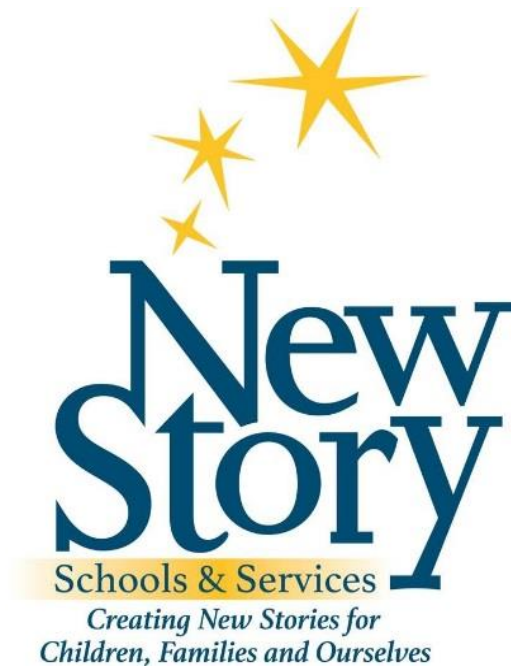


# Parent-Student Handbook

2016-2017



**715 Bilberry Road  
Monroeville PA 15146  
Tel: 412-373-5235  
Fax: 412-373-5255**

## **Purpose**

Welcome to the 2016-2017 school year! The purpose of this handbook is to better acquaint the parents/guardians and students with the policies and procedures which have been adopted by New Story to implement a safe, efficient, and well-operated school.

## **Mission Statement**

New Story is a private school designed to address the unique needs of students with autism and other developmental and emotional disorders through the utilization of outcome-based methodology. Educational and behavioral interventions are designed to complement each other and address each student's unique needs.

## **Beliefs and Practices**

New Story provides a solid educational program in an environment that allows for social, emotional, and behavioral growth. Our small class size allows New Story staff to focus on the individual needs of the student. Individual needs are met through the implementation of the Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and in collaboration with other related service providers.

New Story staff work closely with parents/guardians and the student's home school district and complies with all Commonwealth of Pennsylvania regulations for licensed private schools and special education programs. Each classroom is staffed with a certified special education teacher and the necessary support staff. The type and number of support staff utilized in the classroom is based on the number of students in the classroom and also the individual needs of those students. All New Story teachers are certified by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

## **Student Rights and Responsibilities**

Students of New Story are ensured the right of privacy, safety, emotional security, personal property and personal space. This will be strictly adhered to and only changed if the site administrator feels there is a reasonable suspicion of any act or item that may pose serious or illegal threat to any student/staff member at New Story.

Dear Parents and Guardians,

On behalf of the New Story staff, I am happy to welcome you to the 2016-2017 school year. We are looking forward to a positive and productive partnership with you to ensure optimal success for our children. We recognize that in order to be successful in school, our children need support from both the home and the school. As partners, we take our share of the responsibilities for the children's success very seriously and will do our very best at all times. I have a few reminders for you before our first day of school on August 29, 2016:

- Please return the student informational packet for this school year as soon as possible. These are essential to having the necessary information for our student and medical files. These need to be received prior to school starting; therefore, if you should have any questions or need help with the completion of these materials, please do not hesitate to contact us. We would be happy to help.
- Our nurse must have a physician's order and prescription in order to administer any medications during the school day.
- Please make arrangements with our nurse for the delivery of any medications. It is against state law for any medication to be sent with the student unless specific procedures are followed. You can discuss allowable procedures with our nurse.
- Your local school district will be contacting you with the transportation schedules for your child.

I am attaching a copy of our Parent-Student Handbook for your review. If you have any questions, please contact me or your child's teacher. I am looking forward to a happy and successful school year. I feel privileged to be a part of this school family and want to sincerely thank you for sharing your amazing child with all of us at New Story.

Sincerely,



Denise Rechterik, M.Ed.  
Education Director  
412-373-5235

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# Need to Know

## School Day Schedule

The school day at New Story runs from 8:30 AM to 2:30 PM. Classroom schedules/school calendars will be given to each parent/guardian at the beginning of the year and parents/guardians will be notified in the event of a schedule change.

At the beginning of the school day, students will be met by New Story staff at their bus and taken directly to their classrooms. At the end of the school day, students will be taken back to their bus by the New Story staff. Bus drivers will not be permitted to escort students in/out of the building.

Students being transported by car should be dropped off 5 minutes prior to the start of the class day at 8:30 AM and picked up at 2:30 PM. Specific drop-off and pick-up information will be distributed at the beginning of the school year between the parent and the directors.

In certain extreme situations, and as deemed necessary by the Director of Education and/or school district, a student's school day schedule may be altered to accommodate individual student needs.

## Delayed Openings and School Closings

In the event of inclement weather or mechanical breakdown, the school may be closed or the starting time may be delayed. These same conditions may also necessitate early dismissal. Reports of closures or delayed opening will be broadcast beginning at 6:00 AM over the following radio and TV stations.

