

Pine-Richland School District Annual Notice of Student Services



PRSD Student Services

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Special Education Services

Free & Appropriate Public Education

Pine-Richland School District provides a free and appropriate public education for all students including students requiring special education services. This includes provision of education and related aids, services, or accommodations which are needed to afford each qualified student with a disability equal opportunity to participate in and obtain the benefits from educational programs and extracurricular activities without discrimination, to the same extent as each student without a disability, consistent with federal and state laws and regulations.

Public Outreach & Awareness System (Child Find)

Pine-Richland uses a public outreach awareness system to locate and identify children thought to be eligible for special education within the school district's jurisdiction. The district provides details of where to find out more information about the district's special education and early intervention programs through announcements on PR-TV (broadcasted throughout the community), in the annual report (distributed to residents, township buildings and libraries), via electronic communications (e-notices and website) and shared with the newspapers. This public awareness effort includes information regarding potential signs of developmental delays and other risk factors that could indicate disabilities. The process includes notification to parents throughout the school district of child identification activities and of the procedures followed to ensure confidentiality of information pertaining to students with disabilities or eligible young children in accordance with this chapter.

Indicators & Risk Factors

Some indications that your child may be a student at risk for developmental, academic, adaptive, and/or physical, sensory, mental or emotional disabilities may include:

- Consistent problems in getting along with others;
- Difficulty communicating;
- Difficulty performing tasks that require reading, mathematics and/or writing;
- Difficulty seeing or hearing, which interferes with the ability to communicate;
- Health problems that affect educational performance, including attention problems;
- Lack of interest or ability in age-appropriate activities;
- Resistance to change; or
- An emotional disturbance over a long period of time, which affects your child's ability to learn.

If you have questions about your child's development or disability, you may speak with your child's physician/healthcare provider, Pine-Richland School District or the Allegheny Intermediate Unit.

Services for Preschool Age Children with Disabilities

Act 212, [the Early Intervention System Act](#), entitles all preschool age children with disabilities to appropriate early intervention services. Early Intervention supports and services are designed to meet the developmental needs of children with a disability as well as the needs of the family related to enhancing the child's development in one or more of the following areas:

- Physical development, including vision and hearing
- Cognitive development
- Communication development
- Social or emotional development
- Adaptive development

Young children experiencing developmental delays or physical or mental disabilities are eligible for early intervention services. The Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare is responsible for providing services to children from birth through two years of age. Contact the Alliance for Infants and Toddlers, 2801 Custer Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15227 or call 412-885-6000.

The Pennsylvania Department of Education is responsible for providing services to preschool age children from ages three through five and demonstrates a delay of 25% or more in one or more developmental areas (communication, adaptive, cognitive, fine motor, gross motor or personal/social) on a standardized assessment. Contact Project Discovery, Assessment, Referral and Tracking (DART) at 412-394-5904.

Screening, Evaluation & Placement Procedures

The Pine-Richland School District employs the following procedures for locating, identifying, and evaluating specific needs of school age students requiring special programs and services. The district, as prescribed, routinely conducts screenings of children's hearing acuity (grades K, 1, 2, 3, 7, 11), visual acuity (grades kindergarten-12) and speech and language skills (kindergarten and teacher referral).

The classroom teachers assess gross motor and fine motor skills, academic skills and social emotional skills on an ongoing basis and needs from all of these screening sources and are noted within the child's official file. Screening activities includes a review of group-based data such as cumulative enrollment and health records, report cards, and ability and achievement test scores. The district has repeated assessments of achievement and/or behavior, formal monitoring of student progress and ongoing researched based interventions as needed. Identified needs from these screening sources, as well as information obtained from parents/guardians and outside agencies, are assessed, noted within student records, and discussed with parents/guardians. These school records are available to parents, and to school staff who work with the child on a direct or indirect basis. Information from the records is released to other persons or agencies only with appropriate authorization, which requires written signed permission by the parents/guardians.

