



NorthFloridaSchool
Of Special Education

Enhance. Empower. Enlighten.

Parent/Student **Handbook**

2023-2024



*North Florida School of Special Education welcomes all qualified students ages 6 – 22
regardless of race, creed, color, gender, national origin or religion.*

Mission

To discover and foster each student's unique abilities revealing their highest potential within an engaged community.

Vision 2025

We are the leading innovator in education creating wholeness for students with unique abilities. As a catalyst in our community, there is a deeper acceptance and understanding that we are all more alike than different.

Core Values

We believe that all students are unique and can achieve individualized goals based on their abilities and potential for growth.

We believe that we are responsible for meeting our commitments to our students, parents, community partners and donors.

We believe in providing a safe, nurturing school environment.

We believe that by working together as a committed team we can maximize our impact on students and families.

We believe in using creative educational approaches for diverse, learning styles.

We believe through reverse inclusion our students and community members make meaningful connections to thrive together.

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WELCOME

Welcome to North Florida School of Special Education! This handbook has been assembled with important information about our school. We strive to promote an upbeat, positive learning and working environment for students and their families and for the staff at North Florida School of Special Education. We are happy to have you with us!

North Florida School of Special Education focuses on the goals outlined in the Individual Education Plan (IEP) of each student enrolled. These include academics, enrichment through art, music and horticulture, social, emotional, behavioral and transitional needs as well as appropriate life skills. Also included are speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and social skills development as allowed by each student's IEP and funding.

OUR RESPONSIBILITY

NFSSE recognizes the challenges in providing a safe and secure environment for our students, families and staff. In cases of health emergencies, we will follow and act in accordance with federal, state and local mandates and those of the CDC (Center for Disease Control). The quality of our program and culture are vitally important. We will endeavor to present our curriculum with in-person and distance learning options when necessary and feasible.

To address public health concerns, NFSSE has established guidelines for safety and will institute the following:

- Placement and use of hand sanitizer stations throughout school buildings;
- Consistent cleaning of touchpoints in classrooms and common areas;

NFSSE reserves the right to make modifications to these practices based on CDC guidelines

Your cooperation with these guidelines is necessary to ensure the protection of all.

CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

The academic program has been designed specifically for children with special learning differences. While Unique Learning System aligns with access points for academic content standards (reading, writing, math, science and social studies), the lessons are modified to make sure that all children have a way to participate and learn. There is a strong emphasis on life skills that are embedded in each lesson as well.

Unique Learning System provides monthly units that teachers can download from the website. Each month there is a new topic built around a science or social studies theme. There are five grade level bands, Elementary, Intermediate, Middle School, High School and Transition, so that learning is new as students progress through the years. Your child's teacher has selected the grade level band that matches the ages

and grades of the students in his/her classroom. There is also a three-year cycle of new units for each grade band. In that way, your child will have new learning materials even if he or she is in the same classroom setting next year.

ULS lessons and materials have been created by teachers with experience in special education. Lessons include stories, chapter books, comprehension activities, writing activities, math lessons for time, money, counting, and problem solving, as well as recipes, craft projects and science experiments. Many of the materials are designed in three levels so children of various abilities can actively participate. Materials have been created with Symbolstix®, which is a graphic library of symbols to help children who learn best with picture supports.

In addition there will continue to be supplementary materials available to teachers and students, such as the Edmark Sight Word Curriculum for identified students, TouchMath, Handwriting without Tears, Moby Max, Language Live, Linda Mood Bell, Reading A-Z and Starfall online programs. Our comprehensive, multi-sensory programs strive to meet the varying needs of our students in a positive learning environment.

SOCIAL THINKING

Activities are provided to assist students in developing proficiency with the following:

- Appropriate expression of ideas and feelings. Maintaining both physical and verbal self-control.
- Demonstration of perseverance in working to accomplish goals.
- Recognition and respect of individual differences.
- Recognition of the effect of one's own behavior on others.

