

## **Introduction to Horizons Academy**

In 2006 the Nelson County Board of Education, with the direction and guidance of the district superintendent, director of secondary instruction, and other key district personnel, approved the plans to create an alternative school in Nelson County.

A horizon is a line in which the sky and earth appear to meet; it is also defined as a range of one's knowledge, experience, or interests. We plan to equip our students with the tools and skills so they will be prepared for what is on the next horizon of life.

As a small group that has been given a large task, we, the faculty at Horizons Academy, will strive to make this new undertaking a great success, to help students understand their importance, and to help ensure they understand their importance into the next horizon of their life. We will do this by working together as a team by being persistent in the daily awareness of each student's needs and by communicating these needs with each other. We will take pride in our work ethic and we will look beyond our own horizon to see what a difference we can make in each student at Horizons Academy.

## **Horizon Academy Mission Statement**

Our goal is to foster a therapeutic environment that promotes educational, social, and emotional growth for students who are having difficulties in the comprehensive school setting and to teach each student to reach for brighter horizons.

### **Vision Statement**

Helping Students Reach for Brighter Horizons.

## **Horizon Philosophy**

### **We believe...**

- In the uniqueness of each student
- That all students can learn
- In the importance, dignity, and respect that should be given to each person
- That each student deserves a positive educational experience
- In creating a non-threatening, needs fulfilling learning environment for each student
- In preparing each student to become a successful member of society

## **Horizons Academy Educational Programs**

**The Axis Program** is designed for students who have been identified by school personnel as high risk for drop out, failure, suspension, or expulsion. These are students who have barriers to learning which are social, emotional, or behavioral in nature. Students who demonstrate a consistent inability to succeed in a regular or specially designed educational setting may be eligible for this program.

**The Compass Program** is designed as a therapeutic and educational alternative for students who have been suspended or expelled from their home school for more than (3) days. A student can be referred to this program by the principal or school board for specified period of time. The student will be monitored and re-evaluated monthly to ensure proper placement. This program will help to meet the needs of the student by motivating them to work on the issues that have hindered their educational process.

A meeting will be conducted for initial placement to set goals and determine length of stay for the student. Prior to the student returning to their home school a meeting will be scheduled to reinforce the skills and goals the student has accomplished. This will help to ensure that the interventions gained from the Compass Program will assist them as they return to their home school.

\* Compass program suspension students will have classroom work sent from their home school.

**The Positive Action Program** is a common sense approach to helping teenagers through their turbulent high school years. This program addresses all of the issues of character development, prevention, academic achievement, health, and safety and physical, intellectual, social and emotional health at the high school level. This curriculum will be administered to the students during their homerooms and it will also be linked with the Horizons Academy Phase System.

**Enrollment Procedures** Any Nelson County School District student who has been referred to the Horizons Academy program will be required to attend, along with a parent or guardian, an orientation meeting with the principal or a designee. The student and parent will be required to review and sign the **Horizons Orientation Packet and Student Contract**.

Any student who is enrolling from another school district will be required to also attend an orientation meeting and at that time have proof of residency in the Nelson County School District, a copy of their transcript and discipline record.

**\*Nelson County School district will accept “out of district” students on a basis of enrollment numbers and available space. Tuition is required.**

#### **Horizons Academy Policies/ Procedures**

**Attendance:** Regular school attendance is important to a student’s educational success. Horizons Academy follows the attendance policies set forth by the Nelson County School Board and the state of Kentucky. Any student attending Horizons Academy will be expected to keep a high percentage of attendance, if a student has an unacceptable amount of absences and tardies the principal can decide to terminate the student’s enrollment.

For a student to be considered in attendance a full day, he/she must be in the building before the morning bell and stay until the bus release bell in the afternoon.

**Truancy:** Any student who accumulates three (3) unexcused absences and/ or tardies will receive a letter from Horizons Academy; this is considered the first step in the truancy process. An entry will be made in the student’s behavioral file noting the date the letter was mailed. Once a student has accumulated four and a half (4.5) absences or tardies they will be referred to the truant officer Mr. Chuck Thompson, he will conduct a meeting with the student and parent and each will have to sign a truancy contract. **\*If the student is 18 years of age, he/she will attend the meeting without a parent and will have full responsibility for their attendance and any action taken because of it.** This is considered the second step in the truancy process and at this point no late notes of any kind will be accepted. Once a student has reached 6 unexcused absences and/or tardies they are referred to the county attorney. This is the third and final step, once it has reached the county attorney; Horizons Academy and the Nelson County School District have no control over the situation.

