

# **Porter Academy**



**2010-2011  
PARENT HANDBOOK**

# Welcome to **Porter Academy**

Dear Parents,

We welcome you and your child to Porter Academy! The purpose of this handbook is to share information and ideas with parents to promote understanding of our programs and foster a spirit of cooperation between parents and our staff. We hope you will find it useful as an orientation to both our policies and our services.

We strongly believe that open communication between parents and our staff is essential to fully meet your child's needs. Any questions and concerns may be brought immediately to the attention of the homeroom teacher. If you would like to discuss anything further, please feel free to contact Barbara Ramer or myself. We look forward to developing a sound and positive relationship.

We encourage you to take an active role in your child's education. Volunteering in some capacity at our school is a great way to see our teaching staff in action and to meet your child's classmates.

Sincerely,

*Claudia Porter*

Claudia Porter  
School Founder

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# About Porter Academy

## **Mission**

Porter Academy is dedicated to the education of children with atypical learning styles who have not been successful in public or other private schools. We serve children who have difficulties with attention, language processing, auditory discrimination, dyslexia, visual-motor integration, fine or gross motor skills, processing sensory information, social interactions, self-esteem, etc. Our goal is to help each child appreciate and use his or her strengths to build self-confidence, to acquire academic and social skills, increase knowledge, develop motivation, and the good work/study habits needed to succeed elsewhere.

## **Beginnings**

Claudia Porter and Muriel Lange founded The Porter School in 2000. It first opened at Christ United Methodist Church in Roswell with sixteen children in grades 1 through 3. The following year the school expanded to include a 4<sup>th</sup> grade, increased to 30 students, and moved to a larger facility located at the Lutheran Church of the Incarnation in Marietta. In 2002, we purchased our present location; enrollment was up to 40 students, and we expanded to include a 5<sup>th</sup> grade. In 2003 we added a kindergarten and our student population grew to a total of 45. In 2005, we lost our second building to structural defects and added three trailers to accommodate our older students and occupational therapy center. We have recently changed our name to Porter Academy.

## **School Information**

Porter Academy  
200 Cox Road  
Roswell, GA 30075  
Phone: (770) 594–1313  
Fax: (770) 594–1771

School Founder: Claudia Porter  
claudia@porteracademy.org

Principal: Barbara Ramer  
bramer@porteracademy.org

Website: [www.porteracademy.org](http://www.porteracademy.org)

## **Non-Discriminatory Policy**

Porter Academy, Inc. admits students of any race, color, religion, gender or national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender or national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship or loan programs, and athletic or other school administered programs.

## **Techniques**

Our program is a structured multi-sensory program that allows flexibility to accommodate the different learning styles of our students. We draw from a variety of well-established learning disabilities and regular programs, adapting lessons to the particular needs of the children and creating our own materials where appropriate. Children are exposed throughout the entire day to an environment rich in both receptive and expressive language experiences. Sensory diet activities are incorporated into classroom routines to facilitate a level of arousal that fosters learning. Multi-sensory learning activities are used to accommodate various learning styles. All children have an opportunity to develop their visual, auditory and academic skills using computers equipped with a variety of educational software.

Our program includes strategies developed by Claudia Porter that have proven highly effective in improving students' social skills while building both self-esteem and internal motivation. We encourage teamwork, rather than competition, a sense of personal responsibility, and pride in excellence. We expect our students to work hard and achieve goals in accordance with their abilities; this earns them free time to interact socially and participate in fun activities with their peers.

## **Curriculum**

Our curriculum covers the usual content of grades pre-kindergarten through middle school. We adhere as closely as possible to the requirements of the Georgia Core Curriculum and the NCTM Math Standards. We are attentive to the different learning styles of our children, and we adjust the sequence, timing, and intensity of what we teach accordingly.

We place major emphasis on the basic skills of reading, writing, and math as these provide the necessary foundation for success in all other areas. We have an exploratory, creative, hands-on approach to science and social studies at all levels. Our students are regularly scheduled for music, art, drama, physical education and occupational therapy. Use of the computer, both for reinforcing skills and as a tool for research, is an integral part of our curriculum.

## Teaching Staff

### **Claudia Porter**

#### **Language/Reading Specialist, Speech/Language Pathologist**

M.A. in Speech/Language Pathology; Certified Speech/Language Therapist since 1971, GA license in Speech-Language Pathology; CA Life Teaching Certificate; developed L.D. program at High Meadows School; Program Director of Child Development Center in Roswell; speech/language therapist & teacher/coordinator for the Georgia Challenge Grant Program; Founded the Porter School with Muriel Lange in 2000.

