



Student Handbook

The Excel Center
1490 Norris Road
Memphis, TN 38106
901-726-3100 · excelcentermemphis.org

GENERAL OVERVIEW:

School Mission

The mission of The Excel Center is to provide adults 18 and older the opportunity and support to earn a high school diploma and begin post-secondary education while developing career paths in sectors of the local economy that offer better-than-average employment and growth opportunities. The school will “meet students where they are” in their education by providing a flexible structure and supportive relationships to help them manage work, life, and family concerns as they achieve their educational goals.

Program Description

The Excel Center provides adults 18 and older the opportunity and support to earn a high school diploma and begin post-secondary education. The program provides transportation assistance, drop-in child care and life coaches. The Excel Center is operated by Goodwill Excel Center Midsouth, Inc. with the support of Memphis Goodwill Incorporated (MGI), and is a state-funded public charter school.

Program Schedule

The Excel Center offers day and evening classes throughout five, eight-week terms. The Excel Center will be open from 8:00am to 8:00pm Monday through Thursday and 8:00am to 4:30pm on Friday. Students will be able to do some work online, but are encouraged to take part in direct instruction courses that generally run from 8:00am to 4:30pm. Enrollment is open year-round.

ENROLLMENT PROCESS:

Enrollment Procedure

Anyone who dropped out of school and wants to earn a high school diploma can enroll. However, The Excel Center is designed for Shelby County adults 18 years and older. Applicants may apply online www.excelcentermemphis.org or may call (901) 726-3100. Students expelled from another school system within Shelby County will be ineligible to enroll as a student at The Excel Center until the completion of the student’s expulsion is cleared. An expulsion is considered between 4 and 180 days out of school. Once the student has completed the expulsion period, he/she can enroll at The Excel Center using normal enrollment procedures.

Students are required to submit necessary documentation in the application packet prior to receiving invitation to attend the IEXCEL Orientation. Enrolled students will sign an academic and behavioral expectations contract in order to remain at The Excel Center (attachment).

All classes teach the Professional Interpersonal Competency Assessments (PICA) characteristic of the week. Each teacher/staff will incorporate a graded PICA lesson and assignment each week.

EVALUATION:

Curriculum/Earning Credit

The curriculum is an individualized road map that has been designed to help students succeed. The Excel Center focuses on the mandated Tennessee Diploma Project requirements. Students will complete course requirements via direct instruction while building on long-term knowledge and a student’s ability to apply course information at higher levels. Credits can also be earned through our online learning

options, from prior work experiences, and by taking courses at one of our partnering higher-education institutions.

STUDENT SERVICES:

Life Coaches:

Each student at The Excel Center will be assigned to a life coach. This coach will help students address concerns in their life and facilitate access to supportive services to help them stay in school and achieve their goals. The coach will meet with students individually and in small groups to provide a forum for students to share concerns and address any barriers that may be faced. Regular meetings may be scheduled based on the student need. Coaches are also responsible for tracking students' academic progress, graduation plans, and guiding them toward post-secondary conversations.

Childcare:

The Excel Center will operate a drop-in center for students who have children. The drop-in center will only be available when a student is studying on site and will serve children up to age 12. A child may stay in the drop-in center for a maximum of 4 hours. There is no cost for this service. The drop-in center provides an introductory curriculum for children who engage with this service.

Transportation:

The Excel Center will provide bus passes to students which is a cost-effective way for students to attend class with the additional benefit that students would be able to use the bus pass during nights and weekends for non-school activities. Passes are distributed by the life coaches after students have attended class for two weeks.

