



Parent Handbook

thelearningspectrum.com

“To serve, with excellence, special children with special needs in their natural environment. To educate the whole child through a multi-disciplinary approach that meets each child’s individual needs and facilitates the highest level of success.”

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Table of Contents

4	Introduction		Academics
5	Welcome		Testing
6	Hours of Operation		Code of Conduct- Discipline Policy
	Attendance Policy/Child Absences	18	Property Destruction
7	Parent Observation Policy		Elopement
	Volunteers		Technology Policy
8	Arrivals and Departures		Anti-Bullying Statement
	Closures-Holidays-Breaks	19	Food Services Practices
	Inclement Weather	20	Health and Safety
9	Enrollment Process		Diapering
10	Disenrollment Process		Toilet Training
	Parent Supplied Items-School Supplies		Mandatory Reporting
	Child Records		Health Care and Emergency Preparedness Policy
11	Video Surveillance		Medication Storage and Medication Management
	Confidentiality Policy	21	Removal of Ill Persons Policy
	Non-Discrimination Clause		Emergency and Evacuation Plans
12	Communication Plan	22	Child Custody
13	Parent-Teacher Conferences		Emergency Lock-In Procedure
	Rates, Fees, and Payment	23	No Smoking Policy
14	Respite		Drug and Alcohol Policy
	Autism Scholarship		Gun and Weapon Policy
15	Jon Peterson Scholarship	24	Pet Policy
	School District Placement	25	Appendix
	Private Pay		

16	IEP Information		
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INTRODUCTION

As of August 1, 2017, this handbook supersedes any prior policies or handbooks. The information contained within this handbook applies to all parents and students of The Learning Spectrum and is intended to be a helpful guide to the Company’s policies, although it should not be considered all-inclusive. The policies and programs described in this handbook may be changed by the company without prior notice. Final authority for information summarized in this handbook rests with management discretion and management interpretation of company policies.

Any exceptions to this parent handbook must be in writing, signed by a Director of the company, and specifically state that this is an exception to the parent handbook. It is each parent’s responsibility to remain informed regarding the Company’s most current policies. Policy changes will be communicated via email.

Welcome from the Executive Director:

Welcome to The Learning Spectrum! You have many educational options for your child, and we are glad you elected to choose TLS for his/hers educational needs. The Learning Spectrum was formed in 2005 by myself, another special education teacher, and a parent who saw a need in the community for a wide variety of services for children with ASD. In 2015, I became the sole owner of The Learning Spectrum. In addition to my role of running the Company, I also serves as the Client Services Director, with the experience of over two decades of working with children with autism. My vision continues to be providing families with individualized services designed to meet the needs of children in and out of the school setting.

As an Autism and Jon Peterson Scholarship provider, The Learning Spectrum is able to create individualized education programs as well as work within the IEP to help meet specific educational goals. In addition, The Learning Spectrum offers support in inclusive settings including daycares, pre-school, and private schools. Our early childhood classrooms include peer models to enhance our educational experience for our students. The overall goal of all intervention is to help children grow and prosper in their natural learning environments.

TLS takes a strengths-based approach when considering the abilities and developing abilities of the children and adolescents with whom we work. In other words, the staff have positive attitudes and are optimistic about the fact that our clients can and will further develop their cognitive abilities and their abilities to function independently.

We believe all interventions are ideally incorporated into the student's natural learning environment so that the appropriate behaviors can be learned more completely and then be generalized to other environments. Our classroom services focus on supporting students in autism specific classrooms, as well as typical classrooms through inclusion services, to achieve optimum learning of academic, social, and communication skills. With the addition of speech, occupational, music therapies, behavior health, and transition services, TLS is able to create a comprehensive multidisciplinary approach to working with children.

Looking forward to another successful year!

Sincerely,

Jill Medley M.A.
Executive Director
The Learning Spectrum

Hours of Operation:

The following days and times are for all locations:

SCHOOL DAY: Monday-Thursday: 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. and Friday 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

RESPITE (at central office only): Monday –Thursday: 8:00am to 9:00am and 3:30-5:30pm.
Friday: 8:00am to 9:00am and 2:00pm-5:30pm

Inclusion hours will vary based on placement(s) and hours of students' private schools.

Therapy may be scheduled until 5:00 p.m. for outpatient therapy.

Office Hours:

The Learning Spectrum's central office has variable hours. During the school year, our office manager's hours are Mondays- Fridays 8:30am-5:00pm. Summer time hours are Mondays-Thursdays 8:30am-4:30pm. Voicemail messages will be checked frequently throughout the day. If you are unable to reach a staff person, please leave a message and your call will be returned as soon as possible. If you wish to meet with a director, please call or email to schedule a time so that we can make sure to give you our full attention.

Attendance Policy/Child Absences:

Children who attend TLS on the Autism Scholarship or Jon Peterson Scholarship program must be in compliance with the state compulsory attendance law established under Chapter 3321.01 of the Revised Code.

If your child will be absent on a given day, please call the office before 9:00am and leave his/her name and teacher's name and the reason for absence. This procedure assures the child's safety and informs the school of the nature of the illness. Ohio Law requires that students returning to school after all absences (full or half day) bring a written note from their parents or guardian that states: (1) the date(s) of the absence(s), (2) the reason for the absence(s) and (3) the parent/guardian signature. Excused absences include but are not limited to illness, critical illness in the family, quarantine of the home, doctor appointments, court ordered visitations during school, or death in the immediate family. A student's absence message may be left on the school's voicemail. Unexcused or parent excused absences are still counted as an absence.

If you are bringing your child in after arrival time, they must be accompanied into the building by an adult, signed in at the office or by the director and taken to their classroom.

Individual and/or Therapy Sessions:

Students who are attending individual services (such as 1:1, classroom aide, therapies, etc.) are asked to be on time. In the event of tardiness, the full scheduled session will be billed. The last 5 minutes of any session will be used for parent education and collaboration; therefore, plan to arrive 5 minutes before your child's scheduled session end time. In the event that an instructor must cancel a session, every effort will be made to find a sub or reschedule a make-up session for your child. If a client is unable to maintain 75% attendance for scheduled sessions, he/she may be discharged from The Learning Spectrum's services. Three (3) "no calls/no shows" will result in discharge from services.

