Board Network Policies

Mission Statement

PLA's mission is to ensure that all scholars meet high academic and social standards, and thrive as leaders at home, in their communities, and in the world.

Guiding Principles of all PLA Network Schools

- PLA has adopted a scholar-focused, learning-oriented environment.
- PLA will focus on the academic education of scholars within a safe environment.
- PLA learning environment will be relevant and engaging.
- PLA will focus on assisting scholars in developing essential skills that include: cooperation, teamwork, research, problem solving, ability to work independently, and communication using technology effectively.
- PLA is committed to accountability and having meaningful metrics of success that demonstrate continuous improvement.
- PLA will provide scholars with differentiated, personalized, rigorous opportunities for learning with an emphasis on developing 21st Century skills.
- PLA will empower scholars to shape and manage their future by encouraging prudent and intellectual risk-taking.
- PLA will work to develop processes to become knowledgeable of stakeholders' needs and expectations.
- PLA will support parents/guardians and the community in their roles in the character education, moral education, and social education of all scholars.
- PLA will provide a variety of experiences to aid in the development of a total person, including physical, recreational, civic, and social activities.

PLA established policies are meant to serve as a source of information and guidance, and to be interpreted under the authority and restrictions mandated by our federal, state and local regulatory agencies.

The PLA Board welcomes suggestions from its stakeholders for ongoing policy development.

Network Policies

EEO Statement

The PLA Network does not discriminate on the basis of age, race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, disability or national origin in any employment and/or educational opportunity. No person shall be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or otherwise subjected to unlawful discrimination in any program or activity for which the PLA Network Board is responsible or for which it receives financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Education. The PLA Network values diversity and the benefits of different perspectives and backgrounds.

Complaints of Discrimination should be directed to humanresources@phalenacademies.org.

Enrollment Policy

The PLA Network welcomes scholars entering grades K-12. All interested scholars must complete an application. An adult who is a non-custodial parent or does not have legal guardianship and wishes to enroll a scholar must contact the School Enrollment Coordinator or designee for assistance to complete the enrollment process.

Parents/Guardians must provide the following documents to the school during the enrollment process:

- Proof of Indiana residency
- Birth certificate
- Court documents specifying parental rights, responsibilities or custody (if appropriate)
- Immunization Records

PLA school administrators shall communicate with the Parent/Guardian about missing records and what records are needed to complete the enrollment process.

General School Records Policy

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) prohibit schools from disclosing personally identifiable information ("PII") from scholars' education records without the consent of a parent or eligible scholar. An eligible scholar is a scholar who has reached the age of eighteen (18).

The Parent/Guardian or eligible scholars have the right to inspect and review the scholar's records and request that PLA correct records which they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If PLA refuses to amend the record as requested by the Parent/Guardian or eligible scholar, PLA will notify the Parent/Guardian or eligible scholar of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. PLA must obtain written permission from the Parent/Guardian or eligible scholar in order to release any information from the scholar's record. PLA may disclose records without consent under the following conditions.

- School officials with legitimate educational interest
- Other schools to which a scholar is transferring
- Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes

- Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a scholar
- Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school
- Accrediting organizations
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena
- Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies
- State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law

PLA may also disclose, without consent, information designated as "directory information", which includes a scholar's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors, awards, dates of attendance, scholar photos, and scholar work displayed at the discretion of the teacher. School administrators shall work with families to ensure that the FERPA consent form is reviewed and sign by the Parent/Guardian.

The Parent/Guardian has the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the School Corporation to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the office that administers FERPA is:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
600 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20202-4605

Grievance Policy

PLA has adopted specific policies and procedures to address harassment (Title IX), discrimination (Title IV) and bullying (Title II) concerns in its school environment. The specific grievance procedures for these issues can be found in the school handbook. If a complaint of this nature is made to a staff member, the staff member must follow the guidelines and procedures set forth in the aforementioned policies.

Regarding all other issues of concern, PLA's faculty and administration shall make every effort to work with Parents/Guardians and scholars in regard to discipline, grades, school operations or procedures. PLA believes in open door communication within its school community as this facilitates problem solving and conflict resolution. If a scholar, parent, or other member of the school community wishes to raise a concern regarding a school policy, practice, or alleged misconduct by a scholar or staff member, or any other concern they should follow the process noted below.

