



DEPAUL SCHOOL
FOR HEARING & SPEECH

Family Handbook

2023-2024 School Year



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DePaulHearingAndSpeech.org

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Mission, Identity and Values

Mission

The mission of DePaul School for Hearing and Speech is to develop listening skills and spoken language in children who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have spoken language communication challenges and to prepare them to transition to their home school district successfully at the earliest possible age.

Identity

Founded in 1908 by the Diocese of Pittsburgh and the Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill, DePaul School for Hearing and Speech has been providing quality listening and spoken language education for children who are deaf or hard of hearing for 100+ years. DePaul School is licensed by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as an Approved Private School. DePaul School provides equal educational opportunities to all students who qualify for admission to the programs without regard to race, color, sex, religion, ancestry or national origin.

Values

DePaul School for Hearing and Speech carries out its commitment to listening and spoken language education through our dedication to these core values:

- The Listening and Spoken Language Philosophy
We believe that children who are deaf and hard of hearing have the potential to develop listening and spoken language skills as the foundation for lifelong literacy and intellectual growth.
- Academic Excellence
We embrace our responsibility in providing the best education for children who are deaf and hard of hearing through the development of academic skills that ensure success in the educational and social mainstream.
- Respect for the Individual
We welcome children of all religious, cultural and ethnic backgrounds in recognizing diversity as strength in our community.
- Commitment to the Children We Serve
We demonstrate our commitment to the children we serve by providing a learning environment that fosters the spiritual, emotional and personal growth of each child.
- Family Participation
We value the participation of parents and all family members in their child's education as we recognize the importance of their role as their child's primary teacher.

- **Support for the Educational Community**
We support the development of a trusting and respectful educational community where children, their families and the DePaul School staff work together as partners in the educational process.
- **Collaboration Beyond Our Community**
We engage professionals from the medical, educational and philanthropic communities to enlist support and collaborate in an effort to provide quality listening and spoken language services to children who are deaf and hard of hearing in southwestern Pennsylvania.
- **Innovative Use of Technology**
We recognize the vital role of technology in providing state-of-the-art audiological and educational services throughout our school.
- **Encourage Lifelong Learners**
We encourage our staff to be lifelong learners and to recognize that as their skills as educators grow, our ability to provide excellent educational services grows.

Academic Programs

Early Intervention Programs

DePaul School's Early Intervention (EI) team consists of a teacher of the deaf, an audiologist and speech/language pathologists with expertise in Listening and Spoken Language development. The partnership between the EI team and the family is key to the success of the students. Services provided are based upon the individualized needs of each child and family. A variety of Early Intervention services are provided for children from birth to age 3 including:

- Music social group
- Individual Auditory-Verbal therapy
- Home consultation visits
- Telepractice consultation and/or therapy
- Toddler group
- Individual and small group parent education.

Preschool Program

DePaul School offers a full day preschool program for children who are deaf or hard of hearing between the ages of 3 to 5 years. DePaul School has a separately licensed preschool program, SAILL, for students who are not deaf or hard of hearing but have a significant speech delay. There is a separate Family Handbook for the SAILL preschool program.

The school day begins at 8:30 and ends at 3:15 Monday through Friday with the exception of Wednesdays when there is a 1:00 PM dismissal. If parents or guardians prefer a half-day program, they are responsible for providing mid-day transportation.

DePaul School offers a unique preschool program focused on the development of listening, speech and language skills. Certified teachers of the deaf provide direct instruction to children in groups of 2 or 3 to ensure maximum opportunities for children to learn and practice new language skills. Throughout the day, children enjoy participating in larger groups of 6 to 8 children for circle time, music and movement. Each day children learn social skills through guided center activities with their peers. In the afternoon, the younger children are given quiet time activities on mats, while the 4 and 5 year olds work on pre-literacy and pre-math skills to prepare them for kindergarten.

Every child in the preschool program receives individual speech therapy for 30 minutes 4 or 5 times a week by a certified speech language pathologist who has special training in listening and spoken language development. The DePaul School audiologist is also a key member of the educational team. The audiologist completes comprehensive audiologic testing (at least annually), completes data logging on equipment as needed, and ensures that hearing devices

are in good working order so that each child has the best access to auditory information. Children who have an identified need may also receive physical and/or occupational therapy during the school day.

Elementary Program

The Academic Program

DePaul School's Elementary Program serves children who are deaf or hard of hearing, or have severe language delay, from Kindergarten through Level 8. The school day begins with homeroom time at 8:30 and ends at 3:15 Monday through Friday with the exception of Wednesdays when dismissal is at 1:00 PM.

Students who demonstrate needs in the area of listening, speech and language development benefit from the small group (4 to 8 students) and individualized instruction that the elementary program provides. The curriculum parallels that of a traditional school with an emphasis on the development of literacy skills so that students can access the information necessary for academic progress. Students are taught by certified teachers of the deaf who provide oral and written language instruction as an integral part of all academic lessons.

Auditory and Speech Services

Every student in the elementary program receives individual speech therapy for 30 minutes 3 to 5 times a week by a certified speech language pathologist who has special training in listening and spoken language development. Formalized testing is done annually to document progress.

The DePaul School audiologist is a key member of the educational team. The audiologist completes comprehensive audiologic testing (at least annually), completes data logging on equipment as needed, and ensures that hearing devices are in good working order so that each child has the best access to auditory information.

Physical and Occupational Therapy

Children who have an identified need may also receive physical and/or occupational therapy during the school day.

Religious Education

Religious education is offered to all students in Levels 1 to 8. This instruction is supplemental and not meant to replace the local church youth instruction program. Catholic families are encouraged to enroll their child in CCD for all sacramental preparation. Participation in religious education requires parent permission. The time slot allotted for this class is beyond the 900/990 hours of required instruction to meet Pennsylvania Department of Education standards.

Extended School Year Program

According to the state and federal special education regulations, a local school district must consider the eligibility for extended school year for all students with disabilities at the IEP team meeting.

