

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Pearls Academy Student & Parent Handbook 2024-25

Introduction

Pearls Academy extends a warm welcome to you and your family. We believe that education is an ongoing process that begins at home by the Parents and continues to be nurtured by the teachers at school. It is a collaboration between Parents and the teachers that delivers positive outcomes for the children.

Our educational and extra-curricular programs at Pearls Academy are tailored to the needs of our students. They range from *tahfeeth* and Islamic studies classes to academic programs and after-school events and activities for both children and adults. We aim to facilitate every means for our students to grow and learn in a safe Muslim environment, where they can deepen their love for Allah and his Messenger (Allah bless him and grant him peace) as well as gain a solid academic education. We seek to pave the way for our students to succeed in their spiritual and professional lives, so that our graduates can carry the torch of *Ihsaan* or excellence to future generations who are always proud of their Muslim identity and have a strong sense of belonging to their Muslim community.

Our focus is on connecting students with the Qur'an. As the Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, "The best among you is the one who learns the Qur'an and teaches it."

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم "خيركم من تعلم القرآن وعلمه"

We provide integrated secular and religious instruction to elementary and middle school students, as well as Quran and Islamic Studies instructions to students in Grade 9. Our goal is to provide a safe and stimulating environment conducive to learning. It is important that our students enjoy learning and can do so at their own pace. Once again, we would like to welcome you, and we hope you and your child will have an enjoyable experience with us.

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PEARLS ACADEMY

1 The School

1.1 Mission

Pearls Academy's mission is to empower young American Muslims by connecting them to the Qur'an with clear understanding and implementation. We aim to nurture in them high spiritual values and strong academics to enable them to become active members in the Muslim community and the American society at large.

1.2 Vision

Pearls Academy strives for academic and spiritual excellence by providing a learning environment that nurtures the development of both the child's American-Islamic identity and intellect.

1.3 Educational Philosophy

We firmly believe that every child has the potential to thrive academically, emotionally and physically in their environment. Our approach to teaching includes methods which are effective in addressing a wide range of learning styles and abilities as well as imparting values such as empathy and honesty to children and nurturing their mental well-being. We strive to inspire a love of learning in our students by providing a safe environment to develop both spiritually and academically.

1.4 Tahfeeth Program

Pearls Academy offers a *tahfeeth* program with the aim of perfecting students' Qur'an reading and memorization as well as refining their character traits and their love of, and attachment to, Islam. When a student joins, the parents, teacher and *tahfeeth* director set up memorization and review goals for the year. Goals are periodically assessed for feasibility and accuracy and are subject to change based on the student's performance. The *tahfeeth* program also includes a morning assembly consisting of morning *adhkar*, as well as an Islamic Studies class, which includes Tafseer, Seerah, Arabic, Hadith and basic Fiqh concepts. The focus of our Islamic education is on introducing students to the world of sacred knowledge, so they can come to appreciate their religion and continue to learn it, and internalize its virtues. Noble characters and Love of Allah and His Messenger (Allah bless him and grant him peace) is the axis around which Pearls Academy revolves.

1.5 Islamic Studies and Arabic Curriculum

The Islamic studies classes are based on An-Nasiha Islamic Curriculum. This curriculum consists of a set of eight coursebooks, each covering up to eight Islamic fields of knowledge: *fiqh* or Jurisprudence, *seerah*, *tarikh* or history, *tajweed*, *Akhlaq* or noble characters, doctrine, *hadith* and *adab* or Islamic etiquettes. Students in Grades 4 - 8 will focus on the following subjects this year: Arabic, Seerah, Tafseer and Hadith.

This series has been selected because it adopts a child-friendly, engaging approach. Based on authentic sources, it represents mainstream Islam in its beauty and entirety. The content is characterized by being comprehensive, inclusive, age-relative as well as gender-appropriate.

Teachers of Islamic studies, however, will not confine themselves to this series. Rather, they will enrich their classes with further material from books by traditional scholars.

The students from Kindergarten- 3rd Grade will focus on using the following books:

For Islamic Studies, the teachers will reference the “ I Love Islam” books. They will cover Duaa, Hadith, Tafseer and Seerah.

For Arabic, they will use the Arabic Sanabel Curriculum. The students will not only learn Arabic conversation and grammar, but also work on their Arabic handwriting and spelling.