**TV Stations:** Channel 2 – KDKA, Channel 4 – WTAE, Channel 11 – WPXI

Please do not call the school for delay or closure information as the telephone lines must be kept open for emergencies.

**New Story follows the school closing schedule for the Gateway School District.** You may follow the schedule for your home school district or Bus Company unless New Story announces a school closing. If your district closes, but New Story is still open, you may choose to transport your student to/from school or keep them at home. This would be considered an excused absence. **If your district is open but New Story is closed do not bring your child to school!**

## Attendance and Absences

Regular school attendance is imperative for student achievement in all areas. As such, students are expected to be in school, on time, each day school is in session except for personal illness or listed holidays.

Absences from school are defined by the state and include *legal/excused absences* and *illegal/unexcused absences*. Both types of absences are outlined below. No one but the student's parents/guardians may provide an excuse for an absence. The Director of Education reserves the right to determine which absences are, or are not, considered legal or excused absences. In

addition, the Director of Education retains the right to request a note, or as deemed appropriate, a physician clearance following an absence.

As per state regulations, students are allotted a MAXIMUM of (10) TOTAL absent (excused or unexcused) days for the school year. Any absence beyond (10) cumulative days will require a doctor's note from there on out, and if neglected by parents/guardians will be reported to appropriate authorities for failing to comply with the statutory requirements of compulsory attendance (any student below the age of 17).

### **Legal or Excused Absences**

Students may legally be absent because of personal illness, quarantine, impassable roads, death in the immediate family, or other compelling situations directly affecting the student.

A student returning from a legal or excused absence will be required to provide a note.

The following requires a doctor's note upon returning to school:

1. Upon returning from three (3) consecutive excused absences; or
2. Upon returning from an absence as a result of a communicable illness/disease.
3. Upon returning after exceeding (10) cumulative absences for the school year.

The Director of Education will notify the local home school district in the event a student requires an extended absence due to an illness.

### **Illegal or Unexcused Absence**

Absence of students resulting from parent/guardian neglect, illegal employment, or truancy is unexcused and/or illegal according to compulsory attendance regulations. Parents/guardians are responsible for exercising whatever reasonable supervision and control is necessary for his/her student to maintain regular attendance.

A student returning following an unexcused absence will be required to have a note upon his/her return to school. The Director of Education, or designee, will contact the parents/guardians of any student who has three (3) consecutive days of unexcused absences to determine why the student is absent and the anticipated return. As required by state law, the Director of Education will notify the Superintendent of the student's home school district when a student has three (3) or more unexcused absences.

### **Educational/Vacation Absences**

Parents/guardians may request an educational absence for travel or other personal business. All requests for educational absences must be submitted in writing to the Director of Education. Educational absences will be limited to a maximum of ten (10) days per school year.

Discretion is strongly advised in seeking approval for an educational absence. Absence from school can be very detrimental for some students. Parents/guardians are asked to give this careful consideration before deciding on a trip or activity that requires an absence from New Story. Parents/guardians and students must take responsibility for finding out what work will be missed and to secure that work prior to the absence.

## **Persistent Absences**

Persistent or excessive absences, whether excused or unexcused, seriously affect a student's performance in school. This includes full day absences, tardiness, and early dismissals. The Director of Education will request a team meeting with the school district, parents/guardians and New Story education staff to discuss persistent or excessive absences.

If it becomes evident that the student has an underlying medical condition that is the basis for the excessive absences the school will consider modifying the student's education program to address the health needs.

## **Early Dismissal**

Parents/guardians are encouraged to leave his/her child in school all day. Doctor or other appointments should be scheduled outside school hours and on school holidays whenever possible.

If a student needs to be dismissed early, he/she must bring a note to the teacher stating the time they will be picked up and the reason for the early dismissal. When picking up a student during the school day, a parent/guardian must check in at the office and sign the student out with the classroom teacher/administrative assistant.

If a student arrives more than 15 minutes after the start of the school day, they are considered to be a late arrival and require a parent excuse in order to be considered present for the school day.

If a student leaves more than 15 minutes before the end of the day, they are considered to be early departure and require a parent excuse in order to be considered present for the school day.

Students who arrive late or must leave early due to problems with transportation provided by the school district will not require a parent excuse.

## **Homework**

Homework is any work assigned by the teacher to be completed by the student outside of the regular classroom without the immediate and direct supervision of the teacher. It is the student's responsibility to bring the completed homework assignment to class on time. Parents/guardians are encouraged to support his/her student in completing homework assignments.

Homework will be assigned on a limited basis in the early grades, with increasing homework as the student gets older/more capable. It is requested that parents/guardians develop a daily routine and establish a set place in the home for homework to be completed. Taking an interest in your student's homework helps reinforce the importance of completing his/her homework. Completion of homework on time is also a great way to help build self-esteem.

