

## ANNUAL PUBLIC NOTICE AND CHILD FIND



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### **Screening and Evaluation**

City Charter High School uses the following identification activities on an on-going basis for locating, identifying, and evaluating the needs of school-aged students who may require the provision of special education services.

City Charter High School has a system to collect and maintain data on child identification activities. Parents with concerns regarding their child may contact the school at any time to request an evaluation of their child that may result in a special education determination. All communication with parents will be in English or the family's native language.

City Charter High School, as prescribed in Section 1402 of the School Code, conducts vision and hearing acuity screening for all students. Academic skills, social-emotional skills, and gross and fine motor development are assessed by the classroom teachers on an on-going basis. Other screening activities include: the review of student records as they are forwarded from the student's previous school(s), the review of cumulative group achievement and ability data, health and attendance records, grades and other relevant information shared by the teachers and parents. Teacher and parent concerns should be directed to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or the Director of Special Education of the school. A parent may request that the school initiate a screening or evaluation of their child's specific needs at any time by contacting the CEO or the Director of Special Education and expressing his/her concerns.

The purpose of the screening activities is to gather information for the special education pre-referral process. This information is reviewed in an attempt to develop a strategic educational plan for the student. The information might be used to determine if a child needs additional services including special education. If it is determined that the child needs additional services, the multidisciplinary team will make recommendations relative to special education programming geared to maximize the student's learning. If a student does not make progress after the strategic education plan is implemented, parents will be asked to give written permission for further individual evaluation that might lead to a special education eligibility determination.

Parents of students who suspect that their child has a disability and is in need of special education programs or services may request a multidisciplinary team evaluation of their child through written request to any of the school's administrators.

City Charter High School has a multidisciplinary team that has been established as part of the pre-referral process. The team consists of the Director of Special Education, the Reading Specialist, a school counselor, special education teachers, general education teachers, grade level teaching associates, and the parent(s)/guardian(s). School administration and the multidisciplinary team assist teachers and parents in supporting students who are experiencing academic, behavioral, medical, emotional and social skills

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difficulties. A student may be suggested for a multidisciplinary team referral by the student's grade level team, the student's academic advisor, a school counselor or a member of the school's administration. The multidisciplinary team process is initiated by speaking with the grade level principal in regards to the student of concern. At this time, if the reading specialist has not assessed the student, with permission from the parent, the specialist will conduct reading level and comprehension assessments. The information from the assessment will be provided to teachers along with recommendation to properly support the student within the regular education classroom. This information will also be used throughout the multidisciplinary team referral process.

The academic advisor is to collect assessment data from the student's file and collect background information on the student from the previous school such as previous report cards, assessment data, health records and any information pertaining to previous support services. This information is provided to the school administrator prior to the multidisciplinary meeting. During this process, regular education teachers and the student's academic advisor monitor the effectiveness of the instructional strategies that are utilized in the regular classroom environment. The teachers are to collect two classroom-based assessments, student work, provide information regarding the student's performance in class and strategies that the teacher has utilized when working with the student. This information is to be provided on the "Student Information" worksheet for the multidisciplinary team meeting.

During the multidisciplinary team process, the team will meet to discuss the data and information provided by the teachers. A school administrator or the reading specialist will facilitate the meeting. Assessment data, background on the student's previous academic record and the information provided by the regular education teachers on the "Student Information" worksheet will be used by the team in the decision-making process. This information is also used to meet the student's specific needs by recommending modification or adaptations to the regular education program, creating interventions to address the problem and monitoring the student's response to intervention, or to document the need for further evaluation.

The Student Assistance Team (SAP) is an additional support used by City Charter High School to identify at-risk students. SAP is a cooperative effort with parents utilizing the support staff, students, and community through contracted services with a variety of healthcare facilities. It is a proactive prevention and intervention program that attempts to provide intervention before school performance is seriously compromised. The SAP Core Team of individuals is trained the SAP Model and focus on screening/intervention for students who may be experiencing drug and alcohol use, depression, anxiety, and/or family issues. Referrals to appropriate agencies and treatment facilities, aftercare for those returning from treatment, and crisis intervention are made as needed.

