

North Hudson Academy, A First Children School

FAMILY STUDENT HANDBOOK | 2026-2027 SCHOOL YEAR

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PRINCIPAL | 4755 LIBERTY AVENUE, NORTH BERGEN, NJ



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Part I – Welcome and School Overview

Board of Education Governance

North Hudson Academy (NHA) operates as an Approved Private School for Students with Disabilities (APSSD) under New Jersey Department of Education regulations. As an APSSD, the school is governed by the corporate leadership of First Children Services rather than an elected local Board of Education. Corporate officers provide oversight of school operations, finances, program quality, and compliance to ensure students receive a high-quality and supportive educational program.

School Administration

NHA is led by an experienced administrative team that oversees school operations, programming, student services, and compliance with New Jersey Department of Education requirements. The team works collaboratively to maintain a safe, structured, and supportive learning environment focused on student success.

School administration includes:

- **Joseph Hess**, Founder
- **Matthew Hess**, Chief Executive Officer
- **Aaron Winik**, Vice President of Therapeutic Programs / Director
- **Lisa Corliss**, Principal
- **Marilu Garcia**, Supervisor of Instruction

The administrative team oversees academic programming, behavioral and clinical supports, staff supervision, and daily school operations to ensure students receive a high-quality, individualized educational experience.

NHA Administrative Staff Directory

Name	Title/Department	Email
Lisa Corliss	Principal; Anti-Bullying Coordinator	lcorliss@firstchildrenservices.com
Marilu Garcia	Supervisor of Instruction; Transportation Coordinator	mgarcia@firstchildrenservices.com
Andres Castellanos	School Psychologist; Anti-Bullying Specialist	acastellanos@firstchildrenservices.com
Kywani Best	School Social Worker; Community Liaison	kbest@firstchildrenservices.com
Rachel DeVinney	Art Therapist; Art Teacher; Testing Coordinator	rdevinney@firstchildrenservices.com
Rachel Kreisler	Art Therapist; Art Teacher; Technology Coordinator	rkreisler@firstchildrenservices.com
Johanna Infante	School Coordinator; School Culture & Climate Chairperson	jinfante@firstchildrenservices.com
Lucianna Farro	Registered Nurse	lfarro@firstchildrenservices.com
Julie Richman	Certified School Nurse	jrichman@firstchildrenservices.com

A Message from the Principal

Dear Families, Students, and District Partners,

Welcome to North Hudson Academy, A First Children School! It is truly an honor to serve as Principal here, working alongside our staff, families, and sending district who are all committed to the same goal: helping our students succeed.

Every student who joins our community brings something wonderful and unique: their own strengths, their own story, their own way of seeing the world. Our goal is to meet each one with an environment that feels structured and safe, warm and understanding, and full of opportunities to grow. That means blending strong academics with meaningful therapeutic support, so students are not only making progress today but building skills that will carry them well into the future.

We believe students thrive when they know what to expect, when the people around them are working together on their behalf, and when every part of their day, academic, social, and emotional, is connected and intentional. With a full continuum of programs, we are able to meet students right where they are and walk alongside them as they move forward with confidence.

None of this happens without our families and sending districts. We consider you true partners in this work, and we are grateful for the trust you place in us. Open communication and shared responsibility are at the heart of how we support your child, and we welcome your voice, your questions, and your involvement every step of the way.

This handbook reflects our programs, policies, and procedures, and is intended to serve as your guide to what to expect throughout the school year. We encourage you to keep it on hand and refer to it as questions come up. A copy will also be made available on our school website for easy reference.

Thank you for your continued trust and partnership. We are so glad to be on this journey with you, and we look forward to a wonderful year together.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lisa Corliss". The script is fluid and cursive.

Lisa Corliss, MA
Principal

A Guide to This Handbook

This handbook is designed to help families understand how NHA operates and supports students throughout the school day. It includes information about expectations, services, safety procedures, and the partnership between the school and sending districts.

As an Approved Private School for Students with Disabilities (APSSD), NHA operates under New Jersey Department of Education regulations governing special education programs and services. This handbook reflects those requirements and is intended to keep families and sending districts informed of our programs, policies, and procedures.

The handbook is organized into sections to help you easily locate the information you need.

Overview of Handbook Sections

Part I – Welcome and School Overview

This section introduces North Hudson Academy, including leadership, mission, and guiding principles. It explains who we are and how we approach student learning and support.

Part II – Programs, Placement, and Enrollment

This section explains how students are placed at North Hudson Academy and how the school works in partnership with the **sending district**. It also outlines the different programs (REGAL, KNIGHTS, PATHWAYS, and 18-21) and how placement decisions are made through the IEP process.

Part III – Educational Program and Student Experience

This section describes what students experience during the school day. It explains how instruction is provided, how IEPs guide programming, the role of therapeutic and related services, and how progress is monitored.

Part IV – Behavior, PBIS, and Student Conduct

This section outlines expectations for student behavior and explains how the school supports students in developing positive behaviors. It includes the Code of Student Conduct, The PBIS and MTSS frameworks, the continuum of behavioral supports and discipline, and Restorative practices and accountability.

Part V – Attendance, Transportation, and Daily Procedures

This section explains the daily logistics of attending school, including attendance expectations and requirements, transportation roles and responsibilities, arrival and dismissal procedures, and daily routines.

Part VI – Academics, Learning, and Progress

This section provides information about academic instruction and expectations, grading, promotion, and graduation requirements, progress monitoring and reporting, and the role of the sending district in awarding credit.

Part VII – Student Health, Safety, Rights, and Responsibilities

This section outlines how the school ensures student safety and well-being. It includes health procedures and medication policies, student protections (HIB, Title IX, reporting requirements), use of safety interventions and crisis response, and school security and emergency procedures.

Part VIII – Family Communication and Partnership

This section explains how families, the school, and sending districts work together. It includes communication expectations, how to contact staff, how to address concerns, and parent rights and student records.

Required Information for APSSDs

As a state-approved private school, NHA is required to include specific types of information in this handbook, including:

- The Code of Student Conduct and discipline procedures
- Policies related to student safety and protection
- Information about programs and services provided
- Expectations for attendance, behavior, and participation
- Explanation of the relationship between the school and the sending district
- Procedures that ensure compliance with state and federal law

These requirements help ensure that families and districts have a clear understanding of how the school operates and how students are supported.

Using This Handbook Throughout the Year

This handbook is intended to be used as a **reference throughout the school year**.

Families may find it helpful to revisit different sections at different times, especially when questions arise related to:

- Behavior and expectations
- Attendance or daily procedures
- Health or safety
- Academic progress or services

While the handbook provides general guidance, all decisions are made based on **individual student needs** and in coordination with the student's IEP team. Families are always encouraged to reach out to school staff with any questions or for clarification.

This handbook provides general guidance and does not include every possible situation. School decisions are made based on individual student needs, applicable law, and policy.

Welcome

Welcome to the **2026-2027 school year**. This handbook is intended to provide students, parents, guardians, and staff with a clear overview of school expectations, routines, supports, and procedures. It is designed to promote a safe, orderly, respectful, and academically focused learning environment. Families are encouraged to read this handbook carefully and use it as a reference throughout the year. School administration may revise procedures as needed to remain aligned with law, regulation, health guidance, and operational needs.

About Us

North Hudson Academy, A First Children School (NHA) is a New Jersey Department of Education-approved private special education school located in North Bergen, New Jersey. As part of First Children Services, the school is connected to a broader family-centered organization that supports children and families through specialized education, therapeutic services, and individualized programming. NHA serves students with diverse learning, behavioral, emotional, and developmental needs in a structured setting designed to promote growth, stability, and meaningful progress.

Our approach reflects First Children Services' commitment to life-changing outcomes for exceptional kids through collaborative, student-centered care. We believe students thrive when educational instruction, therapeutic support, and family partnership work together in a coordinated way. NHA provides a learning environment that values safety, dignity, consistency, and individualized support while helping students build the academic, behavioral, social, and functional skills needed for success in school and beyond.

Mission, Vision, and Core Commitments

Our Mission

NHA is committed to providing a safe, structured, and therapeutically supportive educational experience that promotes meaningful academic, behavioral, and social-emotional growth.

We strive to meet each student where they are by delivering individualized, standards-based instruction and coordinated therapeutic supports. In partnership with families and sending school districts, we implement comprehensive programs that address each student's strengths and needs, helping them make measurable progress and develop the skills necessary for increasing independence and long-term success.

Our Vision

NHA envisions a learning environment where all students are empowered to grow, achieve, and transition successfully into adulthood. Through consistent expectations, high-quality instruction, and strong collaboration among school staff, families, and sending districts, we aim to prepare students to become independent, responsible, and engaged members of their communities.

We are dedicated to fostering a school culture that is respectful, inclusive, and responsive, where students are encouraged to build confidence, take ownership of their learning, and develop the skills needed to succeed beyond the classroom.

Our Commitment

NHA is committed to providing a safe, structured, and supportive learning environment where every student is valued and respected. Through a comprehensive program that integrates academic instruction, behavioral supports, and therapeutic services, we work to meet the unique needs of each student and promote meaningful growth in all areas of development.

Our approach is grounded in the belief that students learn best when expectations are clear, support is consistent, and relationships are built on trust and respect. We are dedicated to helping students develop the academic skills, social-emotional competencies, and independence necessary for success in school and in life.

As an APSSD, NHA works in close partnership with families and sending school districts to ensure that each student's educational program is implemented effectively and aligned with their Individualized Education Program (IEP). We value open communication, collaboration, and shared responsibility in supporting student success.

Through high-quality instruction, individualized supports, and a commitment to safety and dignity, NHA strives to create a learning environment where students are encouraged to take ownership of their growth, make positive choices, and prepare for their future with confidence.

Non-Discrimination Statement

North Hudson Academy does not discriminate on the basis of any legally protected status in the administration of its educational programs, services, admissions practices, or school operations. The school is committed to maintaining an environment that is respectful, inclusive, and free from unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying.

Part II – Programs, Placement, and Enrollment

NHA Program Structure and Placement

North Hudson Academy offers specialized programs designed to meet students' academic, social, emotional, and behavioral needs while promoting growth, independence, and success.

Program placement is not based solely on eligibility classification. NHA works collaboratively with families, sending districts, and Child Study Teams to determine the program and supports that best meet each student's individual needs

REGAL Program (Autism Spectrum Disabilities – Grades K–5)

Responsive Early Growth for Autism and Learning

The REGAL Program serves students classified with Autism Spectrum Disabilities (ASD) and related needs. Grounded in a responsive approach to early growth, the program provides a structured, supportive environment with a focus on early development and foundational skill building.

Program Focus

- Communication and language development
- Social interaction and engagement
- Behavioral regulation and skill acquisition
- Foundational academic instruction
- Sensory integration and self-regulation supports

Program Criteria and Staffing

The REGAL Program follows a 3:1 student-to-staff ratio in accordance with program design.

Class structure includes:

- 1–3 students: 1 teacher
- 4–6 students: 1 teacher and 1 classroom aide
- Maximum class size: 6 students
- Extraordinary 1:1 aides, when required through a student's IEP, are not included in the class ratio

Instruction incorporates evidence-based practices, including structured teaching and behaviorally informed supports, to meet individualized student needs.

KNIGHTS Program (Emotional Regulation Impairment – Grades K–12)

Knowledge, Navigation, Independence, Growth, Healthy-Coping, and Therapeutic Supports

The KNIGHTS Program serves students classified with Emotional Regulation Impairment (ERI) and related behavioral and learning needs across grades K–12. Built around six core pillars — building academic **Knowledge**, **Navigating** social and emotional challenges, developing **Independence**, supporting **Growth** across academic and behavioral domains, teaching **Healthy-Coping** strategies, and providing **Therapeutic Supports** — the program equips students with the tools to achieve emotional regulation, behavioral stability, academic progress, and long-term independence.

Program Focus

- Academic instruction individualized to student needs
- Social-emotional learning and counseling
- Behavioral intervention and self-regulation skills
- Executive functioning and organization
- Preparation for post-secondary success

Program Criteria and Staffing

The KNIGHTS Program is structured to provide appropriate support based on class size and student need.

To support appropriate program planning and student transition, NHA requests that referring districts provide available behavioral documentation, including current behavioral assessments, intervention plans, behavioral data, and relevant disciplinary records.

Class structure includes:

- Up to 8 students: 1 teacher
- 9–12 students: 1 teacher and 1 classroom aide
- Maximum class size: 12 students
- Extraordinary 1:1 aides, when required through a student's IEP, are not included in the class ratio

This structure allows for flexibility in meeting a range of student needs while maintaining a safe and supportive learning environment.

NHA's 18-21 Program

Career Advancement, Behavioral Readiness, Education, Resources, and Adult Living

Our 18–21 program focuses on transition planning and preparation for adult life. This program supports the development of independence and prepares students for meaningful post-secondary outcomes.

Program Focus

- Career exploration and vocational training
- Self-advocacy and decision-making
- Budgeting and financial literacy
- Community-based instruction and real-world experiences
- Education and employment planning
- Accessing community resources and support systems
- Independent and supported living skills

Program Criteria and Staffing

Our 18-21 is designed to provide flexible, real-world learning opportunities with appropriate supervision and support.

Class and program structure includes:

- Small instructional and community-based groups
- Individualized schedules based on transition goals
- Group sizes generally range from 6–12 students, depending on activity, location, and needs of students
- Staffing includes:
 - Certified teacher(s)
 - Support staff or job coaches as needed
- Additional supports are provided based on individual student needs
- 1:1 supports, when required, are not included in group ratios

The program emphasizes independence while maintaining appropriate levels of supervision and guidance.

Program Placement Philosophy

At North Hudson Academy, program placement is based on each student’s individual academic, behavioral, social, and developmental needs — not solely on eligibility classification.

NHA works collaboratively with families and districts to determine the level of support, instructional approach, and learning environment that will best support each student’s success.

Understanding APSSDs and School District Partnership

North Hudson Academy is an Approved Private School for Students with Disabilities (APSSD) approved by the New Jersey Department of Education to provide specialized educational programs for students whose Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams determine a more supportive setting is needed outside their home district.

When a student attends North Hudson Academy through an IEP placement, the public school district remains responsible for overseeing the student’s IEP and ensuring the student receives a free appropriate public education (FAPE). North Hudson Academy serves as the receiving school and provides the student’s daily educational program, behavioral and related supports, progress monitoring, and communication with families and the district.

Parents and guardians remain important members of the IEP team and school partnership. Because both the school and sending district share responsibilities, families may receive communication from both regarding meetings, services, transportation, records, and student progress.

Student Intake and Admission Process

At North Hudson Academy, the intake and admission process is designed to be collaborative, thoughtful, and aligned with New Jersey special education regulations. NHA works closely with families and school districts to ensure students are appropriately matched to the supports and services provided.

