



Student Handbook

2025-2026

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Introduction & Foundational Statements

Pivot Charter School (PCS) is a unique "blend" of both online and school-based educational programs. It has been designed to provide individualized support for students and parents to ensure student success. The PCS program is the perfect option for students who wish to receive a quality education while working at their own pace and being able to seek immediate assistance when they face difficulties.

Additionally, this program caters to the needs of students seeking access to Advanced Placement and/or Dual Enrollment classes to get ahead in their education, as well as those who need to catch up on credits.

At PCS, we believe that for students to thrive, they must take an active role in their education and self-advocate for their learning. This includes asking for help whenever needed and being open and receptive when help is offered. We encourage students to put forth their best effort in all aspects of their academic journey.

Parents play a vital role in facilitating their child's success at PCS. We expect parents to closely oversee their child's schoolwork and actively support their learning experience. This involves holding them accountable for their actions and inactions, encouraging responsible study habits, and fostering a positive attitude towards learning.

The staff at PCS is dedicated to supporting students and their families to determine the most effective strategies for ensuring each student's academic success. However, it's important to note that while PCS can customize each student's program, it may not be suitable for all students. We encourage parents and families to ask many questions and schedule an appointment with the school before enrolling to make a fully informed decision regarding their child's education.

Parental involvement is essential for a student's success at PCS. Parents are encouraged to closely engage in their child's educational journey, providing the necessary support and guidance. By fostering a collaborative partnership between the school and parents, we can create an environment where students thrive and reach their full potential.

Mission Statement

Our mission is to engage and empower each student to achieve excellence as a learner and a citizen.

Vision Statement

Pivot Charter School's vision is to be a leading, innovative, high-performing school that graduates each student to be prepared for college or a career.

Philosophy

At Pivot Charter School, we are dedicated to providing a high-quality education to our middle school students and their families. Our philosophy is centered on caring for our students and delivering our services with passion and respect. We are constantly seeking innovative ways to meet the dynamic and evolving demands of blended learning, and we believe in providing our students with rewarding outcomes, engaging experiences, active participation, a challenging curriculum, and a holistic approach to enrichment. We are committed to ensuring that Pivot Charter School is a place where students can reach their full potential and succeed.

We understand that to provide a high-quality educational experience to our students, we must continue to develop “innovative” ways of thinking that will allow us to respond to the dynamic, ever-increasing demands for our blended learning schools. In carrying out our promise, Pivot will ensure that our school maintains those qualities that REACH our students by providing a school that:

- R** – Provide Rewarding outcomes
- E** – Maintain Engaging experiences
- A** – Consist of Active participation at all times
- C** – Steeped in a Challenging curriculum
- H** – Encompass a Holistic enriching approach

Pivot Promise

The Pivot Team promises to:

1. Treat our students with respect and care as individuals
2. Create trusting and meaningful relationships with each student
3. Provide an individualized educational experience that builds academic efficacy
4. Cultivate a school culture that is welcoming and safe
5. Strive for student success at all times

Pivot Panthers, in return, Promise to:

1. Make school a priority by being punctual and attending classes regularly
2. Always do their best and invest the time needed to succeed.
3. Utilize the available resources and show appreciation for them.
4. Exhibit the characteristics and qualities of a successful student at all times.
5. Strive for success at all times

Current Board Members and Contact Information

- Dr. Angela Combs, Educational Director
 - acombs@pivotcharterschool.com
- Lisa Galbraith, Board Chairperson
 - lisa.galbraith@lsfnet.org
- Jim Guelzow
 - jguelzow@aol.com
- Mitzi Drummer-Flintroy
 - mdflintroy@yahoo.com
- Andrea Preziosi (Parent Rep)
 - apreziosi@pivotcharterschool.com

Academic Calendar

Open House	Thursday, August 7, 2025
Students' First Day of School	Monday, August 11, 2025
Labor Day/Non-student Day	Monday, September 1, 2025
End of 1st Grading Period	Friday, October 10, 2025
Veteran's Day/Non-Student Day	Tuesday, November 11, 2025
Fall Break/Non-Student Days	Monday, November 24 – Friday, November 28, 2025
Students Return to School	Monday, December 1, 2025
Exams	Tuesday, December 16 – Thursday, December 18, 2025
End of 2nd Grading Period/1st Semester	Friday, December 19, 2025
Winter Break/Non-Student Days	Monday, December 22 – Friday, January 2, 2026
Non-Student Day	Monday, January 5, 2026
Students Return to School	Tuesday, January 6, 2026
Martin Luther King, Jr. /Non-Student Day	Monday, January 19, 2026
Florida State Fair Day/Non-Student Day	Friday, February 13, 2026
President's Day/Non-Student Day	Monday, February 16, 2026
Strawberry Festival Day/Non-Student Day	Monday, March 2, 2026
End of 3rd Grading Period	Friday, March 13, 2026
Spring Break/Non-Student Days	Monday, March 16 – Friday, March 20, 2026
Non-Student Day	Monday, March 23, 2026
Students Return to School	Tuesday, March 24, 2026
Non-Student Day	Friday, April 3, 2026
Memorial Day/Non-Student Day	Monday, May 25, 2026
Senior Graduation at The Regent	Wednesday, May 20, 2026
Semester 2 Exams	Tuesday, May 26 – Thursday, May 28, 2026
Last Day of School/ End of 4th Grading Period/2nd Semester	Friday, May 29, 2026

Hurricane day(s), if needed: November 11, November 24-26, January 5.

Please be aware that state assessments are scheduled for August, December, April, and May. We will share the exact dates as each testing window approaches.

Pivot Charter School Bell Schedule 2025-2026

1st Period	7:50 am – 8:40 am
2nd Period	8:42 am – 9:32 am
3rd Period / Homeroom	9:34 am – 9:44 am
4th Period	9:44 am – 10:34 am
5th Period	10:36 am – 11:41 am
6th Period	11:43 am – 12:33 pm
7th Period	12:35 pm – 1:25 pm
8th Period	1:27 pm – 2:17 pm
Teacher Planning	2:19 pm – 3:09 pm

Policies & General Information

Policy of Non-Discrimination

At Pivot Charter School, we are committed to maintaining a policy of non-discrimination to ensure equal opportunities for all individuals. No person shall be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity, or in any employment conditions or practices conducted by our school district, based on the following protected characteristics: race, color, sex, national or ethnic origin, marital status, disability, religion, age (except as authorized by law), political beliefs, sexual orientation, gender identity, or social and family background.

This policy applies to all students, parents, employees, volunteers, and any other individuals associated with our school. We do not tolerate any form of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation against those who assert their rights under this policy.

If any individual believes they have experienced discrimination or harassment in violation of this policy, we encourage them to report the incident promptly to the appropriate school official. We will promptly investigate all such complaints in a thorough and impartial manner and take appropriate corrective action if necessary.

Bullying & Harassment Policy

a. Prohibition of Bullying and Harassment:

Pivot Charter School is fully committed to maintaining a safe, secure, and inclusive learning environment for all students and staff. Bullying, harassment, and retaliation of any kind will not be tolerated. Every student has the right to attend school without fear of being targeted, humiliated, or harmed by others.

This policy is designed to prevent and address behaviors that interfere with a student's ability to learn or a staff member's ability to work. All reports of bullying and harassment will be taken seriously and handled promptly.

b. Definition of Bullying and Harassment:

Bullying is defined as systematically and chronically inflicting physical hurt or psychological distress on one or more students or staff members. It includes written, verbal, physical, or electronic acts that:

- Create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment
- Cause discomfort, fear, or humiliation
- Substantially interfere with academic performance or participation

Examples of bullying include, but are not limited to:

- Teasing or name-calling
- Social exclusion or public humiliation
- Threats or intimidation
- Stalking
- Physical violence
- Theft or destruction of property
- Sexual, racial, or religious harassment
- Cyberbullying through texting, apps, or social media

Harassment refers to any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gestures, words, or actions—whether written, verbal, physical, or digital—that:

- Place a person in fear of harm
- Interfere with educational opportunities
- Disrupt the orderly operation of the school

Cyberbullying includes acts of bullying carried out via electronic communication, including social media, messaging platforms, and personal devices, especially when it impacts a student’s ability to learn or feel safe at school.

Retaliation against any student or staff member who reports bullying or harassment is strictly prohibited and will be treated as a separate disciplinary offense.

c. Consequences for Bullying and Harassment

Any student found to be engaging in bullying, harassment, or retaliation will be subject to disciplinary action as outlined in the school’s discipline matrix. Responses may include restorative practices, behavior interventions, suspension, or other consequences appropriate to the severity and frequency of the behavior. In cases involving criminal behavior, law enforcement may be contacted.

d. Guidance for Parents

If you are concerned about behavior involving your child and another student, we encourage you to reach out directly to school administration. Open communication

helps us respond quickly and appropriately to any situation affecting student safety or well-being.

While it may be tempting to address concerns directly, we strongly discourage parents from approaching other students or families. Even with good intentions, these interactions often escalate tension and can create added stress or confusion for the students involved. Our team is here to help resolve issues calmly, respectfully, and in a way that supports all students.

If a concern arises outside of school hours, off campus, or through non-school technology, and it does not involve a substantial disruption at school, the school's ability to issue formal discipline may be limited by Florida law. In these cases, we encourage families to contact local law enforcement, especially if the behavior involves threats, harassment, or safety concerns.