DISCIPLINE:

Code of Conduct:

The purpose of the Code of Student Conduct is to provide fair and reasonable rules and procedures to promote human development and to ensure that students do not engage in conduct that in any way interferes with the education of The Excel Center students Attendance and Tardiness

- Excused absences require proper documentation and include the following: death of a family member, illness, work, court appointments, religious holidays and parent-teacher conferences.
- Students are allowed to make up any missed assignments with an excused absence.
- Students with 3 or more excused absences will be withdrawn from class and school. The student will be eligible to reenroll the following term in front of the waiting list.
- Students with 3 or more unexcused absences will be dropped from class and school. The student will be placed last on the waiting list in order to return.
- Students will not be allowed to enter the classroom 10 minutes after the start of class. If a student arrives after 10 minutes, he/she is required to sign-in at the main office and report to Hardaway Hall until the start of the next class.
- After 3rd tardy, a conference will be held with student and life coach.
- The fourth tardy will be considered a minor disciplinary infraction and progressive disciplinary protocol will be followed.

- Leaving the classroom without permission
- Cell Phones
 - Answering phone calls in class
 - Cell phones not on silent/vibrate during class
 - Texting in class
- Dress Code
 - Clothing that reveals the breasts, midriff or butt area

Expulsion:

After a proper investigation and hearing, and depending on whether the infraction is major, minor or related to the drop-in center, the student may be expelled when his or her behavior renders it appropriate.

When the school director or designee makes a recommendation for expulsion of students, the school director or designee may suspend the students until the conclusion of expulsion proceedings. This may occur if the school director believes that the students must be suspended immediately to prevent or substantially reduce the risk of:

- Interference with an educational function or school purposes or
- A physical injury to themselves, other students, school employees, or visitors to the school

Progressive Discipline Standard Operating Procedures:

Purpose:

- To assist the student in understanding that a performance problem and opportunity for improvement exists
- To assist the student in overcoming performance problems and satisfy The Excel Center expectations
- To prepare students for conduct that is expected in the workplace
- To provide students with opportunities for due process in disciplinary actions

Minor Infractions Disciplinary Process

1. Conference with Life Coach, Lead Teacher, and Student
2. Contractual probation created by Life Coach. The duration of the probation is to be determined by recommendation of life coach.
3. Two-Day suspension
4. Expulsion pending investigation.

Minor infractions include:

- Deliberate disruption: shouting or yelling at anyone, slamming doors, publically using profanity, throwing items, checking, threatening other students
- Displays of affection: public displays of affections with another student that could include, but not limited to, kissing, any type of sexual acts, fondling or groping.
- Excessive, unexcused tardy (4 or more)

- Profanity spoken loudly but not directed toward staff or another student while on campus
- Cell phone use during class which disrupts class
- Violation of dress code
- Food/drink in the computer lab or rooms with laptops
- Excessive lateness to class (student claiming to be in drop-in center tending to their child and not)

Drop-In Center Progressive Disciplinary Process

1. Conference with Drop-In Center Director, Life Coach and student.
2. Contractual probation to cover duration of one full-term. If the student violates probation, they will advance to step three.
3. Loss of Drop-In Center privileges for one week. We understand that some students may be forced to miss classes because of a lack of childcare but the purpose is to assist the students with preparing for the workforce and personal development, i.e. consequences of actions.
4. Drop-In Center expulsion for the remainder of the term.

Drop-In Center Infractions include but are not limited to:

- Late pick up (after 6 minutes)
- Failure to provide daily proper necessities for child care (diapers, wipes, clean bottles, formula, change of clothes, shoes, appropriate clothing based on weather conditions, snack, medication such as breathing treatments, inhalers).
- Neglect toward childcare needs (excessively wet and/or soiled clothing, uncleanliness, breathing treatments, asthma pumps, etc.).
- Insubordination or disrespect toward Drop-In Center staff

*The Drop-In Center will speak with a student's life coach as the first line of defense for issues with a child's parent(s).

Major Infraction Progressive Disciplinary Process

1. Investigation conducted by School Director and/or his/her designee.
2. Conference with Life Coach, Executive Director and student pending investigation with School Director, Lead Teacher, Lead Life Coach and Life Coach.
3. Expulsion pending a student hearing except for zero tolerance violations (i.e. drugs, weapons, assault on another student or staff, etc....).