# Health and Safety

## **Registration Packet**

At the beginning of each school year and/or when a student transitions into the school, a registration packet needs to be completed by the parents/guardians. The registration documentation provides essential information for the school in order to maintain safety and also ensures the preferences of the parents are followed by the school. The registration packet contains a variety of issues/topic including, but not limited to Emergency Information, Student Pick-Up Authorization, Authorization to Release Information, Handbook Sign-Off, Privacy Notice, Restraint and Seclusion Policy, Student Background Information, Health Screening Questionnaire, Medical Assessment, Authorization for Medication Administration, etc...

All registration documentation needs to be completed and submitted to the school before the student begins his/her attendance. Any issues related to the completion of the registration packet will need to be directed to the Director of Education for resolution.

## **Immunizations & Health Exams**

All New Story students are required to have an annual Medical Examination performed by a licensed physician each school year. Medical Examination forms will be provided as the student's current file expires. In addition, immunization records must be provided for each student enrolled as required by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. On-going health screenings such as dental, vision and hearing, and scoliosis screening are also required based on the grade/age of the student. The New Story nurse or New Story staff will notify parents/guardians when the student requires a health screening. If a student fails a school screening, it is required that he/she is evaluated by a physician.

## **Visitors**

New Story welcomes and encourages visits to school by parents/guardians or by other members of the community or interested educators. To ensure order in the schools, it is necessary for New Story to establish guidelines governing such school visits.

New Story schools maintain locked exterior doors and require all visitors to request admittance by the schools main entrance via doorbell or intercom system. All school visitors must report immediately to the front office at the school for permission to be in the school and receive permission to be in the school. Visitors must sign-in and wear a visitor's pass at all times. Visitors are also expected to return to the front office to return the visitor's pass and sign out prior to leaving the school.

Any individual who disrupts the educational environment, acts in a disorderly manner, damages school property or violates New Story policy or law, may be requested to leave. Such individual also may be prosecuted and may be prohibited from attending any other events sponsored by the school for the remainder of the year. Failure to comply with requests to leave school grounds or



other restrictions imposed by school staff may result in the filing of trespass charges against the offending individual.

## **Search and Seizure**

Weapons and drugs in schools endanger students and staff and make it difficult for them to focus on education. To ensure that New Story is a safe haven for students and a safe workplace for staff, this policy authorizes school officials to search students and visitors, the belongings they bring to the school and property owned, leased or used by New Story for school activities, and to seize any weapon or contraband recovered in such searches. The New Story Search and Seizure policy establishes the terms and conditions upon which a search of a student or visitor may be authorized and conducted. Nothing in this policy is intended, nor shall be construed, to create an obligation to search any student or visitor.

## **Animals in School**

No animal shall be brought to school without prior permission of the designated school administrator. Use of animals, including classroom pets, to achieve specific curriculum objectives may be allowed by the designated school administrator provided student health and safety is not jeopardized and the individual requesting that the animal be brought to school is responsible for adhering to the guidelines listed below and any other conditions established by the designated school administrator to protect the health and well-being of students. Any domestic animal entering a school building must have proof of an up-to-date rabies vaccine.

### Service Animals (Guide or Assistance Dogs)

New Story does not permit discrimination against individuals with disabilities, including those who require the assistance of a service animal. New Story will comply with Federal law concerning the rights of persons with guide or assistance dogs and will permit such animals on school premises and on school transportation. The dog must be wearing an up-to-date rabies tag on its collar.

## **Illness & Injury**

A New Story nurse is present at New Story on a part time basis. The designated office staff, teachers, or Director of Education will provide health assistance and first aid in the event a student becomes ill or is injured at school and the nurse is not present. Nurse/Office/school staff will notify parents/guardians if an injury occurs or in the event a student becomes ill during the school day. If the staff cannot reach the student's parent/guardian they will contact the emergency contact listed. It is required that all emergency contact numbers are kept current.

If a serious injury occurs, the school/office staff will contact 911 immediately as well as contacting the parent/guardian. In the event the student needs to be transported for emergency medical care by the 911 respondents and the parent/guardian or contact person is not available, a staff person will travel to the hospital with the student and will remain with the student until a parent/guardian or emergency contact person arrives

**Students should not be sent to school if they are not well enough to participate in normal school activities** or recess. In addition, students should not be sent to school if they currently have, or have had in the prior 24 hours, any of the following symptoms:

- Fever
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Thick yellow or green discharge from the nose or mouth
- Rash or skin eruption anywhere on the body
- Headache (when/if the headache interferes with participating in normal school activities)
- Aches and pains
- Cold or flu symptoms

These symptoms are forerunners of many different diseases, and staying at home at the onset may shorten the illness and prevent complications. Parents/guardians should contact the school within one hour of the scheduled start time in the event a student is ill and unable to attend school. **Medical information should be reported directly to the Nurses and not through third party staff such as transportation drivers, community agencies, etc.**

## **Communicable Illness**

### Exclusion of Students with Communicable Diseases

In accordance with Pa Code § 27.71 students with any of the communicable diseases noted below will be excluded from school attendance for the days noted for each disease:

