

# Pillar Elementary School

# STUDENT HANDBOOK

2019-2020



## Mission

Pillar Care Continuum is dedicated to enhancing the lives of people with disabilities and other special needs by supporting personal growth, independence and participation in the community.

## Core Values / Guiding Principles

1. We believe with the appropriate supports every student has the ability to learn. We recognize that every student can communicate and should exert a degree of control over his or her environment.
2. We strive to create an inclusive environment that provides educational and social opportunities for students.
3. We dedicate ourselves to enhancing student independence pertaining to:
  - Social and communication skills
  - Ability to complete activities of daily living
  - Self-determination
  - Self-esteem
  - Participation in the community
4. We actively collaborate with all stakeholders and implement a transdisciplinary approach to enhance the opportunities for the successful attainment of every student's unique goals.
5. We embrace the most current and innovative technology to enable the students' access to the curriculum as well as appropriate means of communication, independent mobility and access to the environment.



## **Contact Information**

Pillar Elementary School  
51 Old Road

[www.pillarnj.org](http://www.pillarnj.org)

Phone: 973-740-2353

Fax: 973-740-8618

To contact a staff member, please dial the Pillar Elementary School main phone number and dial **0** for our main office who can help direct your call.

### **School Hours**

Pillar Elementary School hours for students are from 8:25AM to 2:40 PM. Building administrative assistants are available from 8:00 AM until 4:00 PM. The length of the regular school year is 180 days. Please refer to school calendar for days of operation.

### **Extended School Year**

Pillar Elementary School offers a 30-day extended school year (ESY) program. The dates of the program vary by year; please refer to the school's annual calendar. The ESY program offers all of the same services that are provided to students during the course of the school year. The program is staffed by the same faculty, takes place in the same location and is a full day program.

### **After School Program / Camps**

Pillar Care Continuum offers a daily afterschool program. The program is staffed by Pillar Care Continuum staff members and takes place both in the Pillar Elementary School and Pillar High School buildings. The program runs until 6:00 PM daily. The program is a fee for service to our families and is not covered under the daily school tuition.

Pillar Care Continuum also offers camp programs when the school is closed for various recess periods. Dates and times of the camp program are determined on an annual basis. Further information is provided to families annually based on the school's calendar. The program is a fee for service to our families and is not covered under the daily school tuition. There are programs that may help families with the cost of afterschool and camp tuition. Please contact Pillar Schools' social worker for more information.

For further information on the afterschool program regarding rates and services offered please call 973-535-1999 and dial **0**.

### **Open Door Policy**

Pillar Schools have an "Open Door" policy that encourages parents/guardians, school district and department of education representatives to come in to the school for an observation. Parents/guardians/caregivers, district representatives and Department of Education representatives are welcome to visit at their convenience. Please schedule

meetings with classroom teachers, therapists or school administrators prior to your visit.

### **Back-to-School Night**

Back-to-School night will be held in October. A letter will be sent home with your child regarding the specific date. This is a chance to meet your child's educational team, receive valuable information regarding school programs and engage with other parents. Childcare is available.

### **Emergency School Closings**

Pillar Elementary School makes every effort to operate in alignment with the school calendar, however there are instances whereby the school building needs to be closed. The school utilizes the Honeywell Instant Alert system to inform families of any information regarding emergency school closings or adjustments to the school day. We will provide families with information on how to register for alerts. Please ensure this information is updated as all emergency school alerts will be sent via this method. For further information please contact our main office at 973-740-2353.

### **Transportation/ Student Drop off and Pickup**

As a reminder to families, Pillar Elementary School does not directly contract with the bus companies that are assigned to transport your child. We will assist in any way we can to ensure your child has a safe daily commute. If you are having any difficulties with your child's transportation, we encourage you to contact your case manager to express your concerns.

If you elect to transport your child, please be advised that drop off begins at 8:25 AM daily, unless otherwise specified. Students must be brought into the main office and signed in. Please ensure that a staff member is alerted that your child has arrived prior to departing. School dismissal begins at 2:40 PM daily, unless otherwise specified, such as in the event of an emergency closing. We ask that when picking up a child, parents/guardians come to the main office to receive their child and sign them out.

We ask that families notify the office if someone other than the parent/guardian of a child is responsible for pickup. On these occasions, the individual who will be receiving the student must provide photo identification to the office.

### **Attendance**

Pillar Elementary School believes that consistent attendance helps students achieve their goals. If a student is absent for any reason, we ask that the family contact the office at 973-740-2353 and press **0** to advise the office of the absence. If a student is absent for **3** or more consecutive school days due to illness, a doctor's note is required. Please be advised that if a student is absent for **5** consecutive school days, we are obligated to alert the student's school district in writing regarding their attendance.

### **Student Emergency Cards**

Please ensure that Student Emergency Cards are updated annually. If at any point throughout the school year a change to any of the information on the Student Emergency Card is made, please alert the office at 973-740-2353 and press **0**.

### **Contacting Pillar Elementary School Staff**

Pillar Elementary School staff should be contacted via phone and e-mail only. Parents/guardians and students should not use text messaging with staff. The best time to reach a classroom teacher is between 8:15am-8:45am and 2:40pm-3:15pm. If you need to speak with a teacher outside of those hours, please call the main office at 973-740-2353 and press **0** and your message will be relayed. If needed, the teacher can return your phone call when he/she has a prep period. This is to minimize interruptions throughout the school day. Therapists may be reached at their extensions throughout the day and every effort will be made to return your phone call as soon as possible.

### **Medical Documentation**

Pillar Elementary School looks to ensure the health, safety and well being of all students. Therefore, we ask that the parents/guardians provide medical documentation to the nursing office that is updated annually. Failure to provide these documents may restrict the student's ability to participate in activities such as Special Olympics and Field Trips.

### **Medication Administration**

Please be advised that all medications and over the counter drugs require current orders from a licensed physician. No medication in any form may be dispensed to a student

without the proper medical documentation. The medication's label must correspond to the physician's order with current dates for dispensing and expiration. Medication without a label or labeled incorrectly will not be dispensed. If there is any change in a student's medication needs, please speak to the nursing department at 973-740-2353 ext. 2136.