Criteria:

- The extent to which the student has mastered and consolidated an important skill or behavior at the point when educational programming would be interrupted
- The extent to which the student reverts to a lower level of functioning as evidenced by a measurable decrease in skill or behaviors which occur as a result of an interruption in education programming
- The extent to which the student has the capacity to recover the skills or behavior patterns in which regression occurred to a level demonstrated prior to the interruption of educational programming.

Parents have the right to refuse extended school year services.

Assessments

Academic Assessments

Students in the elementary program are given formal and informal assessments throughout the school year. Curriculum based tests and teacher made tests are given at the end of a unit of study. All IEP goals and objectives are monitored on a regular basis to determine if progress is being made.

All elementary students are given the GRADE (Group Reading Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation) and the GMADE (Group Mathematics Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation) on their instructional reading and mathematics levels at the beginning and end of the school year.

Speech and Language Assessments

Formal speech and language assessments are given annually prior to a child's IEP to document progress and identify needs to be addressed in the new IEP. Typically, the speech language pathologist will contact the parent/guardian prior to the IEP meeting to review the results of these assessments.

Audiological Assessments

The school audiologist provides annual comprehensive audiologic testing, including speech perception tests in both quiet and in noise, when applicable. Additional testing is often completed throughout the school year as needed.

PSSAs

Pennsylvania resident students in Levels 3 to 8 are required to take the Pennsylvania System of State Assessments at their chronological grade level each year. Students are permitted some accommodations due to their hearing loss. Parents can request that their child be exempted from taking the PSSAs. Such an exemption should be discussed with the school district at the IEP meeting.

Instructional Materials

The DePaul School provides all textbooks and some supplies needed for the regular instructional programs. We ask families to provide the items for their child specified on the department supply lists sent out at the beginning of each school year. Students are responsible for the care of all items provided by the school for their use, including Chromebooks. Families are expected to pay for lost or damaged books and equipment.

School Practices and Policies

Anti-discrimination Policy

It is the policy of DePaul School for Hearing and Speech to provide equal educational opportunities to all students who qualify for and are eligible for admission to the programs without regard to race, color, religion, sex, ancestry, or national origin. This policy applies to all educational programs offered by the school. Unlawful discriminatory conduct by school employees and other individuals within the school environment is strictly prohibited.

Our role is to provide educational services to each child who enrolls in DePaul School. We intentionally stay within our role, when matters of personal choice or identity arise that are outside of education, and do not violate state or federal laws, we remain neutral, and we rely upon parents'/guardians' influences to address these issues.

We will communicate our thoughts and concerns to parents/guardians, as warranted. We remain neutral, and supportive of the family's choices that fall within these parameters. Our role as educators is the only role with which we will offer, advise, or comment upon.

Attendance

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania requires every elementary student to have 180 school days or 900 hours of instruction. Regular school attendance is important to your child's educational success. In accordance with Pennsylvania law, for school-age children, the DePaul School will:

- Require a parent / guardian's written excuse for a child's absence up to 10 days, cumulative for the school year
- Require a physician's written excuse for a child's absence after 10 days, cumulative for the school year
- Notify the child's school district after 10 cumulative days of absence
- Include year-to-date attendance in every IEP.

Absences

The following are examples of excused absences:

- Illnesses
- Recovery from an accident
- Family emergency
- Death in the family
- Court appearance.

Absences for a portion of the school day may be excused for medical or dental appointments or therapy services that cannot be arranged after school hours.

In addition, DePaul School recognizes a number of specific reasons for which a child may be excused from school for all or part of a day. These include:

- Observance of religious holidays
- Religious instruction - restricted by law to a maximum of 36 hours per school year
- Educational trips not school sponsored

This requires a written request and approval by the Director of Education.

Reporting Absences

A parent or guardian is expected to call the school office between 7:30 AM and 9:00 AM to report that a student will be absent. Parents are also to alert the transportation provider when their child is absent. The school should be informed if an extended absence is anticipated.

Parents/guardians are to complete an excuse form after each absence. The completed form, which is sent home by the teacher upon the child's return, should be returned to the school within three days of the absence. A doctor's note is required for students who are absent four or more consecutive days. If no excuse form is completed, the student's absence will be recorded as an unexcused absence.

Arrival and Tardiness

The school day begins at 8:30 AM, therefore, students should arrive no later than 8:20 AM. Supervision of students begins at 7:40 AM each morning. No student is to be dropped off at the school before that time without prior permission of the Director of Pupil Services. When dropped off by a parent/guardian, the parent/guardian must sign their child in at the school office if they arrive after 8:45 AM.

A student is considered tardy if he/she is not in school by 8:30 AM unless the tardiness is related to a problem with the transportation provider, unexpected traffic due to an accident, road construction or severe weather.

If a parent/guardian brings a child to school rather than putting them on the bus, he/she is expected to notify the bus company to let them know that the child is at school and will need transportation home at the end of the school day.

Early Dismissal

In the event that a student must leave school before the 3:15 PM dismissal time for any reason whatsoever, the parent or guardian must notify the homeroom teacher or school

receptionist in advance. The parents or guardians who come to pick up the student are required to come to the front office to sign them out. The parent or guardian is expected to notify the bus company to let them know that the afternoon pick up will not be needed.

Dismissal

Van and bus drivers who come to pick up students are to wait outside. The children will be dismissed by a designated staff member.

Parents/guardians who transport their children should park on the street or in the lot across Alder Street and meet their child on the sidewalk in front of the school. A staff member will walk your child to you.

For dismissal and early dismissal, children will only be released to his/her parent/guardian or those individuals designated on the current year's Student Emergency Information form.

If due to an emergency, it is necessary that someone other than a parent/guardian pick up the child, the parent/guardian must call the school and give the specific name of the person and that person must present a photo ID at the school.

Withdrawal

The withdrawal of any school age student will be reported to the applicable school authorities within the local school district.

