

# Parent and Student Handbook

2024-25



WELCOME!

Welcome to Aspire Living & Learning (ALL) Academy! The following pages will provide you with pertinent information related to the policies and procedures of this school as well important day to day information. Please feel free to contact the school with any questions or concerns that you may have.

The primary objective of the ALL Academy is to ensure the academic and social behavioral growth of each and every student. All of our students have unique and individual needs and every effort will be made to provide a full educational program that meets those needs according to the students Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Using the principles of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), our staff commit to understanding each student's needs through careful assessment of academic and behavior skills. Instruction is then designed and implemented on a daily basis. Using a data-based decision-making model, educational programs are modified and/or changed to ensure student progress. Our goal is for students to achieve academic and behavioral success AND to have a full understanding and pride in their accomplishments each and every day they come to school here at the ALL Academy!

## BUSINESS INFORMATION

### Administrative Staff:

Katie Cyr, Director

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Lisa Riggi, Principal

[LRiggi@allinc.org](mailto:LRiggi@allinc.org)

### Aspire Trumbull Contact Information

Main Office

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Lisa Riggi, Principal

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Allison Gyllensten, Administrative Asst.

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Clinical Supervisors:

- Cat Tranquillo
- Dr. Ginger Tillman
- Krystal Jackson

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### Aspire Naugatuck Contact Information

Main Office

[475.212.3848](tel:475.212.3848)

Marigary Mejia, Administrative Asst.

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Amy Devine, Vice Principal

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Clinical Supervisor

- Aine Murphy

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### Aspire Stamford Contact Information

Main Office

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Krystal Ramalho, Vice Principal

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Clinical Supervisor

- Alexandra Dileo

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Website: <https://allinc.org/all-academy/>

### School Hours:

- **REGULAR HOURS** 8:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
- **EARLY DISMISSAL HOURS:** 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
- **DELAYED OPENING HOURS:** 10:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

### Visiting Aspire Living & Learning Academy:

- When visiting Aspire Learning Academy, please ring the doorbell to enter the building. Once you are let in, please report directly to the main office to sign in. You will be asked to wear a visitor badge at all times.
- If you would like to observe in the classroom:
  - Please schedule in advance with the school principal.
  - Classroom observations shall not exceed one hour.
  - Parents or visitors will be accompanied by a school staff member for the duration of the visit.
  - Parents may observe up to 1 time per school marking period.
- Observations from outside professionals (e.g., evaluation purposes, consultation) may be scheduled in advance with the school principal. Please note that observations will be limited to 1 hour per day.

### Calendar:

The school calendar can be found on the ASPIRE Living & Learning Academy website: [www.allinc.org](http://www.allinc.org).

### School Attendance Procedures:

- Regular school attendance is important for a student's academic success. Each teacher will be responsible for keeping a record of every student's attendance both at school and within each class. Students missing more than 14 days of school are in jeopardy of promotion to the next grade.
- When a student is absent, a parent/guardian must call the school before school starts on the date of absence to give a reason for the absence.
- If the parent is unable to contact the school, a note signed by the parent/guardian stating the reason for the absence must be submitted to the student's teacher (or principal) the first day the student returns to school.
- Absence due to a long illness or contagious disease must be verified by a doctor's note which must be submitted to the principal following 3 days of absence.
- Once school is in session, no student is allowed to leave the school building without permission from the principal or designee.

### Early Dismissals:

- Sometimes, a student may need early dismissal from school.

- Parent/Guardian must submit a note to the teacher providing the date, time, and reason for the early dismissal. The note should also include a phone number where a parent/guardian can be called to confirm the early dismissal if necessary.
- If the parent/guardian cannot be reached, the student MAY NOT be given early dismissal.
- All medical appointments should be scheduled after school hours whenever possible.
- All students are expected to stay for the entire school day, if students are repeatedly picked up early an adjustment of service hours requested via the PPT process will occur.
- A student is considered absent if he/she is not in attendance for at least four (4) hours of the school day.

#### Attendance Rules by Classrooms:

##### Elementary/Middle School Classrooms (K-8):

- In the event of multiple, unexcused absences (i.e., 3 or more) a case conference/team meeting will be initiated by the classroom teacher with the parent/guardian and district.

##### High School (9-12):

- Classes are scheduled seven periods a day and attendance in each class is mandatory unless a student has been excused.
- Students who are absent from school or class more than 10 days in a semester course or more than 20 days in a full year course risk loss of course credit in addition to lowered class grades.
- When credit is withheld, students must earn additional credit to meet graduation requirements.
- In the event of multiple, unexcused absences (i.e., 3 or more) a doctor's note will be required by the student's parent/guardian.