If a parent/guardian or the school team feels more comprehensive assessment of a student is necessary, an evaluation may be recommended. Parental consent is required before a comprehensive evaluation may take place. Evaluations may include review of the student's records, classroom observations, gathering of parent/guardian and teacher input, individually administered assessments of achievement and ability, and other assessments as deem necessary. Parents/guardians of students who suspect that their child is exceptional and in need of special education services, may request a multidisciplinary evaluation of their child through a verbal or written request to the building principal or Psychological Services (724-443-7230 ext. 6500). Pine-Richland shall make the permission to evaluate form readily available for that purpose. If a request is made to any professional employee or administrator of the school entity, that individual shall provide a copy of the permission to evaluate form to the parents within 10-calendar days of the request.

Independent Educational Evaluations

Parents/guardians have the right to an Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE) at public expense if there is a disagreement with an evaluation obtained by a District (34 CFR 300. 502). However, the district may initiate a due process hearing to show that its evaluation is appropriate. If the final decision is that the evaluation is appropriate, parents/guardians still have the right to an IEE, but not at public expense.

Working Together

After all the assessments are complete, an Evaluation Report that includes specific recommendations for the types of intervention necessary to deal with the child's specific needs is prepared and shared with parents/guardians. When a student qualifies for special education services, copies of the evaluation report shall be disseminated to the parents at least 10 school days prior to the meeting of the IEP team, unless this requirement is waived by a parent in writing. In accordance with state regulations, an Individualized Education Program (IEP) team meeting, with parent/guardian involvement, may be scheduled to develop an appropriate

IEP for the student. Parent/guardians are then notified of the proposed placement and services with the Notice of Recommended Educational Placement (NOREP). Parents may disagree with the recommended program and may suggest alternatives. Either the parent or the school district may choose to use a mediation or due process hearing as an impartial method to determine the most appropriate program for the child.

Services for School Age Exceptional Children

All students in the Pine-Richland School District have access to the following services which address students' needs throughout their district enrollment: school counseling, psychological services, health services, home and school visitor services, and social work services to support students in addressing academic, behavioral, health, personal, career and social development issues. The provision of special education services is governed by Chapter 14 of the Pennsylvania Department of Education. The Pine-Richland School District provides a free, appropriate, public education to an exceptional student according to state and federal mandates. To be eligible, the child must be of school age, need specially designed instruction, and meet eligibility criteria for mentally, gifted and/or one or more of the following physical or mental disabilities as set forth in the Pennsylvania State Standards:

- Autism
- Deaf-Blindness
- Deafness
- Emotional Disturbance
- Hearing Impairment
- Intellectual Disability
- Multiple Disabilities
- Orthopedic Impairment
- Other Health Impairment
- Specific Learning Disability
- Speech or Language Impairment
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Visual Impairment including blindness

Services designed to meet the needs of eligible students include annual development of an IEP, multidisciplinary reevaluation, supportive intervention in the regular class, supplemental intervention in the regular class or in a special education resource program, and placement in a part-time or full-time special education class outside of the regular school. The extent of special education services and the location of the delivery of such services are determined by the parents/guardians and staff at the IEP team meeting and are based on the student's identified needs and abilities, chronological age, and level of intensity of the specified intervention. Related services are supportive services that are required for a child to benefit from special education. Related services help children with disabilities benefit from their special education by providing extra help and support in needed areas, such as speaking or moving. Related services can include, but are not limited to, any of the following:

- Assistive Technology
- Counseling services
- Hearing support and audiology services/programs
- Parent consultation and training
- Psychological services
- Physical and occupational therapy
- School health services
- Social work services in schools
- Speech and language services
- Vision, orientation & mobility support services/program
- Transportation

Prior to the initiation of the services parents/guardians are presented a “Notice of Recommended Educational Placement” (NOREP) with which they may agree or disagree. If parents/guardians disagree with the program being recommended, they have the right to request a pre-hearing conference, mediation, and/or due process hearing. For additional information about special education services and programs, contact, Mr. Noel Hustwit, Director of Special Education, 3811 Bakerstown Road., Gibsonia, PA 15044 or via phone at phone: 724-443-7230, extension 6501 or Fax: 724-443-7374.

Admissions of Service Animals to Schools

A student or an employee with a disability may submit a request to bring a service animal to school for educational or employment purposes. However, there is no automatic right to be accompanied by a service animal in the school setting. Parents/guardians of students with disabilities who believe the student needs to bring a service animal to school in order to receive a free and appropriate public education, shall notify the building principal or the Section 504 coordinator or IEP team. The appropriate team shall evaluate the request to use the service animal in school, gather necessary information and determine whether the student requires the service animal during the school day or at school activities. Any service animal accompanying a student with a disability to school or school activities shall be handled and cared for in a manner detailed in the student’s IEP or Section 504 Service Agreement.