Birthday/Holiday Treats

Parents are asked to check with the child's teacher prior to sending in treats or party items for any classroom celebration. It is required that any treats sent to school be peanut-free because of the allergies of some of our students. Also, treats should be store-bought, not homemade. Due to latex allergies, balloons are not permitted unless they are Mylar. Parents are encouraged to follow the Student Wellness Policy (covered later in this section) by providing a snack that does not have sugar as a primary ingredient.

Breakfast Program

In accordance with the state of Pennsylvania, DePaul School offers breakfast to all of its students every morning between 7:40 and 8:15. A light breakfast is offered with at least two choices. The menu usually consists of cereal, cereal bars, fruit, milk and orange juice in accordance with our Student Wellness Policy. Breakfast is a voluntary program at no cost to the student. The purpose of the breakfast program is to ensure that every child has access to a meal in the morning in order to maximize his/her ability to concentrate and learn in the classroom.

Cell Phones and Tablets

Bringing a cell phone or tablet to school is discouraged. DePaul School will not be responsible for lost or stolen cell phones or tablets. If it is necessary for a student to bring a cell phone or tablet to school, it must be turned into the school office as soon as the student arrives and it will be kept there until dismissal.

Change of Address

Parents/guardians must notify the DePaul School office as well as their home school district if there is a change of address, telephone number or email address as soon as possible. It is necessary to maintain updated information for emergency situations and accurate record keeping.

Confidentiality and School Records

DePaul School maintains a cumulative student record for each child. Confidentiality of student information will be maintained at all times and released in accordance with the regulations in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Only relevant and specified school staff have access to the file information for legitimate educational interest reasons. Relevant specified school staff includes:

- a person employed by DePaul School in an administrative, clinical, supervisory, academic, student support services, or research position, or a support person to these positions; or
- a person employed by or under contract to DePaul School to perform a special task.

Legitimate educational interest reasons include use of the information within the context of school business and not for purposes extraneous to staff member's area of responsibility.

In compliance with the FERPA, records can only be released with the written permission of the parent, guardian, or eligible student (18 years of age or older). Under FERPA, a school must provide a parent with an opportunity to inspect and review his or her child's education records within 45 days following its receipt of the request. FERPA guarantees the following rights to parents and eligible students:

- To inspect and review his or her child's education records
- To seek to amend the records
- To consent to disclosure of personally identifiable information from the records (except in certain circumstances)
- To file a complaint with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act Office.

FERPA gives custodial and noncustodial parents alike certain rights with respect to their children's education records, unless the school is provided with evidence that there is a court

order or state law that specifically provides to the contrary. Otherwise, both custodial and noncustodial parents have the right to access their child's education records, the right to seek information from the records (with certain exceptions specified in the FERPA regulations).

FERPA allows schools to disclose, without consent, "directory" information which includes a student's name, address, telephone number, and date of birth.

Confidentiality and Health Information

The Federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA) mandates confidentiality regarding health and medical records. DePaul School respects the confidentiality of your child's health information and adheres to the standards prescribed therein.

Chromebooks

All students in Kindergarten through Level 8 are issued a DePaul School Chromebook or tablet to be used in their educational activities. Students will be given instructions on the proper use of their Chromebooks at the beginning of each year. Such instruction is done both in person at school and is provided in writing for parents/guardians. Students and parents/guardians are responsible for the proper care of the Chromebook, and its return at the end of the year in the same condition as it was issued at the beginning of the year (each family is responsible for the condition of the returned material; replacement fees may be applicable).

Dress Code

DePaul School does not require a uniform for students. Parents should be sure that their child's clothing is comfortable and suitable for everyday school activities. Students are encouraged to keep a sweatshirt or sweater in school for indoor and outdoor temperature changes. Under normal circumstances, children will not be permitted to wear their coats all day in school. Students must have sneakers for outdoor recreation and physical education. Shorts and skirts should be at fingertip length. Clothing items considered inappropriate and unacceptable for school are the following: t-shirts with inappropriate wording or pictures, spaghetti strap tops, cropped shirts of any kind, and flip flops.

Emergency Closings and Delays

When classes are canceled or delayed due to snow or inclement weather, DePaul School will announce closings via a robo-call to the telephone number you provided to the school at the beginning of the year for this purpose.

DePaul School will continue to post delays or closings on KDKA, WPXI and WTAE.

When school districts call a delay and DePaul School does not, students from the districts will be picked up according to the delayed start time. Students will not be marked tardy on those days. When a school district is closed and DePaul School is not, no transportation will be provided. Parents/guardians may provide their own transportation both to and from DePaul School. The student will not be marked absent on those days.

DePaul School will notify parents/guardians by phone if there is an early school closing. Parents/guardians should have an emergency plan and provide DePaul School with the name(s) of person(s) who will be available to meet the child at home if the parent/guardian cannot do so. Any person other than a parent/guardian picking up a child at the school must present a photo ID that corresponds to the name provided.

Field Trips

As an extension of the students' educational experience outside of the school building, DePaul School offers recreational field trips as well as field trips related to specific curricular purposes. Department coordinators or teachers will send home a consent form containing detailed information about specific field trips. A parent/guardian signature is required for a child to participate in a field trip.

Internet Access Policy

Use of the Internet provides great educational benefits to students. Unfortunately, some materials accessible via the Internet may contain items that are illegal, defamatory, or potentially offensive to some people and contrary to their religious beliefs and/or moral values. Access to the Internet is given as a privilege to K-8 students who agree to act in a considerate and responsible manner. DePaul School has implemented technology protection measures that block/filter Internet access to inappropriate sites that may be harmful to minors. Nonetheless, DePaul School cannot have full control of the content that may be accessible. All students will be supervised by a teacher or teaching assistant when using the Internet. We require that students and parents/guardians read, accept and sign the following rules for acceptable on-line behavior.