#### Tardies:

A student will be considered tardy, if he or she arrives to school later than 8:00 a.m.

If a student will be tardy to school, a parent/guardian must either call the school or send in a note to report the reason of the tardy. If a student will be tardy because of a late bus, please contact the school so that we may notify the district.

- Excessive unexcused tardies (i.e., more than 3 within a 2-week period) will result in discipline.
- Students who arrive late and miss class may receive lower class grades due to missed assignments and participation.

- Some individuals will require modifications to these guidelines. If that is the case, changes/modifications should be explicitly stated within the student's IEP.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### Arrival and Dismissal

If there is a change in a student's regular dismissal routine, the school should be notified in writing. In the case of an emergency, a phone call accompanied with a parent email will be accepted.

#### Drop off:

Please be advised that if you drive your child, students should not be dropped off before 8:00 a.m.

#### Pick up:

- When picking up a student, please sign in at the main office and wait for the student to meet you.
- If someone other than a parent is picking up a student, parents are required to notify the school. The individual must show photo identification before the student will be released.
- When health restrictions are in place, no parents may enter the building to sign out children. The school secretary will bring the child to the parent and have them sign the student pick-up log.

### Breakfast/Lunch

#### NAUGATUCK and TRUMBULL

Naugatuck and Trumbull Aspire Living & Learning Academies will not run a school breakfast/lunch program this year. Students are expected to supply their own food during the school day.

#### STAMFORD

- Breakfast and lunch will be offered at the Aspire Learning Academy Stamford location. Food choices will be announced on a daily basis by the classroom teacher. Families will be notified of any meal price change at the beginning of the school year.
- Each student will receive a Free and Reduced Lunch Application at the beginning of the school year. The principal will review the application and determine eligibility based on specified criteria provided by the state. Once the eligibility process is complete, letters will be sent home regarding the status of the application. Typically, this process is completed mid-October. Until that

time, each student's status from the previous year will remain active until the new applications are reviewed.

#### Collection of Money:

- Each student who is designated as either reduced or paid will be required to bring in either a check or cash for the specified amount. Money may be sent in advance daily, weekly, or monthly. A square link may also be available for payment if applicable.

#### Bullying

**Public Act 11-232, *An Act Concerning the Strengthening of School Bullying Laws*, was signed into law by Governor Ned Lamont. The Connecticut General Assembly unanimously approved the legislation. **The new law takes comprehensive steps to prevent bullying and ensure every child the right to learn in public school without fear of teasing, humiliation or assault.****

According Public Act No. 11-232:

"Bullying" means (A) the repeated use by one or more students of a written, oral or electronic communication, such as cyber bullying, directed at or referring to another student attending school in the same school district, or (B) a physical act or gesture by one or more students repeatedly directed at another student attending school in the same school district, that: (i) Causes physical or emotional harm to such student or damage to such student's property, (ii) places such student in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself, or of damage to his or her property, (iii) creates a hostile environment at school for such student, (iv) infringes on the rights of such student at school, or (v) substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. Bullying shall include, but not be limited to, a written, oral or electronic communication or physical act or gesture based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance, or mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability, or by association with an individual or group who has or is perceived to have one or more of such characteristics

Aspire Learning Academy will respond to bullying whether it occurs at school, online, on a school bus, at a bus stop, at a school-related activity or elsewhere. (ASPIRE Living & Learning Academy will respond to bullying outside the school setting if it creates a hostile environment at school for the bullied student, infringes on the rights of the

student at school, or substantially disrupts the student's education or the orderly operation of the school.)

Aspire Learning Academy staff are required to:

Report acts of student bullying to the principal.

They have:

- Should report the incident immediately
- 48 hours to submit written reports
- The principal or designee will investigate all reports promptly.
- Parents/Guardians of the children involved must be notified of the school's response within 48 hours after the investigation's completion.
- Results of all investigations should be forwarded to the student's home district as well as the families involved.

### Clothing

All students are expected to dress appropriately for school. This means that they must dress in a manner that shows good judgment. If a student's appearance is inappropriate or unsafe, a parent/principal conference will be arranged or the parent/guardian contacted. In addition, students may be asked to call home for a change of clothes or turn the clothing inside out (e.g., shirt). Some examples of inappropriate attire within the school building include:

- Outerwear, such as coats, and all forms of headwear (e.g., baseball caps, hoodies)
- Unsafe clothing and shoes (students should be able to exit the building without difficulty)
- Sleepwear (including slippers)
- Suggestive clothing (e.g., short shorts, bare midriffs, spandex, mini-skirts)
- T-shirts with inappropriate statements or slogans (e.g., curse words, gang related or suggestive, alcohol or drug related slogans)

### Computer Rules

The school offers students use of a computer, including the internet.