1.6 Academic Program

The academic curriculum is built upon a strong foundation of the Virginia Standards of Learning. Each subject area is meticulously mapped to these standards, ensuring that students receive a comprehensive and well-rounded education that prepares them for success in standardized assessments and beyond. Our program goes beyond surface-level learning. It delves deeply into each subject, encouraging students to explore concepts, make connections, and think critically. The curriculum promotes a deep understanding of core principles, allowing students to apply their knowledge across various contexts. Our K-8 curriculum includes GO Math, HMG Glencoe secondary math, Gallopade Social Studies, Sadlier and BookWorms ELA, Generation Genius and Glencoe Secondary Science. Our curriculum, textbooks and learning materials are all in line with the Virginia Standards of Learning and will ensure that our students are well prepared for any high school program.

We hold our students to the highest academic standards. Through engaging and challenging coursework, students are encouraged to push their limits, strive for mastery, and excel academically. This emphasis on excellence fosters a culture of continuous improvement and a strong work ethic.

Education goes beyond academics. Our program emphasizes the development of positive character traits, ethical values, and responsible citizenship. Students are encouraged to be active participants in their communities and to contribute positively to society.

1.7 Teaching staff

Pearls Academy seeks to hire teachers who have a rich experience in education. Teachers at Pearls Academy are highly qualified in their relevant subject, are passionate about their vocation and sincere to the vision and mission of Pearls Academy.

- **Tahfeedh Teachers:** Pearls Academy’s Tahfeedh teachers are highly qualified instructors who memorized the Quran at an early age. They all have studied Tajweed at a professional level and have Ijaza’s (certificates) in Hafs and other narrations and Quranic canonical versions. Aside from their Islamic studies backgrounds, the teachers are holders of Bachelor's and Master’s degrees from well-known universities. They are carefully hired to ensure that they conform with the vision of Pearls Academy to teach with love and patience and always reflect a

positive attitude. Pearls Academy and its teachers strongly believe in the importance of professional development, and thus continuous training workshops are scheduled around the year.

- **Academic Teachers:** To maintain our high academic standards, Pearls Academy requires our teaching staff to be qualified in their subject matter, and attend further professional development sessions throughout the year. Current teachers are highly qualified in varying degrees, from Associate and Master's degrees to teaching licenses. Teachers are assigned grade levels based on teaching experience and subject mastery, as well as their interest.

2 Roles and Responsibilities

Each Pearls Academy staff member, Pearls Parent, and Pearls Student has an important role in the success of their academic career, spiritual journey, safety and well-being while at school or off-premises under the supervision of the school and its staff. The following outlines the responsibilities of our various roles in supporting our students:

2.1 School Principal and Board Directors

- Oversee effective curriculum development and delivery, achievement of school goals, learning outcomes, and the meeting of targets and benchmarks set by the Board and Administration
- Manage teaching staff, and providing high-quality professional support to teachers and other school staff
- Assist teachers in developing, preparing and distributing learning resources to support students and Parents
- Provide opportunities for Parent-Teacher conferences, where feedback can be provided to Parents and received from Parents, and shared goals for students can be set
- Issue report cards and progress report for each term for each student
- Oversee the purchase and Administration of National Standardized Tests

2.2 Director of Administration

- Report to the Board of Directors, taking instruction and guidance
- Oversee all administrative duties
- Communicate with Parents on major events, activities, and keeping Parents informed of policies and progress of school outcomes
- Ensure that Parents have information they need to support their children's education at home

2.3 Our Teachers

- Plan lessons and instruct their students in the subject they teach
- Assess students' abilities, strengths, and weaknesses
- Adapt lessons to changes in class size
- Grade students' assignments and assessments
- Communicate with Parents about students' progress
- Work with individual students to challenge them and to improve their abilities
- Plan lessons and instruct their students in the subject they teach

- Assess students' abilities, strengths, and weaknesses
 - Adapt lessons to changes in class size
 - Grade students' assignments and exams
 - Communicate with Parents about students' progress
 - Work with individual students to challenge them and to improve their abilities
 - Strive to make students passionate participants in the instructional process by project-based, participatory experiential learning
 - Prepare students for standardized tests required by the state
 - Develop and enforce classroom rules and administrative policies
 - Supervise students outside of the classroom—for example, during lunchtime or detention
 - Prepare students for standardized tests required by the state (Academic teachers)
 - Develop and enforce classroom rules and administrative policies
 - Supervise students outside of the classroom—*during lunch, break, detention*
 - Respond to communication from school and Parents on a consistent and timely basis
 - Participate in school level meetings and professional learning opportunities
- Maintain proper conduct in line with the school's mission and vision

