



The Italian Home
for Children



Mary Savioli Pallotta Educational Center

**SCHOOL
HANDBOOK**



Dear Parents, Guardians, and Students;

On behalf of the staff, I take pleasure in welcoming you and your child to the Mary Savioli Pallotta Educational Center. This handbook will introduce you and your child to our school community, and we hope that the time spent in our program will be a rewarding experience for both of you. Please take the time to review this handbook and feel free to contact us with any questions you may have. For further detailed information regarding the Italian Home for Children Policies and Procedures there is a manual maintained in the school building that is accessible to you upon request.

Our school provides an environment to help students work on their individual needs. Through intensive academics, a structured behavior management system, support and counseling services, after school activities, and enrichment courses as part of our daily program, each student is provided with the opportunity to achieve his/her highest level of success. We seek to create a positive and caring community where everyone feels accepted, everyone feels safe, and everyone learns.

We look forward to working with you and your child.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jane Zopatti-Lewis" with a decorative flourish at the end.

Jane Zopatti-Lewis, M.Ed.

AVP of Educational Programming

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MISSION STATEMENT

MISSION

At Italian Home for children, we are creating communities where all children, adults, and families are embraced and empowered to reach their full potential.

VISION

To achieve our mission, we provide progressive and therapeutic programs to help children, adults and families with emotional, behavioral, and educational needs thrive in their communities.

CORE VALUES

Caring "Demonstrate compassion for others"

Courageous "Act with conviction even if the face of fear or adversity"

Innovative "Foster a culture where all ideas can flourish"

Inclusive "Create an environment where all can participate and belong"

Agile "Develop the capacity to implement strategic opportunities quickly and flexibly"

PALLOTTA EDUCATIONAL CENTER PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

The Pallotta Educational Center is committed to providing high quality, comprehensive, and meaningful education for all students.

Programs and services are designed to offer students opportunities to achieve the highest level of learning in all basic skill areas, to foster individual talents and strengths, and to instill a love for lifelong learning. Individual differences in development and learning styles, cultural and ethnic backgrounds, and family/life systems are all taken into consideration.

The student's sense of self-worth, self-reliance, and respect for others is encouraged through a supportive, structured, and safe environment. Students are challenged to develop problem solving and life skills that will assist them in school, the Italian Home community, and their home communities.

The ultimate goal for all students attending the school program, is to be able to make the transition to a less restrictive environment. Ongoing support and encouragement are provided throughout the transition period to address the changing needs of students and families. Students who have experienced success at the Pallotta Educational Center can feel confident in their move towards a less restrictive setting.

EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

The Pallotta Educational Center provides a variety of services to both day and residential students. Children placed at the Italian Home in the residential program may attend the on-grounds school, continue in a previously designated private day school setting, or participate in an inclusion model within the public schools as determined by the Individual Educational Plan. Day Students transition from their communities to school via special transportation arrangements. The AVP of Educational Programming and Clinical Supervisor attend all intake interviews to explain the educational and clinical services available and to assist all involved parties with any questions or concerns that may arise regarding the choice of educational placement for the student.

Students at the Pallotta Educational Center range in age from 4-13 years, and are those for whom a private day or residential educational placement has been deemed appropriate. The students have experienced a variety of behavioral, emotional and learning differences. Behaviors are addressed through a systematic, positive behavior management system. The emotional climate created by school staff is caring and nurturing. The environment is highly structured and predictable to ensure that the students feel safe and secure in school.

There are six classrooms at the Pallotta Educational Center with eight to ten students, a certified Special Education Teacher and two Assistant Teachers in each class. Students are grouped primarily according to age; however, academic and social ability are also factors in placement. Many students are also experiencing learning differences and developmental delays. Each student's academic program is individually designed and based on the goals in his/her Individualized Educational Plan. Reading and math instruction are presented both individually and in small groups. Instruction in the content areas is conducted within the small group. The curriculum is developed by the Curriculum Coordinator and teachers present in a unit format to interface with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and Common Core, class needs and the students' IEP goals and benchmarks. Teachers also incorporate instruction in basic classroom expectations such as discussions, note-taking, follow-up and hands-on activities. Each classroom is equipped with state of the art technology to enhance curriculum and promote the students' growth in the areas of technology.