### **Seizure Protocol**

Pillar Care Continuum's policy requires that in the event of a seizure, 911 will be called after assessment by the nurse, if the nurse feels it is necessary based on individual situations.

Individual situations include, but are not limited to:

- As instructed by the person's physician and documented in the person's medical chart
- Seizures longer than 5 minutes
- If the student does not become alert after the seizure has ended

### **School Exclusions**

Pillar Elementary School makes every effort to ensure the health, safety and security of all students. If a student arrives at school or becomes ill during the day with a condition that school nurse determines could jeopardize his or her health or safety or the health or safety of others, the student may be sent home. No student will be sent home without school staff first notifying the parent/guardian. If the parent/guardian cannot be reached, staff will contact other individuals listed on the student's Emergency Notification Card who are authorized to act on the parent/guardian's behalf. To ensure a healthy school community, parents/guardians will be contacted to pick their child up from school immediately in the following cases:

- Students with a registered temperature of 100.4 or greater
- Three or more episodes of diarrhea or vomiting
- Any suspicious rash or infectious condition
- Head lice discovered on student

We encourage you to arrive within a timely manner to pick up a sick child at school. If a student is determined to have any of the above conditions, we will not send them home on a bus and guardians are responsible for picking their child from the school nursing office. For a student to return to school all presented symptoms must cease or the student must have written clearance from their primary care physician.

Subsequent to a student's return to school after surgery and/or hospitalization, a signed medical release, including specific therapeutic and activity prescription where appropriate, is required for the student to return to school.

### **Head Lice Policy**

A student who has head lice will be sent home. Any extra clothing items, blankets or other personal items will also be sent home so that they can be properly washed. The affected student must have treatment before he or she can return to school. Head lice treatments require a 24-hour period to be effective, therefore, the consumer will not be allowed to return until 24 hours after being treated. The affected person must have a second treatment 7-10 days after the first treatment to ensure all lice and nits have been eradicated. Once head lice have been detected, all students and staff members will be checked regularly. If a person does not have head lice but is in a room where cases of head lice have been reported, it is recommended that all students receive treatment as a preventative measure.

### **Allergies**

Pillar Elementary School looks to ensure that all student allergies are documented and addressed. Please ensure that any known allergies are documented and provided to our main office.

**Please be advised that  
Pillar Elementary School is a Nut Free School**

### **EpiPens®**

The following applies for all students who have current medical orders for the administration of epinephrine:

- A completed and signed guardian's authorization form and physician order must be on file in the student's records with a copy in the nurse's office before any administration of epinephrine. Authorization forms must be updated annually at the time of the student's annual physical examination.
- The student's parent/guardian will also provide written authorization for nursing staff to obtain, record, display and discuss information about the consumer's potentially life-threatening allergy.



- The student's parent/guardian will participate in the development of an action plan prior to the first instance of the use of an EpiPen® and review the plan at the student's annual meeting
- The student's parent/guardian will provide Pillar Elementary School with:
  - A list of known allergens
  - An unexpired EpiPen® and replacement pens as necessary upon expiration
- Any instances requiring the administration epinephrine will result in a 911 call

### **Breakfast and Lunch Program**

Breakfast and lunch are prepared fresh every day at Pillar Elementary School. A variety of foods are incorporated as part of a well-balanced diet and in accordance with federal guidelines. Breakfast and lunch are made available in the cafeteria, where students have the opportunity to learn feeding and social skills while increasing their level of independence. Pillar Elementary School adheres to all documented allergies, dietary and religious restrictions. Although breakfast and lunch are prepared by the school, parents/guardians have the option of sending breakfast and lunch from home. We ask that families are mindful that Pillar Elementary School will not serve foods that contain nuts to ensure the safety of all students.

Students will be provided with a free or reduced meal application. We encourage all families to complete and submit this application. Students will be sent home with a monthly breakfast and lunch menu. This menu includes the price per meal along with details of what will be served including portion sizes. Families can select which meals they would like their child to receive at school. Payment is expected at the beginning of the month when the form is returned to school. You will be informed of the status of your application once it has been processed by the state. Students will never be denied meals based on their non-payment or application status.

### **Health and Wellness Policy**

Pillar Care Continuum recognizes child and adolescent obesity has become a major health concern in the United States. The Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010 (HHFKA), funds child nutrition programs and establishes required nutrition standards for school lunch and breakfast programs. In accordance with the requirements of the HHFKA, Pillar Schools shall implement this Wellness Policy that includes goals for nutrition promotion, nutrition education, physical activity, and other school-based activities that promote student wellness,

A. Wellness Committee

- a. The Wellness Committee will serve as an advisory committee that will help plan, implement, and monitor this wellness policy as well as other health and nutrition issues within Pillar Schools.
- b. The committee will serve as an advisory committee regarding student health issues.
- c. The committee may examine related research and laws, assess student's needs and the current school environment, review existing school board policies and administrative regulations, collaborate with appropriate community agencies and organizations, and help raise awareness about student health issues.
- d. The committee also will assist in developing the wellness policy and may make other policy recommendations to the board related to health issues necessary to promote student wellness.
- e. The Wellness Committee will be composed of parents, teachers, local school health professionals, and community representatives.

B. Wellness Goals & Measurement:

- a. Pillar Care Continuum believes that promoting student health and nutrition enhances readiness for learning and increase 'student achievement goals of nutrition education are (1) provide appropriate instruction for the acquisition of behaviors that contribute to a healthy lifestyle for students and (2) to teach, encourage and support healthy eating by students.
- b. Nutrition education will be provided to all students with the knowledge and skills needed to lead healthy lives. Students should learn to address nutrition related health concerns through age-appropriate nutrition lessons and activities. Pillar Schools personnel will work to disseminate consistent nutrition messages throughout the school district, schools, classrooms, cafeterias, home, and the community.

C. Physical Education and Physical Activity

- a. The goal of the physical education program is to promote lifelong physical activity and provide instruction in the skills and knowledge necessary for lifelong participation in physical activity. To address issues such as obesity, Type II diabetes, and cardiovascular disease, students enrolled in prekindergarten through 12th grade (ages 3 to 21) will participate in physical activity as part of Pillar Schools physical education curriculum,
- b. The physical education course will foster support and guidance for being physically active, help students know and understand the value of being physically fit, and teach students the types of activities that contribute to

total fitness. The course will be taught in an environment where students can learn, practice and receive assessment on age appropriate skill as defined by the New Jersey Department of Education.