Students are referred to NHA through their home school district after the Child Study Team determines that a more specialized setting is needed. Students must have a current Individualized Education Program (IEP), and the IEP team must identify an out-of-district placement as appropriate while considering the least restrictive environment. Families remain active participants throughout the process.

Review of Student Information

Once a referral is made, the district provides NHA with records that help us understand the student's strengths and needs. Our team carefully reviews this information to determine whether we can appropriately implement the student's IEP and provide the required level of support.

This information typically includes:

- The current IEP
- Psychological and educational evaluations
- Social history
- Related service reports (such as speech and occupational therapy)
- Behavior plans, if applicable
- Recent report cards, transcripts, and school records

As an approved private school, NHA can only accept students when we are confident that we can fully meet the needs outlined in the IEP.

Family Involvement

Parents and guardians are important partners throughout the intake and placement process. Families are informed by the school district, encouraged to share input about their child's needs, and included in meetings and placement discussions as part of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) process and required consent procedures.

Student Visit or Observation (When Needed)

In some cases, North Hudson Academy may request additional information, observations, or meetings to better understand a student's learning, communication, and support needs. This may include observing the student in their current program or meeting with the student and family to help support a successful transition.

Acceptance Decision

After reviewing all materials, NHA communicates its recommendation to the school district. This decision is based on whether we may meet the student's needs as outlined in the IEP.

Possible outcomes include:

- **Acceptance** – NHA may meet the student's needs
- **Conditional Acceptance** – Additional planning or supports are needed
- **Decline** – Another program may better meet the student's needs

Final Placement Decision

Placement decisions are made by the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) team, which includes parents or guardians, school district representatives, Child Study Team members, and, when appropriate, North Hudson Academy staff. Together, the team determines the most appropriate placement while considering least restrictive environment requirements.

Enrollment and First Days at NHA

If the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team determines that North Hudson Academy is an appropriate placement, the school district coordinates enrollment and the student's start date with NHA.

Before the student begins, records are transferred, staff review the IEP, and supports are prepared. Upon enrollment, IEP services are implemented, transition supports are provided, and baseline data is collected to monitor progress.

Required Health Records for Enrollment

Before a student can begin attending North Hudson Academy, certain health records must be submitted to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all students. These requirements are established by New Jersey regulations and apply to both public and approved private schools.

Families must provide the following:

1. Immunization Record (Required for School Entry)

- Official **New Jersey Immunization Record** or equivalent documentation
- Must include dates of all required vaccines (such as DTaP, Polio, MMR, Varicella, Hepatitis B, and others based on age/grade)
- Schools are required to review and maintain these records, and students may not attend without proof of required immunizations or an approved exemption

2. Entrance Physical Examination

A medical examination must be completed by a licensed healthcare provider. The exam must include:

- A full **physical examination**
- **Medical history**, including:
 - Allergies
 - Past illnesses, injuries, or surgeries
 - Current medications
- **Health screenings**, such as:
 - Height and weight
 - Blood pressure
 - Vision and hearing

This exam provides a baseline of the student's health and is required for all newly enrolled students

3. Updated Health History / Annual Medical Information

- Parent/guardian-completed health forms or updates
- Includes current medical conditions, medications, and emergency contact information
- Must be updated regularly to ensure accurate care at school

4. Medication and Treatment Authorization Forms (If Applicable)

Required for students who need medication or medical support during the school day. Forms must be completed by the parent or guardian and physician and may include medication administration forms, self-administration authorization, and standing medical orders.

5. Individual Health Care Plans (If Applicable)

Required for students with specific medical conditions. These plans help ensure staff are prepared to respond appropriately.

Examples include:

- Asthma Action Plan
- Allergy / Anaphylaxis Plan
- Seizure Action Plan
- Diabetes Management Plan

6. Additional Health Requirements (When Applicable)

Depending on the student and circumstances, the following may also be required:

- Tuberculosis testing (if directed by health authorities) [\[law.cornell.edu\]](http://law.cornell.edu)
- Medical clearance for participation in physical activity or athletics
- Documentation related to specialized medical needs

Important Notes for Families

- All required health records should be submitted **before the student's first day of attendance**
- In limited cases, students may be allowed a short grace period to submit documentation (for example, immunization records), but this is determined by state guidelines
- Students may not be permitted to attend school if required health documentation is missing

School-Home Partnership

Student success depends on a positive partnership among students, families, and school staff. Parents and guardians are expected to support regular attendance, communicate important concerns, review school communications, reinforce school expectations, and maintain updated emergency and contact information. Students are expected to come to school prepared to learn, follow directions, complete assignments, show respect for others, and contribute to a positive school climate.

The First 30 Days of Enrollment at North Hudson Academy

The first few weeks at North Hudson Academy (NHA) are an important time for helping each student adjust to their new environment and ensuring that all supports are in place. During this transition period, our staff focuses on getting to know your child, implementing their Individualized Education Program (IEP), and establishing a strong foundation for success.

Immediate Implementation of the IEP

When a student begins attending North Hudson Academy, the Individualized Education Program (IEP) is implemented immediately, as required by New Jersey regulations. Special education instruction, related services, accommodations, and supports begin as soon as the student starts to ensure a smooth and consistent transition.

Transition and Adjustment Support

North Hudson Academy recognizes that transitioning to a new school can be both exciting and challenging. During the first 30 days, staff provide structured support to help students adjust to routines, expectations, and the school environment. This may include additional check-ins, individualized behavioral or emotional supports, and opportunities to build positive relationships with staff and peers.

Baseline Data Collection and Observation

During the first several weeks, North Hudson Academy staff gather information about each student's academic, social, and behavioral functioning in the new school environment. This includes collecting baseline data on Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals, monitoring progress and engagement, and reviewing the effectiveness of supports and strategies to help guide instruction and individualized services.

Related Services and Supports

If your child's IEP includes related services, these are provided as part of the school day. Under New Jersey regulations, related services must be delivered when required for a student to benefit from their educational program.

Related services may include:

- Counseling
- Speech-language therapy
- Occupational therapy
- Physical therapy

- Nursing or health services

NHA is responsible for ensuring that all services listed in the IEP are delivered consistently and by qualified staff.

Staff Collaboration and Communication

During the first 30 days, North Hudson Academy emphasizes teamwork and communication among teachers, therapists, support staff, families, and the sending district. Staff regularly review student adjustment and progress, and families may be contacted to share updates, gather input, and support a successful transition.

IEP Review (If Needed)

In some cases, an Individualized Education Program (IEP) team meeting may be scheduled after a student begins attending North Hudson Academy to review progress, gather additional information, or consider adjustments to supports and services. IEPs are reviewed and updated as needed to ensure they continue to meet the student's needs.

Our Commitment During the Transition

During the first 30 days, our priorities are to:

- Ensure **full implementation of the IEP without delay**
- Help each student feel safe, supported, and understood
- Build a clear understanding of your child's strengths and needs
- Establish a strong partnership with families and the sending district

We are committed to making this transition as smooth and positive as possible. If you have any questions or concerns during this time, we encourage you to reach out to our staff—we are here to support you and your child every step of the way.

Part III – Educational Program and Student Experience

Educational Program and Services

After the initial transition period, students at North Hudson Academy participate in a structured, individualized educational program guided by their Individualized Education Program (IEP). NHA provides small class sizes, individualized instruction, and integrated academic, social-emotional, behavioral, and therapeutic supports to promote student growth, independence, and success.

Individualized Instruction

Instruction at North Hudson Academy is guided by each student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) and aligned, when appropriate, with the New Jersey Student Learning Standards. Students receive individualized instruction, accommodations, curriculum modifications, and academic, communication, and functional life skills supports based on their unique needs and goals. Our goal is to support continuous growth and meaningful progress over time.

Individualized Education Program (IEP)

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is the foundation of each student's program at North Hudson Academy. It outlines the student's goals, accommodations, supports, related services, and behavioral interventions, and is implemented immediately upon enrollment in accordance with New Jersey regulations.

IEPs are reviewed at least annually, and families remain active participants in the process. Beginning at age 14, students are also invited to participate in meetings to support transition planning, self-advocacy, and preparation for post-secondary education, employment, and independent living.

Section 504 Plans

Some students at North Hudson Academy may receive supports through a Section 504 Plan rather than an Individualized Education Program (IEP). A 504 Plan provides accommodations and supports to help students access the educational environment and may include supports such as extended time, preferential seating, breaks, modified schedules, or assistance with attention, organization, behavior, or medical needs.

Students with 504 Plans participate in the educational program with appropriate accommodations that are implemented consistently across settings. Families are included in the development and review of all 504 Plans.

Related Services

Many students at NHA receive related services as part of their IEP. These services are provided when necessary to support a student's ability to benefit from their educational program.

Related services may include:

- Counseling services
- Speech-language therapy
- Occupational therapy
- Physical therapy
- School nursing services
- Social work or other therapeutic supports

These services are provided as outlined in the student's plan and are coordinated as part of the school day to support overall progress.

Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), Placement, and Behavioral Protections

North Hudson Academy, in collaboration with each student's sending school district, is committed to ensuring that all students receive a **Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)** in accordance with federal and New Jersey special education law.

Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)

A free appropriate public education (FAPE) means that each student receives an educational program designed to meet their individual needs, including instruction aligned to their Individualized Education Program (IEP), appropriate supports and accommodations, and opportunities for meaningful progress in academic, social, emotional, and functional areas.

The sending district remains responsible for ensuring FAPE, while North Hudson Academy implements the student's program on a daily basis.

Placement and Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

Placement at North Hudson Academy is determined by the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) team, including the family and sending district. In accordance with the principle of the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), placement decisions are based on the student's individual needs, ability to benefit from instruction, and required level of support and structure.

North Hudson Academy serves students whose needs require a more specialized setting than can be provided in a general education environment.

Behavior and Manifestation Determination

For students with disabilities, behavioral concerns and disciplinary actions are considered within the context of the student's disability and individual needs. If disciplinary removals exceed **10 cumulative school days** or constitute a change in placement, the sending district will convene a Manifestation Determination Meeting as required by law.

The meeting determines whether the behavior was related to the student's disability or the result of a failure to implement the Individualized Education Program (IEP). If so, the IEP team will review and adjust supports and services as needed. North Hudson Academy works collaboratively with families and sending districts throughout this process.

Commitment to Individualized Supports

All decisions related to placement, services, and behavior at North Hudson Academy are individualized, based on student-specific needs, and aligned with the Individualized Education Program (IEP) and applicable regulations. NHA prioritizes proactive supports, early intervention, and collaboration to promote student success and reduce the need for disciplinary action.

Clinical and Therapeutic Services

North Hudson Academy provides a range of clinical and therapeutic supports to address students' social, emotional, behavioral, and mental health needs. These services are integrated into the educational program and provided collaboratively with teachers, related service providers, families, and sending districts to support each student's success.

Counseling and Therapeutic Supports

Students at North Hudson Academy may receive counseling and therapeutic supports as part of their individualized program or Individualized Education Program (IEP). Services are provided by qualified professionals, including school psychologists, school social workers, therapists, and art therapists, through individual or group sessions.

These supports help students develop emotional regulation, coping, problem-solving, communication, and social skills while addressing behavioral or mental health needs that may impact learning.

Behavioral Supports and BCBA Services

North Hudson Academy incorporates evidence-based behavioral supports across all programs. Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs) support students and staff by conducting Functional Behavior Assessments (FBAs), developing and monitoring Behavior Intervention Plans (BIPs), training staff, and monitoring student progress.

Behavioral supports are individualized to increase positive behaviors, reduce barriers to learning, and strengthen communication, self-regulation, and independence skills across settings.

Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner (APN) Services

North Hudson Academy partners with a licensed psychiatric nurse practitioner to support students with developmental, behavioral, and emotional needs as part of a collaborative, team-based approach. When appropriate, services may include psychiatric consultation, classroom observation, parent collaboration, coordination with outside providers, and medication evaluation or prescribing.

These supports may be available at no cost to families or sending districts, though families remain responsible for prescribed medication costs. Additional consent is required for participation, and services do not replace a student's primary medical or mental health providers.

Collaborative, Team-Based Approach

A key strength of North Hudson Academy is the collaboration among educational, clinical, behavioral, and support staff, along with families and sending district representatives. Team members work together to align academic, behavioral, and therapeutic goals, monitor progress, and provide consistent support across all settings throughout the school day.

Daily School Schedule

North Hudson Academy follows a structured A/B/C schedule designed to provide consistency, protect instructional time, and support student engagement throughout the school day. Specific classes vary by grade, program, and rotation day, but the general school-day structure is outlined below.

Students follow a repeating A Day, B Day, and C Day rotation. The rotation advances each instructional day. Learning modules may be combined into longer instructional blocks depending on the student's grade level, program, and course requirements. This allows the school to provide appropriate instructional time and meet applicable program and course requirements.

Full Day Schedule — 8:00 AM–2:00 PM

Student arrival and breakfast occur from 7:50–8:00 AM.

Segment	Start Time	End Time	Length
Homeroom / SEL	8:00 AM	8:40 AM	40 min
Module 1	8:45 AM	9:15 AM	30 min
Module 2	9:20 AM	9:50 AM	30 min
Module 3	9:55 AM	10:25 AM	30 min
Module 4	10:30 AM	11:00 AM	30 min
Module 5 / Upper School Lunch Wave	11:05 AM	11:35 AM	30 min
Module 6 / ERI Grammar and ASD Lunch Wave	11:40 AM	12:10 PM	30 min
Module 7	12:10 PM	12:40 PM	30 min
Module 8	12:40 PM	1:10 PM	30 min
Final Course / Elective / Application Block	1:10 PM	1:50 PM	40 min
Checkout / Dismissal	1:50 PM	2:00 PM	10 min

Five-minute transition periods are provided between most morning modules. Students who are not assigned to a lunch wave continue with their scheduled class or application block.

Two-Hour Delayed Opening Schedule — 10:00 AM–2:00 PM

Student arrival and breakfast occur from 9:50–10:00 AM.

Segment	Start Time	End Time	Length
Homeroom / SEL	10:00 AM	10:20 AM	20 min
Priority Learning Block 1	10:25 AM	11:05 AM	40 min
Priority Learning Block 2	11:10 AM	11:50 AM	40 min
Upper School and 18–21 Meal Wave	11:50 AM	12:20 PM	30 min
ERI Grammar and ASD Meal Wave	12:20 PM	12:50 PM	30 min
Priority Learning Block 3	12:55 PM	1:35 PM	40 min
Checkout / Dismissal	1:40 PM	2:00 PM	20 min

Students who are not eating during a meal wave participate in a scheduled instructional or application activity.