Services for Students in Nonpublic Schools

Public special education is accessible to resident students attending nonpublic schools by permitting the nonpublic school student to enroll on a part-time dual enrollment basis in a special education program operated in a public school. Special education programs are accessible to nonpublic school students through dual enrollment following the multidisciplinary team evaluation and the development of an Individualized Education Program (IEP). Parents/guardians of nonpublic school students who suspect that their child is exceptional and in need of special education may request a multidisciplinary evaluation of their child through a written or verbal request to Mr. Noel Hustwit, Director of Special Education , 3811 Bakerstown Rd., Gibsonia, PA 15044 or via phone at Phone: 724-443-7230, extension 6501 or Fax: 724-443-7374.

Protected Handicapped Students: Chapter 15 (Section 504 Service Agreements)

Pine-Richland School District will provide each “protected handicapped student” without discrimination or cost to the student or family those related services, aides, or accommodations, which are needed to provide an equal opportunity to participate in and obtain the benefits of the school programs and extracurricular activities to the extent appropriate to the student’s abilities. To qualify as a protected handicapped student, the child must be of school age with a physical or mental disability, which substantially limits or prohibits participation in, or access to, any aspect of the school program. Services and protections for protected handicapped students are different from those applicable to all eligible students enrolled in special education programs. Additional information about the evaluation procedures and provision of services to protected handicapped students are available to “Protected Handicapped Students,” by contacting Dr. Maura L. Paczan, Coordinator of 504 Service Agreements, 3811 Bakerstown Road., Gibsonia, PA 15044 or via phone at Phone: 724-443-7230 and Fax: 724-443-7374.

Gifted Education Services

Determining Gifted Eligibility

Mentally gifted is defined as “outstanding intellectual and creative ability, the development of which requires specially designed programs or support services, or both, not ordinarily provided in the regular education program.” A child may be eligible for gifted education if he/she:

- Is a year or more above grade achievement level for the normal age group in one or more subjects.
- Demonstrates an observed or measured rate of mastering new academic content or skills that reflect gifted ability.
- Demonstrates achievement, performance, or expertise in one or more academic areas.
- Shows early and measured use of high-level thinking skills, academic creativity, leadership skills, intense academic interest areas, communication skills, foreign language aptitude, or technology expertise.
- Has documented, observed, validated, or assessed evidence that intervening factors are masking gifted ability.

Screening and Evaluation

The term mentally gifted includes a person who has an IQ of 130 or higher and other factors that indicate gifted ability. Gifted ability cannot be based on an IQ score alone. If the IQ score is lower than 130, a child may be admitted to gifted programs through multiple criteria and/or other conditions that strongly indicate gifted ability. The other factors to be considered may include: achievement test scores that are a year or more above level; observed or measured acquisition/retention rates that reflect gifted ability, achievement, performance, of expertise in one or more academic areas that demonstrates a high level of accomplishment; higher level thinking skills and documented evidence that intervening factors are masking gifted ability.

The Gifted Multidisciplinary Evaluation (GMDE)

A gifted multidisciplinary evaluation is a process to gather the information that will be used to find out if a child qualifies for gifted education and, if so, the types of programs and services needed. Part of this process includes an evaluation by a certified school psychologist. A child may be referred for the first GMDE in several ways:

- Parents may request the school to give their child a GMDE at any time, but there is a limit of one request per year.
- A child’s teacher may also ask to have a child evaluated.

The Gifted Written Report (GWR)

A multidisciplinary team reviews all materials and prepares a GWR that recommends whether a child is gifted and needs specially designed instruction. As a member of the Gifted Multidisciplinary Team (GMDT), a parent may present written information for consideration. The GWR must include the reasons for the recommendations and list the names and positions of everyone who was part of the team. The entire GMDT process must be completed within 60 calendar days, excluding summer vacation, from the date the school district receives the parent’s written permission on the Permission to Evaluate form.

