



# Propel

Student Handbook

2017-2018

## A MESSAGE FROM OUR TEAM

Welcome to the 2017-18 school year! We look forward to the educational journey that you will take both inside and outside of the classroom this year. As always, safe and secure learning environments will provide the foundation for high levels of teaching, learning, and student engagement.

PROPEL is committed to continuous improvement and will build on recent advances in safety and security through physical, technological, staffing, training, and procedural changes. But each of us who makes up Team PROPEL – students, families, community members, and staff – plays an important role.

This handbook offers students essential information about our expectations for student behavior and steps we will take when issues arise. In addition, the handbook describes how PROPEL fosters character development and promotes positive student behavior. A wide cross-section of Team PROPEL came together to develop this handbook, and great care has been taken to ensure that PROPEL behavioral and discipline policies are in the best interest of student learning and wellbeing.

Please review this handbook to understand the purpose of school, the value of education, and the importance of positive behavior. Through this program you will discover your talents and interests, make friends, and develop as an individual and future citizen during the years you spend with us. We know that you share our commitment to fostering this positive growth and development.

We look forward to a great year!

**Gregg Francis, MBA, CPA**  
Executive Director

**Shaena Fray**  
Educational Program Director

**Drew Gaut**  
Operations and Logistics Director

**Betsy Levy**  
Program Administrator

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## HISTORY AND MISSION

PROPEL Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization operating in Boca Raton, Florida. It was founded in 2004 by a small group of Boca Raton business people and community leaders to be an afterschool drop-in center. We aimed to create a safe and supportive environment for kids to spend their afternoons and evenings. Overtime, our program grew to include sports and community activities. In the June of 2015, PROPEL moved into its current 8,000 square foot location, equipped with classrooms, a cafeteria, a game room, and a kitchen.

It is our mission at PROPEL to promote education, character, and leadership through mentorship, apprenticeship, and life skills training. We hope to see all of our dedicated students go to college, trade school, or the skilled labor market after they graduate from high school. PROPEL aspires to expand opportunities and improve the quality of life and we adopt the values of commitment, integrity and respect through mind, body and spirit.



## HOURS OF OPERATION



### **Office Hours**

Monday - Thursday 9am-7pm  
Friday 9am-3pm

### **Middle School/High School HUB Hours**

Monday - Thursday 4pm-7pm

### **College HUB Hours**

Monday - Friday 9am-3pm

# PROPEL Non-Discrimination Policy

PROPEL promotes inclusiveness and non-discrimination in all aspects of our organization's staffing, programs, services and operations. To implement this non-discrimination policy, the Board and staff of PROPEL are committed to taking meaningful steps to promote inclusiveness in hiring, retention, and promotion of staff; in Board recruitment; and, in direct client services, our Agency will ensure non-discrimination against any individual on the basis of race, gender, ethnicity, religion, national origin or sexual orientation.

## PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

PROPEL offers many educational opportunities to prepare its students to be industrious, creative, caring and productive citizens as well as lifelong learners. The academic, career, social, and emotional needs of all students are best met when there is a cooperative approach among the program staff, students, and parents. This Student Handbook was designed to help students understand their rights, responsibilities, and behavioral expectations so that they can enjoy learning in safe and orderly environments.

Positive behavior in this program is extremely important to the maintenance of safe and orderly learning environments for all students. Positive behavior displayed at PROPEL increases the chances that students will reach expected outcomes.

Several different strategies may be employed by PROPEL members to teach, practice, and reinforce the program wide code of conduct, rules, and expectations for student behavior. Each student is expected to adhere to the PROPEL's code of conduct and follow all routines, regulations, and procedures.

Please see our programs and services below:

### **Tutor Based "HUB" Programs**

- **Grammiticians** - Providing tutoring and teaching in English.
- **Equation Station** - Providing tutoring and teaching in mathematics.
- **1600 SAT Drive** - Providing SAT/ACT tutoring and preparation materials.

- **General Studies** – Providing tutoring in the sciences, liberal arts and elective courses.
- **College Hub** – Providing college students with tutors, resources, resume-writing seminars, and job preparation training.

### **Elective Programs**

- **“Bonding Over Books”** - Many students have not been exposed to the joy of reading; this program is designed to help students find this passion. Every two months, this program gives out a book to read and analyze. They meet regularly throughout the term to discuss their findings. The discussions incorporate literary terms and grammatical structures into their everyday reading.
- **Technology** - Students have the option to utilize this program to increase their knowledge of programs such as Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, Publisher, Excel, and other general computer knowledge. These skills are need for current studies, college, and a variety of occupations.
- **Fine Arts** - Through outlets such as music, dance, painting, and martial arts, we encourage students to express themselves. The fine arts can improve a student’s self-esteem, teach them about diversity, and helps students think outside of the box.
- **BAM – “Body and Mind Recreation Program”** - Providing exercise education and physical training through sports, weight lifting, and team activities.

