



Parent/Student Handbook

2026-2027

Dear Reach Academy family,

We are privileged to partner with you in the education of your child. Our steadfast goal is to create a dynamic learning environment characterized by acceptance and marked by achievement. A necessary component for a successful year is open, productive communication between school administration, teachers, parents, and students. Through the Reach Parent/Student handbook we hope to present clear policies and guidelines for student behavior, parent responsibilities, and the basic rules that govern our everyday school operation.

Please take time to read and review the following sections **with your child**: *Code of Conduct, Basic Behavior Plan, Maintaining a Productive Learning Environment, Definition of Bullying, COVID-19 Precautions and Procedures, and Student Internet Acceptable Use Policy*. We appreciate your support and reinforcement of the standards that will be expected of each Reach student. On the final page of the handbook, you will find an Acknowledgement and Agreement form. **Please review the handbook with your child, sign the form, and return the signed form to Cam Holcomb or Stephanie Kaloupek on the first day of instruction.**

Respectfully,

Cam Holcomb and Stephanie Kaloupek
Co-Directors Reach Academy

Reach Academy admits students of any race, gender, color, and national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally made available to the students at the school.

Reach Academy does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, and national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admission policies, athletics, and other school-administered programs.

Table of Contents

About the School	
Welcome	4
Mission	4
Our School	4
The Fundamentals	5
Registration, Withdrawals	5
Tuition, Accounting Policies	5
Attendance, Absences	6
School Calendar, Hours of Instruction, Arrival & Dismissal	7
School Closure, Parking	7
Academics & Conduct	8
Curriculum	8
Community Based Instruction (CBI)	8
Assessments, Report Cards	8
School Supplies	8
Field Trips	9
Code of Conduct	9
Basic Behavior Plan	9
Maintaining a Productive Learning Environment, AUP, Bullying	10
Communication & Parental Involvement	11
General Communication	11
Parent/Teacher Meetings	11
PTO	12
Volunteer Hours	12
Photo & Media Release	12
Health & Safety	12
COVID-19 Procedures	12
Health & Records	13
Food	13
Medication	13
Illness Guidelines	14
Parent/Student Handbook Acknowledgement	

About the School

Mission Statement

Reach Academy is committed to meeting the academic needs of exceptional students by integrating the efforts of families, educators, and the community. Individualized instruction, small class size, and teacher/family collaboration all work together to create a unique, student centered learning environment. Our goal is to redefine potential, surpass expectations, and facilitate personal success for each student.

Our School

Reach Academy, Inc. is a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization created to offer an education alternative for individuals with a variety of academic delays or challenges due to various physical or mental health diagnoses, including but not limited to ASD, PDD-NOS, and Down Syndrome.

Reach offers a 10-month school year and is structured to provide 1:1 instruction and small group instruction. A low student teacher ratio allows for a more personalized teaching approach that caters to each student's learning style. We encourage community based instruction and offer a variety of resources within the school.

Our website is <http://www.reachacademyjax.com>. Please check frequently, as important announcements, assignments, projects, and class newsletters will be posted on our school page.

We also have a social media presence:

Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/reachacademyjax>

Instagram - https://www.instagram.com/reachacademy_jax

Our Philosophy

Everyone is capable of learning. Success is measured differently for every student. We do not serve “cookie cutter kids”, so our approach to learning should be dynamic, unique, and creative.

Reach Mission Statement

Reach Academy is committed to meeting the academic needs of a diverse group of exceptional students through integrating the efforts of families, educators, and the community. Individualized instruction, small class size, and teacher/family collaboration all work together to create a unique, student centered learning environment. Our goal is to redefine potential, surpass expectations, and facilitate personal success for each student.

Fundamentals

Registration

Parents interested in enrolling their students in Reach Academy must first complete a preliminary application for admission and submit a non-refundable, non transferable application fee. The application process includes a basic behavioral assessment to determine student/school compatibility. Application and assessment does not guarantee enrollment. If it is determined that Reach can serve the needs of the child, then enrollment will be finalized. Deposit, tuition and fees are due at time of enrollment. Enrollment deposit is refundable on completion of the school year if a student does not re-enroll for the following year. Existing students are given priority registration consideration from one year to the next, as long as re-enrollment forms and fees have been returned by the posted due date.

Withdrawals

Withdrawal forms are available in the directors' office. In the event a student is withdrawn from the program, all outstanding balances and the remainder of the tuition balance for the quarter are due and payable upon withdrawal. Enrollment deposit is forfeited if the student is withdrawn prior to completing the school year. No records will be released until the student's account is clear.