The Gifted Individualized Education Program (GIEP)

If the GIEP team decides the student is gifted and in need of gifted education, the team writes the GIEP at the meeting. The GIEP is based on the unique needs of the gifted student and enables the gifted student to participate in acceleration or enrichment programs, or both, as appropriate, and to receive services according to the student’s intellectual and academic abilities and needs.

Notice of Recommended Assignment (NORA)

Upon completion of the GIEP, the parent will receive a NORA and a Notice of Parental Rights for Gifted Children. The NORA will indicate the educational placement for the student and requires parent approval before the school district will begin implementation. The Notice of Parental Rights for Gifted Children describes your rights and the procedures that safeguard your rights. For additional information about Gifted Education, contact, Mr. Noel Hustwit, Director of Student Services and Special Education, 3811 Bakerstown Road., Gibsonia, PA 15044 or via phone at 724-443-7230 or Fax: 724-443-7374.

Parent Rights

At all times, a parent has certain rights with all gifted education services received by their child:

- The right to be notified about a child’s program and progress, and any changes that take place;
- The right to approve or reject programs and testing; and
- The right to privacy.

Other Services

Education for Homeless Youth

Federal guidelines, as set forth in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, require that the local school identify children who are experiencing homelessness. The federal mandate, and the intention of the Pine-Richland School District is to ensure that homeless children and youth have access to free appropriate public education on an equal basis with other children. Children who are experiencing homelessness, including those living with others in emergency situations, may qualify for assistance with transportation, school lunch and/or tutoring, so that they can remain in their school of origin. If you believe your child may qualify for these services, please contact the principal of your child’s school. You may also contact Dr. Melissa Ramirez, District Homeless Liaison at 724-443-7230 or Fax: 724-443-7374.

English as a Second Language Instruction

When registering children in Pine-Richland School District, all parents/guardians will be required to fill out a Home Language Questionnaire. If a parent/guardian indicates there is another language spoken in the home on Home Language Questionnaire, then an English language provider will conduct a full interview with the parent/guardian. Based upon the responses for the questionnaire and interview, those children who qualify will be referred for an “English Language Learner Assessment.” The results of this assessment will determine if a student requires English as a Second Language instruction. Parents/guardians may not opt their children out of English language learner assessment or ESL instructions if found to be eligible.

Federal Programs/ Title I

According to the Title 1 Part A, Pine-Richland School District will provide the Pennsylvania Department of Education’s written complaint procedures and information on the professional qualification of student’s teachers and paraprofessionals upon request. To request this information, please contact Mr. Noel Hustwit, Director of Student Services and Special Education at 724-443-7230 or Fax: 724-443-7374.

Free and Reduced Lunch

Through the National Lunch Program, Pine-Richland offers both free and reduced price meal plans for qualifying students. Registration forms and information are available at the central district office (724-625-7773) or via the school [district website](#).

Homebound Instruction

The Pine-Richland School District shall provide, pursuant to law and regulations, homebound instruction to students confined to home or hospital for physical disability, illness, injury, urgent reasons, or when such confinement is recommended for psychological or psychiatric reasons. The period of homebound instruction for an individual shall not exceed three (3) months. Application for homebound instruction shall certify the nature of the illness or disability, state the probable duration of the confinement. For additional information about homebound services, please contact, Mr. Noel Hustwit, Director of Student Services and Special Education, 3811 Bakerstown Road, PA 15044 or via phone at 724-443-7230, ext. 6500.

Notice of Rights Regarding Education Records

The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), in addition to Pennsylvania Department of Education regulations and School Board policy, affords parents/guardians and students over 18 years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to students' education records. These rights are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 30 days of the date the district receives a request for access. Parents/guardians or eligible students should submit to the principal of the school where the student is enrolled or was previously enrolled a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The principal or his or her designee will make arrangements for access and notify the parent/guardian or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that a parent or eligible student believes is inaccurate. In order to request such an amendment, the parent or eligible student should make the request in writing to the school principal and clearly identify the record they want changed. The request should also specify the reasons why the record is believed to be inaccurate. If the district decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent/guardian or eligible student, the district will notify the parent/guardian or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent/guardian or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.
3. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

One such exception is for a disclosure to school officials who possess a legitimate educational interest in the record. A school official is a person employed by the district as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the school board; a person or company with whom the school has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent/guardian or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.

A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility. The district will also disclose education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll, upon request of that school district.