2.4 Our Students

- Arrive to school on time
 - Establish daily routines for learning, rest, and play.
 - Check communication from school daily
 - Participate in all learning opportunities
 - Submit assignments on time in the appropriate format
 - Be a 'good' citizen within your learning environment (whether at home or at school)
 - Communicate with your Parent and/or teacher if you require support of any kind
- Maintain proper conduct in line with the school's mission and vision

2.5 Our Parents

To make the school a success for your student, Parents need to be actively involved with the teachers and Administration. The school recommends the following:

- Help your child establish effective routines
- Minimize absences and tardiness
- Encourage physical activity and exercise
- Track your child's learning via shared documents such as newsletters, assessment schedule, grade sheet, etc
- Attend Parent teacher conferences, actively seeking feedback and providing feedback to teachers and the Administration
- Read through and, if required, respond to communication from the school office and/or teaching staff
- Communicate with your child's teacher or Administrator through email if you or your child requires support

3 Expectation of Parents

At Pearls Academy, we believe that educating children is a process that requires a partnership between Parents, teachers and the school. As a partnership, Parents with children at Pearls Academy will understand the importance of a good working relationship aimed at equipping children with the necessary skills for adulthood. Parents should indicate their agreement to act in accordance with these expectations by signing the Student Agreement.

The Pearls Academy's office is open Monday through Friday, 8:30 am – 3:30 pm. All school visitors, including Parents and guests, must first visit the office, inform the Administration of your arrival, and sign-in if requested. While we welcome meeting and engaging with Parents, we must also minimize interruptions to the school day where possible. Accordingly where possible, Parents should make appointments with teachers or the Administration prior to visiting the school. This allows the teacher or Administrator to plan ahead and make plans to have uninterrupted time with the Parent. Without a prior appointment Parents will likely be asked to reschedule their visit to the school.

3.1 Arrival and Dismissal Procedure

- The arrival time for all students is between 7:40 am - 7:55 am.
- The dismissal time for students in Kindergarten - Grade 5 is 3:45pm and for students in Grades 6-8 is 4:00pm
- Please make sure that you follow the drop off and pick-up line procedures. If someone else will be picking up your child, you must fill out an Alternate Person Pick-Up Form at the office or send this form via email. Your child will not be released to anyone except the Parent unless this form has been filled out, even if the child recognizes the person.

3.1.1 Tardy Policy

- All students are expected to arrive between 7:40 am - 7:55 am and be seated in the Musalla for assembly by 8:00am. Beginning the day promptly is a good habit and demonstrates commitment to success.
- If a student arrives after 8:00 am, they must report to the admin office and a Parent must sign in the student. Oversleeping, car/traffic problems, etc. are all unexcused tardies. Problems with tardiness to school may require adjustments in the family's morning schedule. Excusable tardies include illness of the student and having a doctor/court appointment. A note or phone call from a Parent or a professional note from a doctor/dentist will be required to verify the excuse. Consequences for repeated tardiness shall be implemented as follows:
 - A Parent must sign in their child in the Tardy Sheet if they arrive past 8:00.
 - Repeated tardiness (5 and above within a month) will result in a conference with the student and a call to the Parent.
 - Continued tardiness shall be penalized by an unexcused absence on the record.

3.1.2 Attendance Policy

The purpose of this attendance policy is to establish clear guidelines for excused and unexcused absences in our school. Regular school attendance is essential for student success, and this policy aims to support students' educational growth while ensuring compliance with state attendance regulations.

- Excused Absences:
 1. Illness: Absences due to illness or medical appointments are considered excused. A written note from a healthcare provider may be requested for prolonged illnesses.
 2. Family Emergencies: Absences related to family emergencies or bereavement are excused. Please notify the school as soon as possible in such cases.
 3. Religious Observance: Absences for religious observances such as Hajj or Umrah are excused when advance notice is provided to the school. Students are given 7 days of excused absence for Umrah during the school year.
 4. Medical Appointments: Absences for medical appointments, therapies, or treatments are excused when prior notice is given to the school, and a medical note is provided if necessary.

In the event of an excused absence, the teacher will provide the student with missed study and classwork materials and will grant an extension for assessments and assignments due. The student and parents are responsible for learning any material missed during the absences using the resources provided by the teacher. The teacher will provide guidance to the students based on his/her availability. All class assignments are always uploaded to Gradelink regardless of attendance.

