



# Student Handbook

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**[Rising-stars-academy.org](http://Rising-stars-academy.org)**

Dear Students and Families

Welcome to the Rising Stars Academy family. Each new school year gives us a renewed sense of success and promises to be a challenging and rewarding experience for all students and family members. It is the goal of the staff at Rising Star to provide experiences that will move students towards sustainable independent living and employment.

We encourage everyone to take advantage of each opportunity that will afford learning and promote a successful future for all. Our students will experience personal growth with every classroom and community activity that is presented to you.

A large part of our in school curriculum will rely on community members to help our students to be successful. Whether working in the community garden, or serving food in our on-site restaurant, our students will be given frequent opportunities to develop social skills. We welcome family members to visit and dine in our restaurant daily, along with helping our students in our garden as they learn about growing and cultivating food and the satisfaction of harvesting the food and preparing it in the kitchen. Please visit our website [www.rising-stars-academy.org](http://www.rising-stars-academy.org) to see our hours of operation for our restaurant and bakery.

This handbook is to be used as a guide for you and your family for the opportunities and expectations that we have at Rising Stars Academy.

We are very excited to work with your families and hope that you will have instilled a sense of pride in our school, our community and our students.

Sincerely

Rising Star Academy Board of Education

Robert Nowak, President  
Annette Duda, Vice  
President  
Charisse Cossu-Kowalski,  
Secretary  
Sue Uhl, Trustee  
Nancy Profant, Trustee

# Mission

The mission of Rising Stars Academy is to provide learning for all students to achieve success in school, the workplace, and life.

# Vision

VISION: Rising Stars academy is a program for students with intellectual disabilities, ages 18 – 26, who exited high school with a Certificate of Completion. We are a learning destination that prides itself on a diverse and more than anything, real-life approach to teaching and learning. It is our belief that each and every student has the ability to succeed and with proper tools will learn skills necessary to take on professional opportunities in their futures and lead fulfilling lives.

The academy focuses on, Life skills, Employment skills and Intrapersonal skills in various types of classes. Culinary Arts and the World of Food are the anchor programs at Rising Stars. It is our belief that many of the necessary skills that students need to be sustainable members of the community surround around the world of food. Utilizing the mantra of “Farm to Plate” students are immersed in the science of food growth, harvesting and food storage, preparing food for consumption, while learning how to work in a food establishment, controlling inventory and understanding the importance of food safety. Since the schools inception, we have grown in program offerings that always keep our focus on the three areas of skill building; Life skills, Employment skills and Intrapersonal skills.

Our curriculum is delivered through a contextual approach to learning which guides our students understanding of every class that they are submerged into. Internal and external job sites provide more in depth training for students who have mastered the level to be successful with these opportunities. Each lesson is followed up with a mastery check sheet that provides a snapshot of student’s ability levels in each class. Those mastery lists are used to tailor the focus of each individuals learning.

The following pages outline the programs within our school for the 2016-2017 school year.

## TITLE VI, TITLE IX, SECTION 504, ADA INFORMATION

Rising Star Academy is obligated under the law to make reasonable accommodations for individuals with handicaps. Certain due process procedures are in place to protect the rights of students and parents. If any person believes that the district has violated the law in regard to its compliance with Title VI, Title IX, Section 504, or the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), he/she may file a complaint

# Introduction

The Rising Stars Academy is an employment/life skill training program for special needs students ages 18-26, who will leave high school with a certificate of completion. These students possess disabilities ranging from cognitive impairments to autism; often they do not have a diploma upon exiting high school and are offered an education until they reach age 26.

The focus of the proposed academy will be the world of food; the phrase from “farm to plate” serves as a good description of our vision. The program in its entirety will include a community garden and greenhouse, along with a school that has a commercial kitchen and fully functional restaurant open to the public for meals and bakery items.

This program affords students the ability to understand where food comes from, how they can grow their own food, how they can take it to the kitchen and prepare the food for consumption, how to serve the food to the public and other aspects of working in a food service establishment. Students will also gain important knowledge about good eating habits and nutrition to keep them healthy throughout life.