- In most cases, issues can be resolved when Parents/Guardians or scholars speak to the person who is directly responsible for decisions that have been made concerning a scholar. Generally, this is the scholar's teacher. If the teacher cannot resolve the issue, he or she will direct you to the appropriate contact for assistance.
- If there is no resolution after the discussion or meeting with the teacher, the matter should be taken to the School Leader/Principal. If the issue or concern is about a teacher or staff member, the initial contact should be with the School Leader/Principal or the Director of Academics.
- If the matter is not resolved by the teacher, School Leader or the Director of Academics, the scholar or responsible adult may contact the PLA Human Resources Department to initiate a

formal investigation of the matter. If the complaint or grievance is against the School Leader/Principal or Director of Academics, the matter should be initiated with the Human Resources Department.

A. Formal Investigations

1. Any scholar, Parent/Guardian or school community member may contact the school appointed Deputy Title Coordinator to lodge a formal complaint or grievance. The complaint should include contact information and as much detail about the issue as possible.
2. The school appointed Deputy Title Coordinator may interview witnesses, obtain written statements, and/or request the interested parties to present evidence. The investigator may provide the Parents/Guardians of the scholar who are parties to an investigation with information about the investigation to the extent permitted by law.
3. Investigations will be completed with written findings submitted to the Regional Director within 30 school days after receiving the formal complaint.
4. A complaint may be made anonymously; however, disciplinary action will not be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.
5. The investigative report should include the findings of the investigator and should include recommended resolution options. The Decisionmaker should affirm or reject the findings and recommendations of the investigator. If additional action is deemed necessary, the Decisionmaker will notify Legal Counsel, the CEO or the Board of Directors.
6. If circumstances prevent the investigation from being completed within 30 days, the investigator must notify the interested parties and present the reason(s) for the delay and set a new date for completion of the investigation.

B. Resolution

Once an investigation is completed, the investigator's determination will be reviewed by a final the Decisionmaker. The Decisionmaker will also issue a written determination summarizing the standard of evidence, the allegations, the procedural steps taken, and the findings of fact. The Decisionmaker will also issue a statement explaining his/her rationale for each allegation and their recommended discipline and remedies.

C. Board of Directors

The Legal Department will maintain a record of reports received under this policy and shall provide a report to the Board of Directors on an annual basis summarizing the issues addressed and actions taken in response. If a matter is reported to the Department of Child Services or the local law enforcement agency, the Board President will be notified immediately of the report. An individual who (i) submits a report in accordance with this policy or (ii) is otherwise affected by the resolution of an issue, and is not satisfied with the resolution provided, may make a written request to the Board of Directors for reconsideration of the matter. The request should identify the specific reasons why reconsideration is sought. The Board of Directors (or at the discretion of the Board president, a committee of the board) may, in its sole discretion, hold a meeting to gather and consider such information as it deems appropriate to determine whether to grant the request for reconsideration. If appropriate under the Indiana Open Door Law, the Board or committee may elect to hold any such meeting in executive session.

The McKinney-Vento Act

The McKinney-Vento Act protects scholars from discrimination based on their lack of permanent residence. Scholars who meet the federal definition of "homeless" shall be provided the same opportunities and services as all other scholars.

Scholars experiencing homelessness will be provided services comparable to other scholars including transportation services, free meals under the school nutrition programs, limited English proficiency class, gifted and talented programs, vocational and technical education programs and special education services based on a scholar's eligibility.

Scholars experiencing homelessness will not be stigmatized or segregated based on their status as homeless or be denied enrollment based on a lack of proof of residency.

Neglect/Child Abuse

The PLA Network school personnel are mandated reporters of suspected abuse and/or neglect. Mandated reporters are required to report suspected child abuse or neglect immediately when they have reasonable cause to believe that a child who is 17 years of age or younger and known to them in a professional or official capacity has been harmed or is in danger of being harmed (physically, sexually, or through neglect) and that a caregiver either committed the harm or should have taken steps to prevent the child from harm.

Board Meetings

A Board of Directors governs PLA charter schools. All Board of Directors meetings are subject to Indiana's Open Door Law. Information regarding upcoming Board meetings is posted in the school's website to be shared with the community. To maintain transparency and keep our families and the community informed, Board of Director meeting minutes are also posted on the school's website within 48 hours of the meeting. The Board of Directors approves and authorizes all items in the school handbook.