LIFE SKILLS

Students experience activities to develop independent living skills appropriate to their ages. These include, but are not limited to:

- Personal health/daily living skills
- Clothing care
- Meal preparation
- Family life
- Knowledge of personal information
- Safety at home, school, and in the community
- Housekeeping

VOCATIONAL SKILLS

Students gain experience through volunteer jobs and work on the following skills as part of our Transition Program:

- Filling out forms e.g. job applications

- Use of time clocks
- Judgment/problem solving
- Endurance
- Break time skills
- Interaction with others on the job

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

The staff of North Florida School of Special Education believes in providing an environment that nurtures the individual student and provide opportunities for each child to develop his/her own interests and potential. We offer positive reinforcement for appropriate behaviors and work with students to develop strategies for meeting challenges.

Students are assisted in making choices with the philosophy that all choices yield consequences. Wise choices yield positive consequences; unwise choices may result in the removal of participation in privileges or withholding preferred items. Positive consequences might include tokens for “purchasing” special items at school, or other special privileges. The staff works to develop age-appropriate consequences specific to each child’s needs.

The school communicates with parents any information regarding school activities or concerns that might initiate a change in behavior. We encourage parents to advise teachers of special concerns or changes in the family routine that may impact a student’s behavior.

Positive management and re-direction strategies are used whenever possible. Corporal punishment is not applied. Supervised isolation will be implemented only to ensure the safety of students and staff.

PROGRESS REPORTS/IEP’S

Our educational program and curriculum are designed to meet the specific needs of each student. **Parent conferences are held as needed – with a minimum mandatory attendance and participation in writing the new annual IEP (Individual Education Plan) goals and objectives.** Elementary through Secondary classroom teachers will send reports on activities and student progress home daily. In addition, report cards will be sent home on a quarterly basis and IEP Goal Progress Reports are provided at the end of each semester.

CRITERIA FOR EARNING A NFSSE DIPLOMA

Students who have aged through the 12th grade level may have program continuity into our Transition Program. Due to continued independent and vocational training needs, students who require additional instruction in life skills, academics and

independent living skills, meet criteria to continue in our extended academic transition program.

Each student's eligibility for the Transition Program will be assessed on an individual basis. Factors considered in this assessment include but are not limited to:

- Student's age (minimum 17-18), but may have program continuity up to the age of 22
- Student's social development
- Student's academic progress within the continued education curriculum
- Independent functioning as appropriate for job placement
- Recommendation from teacher and professional staff

Students are expected to work toward mastery of the Florida Standards with Access Points that are modified yet challenging expectations for students with disabilities that are working significantly below grade level. A student is expected to master each standard at a level of functioning that is appropriate for the individual student as determined by assessment and the Transition team. Students are determined to be functioning on any of three different levels: Independent level, Supported level, or Participatory level with regard to benchmarks set in the new Florida Standards with Access Points

Once eligibility for graduation has been established, the parent/guardian and/or student needs to comply with school policy for the graduation ceremony. **Upon receiving a diploma, the student is no longer eligible to return to the Transition Program or any other state funded scholarship program.**

- The parent/guardian will be responsible for purchasing announcements, cap and gown.
- All fees must be paid by the Monday preceding graduation in order for the student to participate in graduation ceremonies.
- The school will provide the diploma to be presented to the graduate.
- A graduate recognition table will be provided at the graduation event.

NFSSE'S Postgrad Program has a minimum age of 20 years old for enrollment.

NFSSE ENROLLMENT PROTOCOL

Contract Renewal

North Florida School of Special Education conducts a priority registration period in the spring of each year for the following academic year. Students currently enrolled will be given priority consideration for enrollment during the registration period based on the following conditions:

- Admissions criteria continues to be met
- All tuition and fees are paid and up to date
- All texts, materials, etc. are returned in good condition
- Evaluation procedures have been initiated and recommendations for additional services are followed if a student demonstrates a specific need requiring further professional intervention.
- The student must continue to exhibit basic behavioral and self care criteria as outlined in admissions guidelines. Any student who does not continue to meet admissions criteria will be unable to re-enroll.

NFSSE reserves the right to rescind a student's pending contract for monetary or behavioral reasons.