A parent/guardian or eligible student may request that the district disclose educational records to a third party by submitting a written consent form to the district. Consent forms may be obtained from the building principal's office or the district's Administrative Office.

Parents/guardian and eligible students also have the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the district to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the office that administers FERPA are as follows:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-5901

Special Notice Regarding Directory Information

Aforementioned, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) requires that the district, with certain exceptions to obtain the written consent of the parent/guardian or eligible student prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from the student's education records. However, the district may disclose certain "directory information" without such prior written consent unless the parent/guardian or eligible student has notified the district that they do not want directory information to be disclosed.

Directory information refers to information which would not be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed, and includes the following: name; address; telephone number; e-mail address; date and place of birth; major field of study; grade level; participation in officially recognized activities and sports; weight and height of members of athletic teams; dates of attendance; degrees and awards received; and the most previous educational agency or institution attended. **[In addition, photographs and/or video footage of students may be used in articles appearing in media outlets, on the district website and/or in connection with television coverage of school events.]**

If you do not want the district to disclose such directory information without your prior written consent, you must notify the district's Administrative Office in writing. Such notices should be delivered no later than September 30th of the current school year.

Pine-Richland School District Nondiscrimination Statement

Pine-Richland School District will not discriminate in its education programs, activities or employment practices, based on race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, religion, ancestry, disability, union membership or any other legally protected classification. Announcement of this policy is in accordance with state and federal laws, including Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Individuals who have an inquiry, complaint of harassment or discrimination, or who need information about accommodations for disabled persons, should contact Dr. Maura Paczan, coordinator of 504 Service Agreements at 724-443-7230 or Fax: 724-443-7374. For non-disability claims, individuals should contact Owen Kenney, Title IX coordinator, at 724-625-7773 x 6201 or Fax: 724-625-1490.

> Policy 103: Nondiscrimination in Schools & Classroom Practices

The district shall provide to all students, without discrimination, course offerings, counseling, assistance, employment, athletics and extracurricular activities. The equitable distribution of district resources in one means the district shall use to ensure all students receive a quality education. The district shall make reasonable accommodations for identified physical and mental impairments that constitute handicaps and disabilities, consistent with the requirements of federal and state laws and regulations.

> Policy 103.1: Qualified Student with Disabilities Grievance Process

The school district shall provide to each qualified student with a disability enrolled in the district, without cost to the student or parent/guardian, a free and appropriate public education. This includes provision of education and related aids, services, or accommodations which are needed to afford each qualified student with a disability equal opportunity to participate in and obtain the benefits from educational programs and extracurricular activities without discrimination, to the same extent as each student without a disability, consistent with federal and state laws and regulations.

The school board encourages students and parents/guardians who believe they have been subjected to discrimination or harassment to promptly report such incidents. Policies 103 and 103.1 can be found in the policy manual or via the website

at www.pinerichland.org/nondiscrimination. Reports of discrimination may be forwarded to the school district's Section 504 Coordinator Maura Paczan, lead School psychologist, Richland Elementary School, 3811 Bakerstown Rd., Gibsonia, PA, 15044; 724-443-7230 x6503.

Non-disability claims may be forwarded to the school district's Title IX Coordinator Owen Kenney, director of Human Resources & Legal Affairs, Pine-Richland School District, 702 Warrendale Road, Gibsonia, PA 15044; 724-625-7773 x 6201 or Fax: 724-625-1490.

Please [visit the website](#) for more details on filing a complaint.

Right To Know Act

Procedures for Submitting Request

1. Requests for access to public records of Pine-Richland School District must be submitted on the Pine-Richland School District's Right-To-Know Request Form, a copy which may be downloaded from our district's website: <http://www.pinerichland.org/domain/56>
2. Each request must include the following information:
 - a. Identification or description of the requested record, in sufficient detail.
 - b. Medium in which the record is requested.
 - c. Name and address of the person to receive district's response.
3. Request forms may be submitted in person at the Pine-Richland School District's Administrative Offices, or via fax, mail or e-mail. Request forms must be submitted to the attention of PRSD's Open Records Office, as follows:

PRSD Open Records Officer
702 Warrendale Road
Gibsonia, PA 15044
Fax: 724-625-1490
E-mail: openrecordsofficer@pinerichland.org