Tuition and Accounting Policies

- ☐ Tuition is divided into 8 or 9 equal payments depending on family's preference due on the 1st of each month. **A late fee of \$20 will charged for payments made after the 5th.**
- ☐ Parent/Guardians will **approve FES Scholarship Payments within 48 hours** of notification by the school. At that time, funds will be applied to student accounts. Tuition: In accordance with the Financial Accountability Agreement, Parent/Guardians are financially responsible for the balance of fees/tuition in excess of scholarship funds. This balance may be paid by cash, credit card, Venmo, Paypal or money order.
- ☐ Additional Fees: In addition to tuition fees, there are a variety of additional charges that can be made on a student account. Therapy provided at the school, field trips, music lessons and certain resources are just a few such items. All fees are due upon receipt of invoice from Reach Academy.
- ☐ ACH/Debit/Credit: Any transaction will result in a **\$35 NSF fee**. The parent will also be responsible for any fees incurred by Reach Academy.
- ☐ If a family elects to withdraw a student mid quarter, balance of tuition is due at that time and enrollment deposit is forfeited.
- ☐ FES-UA Funds Restrictions: Resources obtained outside of Reach Academy are not eligible FES funds paid to Reach Academy. FES-UA funds cannot be paid out directly or reimbursed to parents from the school for any reason.

Attendance

Students are expected to be present throughout the year. Parents have the responsibility to require that their child attend school regularly. Teachers will be responsible for recording attendance for their students.

Please refer to the State of Florida Administrative Code below to determine attendance requirements.

6A-1.09512 Equivalent Minimum School Term for Compulsory Attendance Purposes.

Any child of compulsory school attendance age, who is enrolled in a non-public school pursuant to Section 1002.42, Florida Statutes, shall be deemed to be in compliance with the compulsory attendance requirements of Section 1003.21(1)(a), Florida Statutes, provided the child maintains regular attendance during the entire school term of either:

(1) One hundred eighty (180) actual school days determined as prescribed by Section 1011.60(2), Florida Statutes, or

(2) A minimum of one hundred seventy (170) actual school days and:

(a) Kindergarten: Five hundred forty (540) net instructional hours.

(b) Grades 1-3: Seven hundred twenty (720) net instructional hours.

(c) Grades 4-12: Nine hundred (900) net instructional hours.

Absences

A minimum of 24 hour notice is required for planned absences. Unplanned absences due to illness or emergencies should be reported directly to the teacher as soon as possible.

School Calendar

Reach Academy has a 10-month school year that runs from August through May. A school calendar is available on our website, www.reachacademyjax.com.

Hours of Instruction

Classroom Students 8:45am – 2:00pm

Arrival and Dismissal

Instruction hours are from 8:45am to 2pm. Students are allowed in classrooms at 8:40.

Parents can help the school day start promptly at 8:45am by being on time, allowing students to enter the classroom and settle in independently. Parents will remain with their students until they are admitted into the school; however, parents will not be admitted beyond the entrance to the school suite without permission.

Students are not allowed to enter or leave the school unescorted. No student will be allowed to leave the school building without being accompanied by a staff member, parent, or adult. Students are not to be dismissed with an unauthorized person. If a student is to be picked up by someone other than his or her parent, an authorization from the parent **MUST BE SUBMITTED** in writing. All students will remain in the care of their teachers until retrieved by a parent or authorized person. **A LATE FEE OF \$1 PER MINUTE WILL BE CHARGED FOR LATE PICK-UPS, STARTING AT 2:05 P.M., BASED ON THE SCHOOL CLOCK.**

School Closures

Reach directors may cancel school, delay the start of school, or dismiss students early in the event of hazardous weather, or other emergencies. If schools in surrounding counties close due to hazardous weather conditions, Reach Academy will follow suit and close for the day as well. This decision will be based on official closings issued by neighboring school districts and will be communicated to families through the school's usual notification channels— such as email, text alerts, and updates on our website or local media. In the case of a hurricane, we always err on the side of caution. We would rather our families and staff remain safely at home than at risk on the roads.

Parking

All vehicles parking for an extended period in the Doctor's Center parking lot should do so in the rear of the building.

Academics & Conduct

Curriculum Principles

While the national Common Core standards serve to direct our academic goals, Reach Academy offers each family/teacher team the liberty to implement personalized instruction and curriculum that facilitates achievement beyond the Common Core standards. A Varied Curriculum Lending Library is available to the Reach Academy family and we will remain active in researching various educational advancements especially as they pertain to educational strategies for exceptional learners. Reach Academy utilizes Education City, Unique Learning Systems, and a variety of other computer/web-based resources to support instruction.