It is our goal to use agriculture and the mantra “farm to plate” toward instilling proper and healthy, nutritional food choices into their daily lives. Through implementing this type of contextual learning, we will be helping our students understand how to grow food, the value of that food to their bodies, and most importantly, increasing their self-esteem by seeing the finished product.

# **Rising Stars Course Descriptions**

## **COURSE DESCRIPTIONS**

### **CHEFS IN TRAINING**

This course is designed to prepare students in every area of food service, food production and hospitality. Student will gain knowledge and experience in all aspects of the culinary industry. Through the operations of an on-site restaurant, the students learn to be of service to the public as a waiter/waitress, host/hostess, bus-person and cashier. Through kitchen rotation assignments, the students obtain food production skills in the bakeshop, salad station, and cook station learning various types of cooking styles in the world of food.

### **CORRECTIVE READING**

Students complete an assessment at the beginning of the school year to determine the appropriate reading level for their needs. Assessments are done throughout the year to assess their progress and placement needs. Student's focus on decoding skills, fluency and comprehension through this scientific-research based reading program.

### **CORRECTIVE MATH**

Students are evaluated and progress through a series of math skills. This scientific research-based program focuses on addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, fractions and ratios to meet their level of instruction and address their need.

### **THE STAGE IS YOURS!**

Students develop social skills through the arts. This class will work on students in strengthening their presence with others and in different interpersonal situations. Theatre, Art, Creating Cooking Demonstration Video's, Public Speaking, Salesmanship, Customer Service and Interviewing Skills will all be covered in this class.

## **CAN YOU FEEL IT – PURE RSA! (Hospitality)**

Hospitality is a small skill that can make a world of difference. At RSA, students learn the art of creating an atmosphere that is warm, welcoming and most importantly, clean. Students learn to make beds, wash and fold clothes, iron, cleaning to the standard of a hotel/hospital rooms, manners and etiquette.

## **DO-IT-YOURSELF (DIY)**

Students develop an awareness of tools, the purpose of tools, small self-repairs and building objects. Whether doing repairs around the school, constructing new pieces for other schools, or making items for sale, students receive hands on experience with tools. They also learn how to cut costs and complete simple repairs to incorporate at home

## **GETTING REAL!! (Life Skills)**

Students gain valuable real life experience in various subjects during the year. Learning valuable citizenship lessons and practicing what life is like after 18 years old will consistently be experienced in areas of Money Management, Budgeting, Handling Emergencies, Transportation, Shopping, Personal Hygiene, Internet Safety, Laws, Diversity, and being a good citizen. These getting real experiences will continue to be embedded into all activities and classroom experiences.

## **GOING GREEN!!!**

### **Aquaponics and Microgreens**

The focus is teaching students about organic gardening and where their food comes from (farm to plate). The garden teaches students techniques and processes involved with gardening (example polyculture and companion planting). Knowing how to grow your own food leads to proper nutrition, skills gained and can lead to a secondary income. The aquaponics system focuses on growing food indoors during the cold season, and teaches students about closed loop systems. Students learn that ecosystems relies on variables that are symbiotic in nature.

## **Farming and Gardening**

Students participate in hands-on learning in our 4+ acre garden and handling of our chickens. Students develop and plan the garden layout, the purpose of each item in the garden, hazards of weather and infestations, and harvesting. With the chickens, students are responsible for the daily checking of the general health of the chickens, eggs, feeding and habitat.

## **ARTISAN'S AT WORK**

Within our retail area students will be learning employment skills in various different areas. The focus will begin with product development and continue through with Marketing, Advertising, Salesmanship, and Customer Service for goods that will be created in our Demo room. Cakes, breads, cookies, jams, jellies, canning products, soaps, scrubs and other products will be sold by students in this great learning space.

## **DRIVER'S EDUCATION**

AAA comes to Rising Stars Academy to provide Driver's Education classes to paying students. Students receive a minimum of six hours of on-road instruction, and an additional 24 hours of classroom instruction. A highly qualified instructor certified by the American Driving & Traffic Safety Education Association trains students. There is a fee for this program.