- c. All students in grade K-12, including students with disabilities, special health care needs, and in alternative educational settings, will receive daily physical activity. As a reminder to administration and faculty, PE classes may not be taken from students as a form of punishment.

#### D. Nutrition Guidelines

It is the policy of Pillar Schools that all foods and beverages made available during the school day are consistent with state nutrition guidelines and reinforcing the Whole Grain and Buy USA. The Food Service Director will follow the federal guidelines for portion size and nutrient content of food served at school.

- E. Additional Wellness Policy Goals: Nothing in this Policy shall prevent Pillar Schools from developing and implementing additional activities, approved by the Superintendent or designee, to those required in this policy.

- F. Other School Based Activities to Promote Wellness: In addition to the aforementioned standards, the board adopts the following goals for school-based activities designed to promote wellness;

- a. Schools will provide a clean and safe environment
- b. Adequate time to eat meals. Students will be provided adequate time to eat meals with at least 20 minutes to eat after sitting down for breakfast and 20 minutes after sitting down for lunch,
- c. Provide student's access to wash their hands before meals to make sure adequate soap and paper towels are available,
- d. Drinking water will be made available at all meal periods and throughout the school day.
- e. Food should not be used as a reward in schools. Healthy recommendations of food options will be provided to parents and teachers as well as other ideas of rewards.
- f. Positive Role Models-Administrators, teachers, teacher assistants, nurses, food service personnel, job coaches, custodians, maintenance staff, and all other school personnel, students, parents/guardians, and community members will be encouraged to serve as positive role models to promote student wellness,

- g. Diabetes education will be provided annually by school nurses for all K-12 teachers and staff in school that is necessary because of a student(s) in their class. This will be done in adherence with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act,
- h. Enhance communication between parents of children with special needs and the school community.
- i. The administration and schools will support parent's efforts to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for their children. Schools should encourage parents to pack healthy lunches and snacks and to refrain from including beverages and foods that are minimal nutritional value.

#### G. Implementation and Review Policy

- a. The VP of Education or his/her designee will be responsible for overseeing implementation of this policy and monitoring district schools, programs and curriculum to ensure the compliance with this policy, related policies and established guidelines or administrative regulations. Each principal will report to the VP of Education or designee regarding compliance in his/her school. Staff members responsible for programs related to student wellness also will report to the VP of Education or designee regarding the status of such programs.
- b. The goals for nutrition promotion, nutrition education, physical activity, and other school-based activities that promote student wellness shall be evaluated annually by the VP of Education or designee of each school and the School's Wellness Committee in an Annual School Progress Report provided to the VP of Education before June 30. The Annual School Progress Report shall present the extent to which each school is in compliance with this Policy, the progress made in attaining the goals of this Policy, any recommended changes to this policy, and an action plan for the following school year to achieve the school's annual goals and objectives.

#### **Feeding Plans**

Feeding plans are created for each student upon acceptance into Pillar Elementary School. The feeding plan is written by the speech and occupational therapist after student skills have been assessed and any pertinent medical information has been reviewed. The feeding plan addresses the need for any specialized diet such as pureed or chopped food.

Allergies and special diets are noted on the plan. All staff feeders are formally trained in the Pillar Care Continuum training session, "Effective Feeding Skills".

### **Academic Standards**

Pillar Elementary School strives to meet the goals of our mission in fostering the independence of our students. We highly individualize our instruction and provide students with the necessary accommodations to achieve their goals. Students who exit the Pillar Elementary School have been provided various supports and resources to assist them in the transition to high school.

The Pillar Elementary School evaluates student performance through ongoing assessment. We do not believe that tests are the only measure of a student's ability or progress. Student's progress is informally evaluated daily and staff members monitor and adjust their instructional techniques to meet the diverse needs of our student population. Student progress is documented in quarterly progress reports, which are aligned with the student's goals and objectives as referenced in the student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

The progress reports are based on the following grading scale:

- NI Not Initiated
- 1 No Progress
- 2 Minimal Progress
- 3 Moderate Progress
- 4 Goal Achieved

Pillar Elementary School adheres to the core curriculum standards as determined by the state of New Jersey. All students participate in state mandated annual assessments as deemed appropriate, with accommodations made through their IEP.

### **Therapeutic Services**

#### **Physical Therapy**

Our physical therapists provide a number of services to facilitate students' mobility in school and in the community. Students work on gait training, wheelchair mobility, strengthening, balance, coordination and endurance to promote functional independence

in order to participate in age appropriate activities. The following are some examples of the equipment, activities and resources:

- **Adapted Equipment:** The Pillar Elementary School has a variety of therapeutic equipment including, but not limited to: adapted tricycles, gait trainers and walkers, as well as standers.
- **Adapted Playground:** The playground allows our students to work toward their IEP goals, while having fun in an outdoor environment. Students will be able to work on strengthening, balance, coordination, receive sensory input and improve endurance.
- **Therapeutic Techniques:** Our therapists are trained in a variety of therapeutic techniques including: Kinesio Taping, Neuro-Developmental Treatment, sensory techniques and gait training.
- **LiteGait:** This gait training device allows the therapist to control weight bearing, posture, and balance over a treadmill or over ground. It provides proper posture, reduces weight bearing, eliminates concerns for balance, and facilitates the training of coordinated lower extremity movement. It also allows the clinician to manually assist the legs and pelvis to achieve proper gait patterns.
- **Universal Exercise Unit (UEU):** This modality uses a system of pulleys and weights to target specific muscles and allows the therapists to support the strengthening of weaker muscles while preventing the compensatory use of other muscles. It is an effective tool for teaching children to activate and use their muscles for functional activities. The UEU is useful for learning to transfer independently between positions. It also may improve proprioception and arousal.
- **Scoliosis Screenings:** Students ages 10-15 who do not already have a diagnosis will be participating in scoliosis screenings every two years. These screenings will be conducted by your child's treating physical therapist or by the school nurse.