1. Chicken Pox – five (5) days from appearance of the first crop of vesicles, or when all the lesions have dried and crusted, whichever is sooner.
2. Diphtheria – two (2) weeks from onset or until appropriate negative culture tests.
3. German Measles (Rubella) – four (4) days from onset of rash.
4. Infectious Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye) – until no discharge is present.
5. Measles – four (4) days from onset of rash.
6. Mumps – nine (9) days from onset or until swelling subsides.
7. Neisseria Meningitidis (Meningitis) – until deemed noninfective after a course of medication or until otherwise shown to be noninfective.
8. Pertussis (Whooping Cough) – three (3) weeks from onset or five (5) days from commencement of appropriate antimicrobial therapy.
9. Respiratory Streptococcal Infections including Scarlet Fever – at least ten (10) days from the onset if no physician is in attendance or twenty-four (24) hours after commencement of appropriate antimicrobial therapy.
10. Tuberculosis – following a minimum of two (2) weeks adequate chemotherapy and three (3) consecutive negative morning sputum smears, if obtainable and a physician's statement that the student is able to return to school.

Students who have been excluded for the following communicable diseases will be permitted to return to school immediately following the first treatment:

1. Ringworm – body lesions, except those lesions that have dried, will be covered
2. Pediculosis Capitis (Lice) – re-examination for infestation will take place seven (7) days post treatment.
3. Scabies.

Students who have been excluded for the following communicable diseases will be permitted to return to school twenty-four (24) hours following the first appropriate treatment:

1. Impetigo Contagiosa (Impetigo).
2. Trachoma.

A student who has experienced a communicable disease will be permitted to attend school when s/he is free of symptoms and has observed the exclusion period. If there is a question about a student returning to school after a communicable disease, the New Story nurse will make the final decision.

## **Medication**

In all cases, it is preferable that a student be administered his/her medications at home. In the event medication must be administered at school, written authorization/consent will be required by the parent/guardian and the prescribing doctor. In all cases the first dose of any new medication may not be administered in the New Story school.

Medications must be transported to school by the student's parent/guardian, not the student. When medication is absolutely unable to be delivered to New Story by the parent/guardian or designee, they must contact the nurse to request an accommodation. The nurse and Director of Education will evaluate this request and determine if a temporary accommodation is warranted. Accommodations are temporary and should not extend into the next school year. Parents/guardians should work towards making arrangements to meet the medication transportation requirements set by New Story.

All prescribed medications must be received in the original pharmacy container and must be accompanied by a physician's written order which includes the name of the medication prescribed, dosage, duration, instructions for administration. Students will not be permitted to carry medications on his/her person or in personal belongings such as backpacks while at school. In addition, no unsupervised self-administration is permitted.

**Students will not be permitted to carry medications on his/her person or in personal belongings such as backpacks.**

If a student has a known, severe, allergic reaction to stinging insects or other allergies requiring medication, the school must be notified and the appropriate medications brought to school with a doctor's order. Medication will be kept in the locked cabinet in the school nurse's office or in a locked cabinet in the student's classroom. Emergency medication will also be kept in a secured backpack in each student's classroom to be taken on field trips and during community based instruction, or to follow the student throughout the building as necessary (i.e. EpiPens, rescue inhalers).

The New Story nurse or other school personnel will, under no circumstance, provide the student with any type of over-the-counter (OTC) medication without a doctor's script, which includes the proper dosage/time, etc. and parent/guardian consent form. Students requiring OTC medications must bring a doctor's orders for the administration of the medication and the medication must be brought to school in the original container.

### **Emergency and Disaster Drills**

Fire drills are necessary for the safety of the students and are performed on a monthly basis. Students will learn specific directions for reaching a point of safety from any area of the building in which he/she may be located. Students are required to remain with his/her class and to remain quiet in order that instructions can be heard and carried out.

Since this process could be potentially disruptive and difficult, time will be spent learning this skill at the start of the school year and will be reinforced throughout the school year. Social stories may be used to aid in instruction for fire drills, and the staff requests parents/guardians reinforce the fire drill procedure at home through reading the social stories and practicing the drills. Any visitors in New Story at the time of a fire drill must participate in the drill.

### **Emergency Evacuations**

In the event of an emergency, the New Story staff will attempt to notify parents/guardians or the student's emergency contact person as quickly as possible. In the event of an emergency requiring evacuation from the classroom, or room where the students are located, the students will be escorted from the room and relocated to a safe area within the building. If the building in which New Story is located requires evacuation, the students will be escorted out of the building to a pre-designated location such as a neighboring business or church. At all times, the New Story staff will work in conjunction with state, county, or local authorities to ensure students are relocated to a safe holding place. Parents/guardians will be notified of the student's location as soon as the student's safety and welfare has been secured. Parents/guardians that cannot be reached should monitor local radio and television stations regarding evacuation locations.