- Unexcused Absences:
 1. Non-Medical Family Trips: Absences for family trips or vacations are considered unexcused.
 2. Truancy: Any absence not covered by excused reasons and not reported by a parent or guardian will be marked as unexcused.
 3. Tardiness: Repeated and unexcused tardiness to school may be considered unexcused absences.

- ❖ In the event of an unexcused absence, the teacher will not be responsible for providing the student with assignments ahead of time. Any tests or assignments given during the unexcused absence period will result in “AB” or 0 grade for the student. It is up to the teacher’s discretion to allow extensions for missed assignments in this situation. All class assignments are always uploaded to Gradelink regardless of attendance.

- Notification Procedures:
 1. Parents or guardians are responsible for notifying the school as soon as possible when a student will be absent.
 2. In the case of extended medical absences, parents or guardians should provide a written note from a healthcare provider within three days of the student's return to school.

3. For planned trips or vacations, parents or guardians should submit a request at least two weeks in advance to the school office. Please note that planned absences are not considered excused if they do not meet the guidelines above.

- Consequences for Excessive Unexcused Absences:

1. Excessive unexcused absences may result in mandatory meetings with school administration to address attendance concerns.

2. Continued unexcused absences may lead to interventions, including referral to the school's administration or involvement of appropriate authorities as required by state law.

We appreciate your understanding and cooperation in upholding our school attendance policy to ensure positive educational outcomes for our students, in sha Allah.

3.2 Daily Routines

1. Please drop-off and pick-up your child on time.
2. Ensure that your child's attendance is consistent.
3. If your child will be absent or late to school, please contact the office via email by 8:00 am: info@pearlsacademy.org.
4. For planned early dismissal, contact the office at the start of school day using the Absence Form.
5. If your child is picked up after 4:15pm, you will be charged \$10 per 30 minutes that you are late for pick up. This fee covers the staff time required to supervise students at school.
6. Please provide your child with healthy snacks and lunch.
7. Please inform us if your child has any food allergies so we are mindful in case of class events.
8. Students are not allowed to bring any toy weapons to school. If a toy weapon is found, it will be confiscated and returned at the end of the day to the Parents. Please see the disciplinary action section for more details.
9. Students are **not** allowed to bring cell phones to school. If a student brings a cell phone, it will be confiscated. The student will only be allowed to take it at the end of the day. Repeated incidents may result in the confiscation of the student's phone for a couple of days. If your child needs to communicate with you during the day, they may ask permission in the office and use the school's phone.
10. Digital devices brought in by elementary and middle school students will be kept in the school office during school hours and handed to students when needed. Students are responsible for bringing in a clearly labeled charged device and a charging cable. Additionally, students are to hold themselves to the Online Code of Conduct outlined in section 5.5 at all times, whether at home or at school. Parents are requested to ensure that student devices have Parental control software that helps you keep your child safe from both intentional and unintentional misuse.

3.3 At Home Support for Quran

Since Pearls Academy is a Hifdh and Academic program, it is extremely important that each child has support at home to keep up with the memorization schedule and academic curriculum. Parents can provide this by doing the following:

- Check and sign the Quran progress sheets on a daily basis. The progress sheet is the best way to communicate with your child's Quran teacher via the comments section.
- Ensure that your child has completed the Quran homework assigned by having them recite to you
- Encourage your child to conduct daily review to ensure that they retain any new Surah/Ayahs they have memorized
- Set aside dedicated time each day for Quran memorization and review. Consistency is key, so creating a regular schedule will help the child develop a habit of reciting and memorizing the Quran daily.
- Choose a peaceful and distraction-free area in the home for Quran memorization. Minimize noise and interruptions to help the child concentrate and retain the verses better.
- Encourage the child to repeat each verse multiple times while looking at the text. Visualization techniques, such as tracing the words with their fingers or using colorful markers to highlight the verses, can aid in memorization.
- Offer encouragement, praise, and rewards for each milestone achieved. Positive reinforcement can motivate the child and boost their confidence in their memorization journey.
- Continuously remind the child of the importance of the Quran as well as the Academic subjects.
- Be patient and understanding throughout the process, as memorizing the Quran is a gradual and continuous effort. Celebrate the child's progress, regardless of the pace, and remind them of the immense rewards and blessings associated with memorizing the Book of Allah.

