

**Putnam County Educational Service Center (ESC)
New Cleveland Building Handbook**

Putnam County Educational Service Center (ESC) Mission Statement:

The Putnam County Educational Service Center will meet the needs of all county residents now and in the future, by providing, coordinating, and supporting a wide range of best practices and quality programs.

Alternative Opportunity Center (AOC) Mission Statement:

The Alternative Opportunity Center will provide a positive educational environment that meets Putnam County student's academic, social, emotional, and vocational needs on an individual basis.

Program Objectives

1. Provide an alternative educational setting for certain students, including, but not limited to:
 - a. Students who would otherwise be eligible for an out-of-school suspension.
 - b. Students who have demonstrated in the past that they do not achieve the educational goals in the traditional classroom setting and are in danger of dropping out.
 - c. Students who would benefit from an intensive or specialized educational program in order to complete graduation requirements.
2. Provide an educational setting, which enables students to:
 - a. Complete current assignments or earn credits for graduation.
 - b. Work on basic study and social skills.
 - c. Identify negative behaviors that have hindered success in the traditional classroom and design strategies to change these behaviors.
3. Provide an educational setting which requires greater parental involvement in:
 - a. Assessing the current educational status of the student in terms of graduation requirements.
 - b. Establishing short-term and long-term goals.
 - c. Addressing negative behaviors that hinder their child's performance.
4. Eliminate or reduce out-of-school suspensions.
5. Increase attendance rates.
6. Increase graduation rates.
7. Increase parent involvement.
8. Improve OGT scores.
9. Provide a safe environment in which the student is free from violence.

Discipline

Students are responsible for their own actions! All discipline will be handled on an **individual basis** when the need arises. The main goal in our school is education. Everyone should have an equal opportunity to work toward achieving this goal. Anyone who distracts or prevents others from reaching this goal will receive disciplinary action. Whatever steps are necessary to correct the problem will be taken. This includes parent conferences, students staying after school, in-school, out-of-school suspension, expulsion, and emergency removal. **The New Cleveland Building Staff reserves the right to exercise discretion in the administration of all disciplinary action.** Disciplinary actions are based on the philosophy of progression. Therefore, as disciplinary referrals mount, more severe penalties will be progressively implemented. The intent of this philosophy is to modify, perhaps eliminate, undesirable behavior. Students will

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follow all rules and regulations from their home school handbooks, as well as any additional rules and regulations set up by the New Cleveland Building staff. In case of conflict, the New Cleveland Building rules will apply while the student is enrolled at the Alternative Opportunity Center or ESC High School ED Program.

Rules and Regulations

Students selected to attend the New Cleveland Building and their parents should be committed to making this a productive and successful experience. Ohio law requires parents, students, guardians, and persons having custody of school-age children to be accountable and responsible for their regular attendance and appropriate behavior in school. Both students and parents should, therefore, expect the rules and regulations to be strictly enforced. Students who violate the rules of the New Cleveland Building will be subject to the disciplinary procedures and consequences available within their respective home school districts.

In addition, students who violate the rules of the New Cleveland Building may be immediately referred to the Juvenile Court. Students who are already on probation would be subject to any of the sanctions within the court's authority, including, but not limited to, placement in a juvenile detention facility.

A student shall not disrupt the educational process in the classroom and/or violate established classroom rules.

A student shall not engage in physical contact for express purpose of inflicting harm on another person. Words (threats) can constitute provocation.

A student shall not refuse to accept the discipline that has been determined as proper by school personnel.

Students will abide by all rules and regulations of the program, with an appropriate positive attitude.

To maintain a safe learning environment, any or all students are subject to random searches by the police and/or juvenile court personnel. Staff may also make searches based on reasonable suspicion.

Failure to follow any of these rules, guidelines, or expectations will result in disciplinary action which may include verbal warnings, environmental restrictions, after school detention, referrals to the home school for suspensions or expulsion, notification of parents, notification of the Putnam County Courts, and/or emergency removal.

Isolation – Students placed in isolation for 5-10 consecutive days may be subject to an out-of-school suspension, juvenile court referral, and/or other disciplinary actions.

