

Q: Is the school licensed?

A: Yes. The schools are Licensed Private Academic Schools for Special Education- Specializing in Services for Autism Spectrum Disorders and Emotional Support Needs.

Q: Is my child appropriate for the school?

NHS Schools serve either students diagnosed with an Autism Spectrum Disorder, Pervasive Developmental Disorder, Asperger's Syndrome or students identified as having emotional support needs. Some of our locations serve both populations; therefore, you must check with the educational director of the school nearest you to find out which population the NHS School serves.

Q: Who do I contact to schedule a tour?

A: Contact the school location and ask to speak with the director:

- Altoona: 814-944-3733
- Apollo: 724-478-2223
- Carlisle: 717-249-4525
- Chambersburg: 717-261-1163
- East Freedom: 814-696-3390
- Ellsworth: 724-239-2539
- Greensburg: 724-600-7230
- Harrisburg: 717-657-0149
- Herminie: 724-446-7282
- Philadelphia: 215-671-5155
- Reading: 610-208-0466
- Scranton: 570-496-4300
- Somerset: 814-443-3113
- State College: 814-237-2870
- Warrington: 215-293-9092
- Whitney: 724-424-9185
- York: 717-792-2304

Q: What is needed for a student to be admitted to the school?

A: Call the nearest NHS School listed above to request information about the school or to schedule a tour of the facility.

Once you have toured and decided that you are interested in enrolling your student, contact your local School District's Special Education Director to express your interest in the school. Complete a referral form to start the process (form can be found on the NHS Schools website).

If the School District's Special Education Director agrees with the placement, you will sign a Notification

of Recommended Educational Placement (NOREP) form. You will also be required to fill out an NHS intake packet. The school district will provide the NHS School with the student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP), Evaluation Report (ER)/Re-Evaluation Report (RR) and medical record as well as a signed contract between the district and the NHS school.

Q: Will my child be able to return to their home school district?

A: Yes, discharge planning starts upon entrance into the NHS school. Discharge planning is discussed at each subsequent IEP meeting as well.

Q: What are the schools hours?

- The school day is 6.5 hours (times will depend upon location).
- The school will operate grades K-12 or ages 5-21.
- Kindergarten will be an all day program.
- The school is based on a 180 day school year.
- Extended School will also be offered for students who qualify.

Q: How many students are in a classroom?

A: The regulations allow no more than 8 students per Autism Support classroom and 12 students per Emotional Support classroom. However, NHS will evaluate each classroom individually considering the student's academic level and needs. Each classroom will have a teacher and any other support staff a student is assigned. Some classrooms will have a teacher's aide based on need.

Q: What curriculum is utilized?

A: All students are assessed using the Brigance Academic Assessment when they enroll. This assessment allows the teacher to determine developmentally appropriate goals and programming for each student.

The schools currently utilize Dr. Raymond Romanczyk's "Individualized Goal Selection Curriculum" and SRA Direct Instructional Programs for students with Autism Spectrum Disorders. Districts are encouraged to provide the appropriate curriculum for each enrolled student from their home school district which is used along with teacher created standards-based lessons. All NHS Schools utilize the ECLIPSE social-emotional curriculum and Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools (CBITS) to build social and emotional regulation skills and provide trauma informed care. Students are also taught using goal based programming and various instructional methods such as discrete trial training (DTT), verbal behavior interventions (Intensive teaching/Natural Environment Teaching), fluency-based instruction, and direct instruction.

Q: What additional services are offered?

- **Continuum of Care-** NHS offers a complete range of programs to help support individuals as they move through the life span. NHS serves individuals throughout Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Virginia, Maryland and Louisiana.
- **Peer Mentoring Program-**Peer mentoring programs match older students with younger students in one-on-one relationships to provide guidance and direction for students. Through this relationship, peer mentors provide advice and support and serve as role models for younger people.
- **Olweus Bullying Program-**The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program is designed to improve peer relations and make schools safer, more positive places for students to learn and develop.

