



# **MPJ**

## **ACADEMY OF EXCELLENCE**

where Making Progress is a Journey

**MPJ ACADEMY OF EXCELLENCE**

**2024-25**

**STUDENT/PARENT HANDBOOK**

## **Welcome to M.P.J. Academy of Excellence, where Making Progress is a Journey!**

In 1988, Melba St. Andrews-Prevot, a former chemical engineer, began a career in teaching after starting her own family to ensure she would raise her own children and not the day-care centers. She realized many of the challenges students were having ranging from dis-engaged families, single mothers, teenage pregnancies, and stepparents not bonding with stepchildren; the problems were phenomenal and overwhelming. It was no longer a question why many students had excessive absences, poor grades or just chose to drop out. After serving 20+ impactful years in the public school system, Melba retired and ventured out on her own journey in the private school sector and founded what became M.P.J. Academy of Excellence in 2007. To this day M.P.J. still serves the adult learner seeking a high school diploma. In honor of the legacy set forth by Melba St. Andrews-Prevot, we stand the M.P.J. Bulldogs.

### **THE JOURNEY STARTS HERE ...**

Thank you for trusting MPJAOE,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Prevot', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Paul Prevot

Director

[paul.prevot@mpj-academy.org](mailto:paul.prevot@mpj-academy.org)

## **Statement on Equal Educational Opportunities**

The M.P.J. Academy is committed to an educational and working environment that provides equal opportunity to all members of the school's C'MUNITY. In accordance with federal and state law, the M.P.J. Academy prohibits unlawful discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race; color; religion; national origin; gender, including sexual harassment; age; disability; citizenship; and veteran status. Discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression is also prohibited pursuant to school policy. Any member of the school C'MUNITY who believes they have been subject to discrimination, harassment, or retaliation should contact the Office for Inclusion and Equity in person at 8300 Bissonnet Houston, TX 77074; via e-mail at [equity@mpj-academy.org](mailto:equity@mpj-academy.org); or by phone at (833) 215-2100.

## **Student Procedures**

*MPJAOE reserves the right to use different student registration methods when signing up Student for enrollment to the Academy*

### **Signing up as a Student**

Enrollment staff gives the student, parent or guardian a full Student packet. Staff takes the name and phone number of the student that received the packet in order to remind the family to turn in their forms. Generally, the parent or guardian is able to fill out all the information at the Academy

As soon as completed applications are received, the information will be entered promptly into the Student management database. A hard file is created, and a Student card is issued. **Replacement cards are \$1 if needed.**

### **Required Forms:**

- Student Application
- Parent Handbook Receipt Signature Form
- Proof of Student's Age for 16 years old

### **Student Form (*Signed & Completed*)**

The Student form asks for basic information about the Student applicant, including health history, emergency contact information, and data regarding the Student's eligibility for income-qualifying services.

### **Parent Handbook Receipt Signature Form (*Signed*)**

The Parent Handbook must be signed by the Student and his/her parent(s) or guardian. The handbook lists all Academy rules and expectations. Students at the Academy can and will be suspended or revoked if the Code of Conduct is violated.

### **Proof of Student Age for 16 year old**

MPJAOE must verify that no student younger than age 16 is enrolled. *Exceptions allowed*

### **Bulldog Mission, Vision & Values**

Vision: The M.P.J. Academy is dedicated to providing an immersive learning experience guided by *Literacy and Leadership*.

Mission: The M.P.J. Academy provides a mix of **Social, Educational** and **Technology (S.E.T.)** programs that serve as a catalyst to promote self-affirmation and economic resiliency.

### C'MUNITY VALUES

**CHARITY:** We believe in giving back to our C'MUNITY and helping those in need.

**MOTIVATION:** We strive to motivate and inspire our students to achieve their goals and reach their full potential.

**UNITY:** We believe in working together as a team to create a positive and supportive learning environment.

**NETWORK:** We encourage our students to build meaningful connections and relationships with each other and the C'MUNITY.

**INFLUENCE:** We believe in using our platform to make a positive impact and be a force for good in the world.

**TRAINING:** We provide our students with the necessary tools and training to succeed in their educational and professional pursuits.

**YOUTH:** We value the energy, creativity, and potential of our young students and strive to create opportunities for them to thrive.

### **Attendance Procedures (Local-Remote Students)**

- **ALL STUDENTS entering the building must be checked -in**
- Students verify attendance by signing in at the **Student Desk**.
- Students who do not have their card should report to the Student Coordinator.
- Students who forget their cards must get a Replacement Card.
- An Individual Student Guest who has never been to the Academy before should fill out a ***Guest Information Form***.
- Group Guests will sign in with the Student Coordinator.

### **Local-Remote Student Attendance:**

Local-Remote Students must attend Academy for at least 24 hours. The 24 hours are curriculum requirements in which students will participate in workshops, projects, and hands on experiments for all Elective and Fine Arts classes.

### **Forgotten Student Card**

If a Student forgets to bring their Bulldog card, he or she will have to sign in at the Student desk and get a Replacement Card. The purpose of the One-Day Pass is two-fold. First, it is important for the student to learn responsibility and consequences. Second, it is important that no student is turned away for not having his/her card and the pass helps maintain accurate Academy attendance records.