Financial Assistance

- NFSSE will consider requests for financial assistance however the school **cannot** guarantee approval.
- All applications for financial assistance must be made online through **FACTS**, a third-party agency, to ensure privacy and confidentiality of parent information. Deadlines for applications are set on the website and availability of funds cannot be assured after applications are due.

Open Enrollment for New Applicants

Open enrollment for any remaining class vacancies will begin at the end of the priority registration period.

New applicants, continued enrollment of a NFSSE student or the renewal of a student's contract will be approved by the Head of School and supported by the Board of Directors. All returning and newly enrolled students must submit their information packets and physical/medical forms by August 1.

DAILY ROUTINE

ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE

To facilitate safe and timely arrival and departure, please observe these guidelines:

- Intermediate, Secondary and Transition student dismissal will be from 3:30 – 3:45 pm
- Elementary student dismissal will be from 3:00 – 3:15 pm
- Please observe driveway speed of 5 mph
- NO PASSING unless directed by staff – stay within the traffic cone lane.
- No cell phone usage in car line
- Drive to the designated areas to drop off or pick up your child
- Students should arrive at school between 8:45 and 9:00 am.
- Students who attend Morning Care before 8:45 am should sign in and go to the designated Morning Care classroom. Students who arrive after 8:00 am for Morning Care are to check in at the front desk.
- Classes begin each day at 9:00 am and conclude at 3:00 for Elementary and 3:30 for Intermediate, Secondary and Transition. If a student arrives after 9:00 am or leaves before 2:30 pm, parents must sign him/her in or out in the office.
- The school will not assume responsibility for a student arriving after 9:00 am if his/her class is out on a field trip. The child can be transported to the site of the field trip by a parent/guardian or returned home.
- If a student needs to leave school prior to 3:00 pm, parents are asked to go to the school office and request the student. In case of an emergency or need for urgent pick up, please call the North Florida School of Special Education office (904 724-8323) ahead of time, and we will have your child meet you when you arrive.
- Students will be dismissed only to individuals authorized to pick them up. Please notify the school in writing if someone other than a parent/guardian is to pick up your child.

MORNING CARE

North Florida School of Special Education offers a morning school care program implementing the philosophies and policies of the regular school program. The general purpose of the program is to provide a warm, safe environment where self-confidence is enhanced, independence is encouraged and individuality is respected.

Students may be dropped off any time after 7:15 a.m. and may bring a packed breakfast if desired. This is a time for quiet activities or visiting with friends. Students will report to their classes at 8:45 a.m.

Any student who does not normally attend Morning Care but arrives before 8:45 a.m.

will be sent to Morning Care and **parents will be billed. Children not registered for Morning Care should not enter the building prior to 8:45 am.**

The morning care program at North Florida School of Special Education is financially self-supporting and fees are charged only to families utilizing the service. Staffing will be provided based on contracted services in order to keep expenses and fees at a minimum. Therefore, parents desiring drop-in care must arrange for services at least 24 hours in advance.

**CONTRACTED (MONTHLY) &
DROP-IN MORNING CARE (PER DAY)**

Fee schedules for Morning Care will be announced at a later date
Monthly Contracted Fee for Elementary, Intermediate and Secondary
Monthly Contracted Fee for Transition and Postgrad
Drop-In

Parents need to register their child for day care prior to utilizing this service. There is a flat monthly fee for Morning Care. There will not be any refunds if your child does not attend during the month. Parents will be billed monthly on FACTS for this service.

EXTENDED DAY – AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM

This program is designed to offer a relaxed atmosphere and provide students with social and recreational opportunities as well as homework assistance. A light, healthy snack will be provided. This is **not** a duplication of clubs and is offered as a resource to parents who need care between the hours of **3:00 – 6:00 p.m.** NFSSE may be utilized for 3 or 5 days or on a drop-in basis as needed. FACTS accounts will be billed monthly.

Fee schedules for Extended Day will be announced at a later date
3 days/week – May be any 3 days and includes care for school dismissal until 6:00 p.m.
5 days/week – Includes care from dismissal until 6:00 p.m.
Drop-In – Includes care from dismissal until 6:00 p.m.