If it is determined that a student is in need of further evaluation, the student is referred for a formal evaluation, which requires parent permission and includes parent input. Next, a "Permission to Evaluate Consent Form" is issued to the parent to sign giving the

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school permission to conduct the evaluation. City Charter High School has 60 calendar days to complete the evaluation. After the evaluation is completed, an evaluation report is prepared which includes specific recommendations for the types of intervention necessary to meet the needs of the student and to determine the child's eligibility for special education services based upon a disability.

When the evaluation report is completed, parents are invited to a multidisciplinary team meeting to review the finds and plan for the student's needs. After the evaluation is completed and if a student is determined to be eligible for special education services, the parents are provided with a Notice of Recommended Educational Placement (NOREP), which they sign to indicate their agreement or disagreement with the recommendation. If all parties are in agreement with an evaluation report that finds a student eligible for special education services, and Individualized Education Program (IEP) will be developed. If it is determined that a student is eligible for special education and related services, individualized to meet student needs, these services are provided at no cost to the parent, in compliance with state and federal law, and are reasonably calculated to yield meaningful educational benefit and student progress.

Parent and student attendance and involvement will be encouraged at all IEP meetings. Teachers who instruct the student will also be in attendance at the IEP meeting. The IEP Team may consist of the following individuals: the parent(s), the student, the CEO or Special Education Chairperson (LEA), the school psychologist, a special education, a regular education teacher, community agency representatives, and other individuals and specialists as appropriate. Parents may also invite participants to the IEP team meeting who have knowledge or special expertise regarding their child. The IEP is developed within 30 calendar days of the completion of the evaluation report and implemented within 10 calendar days of the IEP meeting date. An IEP meeting is held at least annually after implementation of the initial IEP.

Staff will notify the parents in writing and make documented phone calls and/or electronic mail messages to coordinate efforts to arrange for a mutually convenient IEP meeting. At the conclusion of the IEP meeting, parents will be presented with a Notice of Recommended Educational Placement notice (NOREP) which enables the parent to agree or disagree with the recommended program. If parents disagree with the recommended program, the issue may be resolved through informal meeting, formal mediation, or a due process hearing. The parents will be provided with a comprehensive listing of their rights at the IEP meeting.

### **Risk Factors: Signs Your High School Student May Have a Disability**

The transition to high school can be quite difficult for students. It is a new place with new teachers, administrators, and expectations. Students are held to a high standard both academically and behaviorally. While students with disabilities are often identified in elementary and middle school, some students reach high school before they are identified

as needing specially designed instruction. Some common signs of students with disabilities are listed below:

- Student cannot seem to successfully follow their daily schedule
- Student presents very poor organization skills as compared to age peers
- Student continues to struggle with spelling
- Student avoids tasks involving reading, writing, and math
- Student has difficulty summarizing material
- Student has difficulty adjusting to changes in routine
- Student works slowly as compared to age peers
- Student cannot grasp abstract concepts
- Student misreads printed information
- Student complains of boredom at school
- Student has poor memory
- Student presents sudden and drastic changes in behavior at school.

If you suspect your child has a disability, please reach out to City Charter High School's Director of Special Education at 412-690-2489.

### **Privacy Rights of Parents and Students**

School records are always open and available to a child's parent/legal guardians, and only school officials who have a legitimate "need to know" about the child as defined in the school's Confidentiality Policy. Confidentiality of information obtained regarding a specific child is protected by federal and state laws. Education and personally identifiable information cannot be disclosed or released without written parental consent. Information from the records released to other persons or agencies with appropriate authorization that involves written signed permission by the parents.

City Charter High School protects the confidentiality of personally identifiable information regarding exceptional children in accordance with state and federal laws dealing with regular and special education students' rights and privacy. The foundation of the rights and laws comes from federal legislation titled, Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA). There are also state rules and regulations contained in Chapter 12 known as Students' Rights and Responsibilities.