- **Scramble for Scholars-** An annual golfing event that gives individuals the opportunity to reach their dreams by attending a college/university. NHS's Scramble for Scholars event raises money to send individuals who have received services from NHS to attend a college or university.
- **Nutrition Curriculum-** The interdisciplinary nutrition education curriculum includes lesson plans for grades K-12 and is organized into four grade groups (K-3, 4-6, 7-9, and 10-12). The lesson plans are aligned with the Pennsylvania Academic Standards, include activities that encourage physical activity, contain website links to additional resources, and provide ideas that assist schools with implementing the local wellness policy and involving parents, food service, and the community.
- **Food Scholarships-** Food scholarships are provided to families who have difficulty providing their son or daughter with lunch because of economic hardship. Food scholarships ensure students receive a lunch to maintain a healthy life style.
- **Community Meeting-** A structured group setting in which students respond to positive peer pressure, trust and safety to determine their own outcomes of success in a non-threatening environment. The keys to successful milieu sessions consist of repetition, structure, support, and consistent expectations
- **Foundation Supports-** The mission of the **NHS Human Services Foundation** is to support the individuals and families served by NHS Human Services (NHS) and to secure the programs that make a difference in so many lives daily.
- **Eclipse-The ECLIPSE Model-** is the curriculum utilized for social skills training so that the student can be successful in a classroom and in the community. This curriculum teaches students self regulation, organizational skills, theory of mind,(the ability to recognize and understand other peoples thoughts, feelings, desires, and intensions in order to make sense of their behavior and be able to predict what they will do next), and lessons for teaching the "hidden curriculum" (Unspoken social rules or norms).
- **Health and Wellness Curriculum-** FLASH curriculum is utilized to teach sexual education and social skills. The FLASH curriculum addresses physical development, promotion of sexual health, prevention of disease, affection, interpersonal relationships, body image, and gender roles
- **Transition Services-** Available to students 14 years and older as stipulated by each student's IEP. Transition services are aimed at providing students and their families with practical and experiential skills and knowledge that will support student's transition into adult life.
- **Transition Program 18-21-** Apartment style classrooms for students aged 18-21. Students focus on building skills for independence and functioning within the community. The program is designed to target the skills the student will to build for their intended placement once they age out of the special education setting.
- **Cognitive Behavioral Interventions for Trauma in Schools (CBITS)-** A structured, system focused therapy that includes a wide variety of skill building techniques. All are based on the premises that thoughts and behaviors can cause negative emotions and patterns of interactions with others. CBITS makes maladaptive thoughts and behaviors more functional by changing those thoughts.
- **Trauma Focused-Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT)-** is an evidence-based treatment approach shown to help children, adolescents, and their caretakers overcome trauma-related difficulties. It is designed to reduce negative emotional and behavioral responses following child sexual abuse and other traumatic events.

- **Motivational Interviewing (MI)**- Is a particular kind of conversation about change, it is a collaborative effort and is person centered. A central concept of MI is the identification, examination and resolution of ambivalence about changing behavior.

Q: What types of therapy or social emotional supports are offered for students with emotional support needs?

A: Teachers and staff are trained in motivational interviewing techniques, Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Schools (CBITS), Olweus Bully Prevention Program and the ECLISPE Model which all assist in developing coping skills, emotional regulation skills, attribution retraining, theory of mind, social skills, self-esteem, respect and excepting of others, relaxation strategies, etc.

Q: What other activities or services do you provide?

A: Students have the opportunity to be involved in SNAG golf, special Olympics, intramural sports, field day, and field-trips.

Q: What types of transition services do the NHS Schools offer?

A: Each NHS School utilizes the Attainments Curriculum and Prevocational Skills as well as the Brigance Transition Skill Activities. Students who are 14 and up are placed within levels based on academic and transition skill assessments (Brigance IED II and TSI). Each level assists placing students into tracks for job shadowing, volunteer opportunities, simulated work environments and community-based job placements. Our transition programs work to develop skills for community involvement, independent living, job placement, post-secondary education, safety skills, and self-advocacy.

Q: If my child has a TSS in school, can the TSS come to the NHS school with my child?

A: Yes. If a child is prescribed hours for school support and it is deemed to be medically necessary by the prescribing psychologist, then the TSS will come to school with the student. NHS will expect the TSS to follow the general guidelines and procedures for BHRS staff in an educational setting.

Q: Does my child need to be toileting independently?

A: No. The teachers and aides that work for the school are willing and capable to assist at all levels of toileting and hygiene.

Q: Will transportation to and from the school be provided?

A: Arrangements for daily transportation will be made through the student's home school district.

Please visit the NHS Schools Website and complete a Referral Form!

<http://schools.nhsonline.org>