

Skyline Academy Student Handbook

Table of Contents

- P2. Welcome to Skyline
- P3. Important Contact Numbers
- P4. The Basics (school schedules & daily routine)
- P5. Transportation Information
- P6. Attendance & Snow Day Info
- P7. Dress Code & Personal Items
- P8. Behavior Management
- P9. Educational Information
- P10. Therapy
- P11. Policy on Relationships Outside of School



Mental Health Center *of* Denver

mhcd.org |   

Dear Student and Parent/Guardian,

Welcome to Skyline Academy Day Treatment Program! Since 2001, the Mental Health Center of Denver has provided intensive Day Treatment services to children in Grades 1-8. We provide mental health treatment and educational services in a safe environment with the goal of helping students to be the best they can be and return to public school.

Skyline has three classrooms; the RhinoCats elementary classroom, the Panthers upper elementary classroom and the Middle Scholars middle school classroom. There is a maximum of 8 students in each classroom with a ratio of 4 students to 1 staff. And, in addition to classroom instruction we provide individual, group and family therapy as well as case management and crisis support. Our goal is to enrich the lives and minds of all the children and families we serve.

MHCD strives to provide programming that meets your student's therapeutic needs and the needs of your family. At Skyline Academy caregiver engagement is essential because our students are only as strong as their support systems. We firmly believe that our student succeed because of the support and engagement of their caregivers. What happens outside of school is just as important as what our students learn during the day. For this reason, we ask that you **communicate, collaborate, participate and celebrate** all the successes we will experience together along the way.

Welcome to our team and we are thrilled to have your student and your family join us on this journey.

This handbook provides necessary information regarding our expectations of student and caregiver participation, responsibilities and what you can expect from us. If you have additional questions, please feel free to contact any Skyline Academy Day Treatment staff member.

Again, welcome to our program and we look forward to working with you!

Sincerely,

The Skyline Team



Day Treatment Team

Dahlia Campus Front Desk		303-300-6500
Day Treatment Fax		303-300-6326

Sibyl Graham, MA, LCSW*	Program Manager	303-300-6257
Tara Butler, MA*	Special Education Director	303-300-6244
Hylar Cozart, BA*	Unit Manager	303-300-6253

****Please contact one of us if your student will be absent or tardy.***

Danielle Groves, MA, LCSW	Child & Family Therapist	303-300-6268
Hillary Haspel, MS, LSW	Child & Family Therapist	303-300-6269
Teresa Hernandez	Clinical Case Manager	303-300-6267

John Rubano, BA	Special Education Teacher	303-300-6264
Matt Stacy, MA	Special Education Teacher	303-300-6250
Mary Louise Carrick, BA	Special Education Teacher	303-300-6296

Danny Wilson, BA	Mental Health Therapist	303-300-6254
Maury Holliman, BA	Mental Health Therapist	303-300-6255
Chrissy Andreson, BA	Mental Health Therapist	303-300-6294
Nathan Sperry, BA	Mental Health Therapist	303-300-6256
Shannon Cahill, LCSW	Mental Health Therapist	303-300-6242

Karla Recinos	Medical Assistant at Dahlia	303-300-6176
Dr. Yvette Buxton	Child & Family Psychiatrist	303-300-6174
Dr. Casey Wolf	Child & Family Psychiatrist	303-300-6172

Other MHCD Services

Access Services	To Set Up New Services	303-504-7900
MHCD Walk In Center	24/7 Walk In Crisis Support 4353 E. Colfax Ave, Denver, 80220	

Colorado Crisis Services	24/7 Phone Crisis Support Text "TALK" to 38255	1-844-493-TALK
--------------------------	---	----------------

Other Important Numbers

Kids Wheels**	Transportation	720-225-8495
---------------	----------------	--------------

*****If your student will not ride the van in the morning and/or afternoon please call or text Kids Wheels AND call Skyline to report the absence.***

The School Week

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday HALF DAY	Thursday	Friday
8:30am – 3:30pm	8:30am – 3:30pm	8:30am – 1:30pm	8:30am – 3:30pm	8:30am – 3:30pm

Daily Routines

	8:20am	Arrival
1st	8:20-8:50 A.M.	Combined Social Skills
2nd	8:50-9:15 A.M.	Check-In + Breakfast
3rd	9:15-10:00 A.M.	Reading
4th	10:00-11:00 A.M.	Writing
5th	11:00-11:45	Math
6th	11:45-12:10	Physical Education 1
7th	12:10-1:00 P.M.	History
	1:00-1:40 P.M.	Lunch/P.E. 2
8th	1:40-2:40 P.M.	Science
9th	2:40-3:20 P.M.	Computers/I-Ready
10th	3:20-3:30 P.M.	Check Out/Dismissal

Transportation Details – Kids Wheels

Our transportation provider for students is Kids Wheels, LLC. Required information including your child's name, age and your family's phone number and address will be submitted to Kids Wheels to set up your student's ride to and from school.