Two-Hour Early Dismissal Schedule — 8:00 AM–12:00 PM

Student arrival and breakfast occur from 7:50–8:00 AM.

Segment	Start Time	End Time	Length
Homeroom / SEL	8:00 AM	8:20 AM	20 min
Priority Learning Block 1	8:25 AM	9:05 AM	40 min
Priority Learning Block 2	9:10 AM	9:50 AM	40 min
Upper School and 18–21 Meal Wave	9:55 AM	10:25 AM	30 min
ERI Grammar and ASD Meal Wave	10:25 AM	10:55 AM	30 min
Priority Learning Block 3	11:00 AM	11:40 AM	40 min
Checkout / Dismissal	11:40 AM	12:00 PM	20 min

Program and Instructional Information

Because North Hudson Academy serves students in grades K–12 and students ages 18–21, exact class, lunch, recess, elective, and service times vary by grade and program. Lunches are staggered to maintain appropriate group sizes. K–5 recess is scheduled separately from Health, Safety, and Physical Education.

On regular school days, every student receives one 30-minute Health, Safety, and Physical Education session each day, totaling at least 150 minutes during a regular five-day school week. When a delayed opening or early dismissal affects HPE instruction, missed minutes are documented and rescheduled.

English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies are distributed across the A/B/C rotation. Art, technology, Spanish, communication instruction, electives, transition programming, and other learning supports are scheduled according to each student’s grade and program.

A student’s schedule may also vary based on the IEP, counseling, therapies, accommodations, related services, or other individualized needs. Families receive their student’s specific schedule from the program at the beginning of the school year and whenever a significant change is made.

School Calendar for 2026-2027

North Hudson Academy, A First Children School 2026 to 2027 Calendar							* There are 182 school days from September 9, 2026 through June 24, 2027 with 2 inclement weather days built into the calendar. If additional inclement weather days are needed, they will be taken from Spring Break. We recommend purchasing trip insurance.						
July 2026 – 30 Day ESY							August 2026 – 30 Day ESY						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4							1
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
26	27	28	29	30	31		23	24	25	26	27	28	29
							30	31					
7/1 ESY Begins 7/3 Holiday Observed							8/12 Last Day of ESY 8/13-8/28 NHA Closed 8/31 Admin Return						
September 2026 [16 Days]							October 2026 [22 Days]						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5					1	2	3
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
27	28	29	30				25	26	27	28	29	30	31
9/7 School Closed 9/8 Staff In-Service (IS) 9/9 First Day Students/ Early Dismissal (IS)							10/8 Mid-Quarter 1 (MQ1) 10/15 MQ1 Reports Disseminated 10/19 Early Dismissal/Parent Conferences (PM)						
November 2026 [14 Days]							December 2026 [17 Days]						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7			1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
29	30						27	28	29	30	31		
11/2-11/6 Fall Recess 11/9 School Resumes 11/17 End of Quarter 1 11/24 Report Cards Disseminated							12/21 Mid-Quarter 2 (MQ2) 12/23 Early Dismissal 12/24-12/31 Winter Recess						
January 2027 [19 Days]							February 2027 [18 Days]						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2		1	2	3	4	5	6
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
24	25	26	27	28	29	30	28						
31													
1/1 Holiday Observed 1/4 School Resumes/MQ2 Reports Disseminated 1/18 Holiday Observed 1/19 School Resumes 1/25 Early Dismissal (IS)							2/2 End of Quarter 2 2/9 Report Cards Disseminated* 2/12-2/15 Holiday Observed 2/16 School Resumes						
March 2027 [19 Days]							April 2027 [20 Days]						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6					1	2	3
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
28	29	30	31				25	26	27	28	29	30	
3/8 Early Dismissal/Parent Conferences (PM) 3/9 Mid-Quarter 3 (MQ3) 3/16 MQ3 Reports Disseminated 3/25 Early Dismissal 3/26-3/31 Spring Recess							5/18 Mid-Quarter 4 (MQ4) 5/25 MQ4 Reports Disseminated 5/31 Holiday Observed						
June 2027 [17 Days]							May 2027 [20 Days]						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5							1
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
27	28	29	30				23	24	25	26	27	28	29
							30	31					
6/18 Holiday Observed 6/22 End of Quarter 4 6/23 & 24 Inclement Weather Days** 6/29 Reports Cards Disseminated							4/1-4/2 Spring Recess Continued 4/5 School Resumes 4/16 End of Quarter 3 4/23 Report Cards Disseminated						

Part IV – Behavior, PBIS, and Student Conduct

Student Behavior, Expectations, and Code of Conduct

Policy 5600: Code of Student Conduct

North Hudson Academy maintains a Code of Student Conduct in accordance with New Jersey regulations, including N.J.A.C. 6A:16, to promote a safe, respectful, and supportive learning environment. The Code establishes clear behavioral expectations and emphasizes positive student development, self-regulation, responsibility, and respectful interactions.

The Code applies to all school settings, including classrooms, transportation, and school-sponsored activities, and may apply to off-campus conduct that substantially disrupts school operations or the rights of others.

Consistent with state regulations, NHA uses a continuum of supports and responses that may include proactive interventions, restorative practices, behavioral supports, and disciplinary action when necessary. All responses to student behavior are individualized, developmentally appropriate, and implemented in a manner that upholds student dignity, due process protections, and a safe educational environment.

Student Expectations for Daily Conduct

Behavioral Expectations and PBIS Framework

At North Hudson Academy, students are expected to demonstrate behaviors that support learning, safety, responsibility, and respect. These expectations are directly taught, practiced, and reinforced through Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and other positive reinforcement systems used across programs.

Students are expected to:

- Arrive prepared, participate in learning, and take responsibility for academic progress
- Follow school rules, directions, and safety procedures
- Treat others with respect, kindness, and fairness
- Use appropriate decision-making, self-regulation, and problem-solving skills
- Respect school property, materials, and the learning environment
- Communicate appropriately with staff, peers, and families
- Accept feedback, reflect on behavior, and work toward personal growth

NHA emphasizes proactive support, positive relationships, and skill development to help students build independence, responsibility, and success in school and beyond.

Prohibited Conduct

The following behaviors are considered serious violations and may require immediate intervention:

- Harassment, intimidation, or bullying
- Fighting or physical aggression
- Threats or intimidation
- Disrespect toward staff
- Willful disobedience or refusal to follow directions
- Theft, vandalism, or damage to property
- Substance use, possession, or distribution
- Misuse of school property or technology

- Leaving assigned areas without permission
- Significant disruption of the school environment

How North Hudson Academy Supports Student Behavior

At North Hudson Academy, behavior is viewed as a skill that can be taught and strengthened over time. NHA uses Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), and restorative practices to create a proactive, structured, and supportive learning environment.

Behavioral expectations are directly taught and reinforced across settings, with an emphasis on prevention, intervention, skill development, and positive decision-making. Students are supported through integrated academic, behavioral, and social-emotional services, including structured routines, positive reinforcement systems, counseling services, and individualized interventions when appropriate.

Through the MTSS framework, supports are provided at universal, targeted, and intensive levels based on student need, helping students build self-regulation, responsibility, independence, problem-solving, and positive social interaction skills.

Response to Behavioral Concerns

When students have difficulty meeting expectations, North Hudson Academy responds in a structured, supportive, and consistent manner focused on maintaining safety, preserving access to instruction, teaching appropriate behavior, and restoring the learning environment.

Responses may include redirection, coaching, problem-solving discussions, restorative practices, increased support, or temporary removal from an activity or setting when necessary.

Continuum of Behavioral Support and Discipline

NHA uses a **progressive, tiered response system** aligned with PBIS and MTSS. Disciplinary decisions are individualized and consider:

- Severity and impact of the behavior
 - Safety risk
 - Frequency and pattern
 - Student age and developmental level
 - IEP, BIP, or 504 Plan requirement
- Levels of Behavioral Response**

Level 1 – Minor Concerns (*Low-level disruptions or off-task behavior*)

Examples may include:

- Talking out of turn or calling out
- Off-task behavior (e.g., not starting work, distracted)
- Minor refusal (e.g., “I don’t want to do this” without escalation)
- Inappropriate language (non-threatening, not directed at others)
- Not following classroom routines (e.g., out of seat, minor disruption)
- Minor peer conflict or inappropriate social interactions

Responses may include:

- Verbal redirection and coaching
- Reminder of expectations (Knights CRAFT)
- Brief problem-solving conversation
- Behavioral reflection activity
- Minor loss of privileges (e.g., break time, preferred activity)

- Restorative conversation or guided apology
- Increased staff check-ins or structured support

Level 2 – Repeated/Moderate Concerns (*Ongoing disruption or non-compliance*) Examples may include:

- Repeated refusal to follow directions
- Ongoing disruption of instruction
- Leaving assigned area without permission
- Repeated Level 1 behaviors despite redirection
- Verbal conflict or arguing with peers

Responses may include:

- Restorative practices
- Parent/guardian contact
- Increased structure, supervision, or check-ins
- Temporary removal from activity/classroom
- Assignment to structured support setting
- Adjustment to supports or intervention plan

Level 3 – Significant Concerns (*Escalated or repeated patterns of behavior*)

Examples may include:

- Escalated defiance (refusing directions with disruption)
- Repeated pattern of non-compliance across settings
- Unsafe behavior (e.g., throwing objects, but no injury, leaving area without permission)
- Property misuse or minor damage
- Harassment or inappropriate peer interaction (non-HIB level)

Responses may include:

- Restorative conference (student + staff; family when appropriate)
- Behavior plan review (FBA/BIP consideration)
- Increased supervision and structured interventions
- Loss of privileges (extended)
- In-School Suspension (ISS)
- Collaboration with clinical staff/BCBA

Level 4 – Serious Incidents (*Safety concerns or major violations*)

Examples may include:

- Physical aggression without significant injury (e.g., hitting, pushing)
- Threats toward peers or staff
- Confirmed bullying or harassment
- Leaving a supervised area creating a safety concern (elopement)
- Possession of prohibited items (non-dangerous but violation)
- Significant disruption requiring removal from program

Responses may include:

- In-School Suspension (ISS)
- Parent/guardian conference
- Restorative conference (required before return to program)
- Behavior intervention plan revision

- Child Study Team consultation
- Out-of-School Suspension (OSS), when necessary, with re-entry conference including family and sending district case manager

Level 5 – Severe/Safety-Critical Incidents (*Serious safety threats or illegal behavior*)

Examples may include:

- Physical assault causing injury
- Serious threats, intimidation, or credible safety risk
- Possession of dangerous or illegal items (e.g., weapons)
- Substance use, possession, or distribution
- Behavior posing immediate and significant danger to self or others

Responses may include:

- Out-of-School Suspension (OSS)
- Immediate administrative intervention
- Parent/guardian conference
- Mandatory Child Study Team involvement Consultation with sending district
- Program or placement review, if warranted
- Structured re-entry planning and restorative process

Important Note for Families and Sending District Case Managers

The examples provided within each level are intended as general guidance and are not inclusive of every possible behavior or circumstance. Each incident is reviewed individually and addressed based on the student's needs, Individualized Education Program (IEP), behavior plan, and applicable regulations.

All responses are guided by Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework, restorative practices, and applicable New Jersey Administrative Code (N.J.A.C.) requirements. North Hudson Academy is committed to fair, consistent, developmentally appropriate responses that support student growth while maintaining a safe and structured learning environment.

Types of Disciplinary Responses

Detention (Low-Level Intervention)

Detention may be used for minor or repeated behaviors requiring additional structure. Students may complete reflection activities, missed work, or problem-solving tasks during supervised time. Families and sending district case managers may be notified when concerns arise or persist.

In-School Suspension (ISS) (Moderate Response)

In-School Suspension may be used when a student requires temporary removal from the classroom while continuing to access instruction in a structured and supervised setting. Students continue academic work and may participate in behavioral reflection, restorative practices, and skill-building activities. Families and sending districts receive timely communication and updates regarding supports and progress.

Out-of-School Suspension (OSS) (Serious Response)

Out-of-School Suspension is used only when behavior significantly impacts safety or disrupts the school environment. Families and sending districts receive immediate notification, documentation, and information regarding student rights, next steps, and re-entry planning.

Restorative Practices

North Hudson Academy uses restorative practices across all levels of intervention to promote accountability, repair harm,

rebuild relationships, and support long-term behavioral growth. Practices may include reflection activities, restorative conversations, mediation, conferences, and re-entry meetings following incidents.

Through a proactive, collaborative, and student-centered approach, North Hudson Academy supports students in developing the behavioral, social, emotional, and self-management skills needed for success in school and beyond.

Suspension of Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities may be suspended in accordance with New Jersey law and applicable legal protections. Suspensions exceeding 10 cumulative or consecutive school days require additional procedures, and the sending district is notified of all suspensions. All disciplinary actions are implemented in alignment with the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Equitable and Individualized Application

The Code of Conduct is applied fairly and consistently while recognizing that students have individual needs.

- Responses to behavior are individualized
- Student needs, supports, and developmental level are considered
- For students with IEPs or 504 Plans, all actions are implemented in accordance with those plans

Collaboration with Families

Families are important partners in supporting positive behavior. North Hudson Academy communicates regularly with families, collaborates to address concerns, and includes families in planning and problem-solving.

Families are encouraged to reinforce expectations at home, communicate important concerns or changes, and participate in meetings and support planning.

Dress, Personal Property, and School Materials

Student Attire, Personal Property, and School Materials

North Hudson Academy recognizes that student attire and appearance may reflect individual identity, culture, religion, and personal expression. Students are expected to dress in a manner that is safe, respectful, and appropriate for the school environment while allowing full participation in educational and physical activities.

Clothing must provide appropriate coverage, allow safe movement, and support a productive learning environment. Dress code expectations are intended to promote safety, dignity, and readiness to learn, not to unnecessarily limit personal expression. Concerns related to attire will be addressed respectfully, privately when possible, and with consideration for the student's age, developmental needs, disability-related needs, cultural background, gender identity, and individual circumstances.

Prohibited Attire and Items

The following items are not permitted when they interfere with safety, disrupt the educational environment, or prevent full participation in school activities:

- Clothing that exposes undergarments, private body areas, or creates a significant safety concern
- Clothing or accessories containing language, images, or symbols related to violence, weapons, drugs, alcohol, discrimination, harassment, or explicit content
- Clothing or items reasonably associated with gang affiliation or behavior that may substantially disrupt the school environment
- Accessories or personal items that could pose a safety risk, including items that may be used to harm self or others
- Footwear that is unsafe for movement or participation in school activities
- Hats, hoods, or head coverings worn indoors unless approved for religious, cultural, medical, or disability-related reasons

- Costumes or costume accessories outside approved school activities

Students are expected to wear sneakers or other safe athletic footwear on scheduled physical education days.