### **Leadership Programs**

- **Elite Leadership Academy** - Providing leadership skills through seminars, projects, apprenticeships, and service learning.
- **Student Council** - This council consists of a president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, and historian. The main goal of the council is to ensure that the voice of

the students are heard; this group represents the student body as a whole. Every August, students hold an election to choose their representatives. This group of leaders designates meeting times throughout the school year. The President creates an agenda for each meeting. The Secretary provides minutes, recording discussions. The council creates a budget, maintained by the Treasurer, to work with for each semester. It is up to them to figure out how to use these funds to benefit everyone. The Historian advertises all upcoming events to the general body and takes pictures to preserve memories.

- **Life Skills 101** - PROPEL offers services to make our students as well rounded as possible. There are many tools needed for success that are not typically learned in schools. Students struggle in areas such as time management, money management, study skills, resume writing, and interviewing. The life skill and leadership sessions prepare students for tasks they will encounter after graduation and throughout life.
- **“WDT” - We Dine Together** - Student-led project to promote acceptance and camaraderie in local high schools by inviting all people to eat together.

### **Wrap Around Services**

Our goal at PROPEL is to provide our students with a plan that develops good decision-making habits for a lifetime. Please see our wrap around services below:

- **Filling the Gap** - Providing healthy meals and nutritional education, Mondays through Thursdays, to promote healthy eating habits.
- **Calling All Vans** – PROPEL provides year round transportation to and from all programs and services
- **Mentorship** - This community is full of knowledgeable leaders who want to help our students succeed. Through mentorship, PROPEL is able to provide that link. Mentors are chose through a process that determines like minds, hobbies, and ambitions. Our mentors challenge our students to think beyond “what is” and venture out into the “what could be”.
- **I’m Your Dividend** - Students have the ability to earn scholarships to aide them through their higher education. Scholarship determinations are based upon the following: attendance, grades, SAT/ACT scores, character, program participation and timely completion of college application requirements.
- **Uniting Families Through Education** - A multigenerational approach towards achieving higher education through scholarship, by parent and child enrolling in

college simultaneously with the intent of creating more options and opportunities for all.

- **Individualized Educational Planning (IEP)** - Providing an individualized plan for students going through high school and beyond. The planning is an advisory tool for the students as to which high school courses will most challenge them. Furthermore, the IEP will advise students as to colleges that are highly ranked in their prospective majors as well as suggesting schools for application based on their high school performance.
- **Health Services** - If the mind, body, and spirit are in full health, students have a much better chance at achieving their goals. PROPEL is able to set up eye exams and orthodontic appointments. Our goal is to establish good habits now that can be practiced throughout their years.

## CHARACTER EDUCATION

Character development is an important element of PROPEL's continuous program improvement process. Character development is to be included in all instructional programs for all students. The exercising of good character is expected of all staff and students because it is a powerful means of developing and reinforcing positive character in all facets of life.

Character development includes the study and practical application of ethics and codes of conduct acceptable for society. It provides opportunities to develop skills necessary to determine right from wrong, understand consequences, and make appropriate choices. Developing good character should be an ongoing process. The following are PROPEL's character objectives:

1. To develop the wisdom and good judgment to make reasoned/informed decisions.
2. To develop a sense of justice that is founded on fairness, honesty, and civility.
3. To develop and demonstrate respect for self, respect for others, and respect for property.
4. To demonstrate and exercise tolerance and understanding of others regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, disability, national origin, religion, creed, socioeconomic status, marital status, pregnancy, personal record, sexual orientation, or political belief.
5. To demonstrate compassion for others through the development of empathy, kindness, and service.
6. To demonstrate discipline and responsibility by exhibiting self-control and the willingness to admit mistakes, learn from them and correct them.
7. To develop a positive attitude that reflects hope, enthusiasm, flexibility, and appreciation.

8. To demonstrate pride in oneself and others by doing the best for self, family, school, and community and by respecting the achievements of others.
9. To exhibit personal and academic integrity through honesty, hard work and always trying to reach one's potential.