## **WHEELS GO 'ROUND & 'ROUND.**

Transportation for our students is always a struggle. Having a bicycle can help solve this problem and provide independence for them. Within our Bicycle repair classroom students will be learning valuable life and employment skill. Working thru a partnership with Back Alley Bikes, our students will learn how to trouble shoot bicycle problems, and fix them. They will also learn valuable team work, problem solving and get the chance to fix and build bicycles.

# Worksite Training Internships

## OUTSIDE OF RSA WORKSITES:

Students will be placed at off site work training internships based on responsibility, ability and maturity demonstrated within Rising Stars Academy. Parents will be notified of this placement and the schedule when the students will be leaving the building. Transportation will be provided by RSA and students will be traveling with a Para Professional from RSA. Paraprofessionals will monitor students while on site.

**Henry Ford Healthcare:** Training will encompass all areas within Henry Ford Hospital dealing with food service and production.

**Woodside Church Clothing Closet:** Training will encompass all aspects of running a retail store.

**St. Patrick's Church:** Training encompasses food service and catering, while serving senior citizens for lunch.

**BAE Systems:** training in the area of Food Service and Custodial.

**Crest Ford:** training in the area of car detailing and prepping of new vehicles.

## INSIDE RSA WORKSITES:

All students will be placed within an inside RSA work training internships based on rotation within their groups. Parents will be notified of rotations of their student within the Monday Morning Newsletter.

**Café Kitchen:** All areas of food production, prepping, plating, menu development, sanitation and cooking for guests within the Café (Serve Safe)

**Café Restaurant:** All areas within service, includes table maintenance, order taking and serving, cash register, guest satisfaction, and sanitation.

**Farm & Garden:** Maintaining garden, chickens, and green houses on premises. Planting, weeding, harvesting outside, along with planting, maintaining and growing inside with Aquaponics and Microgreens.

**RSA Artisan Outlet:** Maintaining the retail space. Baked goods, canning items, soaps & scrubs, fresh produce (when available). Shirts, sweats, hats, etc



**Mr. Clean Team:** All end of the day maintenance within our building. Sweeping, mopping, vacuuming, dusting, garbage patrol, bathroom cleaning

**Food Processing Plant:** All areas of food processing experience. Students will be trained on how to operate processing equipment, inventory, shipping and receiving.

**Bicycle Repair Retail:** Maintaining the bicycle repair shop retail space. Fixing bikes, repairing and servicing bicycles for customers.

## **APPLICATION PROCESS:**

All students entering Rising Star Academy for the first time must submit:

\*All forms that are located on our website at [www.rising-stars-academy.org](http://www.rising-stars-academy.org)

- Valid Birth Certificate
- Social Security Card
- State I.D. or Driver's License
- Written proof of Immunization
- Most recent IEP
- Current MET and/or Evaluation Review
- F.A.P.E eligibility form
- Official high school transcript

A release of information form is signed for transfer of school documents and other records.

Changes in address or phone numbers during the school year must be reported to the office.

## **ASSESSMENT AND TESTING**

At the beginning of each year students will be given a pre-test of skills through Corrective Reading and Math to determine knowledge level.

IEP hearings will be conducted each year to discuss student goals. The student, parent/ guardian, academy staff and other advocates shall comprise the Transition Team. The student, with input from the other team members, will identify transition goals, which will direct the development of the curriculum for the student.

## **IEP**

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IEP meetings help us communicate students' progress and identify transition goals. Written notices of IEP meetings will be sent as they are scheduled. It is the hope that the invitation date is honored due to the number of special needs students enrolled at Rising Star Academy.

## **SAFETY AND SECURITY**

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Once morning classes begin all doors will be secured at the school. Entry will only be allowed thru the main doors and a buzzer is located for you to signal the main office that you need to enter the building. Students are expected to wear name badges at all times and badges will be left at the school at the end of each day.

It is expected if a student is working on a worksite during the day that they be on time for that job. If a student is going to be late, they must call the front office and notify them (as they should if it was a job), of their time of arrival. If a student does not call, they will likely not be allowed to work their job that day and will be in a classroom.