Parents must notify instructor of cancellation 24 hours in advance of session. Failure to do so will incur a cancellation charge of 50% of the session rate out of pocket expense. In the event of an emergency situation (i.e. sudden illness, accident, etc.), parent must notify instructor of cancellation 2 hours in advance of session. Failure to do so will incur a cancellation charge of 50% of the session rate. Instructors should be notified directly of cancellation. You may leave a voicemail with your site director or send an email directly to your child's therapist. *Please do not assume that other teachers or staff members will notify your child's therapist.*

Parent Observation Policy:

Parents and volunteers are always welcome. We take your child's safety very seriously and follow the laws of HIPPA and FERPA. All visitors (parents, guardians, other family members, service providers, community members) must ALWAYS check in first at the office and sign a confidentiality agreement before gaining admittance to the classroom. It is required to make advance notice of one to several days with the teacher or administrative staff prior to the visitation. We consider this procedure very important for the safety of our students and the security of our building.

Volunteers:

If you would like to volunteer, please contact your child's teacher with your request. One or more fingerprint background checks are required of all volunteers. There is a fee involved with this service. Volunteers must first check in with the office upon arrival before entering your child's classroom. Volunteers must comply with an appropriate dress code.

Arrivals and Departures:

Beginning each school day at 8:50am, parents can follow our car line that circles the outside of our parking lot to drop off students. Staff members will come to your car and assist your child inside the building and to their designated classroom. The car line will then form again at dismissal time as the teachers will watch for their students' parents and walk them out to their cars for pick up. If someone different will be picking up your child, a note must be given to your child's teacher stating this change. They will need their photo ID ready. Please refrain from last minute phone calls for dismissal changes and this will alleviate confusion and stress for your child and staff.

Children staying for respite will need to have their parent walk them in the building for drop off as well as have their parent walk in for pick up at the end of the day.

Closures/Holidays:

Please see the attached calendar for your child's school year calendar. These are specific to each site. If your child attends an inclusion site, they will follow that school's calendar and school closures.

HOLIDAYS:

The Learning Spectrum observes the following holidays:

Good Friday /Memorial Day/Thanksgiving and the day before and after Thanksgiving

Martin Luther King Day /Independence Day /Labor Day/President's Day

A holiday which falls on Sunday will be observed on the following Monday. A holiday which falls on Saturday will be observed either the following Monday or the preceding Friday as a substitute holiday.

Additionally, TLS observes a break during the weeks of Christmas and New Year's holidays (actual dates to be determined on an annual basis) as well as a one week break over the spring break period.

Inclement Weather:

The work we do is closely tied to the school districts in which we operate. As a result, our inclement weather policy will follow the school districts' lead regarding delays and closings. Please review the list for the district to which you are assigned:

- **Worthington/Central follows Olentangy schools**
- **Johnstown/North East follows Johnstown schools**
- **Canal Winchester/South follows Canal Winchester schools**
- **Inclusion faculty, staff and students are based on the school sites in which they're placed**
- **Most corporate/Administrative staff is based on Olentangy schools and will not be in their offices either if Olentangy schools are closed due to inclement weather**

We do notify the new channels (NBC, ABC and FOX) of our closings as well as sending out parent text messages for those who sign up. Please contact your site director for more information.

ALTERNATE CARE:

In the event that TLS is closed it is the parents' responsibility to find alternate care. It is also a good idea to have alternate care in case your child is too ill and cannot attend TLS.

Enrollment Process:

To begin the enrollment process at The Learning Spectrum, all clients must have the following completed and turned in before starting services:

- **Enrollment form**
- **Educational Agreement signed**
- **Emergency card**
- **Handbook policy agreement form**
- **Transportation authorization**
- **Media release form**
- **Respite form (if applicable)**
- **Scholarship, school district or county funding approval letter**

Disenrollment Process:

The Learning Spectrum requires a 30 day notice to make any changes to a student's enrollment in their classroom placement, therapies, respite, and any other schedule within the student's educational plan. Parents will need to contact their site director for educational changes and a therapy director pertaining to therapy schedules. You will be required to complete a written notice to the office of your intent to withdraw and have it signed by a director. You will incur regular charges for services until the 30 day period is over. These charges cannot be paid for by the scholarship, insurance or Medicaid funding.

In any event that disciplinary action is needed for a student, parents are immediately notified and a team meeting will be held to try to resolve the issue. If the situation is not resolved and disciplinary actions cannot rectify the situations an IEP placement meeting will be held and the school district officials will be invited in order to determine if a direct district placement is beneficial for all involved. Direct district placements typically allow for additional intervention. The team will further discuss termination of placement if needed and any action needed for future transitioning.

Parent Supplied Items- School Supplies:

Each student will be given a supply list at the beginning of every school year. These supplies are classroom and age appropriate for our students in order to enhance their educational involvement with The Learning Spectrum. Parents are required to send in the requested school supplies for their child within the first week of school. If a student requires any additional personal supplies (such as for toileting needs, meal time, rest time, sensory and/or behavioral needs), the parent will be expected to supply these as needed. Contact your child's classroom teacher if you have any questions or concerns regarding the classroom supply list.

Child Records: All student records are confidential and are protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. Parents/legal guardians have the right to view their child's records when requested. Your child's records will mainly be used for the following but not limited to: team meetings, such as an IEP or ETR, classroom teacher referral, behavioral health management.

Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent/legal guardian in order to release any information from a student's record. However, FERPA allows The Learning Spectrum to disclose such records, without consent, to the following parties or conditions:

- School officials with legitimate interest
- Other schools to which a student is transferring
- Specified officials for evaluation or audit purpose
- Appropriate parties in relation to financial aid of a student
- Approved organizations conducting studies for The Learning Spectrum
- In order to comply with lawfully issued subpoena or judicial order
- Representatives in safety and health emergencies
- Local and state authorities specific to State Law

Video Surveillance:

The Learning Spectrum recognizes the value of electronic surveillance systems in monitoring activity on school property in protecting the safety, health and welfare of our students and staff as well as to further assist in any investigation of incidents on school grounds. The installation and use of video cameras in public areas of the school such as but not limited to, lobby/waiting room, therapy rooms, and various classrooms. The video recordings will not include sound recordings. The Learning Spectrum retains the right to use such video recordings in student disciplinary hearings. Parents will be allowed to view such recordings upon their request. Subject to FERPA and federal state law, the videos may be turned over to the necessary authorities if criminal conduct is involved.

