

NEW DIRECTIONS

ALTERNATIVE HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM



Student and Parent Handbook

2023-2024 School Year

Creating Choice. Crafting Character. Cultivating Community

Contact Information

- Address: 750 E. Riley Drive Avondale, AZ 85323
- Front Office Telephone: (623) 932-7141
- **Belinda Ward, Administrator**
 - Phone: (623) 932-7142
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- **Madison Peoples, School Counselor**
 - Phone: (623) 932-7047
 - Email: mpeoples@aguafria.org
- **Clerk**

Phone: (623) 932-7141

Email:
- **Bell Schedule**

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday

PERIOD	TIME
HOMEROOM	8 : 45 - 9 : 04
1	9 : 05 - 10 : 03
2	10 : 04 - 11 : 02
3	11 : 03 - 12 : 01
LUNCH	12 : 02 - 12 : 32
4	12 : 33 - 1 : 30

Wednesday

PERIOD	TIME
HOMEROOM	8:45-9:04
1	9:05-9:45
2	9:46-10:31
3	10:32-11:17
4	11:18-12:00
LUNCH	Grab and Go!

Our Mission

The mission of New Directions is to provide a safe, positive, and individualized program that supports the behavioral and social emotional needs of our students. Students will participate in an academic program that includes a motivational behavioral management system. The staff at New Directions will teach students effective strategies to help them succeed both inside and outside of the school setting; however, the responsibility of this success ultimately lies with the student.

Handbook Overview

Students and parents should read the handbook carefully and ask questions about any items that are not clear. Students will be held accountable for their actions. Students and parents/guardians will sign the contract at the back of the handbook indicating that they have read and understood New Directions' expectations.

Program Goals

1. To provide a positive and encouraging learning environment that meets the unique needs of each individual student.
2. To model and teach students how to “level up” so that they may earn, and keep, their transition back to their home campus.
3. To model and teach students how to advocate for themselves and their needs appropriately.
4. To prepare students to be college and/or career ready.
5. To assist students in developing coping and problem solving skills that allow them to meet life’s challenges in a healthy and positive manner.
6. To maintain open, positive communication and partnership between students, families, staff (New Directions, home campuses, and district), and community agencies.
7. To help students develop personal responsibility and accountability.
8. To help students create a realistic and positive self-image.
9. To encourage and teach students the importance of having respect for authority.

General Information

Students will be met by staff members in the bus loop east of the Agua Fria High School campus as they arrive daily. Students who arrive after school has started, must report to the New Directions’ Administrative Office to be checked in. Students will be escorted to their bus at the end of the school day where they will leave campus for the day.

Students are to leave campus immediately, loitering on campus or in nearby neighborhoods will not be allowed.

*Any changes to a student’s regular mode of transportation needs to be called in to the school by the student’s parent/guardian as soon as possible. This includes students being picked up by a family member, a student walking home for the day or a student not riding the bus they are scheduled to ride on. No transportation changes will be permitted without parent/guardian notification.

Attendance

New Directions Alternative Program adheres to the Agua Fria Union High School District calendar and attendance policy. Attendance will be reported daily and students are expected to be in school every day. Students will be excused due to personal illness, death of a family member, observation of a religious holiday, court or other legal proceedings.

If a student is absent more than 6 days (excused or unexcused) in one quarter, he/she runs the risk of not earning credit per the program policy. If a student does lose credit he/she can apply for a credit appeal. *Each credit bearing block will consist of nine weeks of academic instruction.*

When a student has to miss school, a parent or guardian must notify the office as soon as possible. Please call the New Directions office at **(623)-932-7141**.

***A STUDENT'S ABSENCE WILL BE CONSIDERED UNEXCUSED UNTIL WE HEAR FROM A PARENT OR GUARDIAN. ***

If a parent or guardian has not excused the absence within 2 days, the absence will remain unexcused. Students who are unexcused will not earn participation points for the day, which will have an impact on their progression through the level system. All missed academic work is expected to be completed upon return.

Tardiness

All students are expected to be in class by the start of their first period. Students who arrive after this time will not earn participation/academic points for the amount of time missed. Tardies will be excused if there has been a bus transportation problem or if parents or guardians call the school or send a note explaining the tardy. All excused tardies will not count against the student on their daily point sheet. Chronic tardiness or absences may result in a loss of academic credit and/or a review of placement with parents/guardians. They may also be referred to Juvenile Court for truancy or possibly dropped per district policy.