3.4 Parent Code of Conduct (Prohibited Behavior):

In order to provide a peaceful and safe school environment for both students and staff, the school prohibits the following behaviors by Parents/Guardians and visitors in school towards Pearls Academy, its staff and students.

- Abusive, threatening, profane or harassing communication, either in person, by e-mail or text message/voicemail/phone or other written or verbal communication. This includes use of any social media medium, including but not limited to: websites, blogs, wikis, social networking sites such as Google+, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, LinkedIn, Twitter, Flickr.
- Disruptive behavior that interferes or threatens to interfere with school operations, including the effective operation of a classroom, an employee's office or duty station, the lobby, or school grounds, including events, parking lots and car-pickup.
- Threatening to do bodily harm to a school employee, visitor, fellow Parent/Guardian or student.
- Threatening to damage the property of a school employee, visitor, fellow Parent/Guardian or student.
- Damaging or destruction of school property.
- Excessive unscheduled school visits, e-mails, text/voicemail/phone messages or other written or oral. School staff and Administration may not always be immediately available to speak with you. The only way to ensure that you are able to speak with a staff member or Administrator is to schedule an appointment. Staff and Administrators will endeavor to return all phone calls/e-mails within 24 hours. Your calls and visits will be responded to consistent with this practice if someone is not immediately available to speak with you.
- Defamatory, offensive or derogatory comments regarding the school or school staff made publicly to others.
- Defamatory, offensive or derogatory comments regarding the school or school staff made verbally or in writing.

- Harassing or putting undue pressure on any school Staff member regarding curriculum, policies and procedures.
- Any concerns that you may have regarding these matters must be made through the school Administration so they can be dealt with fairly and in a timely manner.

In the event that a parent or guardian fails to abide by the above policies, they will be given a warning, following which they will be asked to remove their child(ren) from Pearls Academy if the negative behavior continues.

3.5 Parent-Teacher Communication

Pearls Academy recognizes the importance of a strong partnership between educators, parents, and the community. Regular communication, parent-teacher conferences, workshops, and involvement opportunities ensure that parents are well-informed and engaged in their child's educational journey.

Teachers will provide clear contact information including email addresses and office hours as well as the preferred methods of communication (email, phone, in-person meetings) to ensure effective communication.

Teachers will provide regular updates on their child's progress, such as progress reports, report cards, and scheduled parent-teacher conferences. This will be done via emails, Gradelink posts and newsletters. Please do not contact teachers on their personal phones or emails. All communication must be sent via email or a school-approved communication platform.

While teachers strive to respond promptly to parent inquiries please allow a response time of 24 hours. Teachers are not expected to respond on weekends or outside of school hours.

In case of urgent matters or emergencies, the Principal, Director of Tahfeeth or Director of Administration can be contacted.

Please maintain respectful communication with teachers and school staff. Our main focus is on the best interests of the student and to address concerns in a collaborative manner.

Parents and teachers must maintain the confidentiality of sensitive information discussed during parent-teacher interactions. Please rest assured that your child's privacy will always be respected.

The school will provide various feedback opportunities for parents throughout the year.

Parents and teachers have a shared responsibility in supporting the student's academic and personal growth. Collaboration and teamwork is highly encouraged for the benefit of the child's development.

4 Student Registration and Enrollment

4.1 Admissions

Our focus throughout the year is the educational development of each student. In order to achieve our goal, a low teacher to student ratio will be observed.

Upon acceptance of the application, Parents will be required to submit copies of certain specified documents for office files. In the event that there is a waiting list, your student's place on the list will be determined according to when the registration form/fee and all other documents have been submitted.

Please remember that the office reserves the right to refuse admission on any grounds.

Please note that Pearls Academy is **not** equipped or trained to provide services to students with special needs (e.g. learning disabilities, health problems and/or any psychological condition that may require professional training or special handling such as, but not limited to, ADHD and Autism). If such a condition is observed by teachers or administrators, the parent will be notified and a meeting will be set up to discuss whether the student will be able to continue attending Pearls Academy. The student will be put on probation for 2 weeks following the meeting with the Parent(s) in order to assess the situation, after which, the school will make a decision on whether the student will be allowed to continue or will be asked to withdraw from Pearls Academy.

I'm not sure if situation is the right word, but something along those lines.