Confidentiality Policy:

It is the responsibility of The Learning Spectrum staff, students and volunteers, to preserve and protect confidential student, client, employee and business information, any individual information in possession or derived from a provider of health care regarding a student's or client's medical history, mental, or physical condition or treatment, as well as the student/client's and/or their family members records, test results, conversations, research records and financial information. Examples include, but are not limited to: physical medical and psychiatric records including paper, photo, video, diagnostic and therapeutic records and academic information, patient insurance and billing records, mainframe and department based computerized patient data, visual observation of patients receiving medical care or accessing

services, verbal information provided by or about a patient, address, phone numbers and other contact information.

Non-Discrimination Clause:

The Learning Spectrum will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender expression, gender identity, religion, disability, age, veteran status, ancestry, or national or ethnic origin.

Communication Plan:

It is very important to The Learning Spectrum that we have open communication between the parents and our staff. The Learning Spectrum values your child's education and takes any concerns you have very seriously. If these should arise, please follow the procedure listed below:

- 1. Contact your child's teacher:** Many issues can be solved by discussing the issue with the classroom teacher first. This can be done via email, phone, sending a letter or scheduling a conference. Please refrain from lengthy conversations at arrival and pick up times at the school as staff need to remain focused on all their students during these times.
- 2. Contact the Behavioral Health director:** If a behavioral issue is a concern, please contact the Behavioral Health director. This can be conducted in the ways listed above. This person will take action to work out a behavior plan and/or supports if needed. If the issue is still not resolved, proceed to:
- 3. Contact the site director:** Your site director will help determine if a meeting needs to be called with your child's team (such as an IEP meeting) to review the child's plan or any other necessary actions.

There are various ways our staff communicates with parents about their student's day. Some examples include: daily sheets, communication notebooks, phone call, emails, etc.

The Learning Spectrum Website: may be accessed by visiting <http://www.thelearningspectrum.com>. Our website is dedicated to new and current parents stating resources, special events, registration, description of classes, camps and groups, site calendars, staff members and a variety of important information.

Social Media: The Learning Spectrum has a Facebook page available. Please follow us as we provide updates of what our locations are involved with, closings or delays, and special events in the community.

Monthly Newsletter: The Learning Spectrum publishes and distributes monthly newsletters through email and sending a copy home with your child. This newsletter includes important dates, special events, and any general information about The Learning Spectrum pertaining to all of our sites.

Change of Address and/or Telephone: In order for your child's information to stay current, to ensure the timely receipt of messages and in case of emergencies, parents are expected to keep their profile information up to date as needed. You can change by contacting the director at your site immediately to make any necessary changes.

Students and parents may NOT use the school's name and/or logo without expressed written permission from the school administration.

Parent-Teacher Conferences:

Parent- Teacher conferences are held school wide twice a year, one in the fall and the other in the spring. Your child's site calendar will list the designated dates each year. Parents will be notified by the child's teacher to sign up for a conference within given days and times. Conferences are optional, however a child's teacher may specifically request the parents attend a conference. If parents would like to set up a conference, they should contact their child's teacher to set up a suitable time. No concern is too small! Parents are always welcome to contact us regarding any issue they may have in order for us to resolve it sufficiently.

Rates, Fees and Payment:

****Please review the current school year enrollment packet for tuition and fees****

Enrollment Fees: There is a \$100 enrollment fee that is non-refundable in order to have placement at The Learning Spectrum each school year. This is due upon enrollment.

Late Fees: Parents who are late picking their child up at the end of the day or service, will be charged \$5.00 for every 5 minutes they are late with a 10 minute grace period. Late fees will be assessed in 5 minute increments. Please contact your child's center to inform the director of your situation as soon as possible.

Payment Due: Each billing statement sent will be emailed to the parents and will have a due date attached. The Learning Spectrum accepts cash, personal checks, and major credit cards. Any invoices not paid in 30 days will receive a courtesy reminder and a late fee will be assessed. After 60 days, unpaid invoices will be sent to collections. The client will, in addition to payment for services reimburse The Learning Spectrum for any attorney fees, court costs, or other charges incurred in the process of collection of delinquent accounts owed by the client.

If you are using insurance to cover therapy services at The Learning Spectrum, you will receive a separate invoice in the mail for any outstanding copays or coinsurance.

Additional Costs to You: All fees will be brought to your attention in advance. Parents are responsible for the cost of school supplies and field trips. If your child damages property of The Learning Spectrum, they will be responsible for the cost of replacement.

Respite:

The Learning Spectrum is pleased to be able to offer this program to our students each year. Our respite program runs 8:00am-9:00am Monday- Friday and after school daily until 5:30pm. Please note we strictly enforce our policy of requiring 30 days notice (in writing) of any changes to your child's schedule. Respite CANNOT be billed to any state scholarship or county funding. It remains a private pay option that is billed monthly. You will be billed based on registration and enrollment days and time, not based on attendance, unless attendance exceeds the scheduled enrollment. We will staff respite daily based on enrollment, therefore you cannot be reimbursed if your child is absent. Contact your site director if you have any questions about your child becoming enrolled in our respite program. Please refer to the current school year enrollment packet for costs and sign up times.