### **Barbara Ramer**

#### **Principal**

M.S. in Education; 54 years experience in the field of education to include teaching (K-7), counseling (K-12), supervision, and administration; Member of National Board of Certified Counselors (NCC); Licensed Professional Counselor in GA and VA (LPC); designed community-wide promotions for guidance services in local VA schools; Director of Special Education School; served as Advisory Committee Chairman for the school superintendent to coordinate curriculum for the Virginia school system; 2003 started at Porter Academy

### **Teresa Bowen**

#### **Teacher**

A.S. in Early Childhood Education; Skilled in Intermediate American Sign Language; 2003 started at Porter Academy

### **Laura Corn**

#### **Middle School Lead Teacher**

M.A. in Special Education University of Arizona, Georgia certification in level 4; specializing in Autism; sign language skills; 2006 started at Porter Academy

### **James Cress**

### **Pam Higginbotham**

#### **Accountant**

B.S. in Corporate Finance and Accounting; 16 years experience working with all aspects of accounting; from large corporations to small businesses; 2008 started at Porter Academy

### **Maureen Kennedy**

#### **Lead Teacher**

M.S. in Education, Counseling Major; B.S. in Elementary Education; 19 years experience with special needs children; 21 years counseling children and their families; 7 years as rehabilitation coordinator at Children's Rehabilitation Center in Ohio; 2006 started at Porter Academy

### **Jody Kershner**

#### **Music Therapist**

B.A. in Music Therapy; 25 years of music therapy experience in education and mental health settings; member of American Association for Music Therapy; trained with Dr. Gary Mesibov and Dr. Stanley Greenspan; ORFF music education; 2003 started at Porter Academy

**Nancy Knight** **Occupational Therapist**  
B.S. in Occupational Therapy; 30+ years experience as OT; certified and licensed occupational therapist; worked in Fulton County School systems from 1987-present; 2007 started at Porter Academy

**Brian Maloney** **Middle School Lead Teacher/Sports**  
B.A. in Business; currently working on M.S. in elementary and special education; 8 years experience as Camp Director at YMCA in SC and GA; continuing education at Piedmont College for elementary education; 2007 started at Porter Academy

**Linda-mae Merab** **Teacher**  
A.S. in Teacher Education; finalizing degree in Early Childhood Education; 2007 started at Porter Academy

**Vicki Miller** **Teacher**  
Vicki is certified as a Special Education Para professional; previous positions include: special education assistant-Brunswick, Ohio; special education assistant and personal care assistant: Erie, Pennsylvania; 2008 started at Porter Academy

**Barbara Richard** **Supervising Lead Teacher**  
B.A. in Elementary Education; currently working on M.S.; 17 years experience teaching grades K-4; 2 years as Vice Principal; FL and MA teaching certification; Orton-Gillingham training; 2004 started at Porter Academy

**Marie Robbins** **Lead Teacher**  
B.A. in Early Childhood Education; Intern at Porter Academy 2005-2006; Teacher Assistant at Porter Academy 2006-2008; 2009 returned to Porter Academy after completing her degree

**Lynn Schoeneck** **Occupational Therapist**  
M.S. in Occupational Therapy; B.A. in Psychology with honors; certified and licensed occupational therapist; instructor at the Autism Society of NC; 4 years camp counselor at High Meadows School; drum, guitar and piano skills; 2004 started at Porter Academy

**Marcie Schultz** **Middle School LeadTeacher**  
B.S. in Computer Technology; Certified Wilson Reading System Tutor; 9 years experience tutoring dyslexic children in reading and spelling; 2004 started at Porter Academy

**Barbara Selkirk**

**Lead Teacher**

M.Ed. in Reading; B.S. in Psychology; several years experience teaching elementary grades; 4 years experience teaching Budding Authors at Mercer University College for Kids; Orton-Gillingham training; year-long study of Art History; Founding Board Member for Mercer University Reading Center; Received the Georgia State University Mortar Board Honor Society Outstanding Student Award; 2006 started at Porter Academy

**Jackie Shallcross**

**Middle School Lead Teacher**

B.A. in Education; 20 years experience teaching children with special needs and behavioral disorders in CT and GA; taught at Mill Springs Academy; drama at The Howard School; 2002 started with Porter Academy

**Jennifer Townsend**

**Art Teacher**

M.A. in Fine Arts from Georgia State; 21 years teaching Art in private schools and Community centers; 2008 started with Porter Academy

**Liana Valentin-Scott**

**Admin Assistant**

A.S. in Early Childhood Education; certified in M.I.L.E math program; skilled in intermediate American Sign Language; over 20 years office experience; 2004 started with Porter Academy

## Board of Directors

**Board Member: (Chairman) Janine Metcalf** is a commercial lawyer who practices in the area of complex civil litigation in a variety of federal and state courts. She focuses on business disputes, with emphasis on matters involving fraud, fraudulent conveyance, corporate governance and securities issues. She currently represents a Fortune 500 public utility holding company in a multibillion-dollar fraudulent conveyance action brought on behalf of a bankrupt independent power producer. She is a member of the State Bar of Georgia, the Atlanta Bar Association, and the Litigation Section of the Atlanta Board.

**Board Member: (CFO) Richard Arnoldussen** retired from a 30+ year career with the Lockheed Corporation / Loral Corporation in May of 1996. Positions held included: Engineering Manager, Project Director-Design and Development, Director of Manufacturing & Quality Control, Director of Reliability Engineering, Vice-President of Operations. Service in Chamber of Commerce; 15-year plus involvement with Junior Achievement; Five years work with disadvantaged inner city youth and prison ministry. He currently volunteers time teaching senior citizens computer skills. He has served as a Board Member of Porter Academy for seven years.