The Resource Specialist tests all students in reading and math and consults with the classroom teacher to devise an appropriate scope and sequence for the student. The Resource Specialist provides services to designated students on a one to one basis as prescribed in the Individual Educational Plan.

The Physical Education program at the Pallotta Educational Center is designed as a structured program emphasizing proper behavior, teamwork, sportsmanship and health and wellness. Each classroom receives two periods of PE per week. Development of gross body movement, knowledge of specific skills and increasing the student's understanding of wellness are the major goals of the program.

Each classroom also receives one period per week of art and music instruction; and, more intensive classes for students who demonstrate additional interest in art or music that take place once weekly. Arts and Humanities lessons interface with classroom activities and students are exposed to a wide variety of materials.

The Pallotta Educational Center also provides the services of a Speech and Language Therapist and an Occupational Therapist. Services consist of evaluation and consultation, weekly treatment sessions, progress notes, quarterly progress reports and final evaluations. Services are provided for those students for whom therapy is part of the IEP or for those students who have been identified through previous or current evaluations as being in need of Speech and Language and/or Occupational Therapy. Each therapist also integrates lessons within the classroom and consults with teachers on an ongoing basis.

The treatment of children at Italian Home is based on a team approach, where education is only one component of the child's overall treatment. Consistency of treatment is maintained through direct communication with all parties involved with the student.

STANDARDS OF LEARNING:

All students at the Italian Home for Children are provided with a wide range of curriculum materials that address specific learning needs based on the goals and objectives/benchmarks in his/her Individual Educational Plan. A comprehensive curriculum of Reading, Language Arts, Spelling, Math, Science, Social Studies, Art/Humanities, and Physical Education is provided using curriculum materials ranging from teacher-made to commercial series and tests. Teachers access the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and Common Core and plan and differentiate lessons to fit students' needs.

Students participate in the **MCAS** testing conducted each year. Accommodations are made for students participating in this testing in accordance with the instructional methods identified in the IEP of each child.

Specifically, the Italian Home for Children continues to examine the curriculum to insure that the students have every opportunity possible to meet learning standards. Approaches involving critical and inferential thinking, cooperative learning, problem solving, exploration, and thematic integration are introduced into the curriculum.

In addition, the Italian Home attempts to access as much of the sending school districts' curriculums as possible in order for students to have easier transitions back to their home community.

The Italian Home curriculum is an "evolving" continuum to be examined and adjusted to fit the needs of all students.

CLINICAL SERVICES

The Italian Home clinicians are masters level therapists trained in working with special needs children and their families. Clinical interventions with residential children focus on assisting the child and his/her family to make measurable progress towards family reunification, using specific task-centered goals. Clinical interventions with day students focus on supporting and strengthening family/community living. Italian Home Clinicians provide weekly individual therapy, therapeutic group work, family treatment, case management services, and crisis intervention; as well as providing ongoing consultation and collaboration with the school staff.

All clinical and school staff participate in ongoing training in **Trauma Informed Care**.

A full time nursing staff is available to administer medication and provide care for the students as needed.

Clinical Conferences/Progress Reviews

Progress Reviews/Treatment Conferences are held quarterly. In addition, the IEP review is conducted via annual **TEAM** meetings. The Italian Home staff, in addition to all collaterals (LEA, DCF, DMH, ESP etc.) and parents/guardians are invited to be a part of the review process. All team members report on the student's progress and make recommendations for the next reporting period.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

PROCEDURES FOR STUDENT ENROLLMENT:

- All students must be referred by one of the following agencies-Local School District, DCF, DMH. Referral Packet must be submitted.
- Guardian and student will visit the program
- **Registration Packet** includes: Personal Data Sheet, Student/Parent Handbook, Anti-Bullying Policy, Permission Sheets, Medication Form, Immunization Form and recent Physical, Emergency Form.