### **Lost Student Card**

Replacement cards are available for \$1. One hour of C'MUNITY Service may be performed if the Student does not have the money. After consecutive hours of C'MUNITY Service Students will be asked to purchase a replacement card.

### **Child Abuse Policy and Procedure**

M.P.J. Academy of Excellence is committed to protecting the safety of its Students. As professionals working with children, *M.P.J. Academy of Excellence staff is mandated by state law to report incidents of child abuse and neglect of Students with whom they work.* M.P.J. Academy of Excellence supports this mandate and requires all full and part-time staff to follow applicable procedures when warranted. Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action.

Child Abuse must be reported when it is discovered, this is interpreted to mean within twenty-four (24) hours of when the abuse and/or neglect is discovered or suspected. The staff person identifying the situation must:

- Inform the immediate supervisor.
- Complete a Child Abuse and Reporting Form.

- The incident is reported to the appropriate Area Manager; the Academy Director will then call 1-800-252-5400. If the Academy Director is not available, the Assistant Director and or Student Coordinator is responsible for making the call. Reporting may also be done via the Internet at [www.TxAbuseHotline.org](http://www.TxAbuseHotline.org).

### **Outside Agency Involvement**

M.P.J. Academy of Excellence is a mandated reporter for child abuse and neglect. MPJAOE also has a zero-tolerance policy for illegal activities. Because of this, MPJAOE will report any suspected abuse and/or neglect to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, and Local law enforcement will be called if a child engages in illegal activities at the MPJAOE. In these cases, parents will also be contacted, either by the Academy or the public agency that is involved

## **BULLDOG CODE OF CONDUCT**

MPJAOE has a simple **Code of Conduct**: RESPECT THE ACADEMY; RESPECT YOURSELF; RESPECT OTHERS.

Additional rules for specific programs, situations or ages may be set and used by MPJAOE staff as needed. All Academy rules are designed to provide a positive, safe, secure, respectful and orderly environment.

**Rules & Regulations for Students**

Below is a list of general rules that parents/guardians should go over with their Student. There may be other rules that will be instituted, as needed. Failure to adhere to the rules could result in suspension or termination of Student.

All student (guests and Students) must sign the Code of Conduct with the Student/guest form.

<b>Prohibited</b>	<b>General</b>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Violence against another Student or Academy staff</li> <li>• Cursing, use of racial slurs, name-calling, bullying or any other use of inappropriate language</li> <li>• Possession of drugs, alcohol, guns, knives or any other weapons</li> <li>• Display of gang paraphernalia, signs or any action showing affiliation or activity</li> <li>• Aggressive action or group demonstration that is disruptive and interferes with Academy activities</li> <li>• Bullying of any kind, including social media</li> <li>• Persons entering or attending the Academy under the influence of an illegal or banned substance</li> <li>• Persons caught stealing will be subject to suspension and/or prosecution. NO EXCEPTIONS! Fighting will lead to suspension. Students must keep their hand/ feet to themselves.</li> <li>• Student are not allowed to gamble under any circumstances.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All Students should help keep the Academy neat and clean.</li> <li>• Students must show their Bulldog Badge every time they enter the Academy.</li> <li>• Students may not wear suggestive garments or inappropriate attire. Shirts must be worn at all time.</li> <li>• Pants/shorts/skirts/tights must be worn on the hip, not sagging around the buttocks.</li> <li>• Students should always show respect and cooperation toward each other and the staff. Running is not allowed within the building.</li> <li>• M.P.J. Academy of Excellence is not responsible for stolen or lost items. If a Student has a problem, question or an injury they should see a staff Student immediately.</li> <li>• Students use only the main door to enter and leave the building.</li> <li>• Food and snack items are eaten in specific area only.</li> <li>• Students will follow these rules at all times while at the Academy or events sponsored by M.P.J. Academy of Excellence.</li> <li>• Public display of affection is not allowed. (i.e. kissing, hugging, holding hands, hitting, etc.) Once Students leave the premises of the MPJAOE, they are not allowed to return.</li> </ul>
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**BULLYING & NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY**



We are committed to creating a C'MUNITY setting where everyone is treated with dignity. To make this possible, we recognize that one of our most important responsibilities is to create and sustain a safe environment so our Students can enjoy participating in our program. To achieve this goal, we must acknowledge that bullying can occur within our Academy.

To clarify the definition of bullying and to help prevent it from occurring, we have outlined the following information:

- **Both boys and girls can be bullies. We, as an organization will not tolerate an attitude of “boys will be boys” or “girls will be girls” to excuse social cruelty or physical harm.**
- **Bullying can be direct or indirect, blatant or subtle. It involves an imbalance of power and repeated and intentional actions.**
- **Bullying is any behavior considered physical aggression, social aggression, verbal aggression, written aggression, intimidation, sexual harassment, or racial/ethnic harassment.**
- **Bullying is cutting someone off from essential relationships.**
- **Bullying includes isolating the target by making this person feel rejected by his or her community.**
- **Bullying is malicious gossip and rumor spreading.**

Bullying often occurs outside of the physical grounds of the Academy, yet these actions impact the safety of our Students as though they occur on Academy sites. Any bullying behavior demonstrated at the Academy or outside of the Academy that affects our Academy community, will be addressed by the Academy Management.