**Board Member (Founder): Claudia Porter** holds an M.A. in Speech/Language Pathology; Certified Speech/Language Therapist since 1971, GA license in Speech-Language Pathology; CA Life Teaching Certificate; developed L.D. program at High Meadows School; Program Director of Child Development Center in Roswell; speech/language therapist & teacher/coordinator for the Georgia Challenge Grant Program; Founded the Porter School with Muriel Lange in 2000.

**Board Member: Michael Twiner** is an engineer with Planners and Engineers Collaborative, 350 Research Court. Norcross, Georgia 30092. [matwiner@bellsouth.net](mailto:matwiner@bellsouth.net)

**Board Member: Lee R. Walker** currently doing professional Internet Consulting, Atlanta, Ga.

**Board Member; Marcie Schultz** has been a teacher at Porter Academy since 2004. Certified in Wilson Reading System in 2000, she has been actively working with dyslexic children and adults. Prior to teaching at Porter Academy, Marcie had her own tutoring practice.

## **Advisory Committee to the Board**

**Principal / Board Advisor: Barbara Ramer** has an M.S. in Education; 54 years experience in the field of education to include teaching (K-7), counseling (K-12), supervision, and administration; Member of National Board of Certified Counselors (NCC); Licensed Professional Counselor in GA and VA (LPC); designed community-wide promotions for guidance services in local VA schools; Director of Special Education School; served as Advisory Committee Chairman for the school superintendent to coordinate curriculum for the Virginia school system; Drafted the Code of Ethics for Middle School Counselors at the National Level; Past President of Va. School Counselors; Past President of the Middle School Division of American Schools Counselors Education. Published in field at the local, state and national level; 8<sup>th</sup> year at Porter Academy.

**Board Advisor: Sharon Berger,**

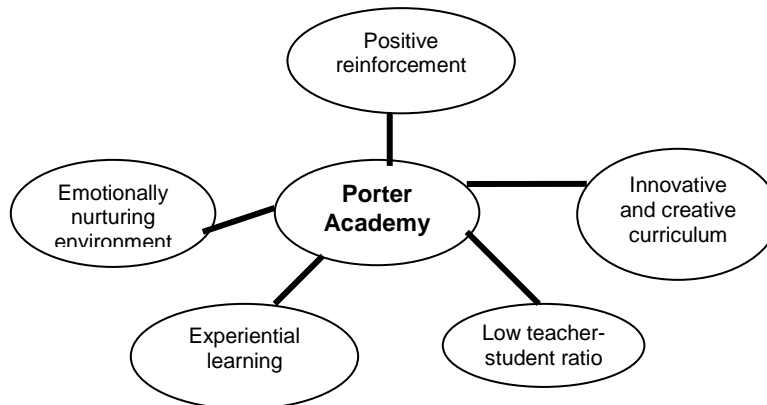
# Classroom Overview

## Homeroom Groups

Each child is assigned to one of seven Homeroom Groups. These groups serve as smaller social units within the school community. The activities of each homeroom are planned and coordinated by the Homeroom Teacher. Children convene in their homerooms upon arrival each day for social time, jobs, homework-check and morning group. They meet at the end of the day for jobs, cleanup and wrap-up. Fantastic Friday activities and instructional field trips are usually planned and carried out by each homeroom individually, although some are coordinated to include a team or the whole school.

## Instructional Groups

This year our staff will be teaching in modified self-contained homerooms and teams. Each child is assigned to one of seven homerooms and each homeroom is assigned to one of two teams. The Arctic team is comprised of 5 homerooms and the Middle school contains 2. These teams collaborate to integrate the academic strengths of each staff member, to ensure that children reach their full potential. Porter Academy's program is based on a multi-sensory, integrated approach to learning.



To quote Claudia Porter, “Porter Academy was created so that children with learning differences succeed.”

## **Drop-Off / Pick-Up**

**MORNING DROP-OFF:** Monday - Friday 8:15 – 8:25 AM

**AFTERNOON PICK-UP:** Monday - Friday 3:10 PM  
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday 1:00 PM

Please note: Students are dismissed at 1:00 PM on the third Friday of each month.

**LATE DROP-OFF:** Students must be signed in at the front desk in Building 1 before going to their homeroom.

**EARLY PICK-UP:** A note to request an early pick-up may be sent or written in the planner. Be sure to include time of pick-up. Your child will be waiting in the lobby of Building 1 where you can sign them out before leaving.

## **Morning Homeroom**

Each homeroom has its own morning ritual. The same basic elements are included throughout the school, with adjustments in style geared to the maturity level of the group. Activities include homework accountability, teacher-directed announcements, awards and special recognition, and classroom and behavioral concerns. Students brainstorm on matters that concern them. They discuss “how their engine is running” and participate in sensory-motor activities to help bring their engines to “just right.” These sensory-motor activities also work to develop the students’ abilities to cross midline and to coordinate the two sides of their bodies (bilateral coordination). Students may fill out their planners, talk about the monthly character trait, and choose jobs. They also discuss the calendar, weather, and work on calendar skills..