1. Students are responsible for good behavior on the Internet just as they are in a school building. General school rules for behavior and communications apply.
2. Designated DePaul School staff members may review files and communications to maintain system integrity and ensure that users are using the system responsibly. Users should expect that files will be subject to review by appropriate school officials without prior notice.
3. The following are **not** permitted:
 - Games are not allowed unless assigned by a teacher for educational purposes

- Sending or displaying offensive messages or pictures
- Using obscene language
- Harassing, insulting, bullying or attacking others
- Damaging computers or computer systems
- Downloading, adding, or installing new programs, software or hardware, sound and video files onto school-owned computers unless approved for education purposes under the direction of school staff
- Violation of copyright laws
- Using another's password
- Revealing the personal address or phone number of yourself or any other person without permission from your teacher
- Using chat platforms or social networks which are morally inappropriate.

4. Violations may result in a loss of access as well as other disciplinary or legal action.

Lunch

All students will be expected to bring a packed lunch with them each day.

If a student forgets a lunch, we will provide a sandwich and snack for him/her. Low fat white milk will be offered to all students at DePaul School at no charge. When packing your child's lunch we ask you to follow the guidelines below:

- **Do not pack items that need to be heated. Children are not permitted to use the microwave.**
- Clearly print the child's name on the outside of the bag or lunch box.
- Pack items that do not need refrigeration, otherwise include ice packs to keep items cold.
- Do not send pop/soda. Pop is not an acceptable beverage for lunch. Students may bring juice boxes or other more nutritional drinks.

We encourage the students to eat their own lunches. Because of potential food allergies, sharing food with other students is not permitted.

Students will also be encouraged to take home each day any food that is not eaten to avoid waste and so that you will know how much your child is eating.

Midday Recess

Students have a scheduled period of recess after or before the lunch period each day. The time allotted for this recreation time is 30 minutes. Students are supervised at all times by a member of the DePaul School staff along with approved volunteers.

School Calendar

DePaul School publishes our school calendar annually. Every student and parent/guardian will be provided with a printed calendar at the start of each school year. Parents/guardians can also obtain copies from the DePaul School website. Changes to the calendar through the school year, if any, will be sent home to parents/guardians in the students' backpacks and will be posted on the website.

Emergency changes to the calendar (such as inclement weather or a water emergency) will be posted on the major local television stations (see the section titled Emergency Closings and Delays earlier in this document). Parents will also receive a robo-call to the phone number they have provided to the school. **These two methods are our official means of notifying parents, bus drivers, etc. of the school cancellation.** Therefore, it is very important for parents to update the school of any changes to your contact information. **If your phone number changes, please notify the main office immediately.**

Social Media Role

DePaul School uses social media to promote programs and services offered throughout the school. Social media platforms are a great way to connect former students and parents/guardians with both current and future families. Our Development Department uses social media to promote events, share ideas, and to provide an insider's glimpse of student life at DePaul School.

DePaul School does not use social media to officially communicate school delays/closings or early dismissals. Parents/guardians will receive a robo-call in the event of a school delay/closing or early dismissal.

Standards of Conduct

Bullying Policy

DePaul School for Hearing and Speech is committed to providing a safe and caring place for all of our students. The administration at DePaul School has determined that a safe and civil environment is necessary for students to learn and achieve academic success. We will treat each other with respect and will refuse to tolerate bullying or harassment of any kind on school property.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is defined as any action that makes a child feel uncomfortable, insecure, or threatened. The school disapproves of bullying in all forms whether it is verbal, physical, or psychological assault and considers it a serious offense. Students are taught that we have a no tolerance policy in regard to bullying and that they should alert a teacher immediately if they are a victim of bullying. Demonstration of appropriate behavior, treating others with

civility and respect, and refusing to tolerate bullying or harassment is expected of all administration, staff, and volunteers in order to provide a positive example for student behavior.

Implementation of the Policy

This policy will be included in the school's Handbook of Policies so it is accessible to all staff. Teachers will discuss this policy with their students at the beginning of each school year in an age-appropriate manner and the students will receive classroom instruction in bullying prevention.

Consequences/Sanctions Imposed for Bullying

Bullying will not be tolerated in any form. DePaul School will provide for appropriate and consistent consequences for isolated instances of bullying and greater consequences for chronic or more serious bullying offenses.

The consequences will range from:

- Referral to Administration
- Asked to provide a genuine apology to the victim
- Loss of a privilege
- Development of a behavior contract for the bully to sign
- Referral to psychologist for conflict resolution
- Suspension or expulsion, only in the most severe of cases.

Drugs and Alcohol

Any student who on school grounds, during a school session, or anywhere at a school-sponsored activity is under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or mood altering substances shall be subject to discipline including referral to the local school district for possible discipline up to and including expulsion depending upon the severity and repetition of the offense. The same applies to any student who possesses, uses, dispenses, sells, or aids in the procurement of alcohol, narcotics, restricted drugs, or mood altering substances.

Through the use of curriculum, classroom activities, community support and resources, a strong and consistent administrative and faculty effort, and rehabilitative and disciplinary procedures, DePaul School will work to educate, prevent, and intervene in the use and abuse of all drug, alcohol, and mood altering substances by the entire student population through the Student Assistance Program (SAP).

These guidelines are intended to provide a consistent minimum disciplinary means to respond to drug and alcohol related incidents. Any alternative placement of the student shall be addressed by the Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) team.

Smoking and Tobacco

DePaul School for Hearing and Speech, in recognition of the health and safety hazards associated with the use of tobacco, shall prohibit the use and/or possession of tobacco by all students on school grounds, during a school session, or anywhere at a school-sponsored activity. This includes lit or unlit cigarettes, e-cigarettes, cigars, pipe or smokeless tobacco in any form, including, but not limited to, snuff and chewing tobacco. Students found to be in violation of this policy shall be subject to discipline including referral to the local school district for possible discipline up to and including expulsion depending upon the severity and repetition of the offense. These measures may be in addition to any fines imposed by the Magistrate for violation of local fire codes.

Through the use of curriculum, classroom activities, community support and resources, a strong and consistent administrative and faculty effort, and rehabilitative and disciplinary procedures, DePaul School will work to educate, prevent, and intervene in smoking and the use of tobacco by the entire student population through the Student Assistance Program (SAP).

Discipline

DePaul School uses a positive approach to discipline, giving clear, consistent rules and expecting and/or helping all students to follow them. School rules are posted in each classroom. The rules and possible consequences are explained by the teachers and reviewed with the students on a regular basis.