Staff may add/modify/or change these rules in order to operate an effective classroom. All rules shall be reasonable and consistent with school policies and procedures.

Classroom Conduct

In order to enhance each student's opportunity to learn, the following rules will be followed:

1. Be on time.
2. Have all proper materials including paper, pens, pencils, and books every day.
3. Listen to and follow directions the first time they are given.

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4. Stay in your seat.
5. Give everyone, including the teacher, a chance to talk.
6. Allow others to work without distraction or interruption.
7. Eating and drinking pop (including gum and candy) are limited to lunch and break times, unless otherwise permitted by the teacher in the classroom. Students may have pop occasionally, but only with teacher permission.
8. Students will work on assigned materials and activities at all times.
9. Stay awake and be on task.
10. Respect all others by not touching anyone else and minding your own business.
11. Maintain a positive attitude during school time. All conversations should be free of topics such as drugs, alcohol, sex, gangs, jail, and/or negative activities.
12. Leave tobacco products, lighters, or matches at home. If found, these items will be confiscated and appropriate disciplinary action taken.
13. All coats and hats will be hung in the appropriate areas. They are not to be worn during the course of the school day. Students may bring a sweatshirt or sweater to leave in the class on cool days.
14. Personal magazines and catalogs are not permitted.
15. Trading or selling of clothing and personal belongings is not permitted.
16. Leave hairspray, perfume/cologne, or any aerosol sprays at home.
17. Leave whiteout, paint pens, rubber cement, and similar products at home.
18. No students are permitted to be in the kitchen, janitor's room, or other classrooms without teacher or staff permission.
19. Students are not allowed to leave classroom, gym, cafeteria, etc. without teacher permission.
20. Cheating and plagiarism are not tolerated. Whenever a student is found to be cheating, the teacher may collect the work in question, give the student a zero, contact parent(s), and inform the AOC coordinator, home school principal, and county superintendent.

Failure to follow these rules will result in lunch period isolation and/or other disciplinary action(s).

Body Piercing Policy

While at the New Cleveland Building, students are ONLY allowed the following piercings:

- round studs or small loops that are one inch (1") or less in eyebrow or chin
- round studs or loops that are one inch (1") or less in ears and/or nose

If piercing is a hazard to your health and/or a distraction in class or to the educational process, the student will be asked to remove it. If he/she does not comply with staff, further action will be taken. All piercings are at the discretion of the teacher.

Appearance

The following guidelines will assist in determining what is appropriate dress for the school. The student will be representing the New Cleveland Building when they are out of the building, so they should dress appropriately at all times. Students who dress inappropriately will be asked to modify their attire or may be sent home upon the request of the staff. Being sent home will constitute an unexcused absence and may require make-up time by the student. Any refusal to comply with reasonable requests will be subject to disciplinary action.

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1. Clothing, hair, and general appearance should be clean, neat, well groomed, and in good taste. Clothing should be clean and free of holes, rips and tears, and inappropriate writing. Clothes should be appropriately sized to fit the student.
2. No hats, headscarves, gloves, or coats may be worn in the school. Students should dress as the weather outside dictates.
3. Sunglasses are not to be worn in the building.
4. Spaghetti strap tops, “sheer” blouses/ shirts, “bare midriff” or “bare back” blouses/shirts, low cut blouses/shirts, nightshirts, or pajamas may not be worn. Tank tops may be worn if the straps are the width of a driver’s license or a credit card.
5. Any reference to drugs and/or alcohol and/or gang affiliation will not be tolerated in school. This includes clothing, notebooks, assignments, folders, desks, etc.
6. Clothing with reference to sexual and/or profane messages may not be worn in school.
7. Shorts, skirts, and dresses may be worn as long as they are of appropriate length and not deemed revealing by the staff and administration.
8. Jewelry may be worn in moderation. Hanging jewelry, chains, inappropriate symbols are not permitted.
9. Any manner of dress, including body piercing, which presents a threat to a student’s health or safety or which may create a disruption will be prohibited.
10. Undergarments are to be worn, but not seen.
11. No sharing of clothes during the school day will be permitted.