Some things on the internet are not appropriate for school. It is not possible to block all inappropriate material; therefore, students are expected to observe the rules of good network behavior and they must:

- Keep personal information (name, address, personal phone number, and password) private and off-line.
- Do not participate in "chat" rooms or newsgroups without permission.
- Do not use inappropriate words or words which would hurt another person.
- Do not accept or send messages without permission.

- Do not damage and/or change computer hardware and software.
- Follow all school rules and laws and visit only appropriate school web sites.
- Do not use the computer to buy or sell anything.
- Be aware that everything that you do on the computer will be monitored.

### Curriculum

Aspire Living & Learning Academy seeks to provide an enriching learning environment using research-based curricula that are also aligned with the Common Core and provide rigorous courses of study across all subject areas. A combination of Direct Instruction curricula and evidence-based programming are used to support the attainment of foundational concepts, as well as to develop higher-order thinking skills, whose mastery is essential for a comprehensive education. For more information regarding Direct Instruction, please go to this website: <http://www.nifdi.org/>.

### Electronic Devices

During the instructional school day, students are not allowed to carry electronic signaling devices, MP-3's, cell phones, iPods, electronic watches, or any gaming devices UNLESS expressed permission is granted by Aspire Living & Learning Academy staff (e.g., student reinforcer).

- These items will be stored in the main office upon arrival.
- If a student carries any of these items in school during the school day (without permission, or refuse to put away when asked to), the device will be taken away until the end of the school day.
- If an item is taken away a second time within the school year, parents/guardians will be asked to pick up the electronic item at the end of the day.
- If a third offense occurs, students will not be allowed to bring any electronic devices to school for the remainder of the school year.

### Field Trips

Notice of field trips will be sent home several weeks prior to the scheduled event. For all field trips involving bus transportation or monetary funds, written permission to attend will be required. Notice will be sent home regarding these field trips.

### Food/Drink Policy

Water will be permitted in the classroom. Unless otherwise stated within each classroom (e.g., snack time, cooking class), no other food or beverage will be allowed anywhere other than the cafeteria.

**Peanut Free Zones: In the cafeteria, a Peanut Free table will be provided for students with this requirement.**

**In addition, all Peanut Free areas of the school building will be clearly marked with signs indicating that it is a Peanut Free Zone. Snacks coming from home should be peanut free.**

### Homework Policy

Teachers may regularly assign and grade homework for each student.

It is the student's responsibility to make sure that the work is completed each day.

If homework becomes problematic, please do not hesitate to contact the teacher to discuss possible solutions.

### Inclement Weather

In the event of inclement weather, Aspire Living & Learning Academy will make every effort to ensure all families are well informed.

The following is in place:

Parents may provide a phone number to receive an automated text message when changes to the school schedule are made due to weather.

### Lost and Found

Students are responsible for their own property and property given to them by the school. When lost materials are found, they are brought to the main office.

If you lose something, check in with the main office to see if your item was brought to the office. Large sums of money and valuable items should not be brought to school.

### Parent Communication

Communication between families and school staff is extremely important. Parents may communicate with staff by calling and leaving a message, sending in a written note, or an email. Please allow staff 24-48 hours to respond.

### Parent Volunteers

Parents are encouraged to volunteer in their child's classroom. As opportunities arise, parents will be informed of the help that is needed.

### Practice Drills

Practice fire and lockdown drills are held at least eleven times a year. The purpose of these drills is to teach the correct way for a) evacuating the building or b) maintaining safety within the classroom in case of an emergency. These procedures will be discussed with students prior to the first drill each school year.

### Report of Progress

For the majority of students, report cards will be sent home on a quarterly basis unless alternate grading is outlined on the students IEP.

- IEP Progress Reports will be sent home based on the dates listed on the student's IEP. In some incidences, these dates will align with the report card dates.
- Parents may request progress monitoring data on an on-going basis. Please contact the student's teacher for more information.

### School Disciplinary Procedures

Behavior issues will be handled according to the School-wide Positive Behavior Support Plan. Some behavioral offenses will warrant a discipline referral. When appropriate, teachers will fill out a discipline referral and turn it into the principal for review.