The off-site emergency evacuation location for New Story is: Evergreen Elementary located at 3831 Evergreen Drive, Monroeville, PA 15146-1297

### **Suicide Prevention**

New Story is dedicated to protect the health and well-being of all students by having procedures in place to prevent, assess the risk of, intervene in, and respond to suicide. New Story:

- recognizes that physical, behavioral, and emotional health is an integral component of a student's educational outcomes,
- further recognizes that suicide is a leading cause of death among young people,
- has an ethical responsibility to take a proactive approach in preventing deaths by suicide, and
- acknowledges the school's role in providing an environment which is sensitive to individual and societal factors that place youth at greater risk for suicide and one which helps to foster positive youth development.

## **Mandated Reporter Information**

New Story staff and administrators are required by law to report evidence or suspicion of child neglect or abuse. Those who fail to report according to state regulations can be held accountable under the law. No one, including a child's parents/guardians can interfere with this reporting requirement. Any questions regarding this policy can be addressed with the Director of Education.

# **Student Conduct**

## **General School Rules**

1. Walk in the halls at all times. Running, pushing, and shouting are not allowed.
2. Gum is not to be chewed in the building or on school grounds.
3. Bathrooms are to be used with the teacher's permission. Games and climbing are not permitted in the bathroom and water is not to be splashed.
4. Do not deface or damage school property, material or equipment. Students who do so may be required to make repayment for replacement or repair.
5. Respect the property of others.
6. Fighting/physical abuse is not allowed.
7. Verbal abuse is not allowed.
8. Harassment and sexual harassment are prohibited.
9. Possession of potential weapons is prohibited.
10. Drugs, alcohol, and tobacco in any form are prohibited (both possession and use).
11. **CELL PHONES:** The New Story protocols on cellular telephones are designed to ensure that the use of cell phones does not interfere with teaching and learning during the school day.
  - a. Students do not need to use a cell phone during the regular school day. In any instance requiring an emergency communication with a student, staff will immediately assist the student, a parent, or other responsible adult with that situation by using a school telephone.
  - b. Students bringing cellular telephones or electronic devices to school do so at their own risk. New Story will not assume any liability for any lost, stolen or damaged cellular telephone and/or any other electronic devices either in school or in their possession.
  - c. Specific guidelines and protocols for the use and possession of cell phones will be distributed to Parents/guardians at the beginning of the school year.
  - d. Due to the evolving nature of emerging technologies, additional rules and regulations may be added throughout the school year.

## **Weapons**

Possession or transfer of weapons on school property is prohibited. For the purposes of this policy, weapons are defined in Section 1317.2 of the school code of 1949, as amended, and includes, but is not limited to: any knife, cutting instrument, cutting tool, firearm, shotgun, rifle and any other tool, instrument or implement capable of inflicting serious bodily injury.

Parents will be promptly informed of all incidents and subsequent action taken by the school and by law enforcement officials on the case.

The illegal use or possession of weapons on school property or during school sponsored activities shall be reported to the local law enforcement officials and shall be considered potential basis for suspension and/or recommendation for expulsion.

New Story reserves the right to do all-school weapon searches. Those involved or suspected of being involved in illegal activities may be subjected to a personal search based on reasonable cause. Illegal property may be confiscated and used as evidence.

## **Drugs and Alcohol**

Drug and alcohol abuse are major problems confronting our society and our community. The primary concern of New Story is to help those students with drug and/or alcohol problems. To this end, student are encouraged to seek help. Although confidentiality shall be extended to students seeking help, it cannot be extended to students who have been apprehended for illegal use or possession of drugs and/or alcohol. Students are reminded that drug and/or alcohol use or possession is illegal. Therefore, the use or possession of drugs and/or alcohol on or around New Story property or during school-sponsored activities is prohibited.

The illegal use or possession of drugs and/or alcohol on school property or during school sponsored activities shall be reported to the local law enforcement officials and shall be considered potential basis for suspension and/or recommendation for expulsion.

## **Smoking**

New Story prohibits smoking, and use or possession of any electronic/vapor cigarette, cigarette and/or tobacco products. New Story recognizes that smoking presents a health hazard which can have serious consequences for both smoker and non-smoker and is therefore of concern. New Story, in compliance with the laws established by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, prohibits smoking and the use or possession of any tobacco products in school buildings, on school buses, on school property or at any school sponsored activity. Therefore, the provisions of the Pa. Statutes relating to smoking and the use of smokeless tobacco in any form by students will be enforced by referral to the student's school district. Parents/Guardians and/or visitors found smoking on New Story property may be asked to cease smoking or to leave the premises.

## **Bullying/Cyberbullying**

New Story believes that all students have a right to a healthy, safe and positive learning environment. New Story has an obligation to promote mutual respect, tolerance and acceptance. It is recognized that bullying has a negative impact on student health, welfare and safety within the learning environment. Therefore, New Story prohibits bullying by all students.

Bullying behavior may include, but is not limited to, intentional physical, psychological, verbal, nonverbal, written or electronic act or series of acts directed toward another student or students which occurs in or outside of the school setting which is severe, persistent or pervasive and has the effect of: interference with a student's education, creation of a threatening or hostile learning environment or substantial disruption of the operation of the school.