Infractions to the rules will be viewed as a learning opportunity. When possible, the student will be engaged in a discussion about the situation or the choice that they made and will be guided in thinking about what needs to be done to fix the problem. Depending on the age and developmental level of the student, he or she may be included in deciding the appropriate consequence for his/her actions.

Consequences may be:

- Time out within the classroom
- A supervised time out in another designated area of the school
- Loss of privilege, such as a loss of minutes of recreation or all of recreation
- In-school suspension.

Student Wellness Policy

The DePaul School recognizes that student wellness and proper nutrition are related to students' physical well-being, growth, development and readiness to learn. The school recognizes its responsibility to provide a safe and healthy learning environment for all students that will include proper nutrition, nutrition education and physical activity as part of

the total learning experience. The children at DePaul School will learn about and participate in positive dietary and lifestyle practices that can improve student achievement.

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines to ensure the health and well-being of all students through nutrition education, physical activity, and the selection of nourishing foods and beverages.

Nutrition Education

Students in Preschool through Level 8 will receive nutrition education that will provide the knowledge and skills needed to lead healthy lives. Consistent nutrition messages will be disseminated throughout the school to reinforce these teachings.

Staff will be encouraged to teach nutrition education when appropriate through content integration in curricular areas such as math and science. Nutrition education shall complement but not replace the existing standards.

Physical Education and Activity

The DePaul School for Hearing and Speech recognizes the value of physical education towards promoting a healthy lifestyle. The primary goal of our physical activity component is to provide students the knowledge and skills for physical activities, encourage self-discipline, develop motor skills, and build attitudes essential to a lifelong physically active lifestyle.

A physical education program shall be provided to students attending DePaul School from Kindergarten through Level 8. All students will receive age-appropriate, quality physical education following a curriculum derived from the PA standards.

Recess/Recreation

All students will have at least 30 minutes per day during which the school should encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity. Exceptions may be made by the Director of Pupil Services for circumstances such as shortened days and special events.

School Lunch Policy and Nutrition Guidelines

The National Association of State Boards of Education recommends that students be given adequate time to eat lunch. This is defined as at least 20 minutes from the time the student is seated. DePaul School will provide a 30 minute lunch period for all students.

Competitive Foods

The USDA defines competitive foods as foods offered at school other than the meals served through the school lunch program. The DePaul School does not have any vending machines on site offering food or beverage products for the children or staff. We also do not have a school store in which food products can be purchased.

Classroom Parties

Classroom parties will offer a minimal amount of foods (maximum 2-3 items) that include sugar as a primary ingredient. Students will have the option for a snack that does not include sugar as a primary ingredient. Water, 100% fruit juice or low fat milk will be offered as the beverage choices.

Classroom Snacks

Snacks given during the school day should reinforce the importance of healthy choices. Teachers should consider snack time as a teachable moment in nutrition education.

Transition and Mainstreaming

DePaul School's mission is to provide our students with the academic, communication, and social skills to succeed in school district-based programs. The students' parents or guardians, along with DePaul School staff and school district personnel, will develop a transition plan appropriate for the student. The transition plan will include academic, speech, audiological, social support and, when possible, partial mainstreaming. DePaul School staff will participate in transition and IEP meetings throughout the transition process. Our staff is also available to provide professional development sessions to assist school districts in supporting our students and families.

Transportation

Transportation to and from the school is the responsibility of the parents/guardians and the public school district in which a student resides. **Parents should inform the transportation provider and the school if students will not be arriving at school or going home from school on the regularly scheduled van/bus.**

Students are expected to behave properly on the van/bus. Inappropriate behaviors will be reported to the school. Failure of a student to comply with safety rules on vans/buses may result in suspension or termination of transportation services.

Authorized Pick-up

If there is a change in a child's transportation plans, the child's parent or guardian must notify the school office. If the parent/guardian will not be picking up the child, he/she must provide DePaul School with name(s) of person(s) who will. The person picking up the child must present a photo ID that corresponds to the name provided.

Parental Custody

By law, if parents are legally separated or divorced, each parent has equal access to the custody of the child unless a parent has a court order indicating which parent has custody of the child and/or that the parents have a specific custody schedule. To exclude a parent from

picking up a child, the school must have a copy of the court order on file; otherwise, either parent may pick up the child from school with proper identification.

Weapons

No weapon may be brought onto school property, including but not limited to, the school building, outdoor areas, outdoor facilities, school buses, or to any school related activity. A weapon shall include, but not be limited to: any knife, cutting instrument, cutting tool, nun-chuck stick, firearm, rifle or any other tool, instrument or implement capable of inflicting bodily injury, which is possessed under circumstances not manifestly appropriate for lawful uses which it may have. This includes firearms that are not loaded or lack a clip or other component to render it immediately operable. A person in possession of a weapon on school property violates state criminal statutes and school regulations, and shall be subject to the following discipline and penalty:

1. Parents/guardians will be immediately notified
2. The local police will be called.

Toy Weapons

In order to discourage violent behavior, students are not to bring toy weapons to school for any reason, including Halloween costumes. If a toy weapon is found, it will be kept in the school office until the end of the day.

School Safety

School Security Plan

All school doors are locked at all times. Camera surveillance of the school doors is maintained during regular hours of operation by the front desk attendant who unlocks them once they are made aware of the reason a person is requesting to enter the school.

The main entrance at the front of the building is the only entrance that visitors may use. This includes parents/guardians, board members, vendors, and those coming for scheduled meetings. Upon entering, all guests must go into the front office and sign in. All visitors will be given a Visitor badge to be worn at all times in the building and must wait to be escorted to their meeting by school staff.

Only visitors who cannot do steps may use the side entrance. They should ring the bell and wait for a school staff member to escort them to the front office.

No parent/guardian or visitor is free to move through the school building unattended except for parents/guardians dropping off and picking up students in the Little Listeners/Toddler Program.