Administrative Review and Support

School administration reserves the right to determine whether attire or personal items meet school expectations based on safety, appropriateness, and the needs of the learning environment. When concerns arise, staff will work with students in a supportive and respectful manner to resolve the issue while minimizing disruption to instruction.

When possible, students may be asked to adjust clothing or use alternative clothing provided by the school for the remainder of the day. Responses to dress code concerns will remain developmentally appropriate, individualized, and aligned with maintaining student dignity and access to instruction.

Part V – Attendance, Transportation, and Daily Procedures

Transportation and Student Travel

North Hudson Academy recognizes that safe and reliable transportation is an important part of the student experience.

Transportation is considered an extension of the school day, and all school behavior expectations apply during transportation and school-sponsored travel.

Transportation is arranged and provided by the student's sending district as part of the educational placement. While NHA collaborates with districts to support safe and consistent transportation, the sending district remains responsible for routing, transportation supervision, and transportation-related disciplinary decisions.

Families should contact their Child Study Team or district transportation office regarding transportation concerns, schedule changes, or special arrangements. Any transportation changes must be approved through the sending district.

Student Expectations During Transportation

Students are expected to demonstrate safe, respectful, and responsible behavior during transportation by remaining seated, following directions, using appropriate language, and interacting appropriately with peers and adults.

Transportation expectations and disciplinary procedures are determined by the sending district and transportation provider. North Hudson Academy may reinforce transportation expectations and collaborate with families and sending districts to support safe and successful transportation experiences for students.

Transportation Discipline and Responsibility

When student behavior interferes with safety or disrupts transportation, North Hudson Academy works collaboratively with the sending district to address concerns.

The sending district and transportation provider are responsible for transportation rules, supervision, and decisions regarding transportation privileges or disciplinary actions. NHA may communicate concerns, provide relevant information, and recommend additional safety measures when appropriate.

NHA may also address transportation-related behavior through school-based supports such as counseling, behavioral interventions, restorative practices, and program adjustments aligned with the student's needs. If transportation-related behavior is likely to impact safety, peer relationships, or the school environment, staff will intervene to support a safe and successful school day.

School-Sponsored Travel and Community-Based Transportation

In addition to district transportation, North Hudson Academy may provide transportation for school-sponsored activities, including community-based instruction (CBI), field trips, vocational experiences, and other educational outings. Students are expected to follow all school rules and safety expectations during these activities. Because school-sponsored transportation is an extension of the school program, behavior concerns may be addressed through NHA's behavioral supports and discipline procedures.

Arrival, Dismissal, and Release Procedures

Arrival and dismissal are structured and supervised times of the school day at North Hudson Academy. Students are supervised during arrival, dismissal, and transitions to assigned transportation to ensure student safety and accountability.

Students are expected to use their assigned transportation unless prior approval is granted by both the school and sending district. Any transportation or dismissal changes must be coordinated through the sending district.

Students released to a parent or guardian must be picked up by an authorized individual listed in school records and may require valid identification. Unauthorized individuals will not be permitted to pick up students.

School Day, Routines, and Student Experience

At North Hudson Academy (NHA), each school day is designed to provide students with a structured, predictable, and supportive environment. Clear routines help students feel secure, reduce uncertainty, and support academic engagement, positive behavior, and social-emotional growth.

Daily Schedule and Routine

The school day begins at 8:00 AM and concludes at 2:00 PM. During this time, students follow a consistent schedule that may be adjusted to meet individual needs. The structure of the day supports independence, responsibility, and successful transitions between activities.

Academic Instruction

Academic instruction is a central part of the school day and includes English Language Arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Instruction is individualized and often delivered in small groups so students can access the curriculum at their level and work toward their individualized goals. When appropriate, students also participate in functional skill development that supports independence and long-term success.

Related and Therapeutic Services

Related and therapeutic services are integrated into the school day based on each student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) or individualized plan. These services may include counseling, speech-language therapy, occupational therapy, behavioral support, and other clinical interventions that support academic, behavioral, and social-emotional goals.

Social-Emotional Learning and Behavior Supports

Social-emotional learning is embedded throughout the school day. Students are given opportunities to develop self-regulation, communication, problem-solving, and relationship-building skills in both structured and natural settings. Behavioral supports are provided through consistent expectations, staff guidance, and individualized interventions when needed.

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) at NHA

North Hudson Academy is committed to fostering a safe, supportive, and inclusive learning environment through Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). PBIS is a proactive, research-based framework focused on teaching, reinforcing, and supporting positive behaviors.

As part of this approach, NHA uses the Inclusive Skill-Building Learning Approach, which emphasizes prevention, clear expectations, structured routines, and layered classroom supports to help students remain engaged in instruction whenever possible. More intensive interventions are used only when additional support is needed.

Through PBIS, NHA:

- Establishes and teaches clear behavioral expectations
- Reinforces positive behavior through school-wide systems
- Provides tiered supports through the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)
- Uses data and collaboration to guide interventions
- Incorporates restorative practices to promote accountability and relationship-building

The PBIS framework was introduced during the 2025–2026 school year and enters its first full year of implementation in 2026–2027. NHA remains committed to ongoing staff training, system refinement, and collaboration with students, families, and sending districts to support positive student outcomes.

For more information about the Inclusive Skill-Building Learning Approach, families are encouraged to visit [NESE Lab](#).

Program-Based Positive Reinforcement Systems

At North Hudson Academy, all students are supported through Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). Behavioral expectations are taught and reinforced using developmentally appropriate supports aligned with each program's design and student needs.

Students in the KNIGHTS Program participate in a structured school-wide point system tied to the Knights CRAFT expectations to promote accountability, consistency, and independence.

Students in other programs, including REGAL, PATHWAYS, and 18-21, may receive reinforcement through individualized systems such as visual supports, token systems, structured feedback, and program-specific incentives tailored to their developmental and instructional needs.

Additional information about program-specific behavioral systems may be shared directly with families through program materials and school communication.

Meals, Lunch, and Breaks

The school day at North Hudson Academy includes structured and supervised lunch and break periods that promote safety, appropriate behavior, positive peer interaction, and the development of social and daily living skills.

Students may bring meals from home or receive meals through district-supported programs when applicable. Families are responsible for informing the school of any food allergies, dietary restrictions, or medical needs. Students are expected to follow school guidelines and remain in designated eating areas during meals and breaks.

Transitions and Classroom Structure

Transitions are planned and supported throughout the day so students can move safely and successfully between classrooms, services, and activities. Staff provide supervision, prompts, and individualized strategies as needed to support smooth movement and reduce stress.

Classrooms at North Hudson Academy are designed to support structured and individualized learning. Small class sizes allow for increased attention, flexibility, and support. Each classroom is staffed according to program requirements and may include a certified teacher and one or more instructional assistants.

Program-Specific Student Experience

The student experience may vary by program. Students in the REGAL Program benefit from highly structured environments with visual supports and predictable routines. Students in the KNIGHTS Program experience a structured but flexible setting that supports emotional regulation, behavioral growth, and academic progress. The PATHWAYS Program provides developmentally appropriate, play-based instruction for preschool students, while the 18-21 Program emphasizes transition, independence, and real-world skill development for students ages 18–21.

Staff Support Throughout the Day

Throughout the school day, students at North Hudson Academy are expected to follow individualized schedules, participate in learning activities, and demonstrate the expectations outlined in the Code of Conduct. Teachers, support staff, therapists, clinicians, and behavior specialists work collaboratively to provide consistent support, guidance, and intervention when needed.

NHA emphasizes structure, consistency, and coordinated supports across classrooms, services, and activities to create a safe, supportive, and responsive learning environment for all students.

Attendance, Arrival, and Dismissal

Regular attendance is essential to student success. Students are expected to attend school daily, arrive on time, and participate fully in instruction and services. Families are responsible for ensuring attendance and communicating promptly with the school when absences occur.

Under New Jersey law, parents and guardians must ensure that children between the ages of 6 and 16 attend school regularly. North Hudson Academy monitors attendance, maintains daily records, and works collaboratively with families, the sending district, and the Child Study Team when attendance concerns arise.

The school day runs from 8:00 AM to 2:00 PM. A student is considered present when participating in instruction or school-related activities for at least four hours unless the absence falls within a state-recognized excused category.

State-Recognized Excused Absences

Under N.J.A.C. 6A:32-8.4, New Jersey recognizes a limited number of absences as officially “excused” for reporting purposes. Appropriate documentation is required for:

- Religious observances (written parent/guardian request required)
- Participation in Veterans Day activities
- Participation in approved election-related activities
- Take Your Child to Work Day
- Up to three college visit days for students in grades 11–12
- Transportation disruptions caused by a school district closure

Other Approved Absences

The school may approve other absences when appropriate communication and documentation are provided. These absences are not considered state-excused and may still count toward attendance concerns. Examples include:

- Student illness
- Medical, dental, or therapeutic appointments
- Family emergencies
- Death in the family

In the event of a death in the family, the school will provide appropriate support. Up to five school days may be approved for immediate family members (parent, guardian, sibling, or grandparent). One day may be approved for attendance at services for extended family or other significant individuals. A written parent or guardian note must be submitted upon return.

Medical, dental, or therapeutic appointments require documentation from the licensed provider on office letterhead or official documentation **submitted within five (5) school days** of the student's return. Documentation must include the date(s) of service and verification of the appointment. In extenuating circumstances, families should contact the school to discuss delays in obtaining documentation.

Reporting an Absence

For an absence to be reviewed and considered for approval:

- A parent or guardian must notify the school by 9:00 AM on the day of the absence
- A written explanation must be provided upon the student's return
- Medical documentation, when applicable, must:
 - Be submitted within five school days of the student's return
 - Include the specific dates of absence
 - Be signed by a licensed medical provider

If these requirements are not met, the absence will be recorded as unexcused or unverified.

An absence may also be considered unexcused or unverified if:

- The school is not notified by 9:00 AM
- Required documentation is not submitted within the required timeframe
- A student does not report to school or assigned class and does not follow check-in procedures

Unexcused absences are addressed in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.6 and may contribute to truancy concerns requiring school intervention.

Tardiness and Early Dismissal

Students must arrive on time and report directly to their assigned class. Students arriving after 8:00 AM must report to the main office before going to class. Students who fail to report to school or homeroom and do not follow check-in procedures may be marked unverified or truant in accordance with school procedures.

If a student needs to leave school early, they must be picked up by a parent, guardian, or authorized adult with valid identification. Early dismissal requests should be communicated in advance whenever possible. Medical and dental appointments should be scheduled outside school hours whenever possible to minimize missed instructional time.

Academic Impact of Attendance

Students are responsible for completing missed assignments following absences. While opportunities to make up work will be provided, frequent absences may negatively impact learning, participation, and academic progress. Regular attendance is critical, as absences may result in missed instruction and reduced performance.

When absences begin to accumulate, the school may contact families and require a meeting to review attendance and develop a support plan. Continued unexcused absences may result in:

- Reduction in grades
- Loss of course credit for high school students
- Additional interventions required under state attendance regulations

Families are encouraged to work in partnership with the school to support consistent attendance. When attendance difficulties arise, North Hudson Academy will collaborate with families, the Child Study Team, and the sending district to identify barriers, provide support, and promote student success.

Attendance, Accountability, and Academic Progress

Attendance expectations become increasingly important as students move through school.

Elementary School (Grades K–5)

The focus is on building routines, attendance habits, and foundational academic, social, and behavioral skills. Attendance concerns are addressed through early intervention and family collaboration. While there are no course credit implications, repeated absences may affect readiness for the next grade.

Middle School (Grades 6–8)

Students begin taking greater responsibility for attendance, work completion, and engagement. Frequent absences or lateness may impact academic performance and promotion decisions. The school will work with families to provide support and attendance intervention when concerns arise.

High School (Grades 9–12)

Attendance directly impacts course credit and graduation progress. Students who accumulate excessive absences, particularly unexcused absences, may:

- Lose course credit
- Receive reduced grades
- Be required to complete make-up work or additional instructional time
- Be at risk of course failure

These expectations align with New Jersey regulations governing attendance, promotion, and course credit. Regular attendance also supports preparation for employment, vocational programs, and post-secondary education.

Truancy

Truancy refers to unexcused absences or patterns of non-attendance requiring school intervention under N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.6. A student may be considered truant when absent from school or class without proper notification, documentation, or approval.

Examples may include:

- Failure to report to school, homeroom, or assigned classes
- Leaving class or the building without permission
- Failure to follow attendance or check-in procedures resulting in an unverified absence

The following are **not** considered truancy:

- Absences related to a student's disability or Individualized Education Program (IEP)
- Participation in behavioral or therapeutic interventions
- Staff-directed removals or supervised transitions
- Transportation delays outside the student's control
- Situations where the student remains under staff supervision

These situations are addressed through supports and interventions rather than truancy consequences.

Consequences for Tardiness

Repeated lateness interferes with learning and may result in intervention or disciplinary consequences.

Late to School / Homeroom

- Each lateness may result in consequences, including detention
- Students arriving late without proper check-in may receive additional consequences

Late to Class (Grades 6–12)

- Teachers may assign consequences for lateness
- Missing a significant portion of class may be considered an unexcused absence
- Missing an entire class due to lateness may result in a cut/unexcused absence and a zero for missed work
- Patterns of lateness may result in:
 - Progressive discipline
 - Parent conferences
 - Attendance intervention planning
 - Additional supports required by state regulations

Extended Medical Absences

North Hudson Academy recognizes that students may experience extended illnesses or medical conditions affecting attendance. The school works collaboratively with families, medical providers, Child Study Teams, and sending districts to ensure continuity of education and appropriate support during extended absences.

Attendance Requirements and Course Completion

Students are expected to attend school regularly and participate in instruction throughout the school year. At the secondary level, attendance is directly connected to successful course completion and the earning of credit. Excessive absences may prevent a student from meeting course requirements regardless of the reason for the absence.

Students exceeding allowable absences may be subject to:

- Loss of course credit
- Removal from a course
- Required make-up work or instructional time
- Placement on an attendance intervention plan
- Religious observances, approved school activities, and suspensions are handled in accordance with applicable state regulations.

Students absent for any reason remain responsible for completing missed assignments.

In limited circumstances, school administration may consider a waiver of attendance-based course requirements for good cause following a review process. Students engaging in unexcused absences or skipping classes are not eligible for waiver consideration.

Early Dismissal and Student Pick-Up

Students may not leave school grounds without permission. Early dismissal requests must include:

- Reason for dismissal
- Time of departure
- Transportation arrangements
- Name and relationship of the individual picking up the student
- Contact information for verification

All individuals picking up a student must:

- Report to the main office
- Present valid identification
- Sign the student out through school procedures

Students will only be released to parents, guardians, or authorized individuals listed in school records. Requests for alternative pick-up arrangements require parent or guardian verification. Legal documentation such as custody agreements, court orders, or restraining orders must be on file with the school when applicable.