## **PROPEL STUDENT COUNCIL**

### **What is a Student Council?**

A Student Council is a representative structure for students only, through which they can become involved in the affairs of PROPEL, working in partnership with PROPEL directors and staff for the benefit of PROPEL and its students.

Usually the student council works with a director, who is the link person between students and staff and the Chief Executive Director, at PROPEL.

### **Aim of the Student Council**

The aim of the Student Council is to promote the interests of PROPEL and the involvement of students in the affairs of the PROPEL in cooperation with the directors, parents and tutors. The council will provide a forum to enhance student participation in the life of PROPEL.

### **Student Council Activities**

- To represent the views of the student body to the Directors, Executive Director, tutors, students and parents.
- To organize and effective communication system e.g. newsletter.
- Assist with mentoring / induction of new students.
- Assist in school activities: sporting, learning, cultural, liturgical, extra-curricular and leadership.
- Organize or assist with fund-raising / charitable work.

### **Election Process**

- Interested students running for Student Council should submit their name to the Chief Executive Officer or the Education Director. The student will be given a Student Council Application form to complete and return.
- Voting will be by secret ballot.
- It is the intention of the Student Council to begin elections as early as possible in the school year generally aiming for some day in the second or third full week.
- Election results are displayed at PROPEL.
- PROPEL Educational Director must keep the voting papers.
- If a member leaves for any reason voting papers will be used to decide the next closest for council seat depending on their own level of interest and suitability as judged by the council.
- All members agreeing to terms of office must sign a contract indicating that they will serve for the year.
- Elections will take place at beginning of Fall semester, date to be determined by the Educational Director and notification given to everyone.

### **Liaison Director**

- Attends Student Council meeting.
- Acts as a link between staff members and the council.
- Has a voice but not a vote.
- Is a source of information.
- Can take notes to complement the secretary's minutes.
- To be a support to the council when needed and to be active when called upon.
- To inform all members of relevant information (training etc.).
- In the event of difficulties with the Student Council and Liaison Director the Executive Director is to be contacted.

### **Meetings**

- Be chaired by President or Liaison Director.
- Minutes to be taken by secretary and meetings to be notified by the secretary. (Good practice is to decide next meeting at meeting).
- Meetings should be held twice a month.
- Must have a minimum of 14 members for a meeting to take place.
- There must be 4 members present for voting.
- Meetings are pre-decided day and time to suit Student Council and Liaison Director.

- Voting of officers happens at the first meeting, elected by members. Officers are not specific to senior students.
- First meeting should take place after training.
- Officers: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and Historian.
- The Liaison Director and the Secretary should draw up the agenda prior to the meeting. Additions from student council members or any director should be given before the meeting.
- Decisions are taken on majority vote.
- The President has the casting vote.
- All issues discussed must be treated with discretion and confidentiality.
- Minutes are accurate and do not reflect names.

### **Discipline and Removal of Student Council Members**

- Non- attendance at 3 consecutive meetings without a valid reason (no appeal).
- Regular non-involvement in Student Council activities.
- If a student leaves PROPEL.
- If a student is suspended from PROPEL.
- If the Student Council issues a warning (1 chance).
- If a member acts inappropriately in a meeting or uses their council membership inappropriately.

### **Removal Process**

- The President must receive any complaints. (If complaint is about the Chairperson it goes to the Liaison Teacher).
- Council issues warning or action if needed.
- Result of action is decided by council and is final.
- Replacement member will be selected if needed (time of year) from the same year so that all groups are represented.

### **Roles**

This council consists of a president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, and historian. The main goal of the council is to ensure that the voice of the students is heard; this group represents the student body as a whole. Every August, students hold an election to choose their representatives. This group of leaders establishes meeting times throughout the school year.

- The President will create an agenda for each meeting.
- The Vice President will work in concert with the President in the oversight and completion of projects, programs, and services. The Vice

President will assume the role of President in the event of the President's absence.

- The Secretary records minutes and will provides a transcript of said minutes to the Executive Council and to the members of PROPEL.
- The Treasurer will be responsible for the budget, disbursement and collection of funds along with the Liaison Director.
- The Historian advertises all upcoming events to the general body and takes pictures to preserve memories.

## TECHNOLOGY ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY FOR STUDENTS

Technology extends the classroom beyond the campus by providing access to information resources on local, state, national, international, and commercial electronic networks. Students shall have access to available program technology resources for educational purposes, such as accessing curriculum-related information, sharing resources, and promoting innovation in learning.

**Student Responsible Use of Technology, Including the Internet:** Students shall be held responsible for the appropriate use of PROPEL's technology and will be subject to disciplinary action for any misuse of computer privileges.