## **Lockers**

New Story and/or local police departments may search a student's locker and seize any illegal or inappropriate materials. Student's lockers are property of New Story. School authorities may search a student's locker and seize any illegal or inappropriate materials. Such materials may be used as evidence against the student in disciplinary proceedings.

New Story, in conjunction with local police departments, reserves the right to conduct locker searches, use dogs trained to detect drugs, and conduct any other investigative activities as deemed appropriate by the police department. It is not New Story's intent to entrap students, but to deter the use and sale of drugs at New Story.

## **Vandalism**

New Story expects students to take pride in their school building and to make every attempt to keep it in good condition. While New Story may not be able to stop school vandalism from occurring altogether, reasonable measures can be taken to protect school property and to deal with those individuals who cause damage to it.

Any student who damages, disturbs, or destroys school property is expected to make restitution. A student may also be requested to cooperate and work with custodial personnel to help clean up any damage caused by the student. Students who violate New Story policy will be dealt with on an individual basis regarding appropriate discipline.

A student involved in an act of vandalism and/or property destruction is subject to one or more of the following disciplinary actions based upon the severity of the misconduct: warning and student conference with treatment team, parent notification, recommendation for expulsion, referral to law enforcement for disorderly conduct, criminal damage to property and other citable offenses. Students may also be subject to a loss of privileges. Example: If a student commits computer vandalism, he/she loses privileges to use the computers at school.

New Story may also provide written notification to the student's parents/guardians requesting that the school property be restored or replaced in accordance with the actual damages as determined by the Director of Education. Any adult student involved in the vandalism or destruction of school property may be held solely responsible for the damages.

## **Academic Integrity**

New Story expects staff and students to demonstrate high standards of academic integrity. Academic integrity is defined as respect for the others ideas and work through proper acknowledgment and referencing. No cheating of any type on school work, tests or quizzes will be tolerated.

Whenever a student is found to have violated the Academic Integrity Policy and/or course-specific rules, these procedures will be followed:

- a. The teacher will document the violation and report it to the Director of Education.
- b. The Director of Education will review the student's disciplinary record and determine whether the violation in question is the student's first (or subsequent) offense.
- c. The teacher and Director of Education will confer with the student and may contact the student's parents as well as the student's school district to determine the need for a meeting. The purpose of the team meeting is to review the Academic Integrity Policy, clarify why the work or behavior in question constitutes a violation of it, and help prevent future violations.

## **Acceptable Internet Use**

This applies to all technology resources in use by New Story students. This includes but is not limited to computers, phones, video equipment, copy machines, e-mail addresses and information storage devices. The use of these resources is a privilege and must be treated as such by all students. New Story reserves the right to access and monitor all aspects of its technology systems and devices, and students should not expect any information stored on New Story equipment or systems to be private.

The actions listed below are violations of New Story's Acceptable Use Internet Policy: Students are to use on-campus internet access for academic purposes. Examples of internet sites that may not be visited outside of academic use at New Story include but are not limited to the following:

- recreational use of sites such as Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Pandora, etc.
- gaming or gambling sites
- pornographic or otherwise sexually explicit sites
- sites promoting "how to" documents encouraging violence or illegal acts
- sites that promote racism or hate speech

Students may not use technological tools with malicious intent, for example, to bully or harass others. All students must respect the privacy of others. Any attempt to access private files, phone or e-mail messages is considered theft.

Students may not in any way vandalize equipment or software that belongs to New Story or any other organization to which New Story has access. Examples of unacceptable behavior include but are not limited to the following:

- damaging, hacking or destroying networks, computer hardware or software
- physical abuse to equipment
- the creation or intentional use of malicious programs



Consequences of violating these policies will be in keeping with the school's disciplinary system. For violations, access to technology may be revoked for a period of time in addition to probation, suspension or expulsion from school.

### **Public Displays of Affection**

Being overly affectionate in school creates an environment that is not conducive to concentration and learning, therefore students are expected to refrain from inappropriate, intimate behaviors on campus or at school related events and activities. Students are expected to show good taste and conduct themselves respectfully at all times.

Inappropriate public displays of affection will not be tolerated. This behavior will result in a parent/guardian meeting and possible suspension if inappropriate behavior continues after being warned. The expression of feelings of affection toward others is a personal concern between two individuals and not of others surrounding them. Therefore, good taste and respect for others is the guideline for appropriate behavior.

### **Student Elopement from School Grounds**

In the event a student actively elopes (runs away) from school grounds and is no longer within the boundaries of school property, employees will immediately notify a member of the leadership team so that all reasonable steps can be taken to discharge the duty of care owed to that student. The reasonable steps to be taken will vary and depend on the individual circumstances of the case and the individual student.

### **Playground**

Recess is a time when students can work on many skills, both physical and social. Interaction with other students during recess is encouraged. Students will be taught correct and safe usage of all equipment and will be assisted in following this instruction. Older students will be provided with opportunities for age-appropriate activity such as 4-square and basketball. Teamwork and sportsmanship will be emphasized during this time.