Check-In Procedure

Every student will be checked in daily and all will be required to do the following:

- Empty all pockets and remove all personal items (this includes cell phones, all money and smartwatches). Cell phones must be turned off upon check-in.
- Take off shoes for inspection
- Take down hoodies (they may put them back up once they are cleared)
- Wanded (searching for metal objects and contraband)
- Pat down (if wand keeps beeping after pockets have been emptied and/or if it appears that there is still an item that has not been checked in)

Few other notes about check in procedure:

- Personal items that are checked in will be secured in a locked place and will be given back to students at the end of the school day.
- Hats, beanies, ski masks, gaiters, bandanas, purses, backpacks, bags, and money are not permitted in the classroom. They must be checked in prior to admission to the classroom.
- All items brought onto campus will be searched.** New Directions is not responsible for anything students bring onto campus. This includes lost, damaged, or stolen items.
- Students may not bring more than \$100 with them to school; if more than \$100 is brought, it will be held for a parent/guardian to pick up from administration. This check-in procedure is for the safety and well-being of all students.
- If cell phones or electronic devices are seen or heard they will be confiscated. Confiscated items will be returned to the student at the end of the day on their first offense. Repeated offenses will require a parent/guardian to pick up the confiscated item(s).
- Students are allowed to bring in food/drinks **for their personal consumption only** if it is intended for breakfast and/or lunch. Sharing is not allowed. All items must be sealed prior to entering the campus and may not contain glass or aluminum cans.

Random Searches

From time to time, when there is probable cause, random searches will be conducted. These searches are done to insure the safety and well-being of all students and staff at New Directions. These searches may include, but are not limited to emptying pockets, socks, shoes, hoodies, and waist-bands.

Breakfast/Lunch

The cost for breakfast is \$2.00 and lunch \$3.25. If the student qualifies for the free and reduced lunch program, breakfast is \$0.00/ lunch \$0.40.

- To set up online lunch accounts, visit <https://www.aguafria.org/Page/5518>
- Free/Reduced Lunch Online Application <https://family.titank12.com/>

Students may bring their lunch, for personal consumption only, if they wish to do so. Lunches will be stored in a separate location and will be given to the student during lunch time. Students are only permitted to eat/drink during their scheduled breakfast/lunch break or during special classroom or school events. If, for medical reasons, a student must have a snack during the day, a note from a medical doctor must be submitted. ***Services like Uber Eats, Door Dash, and other online food service orders, are not permitted.***

Curriculum and Grades

New Directions curriculum is aligned to the State of Arizona Academic Standards. The teachers will provide instruction including individualized accommodations as specified by the student's Individual Education Plan. Grades earned while at New Directions will be transferred to the student's home school at the end of the semester.

In order to remain consistent with the rest of the district, final grades will be based upon the following:

- **Student academic performance and how they are making progress through the Arizona State Standards.**
- **Performance on Professional Standards (Collaboration and Communication)**

District-Wide Grading Scale

Grading Scale			
A+	<i>Mastery</i>	100%	Demonstrates complete and masterful work by effectively and flexibly applying understanding and skills of the assessed standard.
A	<i>Highly Proficient</i>	95%	
B	<i>Proficient</i>	85%	Demonstrates proficient work by communicating a meaningful understanding and skills of the assessed standard.
C	<i>Partially Proficient</i>	75%	Demonstrates an ability to communicate an urgent understanding of the assessed standard. Some gaps in understanding or skill application exist.
D	<i>Minimally Proficient</i>	65%	Demonstrates significant gaps in understanding and/or skills in the assessed standard. Guidance and practice are necessary in order to progress.
F	<i>Not Proficient</i>	50%	Too little or no work submitted to show evidence of the assessed standard.
M	<i>No Attempt</i>	40%	No attempt was made.

Dress Code

In order to accomplish the prescribed goals of the New Directions Alternative High School Program, it is necessary to create an atmosphere that is conducive to learning and teaching, as well as preparing students to be able to follow dress codes for a comprehensive campus and future place of employment. The following are examples of clothing that are **inappropriate**:

- **Halters, backless, or strapless tops. Bralettes may not be used as outer garments.**
- **Tops that are deeply narrowly cut in the back, under the arms, or front to expose cleavage.**
- **Midriffs that are exposed by more than one hand width.**
- **Hats, beanies, other headgear (gaiters, ski masks, bandanas), and sunglasses will be checked in.**
- **Exposed Undergarments**
- **See-Through Clothing**
- **Shorts, Skirts or Dresses that do not cover the buttocks while sitting or standing;**
- **Clothing, accessories and/or head coverings which identify or have been altered to identify and/or are associated with with gang related/illegal activity**
- **Clothing that portrays racial statements, profane language or inflammatory language, and/or sexual depiction/innuendo.**
- **Accessories that can be used as a weapon, such as chains, spiked rings and/or collars, and anything that is distracting to the learning environment.**
- **Clothing that advertises or advocates the use of alcohol, illegal substances, marijuana, sex or tobacco.**

Students wearing inappropriate clothing to school are given the opportunity to change clothing from option here at New Directions, or turn the inappropriate clothing inside out before they return to the classroom environment. Parents/guardians may be notified if

students are not in compliance. For more detailed information regarding expectation for clothing and appearance, please see the district policy.