Autism Scholarship Program:

The Autism Scholarship Program (ASP) gives the parents of children with autism who qualify for a scholarship the choice to send the child to a special education program other than the one operated by the school district of residence to receive their educational. Any student who has been identified by their district as a child with autism and for whom the district has created an individualized education plan (IEP) qualifies for the Autism Scholarship program. The student must have a current IEP from the district of residence that is finalized and all parties, including the parent, must be in agreement with the IEP. A child is eligible to apply to participate in the program when the child turns three. The Autism Scholarship Program year for 2016-2017 begins July 1, 2016, and continues through June 30, 2017. The rules ensure parents of children

with autism are informed about the requirements and process to obtain a scholarship, inform prospective providers of the requirements to become a program provider, inform providers of their responsibilities and inform school districts of their responsibilities for children residing in the district who participate in the program. Section 3310.41 of the Revised Code establishes the ASP and requires the Ohio Department of Education to adopt rules prescribing procedures to implement the program.

<http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Other-Resources/Scholarships/Autism-Scholarship-Program>)

Jon Peterson Scholarship:

The Jon Peterson Special Needs Scholarship Program provides scholarships to students who are eligible to attend kindergarten through 12th grade and have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) from their district of residence. The amount of each scholarship will be based on the disability identified on the student's IEP and will not exceed \$27,000. There are two application periods annually. The first application period begins in February and ends on April 15th. Scholarships awarded to this group of applicants will be for the full school year. The second application period begins in October and ends on November 15th. Scholarships awarded during this second application period will be awarded for half of the school year (January 1 through June 30). To apply for a Peterson Scholarship, parents of eligible students must first register with a participating Peterson Scholarship Provider. The provider will have the required application forms and will assist the parent in the scholarship application process.

<http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Other-Resources/Scholarships/Special-Needs-Scholarship>)

School District Placement:

School district placement is when an IEP team comes together to decide appropriate placement for the student. Parents and/or school districts are permitted to call a placement meeting if the student requires a change of placement.

Private Pay:

The Learning Spectrum does accept private pay from students who need to cover the cost of therapies and/or other services that are not covered or exceed the scholarship, county funding or insurance. Payment for services must be agreed upon before beginning services are rendered. You are required to sign a contract of understanding of the current fee schedule and payment methods. We are able to accept credit card payment as an option. We are happy to

accept checks as form of payment with your name, address and phone number. If we receive a notice from the bank of a non-sufficient fund, you will be charged any additional service fees associated with the payment.

IEP Information:

The Learning Spectrum follows the goals of a student's given IEP as detailed by the student's school district and IEP team. The student's school district is responsible for assembling the IEP team before the IEP is to expire and will work with The Learning Spectrum to create appropriate goals for the student to work towards during the school year. All IEP goals, including therapy goals, will be written as if the child were in their district placement. The IEP goals will be reported on quarterly by the child's teacher showing progress with data. Quarterly reports are sent to the parents of the student as well as The Ohio Department of Education to show development of the student. The parents or legal guardian of the student can contact their site director to request an IEP if they feel one is needed before the yearly meeting.

Academics:

All students enrolled at The Learning Spectrum have the right to an appropriate education as directed by The Ohio Department of Education. The Learning Spectrum utilizes state certified curriculum in all grades as well as in our educational services. Some examples our teachers incorporate in classrooms are Handwriting without Tears, TouchMath, Unique Learning Systems, The Phonics Dance, and Everyday Math. Our students have access to the use of hands on activities using a multi-sensory approach as well as technological lessons. With our variety in curriculum choices, our students can easily find one that can fit to their needs and enhance their abilities.

Testing:

Students enrolled at The Learning Spectrum under the Autism Scholarship Program, are not required to complete state testing. Students who are enrolled through their school district attending The Learning Spectrum or utilizing The Jon Peterson Scholarship will be required to complete grade level testing with modifications as stated in their IEP.

Code of Conduct- Guidance and Discipline Policy:

At The Learning Spectrum we believe that discipline should be used to teach the child and help him learn to make good choices. We take the time to explain the rules frequently and in a way that is developmentally appropriate for the child so that she may understand what is expected. The following techniques are used to guide behavior. “Research has clearly demonstrated that task engagement increases and student problem behavior decreases when high rates of teacher praise are present in the classroom.” (Lewis, Hudson, Richter, and Johnson, 2004).

In order to ensure all groups provide a safe and effective learning environment, we ask that participant’s behavior be manageable in a group setting. The Learning Spectrum reserves the right to discuss with parents the need for an individual aid for any child who is exhibiting behavior that takes away from the learning experience. If an individual aid is required, parents will be asked to pay an additional fee to cover the cost for additional support.

In providing services to those students affected by autism certain challenges may be faced. In particular, outbreaks of aggressive behavior and difficulty of control are issues faced regularly by those providing services to clients. TLS staff will never intentionally inflict corporal punishment and/or engage in violent or turbulent behavior with a client, but will use reasonable techniques of control in accord with standard practices for dealing with children with special needs. In signing this handbook acknowledgement, TLS and its staff will be released from any liability incurred in the normal process of delivery of services. This release will not affect any gross and wanton negligence and/or acts where the intent is to harm a student. All staff members across all locations of The Learning Spectrum are certified in CPI (Crisis Prevention Intervention). Please refer to Appendix III for more information.

Positive Guidance Techniques:

- **Ignoring** - Some negative behavior is produced by a child to get attention. It can be stopped when it does not get the attention desired. We will use this technique unless a safety issue is involved.
- **Redirection** - We offer alternatives to children engaged in undesirable behavior by presenting a different item or activity.
- **Verbal Intervention** - We explain to the child the inappropriate behavior and show him the appropriate way to handle the situation with words or through modeling.
- **Logical Consequences** - We help the child understand the logical consequence of her actions by removing the object or activity in which the child is engaged.

- **Take a Break** – All of our locations include sensory rooms that are geared towards our students and helping them use different materials to soothe their emotions and return them to their calming state. Students can either request time to leave to leave the classroom for some sensory break time or directed by their teacher and/or therapist. The child is separated from the group to allow him to relax and calm down, and to help him not to be influenced by peers. The child may return to the group as soon as the negative behavior stops or is significantly reduced.

Property Destruction:

Valuable personal property of students such as radios, iPods, jewelry, electronic games, cell phones, etc. may be brought to the center and used during break periods. TLS does not accept responsibility for the loss or damage of personal property. Any property damaged by students within the center will be replaced at the student's cost.