SCHOOL HOURS:

The Pallotta Educational Center is open Monday through Friday from 8:00AM to 5:00PM. A Voice Message option is on 24 hours to take any calls before or after these times. Emergency calls after 5:00PM can be placed through our residential program at (617) 524-3116.

SCHOOL DAY:

The academic portion of the school day for students begins at 9AM and ends at 3:30PM. Monday through Thursday students participate in an **EXTENDED DAY ENRICHMENT PROGRAM** that is from 3:30-4:30PM. On Fridays the school day is from 9:00AM-NOON. **ALL students are dismissed at NOON on Fridays.**

Day students arrive at 8:45AM and enter the building through the Community Room. Teachers are in the Community Room by 8:40AM to greet day students. From 8:45-9:00AM day students have breakfast and transition to classrooms by 9:00AM. Residential students transition from dorms to classrooms by 9:00AM.

FIELD TRIPS:

Field trips are considered to be an important and effective tool in regards to the education of children. Any off grounds excursion is considered to be a learning experience. The assumption is made therefore, that every child will go on any and all field trips unless otherwise decided by the school team for safety reasons.

REPORT CARDS:

Report cards are given to Pallotta Educational Center students two times per year. The purpose of the report card is to replicate the public school experience, desensitize the students to the anxiety often associated with report cards, and to positively reinforce students for their efforts. Teachers base the grades primarily on students' efforts and behavior in school. Parent/teacher conferences and/or phone contact are scheduled within two weeks of report card day.

EXTENDED DAY ENRICHMENT PROGRAM:

The Extended Day Enrichment Program occurs Monday through Thursday from 3:30-4:30PM during the school year. This program provides a positive environment where the students participate in a variety of group activities. The activities are designed to teach group skills as well as help in building a positive self-image. Some examples of activities provided are cooking, sports, dance, arts and crafts, nature walks and structured games. The Extended Day Enrichment Program also includes clinically oriented treatment groups. Treatment groups are lead jointly by members of the Clinical, Education and Child Care Departments.

SUMMER SCHOOL:

The Pallotta Educational Center is a 220 day program that provides an eight week summer school session for all students assigned to the school program.

SUMMER HOURS are: Monday through Thursday 9AM-3:00PM and Fridays 9AM-NOON. The focus of the summer school session is to provide consistency and structure; and, to provide carry-over so that skills learned are not lost over the summer. The curriculum is developed on a thematic approach and provides for reading, math, science, social studies, art and library time. Recreational and socialization activities including swimming, hiking, softball, soccer, basketball, crafts and outside field trips are also provided.

ATTENDANCE:

Daily attendance is taken and turned in to the School Secretary by 9:30AM. If a child is absent the parent/guardian must call the school to report the absence.

BEHAVIOR SUPPORT

The Pallotta Educational Center provides an environment to help support each student's individual behavioral and social goals. Through a structured school wide behavior support system, a curriculum that focuses on individual skills as well as group activities and support services such as counseling (individual, family, group and crisis), resource room tutoring, occupational therapy, speech therapy, art, physical education, after school activities and enrichment courses as part of the daily program, we are able to provide a safe, consistent and predictable learning environment.

Respect and safety are the cornerstones of the foundation at the Pallotta Educational Center. We seek to create a positive, caring, community where everyone feels safe, everyone feels accepted and everyone learns.

Students work on five basic school rules and one individual target behavior throughout the day:

- **Ask for help when needed**
- **Be respectful of each other**
- **Stay in class**
- **Follow directions**
- **Respect property**
- **Individual Target Behavior**

Behavior Reports with comments are sent home daily

Individual Behavior Plans are also designed for each student. Plans are reviewed weekly by classroom staff and quarterly at scheduled treatment meetings; and, are designed to assess the student's skills (social skills, language skills, problem solving skills and emotional regulation).

Disruptive Behaviors

An essential component of our therapeutic program is to help students work through problematic behaviors. If a student's behavior escalates to a point where the behaviors are becoming disruptive, he/she may be asked to take time away from the group. Staff are trained in **Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI)** in order to help students with behavioral difficulties.