Note that these are monthly rates and cannot be prorated for absences or holidays.
Care is not offered on Teacher Planning days.

Afterschool Enrichment Program fees are in addition to Extended Day fees.
Afterschool Enrichment Program days are Tuesdays and Thursdays.

See the **Manager of Extended Day** for additional information.

LUNCH

Our students function to the best of their abilities when they are provided nutritious food and drink. **The following foods and/or drinks are not permitted for packed lunches:**

- **Gum, candy, and other sugar loaded items**
- **Caffeinated and/or carbonated beverages (soda, tea, coffee, etc.)**

We request you send food and beverages for one day at a time. Please assist or allow your child to pack a nutritious lunch. If you want to send a treat to be shared in honor of a special event, please check with the classroom teacher in advance. Please be aware that many of our students have food allergies and will have provided their own food items.

Every day school lunches are offered: Hot lunch and 3 sandwich options. 2% white milk and chocolate skim milk also available. Gluten free options are also available.

COMMUNICATION

Our students are best served when parents are informed of the happenings at school and the school is aware of developments at home. Staff utilize frequent notes and phone calls to facilitate this communication. Forms, calendars, and updates are available on our website, Microsoft Teams and the PSO Facebook page, **NFSSE PSOGROUP**. School newsletters are emailed to families each Friday. Microsoft Teams is used as the primary communication tool for families and the classrooms. Each student is assigned to their classroom team with an individual team login which remains student specific while enrolled at NFSSE.

Families may also receive grade level emails. **Email addresses are very important, so please advise the front office if your personal contact information changes at any time during the school year.**

You may make contact with your child's teacher by leaving a message via voice mail, email or through Teams. Teachers will return calls after 3:00 pm, except in cases of emergency.

We also encourage parents/guardians to discuss concerns with the teacher and/or school administrator, as necessary. Please refrain from expressing your concerns to teaching assistants and support staff. If you desire a parent-teacher conference, please make arrangements for meeting at a mutually convenient time. Teachers are not available for conference at morning drop-off.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION

The school takes the following precautions to ensure the safety of students:

- An evacuation of the school building may be ordered in the event of an emergency involving fire, severe weather or threatening situations. If the evacuation is temporary, students will be escorted to a designated location for the duration of the evacuation and returned to the building when the “All Clear” is sounded.
- If the evacuation requires students to leave the building/campus for the remainder of the day, school staff will notify families using the telephone numbers on file for each student. Details regarding pick up of students will be given during the phone call.
- Emergency drills to prepare for evacuation procedures will be held as follows:
 - Fire Drills – Monthly
 - Intruder – Quarterly
 - Severe Weather – Quarterly
- In case of emergency weather conditions, North Florida School of Special Education follows the decision of the Duval County Public School system regarding school closings. If the Duval County Public Schools are not in session due to weather, North Florida School of Special Education will not be in session. Please listen to your radio or television for notification of school closings.

HEALTH

NFSSE has made provisions to have a health care professional on site during the school day. Every effort will be made to evaluate the status of the student’s complaint and notify the parent/guardian of any decision that may require medication, transportation to a medical facility or a need for parental intervention. Please call the school’s primary phone number **904.724.8323** if there are questions.

COVID19

Health and safety are top priorities at NFSSE and we are focused on taking all reasonable measures to prevent the introduction and spread of COVID-19 on our campus. This situation continues to change daily, and as such, we will adapt and adjust our protocols and procedures as we follow the guidance provided by the CDC and local health department in our efforts to help keep our staff, and families safe. We are bolstering our standard cleaning procedures and adding increased frequency measures such as wiping down common touchpoints, eating areas, and activity equipment.

Parents are asked to carefully monitor and consider the health status of your child **before** bringing them to campus. This will avoid unnecessary interruptions during arrival.