Emergency Procedure Guides

Emergency Procedure Guides are located in every room in the building. This guide provides specific directives for administration and staff to address all crisis and emergency situations. In addition, each classroom is equipped with an emergency supply kit. Fire drills, hazardous weather drills and Lock Down drills are conducted on a regular basis so students learn proper safety procedures.

Lock Down

Our school practice includes Lock Down drills on a regular basis so every child knows what to do in an emergency. In the event of an actual emergency requiring Lock Down, after calling 911, DePaul School administration will prioritize efforts as follows:

1. Safety of the children
2. Communication to parents/guardians (details are included in the Building Evacuation Plan section which follows).

Building Evacuation Plan

Parent Notification of Evacuation:

Once everyone is safely evacuated, the parents/guardians will be notified and instructed to pick up their child at the designated evacuation place, which is across Alder Street in the

ground floor of the Sacred Heart Activities Building using the Emerson Street entrance. The individual picking up the child must sign a document stating that they have taken their child from the designated evacuation area.

No child will be released to an unauthorized person. If a parent/guardian cannot pick up their child:

- the parent/guardian must notify the administration as to whom their child should be released
- the designated person must have a photo identification to present to the school administrator
- the designated person will sign the document stating that they have taken the child from the evacuation area.

Parental Involvement and Support

We consider parents and guardians our partners in the education of our children. We encourage you to become actively involved in the opportunities we provide throughout the school year. Periodically the DePaul School staff offers workshops, webinars and parent education programs based on the responses to our annual parent survey.

Conferences and School Reports

Parent conferences are scheduled during the fall semester with the student's teacher(s) and speech language pathologist(s). Conferences are designed to share progress, address concerns and identify ways that the child can be supported at home. This is also a time to discuss behavioral or other concerns that may need to be addressed to ensure academic achievement.

Individual Educational Program (IEP)

Annually parents/guardians also participate as a member of the IEP team to plan or update their child's educational goals and objectives. Written progress reports on IEP goals are sent home quarterly.

If a parent/guardian would like to meet with the teacher(s) at any other time he or she should contact the teacher and schedule an appointment.

Parent Mentoring

Other parents/guardians of children with hearing loss are often the best resource for families when they first learn of their child's diagnosis. Just knowing that other parents/guardians face similar situations, hopes and fears can bring comfort and support. New parents/guardians, at their request, will be paired with current or former DePaul School parents/guardians to provide consultation and support.

Parent Group

DePaul School has an active parent group that plans and organizes events for the DePaul School students, such as the book fair, the Angel Tree and at times a Back to School Social Event. This group also plans fundraisers such as a Night at the Races or a candle sale to raise money for the student activity fund. This money raised for the student activity fund is used to support departmental and school-wide field trips as well as other special in-house programs that support the academic goals of the students. This fund has also provided recreation equipment, special classroom equipment and specific materials requested by the teachers. Each year we encourage parents and guardians to participate in the leadership team for the parent group or to support the fundraisers and activities in various ways.

Health Services

Health Emergency Forms

A Health Information Form and a Student Emergency Information Form must be completed each year. Parents/guardians must list telephone numbers where they can be reached during the school day in the event of an emergency. In addition, names and numbers of three other family members or friends must be provided in case the parent/guardian cannot be reached.

Immunization Records and Medical Requirements

Immunization records must be complete before any child may enter school.

The following requirements are from the Allegheny County Health Departments:

Effective July 2008, but enacted on September 30, 2009, the Allegheny County Health Department mandated that all public, private, parochial, cyber and home-school students in Allegheny County will not be permitted to attend school without proof of receiving the required immunizations.

Immunizations required for students in all grades K-12:

- 4 doses of tetanus vaccine (1 dose must have been given on or after the 4th birthday)
Note: If series is started after 7 years of age, only 3 doses are required.
- 4 doses of diphtheria vaccine (1 dose must have been given on or after the 4th birthday)
Note: If series is started after 7 years of age, only 3 doses are required.
- 4 doses of polio vaccine (Dose 4 is not necessary if dose 3 was administered at age 4 or older and at least 6 months after the previous dose)
- 2 doses of measles, mumps, rubella vaccine (Usually given as MMR)
- 3 doses of hepatitis B vaccine (Dose 2 must be given at least 1 month after the dose 1. Dose 3 must be given at least 2 months after dose 2 and at least 4 – 6 months after dose 1.)
- 2 doses of varicella vaccine, or written statement from physician/designee indicating month and year of disease or serologic proof of immunity

Additional immunizations required for students on the first day of 7th grade (or age 12):

- 1 dose of tetanus/diphtheria/pertussis vaccine (Tdap)
- 1 dose of meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MCV4)

It is very important that students receive all required immunizations. Students that do not have the doses listed above must receive the required dose within the first five days of school or risk exclusion. If the next dose is not the final dose of a series, parents must provide a medical plan within the first five days of school. Children failing to show official documentation or a medical plan within the first five days of school will be unable to attend school.

Source: Pittsburgh Public Schools website <https://www.pghschools.org/Page/388>

The only exemptions to the school laws for immunizations are:

- Medical reasons;
- Religious beliefs; or
- Philosophical/strong moral or ethical conviction.

If your child is exempt from immunizations, he or she may be removed from school if there is an outbreak.

For kindergarten students: As of August 2017, there is a five-day provisional period for all students entering kindergarten needing to be up-to-date on their vaccinations. Within five days from the first day of school, up-to-date immunization records (at least a single dose upon entry) must be received or a letter from the doctor's office stating when the child has an appointment to receive the shots that are still needed.

If immunizations are not medically advised at this time, a physician must write a note for a medical exemption. Free immunizations may be received at the Allegheny County Health Department by calling 412-578-8060 to make an appointment.

Medical, Dental, Vision Examinations and Other Screenings

Medical examinations / physicals are required for all children entering school in Kindergarten or first grade and for all children in sixth grade at age 11 or 12.

Dental screenings occur in Kindergarten, 1st, 3rd, and 7th grades. The screening may be completed by the family dentist or the school district.