Examples of bullying outside the Academy could be (but are not limited to) the following:

- **Electronic communications that include physical threats and/or malicious gossip and slander.**
- **Hit lists or polls via e-mail or other methods of communication naming specific Students and/or staff.**
- **Sending humiliating photographs to others.**
- **Stealing passwords and misrepresenting oneself.**
- **Changing other people’s personal profiles.**

- **Hazing, or any ritual that degrades, humiliates, threatens, or physically hurts another person as a pretext for joining a team or other formal or informal group.**

As an organization, we will take any report of bullying seriously. Bullying will be responded to through a variety of consequences and intervention up to and including suspension from the Academy, depending on the frequency and severity of the behavior. Any Student who is suspended will not be permitted to return to the Academy without a parent/Student re-entry meeting with the Academy Director.

Some situations, including less severe first offenses, may be handled by the Academy through Student conferences, mediation or other interventions without a phone call home. If more serious bullying behavior has occurred, possible consequences could be suspension or expulsion from participation in all Academy activities. To be a MPJAOE Bulldog is a privilege, not a right. Subsequent consequences could include Academy suspension. If any of these consequences become a likely outcome, we will notify you. If your student is the target of bullying:

- **Notify the Academy Director so that the incident can be documented.**
- **The incident will be addressed as quickly as possible, but please allow us 48 business hours to respond. If you do not hear from us by that time, please feel free to call the Academy Director to follow up.**

Please understand that we want all our Students to feel safe, valued and respected in our Academy. These situations are hard for everyone – parents, Academy staff and Students alike, but it is in these moments when we truly show what we stand for as a community. Working together, we can do our best to ensure that our Academy is a safe and positive environment where great futures can start for every student.

### **NON-DISCRIMINATION PROTECTION POLICY**

Students of M.P.J. Academy of Excellence shall not be discriminated against based on age, race, color, ancestry, national origin, sex, handicap or disability, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or gender expression. A substantiated charge of harassment against another Student or employee shall result in disciplinary action.

The report will be investigated and even if determined not to be discrimination or abuse the individual making the report will not be retaliated against. There will be no

punishment for reporting problems – including Student revocation, suspension, harassment, or any other kind of discrimination.

There are several ways to make a report of suspected discrimination or abuse:

- Call our Headquarters Office @ (833) 215-2100 • Send an email to [feedback@MPJAOE.org](mailto:feedback@MPJAOE.org)
- Submit a report in writing.

Here is what we will do to investigate the report and follow up to report on our findings:

- Provide the person filing a report with a summary of findings.
- Take steps to deal with the issue addressed.
- If warranted, contact law enforcement to deal with any criminal activities.

## **ACADEMIC COUNSELING & COACHING**

As a high-quality private school, MPJAOE is committed to promoting the emotional and social development, in addition to their academic achievement. Therefore, MPJAOE has developed a partnership with *Sincere Life Coach, LLC* which brings a consistent, positive certified professional to assist with student guidance.

The MPJAOE student guidance philosophy is based on time-tested principles in eliciting positive behaviors and fostering progressive development. These include the following:

- Understanding of growth and developmental stages
- Providing a stimulating and educational environment that addresses multiple learning styles
- Maintaining consistency in rules, routines, and discipline
- Modeling of appropriate behaviors and attitudes
- Allowing all to share their feelings and suggested solutions to problems
- Reducing opportunities for misbehavior through effective classroom control
- Teaching coping mechanisms
- Praising appropriate behavior
- Working cooperatively with families to resolve ongoing behavioral challenges

The Academy puts a priority on positive guidance methods that promote the setting of clear-cut limits for Students and for the development of self-control, self-esteem, and respect for the rights of others. Parents are considered partners in finding solutions that will eliminate negative behaviors. In addition to giving

feedback to parents at pick-up time, staff can also make arrangements with families for a sit-down meeting to brainstorm effective student guidance techniques.

### **Prohibited Forms of Discipline**

Actions that are aversive, cruel or humiliating and actions that may be psychologically, emotionally, or physically painful, discomfoting, dangerous or potentially injurious are prohibited. Examples of prohibited actions include:

- Spanking, hitting, pinching, shaking, slapping, twisting, or inflicting any other form of corporal punishment;
- Verbal abuse, threats, or derogatory remarks about a student or the student's family;
- Physical restraint, binding or tying to restrict movement or enclosing in a confined space such as a closet, locked room, box or similar cubicle; and/or
- Withholding or forcing meals or snacks.

### **Physical Handling of MPJAOE Students**

The use of physical force or punishment should not be used as a response to MPJAOE Student misconduct. The only instance when the use of physical force may be used as a response to Academy Student misconduct is in the case where weapons or violent behavior are involved. However, physical force in this instance should be the last choice of action for staff and should not be done except to protect oneself or others where serious bodily harm could occur without physical intervention. Any use of physical force should be to prevent harm, such as separating individuals who are fighting. Fighting, physical assault or verbal assault on another person is a violation of MPJAOE work rules. In any case where physical response is used, the Academy Director will meet with the staff involved to review what happened and fully document the incident.