## Occupational Therapy

Our occupational therapists (OTs) provide a variety of therapeutic techniques to facilitate students' independence with activities of daily living including: feeding, dressing, prevocational skills and recreation. OTs collaborate with other therapies and teachers to provide suggestions for adapting activities, to increase our students' ability to access the curriculum and participate in activities.

- **Sensory Integration Gym:** This room contains a variety of equipment to target a child's sensory systems [such as swings (vestibular), therapy balls (proprioception), massagers (tactile), music (auditory), etc.]. Specific sensory diets

are created by a student's occupational therapist to increase their attention and sensory processing by targeting a student's specific sensory needs.

- **Activities of Daily Living:** Occupational therapists work to support functional independence during activities of daily living including self-care (toothbrushing, dressing, and meal-time routines) prevocational skills, and community integration activities.
- **Controlled Multisensory Environment:** In a darkened room, students are presented with a variety of materials and strategies to improve visual attention and engagement and oculo-motor skills. Tools including lights, colors, sound, music and tactile stimuli are used to either alert or calm students based on individual needs.

### **Assistive Technology (AT)**

Under the umbrella of Occupational Therapy falls Assistive Technology (AT). This includes any item that is used to increase or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities. AT tools allow students to access the computer, music, recreational activities and academics. AT may include specialized software programs and applications, alternate access methods (including eye gaze technology and switch access), and mobile touch technology (including iPads), along with mobility and daily living aids.

### **Speech and Language Therapy**

Our speech language specialists provide a wide range of services aimed at improving students' cognitive, communication and linguistic skills. All speech language specialists collaborate with our Augmentative and Alternative Communication team to provide clinical services such as evaluations, consultations, treatment and documentation. Individual and group treatment focuses on goals established for each student's individual needs to promote independence and achieve maximum social and communication potential.

- **Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC):** AAC provides a means for students who have difficulty speaking to express wants and needs, share ideas and answer questions. AAC can include gestures, sign language, picture boards and books, and voice-output devices.
- **Feeding Therapy:** Our speech language specialists work with each student to promote a safe and developmentally appropriate feeding plan. They work with each individual to encourage progression of food texture and to minimize behavioral feeding challenges and food aversions.

- **PROMPT (Prompts for Restructuring Oral Muscular Phonetic Targets)**  
**Technique:** Therapists use touch cues to a student's jaw, tongue or lips to manually guide them through a word, phrase or sentence.
- **Hearing Screening:** All students receive an annual screening of their hearing to identify and address any concerns.

## Medical Services

Our spacious state of the art medical center provides a soothing environment to assist students with all their medical needs. Pillar Elementary School maintains two nurses to assist with all medication administration and various community outings.

The Pillar Elementary School aims to support our student's and family's needs by offering a variety of on-site clinics.

- **Physiatry Clinic**
  - Physiatry Clinic is managed by our Durable Medical Equipment Specialist. Students are recommended to be seen on a case by case basis by their treating therapists. Recommendations to be seen for clinic at the Pillar Elementary School are made based on imminent needs. Clinics are not to be used for routine physiatry appointments. Parent consent for the clinic will be requested prior to the scheduled date and parents/guardians are encouraged to attend in person or via the phone however, attendance is not required.
- **Neurology Clinic**
  - Neurology Clinic is managed by our Nursing Coordinator. Students are recommended to be seen on a case by case basis by their treating therapists or classroom teacher. Recommendations are made based on imminent needs and are for screening purposes only. Clinics are not to be used for routine neurology appointments. Parent consent for the clinic will be requested prior to the scheduled date and parents/guardians are encouraged to attend in person or via the phone however, attendance is not required.
- **Optometrist Screening**
  - Students receive routine vision screening every two years with parent consent. If parent consent is not provided a doctor's report must be submitted to the school nurse. A visiting vision specialist will provide screenings and make suggestions which can be shared with your child's educational and therapeutic team.
- **Dental Clinic**
  - Students will be provided with the opportunity to be seen by a dentist for a screening and annual cleaning with their parent's consent.



Parents/guardians will be notified regarding the specifics of the program by the nursing department. Insurance information may be required.

### **Durable Medical Equipment**

Pillar Elementary School's Durable Medical Equipment (DME) Department which is comprised of the Durable Medical Equipment Coordinator and HLS therapists, provides on-site clinics to assist students and their families with all issues related to their equipment, including manual or power wheelchairs, adaptive strollers, walkers, canes or crutches, standers, bathroom equipment, therapeutic chairs, protective helmets, orthoses (braces for feet) and splints (for arms or legs) and patient lifts. Our DME Coordinator and therapists help families order the appropriate equipment (including coordinating with insurance companies and evaluating various types of equipment) and assist with modifications and repairs needed.

### **Behavioral Services**

The school incorporates a proactive approach to managing student behaviors. The school currently implements the following to support the behavioral needs of our student population:

- **School Psychologist** - We have a school psychologist available to provide behavioral support services to students. Students that may engage in behaviors that impact learning, or that need to increase certain behaviors that will make them more accessible to learning may be referred for a consult. Our school psychologist will assess the student, collect the necessary data and develop recommendations or an intervention plan that is discussed with the family and staff and approved by the IEP team. Intervention plans are reviewed regularly. Ongoing supervision of strategies and staff training is also provided.
- **Social Worker** - Our social worker is available to assist families in coordinating ancillary services for their child, as well as navigating and completing the state required applications for services. We also assist in coordinating service delivery with state agency case managers, as well as transition to adulthood.

All staff of Pillar Elementary School are annually trained and certified through the Crisis Management (formerly known as Elwyn Crisis Management) training in the areas of verbal intervention, personal control and defensive techniques for crisis situations.

## Student Activities

Pillar Elementary School looks to provide our students with a rich and stimulating school environment. Some activities your child may participate in include:

- Adapted Yoga
- Adapted Cooking Group
- Theatre Arts Productions
- Adapted Athletic Program (Basketball, Volleyball, Bowling)
- Participation in Special Olympics
- Art
- School Dances
- Music
- Dance Class
- Sensory Story Time
- Library
- Hippotherapy
- Aquatic Therapy
- School Trips
- Assemblies

## Volunteers

Pillar Care Continuum values the services of unpaid volunteers as an integral part of fulfilling its mission of enhancing the lives of persons with disabilities. This policy applies to all unpaid volunteers within programs and services operated by Pillar Care Continuum.