The school nurse administers a vision screening. The nurse also does a Body Mass Index assessment and takes height and weight measurements each year. Results from these screenings are reported to the parents.

Administration of Medication

The DePaul School for Hearing and Speech recognizes that parents/guardians have the primary responsibility for the health of their children. It also recognizes that many children are able to attend school because of the effective use of medication in the treatment of chronic disabilities or illnesses. The DePaul School believes that every effort should be made to administer medication at home and many medications can be obtained in an extended release version. However, any student who is required to take medication during the regular school day must comply with school regulations. These are necessary for the protection of both the student and the school personnel. Only essential medications will be given at school, with the parent/guardian taking full responsibility for any medication sent into the school.

The Pennsylvania Department of Education has determined that medication (either prescription or non-prescription) can only be administered to students by the school nurse. Additionally the following requirements must be met:

- A completed Medication Authorization Form with signatures of both the parent(s)/guardian(s) and physician is provided to the DePaul School for each medication.
- The medications are provided to the school nurse in properly labeled prescription containers as described on the Medication Authorization Form.
- The parent or guardian must communicate to the Director of Education when medication is sent to the school with the student. This step assures that the medication is not left in the child's backpack, pocket, etc. The communication with the Director of Education can be via phone call or text, but not through a note in the child's backpack.

No one else at the DePaul School is authorized to administer medication in the absence of the school nurse. Parents and guardians have the following options in this situation:

- The parent/guardian can come to the school to administer the medication.
- The child will need to miss the medication.
- The child who is sick should stay home if needing medication and it is known that the school nurse is out.

In the rare cases where medication must be given at school, the following guidelines for the supply of medication to be kept at school are as follows:

- Single day supply for short-term illness.
- Up to 30 days' supply for long-term chronic illness. This would afford the nurse the opportunity to meet with the parent(s)/guardian(s) and discuss the child's response

to the medication, etc. The amount of medication stored by the school should be based on the length of time medications are to be administered and other individual factors.

Allergies

It is the family's responsibility to notify the school of a child's allergies. It is required that any treats sent to school be peanut-free because of the allergies of some of our students. Due to the growing number of students who have an allergy or sensitivity to latex, no balloons will be permitted unless they are Mylar.

Students Who Are Sick

For the health of students and staff, parents/guardians are expected to keep sick children at home.

At DePaul School, it is our hope for the children to be happy and healthy so they can be in the classroom learning. However, sometimes illness/injury requires a trip to the school nurse's office. The school nurse will assess each child, and based upon findings, make a decision regarding whether that child may return to the classroom or not. The following are guidelines we use here at DePaul School to determine the need for exclusion:

- Colds/Sore throat: A student will not be excluded from school for a mild cold or sore throat unless exhibiting a fever or white dots can be seen on the throat. However, please do not send your child if they do not feel well enough to remain focused in the classroom.
- Conjunctivitis (Pink eye): A child that is suspected to have pink eye will be excluded and will be asked to be evaluated at the doctor due to the highly contagious nature of this condition.
- Cough: A student will not be excluded from school for a cough unless there are accompanying symptoms of infection, such as a fever. If coughing is severe in nature, causing color change or breathing difficulties, the child will be sent home. If your child is coughing, and has no other symptoms, we may ask the child to wear a mask to protect others.
- COVID: Any child who has tested positive for COVID must quarantine until symptom free for 48 hours without medication. Afterward, the child will need to wear a mask for 5 days even if asymptomatic.

Any child who has been exposed to COVID (within 6 feet for more than 15 minutes) will be expected to wear a mask for a period of 5 days.

The school nurse will continue to provide us with current best practices, and will serve as the liaison in gathering information from parents/guardians and communicating with school administrators to make decisions.

- Diarrhea or Vomiting: A student who has two or more occurrences of diarrhea within a school day will be excluded. A student who vomits will be asked to go home unless the cause of vomiting can be determined as a reason other than illness (i.e., car sickness, vomiting after crying, etc.). STUDENTS SHOULD NOT RETURN TO SCHOOL UNTIL 24 HOURS AFTER LAST VOMITING EPISODE.
- Fever: A student will be excluded from the classroom for a temperature of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher. STUDENTS SHOULD NOT RETURN TO SCHOOL UNTIL FEVER FREE WITHOUT MEDICATION FOR 24 HOURS.
- Headache: A student will not be excluded from school for a headache. They may come to the school nurse's office and receive medication if they have permission on file for this. They will be permitted to lie down in the school nurse's office for a short time and then return to class. If the headache is severe, a parent/guardian will be notified and they can come to pick up their child.
- Lice: Children will be excluded from school if found to have head lice until they are treated. A child with live lice will not be readmitted to school. If nits are found and can be removed, a child MAY be readmitted at the discretion of the school nurse.
- Pain: Any unexplained pain will be assessed and reported to the parents/guardians immediately.
- Rash: A student will be excluded from school for any unidentified rash that has an accompanying fever, is spreading or worsening as the day progresses or appears to be contagious. A student may be excluded from school if he/she has an open rash, he/she cannot control scratching, or if the rash is not covered.
- Stomach ache: A student who complains of a stomach ache with no other symptoms will be permitted to rest in the nurse's office for a short time if they choose. Ginger ale may be offered.

** These are guidelines--Students will be assessed in the school nurse's office on an individual basis and a decision will be made from there that is in the best interest of the child.

Student Health Emergency

Basic first aid will be provided for any cuts, falls, bumps, bruises, etc. A child with any injury requiring more than basic first aid will be sent home to receive medical evaluation or if warranted, to an Emergency Room. It is essential that parents/guardians complete and return the annual Student Emergency Information Form. Parents/guardians, or if needed, other authorized individuals per the Student Emergency Information Form, will be contacted.

The School Nurse, Director of Education, or any other individual designated by the Director of Education, shall accompany the student to the medical facility and shall remain with the student until the parent, guardian or person designated on the Student Emergency Information Form has arrived at the medical facility.