If staff determines that it is necessary to forcibly remove an individual because that person refuses to leave voluntarily: *\*The local law enforcement, not staff, should remove a severely disruptive person who refuses to cooperate.*

- Staff should see back up immediately, including the staff-in-charge
- All Students and others should be cleared from the area to isolate the individual
- The police should be notified

### **RESTORATIVE PRACTICES**

"Restorative Practices can change behavior by challenging core beliefs, rather than simply just managing behavior," Restorative practices create a positive learning

environment where Students have the necessary skills to self-regulate their own behavior and re-calibrate their learning experiences. Restorative practices have been found most effective when implementing as a whole Academy approach by aiming to:

- Develop-emotional literacy, truth telling, accountability, responsibility
- Improve- behavior, attendance, learning environment, and teaching.
- Increase- empathy, happiness, social and communication skills.
- Reduce- bullying, exclusion, conflict, need for sanctions.

Restorative Practices are based on four key features:

- Respect- for everyone by openly receiving opinions and learning to value them.
- Responsibility- taking responsibility for one’s own actions.
- Repair- developing the skills within MPJAOE C’MUNITY so its individual Students have the necessary skills to identify solutions that repair harm.
- Re-Integration- working through a structured, supportive process that resolves the issue and ensures behaviors are not repeated, allowing Students to remain in mainstream education while also achieving all of the above.

### **Punitive Discipline vs Restorative Practice**

<b>Punitive Discipline</b>	<b>Restorative Practice</b>
Misbehavior is breaking the rules	Misbehavior is a violation of people and relationships
Offender is accountable only to the Academy Staff /Authorities	Offender is accountable to those harmed and the community

Accountability is equated with punishment, usually exclusion	Accountability is defined as taking responsibility and repairing the harm
Those harmed are peripheral to the process	Those harmed play a key role in response to wrongdoing
Offenders are defined by their deficits (the misbehavior)	Offenders have capacity to take responsibility and change their behavior

Students place significant attention on how they are treated. When punished, it is easy for them to fixate on the harm they experience rather than how their behavior may affect others. This focus on self-leads to resentment towards the punisher, and resentment turns into resistance to participation in activities and disassociation and/or aggression towards others.

**Through Restorative Practices, Students will:**

- Have an opportunity to be heard
- Understand the greater impact of one’s actions
- Learn to take responsibility
- Repair the harm one’s action may have caused
- Recognize one’s role in maintaining a safe Academy environment
- Recognize one’s role as a positive contributing Student of the Academy and Community

**Student Expectations**

We will continue to follow our expectations outlined in the Parent Handbook, but Students can easily revisit our Student Expectations:

**RESPECT THE ACADEMY; RESPECT YOURSELF; RESPECT OTHERS.**

**Behavior Recognition and Rewards**

Staff will promote, encourage and acknowledge positive behavior within and around our Program Area. Staff will be keeping a record of Student’s behavior in ***Student Assessment Record (SAR)***. The SAR is kept in the Student’s File. In addition, Staff may nominate Students for formal recognition through MPJAOE Programming:

- Star of the Week
- Core Area Leaders
- Jr Student of the Month/ Student of the Month

- Jr Student of the Year/ Student of the Year

### **Progressive Behavior**

If Student's behavior is not aligned with the Student Expectation, staff will take corrective action by following the MPJAOE Restorative Practices Continuum. Redirection, Verbal Check-In and Reflection Sheets will be used, and all actions will be documented in the SAR and placed in Student's file. If the behavior does not change, staff should complete the Progressive Behavior Report (PBR) recommending Specialized Programming for Student along with a Student Moment. The Director will review the PBR and meet with the Student. Student's parent/guardian will be made aware through a parent call and given a copy of the PBR. A copy will also be

### **Restorative Practices Documentation**

MPJAOE Staff will follow to document all occurrences at the Academy:

- Repeated Verbal Check-Ins is documented in SAR
- Reflection Sheet/Reasoning is documented on SAR. Groups Circles will be held so Students can see and reflect on how their actions affect other Students.
- Earned Privileges are documented on SAR and the Student will be considered for Specialized Programming.
- Student Moments are documented on the SAR and parents will be made aware through a parent call and a copy of SAR will be provided.
- Restorative Council is held with the Academy Director, Student, and Student's parent(s)/guardian(s). At this meeting parent(s)/guardian(s) will be made aware of all previous actions taken and suggest an Interval of Assessment for the Student to reflect on their actions and how to better handle the situation next time. If this is a repeated occurrence, the Student will be removed from the program, and other resources for afterschool care will be made available.

### **Restorative Practices:**

- **Orientation of Expectations** are presented to Students regularly. Behavior expectations are established and stated positively.
- **Redirection** is used to promote desirable behaviors, reduce punishing interactions and promote learning and exploration.

- **Verbal Check-In** is a courtesy provided to Students letting them know you are aware they are not meeting the expectations at that time and re-evaluate the choices they are making.
- **Reflection Sheets & Restorative Reasoning** provides an opportunity for each Student to be heard. This helps Students tell the incident through their prospective, how it affected them, and helps them develop future actions and/or solutions.
- **Earned Privileges** occur when the Student continues to be disruptive. Students will be removed from the activity for a short period of time. This allows the Student to gain control of a difficult situation. Reflection Time can include activities which might lead the student to consider alternate behaviors.
- **Student Moment** occurs when the Student continues to demonstrate undesirable behavior and/or when a behavior is particular dangerous to the Student, staff or others. Parents will be made aware and Students will be placed in specialized programs to promote positive behavior.
- **Restorative Council** the Academy Director, Student and parent(s)/guardian(s) meet when the Student's behavior puts him/herself, staff, or other Students in danger. At this time, parent(s)/guardian(s) will be made aware of all efforts made to redirect the Student and an Interval of Assessment will be recommended. If Restorative Councils occur regularly, referrals to alternative programs will occur.