**Students' Responsibilities** Students are required to be safe, secure, and responsible digital citizens when using PROPEL's technology and/or networks.

1. I am responsible for my language. I will be polite and use appropriate language in my e-mail messages, online postings, and other digital communications.
2. I am responsible for how I treat others. I will not create or communicate abusive, harassing, bullying, libelous, obscene, offensive, profane, threatening, discriminatory, or illegal messages.
3. I am responsible for respecting the intellectual property rights of others. I will obey copyright laws. I will not plagiarize or use another's work without proper citation and permission.
4. I am responsible for my computer account and am responsible for all activity conducted through my account(s). I understand that my user name and passwords are

private and they should not be shared with anyone. I understand that it is important to log off of the computer at the end of every session so another user cannot use my password.

5. I am responsible for my use of the PROPEL's network. I will use PROPEL's resources responsibly and will not search, retrieve, save, circulate, display, upload, post, e-mail, transmit, or otherwise make available any hate-based, offensive, or sexually explicit images, language or the files that generate such images or language.

6. I am responsible for protecting the security of the PROPEL's network. I will not attempt to bypass security settings or Internet filters or interfere with the operation of the network by installing or downloading unauthorized software, games, programs, files, electronic media, stand-alone applications from the Internet or from any other sources.

7. I am responsible for protecting school property. I understand that vandalism is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, accessing, modifying, or destroying equipment, programs, files, or settings on any computer or technology resource. I understand that I need the authorization from a staff member to use personal electronic devices or memory storage devices that I bring to PROPEL.

8. I am responsible for my conduct on all online sites. I understand that what I do on social networking web sites should not negatively affect PROPEL's learning environment. I will not use Internet tools such as discussion boards, chat rooms, and instant messaging, for personal rather than educational purposes.

9. I am responsible for following PROPEL's policy, PROPEL's staff, and program procedures when using PROPEL's technology and networks and when publishing work online. I understand that it is unsafe to post any personal information about myself and others, including but not limited to my address, phone number, or school. I will not post photos or videos of students with their first and last names on any online site.

Penalties: All student users shall be subject to the student technology acceptable use policy and rule and school procedures when using PROPEL's technology and networks. Violations may result in loss of access to PROPEL's technology and/or networks, disciplinary action, and/or legal action.



## Student Dress Code

The student dress code is intended to outline acceptable standards for student dress while attending PROPEL and during other PROPEL-sponsored activities in order to preserve a safe and orderly environment that is conducive to learning.

Students will not wear attire that is disruptive to the PROPEL environment, promotes illegal or harmful activities, or that could endanger the health and safety of the student or other students, which includes but not limited to that which:

1. Depicts messages that are lewd, vulgar, obscene, plainly offensive, violent, sexually explicit, or that reference items that are illegal in general or illegal specifically for underage students;
2. Promotes use of tobacco, drugs, alcohol, or other illegal or harmful products;
3. Contains sexually suggestive messages;
4. Depicts gang affiliation;
5. Causes or is likely to cause a substantial or material disruption to school activities or the orderly and safe operation of PROPEL or at PROPEL-sponsored activities;
6. Contains rude, disrespectful, or discourteous expressions inconsistent with civil discourse and behavior.

## Bullying and Harassment

Student Bullying, Cyberbullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Bullying is defined as a pattern of behavior when a person repeatedly uses power in an intentional manner, including verbal, physical, or written conduct or intentional electronic communication against one or more students.

Harassment includes actual or perceived negative actions that offend, ridicule, or demean another individual with regard to race, national origin, marital status, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, ancestry, physical attributes, socioeconomic status, familial status, physical or mental ability, or disability.

Intimidation is subjecting an individual to intentional action that seriously threatens and induces a sense of fear and/or inferiority.

Bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, and intimidation are strictly prohibited by federal law and will not be tolerated in PROPEL.

Students who engage in behaviors that constitute bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, or intimidation will be disciplined according to the procedures set forth in this Student Handbook.

# Open Door Policy and Grievance Procedure

We strive to create a positive environment, to foster member development, and promote positive interaction among our members, staff, and volunteers. We believe that all persons involved in PROPEL have the right to a safe, respectful, and productive environment. We believe that this type of quality climate requires high expectations, positive behavioral guidelines, and fair discipline policies and procedures.