That said, even when school consequences are not possible, we still want to be aware of what's happening. We can offer support and put policies or structures in place to help ensure continued safety and well-being for all students involved.

All students and employees at Pivot are expected to be treated with dignity and respect. The use of slurs, hostile language, intimidation, or any form of verbal or physical misconduct is strictly prohibited. We are committed to working in partnership with families to maintain a safe and inclusive school environment for everyone.

e. Limitations of School Authority

At Pivot, we are committed to taking every report of bullying or harassment seriously. However, it's important for families to understand that Florida law limits when a school can issue formal disciplinary action. Generally, our authority covers incidents that take place on campus, during school-sponsored events, at bus stops or on school transportation, or when school-issued technology is involved.

There are also times when behavior that happens off campus—such as during the weekend, in a private group chat, or on a student's personal device—may still be addressed by the school if it causes a substantial disruption to a student's learning or the overall school environment. In those cases, we are legally permitted to step in and respond.

That said, not all off-campus behavior meets this legal threshold, and in those situations, our ability to take direct disciplinary action may be limited. Still, we encourage families to reach out and share their concerns. Even when formal consequences aren't possible, we want to know when something is impacting a student's sense of safety or well-being.

In these cases, we can often implement school-based supports, communication protocols, or safety measures to help prevent off-campus issues from disrupting the learning environment. Our goal is always to partner with families to maintain a respectful, focused, and emotionally safe school setting for all students.

f. Reporting Procedures and Resources

Students, parents, and staff are encouraged to report any concerns related to bullying or harassment as soon as possible. Reports may be made in person to any staff member, in writing, by email, or online. Anonymous reports are accepted and will be taken seriously.

Concerns can also be submitted through **FortifyFL**, Florida's anonymous school safety reporting tool, at getfortifyfl.com or by downloading the FortifyFL app.

No student, parent, or employee will face retaliation for reporting a concern in good faith. If you're unsure whether a behavior qualifies as bullying, please reach out—we're here to listen and help.

Admissions & Enrollment

Admissions

The application process at Pivot Charter School is as follows: Each year, current students are given the opportunity to complete a recommitment application in January. If there are spaces remaining after recommitments are collected, prospective students are allowed to apply. If the number of applicants exceeds the number of vacant spaces for a grade level, the potential students are entered into a lottery. The lottery takes place at the end of open enrollment, which begins in April. The families of the students selected in the lottery will be notified via email. These families will have 7 days to claim their spot. Students not selected during the lottery process will also be notified via email and placed on a waiting list. If the student who applied or the student who was selected in the lottery process does not complete the enrollment process, a student from the waiting list will be allowed to fill the vacant spot. If there are vacancies that occur during the school year, the administration reserves the right to hold another lottery to fill them. Applications are only valid for one year, and prospective students are required to complete a new application.

Pivot Charter School follows the guidelines set by the state of Florida in regard to the application process. There are applicants who may be granted special preference according to Florida Statutes 1002.31, 1002.33, and 1002.38(2).

Student Enrollment

- Students who are in 6th grade, roughly 12 years old, through 19 years old may be enrolled in Pivot Charter School. Students over 20 years of age may only be enrolled if they have been continuously enrolled in a public school since age 19 and have been making appropriate academic progress toward graduation.
- For students in grades 6-8, they will be placed in the grade that matches their chronological age. However, students may still work on materials and in courses that are at a higher grade level if that is appropriate for the student with administration approval.
- For 9th-12th grade students, their grade level placement will be based on the credits earned as demonstrated on their official transcript.
- Students may be enrolled in only one school at a time. They may not be simultaneously enrolled in any other public or private school while enrolled in PCS.
- Students are required to inform their teacher or the administration if there is a change of address or phone number. A student's demographic information must be kept current at all times.

Student Enrollment Area

In accordance with charter school legislation, Pivot Charter School is restricted to serving students from the following counties, as defined as contiguous in charter legislation:

The charter school shall enroll an eligible student who submits a timely application unless the number of applications exceeds the capacity of a program, class, grade level, or building. As of now, we do not accept students from ANY other counties.

Additionally, we are not permitted to accept inter-district transfers for Independent Study programs.

Re-enrollment and the Lottery

All current students who wish to re-enroll for another year must complete a re-enrollment form by a spring deadline. Parents will receive a one-month notice by email prior to the deadline.

According to our charter, siblings of students who are currently enrolled are given preference for vacancies prior to the cutoff date. After the deadline, all applicants will be placed on a waitlist. A public lottery will be held during April, where student names will be drawn at random to determine enrollment. All names not selected during the first lottery will be placed back on a waitlist. Waitlists do not carry over from one school year to the next.

Withdrawal Policy

If a family decides to withdraw a student from the school, they must complete a withdrawal form with assistance from office personnel. This form needs to be signed by the parent/guardian and the school Registrar before Pivot Charter School will release records and grades. Failure to complete the withdrawal form may result in the student losing credits for work they have completed to date in their classes. Additionally, if the student has been loaned a computer or other resources, they must return the computer before the school will release grades or transcripts.

Students planning on returning to their resident school district should follow the procedures outlined below:

- Parents should contact the school administration or may complete the withdrawal request form online to request withdrawal from Pivot Charter School.
- Parents will need to come into the office to sign the completed withdrawal form. The parent must provide the school that the student will be attending.
- Pivot Charter School will notify the district of residence that the student has withdrawn.
- The resident school district will request the student's cumulative file from Pivot Charter School.
- In order to secure all credits for work completed by the student, students must continue to work in their courses until the withdrawal has been approved, and parents are notified.

Student Conduct

Standards of Conduct and Respect

At Pivot Charter School, we expect our students to uphold a high standard of conduct and demonstrate respect for themselves, others, and the environment. By attending our school, students commit to the following principles:

Respecting Self and Body:

- Choosing a healthy lifestyle that excludes the use, possession, or distribution of drugs, alcohol, or tobacco.
- Using thoughtful and appropriate language, refraining from profanity and vulgar expressions.
- Demonstrating honesty and integrity by avoiding theft, cheating, plagiarism, or dishonesty in any form.
- Cultivating a positive attitude about themselves and the world around them.

Respecting Others:

- Respecting the physical and psychological boundaries of others to create a safe environment free from violence and harassment.
- Showing consideration for others' belongings and possessions.
- Practicing kindness and consideration, using effective problem-solving skills to resolve conflicts.

Respecting the Environment:

- Taking care of school buildings and facilities, avoiding vandalism and negligence.
- Demonstrating awareness and concern for environmental issues and promoting responsible stewardship of our planet.

Pivot Charter School adheres to the Hillsborough County School District's Classification of Violations, Proportionate Disciplinary Responses, and the Expulsion/Change of Placement process. For detailed information on these procedures, please review the Hillsborough County Schools Student Code of Conduct at <https://www.hillsboroughschools.org/conduct>.

Dress Code

At Pivot Charter School, we maintain a dress code that prioritizes fairness and inclusivity within our learning environment. Our dress code policy is designed to ensure that students' attire is appropriate, respectful, and consistent. Please review the following guidelines:

Tops: All students are required to wear tops that fully cover their chest, abdomen, and midriff. This includes shirts, blouses, sweaters, and jackets. T-shirts and Hoodies may have graphics but must be appropriate. Tops should provide complete coverage even when students raise their arms above their heads and undergarments should not be showing. It is essential to select attire that does not display or suggest any sexual, vulgar, drug, gang, weapons, or alcohol-related wording or graphics. Students must choose clothing that promotes a positive and respectful atmosphere throughout the school community. This includes avoiding excessively tight or loose garments, and ensuring a modest and comfortable fit.

Bottoms: The length of bottoms, such as skirts, dresses, shorts, and pants, should be no shorter than the student's extended fingertips when their arms are fully extended at their sides. Students must refrain from wearing bottoms with rips or tears. Sweat pants and Joggers may be worn, but must be solid colored with no design. Clothing should be worn in a manner that maintains a professional and appropriate appearance for the school setting. This includes avoiding excessively tight or loose garments, and ensuring a modest and comfortable fit.

Footwear: Shoes must have non-removable backs for safety reasons, minimizing the risk of accidents. Slides, slippers, and flip-flops are prohibited. Students must wear appropriate footwear that provides comfort and facilitates mobility throughout the school day. Crocs with non-removable backs are permitted but cannot be worn during P.E. Activities.

Prohibited Attire: Loungewear, Spaghetti Strap Shirts, Crop Tops, Spandex, and/or pajamas are strictly prohibited as part of the school attire. Additionally, any clothing or accessories that display or suggest sexual, vulgar, drug, gang, weapons, or alcohol-related wording or graphics are strictly prohibited. Students must avoid wearing clothing that may incite violence or disrupt the school environment.

Other Prohibited Items: Students are not permitted to bring non-academic items to school in order to minimize distractions and safety concerns. This policy includes blankets as they have been linked to outbreaks of lice and bedbugs. Exceptions include items necessary for lunch or medical purposes (note: medical items must adhere to Hillsborough County School District and State regulations, potentially requiring paperwork or supervised usage. Contact the front office for more information). Special occasions or specific cases may be considered for exceptions with administrative approval.

Consequences:

1st offense: In the case of a first offense, parents will be expected to bring a change of clothes for the student. If this cannot be done promptly, the student will be placed in in-school suspension (ISS) until appropriate replacement clothing is provided or until the end of the school day.