Elopement:

Our staff will take every precaution to ensure your child's safety while in care. Students will never be left alone without an adult supervising. We are aware some of our students may try to elope when at school. All of our exits are armed with chimes to make staff aware if a student is trying to leave the building. If this situation does occur, the parents of the student will be notified.

Technology Policy:

Students are not permitted to use electronic items, such as but not limited to cell phones, iPods, radios, CD/DVD players, gaming devices or MP3 players during the school day. If a student arrives to school with one of these items, it is to be kept in their backpack until the end of the school day and can be used at dismissal time. The Learning Spectrum is not responsible for any damaged or stolen items that were not turned in at arrival. Student use of the school telephone is restricted. Permission may be granted at the discretion of the staff.

Students and staff are responsible for appropriate behavior when using the Internet just as they are in the classrooms. The use of the internet must be in support of education or research and adhere to the educational goals of a student's IEP.

Anti-Bullying Statement:

Harassment, intimidation or bullying towards another student, whether by other staff, students or third parties is strictly prohibited and will have zero tolerance. This includes but is not limited to, aggressive behavior, verbal, physical or psychological abuse, and violence within a relationship. The administration will not tolerate any comments, gestures, threats or actions which can cause harm or personal humiliation. Harassment, intimidation or bullying means:

Any intentional physical, verbal, written or electronic act that a student or group of students displays toward another particular student(s) more than once and the action causes both mental or physical harm to the other student(s) and is severe, pervasive or persistent that it creates an intimidating, abusive, or threatening educational environment for others.

Reports regarding bullying can be made by first contacting the child's teacher to discuss further action with the student's parents and administration on what necessary steps will be taken.

Food Service Practices:

Classes at The Learning Spectrum each have designated lunch and snack times specific to each classroom. Peers are invited to sit with the student as long as they do not have any foods containing the allergens. Microwaves are used to heat food if needed. Students are assisted to set up and clean up after themselves during meal time as well practice appropriate manners with their classmates.

Students are asked to send in their own snacks/lunches properly labeled. We will not provide students with food if they do not have it. Many of our students are on restricted diets, and therefore we are as careful as we can be about cross contamination during eating periods. However, we do keep extra snacks if a student forgets theirs on a given day.

If your child is on a restricted diet, please make sure to talk with their teacher directly and also indicate this on their emergency medical forms. We practice due diligence when restricting access to food within the center or inclusive placements and will do our best to follow guidelines that are set by the parent/professional teams. We cannot guarantee that a child will not inadvertently gain access to restricted items. Please include an emergency plan if restricted items are consumed.

Birthday treats are allowed as long as the parents give reasonable notice to the teacher to allow any students with allergies to supply their own treat that day. Make sure to discuss your plans with your child's teacher in advance.

Health and Safety:

Diapering:

Students of The Learning Spectrum are required to bring all of their own diapering supplies for the staff to use. Diapers will be checked at least every hour and will be taken to the designated diaper changing area to be changed by a staff member.

Staff must wash their hands before and after diapering. Staff must also wash the child's hands immediately after diapering the child or cleanse with baby wipes.

Toilet Training:

The Learning Spectrum is prepared to help students with the skill of toilet training at any age. Teachers will discuss with parents if the child is ready to take on this challenge and how both home and school can cooperate with a plan to assist the child in mastering this new goal.

Mandatory Reporting:

As an Autism and Jon Peterson Scholarship provider and under the law of The Ohio Department of Education, all staff of The Learning Spectrum are mandatory reporters of child abuse and/or neglect. Upon reporting, the staff member will discuss the situation with their site director and decide if reporting to the appropriate community agency is necessary.

Health Care and Emergency Preparedness Policy:

Promoting good health and safety is a goal at The Learning Spectrum. To prevent the spread of childhood diseases and illness, please do not bring your child to school if they are ill.

Medication Storage/Management:

A Medication Authorization Form will be required for prescriptions and non-prescription medications for students at The Learning Spectrum. Students are not permitted to carry or administer medications to self at any time. All approved medication will be kept in the child's classroom in a lock box supplied by the parent. To administer medication during program times, a Medication Administration form must be completed, signed by a doctor and on file as

well as posted in the child's classroom. The lead teacher will be responsible for administering the medication to the child and must document the date, time and dosage on the Medication Administration form. Parent notes are required for cough drops and any other over the counter medications including sunscreen. Medication will be stored until the end of the school year. Parents will have one week from the last day of the school year to pick up any unused medication or it will be properly destroyed. Unused medication will not be sent home in a child's backpack.

Removal of Ill Persons Policy:

The Learning Spectrum aims to ensure the health of every child in our care. With this in mind we will request the exclusion of any child or staff member who is exhibiting any of the following symptoms:

- **Fever of 100 degrees or higher. (Needs to be fever free for 24 hours to return)
WITHOUT THE USE OF A FEVER REDUCING MEDICINE**
- **Diarrhea (2 or more stools while here that differ from normal BM) ***
- **Vomiting (2 or more times during the day) ***
- **Rash not associated with heat, diapering, or allergic reaction – must be gone before returning**
- **Eye discharge – Pink eye or from a cold - must be gone before returning**
- **Lice or nits – can return only after being free of them for 24 hours ***
- **Communicable disease: chicken pox, measles, etc. - must be gone before returning to The Learning Spectrum**
- **Consistent complaints of ear, stomach or headaches, or other pain**
- **Any color of nasal discharge, it must be clear before returning to school unless it is a severe clear runny nose, then they need to remain home until it becomes a mild runny nose – wiping it less than every 15 minutes or so.**
- **Sore throat**
- **Severe coughing- congested, with phlegm, gets red in the face, gags, throws up, or high pitched whooping or croup sounds – must be mild before returning to school**
- **Fatigue that prevents the individual from participating in group activities.**

Before returning your child to school, they MUST BE free of all symptoms for 24 hours from the last onset of symptom.

Emergency and Evacuation Plans:

The safety of our students is a responsibility each staff member takes seriously. All staff members are familiar with emergency procedures such as tornado and fire drills as well as incident reporting procedures.