### Programming:

- **Affective Statements** are expressions of personal feelings, both positive and negative. They are not intended to shame or vent personal stressors, but to develop empathy, establish boundaries and provide authentic observations. Instead of criticizing or scolding the Student, an 'affective' YDS communicates how the student's behavior makes them feel.
- **Reflective Check-In** takes place at the beginning of every program day. This will give Students dedicated time to gain perspective on their day and how to better it. This also allows YDS to gauge Student's behavior/attitude for the day.



- **MPJ Programming** MPJAOE offers tested, proven and nationally recognized programs in five Core Program Areas that closely align with the developmental needs of all young people:
  - Character and Leadership Development
  - Education and Career Development
  - Health and Life Skills
  - The Arts
  - Sports, Fitness and Recreation
- **Group Circles** will be utilized when a Student’s behavior affects the group. This will allow Students to express their feelings and will also shed light on how their feelings and actions affect others.
- **Specialized Programs** focus on social awareness, relationship skills, and decision making. Students will be placed in a Specialized Program to help the Student develop their awareness and make better decisions.

## **FAMILY ENGAGEMENT**

### **Parent Code of Conduct**

MPJAOE is committed to providing a safe and nurturing environment for your student. In an effort to ensure your student’s development in a positive way, we ask that you as the parent(s)/guardian(s) agree to the following:

- To make every effort to follow all MPJAOE program policies & procedures as expressed in this handbook. You understand that it is your responsibility to read and comprehend the policies set forth and to follow them to the best of your ability; and ask questions regarding any policy and/or procedure that is not clear to you.
- *To attend family events and round table discussions for further knowledge of Academy expectations, experiences, programming, and ability to further educate yourself through our parent workshops. Attendance in these events is key for success in the Academy, school, and home for both student and parent.*
- To strive to support the program in the way you communicate with the Students, the staff and other parents.
- To be courteous, use appropriate language and refrain from making threats and taking actions towards any Student (yours or others), staff, or other parent(s)/guardian(s) either at or near MPJAOE or at any MPJAOE functions/events.
- To not approach any Student other than your own to obtain confirmation, clarification, or “their view” on MPJAOE related issues, disputes, or

disagreements between Students. Such matters must be brought to the attention of the MPJAOE Academy Director.

- Do not approach any staff Student requesting confidential information in regard to any Student but your own.
- To understand there are NO REFUNDS or EXCHANGES on any Student fees.
- Understands that if a parent does not agree with the MPJAOE Parent Code of Conduct, MPJAOE reserves the right to dismiss all access to the Academy facility.

### **Parental Involvement**

MPJAOE encourages parents' involvement in their Student's academic and personal growth. Parents are always welcome to work or play with their student at the Academy. This is the best and most effective method to inform parents about their student's successes and struggles. Parents will have a safe space to speak with Academy directors and management through parent round table participation. Parental involvement is required through participation of our parent round tables and family events held throughout the year.

### ***Family Engagement:***

The C'MUINITY Club program is built on the philosophy that students perform better when parents are involved in their student education.

Various parental involvement activities and parenting workshops will be available throughout the year. Social and educational opportunities are held regularly to promote interaction between the staff and families. We ask that Parents to attend at one (1) of these events.

### **Communication with Parents on Student Progress**

MPJAOE parents, Students and guests receive and sign the parent handbook that includes MPJAOE's Rules and Regulations and Bullying. These policies clearly state that some violations may result in immediate suspension or termination of Student. In all but the most serious violations, however, staff will work with the Student and his/her family to restore the student's good standing in the Academy.

Parents also agree to ensure that their student abide by these rules. If a student breaks a rule, this violation will be documented and placed in the student's file. Depending on the severity of the infraction, parents will be contacted. In the case of student who are picked up by a relative, staff will verbally inform the family

Student the same day that the violation occurs. More serious or repeat violations will also be conveyed via written notice. Parents are welcome to review their student's file at any time. Parents can also meet with staff and Academy leadership regarding their student's behavioral or safety issues in order to develop a strategy for improvement.

## **Safe Journey Program**

### **Release of Student**

Student will be released only to those persons authorized on the MPJAOE Student Application. When the student is picked up, the parent/guardian must sign out the student. Parents must notify the Academy Director in writing of any changes regarding persons to whom the student may be released to, or if there are any variations in departure time.

Parents picking up their student must do so by closing time and complete the sign-out sheet. If parents or other designated persons are late in picking up student, staff will remain with the student until they are picked up. Parents may be asked to withdraw their student after the second time that they are late in picking up their student. Generally speaking, staff are not responsible for the student's transportation to and from the program. If the student is not picked up at closing time, the local law enforcement or student protective services will be called.

### **Student Pick-up Procedures**

One of the MPJAOE primary concerns is the safety and well-being of the student we serve. Our pick-up procedures are designed to protect the student we serve.