Kids Wheels

720-225-8495

If your student will not ride the van in the morning and/or afternoon, please call or text Kids Wheels AND call Skyline to report the absence.

Transportation Rules and Regulations:

1. Please cancel your child's ride as soon as you know your child will not be able to attend a school on any day. Please call MHCD at 303-300-6244 AND Kids Wheels at 303-225-8495 for the child to be excused.
2. All children must wear seat belts on always while in Kids Wheels' vehicles per Colorado law.
3. Kids Wheels' drivers will pull over and contact police if a child is behaving in a manner that is verbally or physically unsafe on the van.
4. Kids Wheels can refuse services if the student's behavior becomes a safety risk. In this case, caregivers are then responsible for arranging or providing alternate transportation to/from Skyline. Students that are suspended from the van will NOT be excused from school.
5. If your child's behavior becomes a safety risk during the school day or they refuse to ride the van home you as the guardian will be responsible for picking your child up at Skyline within 30 minutes of the first call.
6. It is Kids Wheels policy that if there are 2 no call/noshow that service will be suspended for up to 3 days.
7. If there is not an adult present to greet your student or if they do not have a key to let themselves into your residence Kids Wheels will attempt to contact you, but if they are unable to reach a caregiver they may take the student to the nearest police station.

Transportation for Appointments at Skyline

If you need support in finding transportation to Skyline Academy for therapy appointments, medical appointments, IEP meetings or for any other reason we can help! We will connect you with our Clinical Case Manager who can help with setting up alternate transit through Medicaid.

We need your participation so that we can have the most success so, please communicate with your team if transportation is a concern or a barrier to engaging in our program for you or your student.

Attendance

Students learn best when they are in school and we have high expectations for attendance at Skyline.

Unexcused Absences:

Examples of unexcused absences include:

- Refusing to come to school
- Missing the van (please bring your student to school if they accidentally miss the van)
- Oversleeping or being “too tired”

We understand that many of our students have mental health challenges that may make it difficult to come to school. These challenges are exactly why we are here! So that we can help work through these difficulties in a safe and supportive way, PLEASE MAKE SURE to get your student to school.

*Per Colorado law, a child is considered “habitually **truant**” when a child has four unexcused absences in one month or ten unexcused absences in any school year. When this occurs, Skyline will submit a letter to Colorado Department of Education (CDE) and, CDE and Denver Public Schools (DPS) will determine what action they will take up to and including court involvement.

Excused Absences

Excused absences require approval by both the guardian and the school. Documentation of the absence from the caregiver and/or healthcare provider may be required to be excused.

If your child has an undiagnosed rash, diarrhea, high fever or vomiting, please keep him/her home. In general, students are expected to remain home until they have been symptom-free for 24 hours.

As a reminder, **parents must contact transportation AND the school** when their child is absent. If absences are not prearranged with transportation it is possible that services will be discontinued.

Snow Days & Delays

Skyline Academy does not have delays, but it is possible that the vans will run late due to conditions and traffic. Please have your student ready at their usual pick up time and call Kids Wheels with any questions at 720-225-8495.

If Denver Public Schools or MHCD close for the day, Skyline Academy will be closed.

During winter storms, be sure to check 9News for MHCD and DPS closure info.

MHCD Snow Line: 303.756.SNOW (7669)

Student Dress Code

Student dress and appearance is essential to promote a safe learning environment, expectations for appropriate dress are as follows:

- Clothing referring to gangs, sex, drugs, alcohol or other inappropriate items are not allowed.
- Spikes, studs, chains or any items of clothing that could be dangerous are not allowed.
- Clothing may not be ripped or torn anywhere above the knee.
- Shorts and/or skirts must be at least fingertip length.
- No sunglasses or hats are to be worn in the building.
- Students should not carry extra clothing, purses or backpacks to program.

Students wearing inappropriate clothing may be asked to change into clothing provided by the program, to obtain something more acceptable from home, or to cover the offending material.

Personal Items

There is no need and we ask that students DO NOT bring any personal items to school. This is for the safety of student property as well as the safety of our school. We have everything that students will need including school supplies, hygiene items, extra coats/layers or first aid items.

Please be sure that your student leaves all items at home, specifically NO:

- Phones
- Electronics
- Toys, stuffed animals or “coping tools”
- Sharp objects
- Cigarettes, lighters, matches or tobacco
- Drugs or drug paraphernalia
- Food
- Unauthorized medications (over the counter medications such as cough medicine or pain relievers)

If your student brings items to school they will be confiscated and returned to parent/guardian the next time they come to Skyline Academy.

Law enforcement will be notified if a student possesses drugs or weapons and charges may ensue.

Behavior Management

At Skyline Academy we understand that most of our student struggle with challenging behaviors and are here to help. We support students in developing pro-social behaviors that will help them be successful when they return to public school.

It is our hope that we turn difficult situations, behaviors and crisis into an opportunity for growth. To accomplish this we combine positive reinforcement, a strengths-based level system, age-appropriate expectations, logical consequences and corrective interventions. Responses to challenging behaviors are individualized based on the severity of the situation. However, below are basic expectations at Skyline Academy.