If there is a fire in the building during operating hours, the staff's first responsibility is to evacuate the children to a safe place outside the home. Our written fire evacuation plan is posted in all classrooms and offices. They are evaluated annually and updated as needed. An evacuation floor plan that identifies emergency exit pathways, emergency exit doors, emergency evacuation windows, and our "Safety Spot," where we will meet up and wait for emergency services, is also posted near the entrance.

In the event of a fire or other disaster the alarm may be sounded by either the installed fire detectors going off or by staff blowing our "emergency whistle." When an adult discovers a fire, or other need for evacuation, their first action will be to sound the alarm, open the nearest exit door or window, and help children to evacuate the building safely. When evacuating from the building, the staff will place first priority on attending to the children who cannot walk and carry them from the building to the "safety spot" at the front of the property. In the event of a major fire the staff and children will first meet up here and then continue to the end of the block to wait for emergency personnel. Once the children have begun to evacuate the building the staff will bring their emergency cards to the safety spot, where one adult will stay with the children who are already out and the other adults will assist any children who need help evacuating.

The director will call 911 and take attendance from all classes. Once emergency services have been contacted and all children and staff are accounted for, the teachers will begin calling children's parents and guardians to inform them of the event and arrange pick up of children if needed.

Child Custody:

Parents are obligated to inform their site director immediately of any child custody changes. A copy of the court ordered document will be required immediately for the child's records and for all staff involved with the child to be aware of the new ruling. Both the custodial and non-custodial parent are entitled access to their child's records and to conferences with the teacher/therapist, unless otherwise ruled by the court. However, the non-custodial parent may not visit the child at school or remove the child from the premises without the expressed

written and verbal permission of the custodial parent. Step-parents have no legal rights to records, conferences, or reports without permission from the custodial parent.

Emergency Lock-In Procedure:

If the police have been called to The Learning Spectrum with regards to a breach in the security and safety of the facility or property, written notification will be sent home by the next school day.

If administrators are alerted that a crisis exists in another school or public building, the director may decide to impose an emergency lock-in. The following procedures are in place.

- An announcement will be made to all staff of the imposing lock-in
- Administrators will lock all exterior doors
- Blinds will be closed
- No outdoor recess
- Students will be kept in classrooms
- Approved admission will only be granted to those at front door
- An announcement will be made when the lock-in is over

No Smoking Policy:

All sites of The Learning Spectrum are a tobacco free environment. Smoking is prohibited by all persons inside the building; in any indoor or outdoor licensed space; within 25 feet from any entrance, exit, window, or ventilation intake on the building; and in motor vehicles while transporting children. No tobacco products including cigarettes, ashtrays, cigarette/cigar butts, and/or ashes will be accessible to the children.

Drug and Alcohol Policy:

The Learning Spectrum expressly prohibits ALL persons from having or using illegal drugs on the premises; consuming alcohol during operating hours; and from being under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, or misused prescription drugs when working with or in the presence of children in care.

If you or any other person appears to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs at the time of pick-up, you will be asked to have someone come and get you and your child.

If you refuse a ride and leave with your child, we will notify the police department and child protection services with all information required.

Guns and Weapons Policy:

Absolutely NO weapons or guns of any kind will be allowed on the property of any Learning Spectrum site. Under no circumstances may any person, with the exception of law enforcement officers, possess a firearm or other weapon on school grounds. Administration shall reserve the right upon reasonable suspicion, to inspect a student's property. Students who bring a weapon to school will be disciplined as necessary, such as including involvement of the local police department and dismissal from The Learning Spectrum.

Pet Policy:

The Learning Spectrum does value the use of therapy dogs for our students. However, some of our students have allergies that may prohibit them to be around animals. A specific plan will need to be discussed if your child will be bringing their dog on site.

Appendix

- I. Clinical Therapy Department
- II. Creative Arts and Wellness Program
- III. Positive Behavior Supports
- IV. Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)
- V. Allergy Policy
- VI. Head Lice Policy
- VII. Communicable Diseases Policy

Appendix I: Clinical Therapy Department

Speech therapy and occupational therapy services are available at each of our TLS locations and many of our off campus inclusion sites. We currently accept private insurance, Medicaid, Autism Scholarship, John Peterson scholarship, Delaware County funding, Fairfield County funding, and private payments. Appointment times are offered through the student's school day, as well as before and after school hours.

Speech Therapy Services

Speech-language therapy includes the evaluation, diagnosis, and treatment of speech, language, social cognitive, oral-motor and feeding disorders.

Our nationally certified and state licensed speech therapists have extensive experience with children with autism spectrum disorders. They are dedicated to working with each child's

family, teachers, and treatment team to develop the best social and communication skills possible. Our SLPs treat young children, school-age children, and adolescents develop their communication and daily living skills in the areas of:

- Articulation
- Receptive and expressive language
- Resonance/voice
- Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)
- Oral Motor/feeding
- Social-pragmatic language skills
- Play Skills
- Functional Communication

Our therapists believe that communication skills are best learned in the child's natural environment, doing what children do best – playing and learning! We utilize a functional approach to teaching communication by providing therapy in the context of play and natural learning opportunities as much as possible. We believe that every child has the ability to communicate. Our job is to help them discover how.

Occupational Therapy Services

Occupational therapy focuses on the therapeutic use of movement and play to enhance one's development to promote improved sensory processing, fine and gross motor skills, and overall self-care.

Our occupational therapists help children, adolescents, and adults with autism and related disorders to develop the necessary skills needed to lead more independent and fulfilling lives through enhancing the following skills:

- Balance/coordination
- Strength/core stability
- Fine motor

- Visual perception/visual motor
- Handwriting
- Peer play
- Oral motor /feeding/oral sensory
- Activities of daily living (i.e.; dressing, self-care, home management) development
- Focus/attention/organization
- Ability to self-regulate

If you are interested in pursuing therapy services for your child, or if you would like additional information about the services offered at TLS, please send a request to therapy@thelearningspectrum.com, and we will be happy to answer your questions and walk you through the scheduling process.