Part VI – Academics, Learning, and Progress

Academics and Student Learning

North Hudson Academy is committed to providing a comprehensive academic program that supports student growth, engagement, and long-term success. Instruction is designed to develop academic skills, communication, critical thinking, and responsible learning habits while addressing each student's individual strengths and needs.

As an Approved Private School for Students with Disabilities (APSSD), North Hudson Academy serves as the receiving school and is responsible for implementing each student's daily educational program and Individualized Education Program (IEP). The sending district retains responsibility for credit allocation, promotion, and graduation eligibility in accordance with New Jersey Department of Education requirements.

Instructional Approach

The academic program at North Hudson Academy is standards-based rather than textbook-driven, allowing instruction to remain flexible, meaningful, and responsive to student needs. Instruction is aligned with the New Jersey Student Learning Standards (NJSLS) and provides access to grade-level expectations with appropriate modifications and supports.

Instruction may include differentiated teaching strategies, multi-sensory approaches, applied and functional learning opportunities, and ongoing assessment to guide instruction. This approach allows teachers to provide learning experiences that are both accessible and appropriately challenging for each student.

Curriculum and Instruction

North Hudson Academy provides a comprehensive instructional program aligned with the New Jersey Student Learning Standards (NJSLS) and individualized through each student's Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Students receive instruction in:

- English Language Arts
- Mathematics

- Science
- Social Studies
- Health and Physical Education
- Visual and Performing Arts
- 21st Century Life and Careers

Instruction may also include functional academics, life skills, social-emotional learning, communication development, and transition or vocational preparation.

Because students have diverse learning needs, instruction is adapted through individualized supports, modified materials, pacing, expectations, and instructional strategies to promote meaningful participation and progress.

Instructional Alignment and Course Access

To support consistency, equity, and alignment with New Jersey educational expectations, North Hudson Academy aligns curriculum and instructional practices, when appropriate, with the programs and graduation requirements of students' sending school districts.

At the same time, all instruction is individualized to meet each student's academic, social, emotional, behavioral, and functional needs as outlined in their Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Some students may also participate in digital or blended learning opportunities, including platforms such as Edmentum, to support grade-level instruction, skill development, flexible pacing, credit-bearing coursework, and graduation requirements when appropriate. Digital learning is monitored by instructional staff and integrated into the student's overall educational program and IEP goals.

Differentiation and Individualized Learning

All instruction at North Hudson Academy is differentiated to meet the diverse learning needs of students. Teachers adjust content, pacing, instructional methods, and supports to ensure meaningful access to the curriculum.

Differentiation may include:

- Modified assignments or instructional materials
- Small-group or individualized instruction
- Visual supports, scaffolding, and structured routines
- Integration of behavioral and therapeutic supports

Student progress is continuously monitored, and instruction is adjusted based on assessment data and Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals.

Class Structure and Daily Instruction

Students at North Hudson Academy are assigned to a homeroom, which serves as their primary instructional group and support base throughout the school day. Students typically transition with their homeroom group to instructional periods and activities, helping to promote predictable routines, strong student-staff relationships, and consistent academic and behavioral expectations.

Instruction is provided in small class settings to allow for individualized attention and increased support.

Grading and Evaluation

Student progress is measured through a combination of:

- Classroom performance
- Assignments and assessments
- Observation and data collection
- Progress toward Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals

Grading practices are individualized and aligned with each student's educational program. Some students may receive traditional grades, while others may be evaluated based on skill development, participation, engagement, and progress toward individualized goals.

Grades and progress reports are shared regularly with families and sending districts. Because instruction is individualized, grades reflect student progress relative to their abilities and goals rather than comparison to peers.

Student Expectations for Learning

Students are expected to:

- Participate actively in instruction
- Complete assignments to the best of their ability
- Follow classroom expectations and routines
- Demonstrate effort and engagement
- Seek assistance when needed
- Demonstrate honesty and integrity in academic work

Developing responsible learning habits is an important part of preparing students for future educational, vocational, and real-world experiences.

Homework and Classwork

Homework and classwork are designed to reinforce skills taught during the school day and support the development of independent work habits. Assignments may be modified based on student needs and are aligned with classroom instruction.

Students are expected to complete assignments on time and to the best of their ability. Families are encouraged to support consistent work routines and communicate with staff when concerns arise.

Academic Integrity and Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Academic Integrity and Responsible Use of Technology

North Hudson Academy expects students to demonstrate honesty, responsibility, and integrity in their academic work. Students are expected to complete assignments in a truthful and authentic manner and take ownership of their learning. Cheating, plagiarism, forgery, or misrepresentation of work are not permitted.

As technology continues to evolve, students may have access to tools that support learning, including Artificial Intelligence (AI). These tools may be used only when permitted by the teacher and when they support — rather than replace — the student's own thinking, effort, and understanding.

Students may use approved technology tools, including AI, when:

- The teacher has explicitly permitted their use

- The tool is used to support learning, studying, brainstorming, or skill development
- The final work reflects the student's own understanding and effort

Students may not:

- Submit AI-generated work as entirely their own
- Use AI or other technology to complete assignments without permission
- Misrepresent AI-assisted work
- Use technology in a way that undermines the purpose of an assignment

When AI or other digital tools are permitted, students are expected to follow teacher guidelines and be transparent about their use.

Instruction related to academic integrity may include:

- Responsible use of digital tools and technology
- Understanding plagiarism and originality
- Appropriate use of AI and online resources
- Responsible decision-making in academic work

Violations of academic integrity or misuse of technology may result in academic or disciplinary consequences in accordance with the Code of Student Conduct.

North Hudson Academy's goal is to help students develop independence, critical thinking, responsible technology use, and authentic learning skills that support success in school and beyond.

Promotion and Retention

Decisions regarding promotion or retention are made collaboratively, based on:

- Student progress
- Academic performance
- Developmental readiness
- IEP goals and supports

North Hudson Academy provides input and recommendations; however, the **sending school district makes final decisions** regarding promotion.

Progress Monitoring and Reporting

Student progress is monitored consistently through classroom assessments, data collection, and ongoing observation.

Progress is communicated to families and sending districts through:

- Report cards
- IEP progress reports
- Parent-teacher conferences
- Ongoing communication from staff

Families are encouraged to review all academic updates and collaborate with school staff to support student progress.

Credits and Graduation

North Hudson Academy provides instruction and makes recommendations regarding course completion and credit attainment; however, the sending school district is responsible for determining and awarding academic credit, as well as making decisions regarding promotion and graduation.

This includes:

- Evaluation of coursework and credit eligibility
- Determination of diploma pathway
- Final approval of graduation requirements

New Jersey Graduation Requirements

In accordance with NJDOE guidelines, students working toward a state-endorsed diploma must meet credit requirements established by the sending district, which include coursework aligned to the New Jersey Student Learning Standards.

These typically include:

- English Language Arts
- Mathematics
- Science
- Social Studies
- Health, Safety, and Physical Education (150 minutes per week)
- Visual and Performing Arts
- World Languages
- 21st Century Life and Careers

Instruction provided at North Hudson Academy is designed to support students in meeting these requirements to the greatest extent appropriate based on their individual program.

For some students, graduation pathways may be modified through the IEP process, and transition planning may play a significant role in post-secondary outcomes.

Support Services

Academic instruction is supported by a range of related and clinical services designed to help students access learning and achieve their goals. Supports may include:

- Counseling
- Speech and language services
- Occupational therapy
- Behavioral interventions
- Clinical and therapeutic supports

These services are integrated into the school day to promote a coordinated and comprehensive program.

Student Life and School Experience

At North Hudson Academy, student life extends beyond academics. NHA is committed to supporting the whole child by providing opportunities for students to build social skills, develop relationships, explore interests, and participate in meaningful school experiences.

Student life is structured to reinforce the skills students are developing in the classroom while promoting independence, communication, self-management, and appropriate social interaction across school and community settings.

Socialization

Social development is an essential part of the program at North Hudson Academy. Students are supported in learning how to interact appropriately and meaningfully with peers and adults throughout the school day, including during classroom activities, transitions, lunch, and structured group experiences.

Staff model appropriate interactions, support communication, and guide problem-solving and conflict resolution when needed. Social skills may also be taught directly through counseling, group activities, and structured opportunities to practice real-life interactions.

Programs such as REGAL and KNIGHTS emphasize different aspects of social development based on student needs. Some students benefit from highly structured communication and social supports, while others focus on developing independence, cooperation, and self-management skills.

Student Conduct Outside of School

North Hudson Academy recognizes that student relationships and interactions may continue outside of school. Families are responsible for supervising and approving student interactions outside school settings, including social media, electronic communication, gaming platforms, and in-person contact.

Students are expected to maintain the same standards of safety, respect, and responsibility outside of school that are expected during the school day. Off-campus behavior may affect the school environment, student relationships, or the well-being of others.

Families and students should understand that:

- Concerns involving student interactions outside of school may be reported to NHA
- The school may review and investigate reports when off-campus conduct may impact student safety, well-being, or the educational environment
- Certain situations may also be referred to or investigated by the sending district and/or law enforcement, particularly when allegations involve harassment, intimidation, threats, bullying, or other serious concerns

While NHA does not supervise or control student behavior outside of school, the school may respond to off-campus conduct in accordance with New Jersey regulations (N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.6) when the behavior materially and substantially disrupts the operation of the school or interferes with the rights or safety of students.

Families are encouraged to:

- Monitor student interactions outside of school
- Reinforce expectations for respectful and appropriate behavior
- Communicate with the school when concerns arise

Strong collaboration between families, students, schools, and sending districts helps support safe, respectful, and responsible decision-making both in and outside of school.

Student Activities

North Hudson Academy provides opportunities for students to participate in school-based activities that support engagement, motivation, positive behavior, and school connection. Activities may include structured games, incentive-based events, classroom celebrations, and program-specific rewards.

Participation may be connected to attendance, behavior, effort, and engagement, encouraging students to take responsibility for their choices and performance. All activities are supervised and structured to promote safety, appropriate behavior, and positive social interaction while providing students with opportunities to practice skills in supportive, less formal settings.

Community-Based Instruction (CBI)

Community-Based Instruction (CBI) is an important part of the program at North Hudson Academy, particularly for students preparing for greater independence and transition into adulthood. CBI provides opportunities for students to apply school-based skills in real-world settings.

Students may participate in activities such as visiting local businesses, practicing daily living skills, exploring vocational interests, and engaging in structured community outings. These experiences are connected to student goals and support the development of independence, decision-making, communication, and appropriate community behavior.

Community-based learning is a central component of the 18-21 program, where students develop vocational, community navigation, and job-readiness skills through supervised real-world experiences.

All CBI activities are planned, supervised by staff, and aligned with student needs, safety considerations, and program goals.

Physical Education

Physical Education, Health, and Safety Instruction

Physical education, health, and safety instruction are required components of the educational program at North Hudson Academy. In accordance with New Jersey regulations, students in grades 1–12 participate in a comprehensive program of health, safety, and physical education totaling at least 150 minutes per week, distributed across the school schedule. These requirements apply to all students, including students with disabilities, with instruction adapted as needed to ensure access and participation.

Instruction supports students' physical health, emotional well-being, safety awareness, social development, and overall wellness. Activities and lessons are designed to be developmentally appropriate and individualized based on each student's age, abilities, and needs.

Students may participate in activities that support:

- Physical fitness, coordination, and movement skills
- Healthy habits and personal wellness
- Safety awareness and decision-making
- Cooperation, teamwork, and sportsmanship
- Following directions and participating appropriately in group settings

Instruction is aligned, when appropriate, with the New Jersey Student Learning Standards for Comprehensive Health and Physical Education.

Students are expected to participate to the fullest extent possible and follow all safety expectations and staff directions. Appropriate clothing and safe footwear, including sneakers, are required for participation.

Because NHA serves students with diverse needs, activities may be modified or adapted based on:

- Medical conditions or physical limitations
- Behavioral, sensory, or communication needs
- Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals, accommodations, or supports

Students are not excluded from participation solely due to disability-related needs and may receive modified activities to ensure safe and meaningful participation.

For younger students, recess and structured movement opportunities may also support physical activity, regulation, and social development. However, these activities do not replace the required instructional minutes for health, safety, and physical education unless specifically structured and aligned with the curriculum.

Recess and Movement Opportunities

For younger students, recess and structured movement opportunities are important and protected parts of the school day at North Hudson Academy. Recess supports physical development, emotional regulation, social interaction, and student well-being while providing opportunities for supervised play and skill development in a less structured setting.

During recess, students practice communication, cooperation, problem-solving, self-regulation, and positive peer interaction. Staff actively supervise students, reinforce expectations, support safety, and assist with conflict resolution and social skill development when needed.

In accordance with New Jersey law, students in kindergarten through grade 5 are provided a daily recess period of at least 20 minutes, which should be held outdoors when feasible. Recess is recognized as an important part of a student's educational and developmental experience and is not used as a primary disciplinary consequence.

Consistent with New Jersey requirements:

- Recess may only be restricted under limited circumstances related to student behavior or safety
- Students may not be denied recess more than twice per week
- Restorative, supportive, or alternative activities should be considered when behavioral concerns arise
- Recess may be modified based on medical needs, Individualized Education Program (IEP) provisions, or other individualized supports

At NHA, behavioral concerns during recess are addressed through supervision, restorative practices, structured support, and skill-building interventions whenever appropriate.

Recess does not replace the required instructional minutes for health, safety, and physical education.

For older students, opportunities for movement, regulation, and physical activity are incorporated throughout the school day through physical education, supervised transitions, structured breaks, vocational activities, and program-specific supports.

North Hudson Academy views recess and movement opportunities as important components of student wellness, regulation, social development, and school success.

Integration with Student Programs

Student life experiences at North Hudson Academy are aligned with each student's developmental and program needs. REGAL emphasizes structure, communication, and routine; KNIGHTS focuses on independence, emotional regulation, and social growth; PATHWAYS supports early learning through play and exploration; and the 18-21 Program emphasizes transition, community-based learning, and adult-ready skills.

Across all programs, activities are designed to reinforce learning, build confidence, and support success beyond the classroom.

Part VII – Student Health, Safety, Rights, and Responsibilities

Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying, and Discrimination

Commitment to a Safe and Respectful Environment

North Hudson Academy (NHA) is committed to providing a safe, civil, and supportive learning environment where all students are treated with dignity and respect. The school strictly prohibits harassment, intimidation, bullying (HIB), discrimination, and retaliation in any form. These behaviors disrupt a student's ability to learn and interfere with the school's responsibility to maintain a safe and structured educational setting.

