



ACHIEVEMENT CENTER OF TEXAS
"Special needs, our specialty."

Operation Policies Parent Handbook

Updated 2023

Mission:

It is the mission of the Achievement Center of Texas to provide quality Individualized Skills and Socialization (life skills training), arts exploration, educational assistance, and community inclusion for adults and adolescents with disabilities.

Values:

The Achievement Center of Texas respects the rights of its students and their families to make their own decisions regarding the types of services they want to participate in. Individualized Skills and Socialization is a choice and the Achievement Center staff will support them in those choices, whenever possible.

*"It is our unlimited power to care and to love that makes the biggest difference in the quality of our lives."
-Anthony Robbins*

Hours of Operations/ Student Attendance:

The Achievement Center of Texas is open Monday through Friday from 8am to 5pm, 12 months per year. We require that students attend for at least 5 hours during the Individualized Skills and Socialization program. This helps ensure students can participate in all of the offered activities and so that we can submit billing for a full day of services rendered to your provider. Parents must sign students in/out upon arrival and departure. Students must be picked up no later than 5pm. **Students who are not picked up by 5pm will incur a charge of \$3 per minute until the student is picked up.** There is no flexibility in this fee and all late fees must be paid weekly. If late fees are left unpaid or a balance incurs, we will suspend all services outside of Individualized Skills and Socialization hours.

Achievement Center of Texas closings are as follows:

- ★ New Years' Day (the day before or after if it falls on a weekend)
- ★ Memorial Day
- ★ 4th of July
- ★ Labor Day
- ★ Thanksgiving Day and the day after
- ★ 3 days for Christmas (subject to change)
- ★ 1 day each quarter for staff training (TBD)

Students are expected to attend year round; each student is allotted two weeks of vacation without risk of losing their spot at the Achievement Center. All absences will be tracked and if a student falls below 85% attendance, they may lose their spot in the program. If you are an agency student this is especially important because we only get paid for days that the student attends.

Immunization Requirements:

Immunization records are required for all students. Parents are required to provide a copy of the most current immunizations. If there is a reason, due to your child's special needs, that he or she can not get certain immunization, please provide the center with a letter from your physician as to why they cannot get the particular immunization at this time. If the parent/guardian chooses not to have their child receive particular immunizations, they are responsible for providing the Achievement Center of Texas an Affidavit for Exemption from Immunizations through the Texas Health and Human Services dept. These must be updated annually.

Student Illness/Medical Information:

We strive to maintain the highest standards of health in our program. Parents/Guardians are required to pick up students within 30 minutes of notification of an illness. If a parent/guardian is unable to pick the student up in that time frame, they are responsible for arranging another person to meet this timeline. Failure to pickup your student within one hour of notification will result in disciplinary action including but not limited to termination of services.

Students should refrain from attending with

1. Oral temperature of 100 degrees or greater
2. Signs and symptoms of possible severe illness such as lethargy, abnormal breathing, more than one episode of vomiting or diarrhea, rash with fever, drastic behavior changes, or other signs that the student may be severely ill
3. A healthcare professional has diagnosed the student with a communicable disease, and the student does not have medical documentation to indicate that he/she is no longer contagious
4. An injury that warrants or may warrant further medical attention, other than basic first aid
5. Any condition that our staff has evaluated through a physical assessment that may indicate that the student may require further treatment, evaluation, or care that cannot be provided by the center.

Students who are sent home with fever, vomiting, or diarrhea will not be allowed to return to the center until they have had no vomiting or diarrhea for a full 24 hours and/or a temperature of less than 99.9 degrees for a full 24 hours with no medication. If the student arrives at the center without these requirements met, they will be refused admission. **There are no exceptions to this rule.**

Enrollment Procedures:

Individuals wishing to attend the Achievement Center of Texas submit an application and a one time \$35 application fee. **The application fee is non- refundable and does not guarantee placement.**

Once submitted, our admissions team will contact you to schedule a time to tour the facility. We require that parents/guardians as well as the student attend the tour to ensure correct placement in our programs. Tours are available by appointment only and will take place on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 9am and 10am.

A closing interview with the family will take place to conclude the enrollment process. Once a decision has been made, our admissions team will contact you regarding next steps.