2nd offense: For a second offense, parents will be expected to bring a change of clothes for the student. If this cannot be done promptly, the student will be placed in in-school suspension (ISS) until appropriate replacement clothing is provided or until the end of the school day. Additionally, a mandatory parent conference will be arranged.

3rd offense: If a third offense occurs, parents will be expected to bring a change of clothes for the student. If this cannot be done promptly, the student will be placed in in-school suspension (ISS) until appropriate replacement clothing is provided or until the end of the school day. Additionally, the student will be assigned after-school detention.

4th offense: In the event of a fourth offense, parents will be expected to bring a change of clothes for the student. If this cannot be done promptly, the student will be placed in in-school suspension (ISS) until appropriate replacement clothing is provided or until the end of the school day. Additionally, this level of violation and beyond will result in an out-of-school suspension (OSS).

At Pivot Charter School, we uphold values of mutual respect, responsibility, and a positive educational atmosphere. By adhering to this dress code policy, students contribute to maintaining a comfortable and focused learning environment that promotes equality and inclusivity.

Please note that the school administration reserves the right to interpret and enforce the dress code policy. In cases where specific attire does not comply with the guidelines, the administration will collaborate with students and families to find suitable alternatives. In cases where students repeatedly violate the dress code, parents will be contacted to request that an appropriate outfit be either dropped off at the school or sent with the student from home. This collaborative approach ensures that students have the opportunity to rectify dress code violations and maintain an appropriate appearance within the school setting.

We appreciate your cooperation and commitment to upholding the values and standards of Pivot Charter School by adhering to the dress code policy.

Emergency Card/Sign Outs

Emergency Cards are essential for ensuring the safety and security of our students. Please carefully read and adhere to the following guidelines:

Authorized Persons:

Students will only be allowed to leave with individuals listed on the emergency card. If a person needs to be added to the emergency card, the parent or guardian must visit the school in person to make the addition.

Emergency Situations:

In case of an emergency, the administration reserves the discretion to permit a student to leave with members of law enforcement, Child Protective Services, or a person with written authorization from a parent or guardian. The authorized person must provide identification that can be verified by the parent or guardian.

Updating Information:

It is of the utmost importance that parents promptly notify the school office staff or administration if there are any changes to phone numbers, addresses, or emails listed on the emergency cards. Keeping this information up to date ensures effective communication during emergencies.

High School Student Departures:

High school students allowed to leave school due to pre-approved arrangements with the administration must follow these procedures:

- a. Students must sign out at a specific time.
- b. Students must leave campus immediately upon signing out.

Seniors and Graduating Juniors:

Seniors and graduating juniors holding a privilege card and are dismissed from school are required to leave campus promptly. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in the loss of privileges.

Transitions

Arrival to School

For the safety of our students, it is important to note that access to the campus before 7:35 a.m. is strictly prohibited. During this time, there will be no adult supervision available. Therefore, parents and guardians must ensure that students arrive on campus between 7:35 a.m. and 7:50 a.m. Please note that, while we make efforts to provide early supervision in the event of poor weather, we cannot guarantee it before 7:45 am due to it being outside staff contracted hours. Students are welcome to wait on the bus or in their cars until this time. The designated drop-off areas are in front of the school and the driveway south of the school. Adherence to these guidelines will help us maintain a secure and conducive learning environment for all students.

Student Drop-Off

Car line traffic will loop around the parking lot, and students may only be dropped off in the designated areas. Students are not permitted to walk through the parking lot. Please do not leave your car unattended in the car loop lane during drop-off and refrain from engaging in conferences with your child's teacher at this time. The safety of our children is our first priority. Please follow drop-off procedures carefully to ensure the safety of all our children.

Student drivers who park on campus should promptly park their cars and enter the building immediately. They are not allowed to linger in the parking lot for socializing. Students are only permitted to return to their car with administration approval and supervision.

Student Pick-Up

At Pivot Charter School, it is essential to ensure the safety and well-being of all students. To this end, parents or legal guardians are responsible for making appropriate transportation and supervision arrangements for their child to ensure timely pick-up from school at the end of the school day.

- **Parent/Guardian Responsibility:** Parents or legal guardians must arrange for their child to be picked up promptly at the end of the school day. It is crucial to ensure that your child is not left waiting unsupervised.

- **Supervision After Dismissal:** Staff members are not responsible for supervising students after dismissal. Once the school day has ended, parents or guardians must ensure their child is picked up on time.
- **Consistent Late Pick-Ups:** If a parent or guardian is consistently late in picking up their child, it may result in the student losing their spot for the next academic year. Additionally, students may lose the ability to participate in extracurricular activities, including dances, Lock-In's, field trips, and other school events. Timely pick-up is critical to maintaining a safe and organized school environment.
- **Emergency Contacts:** Parents must ensure that the school has up-to-date emergency contact information on file. If a parent or guardian is unable to pick up their child on time, an emergency contact will be called to pick up the student. If no one on the emergency contact list can be reached, and as a last resort for the child's safety, staff may contact the Department of Children and Families (DCF).

By adhering to this policy, we can ensure the safety and security of all students at Pivot Charter School. Thank you for your cooperation and understanding.

Transportation

Pivot Charter School utilizes National School District Services to ensure that transportation is not a barrier to equal access to the charter program, as required by section 1002.33, FS. Currently, three buses are in operation.

Pivot Charter School takes full responsibility for all behavior and discipline issues. All bus riders are required to sign a behavior contract. This contract meets the district's requirements for all students being transported on district-owned buses.

Transportation services will be provided by the school to a student whose Individual Education Plan (IEP) stipulates it. In such cases, all necessary arrangements will be made to ensure transportation does not hinder equal access to the charter program. Due to the flexible nature of the student's schedule, several public options are available. If a contract cannot be negotiated with the district, students may utilize the following options:

- Walk
- Ride a bicycle

- Carpool/Drive
- Get dropped off by another driver
- School Bus

*All students for whom transportation is stipulated in an IEP will receive appropriate transportation in an adequately equipped vehicle to and from school and all related functions. Pivot Charter School will ensure compliance with federal and state regulations.

Weekly Bus Schedule

School District Services will pick up students from their designated bus stop Monday to Friday and drop them off at Pivot Charter School before 7:47 am. School District Services will pick up students from Pivot Charter School by 1:25 pm Monday to Friday and drop them back off at their designated bus stop. There is no bus service for 2nd session students.

Bus Conduct

All students riding buses are expected to behave in the same manner as they would on campus. It is important for students to understand that the driver needs their cooperation to drive safely. Riding the bus is a privilege, not a right.

Expected Conduct for Bus Riders

- Obey the driver and follow school rules.
- Remain seated and facing forward.
- Refrain from loud talking, cursing, horseplay, and/or rude, discourteous conduct.
- Keep all body parts inside the bus.
- Keep hands, feet, and all other objects to yourself.

Major infractions such as fighting, gross insubordination, use of any form of tobacco product (cigarettes, chewing tobacco, vapes, juuls, etc.), tampering with bus equipment, and throwing objects on or off the bus will result in administrative action. This conduct will lead to suspension from the bus. The length of suspension is at the discretion of the administration.

Consequences for Misconduct of Bus Riders:

At Pivot Charter School, we prioritize the safety and well-being of our students. Riding the bus is a privilege. Students are expected to show respect to the driver and fellow passengers and to follow all safety rules at all times. Repeated bus misconduct may result in suspension from transportation services. These expectations apply equitably to all students. To ensure a safe and respectful environment on the bus, we have established the following disciplinary actions for infractions:

- **1st Offense:**
 - Parent notified.
- **2nd Offense:**
 - Parent notified, and student suspended from the bus for three calendar days.
- **3rd Offense:**
 - Parent notified, and student suspended from the bus for five calendar days.
- **Additional Offenses:**
 - Parent notified, and the student may lose bus privileges for the remainder of the school year.

Note: Depending on the nature of the offense, additional consequences may be applied. Severe or dangerous behavior may warrant immediate and more serious disciplinary action beyond the standard steps outlined above.

After-School Event/Field Trip Policies

Pivot Charter School provides students with a variety of afterschool and extracurricular school events, including dances, lock-ins, field trips, and after-school tutoring. These events are an integral part of the educational experience, offering students the opportunity to explore new environments, gain hands-on learning experiences, and enhance their understanding of the world. Whether educational or recreational, these events provide a unique platform for

students to apply classroom knowledge in real-world settings, foster social skills, and create lasting memories.

Benefits of Field Trips and Events:

- **Educational Enrichment:** Students gain practical knowledge and experience by visiting museums, historical sites, science centers, and other educational venues.
- **Recreational Value:** Recreational trips and events offer students the chance to relax, socialize, and build stronger peer relationships in a less formal setting.
- **Personal Growth:** Field trips and events encourage independence, responsibility, and a sense of adventure, contributing to overall personal development.

Inclusive Participation:

Pivot Charter School is committed to providing inclusive events and field trips, encouraging all students to participate. No student will be denied the opportunity to attend due to a disability. However, students may be prohibited from attending due to issues with their academic performance, behavior, or attendance. Depending on the student and their needs, a parent may be asked to chaperone the event if the school feels additional support is needed.

Financial Considerations:

Many events and field trips will involve a cost, which includes the price of the event and any related transportation fees.