## **Morning Energizers (Before school program)**

A before-school program is available Monday through Friday from 7:30 to 8:30. Brian Maloney is in charge of the program. Activities will include bilateral coordination exercises (incorporating exercises from Brain Gym and the Vital Links Astronaut Program), core strengthening, astronaut board with paired ocular motor exercises, and other sensory integration activities. The cost is \$8/day. You may select which days best fit your schedule.

## **Alert Program**

We will be implementing the Alert Program. The program focuses on students recognizing and regulating their own alertness level. We guide students through sensory processing which helps them to efficiently facilitate attention to tasks. The goal in this program is for students to self-regulate while increasing their learning potential. Each homeroom uses a modification of this program that is developmentally appropriate for those students.

## **Break**

As weather permits, the children have free time outdoors. On rainy days, children have a choice of indoor activities such as drawing, building with Lego's or K-nex, watching videotapes, or playing computer games. This is a time when children in all groups can interact in activities of their own choice. In addition to the essential benefits of physical activity, this unstructured time provides opportunities for practicing and improving social skills and impulse control. Many valuable group discussions stem from incidents (both positive and negative) that may occur during these times. Adult guidance within a safe arena supports students as they acquire first-hand experience in learning the social consequences of their behavior and discover ways to resolve their own conflicts to create win-win situations.

## **Afternoon Homeroom**

Students return to their homeroom in the afternoon before dismissal. We discuss their day and verify that the student planners are completed for parents to review. Homework, handouts, and communications to parents are distributed and packed. We utilize social skills and confer on our plans for the next day of school.

## **Extended School Day Program**

Students attending the Extended School Day program will be released to the assigned teacher during afternoon carpool. Extended day ends at 6:00 and costs \$10 per hour. Charges may be added for pick-up after 6:00.

## **Character Value Education**

Porter Academy emphasizes building positive character traits such as responsibility, kindness, respect, honesty, cooperation, and citizenship. Each month a new value is introduced, and during that month, students are encouraged to develop and demonstrate these values. Our students will put into practice core values that can impact their lives both now and in the future.

## **Homework**

Homework is meant to reinforce the materials students learn during the school day. Your child's homework is recorded in the student planner.

## **Student Planners**

Each child will be issued a student planner. Planners are used to record your child's daily activities. In addition, teachers and/or students will write their homework assignments in the student planner. We ask that parents review and sign the planner each day. Please be sure that your child brings their student planner to school each day. Please record the academic minutes each day in the front of the planner.

If you have any questions or concerns about information recorded in your child's planner, the pocket in front of the planner is designated for parent/teacher communications. You may also communicate with teachers or staff via email. A list of email addresses is provided in the back of this handbook.

# Behavior

We have a unique and effective behavior system that has been created and refined over the years by Claudia Porter. The children's efforts to grow and improve in academics, social skills, attitude, and by good behavior choices are acknowledged through verbal recognition, incentives and rewards. The behavior system is linked to increased privileges with increased responsibility.

Porter Academy behavior system has been developed to encourage appropriate behavior and life skills such as integrity, personal responsibility, and respect for self and others. This system allows the student and teachers to respond immediately to appropriate as well as inappropriate behaviors.

If a student's behavior is disruptive to others, the teacher will handle the behavior accordingly. If the behavior becomes unmanageable while in the classroom setting, an administrator will be asked to remove the child from the room until he/she can regain control and calmly discuss the issue. If the child continues to struggle with the same or similar issues, a parent conference may be necessary to discuss a plan of action.

## **Team A: Arctic**

The teachers in "Arctic" will be rewarding students who are working hard, cooperating, and following directions with pennies or stickers. Depending on the developmental level, stickers or pennies are traded daily or weekly for larger rewards. The teachers will specifically be targeting social skills, effort, participation and attitude. If a child's behavior affects the learning environment of our school to the extent that it jeopardizes the education and safety of other students, an immediate conference will be arranged with parents and staff to determine whether it is appropriate for the student to continue at Porter Academy.

## **Team B: Middle School**

Teachers and Staff in the Middle School will model and discuss appropriate behavior and consequences as situations arise with the class or individual students. Students will earn points in their planner throughout the day for appropriate behavior and effort.

If a child's behavior affects the learning environment of our school to the extent that it jeopardizes the education and safety of other students, an immediate conference will be arranged with parents and staff to determine whether it is appropriate for the student to continue at Porter Academy.

### Disruptive Behavior

- A student will be given 3 warnings for disruptive behavior
- After the 3rd warning, the student will be sent to the Principal's office, and the student must comply with the Behavior Contract
- The student's planner will reflect non-compliance for the class period(s) missed
- The completed Behavior Contract will be sent home for the parent(s) signature and returned the next day

- A conference may be called if disruptive behavior persists

#### Extreme/Violent Behavior

- Extreme or violent behavior will result in the student being taken immediately to the Principal's office to receive a behavior contract. The student must comply with the Behavior Contract. The staff and parents will work as a team to assist the student in complying with the behavior contract.
- The student's parent(s) will be notified by telephone and a conference will be required before the student will be readmitted to the classroom

See the next page for a sample of the Ocean Pod Behavior contract. If you have any questions, contact your child's homeroom teacher.