Harassment, intimidation, or bullying involves unwanted, aggressive behavior that may include a real or perceived power imbalance. Because students learn by example, all members of the school community—including staff and students—are expected to demonstrate respectful behavior and to refuse to tolerate bullying or harassment of any kind.

What is Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying (HIB)?

Harassment, intimidation, or bullying includes any gesture, written, verbal, physical act, or electronic communication (such as texts, social media, or online interactions) that may occur as a single incident or a pattern of behavior.

An incident may be considered HIB if it:

- Is motivated by a real or perceived characteristic (such as race, disability, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or another distinguishing trait), or targets a student for any reason
- Occurs on school grounds, on a school bus, at a school activity, or outside of school
- Disrupts the school environment or interferes with the rights of another student

Behavior may meet the definition of HIB if it:

- Causes physical or emotional harm
- Places a student in fear of harm
- Damages property
- Insults, demeans, or excludes a student or group
- Creates a hostile learning environment

Incidents Outside of School

Behavior that occurs outside of school, including online or through social media, may still be addressed if it significantly impacts the school environment.

This includes situations where:

- A student feels unsafe coming to school
- Peer conflict carries over into the school day
- Learning is disrupted due to ongoing issues

In these cases, North Hudson Academy will review the situation and take appropriate steps to ensure student safety. Depending on the circumstances, the sending school district may be required to conduct a formal HIB investigation.

Role of the Sending School District

As an Approved Private School for Students with Disabilities (APSSD), North Hudson Academy shares responsibility for HIB with each student's sending school district.

- **North Hudson Academy** addresses incidents occurring:
 - On school property
 - During school-sponsored activities
 - On school-provided transportation
- **The sending school district** is responsible for:
 - Conducting formal HIB investigations when required
 - Investigating incidents on district transportation or programs
 - Investigating incidents that occur off school grounds

When a report involves multiple districts, the district of the **student who is the target of the behavior** is responsible for leading the investigation.

NHA works collaboratively with the sending district by:

- Providing information and documentation
- Supporting student safety during the process
- Implementing supports and interventions

Families may be contacted by both the school and the district as part of this process.

Reporting Concerns

Any student, staff member, or individual who witnesses or has reliable information about a potential HIB incident should report it immediately.

Reports may be:

- Made verbally or in writing
- Shared with a teacher, counselor, administrator, or the Principal

Once a report is made:

- The school will document the concern
- Administration will review the report promptly
- An investigation will be initiated when appropriate

A verbal report will be followed by written documentation within two school days, and an investigation will typically begin within one school day. Anonymous reports are accepted; however, disciplinary action will not be based solely on anonymous information.

Investigation Process

All reports of harassment, intimidation, or bullying are investigated promptly and thoroughly.

- Investigations are led by the **Anti-Bullying Specialist**
- Investigations are typically completed within **10 school days**
- Parents of all students involved are notified
- Interim steps may be taken to ensure student safety

Following the investigation:

- Findings are shared with the sending district
- Written notification is provided to families
- Supports and actions are implemented as needed

Parents have the right to request a review or hearing through their sending district if they disagree with the outcome.

Anti-Bullying Specialist and School Climate Team

North Hudson Academy designates an **Anti-Bullying Specialist** who is responsible for:

- Leading investigations
- Supporting prevention efforts
- Monitoring school climate

The school also maintains a **School Safety and Climate Team**, which:

- Reviews trends and patterns
- Helps improve school climate
- Supports prevention efforts
- Provides education to staff, students, and families

Consequences and Supports

Responses to HIB are individualized and consider:

- Severity of the behavior
- Student age and developmental level
- Student disability and IEP
- History of behavior

Consequences may include:

- Behavioral interventions and counseling
- Restorative practices
- Loss of privileges
- In-school or out-of-school suspension
- Referral to law enforcement when required

At the same time, NHA emphasizes **remedial and supportive approaches**, such as:

- Social skills development
- Counseling and emotional support
- Behavior intervention planning
- Family collaboration

Students who are **targets of HIB receive support** such as:

- Safety planning
- Counseling
- Adjustments to routines or environment

The goal is to repair harm, restore safety, and prevent future incidents, not simply to punish.

Retaliation and False Reports

Retaliation against any person who reports or participates in a HIB investigation is strictly prohibited. This includes behavior that intimidates, threatens, or harms someone for coming forward.

Any act of retaliation will result in disciplinary and/or corrective action.

Similarly, knowingly making a false report is prohibited. Consequences for false accusations will be determined based on the circumstances and may include disciplinary action.

Prohibition of Sexual Harassment

(Aligned with North Hudson Academy Policy 5751 and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972)

*At North Hudson Academy, we are committed to maintaining a school environment where every student feels **safe, respected, and able to learn without fear of harassment or discomfort**. Sexual harassment is a form of discrimination and is not tolerated in any form.*

We understand that this can be a sensitive topic for families and students. Our goal is to ensure that expectations are clear, that students are protected, and that any concerns are handled with care, respect, and seriousness.

Understanding Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment refers to **unwanted behavior of a sexual nature** that interferes with a student's sense of safety or ability to participate fully in school.

This can take different forms. Sometimes it involves situations where a student feels pressured by someone in a position of authority. Other times, it may involve repeated or serious behavior from peers or others that creates an uncomfortable or unsafe environment.

Examples may include:

- Unwanted comments, jokes, or gestures of a sexual nature
- Inappropriate physical contact
- Repeated messages, images, or online interactions that make a student feel uncomfortable
- Behavior that causes a student to feel unsafe, embarrassed, or targeted

Sexual harassment can happen between students, from adults to students, or from outside individuals. It may occur in person or through technology, including social media.

How the School Responds

North Hudson Academy takes all concerns about sexual harassment seriously. When the school becomes aware of a concern—whether through a report, observation, or information shared by someone else—we act promptly.

Our priority is always to:

- Ensure the immediate safety and well-being of the student
- Understand what has occurred
- Take appropriate steps to address the behavior and prevent it from continuing

The school will review the situation carefully and determine the appropriate response based on the circumstances. This may include working with families, staff, and the sending school district, and putting supports in place for the student.

Reporting Concerns

We strongly encourage students and families to speak up if something does not feel right. Concerns can be shared with:

- A teacher or trusted staff member
- A supervisor or counselor
- The Principal

Reports can be made verbally or in writing. Families can also contact the school if a student shares something at home that needs attention.

Even if a situation is unclear, it is always appropriate to reach out. Early communication allows us to respond quickly and provide support.

Some concerns may also meet criteria for Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying (HIB) and will be addressed in alignment with both processes, as appropriate.

Protection and Support for Students

Students who raise concerns—or who are involved in a report—will be treated with respect and care. North Hudson Academy does not allow:

- Retaliation against a student who reports a concern
- Intimidation or pressure related to speaking up

The school takes steps to ensure that students feel safe throughout the process and that appropriate supports are in place.

Working Together to Prevent Harm

Preventing harassment is part of our broader commitment to building a positive school culture. Students are supported in learning:

- Respect for themselves and others
- Appropriate boundaries and interactions
- How to communicate and seek help

Staff receive training on recognizing and responding to concerns, and families are important partners in reinforcing these expectations.

Our Commitment

North Hudson Academy is guided by Policy 5751, Title IX, and applicable New Jersey regulations in all matters related to sexual harassment.

More importantly, we are guided by a commitment to ensuring that every student:

- Feels safe coming to school
- Is treated with dignity and respect
- Has access to a learning environment free from harassment

If you ever have concerns or questions, we encourage you to contact the school. We are here to listen, support, and respond.

Prohibition of Corporal Punishment

North Hudson Academy is committed to maintaining a school environment that is safe, respectful, and supportive for all students. Discipline practices at the school are designed to promote learning, self-regulation, and positive behavior, rather than punishment.

Corporal punishment is strictly prohibited at North Hudson Academy.

Corporal punishment refers to the use of physical force or action intended to cause pain or discomfort as a means of discipline. This may include actions such as hitting, striking, or any other physical act used to punish a student for behavior.

In accordance with New Jersey law and school policy, staff members may not use corporal punishment under any circumstances. Disciplinary practices at North Hudson Academy are aligned with Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), and restorative approaches, all of which focus on teaching appropriate behavior and supporting student growth.

While corporal punishment is prohibited, trained staff may use reasonable and necessary physical intervention only when required to ensure safety. This may occur in situations where a student's behavior presents an immediate risk of harm to themselves or others, and all interventions are implemented in accordance with established procedures and applicable regulations.

North Hudson Academy is committed to ensuring that all disciplinary practices:

- Promote student dignity and respect
- Support positive behavior and skill development
- Maintain a safe and structured learning environment

Families can be assured that all responses to student behavior are designed to support growth, ensure safety, and help students succeed both in school and beyond.

Child Abuse Reporting and Student Protection

North Hudson Academy is committed to ensuring the safety, protection, and well-being of every student. As part of this responsibility, the school follows all New Jersey laws related to the reporting of suspected child abuse or neglect. While this may be unfamiliar or concerning for families, it is important to understand that these procedures are designed to ensure that any potential concern is reviewed by trained professionals and that students are provided with appropriate protection and support.

All school staff are required by law to report concerns of suspected abuse or neglect directly to the New Jersey Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCPP). This requirement applies whenever a staff member has a reasonable concern for a child's safety, even if there is no confirmed evidence. School staff do not investigate these situations independently; instead, reports are made so that the appropriate state agency can assess the situation and determine next steps. The school's responsibility is to report concerns; the determination of whether abuse or neglect has occurred is made by DCPP.

The school recognizes that this process can be sensitive and, at times, difficult for families. Reports are made in accordance with legal obligations and are not a determination that wrongdoing has occurred. North Hudson Academy remains committed to handling all situations with professionalism, confidentiality, and respect, while prioritizing the safety and well-being of students at all times. Families are encouraged to maintain open communication with the school and to reach out with any questions or concerns regarding student safety or support.

Search and Seizure

North Hudson Academy is committed to maintaining a safe, orderly, and respectful learning environment for all students. In order to support safety and prevent the presence of prohibited or dangerous items, the school may conduct searches of students or their belongings when necessary.

Searches are conducted in accordance with New Jersey Administrative Code (N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7) and are implemented in a manner that is reasonable, respectful, and appropriate to the circumstances.

Student Right of Privacy

North Hudson Academy recognizes that students have a right to privacy and that this right must not be violated through unreasonable search and seizure. At the same time, school staff have a responsibility to maintain order, safety, and appropriate conduct within the school environment.

All searches conducted by school personnel must be reasonable under the circumstances and aligned with applicable law, including Policy 5770 and New Jersey Administrative Code (N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7).

Use of School Property and Storage Areas

The school may provide students with storage areas for personal belongings (e.g., desks, assigned spaces). These areas remain under the control of the school.

Students should understand that such spaces:

- Are **not considered private**
- May be inspected by school officials when necessary

The school may conduct periodic or situation-based inspections of these areas to maintain safety and order.

School Authority to Conduct Searches

School staff may search a student or a student's property, with or without the student's consent, when there are **reasonable grounds to suspect** that the search will uncover evidence of:

- A violation of school rules
- A violation of law
- The presence of items that may threaten the safety or well-being of the student or others

The scope of any search will be **reasonably related to the purpose of the search** and will take into consideration:

- The seriousness of the suspected concern
- The student's age and developmental level
- The student's disciplinary history
- The nature of the item being sought

Searches will not be conducted in an arbitrary, excessive, or unreasonable manner.

Search Procedures and Safeguards

Whenever feasible:

- Searches will be conducted by the Principal or designee
- The student will be present during the search
- An additional staff member may be present

School staff may request the student's cooperation prior to conducting a search; however, a search may proceed when reasonable grounds exist.

Except in urgent or exigent circumstances, more intrusive searches of a student's person or personal belongings will:

- Be conducted by a staff member of the same gender as the student
- Be limited in scope and conducted in a manner that protects the student's dignity and privacy

Under no circumstances will a student be subjected to:

- A strip search
- A body cavity search

Exigent Circumstances

When school staff have a reasonable belief that immediate action is necessary to protect the safety of students or staff, a search may be conducted promptly by available personnel.

These situations may include concerns involving:

- Dangerous items
- Threats of harm
- Immediate safety risk

In such cases, staff will act with appropriate speed and judgment to ensure safety while maintaining respect for the student.

Safety-Based Screening

In order to promote a safe school environment, North Hudson Academy may utilize preventive safety measures, including:

- Visual inspections of belongings
- The use of metal detection devices, when deemed appropriate by administration
- Review of items brought into the school setting

These measures are used to prevent prohibited or dangerous items from entering the building and are conducted in a manner that respects student dignity.

Confiscation and Handling of Items

If a search results in the discovery of items that violate school policies or pose a safety concern:

- The items may be **confiscated by school staff**
- Appropriate follow-up actions will be taken based on the nature of the item

Depending on the situation, items may be:

- Returned to a parent/guardian
- Retained by the school
- Referred to law enforcement, when required

Law Enforcement Involvement

School officials will cooperate with law enforcement in accordance with applicable law. Searches requested by law enforcement will occur:

- Upon presentation of a valid warrant, or
- With appropriate consent, or
- When school officials have independent reasonable grounds to conduct a search

Documentation

The school will maintain a written record of searches conducted by administration, including:

- The reason for the search
- The basis for reasonable suspicion
- The individuals present
- Any items found and their disposition

This documentation supports accountability, safety, and appropriate follow-up actions.

Respect and Student Rights

All searches are conducted with consideration for:

- The student's age, developmental level, and individual needs
- The importance of maintaining dignity and respect
- The need to ensure student safety and the safety of others

North Hudson Academy strives to ensure that all safety procedures are implemented in a manner that is fair, consistent, and aligned with the overall educational mission of the school.

Commitment to a Safe Environment

Search procedures are one part of a broader commitment to maintaining a safe and supportive environment. The school prioritizes:

- Prevention and clear expectations
- Positive behavioral supports
- Collaboration with families and sending school districts

These efforts help ensure that students are able to learn and grow in a setting that is secure, respectful, and focused on their success.

Electronic Devices and Recording Prohibition

North Hudson Academy maintains a structured and distraction-free learning environment in which students are able to focus on instruction, social development, and appropriate engagement throughout the school day. To support this environment, the use of personal electronic devices is strictly limited.

Consistent with New Jersey Administrative Code provisions governing student conduct (**N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7**), schools are authorized to establish reasonable rules regarding the possession and use of personal electronic devices in order to maintain a safe, orderly, and productive learning environment. At North Hudson Academy, these expectations are implemented in a manner that supports student safety, minimizes disruption, and protects the confidentiality of all students and staff.