1. Subject to certain limitations, activities in which volunteers are welcome to participate include, but are not limited to:
  - Interaction with Pillar School students
  - Participation in fundraising and special events
  - Administrative duties
  - Representation of the agency to community groups with authorization by the Development Department
2. All volunteer inquiries are referred to the Director of Volunteers.
3. Every volunteer applicant that spends 20 hours or more at a Pillar School Program must complete a waiver, application, provide references, interview and (if 18 or older) undergo a DDD Central Registry check and tuberculosis testing all under the supervision of the Director of Volunteers. Volunteer applicants that have received clearance from another volunteer organization are not exempt from this process.
4. The Director of Volunteers and a site manager will propose a potential volunteer position within three weeks of the volunteer applicant's interview.
5. All volunteers must sign in and out at the program site upon each visit. Time sheets will be submitted to the Director of Volunteers at the end of the month.

6. A Pillar Care Continuum employee must be present when a volunteer is working in a direct service capacity with a consumer; volunteers will never be left alone with students.
7. The direct supervisor of each volunteer will be responsible for determining the need for any training and for training him or her in all aspects of the job. Additional training opportunities will be offered to regular volunteers.
8. The onsite direct supervisor must keep the volunteer informed of any closings or changes in schedule.
9. The agency maintains the right to terminate a volunteer at any time. All termination decisions must include approval of the Director of Volunteers.

### **Aquatic Therapy Pool**

Pillar Elementary School has a fully adapted pool where therapists perform aquatic therapy sessions. Aquatic Therapy refers to passive and active treatments and exercises performed in the water for relaxation, fitness, physical rehabilitation, and other therapeutic and functional benefits. The pool is heated to therapeutic temperatures where techniques including Halliwick, Bad Ragaz Ring Method and Watsu can be performed. Therapeutic applications of the therapy pool include gait training, postural control/stability, balance training, facilitated swimming, therapeutic exercise and sensory integration for children and adults with neurological disorders, musculoskeletal pain, post-operative orthopedic rehabilitation, spinal cord injuries and brain injuries. The use of our many adapted tubes, floats, walkers, weights, steps, balls, etc. help our students gain self-esteem while being as independent as possible and having fun. Students also have the opportunity to use the aquatic therapy pool with a certified staff member for additional sensory and recreational purposes.

#### **Protocol and Procedures**

1. At the beginning of each school year, an aquatic therapy permission is sent home with the students to be signed by students' parents/guardians. The signed permission slip is kept in the Consent Binder at the Front Desk.
2. Your child's teacher will inform you of your child's pool schedule.
  - All pool attire must be properly labeled with the student's name.
  - No sharing of pool attire

- Notify your child's teacher of your preference for pool attire to be washed at home or at school.
3. Reasons a student may not be eligible to participate in aquatic therapy:
    - Open wounds, skin infections or rash
    - Diarrhea and/or vomiting
    - Infectious respiratory disease (i.e. colds, flu, bronchitis)
    - Acute burns
    - Menstruation without internal protection
    - Students with G-Tubes or Tracheotomies require doctor clearance

\*\*Please notify therapist and nurse if any of the above concerns are noted.
  4. Prior to going in pool, students are to change into their pool attire in pool changing rooms or outside bathrooms.
    - Please have students wear swim diapers only. Student are not permitted in the pool with a regular absorbent diaper.
  5. The following shutdown schedule will be followed for decontamination of pool water:
    - Vomit-24 hours
    - Formed Bowel Movement-24 hours
    - Blood-24 hours
    - Diarrhea (lose bowel movement)- 48 hours
  6. The Pillar Elementary School reserves the right to exclude students from pool sessions after concurrent bowel movements in the water. Typically, a respite period from the pool will be taken after 3 or more episodes. Aquatic therapy will resume on a trial basis once staff and parents/guardians believe that the issue has been resolved.

### Student Rights and Responsibilities

**All students of Pillar Elementary School will always be treated with respect and dignity. Students will always be encouraged to become as independent as possible.**

- Students have the right to communicate their feelings. They are responsible for communicating their wants and needs to the best of their ability.
- Students have the right to make choices when there is an opportunity to do so.
- Students have a right to be independent.
- Students have a right to give their ideas and help their teachers, therapists and parents/guardians plan their goals.
- Students have a right and a responsibility to privacy.

- Students have a right to learn in an environment that is free of attitudinal and physical barriers.
- Students have the right to be treated as children who are capable of learning.
- Students are responsible for their own behavior, to the best of their ability.
- Students have a right and a responsibility to learn at their own pace, in their own way, according to their IEP.
- Students are responsible for following all rules of the school program.

### **Code of Student Conduct**

Pillar Elementary School ensures a positive learning environment. In order to meet this goal, the following are student responsibilities for achieving a positive school climate and culture:

- To follow class and school safety rules always
- To respect all students and staff
- To take care of school property
- To not engage in bullying
- To advocate and express concerns in an appropriate manner
- To give effort into all required school tasks
- To follow school computer usage rules and use computers and all forms of technology for appropriate purposes
- To follow Pillar Elementary School's Student Dress Code

Enforcement of Pillar Elementary School's Code of Conduct will be addressed on an individual basis. Families are asked to enforce these values with their children to ensure the continued success of the school program.

### **Student Dress Code**

Pillar Elementary School encourages all students to attend school neat, clean and appropriately dressed. This means:

Please adhere to the following:

- Proper and safe footwear is required at all times.
- Clothing that is distracting, disrupting or sexually revealing is not to be worn in school.
- Clothing that could cause damage to any student or school property is not to be worn.

- Slogans, patches and emblems that are obscene, drug/alcohol related, gang or violent in nature, are not permitted in school or at any school-sponsored activity.

We also ask that families ensure they provide a change of clothes that will remain at Pillar Elementary School. Please ensure that if your child requires the use of diapers that the supply at school remains stocked.