# Sample

## Behavior Contract

Examples of behavior resulting in behavior contract:

1. Inappropriate behavior with peers, either verbal or physical. Example: shouting, cursing, pushing, grabbing, name-calling or gestures
2. At the teacher's discretion: refusal to comply with teacher's directions
3. Temper tantrums

Student will be escorted to the main building, where he/she will be asked to answer the following questions on paper:

- Who was involved?
- What happened?
- When did this occur?
- Where did this occur?
- How could you have dealt with the situation more appropriately?

Student will receive zero points for the class periods missed.

Failure to comply with the above will result in a phone call to the student's parents.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Teacher's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Principal's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

# Rewards

Each homeroom teacher implements a system that is developmentally appropriate and rewards effort, good attitude, and positive interaction. The reward item (stickers, pennies, points, etc) is given as earned and used as a method to earn a larger reward (treasure box, store, etc) at a scheduled time.

## **Box Tops**

The students are encouraged to collect Box Tops throughout the school year. As they are collected the students will give them to the homeroom teacher as part of a class collection. The last day of the month each class will count their Box Tops.

## **Fantastic Friday-Parent Activity**

At the beginning of the school year, parents are assigned a day to host a Fantastic Friday activity. On the third Friday of each month, students are dismissed at 1:00 pm. The parents and their child host a special in-class activity based on the child's interest before this early release. **The sponsoring parents are responsible for all costs associated with their Fantastic Friday activity.** If you are unable to host your assigned Friday, you may trade with another parent or pay \$100, and the homeroom teacher will arrange for someone to host it for you. Please coordinate any food or beverage with your homeroom teacher and remember to follow the school's policy for snack and lunch and refrain from bringing in foods and drinks with high sugar content. **Note: This activity MUST be held at school. You may not take the children off-campus.**

## **Pets**

Pets are welcome to visit our classrooms on Show or Share Friday mornings. (Show and Share mornings are every Friday). Arrangements must be made in advance, with approval from the homeroom teacher. Parents must remove pets after sharing.

## **Reading/Math Minutes/Earobics/Approved Computer Games**

In addition to reading and math homework, students are encouraged to read and practice math facts daily. Each night, students/parents are responsible for logging all time spent on academic minutes in their planner.

Academics Summary Sheets are included in the front of the student planners. On the first school day of each month, students will submit the completed summaries with the total minutes recorded and parents signature. Safari bucks will be issued on the second Friday of each month. It is critical that academic minutes are turned in. The presentation of Safari Bucks is very important to your child.

## **Porter Academy Reads Together**

Reading together with an adult produces a wealth of benefits! Reading together creates opportunities for intergenerational conversations, discussing important information, sharing differences, and developing a love for words that lasts a lifetime. Reading together can literally change the world for both you and your child! Last year, Porter Academy students read a reported collective amount of 523,769 minutes during the school year! Porter Academy has many resources available to help you learn how to develop a regular reading time together. Please let us know how we can help you READ TOGETHER!

## **Porter Academy & Family Math**

Whether you're measuring ingredients, sorting socks, estimating time to a pizza delivery, or doing fractions with the latest birthday cake, family math promotes creative problem solving, independent thinking, and the chance for some fun! Doing math together with your child as part of daily interactions also increases a child's confidence in the classroom. So, practice some math together this year that leaps off the homework page and into real life! Porter Academy will be glad to help you learn how to incorporate math together; please see us at anytime!

## **Safari Bucks**

Each night you and your child will record the total number of academic minutes spent on academics for that day in the front of the student planner.

Students are rewarded with one Safari Buck for every 100 minutes of logged academic minutes. Safari Bucks are passed out on the second Friday of each month. Monthly reading awards are based on total minutes:

Gold Award	over 1500 minutes
Silver Award	500-1,499 minutes
Red Award	100-499 minutes

Current month reading certificates with an accumulated total will be displayed in the classroom and sent home the following month to share with family and friends.

Safari Bucks are also paid throughout the year as your child completes workbooks and other instructional material. We ask that you exchange the Safari Bucks for real money.

## **Show-and/or-Share**

Friday is always show-and/or-share day. Everyone participates in show-and/or-share. This is the only day that teachers will allow "trinkets" from home, unless previously approved. This is a very important activity in which children practice and improve their expressive language while telling about a topic that is of interest to them. When needed, teachers help students to formulate and express their thoughts as they gain confidence in speaking in front of a group. Students must participate, even if they have nothing to show. Trinkets from home are not allowed on any other day unless requested by the homeroom teachers.

Middle School Guidelines: No toys or playthings. Students may share memorabilia, pictures, souvenirs, hobbies, etc.

# Policies and Procedures

## **Attendance and Tardiness**

The school day officially begins at 8:30 AM and end of the day dismissal is at 3:10 PM. For late arrival or early dismissal, students need to be signed in or out for that day in the lobby. Except for emergencies, please communicate your child's early dismissal plans to teachers and/or staff members in writing with as much advanced notice as possible.