Attendance: Students will be sent home if they exhibit any possible COVID19 symptoms:

Cough	Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
Chills	Diarrhea
Muscle pain	Headache
Sore throat	Runny Nose
Loss of taste or smell	

Medical documentation may be required before a return to school. A negative Covid test may be required based on school nurse discretion.

IMMUNIZATIONS

Students are required by law to have a Florida health form (HRS680 – Part A) with proof of up-to-date immunizations on file in the school office before they attend school.

MEDICATION

Authorized staff will dispense medicine with written parental and physician approval. Prescription and non-prescription medication will be accepted and must be in its original container. All medicines will be locked in the school medicine cabinet.

Parents are required to hand deliver the medication to the school's health care professional along with a written, signed **Medication Authorization** form, including the name of the medication, dosage and frequency to be given. Please do not send medications in the child's backpack or lunch box. Any change in dosage or frequency must be at the signed direction of the physician.

SEIZURE PLAN

If your student has a history of seizures, we must have a seizure plan, signed by a physician, in place with the school nurse prior to school starting. This seizure plan must be updated every year.

HEALTH CONDITIONS

Email or call the school nurse directly with any special instructions regarding your students' existing health condition. Nurse@northfloridaschool.org

ACUTE HEALTH CONDITIONS

Email or call the school nurse with any changes that may arise throughout the school year such as a surgery or illness. 904-724-8323 ext. 1052

ILLNESS

School policy requires that a student be free of fever without the help of fever-reducing medication, vomiting and/or diarrhea for at least 24 hours before coming to school. If the student has a contagious skin or eye condition, a Physician's statement that the student is no longer contagious is required when the child returns to school. A covid test could be required based on the school nurse assessment of illness.

A child who is absent from school 5 or more days due to illness needs to bring a note from the appropriate doctor indicating the reason for absence.

A child who needs to be excused from physical activity (PE or OT) for more than 3 consecutive days needs to bring a note from the appropriate doctor indicating the reason and when the child will be able to participate again.

ABSENCES

Email the school nurse and your students' teacher for all illnesses and planned absences. Nurse@northfloridaschool.org

ACCIDENTS

- If a student is injured during a school activity, the staff member in charge will write an accident report, and parents will be notified.
- In case of serious injury, parents will be notified as soon as possible.
- The school should have on file a waiver for each student allowing the school to seek appropriate medical attention in emergency situations. Parents who do not wish to sign such a waiver must sign a statement releasing the school from liability if the parents cannot be reached in an emergency.
- Parents are responsible for maintaining current emergency information including phone numbers, name of physician, and insurance information.

HEAD LICE ELIMINATION/TREATMENT POLICY

If your child is found to have lice, they will be sent home immediately for treatment.

READMITTANCE AFTER TREATMENT – *School policy dictates that the students must be free of lice and nits in order to return to school.*

Upon return to school, the student must present one of the following: (1) proof of treatment from a treatment facility; (2) a note from the parent stating that the child has been treated and the label or box top from head lice treatment; (3) a statement from a physician, nurse or the Duval County Health Unit.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

SCHOOL VISITS

For the safety of everyone it is necessary that you make prior arrangements with the teacher and/or administration.

VOLUNTEERING

The overall success of our school includes community support and parent participation. We realize everyone is busy, so there are many ways to help if you cannot offer time at school.

There are several days during the year that we are in need of volunteers for special events. Please check the school calendar and newsletters for dates and times.

Each of these play an important role in the success of our programs. We look forward to your partnership in providing the best possible education for our children.

PSO

Any parent or guardian at NFSSE is automatically a member of the Parent Support Organization. There are no required fees, but we encourage parents and families to be actively involved in the NFSSE PSO community.

DONATIONS

Due to the unpredictable nature of funding for non-profits, financial donations are gratefully accepted at any time. North Florida School of Special Education is a non-profit, private school and qualifies for tax exemption under IRS Code 501 © (3). Donations can be in the form of money or gifts-in-kind which are properly functioning. All money and/or tangible items become the property of the North Florida School. Acknowledgement of gifts will be provided to all donors.