### Technology Usage

Computers and various forms of tablets and computer-based technology are made available for use in order to supplement and enhance the educational experience at Pillar Elementary School. Students are responsible for using school technology appropriately and with care and following the school computer rules. Students will be supervised at all times when using the computer.

1. Students are responsible for good behavior on school computers, general school rules for behavior and communications apply.
2. Computers are to be used for educationally appropriate purposes or other activities approved by the teacher or therapist.
3. Computer based communications are public. School administrators and faculty may review the use of any computer, files or places visited on the Internet.
4. The following are **NOT** permitted:
  - Receiving, displaying, printing, storing or distributing matter that may offend others
  - Using obscene or offensive language
  - Harassing, insulting, or attacking others
  - Damaging computers, computer systems, computer networks, or software
  - Violating copyright laws
  - Using passwords of others
  - Tampering with others' folders, work or files
  - Use of chat lines, chat rooms, any open chat pages, and non-school e-mail
  - Use of Social Media pages without direct supervision

### Suspension and Expulsion

Pillar Elementary School puts every effort into employing various interventions to prevent the suspension or expulsion from the school program. Although we look to

provide alternate interventions, significant instances may result in suspension, or expulsion from the school program. According to state law, the Pillar Elementary School staff must collaborate with the district board of education in the provision of a free, appropriate public education for the population served including students with disabilities who are suspended.

- The Principal of the Pillar Elementary School will be responsible for making decisions regarding the suspension or expulsion of any student.
- When a student is removed from his/her program for disciplinary reasons, the case manager from the sending district will be notified without delay.
- The Principal will be responsible for keeping track of the number of days a student is removed from his/her program for disciplinary reasons.
- If a student is suspended from transportation and does not attend school, that day will be counted as a day of removal.
- Removal for a portion of the school day will be counted proportionately.
- In the event matters are not resolved, the school Principal will follow approved policies and guidelines for suspension or termination of a student.

**Anti-Bullying Policy**  
**Policy Prohibiting Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying**  
**In accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A: 37-15 (3)(b)(2)**

**1. PILLAR CARE CONTINUUM’s Pillar Elementary School and Pillar High School prohibit acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying.**

Our schools believe that all students are entitled to work and study in school-related environments that are free of harassment, intimidation and bullying. Our mission, philosophy and values are based on a deep respect for the inherent worth of each individual and their capacity for growth and development. We commit ourselves to forming relationships with people so that each person may experience a sense of belonging, dignity and hope. It is through relationships that students grow in self-understanding and self-esteem. Each student has the right to self-determination. Therefore, a safe and civil environment in school is necessary for our students to fulfill this mission and to learn and achieve to their capacity. Harassment, intimidation or bullying, like other disruptive or violent behaviors, is conduct that disrupts both a student’s ability to learn and our ability to educate students in a safe, respectful environment and therefore will not be tolerated.

**2. Definition of Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying:**

“Harassment, intimidation or bullying” is defined as any gesture, any written, verbal or physical act, or any electronic communication, whether it be a single incident or a series of incidents, that is reasonably perceived as being motivated either by any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or a mental, physical or sensory disability, or by any other distinguishing characteristic, that takes place on school grounds, at any school-sponsored function or on a school bus, or off school grounds, in accordance with law, that substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other students, and that:

- A. A reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, will have the effect of physically or emotionally harming a student or damaging the student’s property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm to his/her person or damage to his/her property; or
- B. Has the effect of insulting or demeaning any student or group of students; or
- C. Creates a hostile educational environment for the student by interfering with the student’s education or by severely or pervasively causing physical or emotional harm to the student.



### **3. Behavioral Expectations: for Students and Staff:**

PILLAR CARE CONTINUUM's Pillar Elementary School and Pillar High School expect students to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner at all times in keeping with their levels of development, maturity and demonstrated capabilities and with regard and respect for the rights and welfare of their fellow students and school staff. Our schools believe that standards for student behavior must be set cooperatively through interaction among the school administrators, school employees, students, parents/ guardians, staff and community members, producing an atmosphere that encourages students to grow emotionally and demonstrate self-discipline. The development of this atmosphere requires respect for self and others, as well as for district and community property on the part of the students, staff and community members. Our schools require that all students adhere to the rules and regulations established and submit to disciplinary measures which are appropriately assigned for the infraction of these rules.

The Principal, or a designee (The Anti-Bullying Coordinator) shall provide annually to students, their parents and guardians the rules of the school regarding student conduct and the policy shall appear in all school publications, including the student handbook.

The Policy shall:

- A. Describe student responsibilities, including the requirements for students to conform to reasonable standards of socially acceptable behavior; respect the person, property and rights of others; obey constituted authority; and respond to those who hold that authority
- B. Address appropriate recognition for positive reinforcement for good conduct, self-discipline, good citizenship and academic success.
- C. Explain student rights; and
- D. Identify disciplinary sanctions and due process.

All Staff are expected to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner at all times with regard and respect for the rights and welfare of their fellow school staff and students. Standards for staff behavior are dictated by Pillar Care Continuum policy including but not limited to the Pillar Care Continuum Code of Conduct, Pillar Care Continuum Code of Ethics, as well as Anti-Harassment, Anti-Violence and Employee Conduct Policies contained within the Pillar Care Continuum Employee Handbook.

### **4. Consequences and Appropriate Remedial Actions for a person who commits an act of harassment, intimidation, or bullying:**

**Students:**

In determining the appropriate response to students who commit one or more acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying, school administrators will consider the following factors: the developmental and maturity levels of the parties involved, the levels of harm, the surrounding circumstances, the nature of the behaviors, past or continuing patterns of behavior, the relationship between the parties involved, the context in which the alleged incidents occurred, and whether the behavior was active or passive.

Concluding whether a particular action or incident constitutes a violation of our policy requires a determination based on all of the facts and surrounding circumstances. After meaningful consideration of these factors the administrative team will determine an appropriate consequence that is consistent with the case law, Federal and State statutes, regulations and policies, as well as Pillar Elementary Schools policies and procedures.