**Parent/Doctor Notes:** Each parent has three (3) parent notes for the first semester and three (3) for the second semester. **\*If you do not use all three (3) during the first semester they do not roll over in to the second semester.** A parent note cannot state that a student was tardy or absent because of transportation issues, this is not considered an excusable reason by the Nelson County Board of Education due to the fact that bus transportation is provided for all Nelson County District students free of charge.

A student has an unlimited amount of doctor notes they are allowed to use, however, the note will have to have a phone number provided from the health office attended so the note can be verified.

**Sign-In/ Sign-Out:** Any student arriving at school after the morning bell will be required to sign in at the front office before entering the building. A note should be provided at that time stating the reason for the student arriving late. A parent or guardian is required to enter with the student if younger than 18 and sign the student in. Any student needing to leave school before the bus release bell will need to sign out through the front office, a note explaining why the student is leaving will be required and if the student is younger than 18 a parent or guardian will be required to enter and sign the student out. **\*No student will be allowed to leave the school premises with someone other than a parent, guardian or someone listed on their entry packet.**

**Refer to policy KRS 159.010 to get a list of what is considered an excused absence and all district attendance policies.**

**Morning Entry:** Students will be allowed to enter the building at 7:45 a.m.; they must be present by 8:30 or will be considered tardy. Each student will enter through the front lobby; they will be directed to the “coat check” to deposit coats, jackets, hats etc. At this time students will go to their first period class. During the entry time any dress code issues will be dealt with according to the established consequences.

**\*Please refer to the Dress Code Addendum at the back of the handbook.**

**Daily Process:** Each student will be given a schedule of their classes and will follow this schedule daily for the entire school year unless changes are deemed necessary. While at Horizons Academy students are expected to follow behavioral guidelines from Horizons and those established by the Nelson County School Board. Students and parents/guardians will be given a Code of Acceptable Behavior and Discipline Handbook and will be required to sign that they have read and understand all its contents.

Horizons Academy Daily Guidelines are as follows:

- Respect yourself, others and school property at all times.
- Be a positive role model to other students.
- Participate in all classroom activities and work to your full potential.
- Keep your school neat and clean.
- Attend school daily and be prompt at all times.
- Dress according to the district’s dress code policy.
- Use appropriate language at all times.
- Follow all other rules and regulations set forth by the staff.

To help ensure daily responsibilities are followed by each student they will be required to carry a point sheet to each class and will participate in **Horizons Academy Phase System**. This system is set up to help have smooth daily routine, promote good behavior, and teach responsibility.

The bus dismissal bell will ring at 3:08; each student is expected to remain in their classroom until the bell rings. First round bus riders will ride a bus from Horizons Academy to NCHS and go directly to their bus that will transport them home. No student is to enter NCHS unless otherwise authorized by a staff member at Horizons. Riding a bus is a privilege; if a student receives a discipline referral from the bus driver, he/she could be removed from the bus for a time determined by the principal. If this occurs, the student and parent/ guardian will be responsible for the student’s transportation to and from school.

**Visitors:** All visitors are to enter the building through the front lobby and sign in. Once the reason for the visit has been determined the visitor will be given a Visitor Pass to wear and will be directed to the correct area. Horizons Academy reserves the right to ask for ID from any individual who enters our building; this is a safety precaution for students and staff.

**School Cancellation:** In the event that school is not in session or closes early because of an emergency or bad weather PLG 13, 96.7 FM, 1320 AM WBRT, and WHAS television and radio 84 AM will broadcast this information. You may also obtain information from the WBRT hotline by dialing 348-2222. Nelson County Schools have a snow line that can be called at 349-1977. The districts Messenger System will also be used to make such announcements.

**Medication/Illness:** Over the counter medication will not be provided to students at Horizons Academy. There are no exceptions to this. The dosing of prescription medication is allowed provided the medication is in the original prescription container with viewable dosage amounts, expiration date and the physicians name on the container. The parent/ guardian must fill out the correct forms giving permission for distribution of the medication. The medication will remain in the front office in a secure area that is locked at all time. Only trained personnel will be allowed to distribute the medication. Personnel are trained early on medicine distribution. If a student has a need for minor medical supplies; band aids, gauze, etc. they will have access to those items in the front office. A student who may become ill during the school will need to inform their classroom teacher or staff member of this fact. The staff member will call the parent/guardian at that time.

**Drug Testing/ Oppositional or Defiant Students/Physical Restraint**

**Procedures:** These Policies are explained in the Horizons Orientation Packet and/ or school district policy packets and the Code of Acceptable Behavior Handbook. Students and parents/guardians received a copy of each in the orientation meeting. Please refer back to one of those for questions regarding these issues.

**\*Please see the Signature page at the back of the handbook, both student and parent/guardian sign and return to Horizons Academy front office.**