Appendix II: Creative Arts and Wellness Program

Wellness:

Yoga: Focusing on breath and simple poses to reduce anxiety and increase balance, focus, and coordination.

Wellness Workouts: Focusing on channeling energy and excitement in a functional way while increasing core, upper body, and lower body strength.

Support groups: Parent, Child, and Sibling groups that focus on living with autism.

Creative Arts:

C.I.R.C.L.E.: Creative, Imaginative, Really, Cool, Learning, Experience. This group incorporates Shakespeare, Movie and Book Themes in a dramatic play experience.

Music Therapy: Individual and group sessions focusing on strengths that use instruments, singing, and movement to address individual needs in a creative and playful way.

Art Enrichment: Individual and group sessions that focus on self expression through painting, puppets, crafting and so much more!

Saturday Classes:

Join our Creative Arts and Wellness team on select Saturdays throughout the school year for small group social groups.

Summer Wellness and Creative Arts at TLS: Join our Wellness and Creative Arts team for an engaging summer experience filled with music, art, movement, drama, and whole child wellness. Each week your child will have the opportunity to participate in engaging themes that incorporate Creative Arts, Wellness, and Education! **Need to know:**

- * CAW runs on the same schedule as each TLS site
- * We have a 24 hour notice policy when cancelling individual sessions
- * If you participate in a CAW group and are absent you will not receive a refund or a makeup. These groups continue even if students do not attend.

Ready to Sign up? You will need:

*A completed Therapy packet

*A completed Creative Arts and Wellness Packet

Appendix III: Positive Behavior Supports

Some children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) can learn, communicate, and socialize with minimal assistance. Other times, supports are needed to facilitate the learning, communication and socialization. These students utilize specialized and individualized learning to access educational opportunities and overcome their personal barriers. The Learning Spectrum (TLS) employs the use of applied behavior analysis (ABA) to service students in their natural environment. Our classrooms operate in accordance with the principles of ABA. Below you will find positive behavior supports that are used in all classrooms to provide a safe and effective environment for our students. The guidelines below are mandatory for our staff to implement and adherence to these strategies is imperative.

Applied Behavior Analysis: The process of systematically applying interventions based upon the principles of learning theory to improve socially significant behaviors to a meaningful degree,

and to demonstrate that the interventions employed are responsible for the improvement in behavior.

The following define the ABC's of ABA:

Antecedent: occurs BEFORE a behavior

Behavior: EVERYTHING we say and do

Consequences: occur AFTER a behavior

In order to incorporate antecedent interventions in the classroom we strive to be proactive with the environment. This consists of using a visual schedule & visual supports (rules, lessons, labeling), limiting auditory stimuli, provide individualized and appropriate educational demands, provide a break area in the classroom and use positive and negative reinforcement for positive behaviors.

Staff at The Learning Spectrum DO NOT use punishment and/or crisis prevention intervention (CPI) restraints unless there is imminent danger to the student or other individuals in the environment.

If a CPI restraint has been done, the staff member involved will out an incident report and get it signed by their TLS Director and sent home. ONLY in a crisis should the student be removed from the classroom when engaging in a problem behavior. Safety is the first concern. The other students will be removed if needed. Positive and negative reinforcement should be used for positive behaviors.

Our goal is to decrease a problem behavior, reinforce the replacement behavior and tell the student what he can do instead and reinforce that behavior. We attempt to provide a rich schedule of reinforcement and make sure we are always be ready to reinforce a positive behavior.

Our teachers and therapists will redirect problem behaviors and tell the students what they can do instead such as to give them choices let them feel powerful, in control. Let their voices be heard and allow them to be active participants. Our students need clear expectations; mean what you say and say what you mean. If the problem behavior continues to occur- we will redirect the student by engaging the student in an appropriate activity. It is important to NOT bring attention to the problem behavior (ex: DO NOT say, "Stop, hitting your friends. DO say, "Use your hands to play with your toy.")

Appendix IV: Parent Teacher Organization

The Parent Teacher Organization at the TLS Central location was started in the fall of the 2015-2016 school year by two parents interested in gathering others that could volunteer time and resources to help support the students, families, teachers and staff of The Learning Spectrum.

Our Mission: Work together to promote a school community encouraging involvement, acceptance and support. To enhance the quality of education provided to our children through our support, volunteering and financial assistance. Like most schools, the PTO as a way to provide the families of our students with a voice to speak on behalf of every child and the best tools to help their children be safe, healthy, and successful — in school and in life. The mission of The Learning Spectrum PTO is to establish and nurture a close relationship between the parents, teachers, and students by advancing opportunities in the home, school, and community of the school.

The PTO provides assistance to teachers in classroom settings, raises funds for supplemental educational materials and experiences, supports school and family social interaction, and provides a non-biased forum for sharing information on issues that impact our children. It is our belief that the team effort of a parent-teacher organization offers the best possible learning environment for our children.

Meetings are held monthly, while school is in session, in the meeting room at TLS Central. All parents are invited to attend meetings and participate in PTO events. We love to see new faces and hear new voices!

The PTO is a non-profit organization with an annual budget. One of the main functions of the PTO is fundraising. All monies raised stays at TLS to benefit students, teachers, therapists and staff. The TLS PTO is a 501(c)(3) organization. Donations are tax deductible.

For more information regarding the parent teacher organization at The Learning Spectrum, please contact TLSPTO@yahoo.com

Appendix V: Allergy Policy

It is imperative that all school personnel know of any type of allergy your child has, such as to bee stings or foods. This information should be provided to your child's teacher/therapist before services begin through written communication. Parents are responsible for providing medication to assist in the case of an allergic reaction and educate the teachers on its administration and if any changes are made throughout the school year. Please include any information on treatment and protocol if allergies are encountered.

If medication (i.e. oral medication, EpiPen) is needed to be administered to aid during an allergic reaction, a medical form will need to be completed by the parent and signed by the child's doctor prescribing the medication. The medication will be kept in the child's classroom, out of the reach of students and in a lock box provided by the child's parents. Medication will be stored until the end of the school year. Parents will have one week from the last day of the

school year to pick up any unused medication or it will be properly destroyed. Unused medication will not be sent home in a child's backpack.