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory. Attendance is an essential element in the success of this program. Regular attendance and promptness are indicators of student success in education, as well as in the workplace. It is our aim to see that students understand the need to be in school all day and every day possible. Students will be sent home for illness only if the student shows significant symptoms, such as fever or vomiting. A Registered Nurse may be consulted, if indicated.

The New Cleveland Building school day runs from 8:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. A parent or guardian must call the New Cleveland Building **prior to 10:00 A.M.** if their child is going to be absent from school. In addition, the student **must bring a note** signed by the parent or guardian on the day they return or within two school days to explain their absence. **If these requirements are not followed, the absence will be considered unexcused.** Excused absences are limited to three per grading period. All absences in excess of three per grading period will be considered unexcused, unless a physician documents a **specific legitimate medical reason** for the absence. The physician’s certificate must have the dates the child will be excused and a medical reason stated on the excuse, and it must be turned in to the school within 24-48 hours. The New Cleveland Building staff has the right to determine whether an absence is excused or not.

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If non-attendance persists, the following may be enforced:

1. After three days of unexcused absences, the Putnam County attendance officer may be notified. He may then make a home visit. The school will also inform parents of the absences.
2. After five days of unexcused absence there may be a home visit and/or phone call from the Putnam County attendance officer and a warning letter will be sent. He will send only one warning letter per year to the home. Also, at this time, an attendance contract may be proposed by school staff.
3. According to Ohio Revised Code Section 2151.011(B)(17), if a student has five days in a row or seven days in a month, or a total of twelve in a year of unexcused absence, a complaint will be filed with the juvenile court.
4. Students who miss six or more days of class without a medical excuse in a semester may be denied credit in that class for that semester, or for the entire course if it is a semester course. Medical excuses must be turned in the next day the student returns to class. A student receiving "No Credit" for a class on their report card may formally appeal to the school. Extenuating circumstances may be considered regarding their absences by the Attendance Committee. Exception may be made for students who have extenuating circumstances as approved by the Attendance Committee at the end of the semester or school year. The Attendance Committee may consist of the home school principal, guidance counselor, attendance officer, and one teacher. Decisions of the Attendance Committee may be appealed to the superintendent.
5. The New Cleveland Building staff, principal, or superintendent reserve the right to take away any driving privileges to and from the school due to excessive absences.

Under this law, parents or guardians may be held accountable for their child's attendance. Parents/guardians will be ordered to appear in court. Failure to attend hearings will result in contempt charges. Parents or guardians may also be held accountable for subsequent truant offenses. According to the Putnam County attendance officer, the penalty for truant offenses is a first-degree misdemeanor and the charges against parents or guardians will be heard in Juvenile Court.

Regular attendance at school will also be recognized and rewarded at the New Cleveland Building.

Transportation

Students will arrive and depart school by means of school transportation. Driving is not permitted, unless working, attending vocational school, or for special circumstances, which must be approved by parents and school. Vocational school students may ride together if written parental and school permission have been obtained. Once parked at the New Cleveland Building, there will be no moving of vehicles. Driving privileges will be lost if student is tardy three times. Students are advised that the New Cleveland Building does not assume responsibility for damages to vehicles, or contents, parked on school property.

Since random searches, including vehicles, have a positive impact on reducing drugs and other criminal activity, it is the policy of the Board of Education to permit such periodic searches. The Board also authorizes the use of canines trained in detecting the presence of drugs to be used when the superintendent, or his designee, has reasonable suspicion or cause to believe that illegal drugs may be present in school, on school grounds, or at a school-sponsored event.

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Unexcused/Excessive Absences

For every unexcused absence or excessive absences as determined by the staff, students will:

- be placed in isolation during lunch period
- be removed from “Fun Friday” for the week
- participate in 40 minutes of intervention with a teacher

Discipline Records

Each student will have a discipline file. When the student breaks one of the rules, the behavior will be noted on the discipline record. A copy of the record may be sent home on a weekly basis by agreement with parents or at the discretion of staff. Accumulation of behaviors will result in disciplinary consequences determined by New Cleveland Building staff. Any negative behavior may also be a focus of counseling.