Consequences for specific infractions requiring a Discipline Referral are implemented at the discretion of the principal but may include one or more of the following:

- Parent contact (for every referral)
- Detention (after school)
- In school suspension
- Out of school suspension
- Expulsion
- Parent/Guardian conference with school team
- PPT request to recommend initiation of a Functional Behavior Assessment by the school team (to result in more intensive individualized behavior supports)

*NOTE: A Manifestation Determination PPT will be scheduled in the event any student receives more than 10 days of suspension. Please see the IDEA: Parent Procedural Safeguards for further information.*

### School-wide Positive Behavior Support Plan

Aspire Living & Learning Academy has expectations which every student must follow. It is the responsibility of ASPIRE LIVING & LEARNING staff to ensure that appropriate instruction (including pre-requisite skills) has been provided to each student regarding the school expectations. Once skills are acquired, it is the student's responsibility to follow the expectations as instructed. A school-wide positive behavior support plan has been carefully designed. A copy of SWPBS plan will be sent electronically to all parents.

### Search and Seizure Policy

- A student may be searched if there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that it will provide evidence suggesting the student has violated either the law or the rules of the school.
- All these searches will be conducted by the principal or designee.
- In addition, since desks and school cubbies/closets are the property of the school, the principal reserves the right to inspect them, at times with the assistance of a police officer.

### Sexual Harassment

Everyone must be treated with respect. Sexual harassment is illegal.

Sexual harassment is any speech or behavior of a sexual nature which is unwelcome to you or which makes others uncomfortable. It is not allowed at school and at all school functions.

It includes:

- PDA (public displays of affection)
- sexual comments
- sexual gossip
- comments about another student's sexual orientation
- force play (male exerting force on female or vice versa)
- sexual advances
- touching of a sexual nature
- displaying or distributing sexually explicit drawings, pictures, and written materials including displays on school computers or web pages
- sexual gestures
- sexual or dirty jokes
- graffiti of a sexual nature
- pressure for sexual favors
- grabbing or poking

### Smoking

Aspire Living & Learning Academy is a smoke-free campus. Smoking and the use of other tobacco products are not allowed. This includes: a) while school is in session, b) while student activities are being conducted. Disciplinary action will occur for breaches of this policy.

### Special Areas

All students have an opportunity to participate in art, movement, and music activities in various ways throughout the school day.

### Student Records/Parental Rights

Parents/guardians have the right to view their child's school records, to receive report cards/progress reports, and to be notified of school activities that involve the child, such as conferences and assemblies.

These rights can only be limited by a court order.

If a non-custodial parent requests any of the above information, that information will be supplied in a timely manner.

Parents, legal guardians, or students 18 years of age or older, shall have the right to review the student's record kept by the school system upon receipt of a written request.

## Student Transportation

Transportation will be provided for each student according to his/her IEP by the home school district. Any questions regarding student transportation should be directed to the home school district as transportation is contracted through the district.

Any issues during transportation will be communicated to the parents and district immediately. Any changes to transportation will be decided through the PPT process.

## Textbooks

All textbooks are the property of either Aspire Living & Learning Academy or the home school district of an individual student. Students are expected to cover and take proper care of the books given to them. Damaged and lost books will result in fines being imposed.

## SCHOOL HEALTH SERVICES

Aspire Living & Learning Academy has two full-time nurses on staff who will be present at our Stratford and Naugatuck locations from 10:00 am until 2:00 pm Monday-Friday and consult to other schools as needed:

- If a student is sick or gets injured at school:
- If a student expresses that he/she is sick at school, or shows signs of illness, Aspire Living & Learning Academy staff will adhere to the following procedures:
- Ask the student about his/her symptoms (i.e., how he/she feels: describe symptoms/complaints)
- Assess the situation: How does the student look?
- Call the nurse/principal to assess the situation.
- The nurse/principal will call the parent/guardian and document the communication
- No medications will be offered to the student
- Student complaints will never be ignored
- Other Medical Concerns Not Covered Above:
- If there are medical concerns of ANY nature regarding a student, the nurse/principal will be contacted immediately to assess the situation. Support will be contacted as necessary and appropriate documentation of every incident will be completed by the end of the day the incident occurred. In the event of a medical emergency, 911 will be called. Guidelines for return to school following illness/injury can be found in **Appendix A**.

## Procedure for administering medication in school for Parents/Guardians:

If a student requires medication to be administered during the school day, his/her doctor must fill out a Medical Authorization Form. This form must be signed by the

parent/legal guardian and sent in to school with the student's medication. The state of Connecticut requires:

- Written order from physician, dentist, advanced practice registered nurse, or physician assistant
- Written authorization/permission from the parent/guardian
- This requirement is for BOTH prescription medications AND "over the counter" medications.