Consequences and remedial measures shall be designed to:

- A. Correct the problem behavior;
- B. Prevent another occurrence of the problem;
- C. Protect and provide support for the victim of the act; and
- D. Take corrective action for documented systemic problems related to harassment, intimidation or bullying.

Consequences and appropriate remedial action for students who commit acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying shall be varied and graded according to the nature of the behavior, the developmental age of the student and the student's history of problem behaviors and performance and may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or removal from the program and notification of the appropriate legal authorities.

**Staff:**

Consequences and appropriate remedial actions for any staff member who commits an act of harassment, intimidation or bullying may range from Corrective Counseling up to disciplinary charges which could result in suspension or termination as permitted under Pillar Care Continuum Policy including but not limited to the Pillar Care Continuum Code of Conduct, Pillar Care Continuum Code of Ethics, as well as Anti-Harassment,

Anti-Violence and Employee Conduct Policies contained within the Pillar Care Continuum Employee Handbook.

## **5. Reporting Acts of HIB:**

All school employees are required to report alleged violations of this policy to the Principal or the Principal's designee. All other members of the school community, including students, parents, volunteers and visitors, are encouraged to report any act that may be a violation of this policy. Reports may be made anonymously, but formal disciplinary action may not be based solely on the basis of an anonymous report. The principal shall inform the parents or guardian of all students involved in the alleged incident, and may discuss, as appropriate, the availability of counseling and other intervention services. The district Case Manager may be notified as well,

All acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying must be reported **verbally** to the school principal on **the same day** when a Pillar Elementary Schools staff member, Pillar Care Continuum employee or contracted service provider witnessed or received reliable information that a student had been subject to harassment, intimidation, or bullying. All acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying must also be reported in **writing** to the school Principal **within two days** of when a Pillar Elementary Schools staff member, Pillar Care Continuum employee or contracted service provider witnessed or received reliable information that a student had been subject to harassment, intimidation, of bullying.

Any Pillar Care Continuum administrator, trustee or school employee who promptly reports an incident of harassment, intimidation or bullying, to the appropriate school official, and who makes this report in compliance with the procedures in this policy, shall be immune from a cause of action for damages arising from any failure to remedy the reported incident.

A school administrator who receives a report of harassment, intimidation, or bullying from a school or agency employee, and fails to initiate or conduct an investigation, or who should have known of an incident of harassment, intimidation, or bullying and fails to take sufficient action to minimize or eliminate the harassment, intimidation, or bullying, may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

## **6. Anti-bullying Schools Support Staff:**

### **Anti-bullying Coordinator**

Pillar Schools Principals shall appoint an anti-bullying coordinator for both schools. The anti-bullying coordinator shall:

- A. Be responsible for reviewing, coordinating and strengthening school and agency policies to prevent, identify, and address harassment, intimidation and bullying of students;
- B. Collaborate with schools' anti-bullying specialist and the Principals to prevent, identify, and respond to harassment, intimidation and bullying of students in the schools;
- C. Provide data, in collaboration with the Principals, to the Department of Education regarding harassment, intimidation, and bullying of students; and
- D. Execute such other duties related to school harassment, intimidation, and bullying as requested by the Principals and Pillar Care Continuum administrators.

The schools' anti-bullying coordinator **shall meet at least twice a school year with the schools anti-bullying specialist** to discuss and strengthen procedures and policies to prevent, identify, and address harassment, intimidation, and bullying in the schools.

#### **School Anti-Bullying Specialist**

The Principal in each school shall appoint a school anti-bullying specialist who is knowledgeable about student behavior and developmental disabilities. The school anti-bullying specialist shall:

- A. Chair the school safety teams;
- B. Lead the investigation of incidents of harassment, intimidation and bullying in the schools; and
- C. Act as the primary school representative responsible for preventing, identifying and addressing incidents of harassment, intimidation and bullying in the school.

#### **School Safety Team**

The Principals shall form a school safety team in each school to develop, foster and maintain a positive school climate by focusing on the on-going, systemic process and practices in the school and to address school climate issues such as harassment,

intimidation, or bullying. **The school safety team shall meet at least two times per school year.**

The school safety teams shall be appointed by the Principals and consist of the principal or his or her designee who, if possible, shall be a certified administrator; a teacher in the school; the school anti-bullying specialist; a parent of a student in the school; and other members to be determined by the Principals. **The school Anti-bullying Specialist shall serve as the chair of the school safety team.**

The school safety team shall:

- A. Receive any complaints of harassment, intimidation or bullying of students that have been reported to the Principal;
- B. Receive copies of any report prepared after an investigation of an incident of harassment, intimidation, or bullying;
- C. Identify and address patterns of harassment, intimidation or bullying of students in the school;
- D. Review and strengthen school climate and the policies of the school in order to prevent and address harassment, intimidation or bullying of students;
- E. Educate the community, including students, teachers, administrative staff, and parents, to prevent and address harassment, intimidation or bullying of students;
- F. Participate in the training required pursuant to the provisions of (N.J.S.A.18A:37-13 et seq.) and other training which the Principals and the Anti-bullying Coordinator may request;
- G. Collaborate with the schools Anti-bullying Coordinator in the collection of data and in the development of school and agency policies to prevent and address harassment, intimidation, or bullying of students; and
- H. Execute such other duties related to harassment, intimidation and bullying as requested by the Principal or schools Anti-bullying Coordinator.

**No parent/guardian who is a member of the school safety team shall:**

- A. Receive complaints of harassment, intimidation or bullying of students that have been reported to the principal;

- B. Receive copies of reports prepared after an investigation of a harassment, intimidation or bullying incident;
- C. Identify and address patterns of harassment, intimidation or bullying of students; or
- D. Participate in any other activities of the team which may compromise the confidentiality of a student.