Transition – REACHing Out

Reach Academy encourages judicious implementation of Community Based Instruction (CBI) to bolster and enhance our students' educational experience. CBI is educational instruction in naturally occurring community environments, providing students with “real life experiences”, job training, independent living, and appropriate social skills within the community. The goal is to provide a variety of hands-on learning opportunities and Work Based Learning Experience (WBLE), to help students acquire the skills to live in the world today.

**CBI must be: PRE APPROVED by parents and directors
PRE PLANNED and included in lesson plans
PURPOSEFUL with clear goals and objectives**

Assessment

Formal assessments are conducted at the beginning of the year and at the close of the year.

Report Cards

The school year consists of four nine-week grading periods. Report cards are sent home with students typically within 7 days of the end of the nine weeks.

School Supplies

A supply list may be provided at the beginning of the school. Any textbooks purchased by Reach Academy for student use remain property of Reach Academy and should be treated respectfully. Any Reach property damaged or misplaced by a student will be replaced at the cost of that student.

Students are responsible for keeping up with their personal belongings and supplies. Reach Academy is not responsible for lost items.

Field Trips

Reach Academy believes that field trips serve to extend the acquisition of knowledge beyond the classroom while also allowing opportunities for relationship building interaction. School wide trips will be judiciously scheduled with the intention that each outing enhances the students' learning experiences and broadens their understanding of the world around us. **Our teachers are in attendance on all field trips; therefore, if a student is not participating in a scheduled field trip, that student is to remain home.**

Notification and permission slips will be sent home to parents prior to each field trip. A completed, signed permission slip must be received in the classroom prior to departure. **A liability waiver must be signed if a student is to be transported by anyone other than the parent/guardian.** Field trip participation is limited to enrolled students. Supervision of accompanying siblings will be the parent's/guardian's responsibility. **There may be special circumstances that require attendance by one parent. Advanced notification will be given.**

Code of Conduct

All Reach Academy students, parents, and staff are expected to:

- Act and speak respectfully and courteously at all times.
- Refrain from cursing, name calling, inappropriate talk, or personal attacks.
- Respect personal space at all times.

Individual family/teacher teams will be responsible for communicating clear guidelines of conduct and utilizing a behavior plan that best suits the student. **Corporal punishment of any form is never allowed at Reach Academy.**

Basic Behavior Plan

- The teacher sets up clear, easy to understand expectations. They will be repeated as many times as necessary during the year.
- Students are reinforced positively when they are following expectations.
- When a negative behavior occurs, the positive expectations will be stated first and the student will be redirected. If he/she cannot be redirected further consequences will be given.
- If a student's behavior is harmful to others, the student will be removed from the immediate area where the conflict is occurring and taken to the quiet room with their teacher to settle down.
- The student will be spoken to privately and expectations will be explained.
- The student will be guided back to the activity they were asked to leave when they are ready to participate.
- Parents/Guardians will be notified of action taken.

Maintaining a Productive Learning Environment

Our goal is to always find a way to maintain a positive, productive learning environment for our students. Any student behavior that is continuously disruptive to the overall school atmosphere will be addressed with the family/teacher team by a Reach Academy director. If disorderly behavior persists, a temporary suspension will be administered. Subsequent infractions will lead to dismissal from Reach Academy. Any parent behavior that is continuously disruptive to the overall school atmosphere will be extended much less grace and may lead to the student's dismissal from Reach.

When conflicts occur between students, a teacher will help students to problem solve with each other, giving them words, and directions when necessary to facilitate the process. If conflicts occur between parents, they are expected to remain mature, cordial, and strive to exemplify a quality of character that our students can emulate.

Reach Academy Definition of Bullying

Physical and verbal bullying will not be tolerated. Any occurrence of such behavior should be reported to a teacher or director. **Reach Academy defines bullying as any form of behavior in which someone intentionally and repeatedly causes another person physical or emotional injury or distress. Bullying can take the form of physical contact, words or more subtle actions.**

Reach Academy reserves the right to dismiss a student that threatens or uses violence against a student or staff member.

Student Internet Acceptable Use Policy

To support learning and enhance instruction, each student is provided with a computer and access to the Internet. It is a general policy that all computers are to be used in a responsible, efficient, ethical, and legal manner. If a parent prefers that his or her child not have independent Internet access, the student will only use the Internet for teacher directed classroom activities. The use of computers at Reach Academy is a privilege.