Major Infractions include but are not limited to:

- Arson (permanent expulsion)
- Failure to report felony criminal infraction
- Assault/physical altercation toward staff and/or another student (permanent expulsion)
- Bullying: bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among any person that involves real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated or has the potential to

- be repeated over time. Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose. These actions include all types of social media.
- Verbal abuse toward staff and/or another student: the use of words to cause harm to a person. The most commonly understood form is name-calling. Verbal abuse may consist of shouting, insulting, intimidating, threatening, shaming, demeaning or derogatory language among other forms of communication.
 - Sexual abuse: a statutory offense that causes another person to engage in an unwanted sexual act by force or threat.
 - Extortion: the use or the express or implicit threat of use of violence or other criminal means to cause harm to a person, reputation or property as a means to obtain property from someone else with his consent.
 - Violation of state and federal law while currently enrolled as a student (permanent expulsion)
 - Consumption of drugs and/or alcohol on school property (mandatory 180 day expulsion plus appeal to Leadership Committee)
 - Selling of drugs and/or alcohol on school property (permanent expulsion)
 - Possession of a fire arm on school property (permanent expulsion)
 - Smoking in building
 - Gang related activity (permanent expulsion)
 - Bomb threats (permanent expulsion)
 - Forgery: the creation of a false written document or alteration of a genuine one with the intent to defraud.
 - Threats toward staff and/or other students.
 - Harassment toward staff and/or other student(s): Harassment is unwanted, unwelcomed and uninvited behavior that demeans, threatens or offends the victim and results in a hostile environment for the victim. Harassing behavior may include, but is not limited to, epithets, derogatory comments or slurs and lewd propositions, assault, impeding or blocking movement, offensive touching or any physical interference with normal work or movement, and visual insults, such as derogatory posters or cartoons.
 - Discrimination: refers to the treatment or consideration of or making a distinction in favor of or against a person or thing based on the group, class or category to which that person or thing belongs rather than on individual merit.
 - Theft
 - Pulling fire alarm

Comprehensive Plan for Delivery of Special Education and Related Services

The mission of The Excel Center is to provide adults 18 and older the opportunity and support to earn a high school diploma and begin post-secondary education, while developing career paths in sectors of the local economy that offer better than average employment and growth opportunities. The school will “meet students where they are” in their education by providing a flexible structure and supportive relationships to help them manage work, life, and family concerns as they achieve their educational goals, while delivering *relevance, rigor, and relationship*, in their education. The school primarily serves adult students who have previously dropped out of high school or who are significantly at risk of dropping out of high school. The framework of the school calls for language and terms that accurately reflect the roles of the adults taking part in the education process. Instead of traditional teachers, there are “Instructors,” licensed content area teachers, and “Coaches,” who work with students to overcome barriers to their education and life-goals. The students are able to build strong relationships with their coaches and instructors. Within this framework, learning is primarily tailored to fit the students’ educational goals.

A Director of Special Education and a team of Highly Qualified Licensed teachers oversee Special Education services, academic needs, accommodations, transition planning, related services, modifications of curriculum, and implementation of any previous IEPs for students ages 22 and under.

The Excel Center staff also assists in the assurance of implementation of curriculum and accommodations for students who formally fell under Article 7 and IDEA and now need accommodations under section 504 of ADA. The full-time “highly qualified” Director of Special Education is experienced in the areas of mild to moderate classroom interventions. The Director of Special Education will also make sure that any students who had a previous IEP will receive the extra academic and transitional support they received on their previous IEP’s if needed or required by the ADA. The School Director will also verify licensing and qualifications for all related services and para-professional staff that assist with support of special needs students.