The Director of Education, in consultation with classroom teachers, will decide if recess will be held outside or inside. All students will remain within the designated play area and the playground will be supervised by teachers and staff whenever students are present.

In an effort to avoid injury, rough play is not allowed on the playground or in the school building. This includes, but is not limited to, tackling, wrestling, pushing and shoving.

### **Disciplinary Action**

The Director of Education and other New Story staff will collaborate with the local home school district and parents/guardians regarding disciplinary concerns or issues. The local home school district will be responsible for developing the appropriate disciplinary plan of action which may include suspension and/or expulsion. At all times the Director of Education, in conjunction with the Clinical Director and the Regional Director, reserves the right to immediately suspend and/or

expel a student that has endangered the well-being of another student or has violated state and/or school regulations.

### **Use of Non-Violent Crisis Intervention Techniques**

In the event that a student is behaving in a manner that is a clear and present danger to himself/herself and others, emergency safety techniques may be utilized. In the event emergency safety techniques (as specified in the Policy included in the regulation packet) are used, such use must be immediately reported to the Director of Education and the Emergency Safety Technique Report Form and IEP Meeting Request/Waiver Form must be completed.

It is the parent's responsibility to complete and return the IEP Meeting Request/Waiver Form as required by Pennsylvania Code Section 14 within 10 days.

## **General Information**

### **Dress Code**

New Story is committed to maintaining an overall environment conducive to the development and maintenance of positive growth and progress. Student dress must meet community and legal standards of health, safety, and modesty, and may not substantially disrupt the work and discipline of the school.

Any articles of clothing that depict alcohol or other drug abuse (beer advertisements, etc.), inappropriate sexual material, vulgarity, or graphic violence are prohibited at New Story. Also prohibited are any articles of clothing that deride or denigrate others. These include hats, shirts, buttons, etc. Students are also expected to cover their bodies appropriately. This means no half shirts, excessively short pants or skirts, or shredded jeans.

If students are inadequately attired, they will be referred to a teacher, Behavior Consultant or Administrator for further action and/or consequences. If students come to school wearing a prohibited item, they will be directed to reverse it or conceal it by any New Story staff observing them. If students refuse to cooperate, they will be directed to an Administrator in order to resolve the conflict. Any questions regarding "appropriateness" will be determined by the Administrator onsite.

Any repetition of these behaviors will also result in contact with parents or referral representatives to further resolve the matter.

### **Clothing/Hygiene**

Parents/guardians are requested to send a set of clothing to New Story in a labeled bag so that clean/dry clothing is available in the event a change of clothing is required. In the case that the student is known to have incontinence events, the parent/guardian should send adequate replacement clothes in the event they are needed, and to replace them as they are used.

Parents/guardians are also required to provide any necessary personal care hygiene items such as soap, shampoo, sanitary wipes, diapers, toothbrush, toothpaste, deodorant, pull-ups or sanitary pads that the student may require. It is requested that students carry a book bag large enough to carry a folder and a change of clothing to facilitate the transport of items to/from the school and home.

## **Lunch**

It is necessary for students to bring his/her lunch to school. Lunch may be eaten in a designated lunch room (when available) or in a classroom. Self-sufficiency will be encouraged, so parents/guardians are requested to keep this in mind when packing the student's lunch. If a spoon or fork is needed for the student's lunch these should be included. Some heating of food is possible but New Story has limited microwave usage. Refrigeration for safe food storage is available on a daily basis.

Lunch is an important time in the day, not only for eating but also for socialization. Students are expected to sit quietly at the table and to eat his/her lunch within a reasonable period of time. Food may not be thrown, and students are to clean up his/her area after they have finished eating. Fighting is not permitted under any conditions or for any reason in the lunchroom.

**If the student arrives without his/her lunch, the parent/guardian will be called to bring lunch to the student. There are no food services in the building.**

## **Student Valuables**

Money or valuables should be left at home. Each student is responsible for their personal property. Watches, rings, and other jewelry items should be worn with discretion, since they can become lost and/or become the object of behavior issues. Toys should be left at home unless they are part of a homework assignment or behavioral program. If previously prohibited electronics or cell phones are seen on school property, they will be confiscated and a parent or guardian will be responsible to come to the school to get the device(s). Anything not claimed at the end of the school year will be donated. New Story is not responsible for the loss, theft, or damage to personal property brought to school.

## **Field Trips**

Field trips are integral to the school curriculum. Teachers/Administrators are responsible for planning and preparing relevant trips that are conducive to the learning process. Field trips may be scheduled to locations that enhance and reinforce classroom studies. Some students will be involved in Community Based Instruction (CBI). All students participating in field trips must have a permission slip signed by a parent/guardian for each field trip taken. If a student is involved in a regularly scheduled CBI program one permission slip will cover all aspects of the program.

## Transportation

New Story expects that your local home school district, upon agreeing to place your child in New Story, will provide transportation to and from school. However, it is the parent/guardian's responsibility to make those arrangements with the local home school district. New Story is not responsible for providing transportation to and from school, nor is it responsible to provide transportation to after-school programs or day care.