Refund Policy:

1. **School Cancellation:** If an event or field trip is canceled by the school, students will be refunded the entire amount paid.
2. **Student Withdrawal:**
 - Students can receive a refund for an event or field trip up until the school purchases or reserves tickets, materials, or other necessary supplies. After these purchases or reservations have been made, no refunds will be provided.
 - Additionally, no refunds will be issued within the last 5 school days before the event or field trip. During this period, funds are used to purchase necessary supplies and reserve vendors based on the number of students attending, and these costs cannot be adjusted or refunded.

3. **Behavioral Exclusion:** If a student loses the right to attend an event or field trip due to a behavioral incident after payment, no refund will be given if the ticket has already been purchased by the school, as most events do not offer refunds.
4. **Third-Party Vendor Events:** If the event is run by a third-party vendor, the refund policy will be subject to the terms and conditions set by the vendor.

Participation Guidelines:

Events and field trips are a privilege, not a right. To ensure a safe and enjoyable experience for all participants, the following guidelines must be adhered to:

1. **Eligibility:** Students must maintain acceptable academic performance and exhibit appropriate behavior both in and out of the classroom. Poor attendance, behavioral, or academic issues may result in a student being barred from attending.
2. **Administrative Discretion:** Exceptions to the eligibility criteria may be made by the administration on a case-by-case basis.

Behavioral Expectations:

Students are expected to adhere to all school rules and behave responsibly during events and field trips. Any behavioral issues that occur may result in serious consequences, including:

1. **Loss of Future Privileges:** Ineligibility to participate in future events and extracurricular activities.
2. **Suspension:** Temporary removal from school activities and classes.
3. **Expulsion:** Permanent removal from Pivot Charter School.

Field trips and events are designed to enhance the educational experience, and maintaining a safe, respectful environment is paramount. We encourage all students to take full advantage of these opportunities while upholding the standards of behavior expected at Pivot Charter School.

After-School Tutoring Policy

Pivot Charter School offers after-school tutoring at no charge, facilitated by our National Honor Society (NHS) students and supervised by a staff member at all times. This program is designed to support academic success and provide students with additional help in their studies.

Expectations:

- On-Task Behavior: Students are expected to remain focused and work diligently throughout the entire tutoring session.
- Engagement: This program is intended to enhance academic achievement. It is important that students actively participate and use this time effectively.

Responsibilities and Limitations:

- Student Responsibility: Students are responsible for attending tutoring sessions, signing in upon arrival, and staying on task throughout the session.
- Supervision: While staff members are present to supervise the tutoring sessions, they are not responsible for ensuring that students attend if their parents expect them to. Staff members have their own after-school responsibilities and cannot monitor students' whereabouts outside the tutoring environment.
- Attendance: If a student remains on campus after school but does not attend the tutoring session or inform staff of their intention to attend, it will be assumed that they are waiting for a parent or guardian. Staff members cannot ensure attendance as they do not know each parent's intentions.

Additional Support:

Requesting Teacher-Provided Tutoring: Students are required to try NHS tutoring sessions first. If a student feels they need additional support from a teacher in the subject area after not having success with our NHS tutors, they may then contact the teacher directly. This request should be made at least 3 days in advance. Teacher-provided tutoring is subject to the availability of our teachers and may not be possible in all cases due to scheduling conflicts.

Behavioral Expectations:

Students are expected to behave appropriately and follow school rules during tutoring sessions. Inappropriate behavior will result in the student being asked to leave and may lead to being barred from future sessions. Additionally, students who act inappropriately may face disciplinary measures, including but not limited to detention, suspension, or other appropriate consequences.

By participating in after-school tutoring, students agree to adhere to these expectations to ensure a positive and productive environment for everyone.

Policy on Damage to School Property:

At Pivot Charter School, we are committed to maintaining a safe and respectful learning environment. To ensure this, it is important that all students take responsibility for school property and treat it with care.

If a student damages any school property, whether intentionally or as a result of inappropriate behavior, their family will be financially responsible for the cost of repairing or replacing the damaged property. This includes but is not limited to desks, tables, devices, walls, and other school equipment.

By adhering to this policy, we can ensure that our school remains a clean, safe, and welcoming environment for all students. Thank you for your cooperation and understanding.

Public Display of Affection (PDA) Policy

At Pivot Charter School, we strive to create a respectful and professional learning environment for all students. To maintain this atmosphere, it is important that students refrain from engaging in inappropriate public displays of affection (PDA) while on school grounds or during school-sponsored events.

PDA Guidelines:

- **No Kissing:** Kissing is not permitted on school property or at any school-sponsored event.
- **Appropriate Touching:** While holding hands or giving a friendly hug is acceptable, any form of intimate or excessive physical contact is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, sitting on another student's lap, or any other physical interaction that is inappropriate for the school environment.
- **Sexual Behavior:** Any actions that could be interpreted as sexual in nature, such as touching, groping, or other intimate behaviors, are strictly prohibited.
- **Respect Personal Space:** Students should respect each other's personal space and avoid behaviors that may make others feel uncomfortable or distracted from the learning environment.

By adhering to these guidelines, we can ensure that Pivot Charter School remains a place focused on education and mutual respect. Thank you for your cooperation and understanding.

Technology & Media Policies

Technology Policy

At Pivot Charter School, we believe that technology is a valuable tool for learning and communication. However, we also recognize the potential distractions and dangers that come with its use. In order to ensure a safe and productive learning environment, all students are expected to adhere to the following technology policy:

Responsible use: Students are responsible for using school devices (including laptops, tablets, and other equipment) in a responsible and appropriate manner. This means using devices for educational purposes only and refraining from activities that are not related to school work.

Security Information: All the data you provide to us is protected to ensure both the privacy and security of your data. We use state-of-the-art technology to keep your personal information as secure as possible, preventing tampering, interception, or unauthorized access. Remember to keep your account information private and secure.

Internet access: Students must use the internet in a responsible and safe manner. This includes not accessing any unapproved websites or engaging in unauthorized communication with peers or other individuals. The school's internet filter is designed to block access to inappropriate sites, but students must still use good judgment when browsing the internet as they are responsible for their actions.

Plagiarism: Using school devices to plagiarize assignments or engage in academic dishonesty is strictly prohibited. Students must complete their own work and give proper credit to sources used in their assignments.

Gaming: Students are not permitted to play games on school devices unless it is part of a teacher-approved activity or assignment.

Videos: Students are not permitted to watch movies on school devices unless it is part of a teacher-approved activity or assignment. They may listen to music on school computers with teacher permission.

Device care: Students must take proper care of school devices. This includes not removing any protective cases, not dropping/slamming/throwing devices, not prying or removing

keys on devices, not leaving devices in extreme temperatures or direct sunlight, and not exposing them to any liquids or foods. Any damage caused to a school device by a student will be the financial responsibility of the student.

Off-task use: Students are not permitted to use school devices for anything other than educational purposes during class time. Using a device off-task may result in the device being taken away, and disciplinary action taken.

Personal Devices: For security purposes, students are not permitted to use their own personal computers, laptops, or tablets. All students must use only school-issued devices to ensure a secure and consistent learning environment.

Photography and recording: Students are not permitted to take pictures or record videos of other students or staff members on campus unless it is part of a school-sponsored activity, such as yearbook.

Consequences: Any violation of this technology policy may result in disciplinary action. The severity of the action will depend on the nature and seriousness of the violation and may include loss of technology privileges, detention, or suspension. Repeated violations may result in more severe consequences.

Student Use of Cell Phones and Electronic Devices Policy

Pivot Charter School is committed to creating a safe, respectful, and academically focused learning environment. In accordance with updated Florida law, and to minimize distractions and misuse of technology, the school has adopted the following policies regarding personal electronic devices, including cell phones.

Florida Law HB 379 (2023) & HB 1105 (2025)

In July 2025, the State of Florida passed HB 1105, expanding earlier legislation (HB 379, 2023) and requiring all public schools—including charter schools like Pivot—to implement stricter rules on student cell phone use. This is a statewide mandate that takes effect during the 2025–2026 school year.

HB 1105 extends the previous ban on phone use during instructional time to cover the entire school day (bell to bell) for students in grades K–8, including lunch, hallway transitions, and breaks. High schools must continue enforcing the instructional-time ban, although a pilot program in six districts is testing full-day restrictions. A statewide high school policy may follow after December 1, 2026.

Statute Reference: § 1006.07(2)(f), Florida Statutes (amended)

In compliance with Florida law and in support of a focused, distraction-free environment, the following personal devices are not permitted for student use during the school day:

- Cell phones (including prepaid or burner phones)
- Smartwatches
- Smart glasses
- Bluetooth or wireless earbuds/headphones
- Any wearable or wireless communication device

Communication Policy

To contact your student during the day, please call the front office at (813) 626-6724. We will deliver messages promptly or bring your child to the phone if needed.

Medical & Learning Exceptions

Students with documented medical needs or accommodations through an IEP or 504 Plan that require access to a wireless device must submit supporting documentation to the Pivot Charter School's ESE coordinator. Approved students will be issued a usage plan that complies with Florida law.