### **Release to Authorized Parent/Guardian Only**

MPJAOE provides a safe and secure environment for its Academy Students. Academy staff are responsible for ensuring Students are picked up by only those adults who are authorized to pick up each Student. Each Student's parent/guardian is to fill out a form listing the individuals authorized to pick up their student each day. If applicable, a copy of any legal documents prohibiting certain individuals' access to the student are kept in the file. Each time a Student is picked up from the Academy, staff are responsible for checking the adult's ID to make certain the student is leaving the Academy with the authorized adult.

In the case of an individual who is not authorized but who claims the parent has given him or her permission to pick up a student, staff will contact the parent for

verbal authorization. The parent will be asked to update the pickup authorization form in their student's file at their earliest convenience.

### **Release to Parent/Guardian Who Appears Impaired**

If the parent or guardian who is picking up the student appears to be impaired by drugs or alcohol, staff will contact another adult on the pick-up authorization form. The student will not be released to the parent under the influence of drugs or alcohol. The student will remain in staff's care until the arrival of an authorized adult who is capable of taking responsibility for the student's release.

### **Field Trips (if applicable)**

Parents are notified of field trips with sufficient notice to give their permission and/or pay required fees. If student are to dress appropriately for a certain activity, the field trip materials will include this information.

## **HEALTH & WELLNESS**

**Health Records for Academy Students; a health record shall be maintained in the facility for each student enrolled. Each record shall include all of the following information:**

- A copy of the immunization record IS NOT required for school-age student.
- Other health information if deemed necessary by the operator or director of the facility and/or by parent(s)/guardian(s).
- Incident/Accident Reports Procedures

All accidents and illnesses (major and/or minor) MUST BE REPORTED and entered into the Incident/Accident online portal. They are to be reported immediately to the department supervisor and the Academy Director. An MPJAOE Accident Report Form should be completed as soon as possible. This report is due at the Administration Center the day after the accident and must be accurate and complete.

Depending upon the seriousness of the accident or illness, the staff person in charge of the area where the accident occurs will be expected to administer the necessary emergency first aid. If the necessary first aid is beyond the abilities of the staff person present at the scene, the Academy Director, or other full-time staff should be called. Only full-time staff should call a parent when there is an accident. If staff are unable to contact a parent or guardian, they will call the Police Department to come to the Academy and follow up with the situation. Staff Students are not authorized to transport Students from the Academy

to any other location but can administer emergency first aid. Fire and/or medical personnel will transport the student to the nearest and most appropriate medical facility.

### **Parent Notification and Confidentiality**

The contents of all Student files are kept confidential and are only available to Academy staff. Staff should call the Student's parent any time a Student is ill or an accident has occurred. In the case where 911 needs to be called, the parent should give any and all information to the responders. If the parent is not able to be reached and the student is in a life-threatening state, the Academy Director may give any necessary information to the responders. If an Academy Student is found to have a communicable disease, it is the responsibility of Academy staff to inform the parent of the infected student, the parents of other student who came in contact with that student and the health department. This will be done in a manner that safeguards confidentiality.

### **Special Health Needs**

Parents should provide the Student Coordinator with any information on a student's special health needs or conditions upon enrollment or upon the onset of the condition. The Student Coordinator will place a copy of the information in the student's file and ensure that all staff who are responsible for the student's care are properly informed. This includes any allergies and/or health issues an Academy Student is diagnosed with, as well as the proper method of treatment (ex: asthma: treat with inhaler – student should administer him/herself.)

### **Other Dietary Restrictions**

Parents whose student have dietary restrictions or special diets due to religious beliefs or other practices should submit documentation to the Academy's office manager. A special diet based on a medical condition may be served only upon written instruction of a student's physician and upon request of the parent. A copy of these restrictions will be placed in the student's individual file. All staff Students having direct contact with the student shall be informed about a student's dietary restrictions, special diet or food/other allergies.

### **Posting of Menus**

All snack and meal menus will be created with at least one week's notice and posted in a prominent place on the Parent Board and in the eating area(s). Menus will be dated and kept on file for at least three months afterward. Any changes to a planned menu should be recorded on the copies of the menu kept on file and posted for parents.

## **SAFE & SECURE ACADEMYS**

### **Commitment to Safety (SAFE)**

The safety and wellbeing of the young people we serve is our number one priority. We have layers of safety policies and guidelines in place for all of our Academy that we continuously improve and add to on a regular basis. These include mandatory background checks, immediate reporting to authorities and annual safety assessments. We work every day to create a safe, fun environment so that kids can have every opportunity to be successful in line. You are encouraged to act if something seems wrong. MPJAOE offers a Confidential and tollfree hotline (1-866-607-SAFE (7233)) for parents to report safety violations.

### **Emergency Preparedness Plan**

M.P.J. Academy of Excellence (MPJAOE) are committed to providing a safe environment for all Students participating in programs at MPJAOE facilities. This commitment requires an established plan to manage

environmental hazard situations in a manner that minimizes risk to any person present when an evacuation or shelter in place is necessary.

This policy contains requirements for general environmental hazard plans which are designed and implemented to protect program staff, Academy Students, visitors and contractors from the hazards associated with an emergency

### **Shelter in Place:**

Staff are required to keeping Students as calm as possible. Older Students, if available, may be used as helpers. All staff must be advised within 7 days of hire where the designated shelter in place is located.