Cell phones and personal communication devices are **not permitted beyond the student entry point** at the beginning of the school day. All such devices must be turned off and secured upon arrival. Students may not access, carry, or use these devices during school hours unless specifically authorized by school administration for an approved educational or medical purpose.

In addition, the use or possession of **smart watches, recording devices, and wearable technology capable of communication or recording**, including devices such as Meta glasses or similar products, is strictly prohibited within the school environment. These items present significant concerns related to student privacy, safety, and disruption of the educational setting.

The prohibition of recording devices is particularly important in maintaining the confidentiality and dignity of all students and staff. Students are not permitted to record, photograph, or capture audio or video of any individual or activity within the school setting without explicit authorization. Unauthorized recording, whether intentional or incidental, is considered a serious violation of school expectations and may result in disciplinary action.

If a student brings a prohibited electronic device into the school:

- The device may be confiscated by staff
- The device will be secured by the school
- Return of the device will be coordinated with a parent or guardian

Repeated violations or refusal to comply with these expectations may result in disciplinary action in accordance with the Code of Student Conduct.

North Hudson Academy is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged electronic devices brought to school. Families are strongly encouraged to reinforce expectations regarding personal technology use prior to arrival each day.

The purpose of these expectations is to maintain a safe, respectful, and focused environment where students are able to fully engage in their educational program without unnecessary distractions or disruptions.

Technology and Acceptable Use

North Hudson Academy provides access to school technology, internet services, and digital platforms to enhance instruction, support communication, and facilitate school operations. These resources are provided for educational purposes and are intended to support student learning, engagement, and development of appropriate digital skills.

Students are expected to use all technology resources responsibly, safely, and in accordance with school expectations. The use of technology is a privilege, not a right, and must be consistent with the school's Code of Student Conduct and overall expectations for behavior.

All school-issued devices, networks, accounts, and systems are the property of the school and may be monitored as permitted by law and school policy. Students should not expect privacy when using school technology. Monitoring may occur to ensure appropriate use, protect student safety, and maintain system integrity.

Students are required to use technology only for authorized, school-related purposes. Accessing technology for non-educational activities, including games, social media, or other unrelated content, is not permitted unless specifically approved by staff for instructional purposes.

Students are responsible for maintaining the security of their accounts. Passwords and login credentials must be kept private and may not be shared with others. Any unauthorized access, attempts to access another person's account, or misuse of login information is strictly prohibited.

Students may not use school technology to access, create, share, or distribute content that is inappropriate, harmful, threatening, discriminatory, or disruptive to the school environment. This includes any material that violates school expectations regarding respect, safety, and appropriate conduct.

The use of technology to photograph, record, or share images, audio, or video of any individual within the school setting is strictly prohibited without explicit authorization. This expectation aligns with the school's responsibility to protect the privacy, dignity, and confidentiality of all students and staff.

Students are also expected to respect the integrity of school technology systems. Any attempt to damage, alter, bypass, or interfere with devices, networks, filters, or security settings is prohibited. This includes attempting to access restricted content, install unauthorized software, or disrupt system functioning.

Failure to follow these expectations may result in consequences, including restricted access to technology, disciplinary action in accordance with the Code of Student Conduct, and, when appropriate, involvement of the sending district or external agencies.

North Hudson Academy is not responsible for loss or damage to personal devices brought to school. Families are encouraged to reinforce expectations regarding appropriate technology use, including responsible decision-making and digital citizenship.

Through responsible use of technology, students are supported in developing the skills necessary to use digital tools safely, respectfully, and effectively both in school and in their everyday lives.

Personal Listening and Tracking Devices

Students may not use personal listening devices, wearable technology, or tracking devices during the school day unless approved by administration.

This includes:

- Wireless earbuds or headphones
- Smartwatches with communication functions
- GPS tracking devices used for communication or monitoring
- Meta-Glasses

These devices may:

- Disrupt the learning environment
- Interfere with instruction
- Raise concerns related to privacy and confidentiality

Use may be permitted when documented for **medical or safety purposes** and approved by the school.

Use of Images, Video, and Social Media

Students are not permitted to record, photograph, or share images or video of:

- Other students
- Staff
- School activities

without explicit permission.

This includes posting on:

- Social media
- Messaging platforms
- Online forums

Unauthorized recording or sharing may result in disciplinary action and may involve additional review when it impacts student safety or privacy.

Protection of Staff and Privacy (Doxxing and Online Conduct)

North Hudson Academy is committed to maintaining a school environment that protects the safety, dignity, and privacy of both students and staff. As part of this commitment, students and families are expected to use technology and communication tools responsibly.

“Doxxing” refers to the act of sharing or posting private or identifying information about an individual online without permission, often with the intent to embarrass, harass, or harm. This may include:

- Names, contact information, or social media accounts
- Photos or videos of staff
- Personal or professional details shared outside of appropriate contexts

The publication or distribution of such information about staff, students, or families—whether through social media, messaging platforms, or other online tools—is strictly prohibited when it:

- Violates privacy
- Disrupts the school environment
- Targets or harms members of the school community

Students may not:

- Record, photograph, or share images or video of staff or students without authorization
- Post or distribute information about staff members or school incidents online
- Use social media or electronic communication to harass, threaten, or target individuals connected to the school

Behavior that occurs outside of school, including online activity, may still be addressed by the school when it impacts the safety, well-being, or rights of students and staff or disrupts the educational environment, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.6. Violations of this expectation may result in:

- Disciplinary action in accordance with the Code of Student Conduct
- Removal of privileges related to technology or activities
- Notification of families and sending school districts
- Referral to law enforcement, when appropriate

North Hudson Academy encourages students and families to use technology in a way that reflects respect, responsibility, and awareness of the impact of online behavior.

Staff members are entitled to the same protections of privacy and safety as students, and any conduct that targets staff in a harmful or inappropriate manner will be addressed seriously.

Health, Illness, and Medication

The health, safety, and well-being of students are a priority at North Hudson Academy. In order to provide a safe and responsive school environment, it is essential that families communicate all relevant health information to the school. Parents and guardians must inform the school of any medical conditions, allergies, medications, emergency contacts, or changes in health status that may affect a student's participation in school activities.

Students who are ill, exhibiting symptoms that may be contagious, or unable to safely participate in the school program should remain home until they are able to return safely. If a student becomes ill during the school day or is unable to continue participating safely, families will be contacted and may be required to pick up the student. These procedures are in place to protect the health of the individual student as well as the broader school community.

Medication administration is managed carefully to ensure student safety and compliance with New Jersey guidelines. Medication may only be administered in accordance with established school procedures and with proper authorization from both a parent or guardian and a licensed healthcare provider. All medications, including over-the-counter medications, must be provided to the school in their original packaging and clearly labeled.

Medication should be delivered to the school by a parent or responsible adult unless specific arrangements have been approved by the school. Students are not permitted to carry medication on their person unless there is explicit authorization documented in accordance with school policy and medical guidance.

Families are responsible for keeping the school informed of any injuries, medical restrictions, or changes in health conditions. This includes updates related to physical activity limitations, temporary or ongoing medical needs, and any factors that may impact the student's ability to participate fully in the school day.

By maintaining open communication and following established procedures, North Hudson Academy works in partnership with families to ensure that all students receive safe, appropriate, and responsive care during the school day.

Substance Use, Possession, and Student Safety

North Hudson Academy is committed to maintaining a safe, healthy, and supportive learning environment for all students. The use, possession, or distribution of alcohol, drugs, or other prohibited substances interferes with student learning and may pose a serious risk to the safety and well-being of the individual student and the school community.

In accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:40A-11 through 18A:40A-17 and N.J.A.C. 6A:16, Subchapters 3, 4, and 6, NHA's substance-related policies and procedures are developed in consultation with the county prosecutor and law enforcement, reviewed and approved by the executive county superintendent, and made available annually to all staff, students, and families. Substance-related concerns are addressed as both a health and safety matter and a disciplinary matter, with a focus on prevention, intervention, and support.

Prohibited Conduct

Students are prohibited from:

- Using, possessing, or distributing alcohol or other drugs, including anabolic steroids
- Being under the influence of substances while at school, on school grounds, on a school bus, or while participating in a school-sponsored function
- Possessing drug paraphernalia or items associated with substance use

New Jersey's legalization of recreational cannabis for adults age 21 and older does not change these prohibitions. Cannabis use and possession by any student, and use by any person on school property, remain prohibited under state law and this policy regardless of age, including within NHA's adult (18–21) program.

Violations may result in disciplinary action in accordance with the Code of Student Conduct.

Response, Medical Evaluation, and Return to School

If it appears that a student may currently be under the influence of alcohol or other drugs while at school, on school grounds, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored function:

- The situation will be reported as soon as possible to the principal or designee and to the school nurse, school physician, or student assistance coordinator, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:16-4.3
- The student will be supervised and supported in a safe setting
- The parent/guardian will be notified promptly
- The sending school district will be informed, as appropriate

In accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:40A-12 and N.J.A.C. 6A:16-4.3, **the parent/guardian must arrange** for the student to be examined by a licensed physician for the specific purpose of determining whether alcohol or other drug use is interfering with the student's physical or mental ability to safely participate in school. This is a distinct medical evaluation, not a routine or general physical examination. At the time of referral, NHA will provide the parent/guardian with a written summary of this requirement to share with the examining physician, so there is no ambiguity about what the evaluation must address.

The examining physician must submit a written report to the parent/guardian, the principal, and the superintendent that specifically addresses and verifies whether the student's alcohol or other drug use interferes with their ability to perform in school. A report that does not address this determination, such as a general physical clearance or well-visit note, does not satisfy this requirement.

- If the written report is not received within 24 hours of referral, the student will be permitted to return to school until a report confirming interference with functioning is received, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:16-4.3
- If the report confirms that substance use is not interfering with functioning, the student may return to school
- If the report confirms that substance use is interfering with functioning, the student will be released to the care of a parent/guardian and may not return to school until a subsequent written report verifies the interference has resolved

A preliminary assessment of a student's need for services or treatment may also be conducted; the findings of that assessment alone will not be used to prevent a student from attending school.

Any removal of a student with a disability will be implemented in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:14 and the student's IEP, including a manifestation determination review where the removal constitutes a change in placement.

The school does not conduct medical evaluations and assumes no responsibility for the provision of medical services.

Investigation, Confiscation, and Reporting

If a prohibited substance or related item is identified, the item will be secured by school staff, and the situation will be reviewed and investigated by administration.

In accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:16-4.3(a)3i, school officials are required to disclose to law enforcement authorities the identity of any student reasonably believed to be in possession of a controlled dangerous substance or related paraphernalia, or reasonably believed to be involved in the distribution of a controlled dangerous substance.

If a student is arrested for violating a law prohibiting the possession, sale, or distribution of a controlled substance, paraphernalia, or a weapon, the parent/guardian will be notified as soon as possible, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:16-6.2.

Coordination of Substance-Related Incidents

When a substance-related concern occurs, North Hudson Academy will:

- Notify the sending school district in accordance with policy and regulatory requirements
- Share relevant documentation, including incident reports and medical clearance information, as appropriate
- Collaborate with district personnel to ensure that responses align with the student's IEP, behavioral supports, and applicable regulations

The sending district may participate in review of the incident, determination of next steps related to program, services, or placement, and decisions regarding additional supports or interventions.

Cannabis and Electronic Smoking Devices

The use, possession, or distribution of cannabis, vaping devices, or electronic smoking devices is prohibited in the school setting, including vape pens and e-cigarettes, THC-containing products, and related paraphernalia. Violations will be addressed in accordance with the Code of Student Conduct, the procedures above, and applicable health and safety protocols.

Emergency Response to Suspected Opioid Overdose (Naloxone/Narcan)

North Hudson Academy maintains access to naloxone (Narcan®) for use in the event a student is suspected of experiencing an opioid overdose. Consistent with New Jersey law applicable to schools serving grades 9–12, naloxone is maintained under a standing order from the school physician, stored in a secure but readily accessible location, and administered only by trained personnel in accordance with established procedures. Staff who administer naloxone in good faith in accordance with training and procedure are protected under New Jersey's Overdose Prevention Act.

Naloxone may be administered when a student is believed to be experiencing signs of an opioid overdose, which may include:

- Difficulty breathing or slowed breathing
- Unresponsiveness or inability to awaken
- Blue or pale skin tone
- Signs of altered consciousness or distress

When naloxone is administered, emergency medical services (911) will be immediately contacted, the student will be continuously monitored and supported until emergency responders arrive, and the parent/guardian and sending school district will be notified as appropriate.

Any incident involving the administration of naloxone will be documented, reviewed to ensure appropriate response and follow-up care, and addressed as a health and safety matter. The school may collaborate with families and the sending district to ensure appropriate medical clearance and follow-up and to identify any needed interventions or supports.

Use of Physical Restraint and Crisis Intervention

(Aligned with Policy 5561P and N.J.S.A. 18A:46-13.4 through 13.7)

North Hudson Academy is committed to maintaining a safe, respectful, and supportive learning environment for all students. Our approach to behavior is grounded in prevention, de-escalation, and skill development, consistent with our PBIS, MTSS, and restorative practices framework.

Staff are trained in the **Safety-Care® approach**, which emphasizes proactive support, relationship-building, and the use of verbal de-escalation strategies as the primary response to behavioral challenges. In the vast majority of situations, staff work with students to resolve concerns through redirection, problem-solving, and supportive interventions within the classroom or school setting.

When additional support is needed, staff may use supportive physical guidance techniques, such as escorting a student to a safe and supervised area. These techniques are intended to maintain safety, reduce disruption, and help the student regain control in a structured and supportive way.

Use of Physical Restraint

In accordance with North Hudson Academy Policy 5561P and N.J.S.A. 18A:46-13.4 through 13.7, physical restraint is considered a measure of last resort and may only be used:

- In an emergency situation
- When a student's behavior places the student or others in immediate physical danger
- When less restrictive interventions have been ineffective or are not feasible

Physical restraint is not used as a form of discipline, punishment, or staff convenience.

School staff may use reasonable and necessary physical intervention to prevent immediate harm to a student or others, consistent with applicable law and Policy 5561P.

Safeguards and Procedures

When physical restraint is necessary, North Hudson Academy ensures that:

- Only trained staff members implement restraint techniques, with training updated regularly
- The student is continuously and carefully monitored throughout the intervention
- The intervention is limited in duration and ends as soon as the safety concern is resolved
- Restraint techniques are implemented in a manner that prioritizes student safety and dignity
- A student is not restrained in the prone position, unless explicitly authorized in writing by the student's physician

Each incident is reviewed to ensure that it was implemented in accordance with established procedures and training protocols, consistent with Policy 5561P.

Communication and Documentation

North Hudson Academy is committed to maintaining clear, timely, and appropriate communication with families and sending school districts following any incident involving physical restraint.