Cell Phone and Electrion Device Violation Policy

Violations of this policy will be addressed according to the **Behavior Matrix** and may be recorded as Level 1 or 2 infractions depending on the student's behavior. Progressive consequences are as follows:

Offense	Consequence
1st Violation	Device confiscated and held until the end of the school day
2nd Violation	Parent/guardian must pick up the device; student must check it into the front office daily; a parent conference is required
3rd Violation	Student loses the privilege to bring any personal device for the rest of the semester; a parent conference is required
Continued Violations	May result in increased disciplinary action, including detention, suspension, or revocation of school choice placement

Refusal to surrender a device when requested by staff will be considered defiance and may result in immediate disciplinary action. If school administrators have reasonable suspicion that a device contains evidence of a violation—such as bullying, threats, or academic dishonesty—they may search the device in accordance with Florida Statutes § 1006.09(10), F.S. Parents will be notified if a search is conducted.

Students are solely responsible for the safekeeping of their personal devices. Pivot Charter School is not liable for any lost, stolen, or damaged items, including those that were confiscated by staff.

Additionally, students may not take photos, videos, or audio recordings of others unless they are participating in a school-sponsored activity, such as yearbook or an approved digital project. Media captured for school purposes is for official use only and may not be posted, shared, or used on personal social media accounts or in personal projects without administrative approval. Unauthorized photography or recording may result in disciplinary consequences.

Photo/Video Release

Throughout the school year, photographs and videos may be taken by staff, students, or media as part of school-related activities at Pivot Charter School. These visual recordings may cover special events, classroom activities, and school-related experiences. We may wish to use these visuals for promotional and educational purposes, including but not limited to publications, posters, brochures, newsletters, on the Internet, radio, television, social media pages, school website, flyers, advertisements, and other special school events. Furthermore, such visuals may be collected and utilized in our yearbook.

As a parent or guardian, you have the legal right to withhold permission for the use of your student's photos, images, and videos by us or any entity. If you do not wish for your child's photos, images, or videos to be used for these purposes, you may contact the school office in writing to Opt Out.

Our commitment to you is as follows:

- Pivot Charter School will make reasonable efforts to ensure that photographs, images, and videos used in the aforementioned contexts are appropriate and respectful.

- We will not release any personal identifying information of your child, such as their full name, address, or contact details, without seeking separate consent. Your child's privacy and safety are of utmost importance to us.

Health & Safety Policies

Allergen Policy

To ensure the safety and well-being of all students, Pivot Charter School has implemented an allergen policy. Students are not permitted to order or bring on campus any seafood, shellfish, or nut products. Additionally, spraying perfume or body sprays, or other scented items is prohibited on campus to prevent allergic reactions and discomfort among students. This policy is in place to protect students with severe allergies and to maintain a safe environment for everyone. Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action, including after-school detention, suspension, or expulsion.

Thank you for your cooperation and understanding in adhering to this policy. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the school administration.

Food Delivery Policy

At Pivot Charter School, we understand that students may wish to use food delivery services such as DoorDash or Grubhub. To ensure that this process is orderly and does not disrupt the school environment, students must adhere to the following policy and have a signed Parent-Student Food Delivery Agreement on file.

Student Responsibilities:

- Order Submission: All food delivery service orders must be scheduled in advance or placed by a parent or guardian. Students may not place orders during the school day, including homeroom, due to Florida's cell phone laws.
- Pick-Up Time: Deliveries that arrive early will be held until break, and any that arrive late will be held until the end of the school day. Early pick-up of delivered items is not permitted under any circumstances, regardless of the item's contents. Please note that the school does not provide refrigeration or special storage for perishable items.
- Late Arrivals: Orders must arrive before the end of the student's designated break time. Orders that arrive after the break time will not be allowed for student pick up until the end of the school day, regardless of the reason for the delay.

- Shared Orders: While we understand that students may place shared orders together, students are not allowed to pick up or deliver food to other classrooms, as this can cause disruptions.
- Handling Shared Orders: If students have shared orders, each student must take their own food, leaving the other items to be picked up by the student with whom they shared an order, during that student's designated break time.
- Identification: Orders must have the student's name for them to be picked up, or a record of their purchase with a matching order number must be shown before items will be released. This is to prevent orders from being picked up by the wrong student.

Consequences:

If there is a widespread failure among students to adhere to these rules, as determined by administration, it may lead to the removal of the food delivery service option for all students at the end of the semester. In such cases, all students will still have the options of bringing their lunch or purchasing items from the vending machine. We do provide microwaves and access to hot water to allow for expanded lunch options for students.

By following these guidelines, we can ensure that the food delivery process is smooth and does not interfere with the learning environment. Thank you for your cooperation.

Student Illness Policy

At Pivot Charter School, the health and safety of our students and staff are our top priorities. To help control the spread of communicable diseases and maintain a healthy school environment, we ask for your continued cooperation with the following guidelines:

If your child becomes ill during school hours, we will contact you immediately. You are expected to arrange for your child to be picked up as soon as possible. Our school does not have a school clinic nor the staff to handle ill children for long periods of time. Therefore, it is essential that your contact information on your child's emergency card is always up to date. This information is vital for the safety and well-being of your child.

Please do not send your child to school if they exhibit any of the following signs or symptoms: vomiting or diarrhea within the past 24 hours, fever of 100.4°F or higher within the past 24 hours, chills, sore or red throat and/or congestion, persistent coughing, sneezing, or shortness of breath, loss of taste or smell, red, watery eyes, rash, earache or drainage from the ear, and excessive mucus from the nose (runny nose).

Your child may return to school once all signs and symptoms have been absent for 24 hours without the use of medication to treat these symptoms. Alternatively, your child can return to school with a written statement from a healthcare provider indicating that they are ready to return to school.

If your child has a communicable disease, please call the school at 813-626-6724 to inform us of the nature of the illness and when we can expect their return to school. When reporting an absence, please use the excused absence form available on our website at www.pivottampa.com.

If your child does not have medical insurance due to financial restraints, we recommend you contact Florida KidCare (not affiliated with Pivot Charter School) for assistance. Florida KidCare offers free, subsidized, and full-pay health insurance option to Florida families based on income and household size. You can visit their website at <https://www.floridakidcare.org/> for more information.

Thank you for your cooperation in keeping our school community healthy and safe. If you have any questions or need further clarification, please do not hesitate to contact the school administration.

Medication Policy

To ensure the health and safety of all students, Pivot Charter School follows district-approved guidelines for medication use during the school day.

General Guidelines

- All medications—including prescription drugs, over-the-counter items, eye drops, cough drops, topical creams, and vitamins—must be handled according to school policy.
- Students are not permitted to carry or self-administer any medication unless officially authorized through completed documentation.
- All medications must be brought to and picked up by a parent or guardian and stored securely in the front office unless a self-carry form has been approved.
- A Physician's Authorization for Medication form, signed by both a healthcare provider and a parent/guardian, is required for school staff to administer any medication.

Self-Carry Exceptions

Students may be allowed to carry and self-administer certain medications only with proper authorization:

1. Emergency Medications (such as inhalers, EpiPens, or diabetic supplies):
Requires the Authorization for Student to Self-Carry and Independently Self-Administer Emergency Medication(s)/Procedure(s) form.
2. Routine Over-the-Counter Medications (such as ibuprofen, acetaminophen, allergy relief, or cough drops):
Requires both the Parent Self-Administration Form and the Physician Self-Administration Form.

These forms can be requested from the front office and must be renewed each school year.

At-School Administration

- Medication without approved self-carry documentation will be kept in the front office and administered only by designated staff.
- Parents must personally administer medication at school if the required forms are not completed.
- Students are responsible for reporting to the office at the correct time to take their medication. Staff are not responsible for reminders.

Please notify your child's teacher of any medication needs or health-related procedures that may affect your child's day.

Thank you for partnering with us to protect student health and maintain a safe learning environment.

Visitor Policy

Visitors, INCLUDING PARENTS, are NOT permitted to go to their child's classroom unannounced during school hours. This policy is in place to ensure that the normal routine and instruction are not disrupted, and to prioritize the safety and privacy of all students.

If a parent or guardian wishes to observe their child's class, they must notify the school administration in writing to set up an appointment for the visit. Before proceeding to a classroom, visitors (including parents) must present a valid Florida Driver's License, sign in and out at the front office, state whom they are visiting, and provide the purpose of the visit. Upon doing so, visitors will receive a pass to proceed to the designated classroom.

By adhering to this process, we aim to create a safe and orderly learning environment for all students. We appreciate your cooperation in ensuring the security and well-being of our school community.

Academic Policies

Course Offerings

Once a student has completed their application and has been informed that they are enrolled, they will be given a registration form to select classes. The administration will consider class sizes, test scores, graduation requirements, and career planning to determine placement. Graduation requirements will guide the decision about which classes the student should take each semester in order to graduate.

Promotion Policy

At Pivot Charter School, students must fulfill all graduation requirements outlined in the Hillsborough School District Student Progression Plan, as per our agreement with the Hillsborough School Board. This plan details the criteria for advancing from middle school to high school and the requirements for earning a diploma. You can access the Progression Plan at the following link: [PDF Student Progression Plan.pdf](#).

Graduation planning begins early in a student's educational career. Each semester, courses are assigned based on several factors and align with the student's four-year plan prepared by the Administration Team. It is essential for parents or legal guardians and students to take a proactive approach and maintain open communication throughout this process. They are expected to stay informed and engaged with the development and progress of the four-year plan, ensuring that course assignments and academic goals are on track.