Promotion and Retention Policy

Scholars are expected to advance one grade level each year unless retention or accelerated promotion is in the best interest of the scholar. Placement of High School scholars shall be based upon progress and credits earned toward graduation.

If a decision is made to retain a scholar, the school will review the scholar's standardized test scores, grades and school assessments to determine the scholar's academic weaknesses. This will assist the school in developing the appropriate academic support for the scholar. The school will allocate resources for scholars who fail to progress, prioritizing scholars who will be retained if progress is not achieved. Scholars who are retained will be provided with intensive interventions to ameliorate the scholar's specific deficiency and prepare the scholar for promotion to the next grade.

Teachers and school administrators will maintain constant communication with Parents/Guardians regarding their scholar's academic progress.

Title IX Policy

The PLA Network strives to ensure that all PLA scholars and employees are educated and work in a positive and productive environment free from discrimination, including sexual harassment and sexual violence.

This policy statement is codified in Title IX, which prohibits sex discrimination in any federally funded educational program. This prohibition applies to all institutions receiving certain federal funds, including public school districts and publicly funded charter schools, and includes all educational experiences the network offers, including academics, athletics, and extracurricular activities.
Title IX is most often associated with inequity in athletics; however more recently, the law has been applied to sex discrimination, which includes sexual harassment and sexual violence.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is unwelcome sexual conduct that creates an intimidating, hostile, or abusive environment that is so severe or pervasive it prevents a scholar from fully participating in an educational program or activity. Harassment includes unwanted verbal or written sexual statements, graffiti, name-calling, and sexual advances in person, via cell phones or online. There does not need to be an intent to harm. The activity or behavior does not need to be directed at a specific person. Male and female scholars may be subject to sexual harassment. In addition, harassment based on gender stereotypes is sexual harassment.

- Sexual Harassment also includes sexual violence, which is defined as physical sexual acts perpetrated against a person's will or where a person is incapable of giving consent due to the victim's use of drugs or alcohol. An individual may also be unable to consent due to an intellectual or other disability. Sexual violence includes rape, sexual assault, sexual battery, and sexual coercion.

PLA Network Title IX Obligations

Any Network school that knows or reasonably should have known about sexual harassment or sexual violence that creates a hostile environment, must take immediate action to end the harassment, prevent its recurrence, and remediate its effects, regardless of whether a scholar complains.

- A school is considered to have actual knowledge of sexual harassment or the allegations of sexual harassment when reported to the Title IX Coordinator, any official with authority to act on behalf of the school, or a teacher when the allegations involve scholar on scholar harassment.

Title IX Coordinator

The Network has appointed Michelle Reeves as the Network Title IX Coordinator. The Title IX Network Coordinator is responsible for the Network's Title IX compliance. The coordinator is trained in Title IX compliance requirements and other applicable federal and state laws.

Deputy Title IX Coordinator

Every school in the network shall identify a Deputy Title IX Coordinator for their campus. The Deputy Title IX Coordinator is responsible for tracking and reporting to the Title IX Coordinator all incidents of sexual misconduct on their respective campus and works with the Title IX Coordinator to ensure that the appropriate designated school officials are involved in investigating and resolving complaints according to the Network's applicable policies and procedures.

Responsible Employee

The Network has also designated every employee and staff member in every Network school a "Responsible Employee". A responsible employee is an employee who has the authority to redress, or a duty to report harassment, incidents of sexual violence, or one who scholars reasonably believe have the authority or duty.

The Title IX Coordinator works with the Deputy Title IX Coordinator and the Responsible Employee to create a structure of documentation and reporting by these designated individuals to ensure that all Title IX issues in the Network are addressed and resolved.

Title IX Grievance/Reporting Procedures

A complaint/grievance may be filed by a scholar, their parent/guardian or an employee via email, regular mail, or handed in person. Once filed, the matter will be assigned to the Title IX Coordinator for investigation (and/or a subsequent hearing).