Examples of misuse of technology include:

- ☐ Vandalism, i.e., any malicious attempt to harm, modify, and destroy data of another user, using magnets, stealing pieces of equipment, downloading viruses, or loading software on machines without the accompanying license or administrative authority.
- ☐ Using a network in any way that would disrupt its use by others.

- ☐ Transmitting any material in violation of federal, state, or local regulations or representing Reach Academy on personal web pages without permission.
- ☐ Accessing websites inappropriate for a school setting.

Violations may result in the loss of computer privileges. Additionally, compensation for damages could be required. Further disciplinary action may be taken by Reach Academy and/or State or Federal authorities in accordance with due process of law. Each student will assume full liability, legal financial, or otherwise for his or her actions.

Communication & Parent Involvement

General Communication

The preferred method of communication between teacher and parent is via the Reach Academy phone or teacher email. Use of directors' and teachers' personal phone numbers should be limited to emergencies.

Communication from the school regarding your student, school events and other pertinent information is handled in a variety of ways:

- ☐ **Text:** Reach Academy's texting platform will provide important &/or time sensitive information. All parents/guardians must join by texting REACH to 855-968-3353 and send a follow up text with your name.
- ☐ **Website:** Reach Academy's website will provide information about the school, fundraisers, and activities. Additional written communication may also be available for parents to view and/or download. The website address is www.reachacademyjax.com
- ☐ **E-mail:** Emails providing updates on events, student progress, and other vital information will be sent out as needed.
- ☐ **Parent/Teacher Conferences:** Conferences may be scheduled at any time. Teachers will be required to schedule a P/T conference at least once per semester to set new goals. Certain student issues will also require that a teacher set up a P/T conference.
- ☐ **Written communication:** Information about your student's progress, campus events, and after school activities are sent home in written form.
- ☐ **Teacher Mailboxes:** Private correspondence can be directed to individual teachers/staff via teacher mailboxes located in the hallway outside the directors' office.

Scheduled Meetings for Parents

Parent orientation, special meetings, and conferences promote a good understanding between parents and faculty. Due to the unique nature of our school, teachers and directors are readily (and happily) available and responsive; however, please reserve extensive parent/teacher discussions for **scheduled conference times**.

There will be a minimum of 2 school/parent information meetings per year. **At least one parent is required to attend informative programs**

Parent Teacher Organization

By virtue of your student's enrollment, you become a member of Reach Academy Parent Teacher Organization. The purpose of the PTO is to encourage fellowship among families, and to draw on the talents and resources available through our families. Meetings will be held periodically and attendance is mandatory.

Mandatory Volunteer Hours

A co-op fee of \$250 per semester is billed to each student account. This fee can be waived or adjusted in exchange for completion of (5) volunteer hours per semester.

Photo Release

All Reach staff and students are required to sign a photo release that either allows or denies Reach to use their photos in school publications or on social media. Please be mindful when posting Reach Academy-related photos on social media or in any public forum as some parents have NOT given permission to use photos of their child.

Health & Safety

COVID-19 - Safety Precautions (general overview):

- **Parents will not enter the school during drop off or pick up without permission. All visits must be pre-arranged.**
- Student therapists/supports are permitted at a 1:1 ratio (no more than one therapist per student will be admitted) due to limited space and distractions in the classroom. Each session must be scheduled with the teacher. Any supports without prior approval will be denied entry.
- The lunchroom schedule will be strictly enforced. Parents **MUST** pack a lunch for students, and provide any plates, cups, and utensils necessary. Community plates, cups, and utensils are not available.

Regarding instruction:

- Reach will provide in-person instruction Monday – Friday.

- Students that are ill or chose to stay home will not be able to join real time group instruction via Zoom or another platform; however, lessons may, at the discretion of the teacher, be set up online and worksheets may be sent home.

Health and Records

- Records: It is extremely important that all student records be kept current and up to date. Any changes to student and/or parent information, including home address, contact phone numbers, emergency contact information, and special instructions should be delivered to the directors' office as soon as possible. In the unlikely event of an emergency, it is absolutely imperative that we have correct contact information.
- Records Transfer: If your student is transferring to another school, a request for transfer of records must be delivered to Reach Academy from that institution, and all necessary information will be mailed directly to the inquiring school when accounts are paid in full.
- Necessary Information: An Emergency Contact form must be completed in its entirety and signed by parents and/or guardians. This card also requires parent contact information, at least two (2) alternate contacts in the event of an emergency, and student allergy information.
- Incomplete Records: Students without a completed card on file prior to the start of school will not be admitted into the school.