GUIDELINES FOR FIELD TRIP CHAPERONES

- Students will be transported in NFSSE vans or other appropriately acquired vehicles.
- Due to liability concerns siblings are not permitted on field trips.
- All students will return to school after the field trip unless alternate arrangements have been made prior to the trip.
- **Chaperones are at the teacher's discretion on a case by case basis.**
- Chaperones must stay with their assigned groups.
- Students/adults will follow the directions/guidelines from North Florida School of Special Education's staff in charge of the trip.
- North Florida School of Special Education is a non-smoking facility and smoking is not allowed on field trips.

DRESS CODE

Students must dress appropriately while at school and on community outings and need to observe the following and adhered to by all students elementary through secondary.

Students may wear navy, khaki or black shorts, slacks, dresses, or skorts paired with any solid color top. The top may be a polo or t-shirt style selection with no graphic other than the North Florida School logo. Please have your students refrain from wearing cat ears, animal headbands, faux freckles or facial art makeup. These items are creating behaviors among the students and are not in-line with the vocational presentation we are teaching. Hair should be clean and appropriate for a school or workplace environment. If your student arrives out of dress code, they will be asked to change into an available PE uniform for the remainder of the day.

The following guidelines apply to all students elementary through secondary:

- All students are expected to wear socks with shoes.
- Multiple bangles, rings, earrings, etc are not allowed for reasons of safety.
- All outer wear brought/worn to school must be labeled with student's name. Clothing left at the end of the school year is considered to be abandoned and will be donated to an appropriate agency.
- Jeans may be worn on Friday with an authorized school shirt.
- Class t-shirts can be worn for field trips.

Transition students are not required to adhere to the dress code unless it is a designated work day. We ask that clothes worn by transition students are free of adult content.

PE uniforms are required for all Intermediate and Secondary students. PE uniforms must be purchased through NFSSE.

- If this dress code presents problems for students with sensory difficulties please inform NFSSE administration regarding acceptable alternative dress code choices.
- Students **MUST** bring gym shoes on scheduled PE days.
- **Students should wear comfortable shoes with shoelaces or Velcro. Tennis shoes are required for Therapy or PE. Flip-flops and wedges or heels are not allowed.** Shoelaces must be tied.
- **Skirts/shorts** come at least to the end of the fingertips when the arm is extended downward along the leg.
- Due to many students and staff who may have allergies, asthma and breathing difficulties, we request that all students, staff and volunteers refrain from wearing colognes, perfumes, and heavily scented hygiene products.
- Hats need to be removed inside the building unless working in the Kitchen or Barkin' Biscuits.
- Hair should be cut and combed neatly.
- **A student who is out of dress code will have their parent called to bring appropriate clothing.**

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance at school is mandatory in accordance with Florida law. Parents need to notify the staff of the absence of a student. Please call by 9:00 am the morning of the absence. Parents must send a note explaining the reason for absence upon the student's return to school. Excessive unexcused absences may impact the students' eligibility for the FES-UA Scholarship.

TARDY POLICY

Students who arrive after 9:00 a.m. are considered tardy and the **parent must sign them in on arrival.**

Please consider the effect of excessive early pick-ups or late drop offs when scheduling doctor or therapy appointments. These absences impact the student's participation and success within our program. If possible. We request that recurring appointments be scheduled during non-school hours.

STUDENT CONDUCT

The purpose of the Discipline Policy for North Florida School of Special Education is maintained under the Guidelines for Student Conduct established by the Administration and Board of Directors. All disciplinary action is directed toward the child's growth in self-knowledge and the understanding of his/her behavioral responsibilities. The Discipline Policy applies to all students enrolled at North Florida School of Special Education. Students are subject to the Discipline Policy at all times while on school grounds and representing the school at functions or field trips.

Minor disciplinary infractions will be dealt with in-house and will be communicated to the parent via the daily progress report and grade reports. Continued minor infractions will result in a parent teacher conference and if necessary the development of a specific behavior plan to assist the student in addressing negative behavior.