Clinical Services

Audiological Services

The Audiology Department of DePaul School for Hearing and Speech has one, full time audiologist on staff to provide a full range of audiological services including:

- annual, comprehensive audiograms
- routine data logging, as needed
- monitoring audiograms for progressive and fluctuating hearing loss
- troubleshooting hearing aids, cochlear implants, and digital modulation (DM) systems
- cochlear implant MAPping/programming (*see below)
- cochlear implant progress assessments
- provision of loaner cochlear implant external equipment, hearing aids, and DM systems
- monitoring middle ear function via tympanometry
- submitting cochlear implant service/replacement/upgrade requests

Use of Hearing Aids and Cochlear Implants

Your child needs to hear the sounds of speech in order to develop listening and speaking. The goal is for your child to wear his/her hearing aids and/or cochlear implants during **all** waking hours. The DePaul School audiologist can monitor students' use of their auditory equipment, both at school and at home. If there are concerns, we will work with you to set goals that will lead to consistent device use during all waking hours.

If you are currently experiencing difficulty with your child not wearing his/her hearing aids or cochlear implants, please reach out to your child's DePaul School audiologist immediately:

Dr. Tessa Wirt @ 412-924-1023 or tessaw@depaulhearingandspeech.org

Cochlear Implant Program

DePaul School for Hearing and Speech's Audiology Department is recognized as a full-service cochlear implant center by all three major manufacturers: Cochlear Americas, Advanced Bionics, and Med-El. Our audiologist is not meant to replace your child's managing audiologist for routine programming or "MAPping"; however, our audiologist is able to provide on-site programming if necessary. A discussion will take place with both you and your child's managing audiologist when there is a need or request to complete any programming at school.

If your child becomes a cochlear implant candidate while a DePaul School student, our audiologist will provide information and support to your family as you consider a cochlear

implant for your child. Our audiologist will also work collaboratively with your child's managing audiologist to help determine cochlear implant candidacy. In addition, we provide a play preparation program, which includes a customized cochlear implant storybook and dramatic play using operating room props.

Batteries

Children are expected to have batteries supplied from their homes available for use at school throughout the school year. It is recommended that you supply one pack of batteries or one rechargeable battery for each device on the first day of school. If your child has Pennsylvania Medical Assistance, you can receive free batteries through UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh each month. Please contact your managing audiologist for more information about this.

Batteries are typically stored in your child's backpack for ease of access. In the event that your child does not have spare batteries and needs them for class, DePaul School will provide batteries.

Please note that disposable batteries for hearing aids and cochlear implants are a choking hazard. If you do not want your child to have access to their batteries, please deliver them directly to their classroom teacher.

Rechargeable Batteries for CI

Should your child's rechargeable cochlear implant battery die during the school day, the Audiology Department will recharge your child's battery and loan a DePaul School-labeled rechargeable battery (if available) during class. In addition to an extra rechargeable battery, your child should have the battery holder (rack) for the disposable 675 Power One Implant Plus batteries in their backpack. If you are experiencing excessive battery drain or need extra rechargeable batteries, please contact the DePaul School audiologist.

Hearing Aid and Cochlear Implant Supplies

The Audiology Department stocks a variety of supplies for your child's hearing technology, including earmold tubing, Dry-briks for DryNStore units, and Otosilk, provided at a reasonable cost.

Ear-related Medical Concerns

If you have concerns regarding the health of your child's ears (e.g.: infection, magnet-site irritation, reports of pain), please contact both your child's ENT physician or PCP **and** the DePaul School audiologist. Although we are able to provide a preliminary assessment (e.g. otoscopic inspection, tympanometry), we cannot diagnose ear infections. We will work with your child's PCP/Otologist as well as managing audiologists to provide any useful information.

Servicing Hearing Aids and Cochlear Implants

It is important to ensure optimal functioning of your child's hearing aids and/or cochlear implant speech processors. Your child's hearing technology will be checked each morning by his or her homeroom teacher, or by the school audiologist. If you discover a problem when performing daily listening checks of your child's auditory technology, please report this to the school audiologist for timely resolution. Additionally, please inform the school audiologist when your child receives a new map so that the new map may be uploaded and stored on our manufacturer-specific database.

Loaner Equipment

In the event of cochlear implant (CI) external equipment (processor, cable/coil) problems or malfunctioning hearing aids during the school day, the Audiology Department is typically (depending on availability) able to provide loaner equipment, labeled with a "DePaul" sticker. The loaner equipment can be used throughout the school day but is not to be taken home. If your child does not have functioning back-up equipment at home, please contact the school audiologist. Furthermore, if current maps are not loaded to your child's back-up processor, this can be performed by the DePaul School audiologist.

If you have any questions or concerns about your child's audiological needs, please feel free to contact:

Dr. Tessa Wirt @ 412-924-1023 or tessaw@depaulhearingandspeech.org

Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy

PT/OT is provided during the school day for students who have been identified as needing these services based on a standardized assessment. Parents/guardians, DePaul School staff or school district staff may request a PT or OT assessment. Parents/guardians must sign a permission form before the assessment can begin. If a child is eligible to receive PT or OT, an IEP meeting will be scheduled to discuss the results of the assessment to add goals and services. Finally, in order for a child who is eligible for PT to begin services, a script from his/her doctor is required.

Psychological Services

The school psychologist is responsible for the development of Initial Evaluation Reports and Reevaluation Reports every two years as required by the state. The school psychologist administers cognitive assessments and is responsible for coordinating information provided by classroom teachers, speech language pathologists, and PT/OT for the evaluation reports.

Student Assistance Program

The Student Assistance Program (SAP) is available to offer supportive services to students experiencing academic, behavioral and/or emotional difficulties that may pose barriers to

success in school. Students can be referred to the SAP by parents, guardians, school personnel, peers or self-referrals. The SAP team is comprised of specially trained school staff. The goal of the SAP team is to work with parents and guardians to offer support and recommendations for the child. When barriers are beyond the scope of the school, the SAP team can provide information so families may access community resources. Parents who feel that they or their child would benefit from support of the SAP team should contact the school.

Family Handbook

Revised: October, 2023