

LIFE MALE STEAM ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL

BOARD OF TRUSTEES POLICIES

ANNUAL CHILD FIND NOTICE

Notice to Parents Regarding Special Education Services, Section 504 Services, and Child Find Responsibilities

The LIFE MALE STEAM ACADEMY Charter School ("LIFE Male STEAM Academy") is committed to identifying, locating, and evaluating all children who may be eligible for special education or related services. In accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Chapter 14, Chapter 15, and Chapter 711 of the Pennsylvania School Code, LIFE Male STEAM Academy provides a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to eligible students with disabilities.

Child Find is an ongoing process designed to locate, identify, and evaluate students who may have disabilities and require specially designed instruction or accommodations. This responsibility applies to all children enrolled at LIFE Male STEAM Academy who may have disabilities, regardless of the severity of the disability.

Who May Be Eligible for Special Education?

Students between the ages of 3 and 21 may qualify for special education services if they:

- Have one or more disabilities recognized under IDEA; and
- Require specially designed instruction to benefit from their educational program.

Disability categories under IDEA include:

- Autism
- Deaf-Blindness
- Deafness
- Emotional Disturbance
- Hearing Impairment
- Intellectual Disability
- Multiple Disabilities
- Orthopedic Impairment
- Other Health Impairment
- Specific Learning Disability
- Speech or Language Impairment
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Visual Impairment, including Blindness

Students who qualify receive an individualized educational program (IEP) developed by a team that includes parents, teachers, school staff, and other professionals as appropriate.

Child Find Activities

LIFE Male STEAM Academy conducts Child Find activities throughout the school year to identify students who may require special education services.

Screening activities may include:

- Review of academic performance
- Review of cumulative educational records
- State and local assessment data
- Classroom observations
- Teacher and parent concerns
- Vision, hearing, speech/language, and health screenings
- Attendance and behavioral data
- Progress monitoring and intervention data

These screenings do not determine eligibility but help identify students who may require a comprehensive evaluation.

Potential Signs of Developmental Delays and Disability Risk Factors

Parents are encouraged to contact the school if they observe concerns regarding their child's development or educational progress.

Possible indicators may include:

Academic Concerns

- Difficulty learning letters, sounds, numbers, or basic academic concepts
- Significant difficulty reading, writing, spelling, or mathematics
- Problems remembering information or following directions
- Difficulty organizing schoolwork

Communication Concerns

- Delayed speech or language development
- Difficulty understanding or expressing ideas
- Limited vocabulary for age
- Difficulty participating in conversations

Social and Emotional Concerns

- Difficulty making or maintaining friendships
- Extreme anxiety, withdrawal, or depression
- Frequent emotional outbursts
- Difficulty understanding social situations

Behavioral Concerns

- Persistent attention difficulties

- Hyperactivity or impulsivity
- Difficulty following routines or classroom expectations
- Significant behavioral challenges that interfere with learning

Physical and Sensory Concerns

- Hearing or vision difficulties
- Delays in fine or gross motor skills
- Frequent medical conditions affecting school performance
- Physical limitations affecting participation in school activities

Developmental Concerns

- Delays in cognitive development
- Delays in self-help or adaptive skills
- Difficulty completing age-appropriate daily living activities
- Developmental milestones significantly below expected levels

While the presence of one or more of these characteristics does not necessarily indicate a disability, families who have concerns are encouraged to contact the school to discuss whether an evaluation may be appropriate. These indicators satisfy Pennsylvania's requirement that public awareness efforts include potential developmental delays and disability risk factors.

Referral and Evaluation Process

Parents, guardians, teachers, or other school personnel may request that a student be evaluated to determine eligibility for special education services.

A parent may request a multidisciplinary evaluation at any time by submitting a written request to the Principal or the Coordinator of Special Education.

Upon receipt of a written request, the Charter School will respond in accordance with Pennsylvania timelines and procedures.

Parental written consent is required before an initial evaluation may be conducted.

If a student is found eligible, an Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team will meet to develop an educational program designed to meet the student's unique needs.

Parents who disagree with the results of an evaluation have the right to request an Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE) at public expense, subject to applicable legal requirements.

Students receiving special education services are reevaluated periodically in accordance with federal and state regulations to determine continued eligibility and educational needs.

Special Education Services

Depending upon individual student needs, services may include:

- Specialized instruction
- Speech and language therapy
- Occupational therapy
- Physical therapy
- Counseling services
- Assistive technology
- Transportation
- Behavioral supports
- Other related services necessary for the student to receive educational benefit

Services are provided in the least restrictive environment (LRE) appropriate to each student's individual needs.

Services for Protected Handicapped Students (Section 504)

In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Chapter 15 of the Pennsylvania School Code, LIFE Male STEAM Academy provides accommodations and related aids and services to qualified students with disabilities who do not require specially designed instruction but need accommodations to access educational programs and activities.

A student may qualify under Section 504 if the student has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.

These services are provided without discrimination and at no cost to parents.

Parent Rights

Parents have the right to:

- Request an evaluation at any time.
- Participate in all meetings regarding their child.
- Review educational records.
- Receive prior written notice before changes to identification, evaluation, placement, or services.
- Receive a copy of the Procedural Safeguards Notice.
- Request mediation or due process if disagreements arise regarding their child's educational program.

Information regarding Procedural Safeguards is available through the Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN).

Confidentiality of Student Records

LIFE Male STEAM Academy protects the confidentiality of personally identifiable student information in accordance with:

- The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)
- IDEA
- Pennsylvania state law
- Charter School Board policies regarding student records

Educational records are maintained securely and are accessible only to authorized individuals as permitted by law.

Contact Information

For additional information regarding Child Find, special education services, or Section 504 accommodations, please contact:

Coordinator of Special Education

LIFE Male STEAM Academy Charter School
777 Penn Center Boulevard, Suite 102
Pittsburgh, PA 15235
412-745-5433

or

Principal

LIFE Male STEAM Academy Charter School
777 Penn Center Boulevard, Suite 102
Pittsburgh, PA 15235
412-745-5433