- Stay away from exterior doors and windows and go to the designated shelter area.
- Do not use elevators during a tornado.
- Remain in areas designated as "shelter areas."
- Use two-way radio advising all staff of the emergency using the site-specific emergency code.
- Lead Academy Students promptly out to the shelter area.
- Staff must ensure that all spaces are cleared including bathrooms.
- Students may not stop to take clothing, toys, book bags, etc.
- Staff must take the group rosters/attendance records to the shelter area.
- Staff must leave lights on and close doors upon exiting the room.
- Directors or other designated staff is responsible for conducting a final walkthrough of the Academy, checking closets or other hiding places, making sure all windows are closed, and all doors are shut and locked.
- The Director must place a sign on the door indicating "Shelter in Place."
- Do not go outside until advised and cleared to do so.
- At Shared Space Academy, school personnel are responsible for shutting HVAC and conducting walkthrough.
- The Director is responsible for taking attendance at the shelter area, ensuring that all individuals are accounted for. Check the completeness of the shelter in place.
- Staff will lead student back into the program area when the hazard has cleared.

### **Evacuation:**

Staff are required to keep Students as calm as possible. Older Students, if available, may be used as helpers. All staff must be advised within 7 days of hire where the designated evacuation and re-location area is located.

- Exits, hallways, and other evacuation routes will be clear at all times to permit prompt and safe exit from the building.
- Do not use elevators during an evacuation.
- The designated meeting location must be at least 1000 feet from the building or as indicated by Emergency Management.
- Use two-way radio advising all staff of the emergency using the site-specific emergency code.
- Lead Academy Students promptly out of the building using the closest and safest exit.
- Staff must ensure that all spaces are cleared including bathrooms.
- Students may not stop to take clothing, toys, book bags, etc.
- Staff must take the group rosters/attendance records to the shelter area.
- Staff must leave lights on and close doors upon exiting the room.
- Upon exiting the building, staff must direct their assigned group of Students to the site-specific designated area or as indicated by Emergency Management.
- Directors or other designated staff are responsible for conducting a final walkthrough of the Academy, checking closets or other hiding places, making sure all windows are closed, and all doors are shut and locked.
- The Director is responsible for taking attendance at the shelter area ensuring that all individuals are accounted for. Check the completeness of the evacuation.
- Staff will lead student back into the program area when and if Emergency Management determines it is safe.

### **Severe/Inclement Weather:**

The CEO will determine whether to close MPJAOE Academy locations due to adverse weather conditions. As a general guideline, when Houston and surrounding city and/or county public schools close due to severe/inclement weather, MPJAOE Academy locations will close. If the decision to close is made when

Students are present in MPJAOE, staff must contact parents/guardians/emergency contacts to pick up Students immediately. Staff must remain with Students while maintaining the staff to Student ratio, until all Students are picked up.

### **Fire/Tornado/Flash Flood and All Other Emergencies:**

Routine drills are necessary to ensure MPJAOE staff know how to conduct fire drill and a shelter in place in the event of a tornado. State regulations and MPJAOE policy define routine as one time per month, January through December. The manager is responsible for documenting the monthly drills in the MPJAOE Safety Binder.

### **Bomb Threat:**

It is the policy of MPJAOE that ALL BOMB THREATS are to be considered valid and taken seriously until proven otherwise. No use of two-way radios or cellular phones because radio signals have the potential to detonate a bomb. Do not activate the fire alarm. Most bomb threats are received by phone and most currently electronically or via social media.

If the bomb threat is received by phone:

- Remain calm. Keep the caller on the line for as long as possible. DO NOT HANG UP, even if the caller does.
- Listen carefully. Be polite and show interest.
- Try to keep the caller talking to learn more information.
- Obtain as many details as possible from the caller.
- If Caller ID is available, take down the number.
- Pay attention to the caller's voice (male, female, adult, student, recorded, well-spoken, accent, lisp, nasal, raspy, stutter, slurred) and background sounds (animals, house noises, music, static, office machinery, factory machinery, street noises, motor)
- If possible, write a note for a colleague to call the authorities 9-1-1 or as soon as the caller hangs up, immediately notify them yourself.

If the bomb threat is received electronically or via social media (Facebook, Instagram, Text, Snapchat, email):

- Notify authorities 9-1-1 immediately.
- Notify MPJAOE personnel based on communication protocol.
- If possible, forward email or screenshot an Account Manager.

Suspicious packages such as packages wrapped excessively, strange odor, foreign postage, strange sounds, and/or unexpected delivery must be taken seriously and cautiously.

- Notify authorities 9-1-1 immediately.
- Notify MPJAOE personnel based on communication protocol.

### **Emergency Numbers:**

- Will be posted in a prominent location where Academy staff can access them quickly.
- 9-1-1 Police, Fire, and Medical
- CPS 24-Hour Hotline 1-800-252-5400
- SAFE Hotline 1-866-607-SAFE (7233)

### **Emergency Relocation:**

In the event that Students must be relocated for safety purposes, the designated relocation sites can be found in front of each Academy near the fire evacuation posting.

### **Use of Drugs or Alcohol**

Use of drugs or alcohol is strictly prohibited. MPJAOE is committed to providing a drug-free workplace and conforms to the requirements of the Drug-Free Workplace Act and all laws pertaining to alcohol and drug use in the workplace.