Parents are requested to call the school office by 9:00 am and leave a message if their child will not be in school that day. Advance notice should be given for a planned absence (such as doctor's appointments). Daily activities are designed to contribute in a variety of ways to the education of your child. This makes it very important that your child be in school on time every day, except in the case of illness. Chronic tardiness will result in a parent-staff conference to determine a resolution.

## **Birthday Celebrations**

If you would like to celebrate your child's birthday (or half birthday for those with summer birthdays) at school, please contact your homeroom teacher to arrange for a small snack to be served. Elaborate celebrations are NOT allowed.

## **Conferences**

Conferences are routinely scheduled in October, January, and May to discuss your child's progress. At this time, each child's IEP (Individual Education Plan) is revised as needed. Progress reports are sent home every nine weeks. Parents may sign up for a January conference, or the school may request a conference if one is needed during this time.

**Please note: Parents, teachers, or staff may request a conference at any time.**

# Calendar

## 2010

Aug 17	Tue	Orientation: 10:00 AM – 11:00 am: Arctic 1:00 PM – 2:00 pm: Middle School
Aug 18	Wed	First Day of School
Aug 20	Fri	1:00 Dismissal-Fantastic Friday
Aug 30	Mon	6:00 PM Curriculum night – Arctic
Aug 31	Tue	6:00 PM Curriculum night – Middle School
Sep 6	Mon	NO SCHOOL– Labor Day
Sep 17	Fri	1:00 Dismissal-Fantastic Friday
Oct 11	Mon	Teacher Work Day-No School for students
Oct 15	Fri	1:00 Dismissal-Fantastic Friday
Oct 18-19	Mon/Tue	NO SCHOOL Arctic-Conferences
Oct 20-21	Wed/Thu	NO SCHOOL Middle School -Conferences
Nov 1	Mon	Teacher Work Day-No School for students
Nov 23	Tue	1:00 Dismissal
Nov 24-26	Wed-Fri	Thanksgiving Holiday
Dec 17	Fri	1:00 Dismissal –Fantastic Friday
Dec 20-31	Mon-Thu	NO SCHOOL – Winter Break

## 2011

Jan 3	Mon	Teacher Work Day -No School for students
Jan 4	Tue	School resumes
Jan 17	Mon	NO SCHOOL – Martin Luther King Jr. Day
Jan 18-19	Tue-Wed	NO SCHOOL Arctic – Conferences
Jan 20-21	Thu-Fri	NO SCHOOL Middle School – Conferences
Jan 21	Fri	1:00 Dismissal – Fantastic Friday
Feb 18	Fri	1:00 Dismissal–Fantastic Friday
Feb 21	Mon	NO SCHOOL-President’s Day
Mar 18	Fri	1:00 Dismissal-Fantastic Friday
Apr 4-8	Mon-Fri	NO SCHOOL – Spring Break
Apr 15	Fri	1:00 Dismissal – Fantastic Friday
May 2	Mon	NO SCHOOL – Teacher work day
May 9-10	Mon-Tue	NO SCHOOL – Arctic-Conferences
May 11-12	Wed-Thu	NO SCHOOL- Middle School- Conferences
May 20	Fri	1:00 Dismissal-Fantastic Friday
May 26	Fri	1:00 Dismissal – Last Day of School

## Dress

We expect students to dress in a way that promotes positive student morale, school spirit, and is demonstrative of the high personal standards we expect from our students. School is considered a student's primary occupation or work; therefore, torn clothing, extreme attire or hairstyles, short skirts and sloppy clothing are considered inappropriate for work or school. Clothing should also fit the student. Large shirts, short skirts/shorts and baggy pants are not allowed. The following guidelines should help parents as they work with their children to choose appropriate school wear.

- Students should wear sneakers and clothing designed for daily physical activity. Open-toed sandals, crocs, flip-flop type footwear and boots are not acceptable.
- Students are to wear clothing that covers all parts of the body from neck to mid-thigh
- All shirts and blouses must cover midriff, back, sides, and all undergarments including straps at all times
- Age-appropriate under-garments are required
- No under-garments may be visible
- All shirts must be zipped or buttoned to an acceptable level
- All pants, slacks, jeans, skirts, and shorts shall remain at the top of the waist
- Shorts, skirts, divided skirts, dresses, and culottes must be mid-thigh length and longer
- Girls should wear shorts beneath their skirts and dresses
- Clothing that displays obscene writing or promotes indecent or unacceptable behavior, whether stated or implied, is not permitted

These are examples of clothing that are not appropriate for school:

- Pajama or lounge pants (unless a "Pajama Day" has been awarded)
- Exotic makeup or hair dye
- Heelys™ skate shoes, platform or high-heeled shoes or sandals
- Midriff tops, tank tops, strapless tops, spaghetti straps, muscle shirts
- See-through or mesh garments without appropriate clothing underneath
- Apparel with inappropriate, obscene or profane statements or illustrations
- Biker shorts/exercise shorts
- Hats inside the buildings
- Extreme hair cuts