A Conduct Referral will be sent home for any student involved in the following major disciplinary infractions:

- Stealing
- Hitting
- Fighting
- Destroying school property or property of others
- Exhibiting repeated inappropriate or disruptive behavior
- Using profane, obscene or verbally abusive language
- Being disrespectful to an authority figure
- Talking excessively or in a loud manner
- Failing to observe school rules
- Sexual misconduct
- Failure to follow directions (defiance of staff)

Parents are responsible for signing and returning the Conduct Referral Form or daily progress sheet. The parent's signature indicates to the Head of School and Teacher that the parent is aware of the disciplinary incident involving the student. Depending on the severity of the incident, the student may receive additional consequences from the administrative staff, including removal from school grounds for the remainder of the day and/or suspension. The administrative staff may call a parent/teacher/administrative conference if the behaviors warrant additional intervention. **The student's family is financially responsible for any destruction or loss of property.**

SEVERE CLAUSE – Due to the seriousness of the offenses, the following are exceptions to the referral system and will be cause for immediate suspension:

- Physical or Verbal Threats – any serious threat to injure or harm a student, staff member, or self
- Assault – any serious assault resulting in bodily injury to a student or staff member
- Alcohol – the possession, transfer, use or sale of any alcoholic beverages
- Drugs – the possession, transfer, use or sale of drugs or drug paraphernalia
- Tobacco – the possession, transfer, use or sale of any tobacco product
- Firearms – the possession of any firearm
- Weapons – the possession of any knife, instrument or device that demonstrates the intent to be armed
- Sexual misconduct – unacceptable sexual touching of others

DUE PROCESS FOR STUDENTS

It is the intent of North Florida School of Special Education to impart fairness and a sense of justice in all actions made by the Board of Directors, administrators, and teachers in dealing with their students. While it is important to protect and maintain the rights of the students and their parents, it is also important that the students and their parents be made aware of their respective responsibilities, which arise from and complement these rights.

Students and parents are presumed to be aware of established school rules and regulations in effect at the time of their signing of the Parent Student Handbook Review Acknowledgement found on the last page of this handbook. **The signed form with all required student registration forms is to be completed at the beginning of school.**

Students and parents have the right to be informed, either orally or in writing, of the school rules that have been violated and of the specific reason(s) that initiated disciplinary action. The administration and faculty have consistently and diligently worked toward providing our students with a safe and wholesome atmosphere where education and values are taught and practiced. To ensure this the following procedures will be enacted when necessary:

- When there is a major violation or multiple infractions of the student code, resulting in suspension, the student's parents/guardians will be called and informed of the violation. Immediate pick-up of the student from school will be required. The student will thereafter be suspended from school until a decision is reached on the violation and consequences.
- A review board, consisting of the administrator, the teacher and a representative will be convened within 72 hours after suspension, excluding weekends and holidays, to consider the violation and consequences. The student and at least one parent/guardian will be present during the board hearing at which time the student will be allowed to present his/her case. The board will then make recommendations, which will be enforced by the school.
- The decision of the review board may be appealed within 24 hours of the board's decision. The student and parents may request further review by the full NFSSE Board of Directors.
- The decision of the Board of Directors will be final and upheld by the school administration.

GRIEVANCE PROCECURE FOR PARENTS

If a parent has a school grievance, he/she should feel free to communicate in writing, the date of the event grieved, his/her grievance to the Administrator/Head of School. The grievance will then be investigated, and within ten days a written response to the grievance will be given to the parent. The Administrator/Head of School will maintain a file containing the written grievance, the findings of the investigation and the response given to the parent. It is our hope that parent grievances will be resolved at this level.

Formal Action

If a parent is not satisfied with the initial response to a grievance, the parent may take the following action in order to have the grievance considered further.

Appeals: The parent may appeal the initial response to the grievance by submitting a copy of the grievance and a written request for review to the Grievance Committee. The Grievance Committee will be made up of a member of the administration and the academic staff. The recipient of the appeal has the discretion to, but need not, refer the appeal to the Executive Board of Directors. The person or group who considers the appeal has the power to carry out additional investigation. The ultimate decision of the Grievance Committee shall be rendered in a timely manner, and shall be deemed final. The proceedings of the appeal shall become part of the grievance file.