Retaliation

Title IX also prohibits retaliation against scholars or employees who report sexual harassment. The retaliation prohibition includes not only the school and Network but also any scholars or employees accused of harassment. Further, a scholar can prevail on a claim, or OCR may find Title IX violations, if the Network did not prevent retaliation even if there was no finding of harassment in the initial reported incident.

Honor Code Policy

PLA expects academic honesty to be a core value for all its scholars, Parents/Guardians, and staff. By making the choice to enroll in PLA, our scholars and their Parents/Guardians have taken charge of their education and demonstrated a genuine desire to fulfill their academic potential.

Cheating, plagiarizing and other acts of academic dishonesty are directly counter to the principles of academic excellence and this policy. Academic dishonesty harms those scholars who engage in such activities because they cheat themselves of the opportunity to fully learn from academic events and develop their own abilities and skills.

The PLA Honor Code embodies a spirit of mutual trust and intellectual honesty and serves as a commitment to academic excellence. All scholars and Parents/Guardians must sign the school's Honor Code agreement upon enrollment.

Academic Integrity Policy

All submitted coursework is assumed to have been completed only by the individual scholar. Scholars are responsible for observing standards on plagiarism, cheating and properly crediting all sources used during the composition of work.

Cheating

Cheating is the use of another person's work to gain an unfair advantage. Cheating occurs when a scholar knowingly submits the coursework or an assessment of another individual and claims it as their own original work. Examples of cheating include but are not limited to the following:

- Copying a classmate's work; this may be an answer to an essay question, any written assignment or exam.
- Copying from course feedback provided by another school, person, website, and/or platform.
- Copying answers to exams found in other sources, such as entering the question into a search engine and copying the response found online.
- Collaboration between two scholars, which results in submitting identical answers on such assignments.
- Using online translators for assignments in language courses.
- A scholar using books or other technological devices for assistance during assessments is considered cheating unless explicitly allowed by the teacher. *These actions also mask a scholar's need for additional help and academic interventions, which can ultimately lead to a significant academic deficit.*
- Hints and assistance with answers from others while taking an assessment or test may be considered cheating. *These actions also mask a scholar's need for additional help and academic interventions, which can ultimately lead to a significant academic deficit.*
- Submitting work that is not one's own.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is using an author's work, without acknowledging the source of the material. Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to the following:

- Quoting work from an outside source, without proper citations and attribution.
- Improper paraphrasing of another person's work, maintaining the original text with little alteration or re-wording and/ or not citing the source.
- Copying information from a book, play, speech, article, website or other written or spoken work without proper citation.
- Plagiarism may occur unknowingly.

It is important to understand that simply acknowledging a source through quotation marks or comments is not the same as citing it.

Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy

PLA has determined that a safe and civil environment in school is necessary for scholars to learn and to achieve high academic standards. To protect the rights of all scholars and groups, PLA prohibits acts of bullying, harassment, and other forms of aggression and violence. Bullying or harassment, like other forms of aggressive and violent behaviors, interferes with both a school's ability to educate its scholars and a scholar's ability to learn.

School administrators, faculty, staff and volunteers shouldn't tolerate bullying and harassment and must demonstrate behavior that is respectful and civil, even when disciplining, in order to provide positive examples for scholar behavior.

Bullying is described as aggressive behaviors that involve unwanted negative actions that are repeated over time and involve an imbalance of power. Specifically, it is any gesture or written, verbal, graphic, or physical act (including electronically transmitted acts – i.e., cyberbullying, through the use of internet, cell phone, computer, or wireless handheld device, currently in use or later developed) and used by scholars that is reasonably perceived as being dehumanizing, intimidating, hostile, humiliating, threatening, or otherwise likely to evoke fear of physical harm or emotional distress and may be motivated either by bias or prejudice based upon any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression; or a mental, physical, or sensory disability or impairment; or by any other distinguishing characteristic, or is based upon association with another person who has or is perceived to have any distinguishing characteristic.

Bullying and harassment also include forms of retaliation against individuals who report or cooperate in an investigation under this policy. Such behaviors are bullying or harassment whether they take place on or off school property, at any school-sponsored function, or in a school vehicle or at any time or place where a child's imminent safety or overall well-being may be at issue.

Bullying or harassment, whether on-campus or off-campus, that results in a potentially material or substantial disruption of the school learning environment for one or more scholars and/or the day-to-day operations of any school or school program are covered by the Bullying policy.