#### 7. Investigating Reported Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying

All reported incidents of harassment, intimidation and bullying shall be investigated promptly and in accordance with law and the following procedures:

- A. All investigations shall be thorough and complete, and documented in writing.
- B. The investigation shall be initiated by the Principal or the Principal's designee within one school day of the report of the incident and shall be conducted in concert with the school Anti-bullying Specialist. The Principal may appoint additional personnel who are not school anti-bullying specialists to assist in the investigation.
- C. The investigation **shall be completed as soon as possible, but not later than 10 school days** from the date of the written report of the incident of harassment, intimidation, or bullying. In the event that there is information relative to the investigation that is anticipated but not yet received by the end of the 10-day period, the school Anti-bullying Specialist may amend the original report of the results of the investigation to reflect the information.
- D. The results of the investigation shall be reported to a Pillar Care Continuum administrator within two school days of the completion of the investigation, and in accordance with law and agency policy. The Pillar Care Continuum administrator along with the Principal may initiate intervention services, establish training programs to reduce harassment, intimidation, or bullying and enhance school climate, impose discipline, recommend counseling as a result of the findings of the investigation, or take or recommend other appropriate action.
- E. The results of each investigation shall be reported to the Board of Trustees no later than the date of the next board meeting following the completion of the investigation, and include:
  - 1. Any services provided;

2. Training established;
  3. Discipline imposed; or
  4. Other action taken or recommended by Principals or Pillar Care Continuum administrator.
- F. The Principals or their designee shall ensure that parents or guardians of the students who are parties to the investigation shall receive information about the investigation. This information **shall be provided in writing within 5 school days** after the results of the investigation are reported to the board and include:
1. The nature of the investigation;
  2. Whether the school found evidence of harassment, intimidation, or bullying; or
  3. Whether discipline was imposed or services provided to address the incident of harassment, intimidation, or bullying.

**8. School Response to Identified Incidents of Bullying, Intimidation, or Harassment**

Some acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying may be isolated incidents requiring that the school respond appropriately to the individuals committing the acts. Other acts may be serious or parts of a larger pattern of harassment, intimidation or bullying that they require a response either at the classroom or school building level or by a law enforcement official.

Consequences and appropriate remedial actions for students who commit an act of harassment, intimidation or bullying range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion, as permitted under N.J.S.A. 18A:37-1, Discipline of Pupils and in concert with student Individual Educational Program (IEP).

In considering whether a response beyond the individual level is appropriate, the administrator should consider the nature and circumstances of the act, the level of harm, the nature of the behavior, past incidences or past or continuing patterns of behavior, and the context in which the alleged incident(s) occurred.

Institutional (i.e., classroom, school building, school) responses can range from school and community surveys, to mailings, to focus groups, to adoption of research-based bullying prevention program models, to training for certificated and non-certificated staff, to participation of parents and other community members and organizations, small or large group presentations for fully addressing the actions and the school's response to

the actions, in the context of the acceptable student behavior and the consequences of such actions and to involvement of law enforcement officers, including school resource officers.

**9. Prohibition of Reprisal or Retaliation for reporting an Act of Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying:**

Pillar Care Continuum and Pillar Schools prohibit reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports and/or is a party in the investigation of an act of harassment, intimidation or bullying. The consequence and appropriate remedial action for a person who engages in reprisal or retaliation shall be determined by the Principal after consideration of the nature and circumstances of the act, in accordance with case law, federal and state statutes and regulations as well as agency and school policies and procedures.

**10. Consequences for False Accusations:**

Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a student found to have falsely accused another as a means of harassment, intimidation or bullying will be considered by the Principal and school administrators and may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion, as permitted under N.J.S.A. 18A: 37-1, Discipline of Pupils.

Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a school employee found to have falsely accused another as a means of harassment, intimidation or bullying shall be disciplined in accordance with Pillar Care Continuum and school policies, procedures and agreements and documented through the Corrective Counseling process.

Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a visitor, volunteer, or contracted services provider found to have falsely accused another as a means of harassment, intimidation or bullying shall be determined by the school Principal after consideration of the nature, severity and circumstances of the act, including reports to appropriate law enforcement officials.

**11. Annual Policy Publication and Dissemination:**

The policy **shall be disseminated annually** to all Pillar Schools' staff, contracted service providers who have contact with students, volunteers, students and parents, along with a statement explaining that it applies to all acts of harassment, intimidation and bullying



that occur on school property, at school-sponsored functions or on a school bus and, as appropriate, acts that occur off school grounds.

The Principals in collaboration with the School Safety Team and instructional staff, shall develop an annual process for discussing the school policy on harassment, intimidation and bullying with students. This policy shall be **published and updated on Pillar Care Continuum website each year.**

The Principals shall also post the name, school phone number, school address and school email address of the schools' Anti-Bullying Specialist and Anti-Bullying Coordinator on the Pillar Care Continuum website.

### **12. Week of Respect:**

The week beginning with the first Monday in October of each year is designated as a "Week of Respect" in the State of New Jersey. Pillar Schools, in order to recognize the importance of character education, shall observe the week by providing age-appropriate instruction focusing on preventing harassment, intimidation or bullying as defined by law (N.J.S.A. 18A:37-14).

Throughout the year the schools shall provide ongoing age-appropriate instruction focusing on preventing harassment, intimidation, and bullying in accordance with the NJ Core Curriculum Content Standards.

### **13. Training and Staff Development:**

Staff, Student and Volunteer Training

Pillar Care Continuum and Pillar Schools shall:

1. Provide training on Pillar Schools' harassment, intimidation or bullying policy to school employees and volunteers who have significant contact with students;
2. Provide ongoing staff training, in cooperation with the Department of Education, in fulfilling the reporting requirements;
3. Ensure that the training includes instruction on preventing bullying on the basis of the protected categories as required by law (N.J.S.A.18A:37-14) and other distinguishing characteristics that may incite incidents of discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying; and

4. Develop a process for discussing the schools' harassment, intimidation or bullying policy with students.
5. Annually review this policy with all school staff, students, volunteers and parents.

Information regarding Pillar Schools' policy against harassment, intimidation or bullying shall be incorporated into the school's employee training program and shall be provided to full-time and part-time staff, volunteers who have significant contact with students, and those persons contracted by the district to provide services to students.

Throughout the school year, Pillar Schools shall provide ongoing age-appropriate instruction on preventing harassment, intimidation and bullying, consistent with the NJ Core Curriculum Content Standards.

Information and resources about harassment, intimidation and bullying will be available to staff, students, parents and volunteers in the Principal's office or school library.