Grievances dealing with the continued enrollment of a NFSSE student or the renewal of a student's contract will be approved by the Administrator/Head of School and Assistant Head of School with this decision backed by the Board's support.

Counseling a Family out of Enrollment

Any new student enrolled to North Florida School of Special Education is under a 90-day probationary period to assure that the school is the appropriate academic and social match for the student and their family. If there is question regarding placement, the family, teacher, Director of Academics or Assistant Head of School would meet to determine what supports should be implemented to assist the student in being successful. If the student exhibits aggressive behaviors towards themselves or others, the student will be suspended, counseled and a behavior plan put into place. Continued aggressive behavior is grounds for removal from enrollment in the school program. Students must be independent and successful in a 1:3 ratio in Early Elementary or 1:6 in other grade levels.

Clean Air and Tobacco Use

The use of tobacco products is prohibited inside any of the school's facilities or vehicles and on any of the School's grounds. This policy is in effect at all times, including before and after normal school business hours.

Library Policy and Procedure for Challenged Materials

Occasionally objections to material will be made, despite the care and quality taken to select material for student/teacher use.

North Florida School of Special Education supports the principles of intellectual freedom inherent in the First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States of America and the views expressed in the School Library Bill of Rights of the American Association of School Librarians.

In the event that materials are questioned, the principles of intellectual freedom, the right to access materials, and the integrity of the professional staff of North Florida School of Special Education must be defended rather than the materials. If the patron is challenging material he/she must have read, listened, or viewed the material before he/she can challenge the material.

If material is challenged; The following procedures will be followed by a committee which includes 1 designated instructor, Director of Student and Family activities, and 1 PSO member to be assigned.

- Step 1: Give patron the "Challenged Material" form
- Step 2: Inform all administration and Challenged Material committee members.
- Step 3: Upon receipt of form, the Library Media Specialist shall call the committee to evaluate the material.

No material shall be removed from use until the Materials Evaluation Committee has made a final decision.

Within 30 days the Material Evaluation Committee shall:

- Examine challenged material
- Check general acceptance of the materials by reading reviews
- Weigh values and faults and form opinions based on the material as a whole
- Meet, discuss, and prepare a report to the Library Media Center using the "Materials Evaluation Committee Report" form
- File a copy of the report with the Administration
- Inform the patron of the decision in writing

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

North Florida School of Special Education Online Community Guidelines

NFSSE is pleased to provide a forum for sharing and interacting with others about our school and disabilities in general. The viewpoints, opinions and actions expressed in comments are those of individuals themselves, and may not reflect NFSSE policies or positions. Always verify information with a qualified professional before taking action.

Any messages or stories shared on this site may be used in other NFSSE marketing activities.

Please review our online community guidelines regarding your responsibilities and North Florida School of Special Education's role in the community.

Be Respectful. It is acceptable to disagree with others but cutting down or insulting individuals will not be tolerated. NFSSE reserves the right to remove comments that use obscenities, personal insults, ethnic slurs, or other disparaging language.

Keep Your Comments on Topic. NFSSE's focus for this site is about our school's programs and services. We welcome discussion about disabilities and its impact on individuals and families. NFSSE reserves the right to edit or remove inappropriate or off-topic comments at any time.

Protect Your Privacy. Comments on the blog are visible to the general public. Protect your privacy and don't give out personal information such as email addresses, telephone numbers or street addresses. Doing so may make you susceptible to spam and unauthorized communication. NFSSE will not verify personal information posted by others.

Links to Other Websites. NFSSE is not responsible for the content of any linked website, or any link contained in a linked website, or any changes or updates to such websites. The inclusion of any link does not imply endorsement by NFSSE of that website. In addition, please be aware that NFSSE is not responsible for the privacy practices of such other websites. NFSSE encourages you to read the privacy statements of every website that requests personal information from you.

The Bottom Line. North Florida School of Special Education reserves the right to delete any comments at any time. Users who persist in violating community guidelines will be barred from posting to this site.