Members should feel free to voice ideas, suggestions or complaints without fear of reprisal or retribution. If a member has ideas, suggestions or complaints to share, they are directed to follow these simple steps, unless it is a matter more appropriately raised pursuant to the steps set forth in the PROPEL's policy against harassment:

**Step 1:** Members are directed to discuss complaints with their PROPEL tutor within 3 working days of the matter causing the complaint. Members should provide detail and offer any suggestions they have for solutions. Most matters can be resolved at Step 1.

**Step 2:** If the member is not satisfied with the results of a discussion with his/her PROPEL tutor, the member is directed to take the matter to the PROPEL Education Director or Operations Director within 3 working days after meeting with the PROPEL tutor.

**Step 3:** If the member believes the matter remains unresolved, he/she is directed to present the matter to the Chief Executive Director (CEO) within 3 working days.

The CEO shall consider all matters brought to his/her attention pursuant to this procedure and all decisions made by him/her shall be final.

In the event of a complaint involving the CEO, the matter will be referred to the Executive Committee of the PROPEL Board of Directors. The Executive Committee will notify the General Board of any grievance that results in policy development or change

## Student's Rights and Responsibilities

Transportation:

- Students have the right to transportation services if they live within a 20-mile radius from the facility.
- Students have the right to transportation to the offsite activities we offer.
- Students must be at their assigned pick-up location at or before the scheduled arrival time. The van will wait no more than five minutes upon arrival. If a student fails to arrive on time, student will be responsible for making his or her own transportation arrangements.

- Students have the responsibility of making PROPEL staff aware if they are in need of transportation.
- Students have the responsibility of making sure their transportation forms are completed and turned in if they want to ride in the vans.
- Students must respect the drivers and obey their rules.
- Students must respect other students on the van.

#### HUBs:

- Students enrolled in PROPEL have the right to attend our Educational HUBs for assistance.
- Students have the right to a comfortable learning environment.
- Students have the right to internet access when needed.
- Students have the right to additional study hours if needed.
- It is the students' responsibility to attend the proper HUB each evening and they must be working on something constructive during this period.
- Students must put away all electronic devices while tutors are presenting.
- The student must obey the rules set in place by the tutor in each designated HUB.
- There is no phone usage allowed during HUB hours; students should place their phone on silent to maintain a respectful learning environment.
- Students have the responsibility to remain in the HUB until released by the tutor.

#### Attendance:

- Students need to attend the HUB at minimum 3 times throughout the week.
- It is the student's responsibility to inform a staff member of their absence beforehand.
- If a student is in attendance but they are not participating, their attendance can be lost for the day.

#### Elective Programs:

- Student have the responsibility of showing respect to all program leaders.
- Students must maintain program areas: set up and clean up.

#### Services:

- Each student has the right to take part in all services that they qualify for.
- Students must respect guest speakers at all times.
- Students must put away all electronic devices while speakers are presenting.
- Students have the responsibility of submitting completed forms on time.

#### Food Services:

- Students have the right to one full meal before HUB.
- Students must respect those serving meals.
- Students have the responsibility of making sure they portion enough food for everyone.
- Students have the responsibility of setting up the area before eating and cleaning up afterwards.

### No Tolerance Policies:

- Students are prohibited from bringing or utilizing drugs/alcohol.
- Students are prohibited from possessing drug/alcohol paraphernalia.
- Students should not be in possession of any weapons.
- It is the students' responsibility to refrain from using profanity, fighting, and destroying property.
- We will not allow bullying of any kind.
- It is the responsibility of the students to report any known violation.
- A breach of any of the no tolerance policies may result in disciplinary actions ranging from a warning to expulsion.

## Violations

### 1<sup>st</sup> Offense:

If students violate any of the above rules, they will receive a verbal warning. This may include a meeting with the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and/or other involved staff members.

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Offense:

If any student violates the same rule twice, they will have to meet with the CEO and any other involved staff members. Students will lose their right to our services for a given time period and will have to abide by the requirements set in place for them to return to our facility.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Offense:

Upon the 3<sup>rd</sup> violation, student will be asked not to return to our facility for the duration of the semester. They will meet with the CEO and any other involved staff. Students are notified if they are allowed to return the following term.

### Fairness of Procedure:

All students have the right to appeal to any of the above decisions. All appeals will be reviewed in a fair manner.

# Acknowledgement Form

I \_\_\_\_\_ have read and understood all the terms of the 2017-18 PROPEL Student Handbook. I will abide by the code of conduct and rules stated. I understand that any violations could result in disciplinary actions. I verify by signing on the appropriate spaces below that I agree to be held accountable to the rules, policies, and procedures, provided by the handbook.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Director Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date