At the end of each school year and before the commencement of summer school, the Administration Team reviews the transcripts of students who have failed courses or have not

completed their assigned courses. These students must complete summer work for any incomplete courses necessary to stay on track for graduation within the expected timeframe. Failure to complete these courses during the summer will result in the student not being promoted to the next grade level, as they will not be on the correct path to graduate on time.

Graduation Ceremony Participation:

To participate in the graduation ceremony, students must meet all the graduation requirements set forth by the state of Florida. Students who do not meet these requirements will not be permitted to walk in our graduation ceremony. Instead, they will be issued a Certificate of Completion and will be allowed to continue working towards meeting the requirements with administrative approval. Once they meet the graduation benchmarks, they will be issued a standard diploma and will be permitted to walk in the next available graduation ceremony.

Transcripts

To request a high school transcript, please ensure that the request is submitted at least two weeks before the required date. Parents or teachers may request a transcript by completing a transcript request form. If the transcript needs to be sent officially to another school or university, please provide the address of the institution along with the request.

Community College Courses

If a student plans to take a class at a community college or any other accredited college, whether online or on campus, they must obtain written approval from the principal by acquiring a K-12 community college form. Students are responsible for obtaining this form from Pivot Charter School, and it is essential to note that Pivot Charter School will not be responsible for notifying families about college deadlines.

Upon enrolling in the college course, students must provide written verification of their enrollment within one week if they intend for the classes to count toward high school graduation. This verification will be kept in the student's file. College courses will be listed on the master agreement with a designation of "CC" or any other designation that indicates the course will not be completed at Pivot Charter School but through a community college. This designation allows the principal to track the courses committed to

being completed at a community college and anticipate the corresponding transcripts at the end of the semester.

Within three weeks of completing a college course, the student must provide the Pivot Charter School Registrar with an official copy of the college transcript if they wish for the courses to be included in their high school transcript. The registrar will inform the principal if the student did not complete the anticipated course(s). Successfully completed college courses will be added to the student's transcript.

State Mandated Testing

All students enrolled full-time at Pivot Charter School are required to participate in state-mandated progress monitoring and end-of-course tests. These tests will be conducted on the Pivot Charter School campus. Failure to participate in these tests may result in a delay in receiving a diploma.

Special Education Services for Students

Pivot Charter School complies with state and federal mandates and is committed to serving students with disabilities. Every student is entitled to a free appropriate public education and placement in the least restrictive environment. Pivot Charter School actively collaborates with families to ensure that students receive all the educational benefits they are entitled to.

Our school provides services to students with Individualized Education Plans (IEP) and Section 504 plans. If you suspect that your child has a disability, please do not hesitate to contact Pivot Charter School for assistance and support.

Grading Scale

The grading scale is as follows:

- 90-100% A – Exceeds Mastery of the Standards
- 80-89% B – Mastery of Standards
- 70-79% C – Approaching Grade Level Standards
- 60-69% D – Below Grade Level Standards
- 0-59% F – Failure

Grade Composition

A student's grade will be composed of a variety of assignments and assessments designed to help them learn, practice, and demonstrate their understanding of skills and content. This can include individual work, group activities, projects, and various forms of assessments such as written assignments, verbal presentations, or physical activities.

Teachers will provide students with a grade for each activity they complete based on a point system. The point value will reflect the significance and effort required for completing the activity. Each activity will be graded based on the expectations communicated by the teacher; this may include expectations regarding the overall completeness or correctness of an assignment, the amount of effort a student put into completing the assignment, and other relevant criteria.

Progress Reports

Parents/guardians will receive progress reports at the midpoint of each quarter to stay informed about their child's academic performance. To get the most up-to-date information, we encourage parents to monitor their child's Google Classroom regularly. In case of any additional inquiries or questions after checking the Google Classroom, parents are welcome to reach out to the teachers directly via email for a formal update on their child's progress and grades. Your involvement and support in monitoring your child's education are highly valued, and we are here to assist you every step of the way.

Grade Reports

Report cards will be made available digitally on the HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY report card website (<https://reportcards.sdhc.k12.fl.us/>) at the end of every 9-week grading period. For easy access, parents/guardians can check the website to view and download their child's report card. However, if any parent prefers to have a hard copy, they may request one through the front office, and we will gladly provide it. We value your involvement in your child's education and aim to ensure convenient access to their academic progress information. Should you have any questions or need further assistance, feel free to reach out to us.

Remediation Policy

In our commitment to supporting all students in achieving academic success, PCS offers several options for additional help with homework, tests, and exams, including one-on-one teacher assistance and our free peer-tutoring program. Before staying after their regular

session hours, students must seek teacher or administrator permission. We value the collaborative efforts between students and teachers and encourage open communication in seeking help when needed.

Homework Policy

At Pivot Charter School, teachers reserve the right to assign homework based on the specific needs of a course or based on the academic progress of students. Completing and submitting homework by the assigned deadline is a fundamental expectation. If students require additional assistance or an extension, they are encouraged to self-advocate and discuss the matter directly with their teacher. We believe open communication is essential for fostering academic success and a positive learning experience.

Unit Assessments

At PCS, assessments, including tests, quizzes, projects, and essays, are crucial components of the learning process. If a student requires remediation or seeks to improve their performance, they are encouraged to consult with a Pivot Charter School teacher. Depending on the teacher's discretion, students may be given the opportunity to complete a new attempt or retake missed questions on a failed assessment(s) within the unit. Additionally, they may also have the chance to review the unit with their Pivot Charter School teacher to strengthen their understanding.

Writing & Assessment Preparation Program

All students in grades 6-10 are required to take the Florida Assessment of Student Thinking in Math and Language Arts, which are state-mandated assessments occurring in August, January, and May. To adequately prepare students for these assessments and improve their writing abilities, we have designed a comprehensive approach.

Pivot students will have regular opportunities to engage in writing assignments, including essays, across various subjects. Our focus is to provide them ample chances to practice and refine their writing skills. Teachers will assign multiple graded writing tasks to assess their progress and offer constructive feedback.

Semester Exams

All Pivot classes have final exams scheduled during the last week of each semester. These exams play a significant role in determining a student's overall semester grade, worth

between 25% - 30% based on the specific course. In addition, teachers have the discretion to include a midterm exam to help finalize the nine-week grade.

By carefully evaluating performance in both semester and midterm exams, we aim to provide a comprehensive and fair assessment of a student's progress throughout the academic year.

Academic Integrity Policy

At Pivot Charter School, we place a strong emphasis on maintaining high standards of academic integrity and responsibility. Our goal is to promote a culture of honesty and ethical behavior among our students, preparing them for future success.

By enrolling in Pivot Charter School, each student commits to upholding academic integrity. This includes:

- Completing all assignments independently, without any unauthorized assistance.
- Seeking pre-approval from teachers before collaborating with classmates on any assignment.
- Avoiding all forms of plagiarism, which includes copying from the internet, books, or peers without proper citation.
- Not permitting others to copy or use their work.
- Not misusing content from the internet or any other sources.

Plagiarism Policy:

Plagiarism is a serious violation of our school's policies on academic integrity. Any form of cheating or plagiarism compromises the learning experience and hinders students' growth and understanding of the subject matter. Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:

- Relying on AI programs without teacher authorization to generate responses for assignments.

- Submitting assignments that are not their own work.
- Manipulating assignments to appear complete dishonestly.
- Searching for answer keys online or from unauthorized sources.

Consequences of Plagiarism:

If a student is found to have plagiarized an assignment, they will receive a grade of zero for that assignment, without the option for make-up work. This policy is non-negotiable, and no exceptions will be made. Furthermore, repeated instances of plagiarism may result in additional disciplinary actions.

We urge parents to have conversations with their children about the importance of academic integrity and the real-world consequences of unethical behavior. By instilling a sense of responsibility and honesty, we can ensure that our students develop essential skills for their academic and personal growth.

Thank you for your cooperation in fostering a learning environment that values integrity and ethical conduct. If you have any questions or concerns about our academic integrity policy, please feel free to reach out to your child's teacher. Together, we can maintain a culture of academic excellence and integrity at Pivot Charter School.

Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

As technology evolves, so does the way students learn and complete assignments. Pivot Charter School recognizes that Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools—such as ChatGPT, Grammarly, and other AI-based programs—can support learning when used appropriately. This policy outlines how students may use AI tools responsibly and ethically in a school setting.

Acceptable Use of AI

Students may use AI tools **only when**:

- A teacher has given clear permission for use on a specific assignment or activity

- The tool is used to support learning (such as checking grammar, brainstorming, or organizing thoughts), not to complete entire assignments
- Any AI-generated content is acknowledged if required by the teacher

Unacceptable Use of AI

Students must not:

- Use AI tools to generate work that is submitted as their own without teacher approval
- Rely on AI to complete assessments, tests, or independent work
- Copy and paste AI responses into assignments without proper citation or approval
- Use AI tools to create content that is misleading, harmful, offensive, or violates school policies
- Enter personal information (such as full names, location, or school details) into AI platforms

Consequences of Misuse

Misusing AI tools will be treated as a violation of the school's academic integrity policy. Consequences may include:

- A grade of zero on the assignment
- Parent or guardian notification
- Additional disciplinary action for repeated offenses

Late Assignments

At Pivot Charter School, we understand that students may occasionally miss or submit late assignments. Our policy is designed to provide a fair opportunity for students to complete their work while maintaining academic accountability.