Food

Reach Academy does not provide lunch. All students **MUST** bring lunch every day. There is a refrigerator and microwave available for use. Students will be responsible for proper storage, disposal of personal food, and cleaning of the eating area.

Although individual students will be responsible for daily lunch and snacks, we **MUST remain mindful of allergies.** To reduce the possibility of exposure to allergens, please communicate any food restrictions or allergies on your health information form and to your teacher. Individual teachers have the responsibility of assessing exposure risk when using the common lunchroom.

In the event that food is provided at Reach Academy, parents will be notified prior to the event to make any required adjustments to dietary plans or to provide an alternative food option. Please communicate any plans to share special foods or treats at the school prior to doing so.

Medications

Reach Academy does not have a registered nurse on the premises. The school staff will handle minor medical situations. When a student becomes ill or is injured in school, he/she will be

evaluated and/or treated by the school staff. If it is necessary for the student to be sent home or to a doctor, parents will be contacted and requested to pick up the student. In case of a major emergency, both the fire department/ paramedics and the parent will be called. Should a life-threatening situation exist, the student will be taken to the nearest emergency facility.

General medication guidelines:

- Prescription and over-the-counter medications cannot be dispensed without written parent permission.
- In order for medication to be dispensed, a parent or guardian must first complete a medication release provided by the office.
- Students may NOT keep their own medication, regardless of type (i.e.: inhalers, Tylenol, aspirin, cough drops, etc.).
- For prescription medicines and routine medication (i.e. doctor prescribes a Tylenol every day for minor pain relief after an injury), a doctor's note will be required to be on file in the school office.
- The school will only dispense prescribed medication that is in the original, labeled container and displays the student's full name, attending physician, etc.
- Over-the-counter medication **MUST** be received in the original sealed container or it cannot be dispensed (no baggies of pills with handwritten instructions).

****Illness Guidelines:***

- ***Any student who has a fever (temp above 99.9) SHOULD NOT be sent to school under any circumstances.***
- A student who is listless or shows active signs of illness should be kept at home.
- If your student has any of the following symptoms, please keep them at home until investigated further by a medical professional: persistent stomach ache, diarrhea, vomiting, deep or hacking cough (even if a fever is not present), continuous runny nose, yellowish or greenish mucus, an undiagnosed rash, pink, swollen, matted and/or runny eyes that have not been treated by a physician
- A student may return to school after an illness under these conditions: *fever is gone and temperature has been normal **for at least 24 consecutive hours without medication, energy level has returned to normal **for at least 24 consecutive hours, no symptoms or*****

*signs of diarrhea and/or vomiting **for at least 24 consecutive hours without** medication, and active signs of illness are no longer present.*

- Students do not have to stay at home until all secondary symptoms of an illness disappear. For example, some forms of nasal and bronchial congestion may linger for several weeks following a cold or flu, but the student is no longer contagious.
- Consult your student's pediatrician if you ever question whether or not your student should return to school.
- If your child's teacher observes signs of illness, he/she may suggest that a director evaluate the student before he/she is admitted to the classroom.
- If your student has been exposed to, or is ill from, a contagious disease, we require that you contact the office so that all students and parents in your student's classroom may be alerted.
- We notify students and parents in a classroom if the following diseases are present: conjunctivitis (pink eye), chicken pox, croup, fifth disease, mononucleosis, or strep throat.
- Upon confirmation from a medical professional that your student has one of the above-listed diseases, please contact the office with your student's name, room number, and type of disease.
- If your student develops symptoms of an illness while at school, a parent or guardian will be called. If a parent has not responded within 30 minutes after the first contact attempt, a staff member will then try to reach an alternate emergency contact person as listed on the Emergency Contact form.

PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND AGREEMENT

I, _____ (parent/guardian) have read and understand the guidelines and requirements set forth in the Reach Academy Parent/Student Handbook. I promise to follow the rules and policies outlined within the handbook.

I, _____ (student) have been informed of the *Code of Conduct, Basic Behavior Plan, Maintaining a Productive Learning Environment, Definition of Bullying, and Student Internet Acceptable Use Policy* in the Reach Academy Parent/Student Handbook. I promise to follow the rules and policies outlined within the handbook.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Student Signature
(parent may sign if student unable to sign)

Date

Return this signed form to Reach Academy within 5 days of receipt.