## **STUDENT CONDUCT**

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School rules are designed for the purpose of student safety, responsibility and organization. Students must be familiar with rules at work-based training sites. Any student who disregards these rules could face consequences:

### **Student Will:**

- Demonstrate positive, non-disruptive behavior at all times which will ensure a positive learning environment and the safety and health of others.
- Respect all staff and students at all times.
- Use positive and appropriate language at all times.
- Demonstrate positive and healthy lifestyle at all times while on school property.
- Respect the property of the school and make appropriate decisions regarding the safety of others.
- Only be on school property during school times or when authorized by staff.
- Utilize cell phones and electronic devices with permission or designated times.
- Respect others personal space and keep hands to themselves.
- Report all inappropriate incidents that may put others in danger, including property damage, bomb threat, arson, possession of weapons or fighting.

## **CONSEQUENCES**

Behavior that impedes learning in class and job performance at work based training site will receive the following consequences:

1. Verbal Warning
2. Office contact to parents for a conference and set up a Behavior Improvement Plan with student.
3. Based on BIP, Suspension from class or work based site for 1-3 days, depending type of behavior. Removal from program may occur if behavior persists and there is lack of cooperation.

Should it be necessary to temporarily separate or suspend a student from school the following process will take place:

1. A student shall be fully informed of the infraction and discipline
2. Upon suspension, a parent/guardian will be contacted. A conference may be requested.
3. Verbal notification may be followed with a written communication to the parent/guardian. A copy of the letter shall be placed in the student's file

## **SCHOOL DAY TIMES**

The school day will be from 8:15 – 3:00 daily. \* see daily rotation on back page.

## **ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES**

Rising Star Academy's attendance policies and practices encouraged student's success and in doing so enforce daily attendance for all students. Good attendance promotes student learning of good habits for preparation for employment. To report an absence, the students or parent/guardian must call the office on the day of the absence during normal school hours. An answering machine will be available for messages after hours.

If an absence is not reported, staff will attempt to contact the students or parent/guardian. After 5 consecutive absences, a notification will be sent to the parent/guardian. If absences are not related to illnesses or have not received administrative approval, the student and parent/guardian will be requested to attend a conference before the student returns to school. Absences relating to illness more than 5 days will necessitate a doctor's note. If the student needs to leave during the instructional day, he/she must sign out at the office.

## **STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Attend all classes on time and prepared to learn.
- Attend work-based training on time and ready to work.
- Notify the office of upcoming absences or need to leave early.

## **SCHOOL CLOSING PROCEDURES**

For the safety of students the Superintendent may close school if hazardous weather or building conditions warrant such action.

Each student should have on file in the office an emergency contact number if school closes during school hours, and if parent/guardian is not available.

School closings will be announced on television on channels 2, 4, and 7 (between 5:00 and 6:00 a.m.)

## **EMERGENCY MEDICAL INFORMATION**

A listing of all medications for each student must be on file in the school office.

Any changes in health or conditions or medications must be made in writing. Any medication taken at school must be in the original pharmacy bottle and clearly labeled with name and dosage.

## **URGENT MEDICAL ATTENTION/ACCIDENTS**

Students needing immediate medical attention, i.e.: seizures, cuts, fractures, burns and other urgent medical problems – Rising Star staff will contact 911 and the family respectively.

At the beginning of each year all students are to sign and return the “Hold Harmless” agreement to the office. Anyone injured during school hours or while participating in school sponsored activities must report the injury to a staff person immediately.

An accident report is filed out and parents are notified of the incident. If the injury requires medical attention, the parent/guardian will be asked to pick up the student at school or a medical facility.

## **LUNCHES**

Rising Stars Academy is part of the National School and Nutrition Program. Students will be required to fill out U.S Government Free and Reduced lunch applications to pay for the food for breakfast and lunch. Our meal service will abide by federal nutrition guidelines for all students. Once your eligibility is determined for the lunch program, you will receive a notice of your standings for free or reduced meal prices.

## **SMART BUS CARDS**

As part of our mission at Rising Star Academy, independence and employment are goals. One of the best ways we can prepare our students for independent life is to give them exposure to public transportation. Smart Bus has a program that your child may qualify for with respect to receiving free – door to door service for your student. Applications are available in our main office.