If your student receives Individualized Skills and Socialization services through the Texas Medicaid Waiver Program, we must contract with your HCS agency in order for your services to be covered through your agency. If we do not already have a contract with your agency we will need to determine whether we will be able to establish a contract with them.

Due to the fact that we have many differing regulations, parents are asked to complete the entire application and include any necessary paperwork as requested. Not submitting completed paperwork may delay a student's start time. All paperwork must be in place prior to the start date; which includes but is not limited to, the application, goals and progress notes, special needs training, level of need and the paperwork required from your agency, such as a contract in place.

All students at the Achievement Center of Texas are placed on an initial 90-day trial period. This gives an adequate amount of time for the student, parents, agency, and center to determine whether the student placement is a "good fit" for all parties. Acceptance into the program is determined upon the availability of space and assessing

the individual's needs. Achievement Center of Texas reserves the right to deny enrollment to any individual that we feel we would not be able to serve appropriately. The Achievement Center of Texas requests to be in attendance at your students annual meetings. It is important for us to be able to communicate with all parties involved in the planning of the students annual plan. Our participation will help us set appropriate goals and objectives and ensure that the students' needs and offsite requirements are met. We are more than happy to host the annual meeting at our facility for the students' convenience.

Parents are encouraged to call the Center at (972) 414-7700 if they have any questions or if there will be any delays in completing the paperwork prior to the start date.

If any of the policies of the Achievement Center are changed for any reason, parents will be notified 2 weeks prior to the change taking place.

Procedures for dispensing medications:

Students requiring medication administration must bring that medication in its original container and the prescription must match the doctor's order in the student's file. The nurse (or a delegated staff) will not administer any medications that are not in the original container or ones that do not match the physician's prescription. If a physician makes a change in the student's medication, that physician must fill out a new medication form. If a student does not take medication at the Achievement Center, the bottom part of the form must be filled out with all the medications the student does take so we have that information in case of emergency. This information must be kept current. If a student takes no medication, the medication form should state "no medication taken".

Medical Emergencies:

If a medical emergency occurs, the parent or guardian will be notified immediately. The emergency medical authorization to treat is included in the student's application and must be filled, signed, and notarized prior to the student starting services. We have a notary on site for your convenience, however, you must make an appointment with them to have your forms notarized. It is the Achievement Center's policy to take the student to the family's choice of hospital, however, depending on the emergency, the Achievement Center will abide by the direction of the physician or paramedics. If the situation is not serious, our nurse will tend to the student's injury or illness. In either case, we will notify the parent or guardian.

Injuries:

Minor Injuries: minor injuries will be cared for at the Center. Parents will be notified of injuries by the staff. All our staff is certified in CPR and First Aid.

Serious injuries: Serious injuries will require immediate notification of parents. Please make sure emergency numbers are up to date. If parents cannot be contacted, emergency procedures for the campus will involve the ACT nurse, paramedics and/or police. The student will be taken to the nearest hospital, which is Methodist Richardson Memorial Hospital.

Community Inclusion:

Achievement Center of Texas strives to engage students on and off-campus through our Community Inclusion program. Outings will be made available online and the monthly newsletter will be sent out on the first Monday of the month. It is the responsibility of caregivers to log into their account through our website and sign up for the trips that their student would like to attend. Payment will be accepted online as a part of the sign-up process or may be added manually to the account as credit if submitted via cash or check. If outings are not selected by the deadline each month, we will assume you are declining participation in off-site outings. Due to staffing requirements, we may not be able to serve students who choose not to participate in off-site activities.

Parental Notification:

Information to parents comes in various methods. Incidents will be shared with parents verbally and in a written incident report, which requires a parent's signature. General information is posted on the front bulletin board, comes in the ACT newsletter, or the ACT website. Other information may be written and placed in envelopes and taped to the reception desk. In emergencies, parents will be notified by phone. Program changes will be shared with parents at face to face meetings with the parent, Executive Director, Admissions Coordinator, an agency case worker at a present meeting time or at the individual student's annual planning conference. Minor changes to services, such as regard to volunteer or enrichment programs can be addressed through email or phone communication with parent or guardian and agency, if necessary.