Discipline for Bullying

The PLA School Leader shall utilize disciplinary procedures that ensure both the appropriate consequences and remedial responses for scholars or staff who commit one or more acts of bullying and are consistent with Scholar and staff disciplinary policies. Appropriate scholar consequences and remedial actions are those that are graded according to the severity of the offenses and consider the developmental ages of the scholars, offenders and scholars' histories of inappropriate behaviors, per the scholar discipline policy, relationship between the parties involved, and context in which the alleged incident occurred.

- **Consequences** and appropriate remedial actions for a scholar or staff member who engages in one or more acts of bullying may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion, in the case of a scholar, or suspension or termination in the case of an employee, as set forth in the code of scholar conduct or employee handbook. School employees will also be held accountable for bullying or harassing behavior directed toward school employees, volunteers, parents, or scholars.
- **Remedial measures** should be designed to correct the problem behavior, prevent another occurrence of the behavior, and protect the victim of the act. Effective discipline should employ a school-wide approach to address bullying offenses and the associated consequences.

Investigations

- **Investigator** - The School Leader shall be responsible for investigating or designating a member of his/her staff to receive all bullying complaints.
- **Complaints -** All PLA employees, volunteers and contracted service providers who have contact with scholars are required to verbally report alleged violations to the school's Principal (or Principal's designee) on the same day that an incident was witnessed or reliable information regarding the occurrence of an incident was received. A written report of the incident shall also be submitted within one (1) school day of submitting the verbal report. Scholars and Parents/Guardians are also encouraged to submit a written report of alleged violations to the Principal (or Principal's designee) on the same day that an incident was witnessed or reliable information regarding the occurrence of an incident was received. Such a report may be made anonymously. Please note that formal action for violations may not be taken solely based on an anonymous report.
- **Time Frame** - The Principal (or Principal's designee) shall conduct a prompt, thorough, and complete investigation of each alleged incident. The investigation is to be completed within five (5) school days after a report or complaint is made. The Principal shall submit a written report to the President of the PLA Network Board within ten (10) school days of the completion of the investigation.
- **Findings** - The Parents/Guardians of the scholar involved shall receive written notice from the school on the outcome of the investigation. The Principal shall provide the Parents/Guardians of the scholar who are parties to the investigation with information about the investigation, in accordance with Federal and State law and regulation. The information to be provided to Parents/Guardians includes the nature of the investigation, whether the corporation found

evidence of bullying, and whether consequences were imposed or services provided to address the bullying incident if the evidence of bullying was substantiated. This information is to be provided in compliance with current privacy laws and regulations.

Bullying Data

All reports or instances of bullying and/or harassment must be recorded by the school for annual data review. The data collected should include the frequency of verbal bullying, physical bullying, social/relational bullying and electronic or written communication bullying.

Retaliation

PLA prohibits reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of bullying or harassment or cooperates in an investigation. The consequences and appropriate remedial action for a person who engages in reprisal or retaliation shall be determined by the administrator after consideration of the nature, severity, and circumstances of the act.

False Reporting

PLA prohibits any person from falsely accusing another as a means of bullying or harassment. The consequences and appropriate remedial action for a person found to have falsely accused another as a means of bullying or harassment may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion. Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a school employee found to have falsely accused another as a means of bullying or harassment shall be in accordance with Network policies.

Training

PLA shall provide annual training on this policy and bullying prevention and intervention instruction to all school employees, volunteers and contracted service providers who have direct and on-going contact with scholars.

PLA shall disseminate the anti-bullying policy and bullying prevention instruction to all scholars in grades K-12 each school year. It is expected that anti-bullying information will be part of a more comprehensive bully prevention effort communicated to the scholars throughout the school year, and that the age appropriate, research-based instruction for all scholars in grades K-12 be delivered by a school safety specialist, school counselor or other person with training and expertise in the area of bullying prevention and intervention.

Scholar Attendance Policy

PLA scholars are expected to be in attendance, whether attending onsite or virtually, during each of the approved 180 instructional school days indicated on the school calendar.

Required Instructional Hours

PLA Schools follow the state required 180-day of instruction school calendar. The yearly calendar is released in the spring prior to the beginning of the school year and can be found on the PLA website and in the Scholar/Parent Handbook.