Closed Campus

The New Directions Program is a “Closed Campus”. Students are not permitted to leave school property during the school day without following the proper procedures and signing out at the attendance office. *School property shall include all sidewalks, parking lots, athletic fields and bus stops.* Students are not permitted to leave campus for lunch. All students, **even those 18 years old**, must follow proper procedures for leaving campus. Should a student leave campus without permission, parents are contacted, school staff is notified, and if necessary, police will be called.

Weapons/Drugs/Tobacco

District policy is strictly enforced regarding the transport of, or use of, illegal substances or the transport of weapons on campus. In all instances of such activity, the police will be called immediately and the parents will be notified. Further action will follow district policy. District policy states there is no smoking, vaping, nor drug use on school property. At New Directions we adhere to this policy. If staff find smoking or vaping materials, the contraband will be confiscated and destroyed; this includes lighters. Parents will be notified.

Use of Movies/Films

During the course of the school day, your student may be presented with the option of watching a movie during lunch or during Behavioral Reinforcement (Fria) time. These movies will be rated G, PG, or PG-13. In addition, academically related films may be used to supplement curriculum that has been derived from the state standards. Some of these educational films will have been published for educational use. Some curriculum based movies are rated R. In this case, a permission slip will be signed home indicating the movie and the rationale for using it in the classroom.

Behavior Management System

A behavior management system is a form of behavior modification designed to increase desirable behavior and decrease undesirable behavior through the use of points. New Directions is based on a 5 level behavioral system. Each day the student is present at school, they will have the opportunity to earn points. Points are earned by engaging in academic work, complying with staff directions, maintaining respectful behavior, and making progress on behavior goals that are written in IEPs.

Students will also have the opportunity to earn Compass Cash. Each time a student progresses to the next week of the level system, they are eligible to receive Compass Cash. With Compass Cash, students will be able to choose from a variety of incentives (snack, bonus points on an assignment, technology time during lunch, outside time with staff during lunch, sensory/fidget item, etc). Students will then place their Compass Cash in a designated box within the classroom for a monthly drawing. Some stipulations regarding compass cash are as follows:

- Compass Cash must be used the same day it is awarded.
- Compass Cash is given at the discretion of the Program Coordinator

Counseling

Students at New Directions will have a variety of options for counseling and behavioral support. The counselor will be available to assist students in resolving academic, vocational, personal and social difficulties by offering alternatives, listening, and referring students to other agencies that may help. Specific to our program, behavioral management and interventions are an integral part of our campus and are provided throughout the classroom and individually for all students.

Advisory

Once per week, students will participate in an advisory classroom lesson where the lesson will focus on Social Emotional Learning, vocational orientation, social skills, high school success and more.

Small Groups

Small groups are offered to all students who wish to participate. Students who participate in small group will have a group once per week, depending on student needs to determine the topic. All groups are led by the school counselor and another trained staff member.

Individual Needs

All students have access to the school counselor for 1:1 meetings. Students may meet with the school counselor weekly or set appointments 24 hours in advance whenever they wish. Individual counseling will work to specifically address student concerns, areas of growth and provide space for students to flourish. Individualized counseling with the school counselor should not take the place of outside therapeutic interventions, but will work as a collaborative add on for student support. If the student receives outside interventions, the school counselor can act as a school liaison in CFT meetings or child support meetings to ensure school compliance for student needs.

Progression through the Level System

A student's progress through the level system is determined by a weekly point average. Students move from one step to the next as their weekly point average meets the duration and percentage criteria. A week is defined as five days of attended school. Unexcused absences will result in zero points earned for the day. New students will enter New Directions on Level 2. The steps progress as follows:

Level	Duration in Weeks	Percentage Needed
1	2	80%
2	3	85%
3	4	90%
4	4	95%
5	Transitional	95%+

Lack of weekly progress:

When students do not earn the required percentage of points to progress each week, the following will result:

1st Week Not Meeting Points	Repeat Week
2nd Week Not Meeting Points (Consecutive)	2 week drop
3rd Week Not Meeting Points (Consecutive)	4 week drop

In-School-Suspension (ISS)/ Out-Of-School-Suspension (OSS)

ISS and OSS Level and Week drops will be determined by administration on a case-by-case basis.

Level Privileges

As the students progress through each level, they will earn increased privileges and responsibilities. The following is a suggested list of privileges for each level, and teachers may add other privileges they feel are appropriate upon the prior approval of the program director.