Teachers and staff who have direct contact with the student will be educated on their allergies and the plan set in place if the student comes in contact with the allergen. Signs will be posted upon entering the child's classroom if certain foods or other products that cannot come in contact with the student. With the consent of the student's parents, The Learning Spectrum will give notice to the student's classmates to follow the request of restricting the given food or items.

Appendix VI: Head Lice Policy

In agreement with the recommendation of the Ohio Department of Health, The Learning Spectrum supports the guidelines below once a student has been identified with head lice:

- A student discovered to have head lice may remain in the building and go home at the end of the day to be treated. The parent or guardian will be notified by telephone.**
- Verbal and/or written instructions pertaining to head lice will be given to the parent or guardian.**
- Students will be readmitted to school as soon as proof of treatment is provided to the site director and no active infestation is identified. This can be completed overnight and allowing admission the next day. The parent or guardian must accompany the student to school the day following identification and speak with the director. The student will**

be examined upon arrival and then again in the next 7-10 days. Active infestation is defined as the presence of live lice or no progress of nit removal. There are safe and effective over the counters and prescription treatment options available.

- If a student has been discovered to have active infestation (live bugs or no progress in nit removal), the parent or guardian must take the student home for continued treatment.
- If the parent or guardian is not accommodating with treatment and the student has missed more than one day of school, the parent or guardian will be contacted first and a referral to an outside agency for investigation will be made if necessary.

Appendix VII: Communicable Diseases Policy

The following information has been taken directly from The Ohio Department of Education's Chapter 3301-32 of the Administrative Code:

- (A) A person trained to recognize the common signs of communicable disease or other illness as required of the Administrative Code, shall observe each child daily as the child enters the group.
- (B) The following precautions shall be taken for children suspected of having a communicable disease:

- (1) The parent shall be notified immediately of the child's condition when a child has been observed with signs or symptoms of illness.**
- (2) A child with any of the following signs or symptoms shall be isolated immediately and discharged to the parent:**
- (a) Diarrhea (more than one loose stool in a twenty-four-hour period) if reported;**
 - (b) Severe coughing, causing the child to become red or blue in the face or to make a whooping sound;**
 - (c) Difficult or rapid breathing;**
 - (d) Yellowish skin or eyes;**
 - (e) Conjunctivitis;**
 - (f) Temperature of one hundred degrees Fahrenheit taken by the auxiliary method when in combination with other symptoms;**
 - (g) Untreated infected skin patch(es);**
 - (h) Unusually dark urine and/or grey or white stool if reported.**
- (3) A child with any of the following signs or symptoms of illness shall be isolated immediately. Decisions regarding exclusion from the program either immediately or at some later time in the day shall be determined by the director or team leader and the parent(s). While isolated, the child shall be observed for the following symptoms as well as those listed in paragraph (B)(2) of this rule:**
- (a) Unusual spots or rashes;**
 - (b) Sore throat or difficulty swallowing;**
 - (c) Elevated temperature;**
 - (d) Vomiting; or**
 - (e) Evidence of lice, scabies, or other parasitic infestation.**
- (4) A child suspected of having a communicable disease shall be**
- (a) Isolated in a room or portion of a room not being used in the school child program;**
 - (b) Within sight or hearing of a staff member;**

- (c) Made comfortable in a warm, safe environment. All linen and blankets used by an ill child shall be laundered before being used by another child, and cots, if used, shall be disinfected; and
- (d) Observed carefully for worsening condition.
- (C) Each program shall have written policies and procedures for management of communicable disease consistent with the policies of the school district, county board of DD, or eligible nonpublic school board, which shall include, but not necessarily be limited to, the following:
- (1) Training of staff members on signs and symptoms, hand-washing, and disinfecting equipment and materials;
 - (2) Isolating and excluding an ill child;
 - (3) Caring for a mildly ill child;
 - (4) Receiving notification from the parent(s) within the same business day when a child has been excluded from school because the child is suspected of having a communicable disease; and
- (1) Placing the Ohio department of health's poster "communicable disease chart" (jfs.ohio.gov) or school's communicable disease chart in a conspicuous place for staff reference. Parents can reference this chart at:
<http://www.odjfs.state.oh.us/forms/file.asp?id=1730&type=application/pdf>

Students returning to school after a diagnosed communicable disease should be symptom free for 24 hours unless the primary care provider provides written documentation approving school attendance before symptoms have abated. This documentation must be presented by a parent or guardian to the director once the child returns to school in order for readmission to be granted.

Appendix VIII. Policy addendum's 2017-18 school year

Staff/child ratios : Preschool-High school, 1:4. Our maximum group size is 2:8. If group size is more than 8 students, more staff will be added as necessary.

Outdoor play: Our goal is that outdoor play will be included in our program on a daily basis. We limit the amount of outdoor time when weather is very warm or very cold. Children will not be taken outside when the temperature drops below 32 degrees or rise above 90 degrees. If the situation requires it, we will also adjust outdoor time due to inclement weather, rain, threatening weather, ozone warnings etc. On days that outdoor play is not possible, we will include time for indoor gross motor activities. Please send you child with the proper clothing so that they may be comfortable and safe when we are outside. This includes hats, mittens and boots in the wintertime.

Breastfeeding accommodations: TLS will provide a private area to breastfeed upon request.

Care of children without immunizations: TLS considers enrollment of non-immunized children upon evaluation.

Transportation for trips and emergencies: Written permission is required from parents for each field trip. No child will be permitted to participate in a field trip with out a signed permission slip. TLS will use it's company van to transport during a field trip. TLS will not transport children in an emergency situation. If a child requires transportation, the parent or emergency squad will be contacted.

Emergency transportation authorization: TLS will not enroll children whose parents refuse to grant consent for transportation to the source of emergency treatment.

Formal assessments of students: All TLS students are on Individualized Education Plans. For students using the Autism Scholarship or the John Peterson Scholarship, TLS reports on these goals on a quarterly basis to ODE. For district placed students, we report to their district on a quarterly basis.