Per Indiana law, schools must provide at least five (5) hours of instructional time for scholars in grades K-6, and at least six (6) hours of instructional time for scholars in grades 7-12 in a day to meet the daily number of instructional hours required. PLA scholars are expected to meet the required hours of attendance by attending onsite, completing their online coursework, or completing offline enrichment activities approved by the assigned teacher.

Excused Absences

If a scholar is unable to attend on a scheduled instructional day, the Parent/Guardian must communicate with school administrators to provide an explanation for the scholar's absence.

Scholars may be excused from school for any of the following reasons:

- Medical or Dental Appointments
- Illness or Injury
- Observance of a Religious Holiday
- Bereavement (Death of an Immediate Family Member)
- Court or Administrative Proceedings
- Unresolved Technical difficulties with the provided on-line platforms
- Quarantine due to COVID-19

Should a scholar accumulate five (5) consecutive excused absences, PLA Administrators may schedule a conference call with the Parents/Guardians to ensure the well-being of the scholar and provide support if needed. Without verification of the scholar's absence by the Parent/Guardian, the scholar's absence will be documented as Unexcused.

Exempt Absences

Exempt absences are those for which Indiana law requires the school to count the scholar as present, including:

- Serving as a page or honoree of the General Assembly (IC 20-33-2-14)
- Serving on the precinct election board or as a helper to a political candidate or party on the day of a municipal, primary or general election (IC 20-33-2-15)
- When subpoenaed to testify in court (IC 20-33-2-16)
- Serving with the National Guard for no more than 10 days (IC 20-33-2-17)
- Serving with the Civil Air Patrol for up to 5 days (IC 20-33-2-17.2)
- The scholar or a member of the scholar's household exhibits or participates in the Indiana State Fair for educational purposes (IC 20-33-2-17.7)
- Educationally related non-classroom activities (IC 20-33-2-17.5), including School sponsored field trips, subject to the following qualifications:
    - Scholars must be in good standing academically and with regard to attendance
    - Trip Permission Form must be completed
    - Attendance must be logged as outlined above
    - Scholars must make up all assignments from the missed day(s)

Unexcused Absences

If a scholar is not in attendance during a scheduled instructional day, and does not submit a legitimate excuse, an unexcused absence will be recorded for that day. Unexcused absences will impact a scholar's attendance record.

Reporting Absences

The Parent/Guardian shall be advised to communicate with the school on the day the scholar is absent to provide a reason for the absence. The Parent/Guardian will be contacted by the school via telephone to check on absences not reported. Parents will be informed promptly of any irregularity in attendance. The absence will be regarded as unexcused until the school is provided with a reason for the absence.

Truancy

A scholar shall be considered truant each day or part of the day that the scholar is absent. An absence is defined as not present in class any time beyond the tardiness limit. Scholars who are absent from school without the permission of school officials will be recorded as truant per Indiana State law.

Truancy is defined as:

- A scholar who has ten (10) or more absences within a school year without being excused or without being absent under a parental request
- A scholar who leaves school property or online classroom without following the established protocol and without Parent/Guardian or teacher approval
- A scholar's absence was fraudulently reported to the school

Scholar truancy will result in Parents/Guardians notification and disciplinary action as determined by School Leaders.

Habitual Absence

Under IC 20-33-2-25, the "Superintendent or an attendance officer having jurisdiction shall report a child who is habitually absent from school in violation of this chapter to an intake officer of the juvenile court or the department of child services. The intake officer or the department of child services shall proceed in accord with IC 31-30- through IC 31-40."

The Indiana Department of Education expects scholars to have no more than nine (9) school absences for the entire school year. Scholars who are absence nine (9) or less school days have met the department of Education's definition of 95% school attendance rate.

Dress Code Policy

PLA strives to create a safe and respectful learning environment, free from distractions. To this end, when attending class, in-person or virtual events, field trips, meetings, conferences, testing, or receiving educational support services, scholars are expected to dress in a manner that is supportive of learning and appropriate to the setting.