Harassment

A student shall not use any form of sexual, racial, or ethnical harassment against another student, staff member, or school visitor. It is the responsibility of the New Cleveland Building staff to maintain a safe learning environment, and any individual, student, or staff guilty of harassment will be disciplined in a prompt and appropriate manner. A student shall not use profanity or obscene language, either written or verbal, in communicating with a faculty member or any other party while under school jurisdiction. Included in this prohibition would be the use of obscene gestures, signs, pictures, or publications.

Substance Abuse Policy

There is a zero tolerance level for students who use, sell, or possess illegal or counterfeit drugs and alcohol. This includes all New Cleveland Building students while under their home school’s and the New Cleveland Building’s jurisdiction. Any student, who is found to have violated this rule of conduct, will immediately be referred for disciplinary action by his/her home school. At such time, a referral to Pathways Counseling Center and/or Insight through the Putnam County Educational Service Center will be made. The New Cleveland Building staff will also notify the court and appropriate charges will be filed. All AOC long-term students will be given a drug screen at admission to the program. Drug screens will be made throughout the year. Reports of these drug screens will be confidential unless the student is on probation, at which time, the probation officer will be notified. Parents will be notified of the results via letter or phone call. Consequences for a failed drug test will be left to the discretion of the parents, or probation officer, and/or staff, and may include release from the New Cleveland Building or after school education classes.

Lockers

All lockers are the property of the New Cleveland Building and are assigned for the convenience of the students. Students have the right to reasonable privacy; however, if there is cause to believe that there are prohibited, illegal, or stolen articles in any assigned locker, the superintendent, or staff designated by the superintendent, may search a locker at any time.

Since random searches have a positive impact on reducing drugs and other criminal activity, it is the policy of the Board of Education to permit such periodic searches. The Board also authorizes the use of canines trained in detecting the presence of drugs to be used when the superintendent, or his designee, has reasonable suspicion or cause to believe that illegal drugs may be present in school, on school grounds, or at a school-sponsored event. Only items connected with school activities and approved by the staff are to be displayed on the lockers, and they must be attached

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with tape in order to avoid damage to the locker surface or paint. The school is not responsible for valuable articles stored in an unlocked locker.

Computer/ Internet Use

The students will have access to the Internet and computers in our computer lab. Students will be strictly monitored while they are using the Internet. Each student and parent will be required to read and sign the agreement in the packet. Improper use of the computers and Internet will result in disciplinary action.

Cell Phones

Students will be required to place cell phones in a collection basket. The use of cell phones by students during the school day is prohibited. Students are not to talk on their cell phone or text message anyone during the course of the school day. Students that need to contact a parent must ask school personnel to place the call. Students are not to receive calls or text messages during the school day. Parents that need to get a hold of their child should call the school. Upon calling the school, parents can request to talk to their child if it is an emergency or have a message sent to their child. Students who are seen using or having their cell phone out during the school day will have it taken away from them. The New Cleveland Building staff may check cell phone activity. Parents may be required to pick up a cell phone if it has been taken from their child more than one time. School is not the place for cell phone usage.

Radios, Pagers, Cell Phones, I Pods, Headphones and Electronic Items

These types of items are not to be used during the school day, which is from 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM. Students will be required to place these items in a collection basket. Any such item found to be on will be confiscated and returned at the end of the day. Use of these items will result in disciplinary action if they are used for any of the following reasons: **1)** to take unauthorized pictures on school property with the intent to post them on the Internet or to display them in any fashion, **2)** used to scan and transmit tests or other school related information, **3)** used to transmit test/quiz answers or transmit answers to any other questioning that is being done in the classroom, **4)** used as a calculator without securing permission, **5)** any other situation that may arise that creates a disruption to the educational system. School personnel have the right to inspect any electronic item if there is reasonable cause to believe that the student used the item for any of the above reasons. Disciplinary action will occur for violation of any of the above items. Some of the above reasons could be done after school hours. As long as a student is on school property and there is reasonable cause that any of the above situations occurred, disciplinary action will be taken.

Field Trips

Going on a field trip is a privilege that requires responsibility. Students must be in good academic and disciplinary standing to participate. The classroom teachers and staff will determine if students qualify to attend all field trips. While on a field trip, students are not to leave a supervised area without gaining special permission from a chaperone, teacher, or staff member.