Following such an incident:

- The parent/guardian will be notified as soon as possible on the same day of the occurrence. Notification may be made by telephone or electronic communication.
- A written report of the incident will be provided to the parent/guardian and the sending school district representative within forty-eight (48) hours, in accordance with Policy 5561P and N.J.S.A. 18A:46-13.4 through 13.7

The purpose of this communication is to ensure that families and sending district partners are:

- Informed of the incident
- Aware of the student's status following the event
- Able to participate, as appropriate, in ongoing support and planning

Each incident is documented in sufficient detail to:

- Support administrative review
- Inform decision-making at the next IEP meeting, when appropriate
- Guide the development or revision of behavioral supports, including Behavior Intervention Plans (BIPs)

When appropriate, school staff may follow up with families and/or sending district personnel to:

- Provide clarification or additional context
- Review supports and next steps
- Ensure alignment between school-based interventions and the student's educational program

North Hudson Academy is committed to ensuring that communication remains respectful, timely, and focused on student safety, dignity, and continued progress.

Ongoing Review and Prevention

North Hudson Academy is committed to minimizing the need for physical restraint through:

- Implementation of positive behavioral supports
- Use of Functional Behavioral Assessments (FBAs) and Behavior Intervention Plans (BIPs)
- Ongoing staff training and professional development
- Collaborative review of incidents by educational, clinical, and administrative staff

When patterns of behavior or repeated interventions occur, the school team may recommend a review of:

- Behavioral supports
- Classroom strategies
- IEP goals and services

This process is designed to ensure that students receive appropriate, individualized supports and that interventions remain aligned with their needs.

Commitment to Students and Families

North Hudson Academy affirms that all students with disabilities and their families are entitled to the protections and procedural safeguards provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Families and sending school district partners are considered essential collaborators in this process. The school remains committed to maintaining transparency, communication, and a shared focus on student safety, dignity, and continued growth.

Seclusion, Time-Out, and Safety-Based Interventions

In accordance with Policy and Regulation 5561P, time-out is understood as a behavior support strategy that involves the monitored separation of a student in a supervised, non-locked setting for the purpose of calming and regaining control. Time-out may occur within the classroom or in a designated area and is implemented by trained staff as part of a broader system of supports. Time-out is not used as a punishment, but rather as a structured opportunity for students to de-escalate and prepare to re-engage in instruction.

North Hudson Academy does not utilize seclusion as a planned or routine intervention. Seclusion is generally defined as the involuntary confinement of a student alone in a space from which the student is physically prevented from leaving. Consistent with school practice, students are not placed in locked environments and are not left unsupervised during behavioral interventions.

However, the school recognizes that, in rare and emergent circumstances, student behavior may require more intensive intervention to ensure immediate safety. In situations such as elopement, severe self-injurious behavior, or actions that may result in harm to others, trained staff may implement safety-based interventions to stabilize the situation.

These responses may include:

- Escorting a student to a safe and supervised area
- Providing continuous, close staff supervision

- Preventing a student from exiting a space when necessary to reduce immediate risk of harm

These interventions are implemented:

- Only when necessary to address an immediate safety concern
- In a manner that is not punitive
- For the shortest duration required to stabilize the situation
- With the goal of helping the student regain control and safely return to learning

Staff remain actively engaged with the student throughout the intervention and provide support to promote regulation and recovery.

In the event that an intervention meets the definition of a seclusion technique under N.J.S.A. 18A:46-13.6, North Hudson Academy ensures that:

- The intervention occurs only in an emergency involving immediate physical danger
- The student is continuously and carefully monitored
- The incident is documented in writing to support review and to inform the student's Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) and Individualized Education Program (IEP)

Consistent with state requirements, the school makes every effort to minimize the need for such interventions through:

- The use of positive behavior supports
- Development and implementation of Functional Behavioral Assessments (FBAs) and BIPs
- Ongoing staff training in de-escalation and prevention strategies
- Collaboration with families and sending school districts

All behavioral interventions at North Hudson Academy are guided by a commitment to:

- Protect the safety and well-being of students and staff
- Maintain student dignity and respect
- Ensure interventions are individualized and developmentally appropriate

When students require repeated or intensive supports, the school team works collaboratively with families and sending districts to review data, adjust interventions, and strengthen supports to promote long-term success.

Safety, Security, and Emergency Procedures

North Hudson Academy is committed to maintaining a safe, secure, and structured environment for all students, staff, and visitors. A comprehensive approach to safety includes preventive practices, clear procedures, and coordinated responses to ensure that students are protected throughout the school day.

To support a safe environment, the school maintains the presence of a **School Security Officer**, who works in collaboration with administration and staff to monitor school grounds, assist with arrival and dismissal, and respond to safety concerns. The Security Officer contributes to maintaining an orderly environment while supporting the overall well-being of the school community.

As part of ongoing safety procedures,  **metal detection screening may be utilized at the discretion of school administration.** This may include the use of handheld devices or other screening methods to check belongings, outerwear, or personal items. These measures are implemented as needed to prevent prohibited or dangerous items from entering the building and to maintain a secure learning environment. All procedures are conducted respectfully and in a manner that preserves student dignity.

Students are expected to fully cooperate with all safety and security procedures. This includes complying with staff directions, participating appropriately in drills, and following all established protocols designed to maintain order and safety.

The school maintains procedures to respond to emergencies and regularly conducts drills so that students and staff are prepared in the event of an emergency situation. These drills may include fire drills, evacuations, shelter-in-place procedures, lockdowns, or other safety responses as required. Students are expected to follow all directions promptly and seriously during these drills.

Students must not bring weapons, look-alike weapons, dangerous objects, or any prohibited items to school under any circumstances. Any such items pose a serious risk to the safety of the school community and will be addressed immediately in accordance with school policy and applicable law.

Visitors to the school are required to follow all entry procedures, including reporting to the main office, signing in, and presenting identification when requested. Access to restricted areas of the building is limited to authorized individuals only. Unauthorized entry into school facilities or areas is strictly prohibited.

Families play an important role in school safety. Parents and guardians must ensure that **emergency contact information is current and accurate** at all times. In the event of an emergency, the school will use this information to communicate promptly regarding student safety, early dismissals, or other necessary actions.

In situations requiring changes to the school schedule, including closures, delayed openings, or early dismissals, families will be notified through designated school communication channels.

Through these combined efforts, North Hudson Academy works to maintain a safe, respectful, and responsive environment where all students can learn and grow with confidence.

Video Surveillance and Recording

To support a safe and secure environment, North Hudson Academy utilizes video surveillance systems in common areas of the school, consistent with applicable law.

Cameras may be present in areas such as:

- Hallways
- Entrances and exits
- Common areas

Video recordings are used exclusively for:

- Safety monitoring
- Incident review
- Investigation of school-related concerns

Recordings are the property of North Hudson Academy and are maintained and accessed only by authorized personnel for the purposes described above. Cameras are not placed in areas where students, staff, or visitors have a reasonable expectation of privacy, such as restrooms or private offices.

Video footage is not routinely released or made available for viewing. Because recordings frequently capture multiple students and staff, disclosure is limited by student privacy protections under FERPA and applicable New Jersey law, and North Hudson Academy cannot release or screen footage that would identify students other than the requesting parent's own child. Requests to review footage related to a specific incident should be submitted in writing to the administration. Whether a request is granted, and the manner in which any review occurs (including redaction, in-person viewing versus copies, and timing), is at the discretion of the administration and may be limited or denied where release would compromise the privacy of other students, an active investigation, or school safety.

Footage is retained for a limited period in accordance with the school's data retention practices and is not preserved indefinitely.

Law Enforcement Involvement

North Hudson Academy works cooperatively with law enforcement when necessary to ensure the safety of students and staff.

Law enforcement may be contacted in situations involving:

- Significant safety threats
- Criminal activity
- Possession of illegal or dangerous items

When law enforcement is involved:

- The school will act in accordance with **state law and district responsibilities**
- Families and sending districts will be notified, when appropriate

The use of law enforcement is considered **only when necessary** and is not a primary disciplinary approach.

Part VIII – Family Communication and Partnership

Communication, Family Partnership, and Student Information

North Hudson Academy values timely, respectful, and consistent communication with families. Open communication and strong family-school partnership are essential to supporting student success, addressing concerns promptly, and ensuring that student information remains accurate and current.

Communication with Families

Families play an important role in this process and are responsible for reviewing school communications carefully and responding promptly when action, acknowledgement, or follow-up is required. To support effective communication, families must ensure that the school has **accurate and up-to-date contact information** at all times, including phone numbers, email addresses, and emergency contacts.

North Hudson Academy utilizes a communication platform called **Gradelink**, which provides families with access to important information related to student progress, attendance, and school updates. Gradelink may also be used to send automated notifications and timely alerts. Families are expected to monitor this system regularly and ensure they can receive communications without interruption.

School-related notifications, including emergency and operational updates, may be sent through Gradelink or other designated communication channels. In the event of school closures or delayed openings, notifications may be issued as early as **6:00 AM**. In situations requiring an unexpected early dismissal, families will be notified as soon as possible so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

In accordance with New Jersey Administrative Code requirements, families will be notified when certain safety procedures occur, including fire drills and security drills. These notifications are typically communicated through Gradelink and are intended to keep families informed about school safety practices.

Through consistent communication and partnership, North Hudson Academy works to ensure that families remain informed, connected, and actively involved in their child's educational experience.

Update of Student Information

It is very important that the school always has current student and family information on file. Parents and guardians must promptly update any changes to student or household information through their Gradelink account or by contacting the Main Office. Keeping records current helps the school communicate effectively and respond quickly in the event of an emergency.

- Home address and mailing address
- Parent or guardian phone numbers and email addresses
- Emergency contacts
- Authorized pickup persons
- Medical information, allergies, or health changes
- Custody-related information or legal restrictions, when applicable

Family Partnership and Ongoing Communication

North Hudson Academy (NHA) values the partnership between families, school staff, and sending school districts as an essential component of student success. Open, respectful, and consistent communication helps ensure that each student receives the support needed to grow academically, socially, and emotionally.

Families are encouraged to maintain ongoing communication with school staff and to stay actively involved in their child's educational experience. The school is committed to providing timely, clear, and meaningful information regarding student progress, behavior, and participation.

Communication between home and school may include:

- Phone calls, emails, or written correspondence
- Progress reports and report cards
- Parent-teacher conferences and scheduled meetings
- IEP meetings and reviews
- Notifications regarding school events, updates, or concerns

Families are encouraged to reach out whenever questions, concerns, or changes arise that may affect their child's experience at school.

Primary Contacts for Questions and Support

Teachers and staff serve as the primary point of contact for most day-to-day questions regarding a student's academic performance, behavior, and participation in the school program. Families are encouraged to communicate directly with their child's teacher whenever possible, as teachers have the most direct knowledge of classroom experiences and progress.

For matters that extend beyond the classroom, additional support is available through:

- Program supervisor
- School psychologist or social worker
- Principal

North Hudson Academy encourages a collaborative approach, where concerns are addressed early and communication remains solution-focused and respectful.

Resolving Questions and Concerns

North Hudson Academy is committed to addressing parent questions and concerns promptly and effectively. When concerns arise, families are encouraged to follow a collaborative process to ensure that issues are resolved appropriately.

In most cases, concerns should be addressed in the following order:

1. The classroom teacher or primary staff member

2. Program supervisor or NHA Case Manager
3. Principal

This process allows concerns to be reviewed at the appropriate level and ensures that all relevant information is considered.

Families are encouraged to communicate openly and work collaboratively with school staff. The goal of this process is to resolve concerns in a timely manner while maintaining a positive and respectful relationship between home and school.

Partnership with Sending Districts

Because North Hudson Academy is an Approved Private School for Students with Disabilities (APSSD), students remain connected to their sending school district while attending NHA.

The sending district is responsible for:

- Oversight of the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP)
- Conducting IEP meetings and reevaluations
- Ensuring compliance with state and federal special education regulations

North Hudson Academy is responsible for:

- Implementing the student's educational program
- Providing instruction and services during the school day
- Monitoring progress and communicating with families and districts

Families may need to communicate with both NHA and the sending district depending on the nature of their questions or concerns. For example:

- Questions about daily programming or behavior → contact NHA
- Questions about IEP decisions or placement → contact the district case manager

This partnership ensures that students receive coordinated and appropriate services.

Parental Rights

Parents and guardians of students with disabilities have specific rights under New Jersey and federal law. These rights are designed to ensure that students receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE) and that families have an active role in decision-making.

These rights include:

- The right to participate in all IEP meetings
- The right to review educational records
- The right to receive written notice of proposed changes to a student's program
- The right to provide consent for evaluations and services
- The right to request meetings or reevaluations
- The right to dispute decisions through mediation or due process procedures

Detailed information regarding these rights is provided through the **Parental Rights in Special Education (PRISE)** document, which is issued by the New Jersey Department of Education. Families receive this document through their sending school district.

North Hudson Academy encourages families to ask questions and seek clarification at any time to ensure full understanding of their rights and their child's program.

Student Records and Confidentiality

North Hudson Academy maintains student records in accordance with state and federal regulations regarding confidentiality and privacy.

Student records may include:

- Academic records
- IEPs and evaluation reports
- Health and medical information
- Behavioral and progress data

Only authorized personnel have access to student records. Information is shared with the sending district and relevant professionals as required to support the student's educational program.

Parents and guardians have the right to:

- Review and request copies of their child's records
- Request corrections to inaccurate information
- Provide consent for the release of records when required

All records are maintained securely to protect student privacy.

Handbook Acknowledgement

Parents, guardians, and students are expected to review this handbook together and remain familiar with its contents.

Continued enrollment and attendance indicate a commitment to follow school expectations, policies, and procedures. The school reserves the right to interpret, revise, or update this handbook as necessary.

NHA Family & Student Handbook — Acknowledgement of Receipt

Please read and sign below, then return this page to your student's teacher or the main office by the date requested. Retain the full handbook for your reference throughout the school year.

Acknowledgement

- ☐ I have received a copy of the North Hudson Academy Family & Student Handbook for the current school year, either as a printed copy or in electronic form.
- ☐ I understand that the handbook describes NHA's programs, expectations, policies, and procedures, and that I am responsible for reviewing its contents.
- ☐ I understand that the handbook may be updated during the school year, and that I will be notified of any significant changes.
- ☐ I understand that questions about anything in the handbook can be directed to my child's teacher or the school office.

Student Information

Student Name

Grade / Program

Parent / Guardian Acknowledgement

Parent / Guardian Name (print)

Parent / Guardian Signature

Date

Please return this page to the school office by: **September 10, 2026**

Thank you for partnering with us in your child's education.