General Expectations:

- In-Class Assignments:

- Assignments must be completed and submitted by the end of the class period or by the due date set by the instructor. Failure to do so will result in a grade of 0, unless prior arrangements have been made with the teacher.
 - Teachers have the discretion to assign a grade of 0 for assignments or activities expected to be completed within a single class period if a student was present but did not participate or submit any work.
 - If a student leaves the classroom without permission, they will receive a zero on the assignment without the option of making it up, unless there is an extenuating circumstance, such as a medical emergency.
- **Late Assignments**
 - **Submission Window:**
 - Assignments turned in after the due date will be accepted at the teacher's discretion for up to 5 school days.
 - Assignments submitted more than 5 school days late will require administrative approval for acceptance and will only be considered under extenuating circumstances. Approval is granted on a case-by-case basis to ensure fairness and equity.

Make-Up Work Following an Absence

At Pivot Charter School, we aim to support students in catching up on missed work following an absence. Our make-up work policy ensures students have the opportunity to complete their assignments and maintain their academic progress.

Excused Absences:

Students with excused absences have 5 school days to submit their assignments for full credit. This allows ample time to catch up on missed work.

Unexcused Absences:

Students with unexcused absences also have 5 school days to submit their assignments. However, there will be a 20% reduction in the assignment's value. For example, an assignment worth 100 points will have a maximum achievable score of 80 points.

Additional Guidelines:

It remains the student's responsibility to take proactive steps in communicating with their respective teachers about missed or late assignments. Our teachers are here to provide support and guidance, including considering reasonable requests for extensions or accommodations.

By adhering to this policy, we ensure that our students are accountable for meeting assignment deadlines and are held to high standards of academic achievement.

If you have any questions or need clarification on this policy, please don't hesitate to reach out to your child's teacher or the school administration. We are committed to supporting our students' success and fostering a positive learning environment at Pivot Charter School.

Work Submission for Students with 5 or More Unexcused Absences

Students with 5 or more unexcused absences will not be allowed to submit their work online from home as a substitute for attending school, and will only be permitted to submit work when they are physically present at school. Assignments, assessments, and other course-related work must primarily be completed in person and submitted through appropriate in-person methods, such as submitting to the teacher directly or placing it in designated submission boxes within the school premises.

Online submission will only be accepted from students who attend school regularly, meet the attendance requirements, and are physically present on campus when submitting the work. Students who attempt to submit work online while having 5 or more unexcused absences and are not present at school will have their online submissions invalidated and not considered for grading or credit.

The student may be required to complete the missed work or assessments during designated makeup periods or as determined by the teacher and school administration. Repeated violations of this policy may result in additional disciplinary actions as deemed appropriate by the school administration.

Students who experience 5 or more unexcused absences will be provided with necessary support and interventions to address their attendance issues. This may include meetings with school counselors, parents/guardians, and other relevant staff members to identify and address underlying reasons for the absences.

The school administration may implement appropriate interventions, such as attendance contracts, academic support programs, or referrals to external resources, to help students improve their attendance and engagement.

This policy will be periodically reviewed by the school administration to ensure its effectiveness and may be modified as necessary to align with evolving educational objectives and attendance requirements.

Classroom Behavior Guidelines:

To maintain a productive learning environment, we expect all students to adhere to the following classroom instruction guidelines:

Punctuality and Preparedness: Students should enter the class in a timely and non-disruptive manner. It is essential for all students to be seated and ready to learn at the scheduled bell time.

Classroom Rules and Policies: Students are required to follow the rules and policies set by their teachers, as posted in the classroom. These guidelines are designed to create a positive and respectful learning atmosphere.

Food Policy: Food is allowed in class only with the explicit permission of the teacher. Students must not consume food without the teacher's approval.

Water in Class: Students are permitted to bring water to class, but the water container must have a cap or lid to prevent spills and minimize distractions.

Classroom Access: For safety and security reasons, students are not allowed to enter classrooms without the presence of a teacher or administrator.

Attendance Policies

Attendance Policy

Regular school attendance is not just important for academic success—it's also required by Florida law. Students age 16 and younger are legally mandated to attend school, and it is the responsibility of each school to monitor and report attendance accurately.

If a student accumulates multiple unexcused absences, the school team will connect with the family to develop a supportive plan. In some cases, we may recommend or refer families to community or district resources that can help address challenges impacting attendance.

Parents and guardians play a vital role in this process. If your child will be absent, it is your responsibility to notify the school. You can report absences to Pivot Charter School by:

- Completing the Excused Absence/Tardy form located on our website www.pivottampa.com

Please note that reporting your child's absence to your student's teacher is not acceptable. Parents will have 3 days to excuse their student's absences.

Attendance Notification Schedule

Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified about their student's attendance based on the following measurements:

3 Unexcused Absences	Teacher/Student Conference and Parent/Guardian Notified
5 Absences (excused and unexcused)*	Parents Notified by Email
10 Unexcused Absences**	A letter is sent to the parent which is also copied and placed in the student's cum folder.
15 Unexcused Absences***	Notification sent to DMV for Drivers License Suspension

Consequences for Excessive Absences

1. Exclusion from club days or other extracurricular activities.
2. Loss of the right to turn in assigned work from an off-campus location (after 5 unexcused absences).
3. Parent Conference regarding attendance (after 10 unexcused absences).
4. Suspension of student driving privileges (after 15 unexcused absences).
5. Attendance Contract (after 16 or more unexcused absences).

6. Students may lose their spot for the following year at the administration's discretion if they accumulate 20 or more unexcused absences.

Excused Absences

The following reasons are accepted for excused absences:

- Illness of the student.
- Death in the family or family emergency (e.g., house fire, family member's health emergency, etc.).
- Religious holidays of the student's faith.
- Required court appearance or subpoena by a law enforcement agency.
- Special events, including public functions, competitions, exceptional cases of family need, and school-approved activities.
- Scheduled medical appointments, dental appointments, and absences for treatment of medical diagnoses such as ADD, ADHD, ASD, etc.
- Students who have, or are suspected of having, a communicable disease.

Note: Students are allowed 5 excused absences per quarter. If absences are due to a medical condition, a doctor's note may be required.

Planned Extended Absences/Vacations

Parents are strongly encouraged to schedule family trips during school vacations to avoid disrupting the learning process. We discourage students from missing school for family vacations, as they are considered unexcused absences. However, if an extended absence becomes unavoidable, parents must notify the school in writing at least one week before the first day the student will be absent.

Please be aware that the school administration reserves the right to deny any request for extended excused absences. The provision of make-up work before or after the planned

absence will be at the teacher's discretion, depending on what they consider most beneficial for the student's learning.

A student is considered tardy when they are not present in their class when attendance is taken. To ensure a smooth learning environment, we have established the following tardy policy:

1. Reporting to Front Office:

- Any student who arrives late to class must immediately report to the front office to obtain a tardy pass before entering the classroom.

2. Parent Communication:

- Upon accumulation of three tardies, the administrative assistant will review all recorded tardies, considering medical excuses or extreme emergencies approved by the administration. They will initiate communication with parents regarding excessive tardies or early dismissals. This communication will take place through a phone conference, e-mail, or letter following the third tardy instance.

3. 10+ Unexcused Tardies:

- For every ten unexcused tardies a student accumulates, the student will be required to attend a meeting with the administration and their parents to discuss the reasons for tardiness and to develop a plan to improve punctuality. Unexcused tardies are those for which acceptable documentation, such as a physician's note, is not provided or when a student is not accompanied by a parent/guardian.

4. Tardy Duration and Absences:

- If a student arrives late to class and is tardy for half a period or more, they will be marked as absent for that class period. This emphasizes the importance of being punctual to maximize classroom engagement.

Maintaining punctuality is crucial for a productive learning environment. We encourage all students to be prompt and prepared for their classes. This policy aims to foster responsibility and ensure that every student has the opportunity to make the most of their education. Your cooperation in adhering to these guidelines is greatly appreciated.

Excused Tardies:

A student will be considered excused only if a parent/guardian personally escorts their child to the front desk and provides an acceptable reason, as described below. Excused tardy reasons include:

- Doctor appointments with notes from the doctor or orthodontist.
- Extreme emergencies approved by the administration.
- Car accident.
- Being sick with a parent escort.
- Late bus.

Note: Excused tardies will not be counted toward the student's tardy or absence record. However, three unexcused tardies in a class will be treated as an unexcused absence.

Procedures for Abiding by State Law:

At three tardies, the attendance clerk will review tardies turned in and recorded, checking for medical excuses or extreme emergencies approved by the administration.

The attendance clerk will contact the parent regarding excessive tardies or early dismissals through a phone conference, email, or letter at the third tardy instance.

If tardies continue, a referral letter will be sent to the administration, including supporting documentation of parent contact and non-medical or emergency tardies.

Disciplinary Action for Habitual Tardiness:

Habitual tardiness may result in any combination of the following disciplinary actions: loss of break time, assigned work detail, exclusion from extracurricular activities, or in-school suspension.

Sign Out Policy

A written or electronic request for a child to be dismissed early from school is required. Phone calls are not acceptable, except for emergencies. The request to leave school early must include the specific time and reason for leaving and should be submitted to the front office or emailed at the beginning of the school day.

Please note that students are not permitted to be dismissed from school during the last 30 minutes of the day, except for emergencies or with prior approval from the administration.

We value classroom time and encourage parents to schedule medical appointments outside of school hours whenever possible.