4.2 Tuition and Fees

Please note that upon acceptance to Pearls Academy, you are required to sign an agreement which commits you to the program for a period of one academic year. By signing this agreement, you commit to paying the monthly tuition on the 1st of every month via PaySimple on Gradelink. No portion of the fees paid or outstanding will be refunded or canceled in the event of absence, withdrawal, or dismissal from Pearls Academy of the above student. For each additional student from the same family, there will be a 5% discount for the second student as well as 10% for each subsequent one. Please note the following:

- There will be a \$10 fee charged for failed ACH payments/transactions on Gradelink.
- There will be a \$35 bounced check fee applied to your child's account if a check bounces for any reason.
- If we do not receive the payment on time, you will be charged a late fee of \$25.
- Student report cards and records will not be released until all fees and charges have been paid.
- All fee and finance related questions should be addressed to the school Administrator.

4.3 Withdrawal from County Public School

Please make sure that your county of residence is aware of your child's enrollment in a private school. Pearls Academy will provide a letter of enrollment upon request.

4.4 Benchmark Testing

Pearls Academy will administer the MAP Test in Quarter 1 and Quarter 4 to ensure that all students have met the academic requirements of their grade level and showed progress in learning. Parents are **not required** to submit the test scores to the county.

5 School Policies

5.1 Dress Code

There is no school uniform, however, all students must follow the Dress Code detailed in section 5.2. Boys are required to wear appropriate clothing that is also suitable for prayer time. **Sleeveless shirts and shorts are not permitted.** All clothing worn by boys must adhere to the Islamic dress code and must cover the knees. **Boys will be required to put on a thobe if their knees are not covered.**

Girls are required to wear **loose fitting and modest clothing** that is also appropriate for prayer time. **Head covering is required for girls in Grades 6** and up during school hours. Please encourage your daughter to wear an abaya at prayer time. Students may not wear makeup of any kind including eye liner, nail polish, and lip gloss.

Please note that though girls in Grades K-5 are not required to cover their hair, they must have a scarf for prayer and must still adhere to the Islamic guidelines of clothing during prayer.

5.2 Hygiene and Dress Code

Pearls Academy has a stringent policy regarding dress code and personal hygiene that applies to all staff and students.

- The attire should be clean, modest, and loose-fitting
- Nails should be trimmed and cleaned regularly
- Socks must be changed daily for the use of musalla
- Shoes should be aired out regularly
- Hair should be washed and groomed daily
- Girls cannot wear makeup or perfume. Their attire cannot be revealing, tight, or short.
- Hijab is mandatory for girls in Grades 6 and up.
- Boys are not allowed to wear shorts, tight pants, chains, bands or bracelets.
- Boys should wear their hair short, neat and well-combed.
- Clothes with figures and/or cartoon characters are not allowed.
- All should come to the school dressed for prayer, clean, nice-smelling and well-rested.
- If a student's attire does not meet the school dress code expectations, we will contact the parent to bring them a change of clothes.

5.3 Student Behavior and Discipline

Pearls Academy has composed a comprehensive Student Behavior Policy for students. Our policies are in line with our Mission and Vision and are rooted in Islamic teachings. The Behavior Policy aims to:

- Nurture the student’s inner character
- Recognize and reward behavior that is in line with good character
- Marginalize any behavior that is not conducive to the student’s character building
- Involve students, Parents, staff, and school leaders in the implementation of a consistent approach to behavior management and improving behavior

The school reserves the right to discipline a student in the case of misconduct. For disciplinary action, the following behavior management measures will be put into place consistently, fairly, and openly in this order:

- A. Two verbal warnings given to the student. Parents will be notified of verbal warning via Incident Reports.
- B. One-on-one reflective meeting between student and Principal.
- C. A written warning sent to Parents with a meeting request.
- D. Suspension
- E. Expulsion

5.3.1 Behavior Management

1. Behavior is a choice, and Pearls Academy provides its students with gentle guidance to make good choices in their conduct. The staff models the process of making appropriate choices in and out of the classroom to encourage students and motivate them to set and maintain high expectations of themselves.
2. Firm and clear expectations for certain behaviors are reinforced consistently and gently; it is hoped that, in time, students will have to make fewer choices around good conduct as those expectations and behavior will soon become grounded habits.
3. On occasions of misconduct, staff need to intervene.
4. There is a list of behavior management measures within the Disciplinary Action Policy that the school reserves the right to use.