Comprehensive Services for Students with Disabilities

- A. Educational continuum and least restrictive environment
 1. Students receiving services spend a majority of their instructional day with their instructors. The remainder of the day they may utilize supplementary services as indicated in their IEP. One-on-one instruction will be provided as needed according to a student’s IEP. Supplementary services will be provided in the following manner:
 - a. Resource
 - b. Special Education Tutors. Tutors will be available for general and specialized assistance to students.
 2. Students will be assigned to a specific tutor whenever possible to ensure continuity and quality in the delivery of services.

3. A Special Education Resource Room will be utilized to provide supplementary services when appropriate and according to the IEP.
 4. The instructor student ratio allows for every student to enjoy an increased level of attention from his or her instructor and coach. This allows for placement of every special education student into a regular education and least restrictive educational situation. All classes are inclusionary and none are comprised solely of special education students; however, the school has the ability to provide intense individualized services if necessary.
- B. Related services
1. The Excel Center will use contract services for Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Psychological and Speech-Language Therapy.
- C. Access to the general education curriculum
1. The long-term relationship between instructor, coach, and student will provide students with a Teacher of Service who is familiar with their cases. This will provide the instructor and coach with more knowledge and a better understanding of the students' needs, which can then be included in the regular instruction program. Student progress will be monitored on schedule with the general education population. The students' IEPs will reflect his or her needs as they participate in the general education curriculum with accommodations and/or modifications which are deemed appropriate by the Teacher of Record.
 2. All general education curriculum and extracurricular activities will be made available to students receiving services, unless indicated otherwise in a student's IEP.
 3. Physical education will be provided in accordance with a student's IEP, with general education students whenever possible.
- D. Preschool services
- Preschool services are not applicable to this charter school.
- E. Services to students in private schools
- Services to private school students are not applicable to this charter school.
- F. Assurance of FAPE
- The Excel Center will provide a Free and Appropriate Education to all enrolled students with disabilities up to 22 years of age prior to the start of the school year. The Excel Center will also follow the guidelines set in ADA for students up to the age of 22 who have previously had an IEP and need support.
2. Personnel
- A. All personnel employed or contracted by The Excel Center to provide or supervise the provision of special education and related services shall be appropriately licensed or certified to provide such services.
- B. Availability and utilization of personnel
1. The Excel Center currently employs a Director of Special Education
 2. The Excel Center will contract for services of speech-language therapy, physical therapy, occupational therapy, psychological services, instructional support

services, and other related services as indicated previously in the Plan, and as needed according to the needs of students.

3. The Excel Center will hire special education tutors utilizing the Federal Work Study program through local universities, with recruiting focused on tutors with majors in education, math, science, English, and social studies.
4. The Excel Center will utilize Resource support, shared with general education students.
3. Interagency Agreements
 - A. At such time as The Excel Center has control of its state and federal funds, it will establish other interagency agreements as needed to provide required services for students receiving services.
4. Parent Involvement and Community Relationships
 - A. For Excel Center students over the age of 18, parent involvement will be at their discretion unless the parents maintain legal guardianship because of the severity of the disability.
 - B. Parents, where applicable, are encouraged to participate in school functions.
 1. Open House
 2. Community Day
 3. iExcel
 - C. Case conferences are scheduled via telephone or in person with the student or the guardian parent. Appointment times are flexible to accommodate students, guardian parents' schedules, including the use of technology to facilitate meetings.
5. Assurance of Compliance with all Applicable Federal and State Regulations: The Excel Center will comply with all applicable state and federal statutes and regulations related to providing services to students with disabilities.

The Excel Center Academic & Behavioral Expectations

Your success in school will undoubtedly influence your life. Orderly behavior is essential to your school success. Courtesy, honesty, regular school attendance, as well as, respect for school property and fellow human beings are the mark of a good Excel Center student. Once you have reviewed the Student Handbook, please sign and date below and return to Excel Center staff.

I certify that I have read, understand, and agree to the policies set forth in The Excel Center Student Handbook. I further certify that I have received a copy of the student handbook.

Signature

Date

Received by: Excel Center Staff Initials