Students who are signed out for reasons other than being ill, experiencing a family emergency, attending a medical appointment, engaging in school business, or any prearranged absences approved by the administration will receive an unexcused absence for the missed class periods. It is essential to limit such sign-outs to prioritize academic engagement.

In cases where a student accumulates five or more sign-outs during a grading period, they will be required to provide medical or other appropriate documentation to have those absences excused.

Communication Policies

Teacher Conferences

All parents and students have the opportunity to meet with their child's teacher at least once during the school year. Parents can request a conference by contacting their student's teacher. Please allow the teachers twenty-four hours to respond to your request. If there is no response please contact the office staff or an administrator. We encourage you to have conferences more often, as effective communication is one of the cornerstones of education.

Please note in order not to disrupt the school day we do not accept walk-in appointments. All appointments or conferences must be scheduled. We can not guarantee that a teacher or administrator will be available at all times. If it's an emergency please notify the office to make arrangements for administration or a teacher to meet with you.

Parent Communication Guidelines

Pivot Charter School values open and respectful communication between parents, guardians, and school staff. We encourage parents to share compliments, suggestions, questions, and concerns about any part of the school program or any employee of Pivot Charter School. This feedback helps us make improvements and positive changes whenever possible.

If the school is not meeting your expectations, please let us know. Parents and guardians may call the front office to set up a conference to discuss any concerns. We cannot address issues we are unaware of, so your communication is vital.

Scheduling Meetings:

Parents are welcome to schedule meetings with teachers or administrators via email. Please note that teachers and administrators are not available to take phone calls or meet with parents during the school day without prearranged and scheduled appointments. This policy ensures that they can focus on the school's daily operations and student needs.

Respectful Communication:

While we are committed to addressing your concerns, it is essential that all communication remains respectful and constructive. Parents who become belligerent or disrespectful will lose the ability to meet with teachers or administrators in person and will be required to communicate solely through email.

Aggressive Behavior:

Any parent who becomes physically or verbally aggressive, threatens school staff, or engages in any form of threatening behavior may be asked to leave the premises immediately and will be barred from school grounds in the future. In extreme situations, their child may lose their placement at Pivot Charter School.

We appreciate your cooperation and understanding as we work together to provide a positive and productive learning environment for all students.

Parent Involvement Policy

At Pivot Charter School, we believe that parent involvement is a critical component of student success. Parents play a vital role in supporting their child's academic progress, and we encourage parents to take an active role in their child's education.

To support this goal, we ask that parents commit to the following:

Check your child's grades at least once per week through the school's online grading system. Hold your child accountable for their academic performance by discussing their grades with them and setting academic goals.

Contact teachers immediately if you have any concerns regarding your child's academic progress, behavior, or well-being. Collaboration between parents and teachers is critical to ensuring that students receive the support they need to succeed.

Be supportive of teacher and administrative decisions. Our teachers and administrators have the best interests of our students in mind, and we ask that parents trust their professional judgment.

Return teacher contacts as soon as possible. Communication is key to maintaining a successful partnership between parents and teachers, and we ask that parents respond promptly to calls or messages from teachers.

Volunteer when able. We value the contributions of parent volunteers and appreciate their willingness to support our school community.

Through active participation, parents can positively impact their child's academic success and contribute to a thriving school community. We appreciate your commitment to your child's education and look forward to working together to support your child's growth and development.

Student Rights and Records

Student's Rights

Students have the right to feel safe from threats and bodily harm. Disruptive behaviors are never acceptable, and when they occur, they may result in exclusion from participation in class activities, detention, suspension, expulsion, or other disciplinary actions.

Parents who have conflicts with students other than their own child and/or parents are requested to speak to the Administration. At no time should parents approach the student or their parents directly to address the issue. Please contact the school's Administration to resolve any conflicts in a respectful manner.

We are committed to treating all students and employees with respect. Any use of slurs, innuendos, hostile treatment, violence, or any form of verbal or physical misconduct against a student or employee will NOT be tolerated. In cases where necessary, law enforcement may be contacted for appropriate action.

Student Records (Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act)

Under the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA 34 CFR Part 99), parents of currently enrolled students at Pivot Charter School (or eligible students of 18 years of age) have the right to:

Inspect and review their student's educational records.

Request the amendment of their student's educational records to ensure that they are not inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy or other rights.

Consent to the disclosure of personally identifiable information contained in their student's educational records, except to the extent that the act and its regulations authorize disclosure without consent.

File with the U.S. Department of Education a complaint under the provisions of the Act concerning alleged failures by the district to comply with the requirements of the act.

In accordance with state and federal privacy laws, students who attain the age of 18 may transfer certain rights related to their academic records.

Dispute Resolution and Grievance Process Policy

This dispute resolution process provides parents, students, and volunteers with a procedure to follow if they have a grievance concerning the school. It allows them to have the grievance heard by an administrator or Principal. If the issue cannot be resolved at this level or with the Executive Director of Pivot Education Inc., it can be brought before the Governing Board at a regularly scheduled Board meeting.

A grievance is defined as any feeling of dissatisfaction or injustice related to the program, school, or staffing. If you have a grievance, please bring it to the attention of the respective party as soon as possible with the intention to resolve the issue. If it cannot be resolved at this level, then you should schedule an appointment with an administrator to attempt further resolution.

If a parent or student disagrees with the established rules on conduct, policies, procedures, or practices, they can express their concern directly to their teacher or the Principal. No parent will be penalized, formally or informally, for voicing a grievance or complaint with Pivot Charter School in a reasonable, business-like manner, or for using this dispute resolution process. PCS requests that parents and students first attempt to resolve concerns at the site level with their teacher or Principal before bringing a concern to the Executive Director of the not-for-profit corporation, Pivot Education Inc., that oversees Pivot Charter Schools.

To file a grievance please click [here](#).

Disciplinary Policies

After-School Detention Policy

The after-school detention consequence has been implemented at Pivot Charter School with the aim of addressing specific behavioral issues and promoting better adherence to school rules. By upholding these standards, we strive to create a more conducive learning environment for all students.

Eligibility and Purpose:

After-school detention is intended for students who have not upheld the policies and expectations outlined in the Pivot Charter School's student handbook. It is assigned to students who have engaged in behaviors that are inconsistent with the school's code of conduct.

These behaviors may include, but are not limited to, violations of dress code, disruptions to the learning environment, academic misconduct, and other breaches of established school rules. The purpose of after-school detention is to provide a structured opportunity for reflection and growth, encouraging students to make better choices and contribute positively to the school community.

Notification and Attendance:

Parents or guardians will be notified in advance of the detention assignment through the school administration. Detention sessions will be held every Tuesday and Thursday from 1:30pm to 3:30pm on the Pivot Charter School campus. It is the responsibility of parents or guardians to arrange transportation for their child to and from the detention session. Additionally, parents are required to provide a snack for their child during the detention period.

Detention Activities and Expectations:

During the detention period, students will be engaged in a productive activity aimed at reflection and personal growth. Specifically, students will be asked to write a reflective essay based on a provided prompt. This exercise is designed to help students process their choices, consider the impact of their actions, and identify alternative courses of action that could have been pursued.

Attendance Requirements and Consequences:

Attendance at the assigned after-school detention session is mandatory. Failure to attend without a valid reason will result in further consequences. These consequences may include, but are not limited to, in-school suspension (ISS), out-of-school suspension (OSS), or even expulsion, depending on the severity of the infraction.

Appeals and Communication:

Students and parents/guardians have the right to request a review of the assigned after-school detention. The process for appealing a detention assignment will be communicated through the Pivot Charter School administration.

We believe that after-school detention provides an opportunity for personal growth, reflection, and improved behavior. By participating actively and taking the assignment seriously, students contribute to maintaining a respectful and positive school community.

Behavior Matrix & Definitions

Incident Levels & Proportionate Disciplinary Response

At Pivot Charter School, our top priority is to maintain a safe, respectful, and effective learning environment where all students can thrive. To support this goal, we set clear expectations for behavior and respond to misconduct in ways that promote accountability, growth, and community well-being. Our approach to discipline is rooted in consistency, fairness, and care for the individual and the school as a whole.

Pivot Charter School utilizes the HCPS Disiplinary Matrix available in the [HCPS Code of Conduct](#), which outlines recommended responses for school administrators when addressing student behavior. These guidelines are designed to ensure that consequences are appropriate to the severity of the offense and increase in seriousness with repeated misconduct. While the matrix provides a structured framework, school administrators have the discretion to determine the most appropriate response based on the specific circumstances of each incident, including the nature of the behavior, the student's disciplinary history, and its impact on the school environment.

Repeated violations will result in progressively more serious consequences, as part of our effort to promote reflection, accountability, and growth. All incidents may warrant consideration for a Choice Revocation Warning Letter or a Choice Revocation letter. In most cases, before a Revocation Letter can be sent, a Warning Letter should have been sent.

Following certain behavioral incidents, a parent or guardian meeting may be required before the student returns to school. These meetings are intended to provide an opportunity for open communication, collaborative planning, and ensuring that the student is supported moving forward. If a parent conference is required, the student may not be permitted to return to campus until the meeting has occurred and a plan is established in partnership with the family.

Consultation with law enforcement is recommended for any incident that qualifies for reporting under the School Environmental Safety Incident Reporting (SESIR) system. Pivot is committed to handling all behavioral concerns with care, consistency, and a focus on student well-being and school safety.