**Please note: Appropriate clothing to participate in P.E. should be worn each day (i.e. athletic shoes with socks, shorts under dresses or skirts).**

## **Drop-Off / Pick-Up**

The covered area in front of Building and the line that forms behind it is the “carpool” drop-off and pick-up lane. Please follow these rules for drop-off and pick-up:

- Do not park or linger in the “carpool” lane
- NO U Turns
- NO Speeding
- Keep your children and animals in the vehicle – do not permit them to sit on top of the vehicle or hang out the windows or sunroof.
- If you don’t use the carpool lane, your child must be accompanied into/from the school building. All children should be escorted during carpool.
- After you have picked up your child, you are responsible for their safety - Please do not let them wander in the carpool lane or parking area.
- Do not make U-turns in the driveway - follow the carpool line and proceed to the back of the parking lot and around the trailers.

## **Mornings**

Carpool starts at 8:15 each morning. Please keep your child safely inside the car until a staff member opens the car door at carpool.

Children are not allowed to enter the school before 8:15 unless they are in Morning Energizers. Students arriving after 8:15 and before 8:30 should be dropped off using the “carpool” lane.

**Parents are not allowed into the child’s homeroom prior to, or after homeroom has begun.** We request that you do not accompany your child to their homeroom in the morning. An appointment should be made with teachers to ask questions and discuss issues. Contact can be made via e-mail or by sending a note in the front pocket of the planner.

## **Afternoons**

Written notice to your child’s homeroom teacher is required if students will be going home with someone other than their normal designated driver.

If your child needs to leave early please inform the homeroom teacher by sending a note in the planner or an e-mail. Be sure to include time of pick-up. We will try to have your child waiting in the lobby of Building 1 where you can sign them out before leaving.

Afternoon pick-up ends at 3:15 on regular days and 1:15 on early release days.

## **Evaluation Request**

Psychologists and other professionals working with your child may ask that our staff complete evaluation forms. Please attach the evaluation form to our "Authorization to Release Records, unless you have one on file already, and submit to the Principal. We will ensure that the forms are completed and returned directly to the professional contact. Please make sure to allow the teacher at least 5 days to complete the form and mail it to the professional office directly.

## **Extended School Day Program**

Porter Academy offers an after-school program from 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm on normal hour school days and from 1:00 pm to 6:00 pm on early release days. This program will provide a safe and positive environment. Students will have an opportunity to work on homework or assigned projects, participate in structured recreations, cooperative games, and art activities in a safe and positive environment

## **Field Trips**

Each homeroom will have at least one in school or off sight field trip during the school year. You will receive instructions regarding departure/return times, transportation, appropriate dress, snack, lunch, and information outlining the event.

## **Fire Drills**

We are in compliance with Subsection 11-7.1 of the National Fire Protection Association's Life Safety Code, which states that all public and private schools must conduct a fire drill every month the school is in session (dates TBD). Faculty and staff are involved in the safe evacuation of all students from the building. The entire school meets on the front edge of the back playground, beyond the parking lot. Teachers call roll to verify the safe evacuation of all staff and students.

## **Severe Weather Drills**

In accordance with the Georgia Office of Insurance and Safety Fire Commissioner, schools have to perform a Severe Weather Drill during the months of November and February in lieu of the required School Fire Drill.

If a weather warning is in effect, staff and students will proceed to the designated shelter areas for each classroom. Teachers will close all windows and doors. Students will proceed to their designated areas, assume a kneeling position and place their hands over the napes of their necks. The staff will make sure everyone is safe from window areas. No one will be allowed to exit the building.

## Food

Each child must bring enough food each day for both mid-morning snack and lunch. We encourage healthy, nutritious food. This also applies to snacks that may be brought on Fantastic Friday or other special occasions. Inappropriate food or beverages will be confiscated. The following foods are NOT allowed at school:

- Carbonated beverages, artificial fruit drinks or other sugary drinks
- Candy or gum
- Items with high sugar content

A microwave oven is available for staff to use for **quick** heat-up of student lunches. Students should carry cold packs in their lunchboxes for all refrigerated items. Children are encouraged to help choose what they will eat and help pack their own lunches. Students are not allowed to trade or share food.

**Hot lunch is available if ordered in advance. You will receive detailed information including menu items and costs.**

A nutritious lunch is a vital part of your child's ability to learn. If your child arrives at school without a lunch, we will contact you, and you may leave it in the office. Please do not deliver the lunch to the classroom. If we can't reach a parent the school will provide lunch to the student and charge the parents \$2 for the meal. You may wish to send in advance several nutritious non-perishable food items to store in your child's locker in case of a "lunch or snack emergency."

## Health and Safety

A child should not be brought to school if he or she has any of the following symptoms:

- Fever, vomiting or diarrhea ***within the last 24 hours*** (If your child returns to school prior to the mandatory 24 hour incubation period you will be asked to pick them up immediately.)
- Severe cold, cough or strep throat
- Earache
- Undiagnosed rash
- Head lice

If your child becomes ill or shows any of the above symptoms during the school day, you will be notified, and you must make arrangements to have your child picked up as soon as possible.