The basic premise of the above mentioned laws, rules, and regulations is that information about students cannot be disclosed without written parental consent. Educational records consist of information directly related to students which are maintained by an educational agency. Personally identifiable information includes the student's name, the name of the parent(s) or other family members, a personal identifier or a list of personal characteristics that would make the student's identity easily traceable. Education records and personally identifiable information cannot be disclosed or released without written parent consent or without student consent if the student is over the age of 18. Disclosure of information means to permit access to or the release, transfer, or other communication

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of educational records, or the personally identifiable information contained in these records, to any party, by any means. The consent must: (1) specify the records that may be disclosed; (2) state the purpose of the disclosure; and (3) identify the party or parties to whom the disclosure may be made.

There is certain information that can be released without consent which is called directory information. Directory information includes information contained in an educational record of a student which would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. City Charter High School designates information that is labeled as directory information. It shall include the following: the student's name, address, date and place of birth, major areas of study, and participation in school related activities, events, or clubs, dates of attendance, awards received, a student's email address, photograph, and the most recent educational agency attended.

In accordance with 34 CFR § 300.624, please be advised of the following retention/destruction schedule for the Pennsylvania Alternate System of Assessment (PASA), Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA), and Keystone Exam related materials.

- PASA, PSSA, and Keystone Exam test booklets will be destroyed one year after student reports are delivered for the administration associated with the test booklets.
- PSSA and Keystone Exam answer booklets and PASA media recordings will be destroyed three years after completion of the assessment.

### **Chapter 15 Protected Handicapped Students**

In order to qualify as a protected handicapped student, the child must be of school age with a physical or mental disability which substantially limits or prohibits participation in or access to an aspect of the school program. In compliance state and federal law, City Charter High School, will provide each protected handicapped student without discrimination or cost to the student or family, those related aides, services, or accommodations which are needed to provide equal opportunity to participate in an obtain the benefits of the school program and extracurricular activities to the maximum extent appropriate to the student's abilities. These services and protections for "protected handicapped students" are distinct from those applicable to all eligible or exceptional student enrolled (or seeking enrollment) in special education programs.

### **Special Education Programs**

City Charter High School provides a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment to exceptional students. To qualify as an exceptional student, the child must be of school age, must be in need of specially designed instruction, and must meet eligibility requirements for one or more of the following physical mental disabilities, as set forth in Pennsylvania State Standards: autism/pervasive developmental disorder,

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deaf-blindness, blindness/visual impairment, deafness/hearing impairment, intellectual disability, multiple disabilities, neurological impairment, orthopedic impairment, traumatic brain injury, other health impairment, emotional disturbance, specific learning disability, and speech/language impairment.

Services designed to meet the needs of exceptional students include the annual development of an IEP and reevaluation as mandated. The IEP team will consider a student's learning needs when assigning the student to one of the following instructional groupings: autistic support, blind/visually impaired support, deaf/hearing impairment support, emotional support, learning support, life skills support, multiple disabilities support, physical support, and speech and language support. The extend of special education services and the location of delivery of such services are determined by the parents and staff at the IEP meeting and is based on the student's identified needs and abilities, chronological age, and the intensity of the specific intervention. City Charter High School provides a continuum of services as appropriate.

### **Support for Homeless Families**

Families in temporary or inadequate living situations due to a loss of housing may have children who might be eligible for certain educational rights and services. For further assistance, contact City Charter High School's Homeless Liaison, Krista Wible, at 412-690-2489. Additional information can be obtained from Nicole Anderson, Regional Director, Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homeless Program, Allegheny Intermediate Unit 3, 475 East Waterfront Drive, Homestead, PA, 15120 or 412-394-5894 or [nicole.anderson@aiu3.net](mailto:nicole.anderson@aiu3.net)

City Charter High School does not discriminate on the basis of age, race, color, nationality or ethic origin, gender, or handicap in employment practices or in the administration of any of their educational program or activities in accordance with applicable federal statutes and regulations.

The Annual Public and Parent Notice/Child Find policy can be located on the school's website and in the student handbook. Parents are provided with this information on a yearly basis at orientation or within the general school mailing at the beginning of each school year.

Any questions regarding the content of this notice may be referred to the following school contact: Joshua Hanna, Director of Special Education, 201 Stanwix Street, Pittsburgh, Pa 15222, 412-690-2489, [hanna@cityhigh.org](mailto:hanna@cityhigh.org)

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