5.3.2 Disciplinary Action Policy

1. Examples of misconduct include, but not limited to, the following:
 - disruptive or confrontational behavior in school
 - rudeness to students and/or staff
 - foul language
 - fighting or aggressive behavior
 - bullying and/or intimidating others
 - theft
 - misconduct while online
 - plagiarism and/or cheating
 - graffiti or vandalism of school property

Misconduct has varying degrees, and thus the disciplinary action taken will reflect the seriousness of the misconduct.

2. The use of verbal warnings should be:

- clearly linked to learning and personal conduct
- addressing the misbehavior, not the student
- delivered in a reasonable tone and appropriate volume
- followed by positive acknowledgment once the remedial action has been taken by the student

3. Serious offenses such as threatening behavior or vandalism will bypass the softer measures and earn the student a written warning immediately.

4. Following the written notice, the school reserves the right to exclude a student on account of any disruptive behavior that threatens the well-being of other students and/or staff.

5. Expulsion may be for a fixed period or permanent.

6. In-house suspension from the school community is the preferred alternative to any period of expulsion from school.

7. Poor work habits are corrected through reminders and setting a deadline for the completion of any missed work. Two or more reminders within a week will result in parent notification via email.

8. A teacher reserves the right to take away a student's break after two verbal warnings. Losing break is the equivalent of office detention and will not always result in an incident report.

NOTE: There is a wide scale of the severity of disciplinary issues and some do not require parent contact or extreme consequences, rather a reflective talk with the student(s) and/or a missed break (detention). Exceptions to this are if a severe incident (such as a fight) have occurred. If the parent was not notified, this means it was a minor incident. We understand that parents can get the wrong message if they hear about incidents from their child without context, however, major incidents will always be communicated to the parents.

5.3.3 Additional support

The School understands that how a child behaves can be a sign of underlying issues such as a mental health challenge, neglect and/or abuse. Staff members are trained to lookout for changes in behavior which could include: a child who is withdrawn and unable to make friends; a child who is unable to concentrate in class; a child who may uncharacteristically become disruptive and/or aggressive in class. In such cases, a parent meeting will be called to put a plan in place to help the child or decide whether the child can continue to be enrolled at Pearls Academy (See Section 4.1).

5.3.4 Powers of Search and Confiscation

1. The general power to discipline enables a member of staff to confiscate, retain and/or return student's property in a reasonable manner.
2. The School also holds the power to search without consent for 'prohibited items' including, but not limited to:
 - knives and weapons
 - illegal drugs
 - stolen items
 - pornographic images
 - tobacco and cigarette
 - any item that can be used to commit an offense, cause personal injury, or damage to property
 - any item banned by the school rules and can therefore be searched for

5.3.5 Use of CCTV

The School has CCTV in operation in and out of the school building. It may be used as evidence during investigations before taking any disciplinary action against a student.

5.4 Academic Integrity Policy

This policy is designed to enhance and enrich the academic and ethical education of students at Pearls Academy by avoiding the two main violations: plagiarism and cheating. Plagiarism is presenting the ideas or statements of another without crediting the original source. Even if it is unintentional, plagiarism is theft. Plagiarized sources include pictures, photographs, music, internet sources, works of art, and the spoken word. Unless otherwise instructed by the teacher, students are not allowed to produce any work using AI such as ChatGPT, etc. As part of their instruction, students are provided with guidelines that promote academic integrity. Failure to adhere to guidelines will result in appropriate disciplinary action.

In case of cheating or copying assignments, consequences will be used at the discretion of the teacher and Administrator, and these include receiving a zero on the assignment, retaking assessments, and Parent notification.

5.5 Use Digital Devices and Online Code of Conduct

Common principles of digital citizenship and acceptable network etiquette (netiquette) will help make your child's online learning more rewarding. Internet access at home is required for all students, but access must be used in a responsible, safe, efficient, ethical, and legal manner. With expanded access to electronic information, availability of inappropriate material is not uncommon. Some sites contain illegal, defamatory, inaccurate, or offensive information.

Although it may be difficult to control such misuses, the school believes that with responsible use, the benefits of the Internet as an educational tool outweigh the negatives. Hence, Pearls Academy recommends Parents to ensure that student devices have a Parental control software that helps you keep your child safe from both intentional and unintentional misuse. Please also review the Student Code of Conduct for Online Learning with your child in order to be

aware of student expectations, Parental responsibility, and consequences of misconduct while online during school hours.