Clothing and accessories which interfere with, distract from, or further impede scholar learning are **not** allowed. This includes:

- Any articles that may reasonably be considered a safety hazard or potential weapon.
- Garments that expose the midriff or cleavage, see-through or mesh clothing, halter or tank tops, pajamas, sleep or loungewear.
- Shirts, blouses and dresses must cover the abdomen, cleavage, back and shoulders. Shirts/ tops must also cover the waistband of pants, shorts or skirts, with no midriff or cleavage visible while standing or while bending over.
- If wearing bike shorts (or something similar), then the top worn must fall to mid- thigh.
- If wearing leggings, then the top worn must fall to mid-thigh.
- Hats, caps and other head apparel should not be worn except for religious or medical purposes.

Clothing and accessories may **not** display any of the following:

- Racial or Ethnic slurs
- Hate Speech
- Gang Affiliation
- Vulgar, sexually explicit or suggestive language/ images
- Products such as alcohol, tobacco or illegal drugs

Shorts, skorts, skirts, and dresses must cover all undergarments even when a scholar is leaning over or sitting down. It is recommended that if skirts or dresses are shorter than 2 inches above the knee that shorts be worn underneath the garment. Baggy or sagging pants/ shorts are also not allowed.

PLA Administration reserves the right to determine what constitutes appropriate or inappropriate dress for the school setting.

Special Education Policy

PLA schools are committed to serving scholars with disabilities in accordance with state and federal laws.

Scholars with disabilities who qualify for Special Education Services will receive a free appropriate education (FAPE) based on the scholar's Individual Education Plan (IEP). PLA shall deliver special education programming and related services in the least restrictive environment, as determined by the scholar's IEP team.

School-age children who do not meet the eligibility criteria for an IEP may be eligible for special protections and for adaptations and accommodations in instruction facilities and activities under Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Educational Neglect Policy

PLA requires the Parent/Guardian to commit to the educational development of their scholar(s). Any person having the care of a dependent who knowingly or intentionally deprives the dependent of education as required by law commits a violation of Indiana Code 35-46-1-4.

If a Parent/Guardian neglects or refuses to send the scholar to school because of the child's illness or mental/physical incapacity, it is unlawful for the parent to fail or refuse to produce a certificate of the incapacity, if it is demanded. It is also unlawful for a parent to fail, neglect, or refuse to send a scholar to school unless the child is being provided with instruction equivalent to that given at school under Indiana Code 20-33-2-28.

State Testing Policy

All PLA scholars are required to participate in state testing.

Standardized Testing

In addition to state mandated testing, PLA schools utilize a variety of assessments to determine the academic needs of scholars. These assessments help the scholar and teacher understand how the scholar is learning and to measure the scholar's academic growth.

Technology and Acceptable Use Policy

The use of technology is a privilege and an important part of our school network. All scholars are expected to always be responsible representatives of the school, whether on or off campus and whether school is in or out of session. This expectation includes scholars' behavior in the electronic world. Parents/Guardians are responsible for supporting the school's standards when scholars use technology resources. The Responsible Use of Technology Policies are in effect as long as scholars have a valid network account and password, including during the summer months and/ or any time scholars use the school's technology resources.

- Scholars are responsible and liable for maintaining the confidentiality of their assigned passwords and access codes.
- Scholars agree not to disclose assigned passwords and access codes or allow others to use them or attempt to circumvent the school's security system.
- Scholars may not interfere with other users' ability to access PLA technology resources or disclose anyone's password or allow them to use another user's account(s).
- Scholars will use their email account for all academic work and only for legitimate and responsible communication between scholars and faculty.
- Harassing, discriminatory, or otherwise objectionable remarks and any other antisocial activities are prohibited on all communications, including email.
- Scholars may only access information that belongs to them, or that they have been given permission to use by the owner.
- Malicious use of the network to download, store, or develop programs that embarrass, harass, or are otherwise objectionable to other users is prohibited.