### **Smoking**

Smoking in or on Academy facilities is allowed ONLY in permitted smoking areas. Employees are not permitted to smoke when Students are present under any circumstances.

### **Guidelines on Staff/Student Relationships**

The essence of the MPJAOE mission is to support young people as they develop and build values, skills and self-esteem. Employees and volunteers are hired and/or selected to carry out that mission. They are expected to perform their job responsibilities at all times in a professional manner. Any employee who acts inappropriately in the presence of or toward an Academy Student, co-worker, or management is subject to discipline, up to and including immediate termination.

#### **Special Notice:**

Please be aware that staff are **NOT** allowed outside contact with any Student in our program. This includes but is not limited to babysitting, house sitting, email/phone/social media contact, personal transporting, etc. Any prior relationships state may have with Students and/or families must be disclosed and on Off-Hours Contact with M.P.J. Academy of Excellence Staff and Minors form must be filled out and on file.

### **Lost and Found**

We are not responsible for lost, stolen or damaged items brought from home. Please help us by labeling everything with your student's name and leaving valuables at home.

## **COMPLAINT PROCEDURES**

Employees should communicate with parents upon pick-up or drop-off regarding any pertinent information about the student's well-being. For communication of policies and/or other information required by law, the employee should check with a supervisor about the best way and most appropriate person to speak with the parent.

### **STEPS TO FILE A COMPLAINT**

1. Contact the Academy Director of the local Academy your complaint is with. If not resolved proceed to Step 2
2. Contact the Account Manager of the local Academy your complaint is with. If not resolved proceed to Step 3
3. Contact the MPJAOE Headquarters Office at 833-215-2100 and complete the attached Parent Complaint Survey
4. Allow 24-48 hours for a response from Headquarters Staff for a resolution.



# **ASSUMPTION OF THE RISK AND WAIVER OF LIABILITY RELATING TO THE NOVEL CORONAVIRUS, COVID-19**

## **FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS**

Assumption of the Risk and Waiver of Liability Relating to Coronavirus/COVID-19

The novel coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2 or COVID-19, has been declared a worldwide pandemic by the World Health Organization and as of March 13, 2020, a National Emergency by the United States. COVID-19 is extremely contagious and has significant person-to-person spread. As a result, federal, state, and local governments and health agencies have recommended social distancing measures and have, in many locations, required ongoing prohibitions on the congregation of groups of people of various sizes.

M.P.J. Academy of Excellence. (“Academy”) has put in place preventive measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19. These include, but are not limited to, implemented – social distancing, wellness monitoring, increased cleaning and disinfecting, required hand-washing, etc. However, the Academy cannot guarantee that you, your family or your student will not become infected with COVID-19. Further, attending the Academy could increase your risk, your family’s risk and your student’s risk of contracting COVID-19.

By signing this agreement, I acknowledge the contagious nature of COVID-19 and voluntarily assume the risk that my student, my family and I may be exposed to or infected by COVID-19 through my student's attendance at the Academy and that such exposure or infection may result in personal injury, illness, permanent disability, and death. I understand that the risk of becoming exposed to or infected by COVID-19 at the Academy may result from the actions, omissions, or negligence of myself and others, including, but not limited to, Academy employees, volunteers, and program participants and their families. I also recognize that exposure to COVID-19 may occur concurrently or in close proximity with other activities by me, my family or my student that are unrelated to attendance at the Academy. I voluntarily agree to assume all of the foregoing risks and accept sole responsibility for any injury to my student, myself and/or any of my other family Students (including, but not limited to, personal injury, illness, disability, and death) and waive any and all damage, loss, claim, liability, or expense, of any kind, that I, my family or my student may experience or incur in connection with my student's attendance at the Academy or participation in Academy programming ("Claims"). On my behalf, and on behalf of my student and my family Students, I hereby release, covenant not to sue, discharge, and hold harmless the Academy, its Board of Directors, Officers, employees, agents, and representatives, of and from the Claims, including all liabilities, claims, actions, damages (actual or special), costs or expenses of any kind arising out of or relating thereto. I understand and agree that this release includes any Claims based on the actions, omissions, or negligence of the Academy, its Board of Directors, Officers, employees, agents, and representatives, whether a COVID-19 infection occurs before, during, or after participation in any Academy program.

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Signature of Parent or Guardian Date

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Printed Name of Parent or Guardian

## **M.P.J. Academy of Excellence**

### **Acknowledgement of Review of the Parent Handbook**

As we strive to provide a safe and quality experience for your student, we also seek the involvement of parents/guardians to help our Students be most successful. Your signature acknowledges receipt of the handbook, as well as the rules, regulations, and expectations outlined for both the Student and family in regard to:

- **Student /Procedures**
- **Student Code of Conduct /Bullying Policy**
- **MPJAOE Student Guidance Philosophy/ Restorative Practices**
- **Parent Engagement /Parent Code of Conduct**
- **Safe & Secure Academy /Health & Wellness**
- **Complaint Procedures**

- **Assumption of the Risk and Waiver of Liability Relating to Coronavirus/COVID-19**

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Student Name (PLEASE PRINT)

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Parent/Guardian Name (PLEASE PRINT)

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Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

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Academy