## Custody Information

If court-determined custody is in effect, the Director of Education must be provided with a copy of the custody order to place in the student's file. This will enable the school to maintain a neutral position, ensure the safety of the student, and avoid embarrassment for both parent/guardian and student. Custody information will be kept confidential.

## Student Pick-Up

All parents/guardians must provide the following information on a form provided by New Story:

1. Name, address, phone numbers, and relationship to student of ALL individuals to whom the student may be released. **This information should be updated as necessary throughout the school year.**
2. Name, address, and relationship to student of ALL individuals to whom the student may *NOT* be released. Court documentation (court order, PFA, or other legal documentation) must be attached to this form if a student is not to be released to a parent/guardian. The school cannot withhold a student from a parent/guardian unless proper court documentation is presented to the Director of Education.
3. A signature on the document signifies that you agree with the content on the form and that the student may be released to any of the individuals identified.

No student will be permitted to leave the facility throughout the day, other than regularly scheduled school transportation, without the required information. All parents/guardians should fill out the required form even if the student rides a school bus in the event of an early dismissal or other emergency.

**The parent/guardian is ultimately responsible to ensure that his/her student is picked up at the end of the day. It is the prerogative of the New Story staff to make the final decision as to whether a student is exhibiting escalated behaviors that make placing him/her on the bus a safety issue for other passengers or the driver. (Escalated behaviors include any behavior that is considered at-risk behavior for self, others, or the bus driver).**

## Failure to Pick Up a Student

In the event a student is unable or unwilling to be transported by van or bus provided by the student's school district, a parent/guardian will be contacted in order to pick up the student. It is a parent/guardian's responsibility to pick up their student, or arrange for an emergency contact to pick up the student within a timely manner prior to the end of business that day.

Uncooperative behavior by the parent(s)/guardian(s) shall be considered potential basis for suspension of the student and/or recommendation for expulsion on the grounds that New Story cannot maintain the safety of the student.

### **Student Records**

New Story maintains complete and accurate records for each student enrolled. These records will include information on behavioral goals, academic goals, and other activities. Records will be kept current and available for inspection during regular school hours by authorized individuals. Records will not be made available to any other person or agency without the written permission of the parents/guardians.

All required registration documents must be completed and on file at New Story when the student enters for his/her first day of school. This includes, but is not limited to, all past school records, Medical Examinations forms, immunization records, and Emergency Contact information.

If a student leaves New Story, his/her records and health information will be released to the parent or guardian. If records are to be released to any other party or school, a signed release must be completed by the parent or guardian and approved by the Director of Education. A copy of the records will be kept on file for a period of 3 years, after which point records will be destroyed.

### **Individual Education Plans (IEP)**

New Story follows the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) process, including required forms, as outlined and approved by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. IEP's will be conducted annually, or more frequently as determined necessary by the IEP team members. Parents/guardians may visit the PA Department of Education website to view IEP materials and guidelines. Alternate IEP forms or reformatting of IEP forms will not be permitted.

Therapy services ordered as part of the IEP are the responsibility of the local home school district unless the necessary therapist(s) are available in New Story. The New Story staff will communicate with parents/guardians regarding what services are available in the school and will collaborate with the local home school district regarding therapy needs.

# Communication

## **Change of Address/Telephone Number**

At the start of the school year, parents/guardians will be requested to provide current addresses and telephone numbers for each student enrolled. Maintaining updated information throughout the school year is very important for all students enrolled in New Story. **Parents/guardians are requested to notify the school and appropriate transportation service providers immediately in the event of a change of address or telephone number that occurs during the school year.**

**NOTIFY THE SCHOOL DISTRICT AND TRANSPORTATION  
OF ANY CHANGES WITH CONTACT INFORMATION**

## **Progress Reports**

All students enrolled in New Story will receive a performance report on a quarterly basis. Progress reports may be sent home with the student or mailed directly to the Parent/guardians. Performance reports will be discussed with parents during parent/teacher conferences or other team meetings. Parents/guardians may contact the teacher with questions regarding a student's performance report.

## **Parent-Teacher Conferences**

Parent-teacher conferences will be held intermittently and may take place in the school or by telephone. The student's teacher will advise parents/guardians regarding scheduling parent-teacher conferences or the need for other types of communication. At any time, parents/guardians may request a parent-teacher conference to discuss issues of concern.

## **Photography and Videotaping**

New Story uses photography and videotaping for several purposes throughout the school year. However, students will not be photographed or videotaped without the permission of the parents/guardians. Pictures will be shared with parents/guardians periodically throughout the school year. Videotapes of student performance are used by the school to track progress and evaluate the student program as well as for teacher development. Parents/guardians having questions regarding the New Story policy for photograph and videotaping should contact the Director of Education.

## **Exceptions**

Students who require exceptions to the Handbook due to individual needs will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

Also, there may be situations which arise during the course of the school year which are not specifically defined in the Parent-Student Handbook. For any such issues, the Administrative Team for New Story reserves the right to amend these guidelines as seen fit to ensure the safety and well-being of the students and staff.