All medications must be delivered to the school by the parent or other responsible adult. The student should not be permitted to bring the medication to school.

If the student is permitted to take the medication independently, this must be documented on the *self-administration section* of the medication authorization form. Students must inform the principal each time he/she self-administers (for data collection purposes).

The school may receive up to a 45-day supply of the medication. The pharmacy label should show the following information:

- Name
- Prescribing providers name
- Name of medication
- Dosage
- Frequency
- Time of administration

Medication orders are good for one school year and must be renewed the following year. In addition, parental authorization is also valid for the school year.

Medications should either be picked up or will be destroyed at the end of the school year.

**No medication of any type will be given without a written authorization.**

Aspire staff designees will be trained by the school nurse in the administration of specific medications (e.g., oral, topical, or injections) as needed. Aspire staff will also be trained in the proper documentation procedures.

All medication will be locked securely in the nurse/administrator's office.

**INFORMATION PERTAINING TO HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**

### Sports and After School Activities

Participation in sports and after-school activities is encouraged. These activities help students to try new things and develop new skills. Aspire staff will make every effort to keep students informed of upcoming events; however, parents/guardians should be responsible for keeping up with events in a student's home school.

### Graduation Requirements

Credit requirements for graduation vary by school district.

Aspire Living & Learning Academy will make every effort to ensure students participate in classes which meet home high school requirements.

### Information Pertaining to Afterschool/ Extra-Curricular Activities

It is a privilege to participate in extracurricular activities. To retain this privilege, students must abide by the expectations set forth by both their teachers/advisors and school administration. Such rules are set up to insure safe, efficient, and fair participation in school activities. Specific behavior plans are set forth and will be followed during all extra-curricular activities.

**ASPIRE LIVING & LEARNING ACADEMY PROGRAM HANDBOOK**  
**ASPIRE LIVING & LEARNING ACADEMY-**  
**SCHOOL-WIDE PBS PLAN**  
**PARENT/GUARDIAN/STUDENT REVIEW**

**Please return a signed copy to school by: Sept. 13<sup>TH</sup>, 2024**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ and my child, \_\_\_\_\_  
have reviewed the:

Aspire Living & Learning Academy Parent and Student Handbook

Aspire Living & Learning Academy School-Wide PBS Plan (sent home electronically at the start of each school year-***including all emergency procedures contained in the document***).

I agree to follow all policies and procedures herein. Should I have any questions or concerns related to this handbook, I will not hesitate to contact the school.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature/

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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Student Signature/

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Date

Office Use Only:

Received Date (include staff initials): \_\_\_\_\_

### **Appendix A**

#### **MEDICAL EXCLUSION FROM SCHOOL**

In the hopes of clarifying any questions you may have regarding school policy on the exclusion of children from school for specific conditions, we have prepared the following list. Please keep this list for future reference. If you have any questions, please call your school nurse. She will be glad to help you.

Bronchitis, Croup	Child: May return to school after two (2) days of adequate treatment
Chicken Pox:	Excluded for seven (7) days and rash has scabbed over
Conjunctivitis:	May return to school after one (1) day of adequate treatment or when cleared. (pink eye)
Fever	Child: May return to school after temperature is below 100° for one (1) day
Fifth Disease:	Child may attend school
Impetigo:	May return after one (1) day of antibiotic treatment
Lice and Nits:	Recommendation: Child excluded until condition treated and child is completely cleared of lice and nits
Pneumonia:	Child may return to school after three (3) days of adequate treatment
Strep Infections:	Child may return to school after one (1) day of adequate treatment
Vomiting/ Diarrhea:	May return after one (1) day without symptoms
Shingles:	May return with a note from physician—must be covered
Scabies:	Child may return to school after adequate treatment and note from physician
Coxsackie:	May return after one (1) day fever
Covid	

<p>Current symptoms considered potential COVID symptoms by the CDC:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fever or chills</li> <li>• Cough</li> <li>• Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing</li> <li>• Fatigue</li> <li>• Muscle or body aches</li> <li>• Headache</li> <li>• New loss of taste or smell</li> <li>• Sore throat</li> <li>• Congestion or runny nose</li> <li>• Nausea or vomiting</li> <li>• Diarrhea</li> </ul>
<p>Criteria for returning to school if student or staff has tested positive to COVID-19</p>	<p><b>Staff or students:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Return to activities/school when fever-free for at least 24 hrs. and other symptoms are significantly improved.</li> <li>- Wear a mask for the first 5 days of exposure.</li> </ul>