## **STUDENTS SUPPLIES**

Rising Stars Academy recommends the following supplies: binder, dividers, pen, pencil and paper. Students will store any extra belongings in their locker. All locks for lockers will be supplied by Rising Stars Academy

Rising Stars Academy also requires that each student purchase a chef coat and hat for working in the kitchen and the restaurant. There will be a list of stores with discounted prices available at registration. Students will also need to have a change of clothes at the school for working in the garden. We also recommended blue jeans, t-shirt and sweatshirt, as well as boots, or old tennis shoes for garden work. Please have all clothes labeled with permanent marker.

## **DRESS AND GROOMING**

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Rising Star Academy prides itself in having well groomed students. Students are expected to dress as they would for employment. Students are expected to present themselves in a manner that will reflect the employment preparation atmosphere of our program.

Students should show neatness and cleanliness.

- Cleanliness and overall hygiene should be practiced at all times. Hair should be clean, combed and out of eyes
- All students are required to wear black, rubber-soled, non-skid shoes
- Clothing must be worn properly
- Pants: Solid color (black) and “docker” style pants or clean jeans
- All pants must be hemmed
- Pants must fit properly and cannot be more than one size too big. Shorts are not acceptable due to training site dress codes
- Prohibited: No flair legs, No spandex, No warm-up suits, No sagging, No holes, cuts or tears are permitted.

### **Consequences:**

- 1st offense: Warning to the student
- 2nd offense: No employment; home

# **COMMUNITY BASED INSTRUCTION**

Community Based Instruction is not a field trip. It is:

- Learning experiences that take place outside of the school in community settings.
- Learning experiences that help students gain functional skill for everyday life.

This process helps students apply learned skills in locations where the skills are actually required in real-life situations. The CBI sites serve as an extension of the classroom and enhance the exploration, training and assessment opportunities of students. Teachers will integrate CBI in the curriculum when the attention involves this experience. Teachers will inform you and your student when a CBI is scheduled during the day.

\*\*All students are required to apply for a SMART bus card in order to attend CBI

# **ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

Cell phone, and all other electronic devices are not used and should be kept "off" during school hours. The use of phones (texting) is inappropriate during instructional time in class and at the job site.

# **TRANSITION TIME**

Students will attend "mentoring time" for 15 minutes each week with their assigned para-professional.

During this time, students will work with their paraprofessional and dialogue about their IEP goal progress. In addition this time will give the students and provider an opportunity to connect with each other.

## Daily Schedule

Time	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
8:15 -9:15 am	Demo M-F	Life Skills M-W-F DIY – T-TH	Reading M-W-F Math T-TH
9:15 – 10:15 am	Reading M-W-F Math T-TH	Demo M-F	Demo M-F
10:15 – 10:45 am	Life Skills M-W-F DIY – T-TH	Reading M-W-F Math T-TH	Life Skills M-W-F DIY – T-TH
10:45 – 11:15 am	Lunch	½ Lunch – ½ Exercise	Exercise
11:15 – 11:45 am	Exercise	½ lunch – ½ Exercise	Lunch
11:45 – 12:40 pm	Garden M-W-F Hospitality T-TH	Art/Theatre M-W-F Cooking Demo T-TH	Bake Shop M-F
12:40 – 1:35 pm	Bake Shop M-F	Garden M-W-F Hospitality T-TH	Art/Theatre M-W-F Cooking Demo T-TH
1:35 - 2:25 pm	Art/Theatre M-W-F Cooking Demo T-TH	Bake Shop M-F	Garden M-W-F Hospitality T-TH
2:25 – 2:45 pm	Cleaning Work time Research/Jour- nal time	Cleaning Work time Research/Journal time	Cleaning Work time Research/Jour- nal time

### POLICY OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

In compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and the Americans with Disability Act of 1990, it will be the policy of the proposed Rising Stars Academy that no person shall, on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin or ancestry, gender, disability, age, height, weight, or marital status be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination during any program, activity, service, or in employment.

It will be the policy of the proposed Rising Stars Academy not to discriminate on the basis of sex or handicap in admission or access to, treatment or employment in its programs and activities. The Rising Stars Academy will periodically review its educational and employment programs and activities to assure compliance with Title IX and Section 504.