- Activities to infiltrate or overburden a computer or computing system and/ or damage computer software or a computing system are prohibited.
- Using technology resources to access, purchase, or download products or services that could subject the school's technology to viruses, malicious code, back doors, or other malware designed to harm technology resources are prohibited.
- Encryption of files is prohibited. Posting images, video, or audio of any scholar, visitor, staff member, faculty member, or administrator on the Internet without receiving permission from the individual(s) is prohibited.
- Scholars must not publicly post their personal contact information (last name, address, phone number, gaming identification, social media identifications, etc.) or personal messages from websites or blogs intended for personal gain or profit, as well as audio files or compressed video, any non-instructional files, or any material not approved by PLA administration.
- Using any recording device, including, but not limited to video and digital cameras or camera phones to record videos or take pictures to slander, bully or denigrate any scholar, visitor, staff member, faculty member, and/or administrator on or off campus at any time is prohibited.
- Unauthorized access to the school's website, platforms, systems, software, is strictly prohibited.
- Impersonation of a teacher/administrator/staff member in any manner is strictly prohibited.
- Impersonation of a teacher/administrator/staff member's moderation/hosting rights is strictly prohibited.

All classroom behavioral conduct guidelines must be strictly followed whether the scholar is attending class onsite or online. Failure to adhere to the Responsible Use of Technology guidelines or other misuse of a computer or the network may result in disciplinary action. Information relating to illegal or inappropriate activities must be reported to the Homeroom Teacher or School Principal.

Virtual Classroom Policy

PLA's online learning environment affords scholars the opportunity to attend class from anywhere. It is expected for scholars to:

- Present themselves in an appropriate manner on camera
- Be in a setting conducive to learning without distractions
- Refrain from using inappropriate/ offensive language
- Not share personal information and/or contact information unless specifically granted permission to do so from a teacher and/or a school administrator
- Not attempt to access school programs and/or platforms
- Not impersonate a teacher's platform rights as the classroom moderator/host
- Not post pictures, images, websites, or links with inappropriate or illegal content

PLA faculty shall remove any scholar from an online classroom session due to inappropriate or distracting behavior.

Social Media and Collaborative Tools Policy

PLA recognizes the benefits collaboration brings to education and may provide scholars with access to websites or tools that allow communication, collaboration, sharing and messaging. Scholars are expected to always conduct themselves appropriately. Violation of this policy may result in a warning, temporary, or permanently prohibited from utilizing the available tools depending on the severity of the infraction. The length of any temporary ban shall be at the sole discretion of the teacher and/or school principal. Instructional time will not be impacted.

Withdrawal Policy

PLA may withdraw any scholar who regularly fails to participate in class. Before a scholar is withdrawn, the Parent/Guardian will be provided notice of the decision to withdraw the scholar and will be given the opportunity to demonstrate that the scholar's failure to participate in class is due to an event that would be considered an excused absence under IC 20-33-2.

Withdrawal Exit Interview Policy

Under Indiana law IC 20-33-2-9, any scholar who is at least sixteen (16) years of age but is not yet eighteen(18) years of age may not withdraw from school prior to graduation unless:

- An exit interview is conducted with the scholar;
- The scholar's parent or guardian consents to the withdrawal;
- Withdrawal is due to financial hardship, and the scholar must be employed to support the scholar's family or a dependent;
- Illness;
- or a court order;

The high school principal or assistant principal may conduct the exit interview. If a scholar withdraws without consent from the principal, the scholar shall be considered a dropout.

Pursuant to Indiana law, the school shall notify the Bureau of Child Labor and Bureau of Motor Vehicles which shall revoke or refuse to issue an employment certificate and driver's license or learners' permit.

PLA Network Schools (IN)

School	Address	Contact Information	School Leader	Grade Level
George and Veronica Phalen Leadership Academy	2323 N. Illinois Street, Indianapolis, IN 46208	317-333-6980	Lawrence Courtney	K-8
HIAT	5861 Harrison St. Merrillville, IN 46410	219-359-1522	Tensia Johnson	K-8
James and Rosemary Phalen Leadership Academy MS & HS	4352 N. Mitthoeffer Road, Indianapolis, IN 46235	317-552-1600	Nicole Fama	7-12
PLA@48	3445 Central Ave, Indianapolis, IN 46205	317-226-4248	Alec Mayer	K-6
PLA@93	7151 E 35th Street, Indianapolis, IN 46222	317-226-4293	Jeff Hendricks	K-6
PLA@103	3920 Baker Drive, Indianapolis, IN 46235	317-226-4103	Matt Rimer	K-6
PLA Virtual	4352 N. Mitthoeffer Road, Indianapolis, IN 46235	888-655-0777	Dr. Tora Townsend	K-12