In addition to ensuring that there are parental controls installed in all personal devices, teachers must supervise students while devices are in use. Personal devices might be requested at times, however, these devices (whether from home or borrowed from the office) cannot be used for any other purpose other than the specific purpose or activity for which it was intended by the teacher. Failure to comply with this policy will result in disciplinary action as per our "Behavior Policy."

Cell-phones are NOT ALLOWED during school hours. If any student is found using their cell-phone or personal devices during school hours - their device will be confiscated and handed directly to the parent at dismissal.

Videos (movies or documentaries) might be shown in class for educational or entertainment purposes. In the event that the teacher decides to show a movie, it will first be approved by administration and a permission slip will be sent home.

5.6 Sick Child Policy

Please email the school to inform the school of the reason for absence and provide details as necessary.

1. **Please keep your child at home if they are sick.** If your child has any cold/flu symptoms such as fever, sore throat, coughing, sneezing, runny nose or severe congestion, they should not attend school.
2. **Your child can return to school if:**
 - a. They have a post-viral non-productive cough (they will be asked to wear a mask).
 - b. They have been fever free for 48 hours **WITHOUT** medication.
 - c. They are nit-free (in cases of head-lice).
3. **You will be asked to pick up your child from school if they:**
 - a. have a fever higher than 100 degrees.
 - b. have a persistent productive cough.
 - c. have a runny nose and severe congestion.
 - d. have any suspicious rash that has not been seen by a doctor.
 - e. are fatigued, have a severe headache, stomach ache or nausea.
 - f. have vomiting or diarrhea.
 - g. have head lice.

5.7 Safeguarding Concerns

Pearls Academy recognises its moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all students. Pearls Academy has a zero tolerance policy on abuse and negligence. If, for example, a student arrives at school in the

morning with unusual bruises or marks on his/her body, they will be called into the school office for investigation. The student will be asked about the marks, followed by the office contacting the Parents to question the same. In case of inaccuracies in accounts and raised suspicions, Pearls Academy reserves the right to call Child Protective Services (CPS).

5.8 Custody

If your family has special custody arrangements that have been mandated by a judge, Pearls Academy must have a copy of the court order. If no such document is submitted, the school cannot refuse a Parent access to his/her child.

5.9 Field Trips

For each field trip planned, the school will require a signature and waiver giving permission from the Parents for students to participate in an off-site learning experience. Parents are responsible to pay for all field trips attended by their child.

5.10 Party Invitations and Celebrations

All events being advertised or shared with students in school must be approved by school Administration. To facilitate appropriate classroom courtesies, please do not pass out invitations to private parties unless all students in the classroom are invited.

If parents would like to send in treats or goody bags for any occasion, they must first get approval from school Administration. **Birthday party celebrations or treats are not allowed in class.**

5.11 Emergencies

Pearls Academy has established an Emergency Preparedness Plan to cover any emergencies to affect our facility based on our geographical location as well as our hours of operation. In all cases, the two main methods for handling emergencies include our lockdown emergency response plan and our emergency evacuation plan.

Regular emergency drills and training sessions will be conducted to ensure that staff members and students are well-prepared to respond effectively in a crisis. All staff and students are expected to participate in these drills and familiarize themselves with evacuation routes, assembly points, and other emergency procedures. These drills are essential for building confidence and ensuring a rapid and organized response in real emergencies, minimizing risks and protecting the safety of all individuals on our campus.

5.12 Inclement Weather Policy

Pearls Academy follows the Loudoun County Public School announcements for inclement weather. However, there may be days when our decision may be different than that of LCPS. Information about delays and closings will be sent through text and email to Parents. Please note that the above policy only applies in case of inclement weather; you will receive a separate calendar for holidays.

5.13 Security Service

To ensure the safety of staff and students, Pearls Academy is equipped with security cameras in and around the school building. We also have an armed security guard on school premises during full-time school hours.

6 Closing Statement

In closing, we hope that this Parent-Student Handbook serves as a valuable resource, fostering a strong partnership between the school, parents, and students. By adhering to the guidelines and information outlined herein, we can collectively ensure a safe, nurturing, and academically enriching environment for all learners. Thank you for entrusting us with your child's education; together, we will continue to inspire growth, curiosity, and excellence.

We would once again like to welcome you to Pearls Academy, and we hope for our students to have an enjoyable and successful academic year.



PEARLS ACADEMY