Discipline and Guidance Practices:

It is the policy of the Achievement Center of Texas to provide our services in the least restrictive manner possible. We do not permit corporal punishment (use of force, hitting, striking, binding, secluding students in locked rooms, locking students out of classrooms, etc.) Achievement Center of Texas reserves the right to discontinue services immediately if the organization determines the student is a threat to the safety of other students or staff, requires a level of supervision that we are unable to provide, or hinders our ability to serve others. As an Individualized Skills and Socialization program, we cannot provide prolonged "one on one" care. Behaviors including (but not limited to) elopement, physical aggression, destruction of property, disruption of planned activities can be grounds for immediate dismissal as it compromises the ability of our staff to serve all the other students effectively and safely. If staff calls the caregiver to pick up the student due to behavioral issues, they must be picked up within one hour of the phone call.

A copy of the Achievement Center of Texas Disciplinary Action Plan is included in your student's application packet. It is required that the parents/guardians read this document to better understand the steps involved in the Disciplinary Action Plan at the Achievement Center of Texas.

Grievance Procedure:

We are committed to respecting the concerns and opinions of all of our families. The staff of the center is available to discuss any concerns or challenges parents face in the program. In the event an issue is not resolvable within the staff, the Executive Director is the person to contact.

Open Door Policy:

It is the policy of Achievement Center of Texas to maintain an open door policy. Parents or guardians may visit the center at any time without an appointment. Parents may come into the office to discuss any concerns or problems with the staff, as there is always one of the administrative staff available to sit down and discuss any concerns or listen to suggestions from parents. Some of the greatest ideas for improvements come from parents.

Parents may also come in and talk to the director anytime they are on-site and available. The parents or guardians may schedule appointments with the Director and other pertinent participants if a meeting is needed to make changes in the student's program, to discuss any concerns, or answer any questions.

Therapy:

The Achievement Center of Texas will allow therapists and other professional visitors to meet with students. Therapists can rent our meeting room or sensory lab (limited hours) for \$10/hr and must inform the center of their intent to hold a therapy session. Some providers prohibit therapies and Individualized Skills and Socialization services from being rendered simultaneously. We reserve the right to deny therapist requests to hold sessions on campus.

Meals and food service practices:

Achievement Center of Texas does not serve lunches. Due to the wide variety of special diets of our students as well as specific food requirements and allergies, parents/caregivers are responsible for preparing the student's lunch and sending it labeled with the student's name and any particular instructions. Students who are tube fed must have formula sent for them daily. The Achievement Center does provide a snack in the afternoon. We strive to provide a healthy, nutritious snack for our students. For those with food allergies or dietary restrictions, the parent/caregiver is asked to provide the appropriate snack for their student. Only lunches in paper or plastic bags labeled with the student's name will be able to be refrigerated. Health standards do not allow for traditional lunch boxes including, but not limited to: cloth, vinyl or plastic, to be kept in the center refrigerator.

Transportation:

Achievement Center of Texas does not transport students to and from the center from their homes, nor do we pick up students from school. We do, however, transport students on field trips or to their community inclusion activities. A permission slip to transport your student is included in your application. Please be assured that every safety measure has been considered in transporting students and staff are trained to make sure these safety measures are implemented.

Field Trips:

Achievement Center of Texas strives to engage students on and off-campus through our Community Inclusion program. Outings will be made available on Bookeo and the monthly newsletter will be sent on or before the first of the month. It is the responsibility of caregivers to log into their Bookeo account through our website and sign up for the trips that their student would like to attend. Payment will be accepted online as a part of the sign-up process or may be added manually to the account as credit if submitted via

cash or check. If outings are not selected by the deadline each month, we will assume you are declining participation in off-site outings. Due to staffing requirements, we may not be able to serve students who choose not to participate in off-site activities.

Water Activities:

Achievement Center of Texas does provide the students with opportunities to enjoy water activities in the summer. Schedules for water activities are posted and included in your summer activity calendar. It is important that parents inform staff of any special needs of the student such as earplugs, special suntan lotions, swallowing water, seizures, etc. We want the student's water activity experiences to be very enjoyable, safe, and healthy. Water activity permission slips are included in the student application and must be signed and dated annually.