Behavioral Expectations:

To ensure a safe and supportive environment, students are expected to:

- Use school appropriate language (no cursing, hate speech or offensive language)
- Refrain from physical contact of any kind (no handshakes, high fives, hitting or other contact)
- Respect the physical safety of others (no fighting, posturing or intimidation)
- Respect school property (destruction of property will not be tolerated)
- Remain in class or use other “time out” spaces available, no wandering the halls or leaving grounds
- No bullying

Physical Restraint

Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI) is a behavior management program. Our staff are trained and certified in TCI’s method. This is to provide the best possible care and safeguard the welfare, safety, and security for your student. The goal of the TCI system is to assist Skyline staff in preventing crises and managing acute physical behaviors. The goal of TCI is also to reduce potential and actual injury to young people and staff.

If a student demonstrates behavior that poses an imminent danger to themselves or others and they are unable to de-escalate with lower level interventions, they may be physically restrained by staff.

If you have further questions about TCI methods, please speak with your clinician or a manager.

Meetings/Education

Once a student is accepted into Skyline Academy, we will work with Denver Public Schools (DPS) on the student's IEP. Skyline Academy will transfer the student to our school and inform the home school of the change, you do not need to do so yourself.

Skyline Academy is considered a significant change of placement from the public-school setting, and due to this the IEP team will need to update the current IEP within 30 days of the student starting at Skyline. At this point the IEP team will look at goals, strengths, needs and change the school setting to reflect the current placement and updates.

While at Skyline your student's IEP team will consist of the student's Special Education Teacher, the student's therapist, the Special Education Director, a representative from Denver Public School's Out of District office, and the parent/guardian. The parent/guardian is welcome to invite anyone else they may feel is relevant to the meeting, and this person can be included via invite if Skyline is informed.

Following the 30-Day Change of Placement meeting, the IEP will be updated annually by the IEP team. A parent, or any member of the IEP team is welcome to request an IEP meeting at any point during the year outside the scheduled annual meeting time. Please contact your student's teacher or the Special Education Director to request a meeting so that we can arrange for district representation as well.

Tri-Annual reports and meetings can also be held while at Skyline, and Skyline Academy will work to ensure all necessary or needed testing is completed with our educational staff, our psychiatric department and Denver Public Schools.

Progress reports on IEP goals will be sent home quarterly, and report cards with class grades will be sent home every semester.

Parents/guardians and students will participate in monthly staffing meetings with their treatment team to ensure treatment goals are being addressed. Teachers and/or other educational staff may join these meetings to help address classroom goals and behaviors.

Transition Planning

Upon transitioning out of Skyline Academy, our team will work closely with Denver Public Schools to share the student's successes in academic and behavioral goals. The Skyline staff will recommend a placement setting, but it is up to Denver Public Schools to determine the school that has availability and the best fitting program.

Whenever possible, Denver Public Schools does try to transition students back to their home school to provide a familiar school and staff. Parent/guardians are always welcome to participate in the Denver Public School's Choice program to choose a different school.

Therapy

Skyline Academy Day Treatment is a therapeutic intervention aimed at supporting students with mental health challenges and help to resolve the resulting difficulty with behaviors and academics.

Therapy is an extremely important part of our program. Students at Skyline will participate in at least 1 hour per week of individual therapy, 1 hour per week of family therapy and at least 2 hours per week of group therapy. We also provide opportunities for non-traditional therapies such as music, art, outdoor and animal-assisted therapy. Students will have an assigned therapist while they are at Skyline Academy, but all members of our team have a background in mental health and are here to support students be their best in every way.

Family Therapy and Caregiver Participation

While your student is enrolled at Skyline Academy it is the caregiver's responsibility and a program requirement, to:

1. Participate in weekly family therapy
2. Attend monthly team meetings and IEP meetings as needed
3. Attend medical provider appointments
4. Support my student in completion of daily paperwork and homework as assigned
5. Cancel any appointments at least 24 hours in advance unless it's an emergency

Please work with our team to problem solve any barriers that will make this difficult as we know life is busy, but the more involved the student's support system is the more success we will have.



Peer Relationships

While we cannot prohibit, we highly discourage that students have contact with one another outside of school. We fully understand the need for peer relationships and work hard at school to encourage our students to build the skills to have healthy and respectful relationships with their student peers.

However, we have found that most often when students interact outside of school (via the internet, phone, or in person) it has a negative impact on treatment. While students are here we ask them to focus on themselves so that they can build the skills needed to get back to public school. We highly encourage peer relationships with peers not in our day treatment program as having friends is of course a great part of being a kid. Great ways to encourage this are to enroll your student in after-school activities such as sports, Boys & Girls Club, recreation programs, music, art or any other activity that interests them. If you need support finding programs we can connect you with our Case Manager who has many resources for free programs throughout the Denver area.

We ask for caregiver support in ensuring that students refrain from having relationships outside of Skyline so that we can do our best work. We appreciate your help with this.