<u>Level One</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• None	<u>Level Two</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fria Room• IPAD during free time
<u>Level Three</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• All Level 2 Privileges• With teacher permission, they may use chromebook and headphone use for music only (audio), no videos nor Youtube	<u>Level Four</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• All Level 2 and 3 Privileges• May go on Youtube, but no music videos• May use school provided gaming system during Fria time• Eligible to participate in field trips
<u>Level Five</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• All Level 2, 3, and 4 Privileges<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No longer need to be escorted around campus• After 2 weeks of still meeting points, they will no longer need point sheet<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transition Meeting will be scheduled with home campus	

Fria Time

Fria Time is part of the positive behavioral modification program for New Directions. This program is scheduled for each classroom once per week. Students are able to listen to music, play board games, video games, draw, paint, read, socialize and participate in outdoor activities. The activities that are completed during Fria are per teacher discretion. **Students must be passing all classes and be on levels 2-5 in order to attend “Fria”.** If a student is sent to ALA the day before and/or the day of their scheduled “Fria” time, they will lose this incentive time and remain in the classroom for academic interventions.

Disciplinary Actions

<u>Type of Behaviors</u>	<u>Examples</u>	<u>Possible Actions Taken</u>
Level I	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Non-compliance● Defiance *not as severe behaviors*	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Deduction of Points● Step Out/Check-In● ALA (description on next page)● Lunch Detention● Before/After School Detention
Level II	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Fighting● Threatening● Verbal/Physical Abuse● Sexual Misconduct● Lewd Behavior● Self Harming● Repeated Level I behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Before/After School Detention● Saturday School (8:00 - 11:00 am)● In-School Suspension● Out-of-School Suspension● Level Drop● Use of ACES/FBI Program● Change of Placement● Law Enforcement if necessary

Step Out/Check In

In the event that a student is prompted multiple times during one class period for the same level I behavior, classroom staff may remove the student from the classroom to complete a Check In. The purpose of the Check In is for the student to problem solve with the staff the barriers they are having in meeting classroom/behavioral expectations as well as provide a time for them to regroup and refocus with a staff member. Students may still lose points on their daily sheet and are expected to return to the classroom for the remainder of the period.

Alternative Learning Area (ALA)

ALA is a learning environment, apart from the classroom, managed by behavior staff, where self-regulated learning can continue. Students can request to go to ALA for a break if they need a quiet environment to decompress. If students request to go to ALA for a break, they will not lose points.

ALA will also be used when de-escalation is necessary, when classroom disruption has continued or when determined necessary by staff. A student sent to ALA is treated similar to an office referral in that they will not be able to return to class for the remainder of the class period. Students will only be allowed to return to classes once they have processed out with the staff member with whom they had the altercation with and have taken responsibility for their actions. If students are sent to ALA for disruption, they will lose all of their points for that class period.

Continued Level I behavior may result in in-school suspension to be served for part of a school day, out of school suspension, behavioral level loss, or use of the ACES FBI program. In general, continued repetitive misbehavior will result in removal to an Alternative Learning Area (ALA) and loss of weekly incentive points while in ALA. Staff may determine that immediate ALA is necessary for any infraction, to provide the best solution for a given behavior. **Two or more ALA days within the same week may result in before/after school detention, Saturday School, In-School Suspension or the use of the ACES FBI program.**

Emergency Behavioral Measures

Situations occasionally arise in which extremely dangerous inappropriate behavior will require crisis management procedures to prevent harm to an individual and/or others. It is important to distinguish between planned intervention intended to modify behavior and emergency procedures. When a student presents as a danger to self or others, staff may determine if it is necessary to maintain safety through the use of physical intervention.

The staff at New Directions is trained in procedures regarding crisis intervention and management. Physical intervention will be used as a last resort when students are in danger of harming themselves or others. The Avondale/Goodyear Police Department or other law enforcement will be notified if laws are broken and arrest/referral to law enforcement is deemed appropriate by staff. Use of emergency interventions will be documented. The use of restraints will follow the Federal Restraint Regulations. (PL 106-310).

In addition Arizona state law (ARS 15-507) states that students shall not intimidate or physically abuse staff. School personnel may use reasonable physical force to protect themselves, other personnel, students, school, and personal property (ARS 15-843).

New Directions Alternative High School Program

Student Code of Conduct Contract

This is an agreement between the student, parent/guardian, and the staff at New Directions. This contract will explain the expectations of the student while attending New Directions. This program is designed for the student and cooperation is needed to make it succeed. For acceptance into the program, the student must demonstrate a serious interest, desire, and commitment to learn.

Collaboration and partnership between New Directions staff and families is also a vital part of success that our students will have. It is highly encouraged and appreciated that parents/guardians assist in the student's education at New Directions by reviewing daily point sheets, monitoring completion of school work, attending parent-teacher conferences and IEP meetings when given sufficient notice.

By signing this document, the student and parent/guardian indicate that they have reviewed the New Directions Handbook and are aware of its content and policies.

Student Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date