Animals:

As a rule, the Achievement Center does not permit animals onsite except for fish, hamsters, or birds. However, it is the policy of the Achievement Center to allow student's opportunities to interact with various animals in a controlled environment as a learning objective. Occasionally we will arrange for animals to be brought in from the Heard Museum or the Dallas Zoo. If any animal is on the premises, there will be a posting on the front door stating what animal is on the premises. Animals brought into the center must have all of their shots and a record provided by a vet stating that the animal is in good health.

Celebrations:

The Achievement Center of Texas will have celebrations for most major holidays. We will notify caregivers in advance of these celebrations with more details.

We will celebrate the entire month's birthdays the first Friday of each month immediately following lunch. The center will provide a cake for the celebration.

Parental Participation with students:

Parents are welcome to visit the center at any time and observe their student or the center's operations and program activities without securing prior approval. Parents may accompany students on field trips, help with classroom activities, and have lunch with their student or just visit the student's classroom. It is recommended that you check with

the teachers to make sure students will be on campus on the day a parent visits unless accompanying the students on a field trip. If you choose to volunteer, we ask that you be present and available to help as needed with all students. On some occasions, we will not be able to take volunteers due to restrictions on the number of people we can bring. All chaperone volunteers must register as a volunteer through our website and agree to all volunteer policies and background checks.

Social Media:

We post regularly on Facebook and Instagram. Search Achievement Center of Texas and make sure to follow us. We post pictures (see photo release in your paperwork), updates, events, and share things pertaining to our community. This will also be a means of sharing announcements in the event of inclement weather or other organizational notifications.

Custody Issues:

The center cannot legally restrict non-custodial parents from visiting their child, reviewing the child's records or picking the child up unless the center has been furnished with current filed and executed court documents. Copies of all court documents must be submitted to the center, as it is our only means of protection for your child. Our purpose is to protect the interests of the students and not to mediate differences. In cases of conflicts, the proper authorities will be contacted.

Emergency or Inclement weather closing:

We make every attempt to remain open during inclement weather, but there may be times when we experience late openings, early closings, or forced all day closings. The policy of the Achievement Center of Texas is to follow the closing schedule of the Garland Independent School District. However, we may choose to delay our openings vs closing all day. Please log onto the Achievement Center website, our social media, or check your email for the most up to date information regarding winter weather announcements.

Notice of Withdrawal:

In order to provide a smooth separation for your student from the group as well as to provide parents or guardians on the waiting list notification of an opening, we request a written 30 day notice of withdrawal. It is our policy to charge a penalty fee of one week's

care (not to exceed \$250.00) for anyone who withdraws their student without written notification.

Termination of services:

Achievement Center takes its policies and procedures seriously. They are designed with the best interest of the adults in mind for their development and welfare. Therefore, the center will terminate services for repeated violation of program policies and procedures.

When a family is found to be in violation of the rules and guidelines, the following procedures will be taken:

1. Notice to bring the situation to your attention
2. Written warning of suspension
3. Student may not attend for three days
4. Written warning of termination
5. Termination of services

Reasons for termination

1. Attendance (infrequent)
2. Fees (unpaid)
3. Medical (not up to date, as required)
4. Behavioral (disruptive or dangerous)
5. Repeated late pick up
6. Refusal to cooperate
7. Noncompliance with policies and procedures

Abuse and neglect:

In an effort to protect the interests, health and safety of students, the State of Texas requires anyone who suspects abuse or neglect to report it to the proper authorities. The center staff has been trained to identify the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect. All suspect indicators will be documented and reported. The center is required, by law, to cooperate with any investigation of abuse or neglect. You will be notified if your student is questioned as part of an investigation. If your student sustains injuries at home or on weekends, please notify the staff. All unreported or suspicious bruising,

burns, cuts, or other physical injuries MUST be reported to Adult Protective Services.
IT IS THE LAW!

Staff and Staff training:

The Achievement center provides staff that is committed to caring and nurturing the students as well as helping them achieve their individual goals. Staff is trained in a 40-hour training session each year that is broken down into four separate training days throughout the year. You will be notified of these dates in advance of closing so you will be able to make the appropriate arrangements.