## Health Forms

Before your child can attend school, the State of Georgia requires that each child enrolled have a current Georgia certificate of immunization record (form #3227) and a Georgia certificate of ear, eye and dental screening on file. These forms can be obtained from your pediatrician or through the County Health Department.

A Porter Academy Health Form must also be filled out and on file before your child attends school. The form includes: general state-of-health information, doctors, medications and their purpose.

### **Items to be left at home**

Gameboys™, hand-held computer games and all trading cards should be left at home and not brought to school. If a student is found with any of these items, they will be taken away and returned to the student when getting into their car at the end of the day.

**Middle** – Toys and stuffed animals.

### **Medication**

We are asking for your cooperation regarding the use of medication at school. The appropriate dispensing of medication is critical to your child's safety and well-being; therefore we insist that these guidelines be followed:

A completed Porter Academy *Authorization for Medication* form is required for all medication and must be filled out **every time** there is a change in dosage.

**Prescription Medication** – A physician's order is required for all prescription medication. Medicine must be in the original bottle with the pharmacy label that shows the prescription number, name of medication, date filled, physician's name, child's name and directions for administration, along with the pharmacy drug information sheet. Your pharmacy will provide you with two labeled bottles if requested.

**Over-the-Counter Medication** – If your child typically takes over-the-counter (OTC) medicine such as a pain reliever or antihistamine, please provide it to the school. A completed Porter Academy *Authorization for Medication* form is required for any OTC medication you would like us to administer. We will contact you prior to giving the medication when needed.

**Medication Delivery to School** – Parents or a designated adult, such as carpool driver, **(not students)** must hand deliver medication to the front office. All medication must be in its original bottle, along with the pharmacy drug information fact sheet. Do not send medicine in baggies or envelopes. Students are not permitted to have medicine in their possession at school. A staff member will dispense the medication each day. School personnel will not dispense medication that is not in the original container, appropriately labeled.

**Change of Dosage** – If your child's medication or dosage changes, you must send a new *Authorization for Medication* form to school. A fax or written instructions from the prescribing physician and a new prescription bottle with matching dosing instructions must accompany any change in medication, dosage or timing. This applies to both prescription and over-the-counter medication.

## **Parent Involvement and Support**

Porter Academy encourages involvement of parents, grandparents, and other special friends who are significant to your child. Parents are encouraged to schedule a visit to observe their child's school environment so as to better understand the methods we use to help your child learn. Parents may volunteer to participate in classroom activities and help with special activities. Additionally, special programs for parents and special friends are planned throughout the year.

Each of us has our own individual talents. When a parent and child combine their gifts to create a special Fantastic Friday experience, it boosts the self-esteem of that child while enriching the school experience for his/her classmates.

Your child's success depends on a cooperative effort between school and home. Your child may need your time, support and guidance to complete daily homework assignments. Open communication between you, the teachers and staff is an important element for your child's educational success. The daily planner sheet is the most efficient way to communicate any observations or concerns you have in relation to your child's academic or behavioral performance. Please also communicate any changes or circumstances that may affect school performance. This allows us to respond appropriately to your child's needs the following day. Your child will look to you to respond to his/her efforts and accomplishments with appreciation, enthusiasm, and encouragement.

We all become winners when parents, teachers and students work together as a team. Our events, celebrations, academic minute program, and the continuous communication between school and home require a team effort. Parents should not "drop in" to classrooms. Please call the school and make an appointment (ext.221), or call if you need to pick up your child early. Students will be in the front lobby of building 1 to be signed out.

## **Release of Records**

We will not release any records without a parent-signed record release form on file. If there is an outstanding balance to the school for tuition, fees, textbooks, library books, and/or any other equipment, his/her records will not be released until these debts are paid.

## **School Closing**

In case of severe weather or other emergency that requires us to delay the start or close the school, notices will be given on the following radio/TV station listed as “Porter Academy”:

WSB AM750

ABC- Action News 2- WSBTV

NBC- 11 Alive News- WXIA  
11 alive.com

We will also utilize “phone trees” to contact families.

## **Termination of Services**

The Porter Academy reserves the right to terminate services to a student for the following reasons:

- Failure to pay assessed tuition or fees in a timely manner
- Excessive absences
- A pattern of behavior that is potentially harmful to that child, to other children, to staff, to the school, or that interferes with the rights of other children to receive their education
- Damage to school property or to the property of others
- Consistent failure by a child or parent to comply with school rules, policies and procedures
- Failure to follow through on school recommendations and/or consistent communication between parent and school.

## **Testing**

The major goals of our testing program are to:

- Provide parents with concrete information about the age/grade level at which the child is performing.
- To assist teachers in determining individual learning objectives for each student.

Each homeroom teacher will give each student in his/her homeroom an assessment to determine the instructional level for reading, math, comprehension and math facts/concepts. Students will also be administered at least one standardized test in the fall and spring. These may include the WRAT(Wide Range Achievement Test), Woodcock Johnson Diagnostic Test, or Peabody Individual Achievement Test (PIAT) annually. These results should be included in the IEP and reported to the Parents. Barbara Ramer, Principal can answer questions.

OT testing is extensively done at Porter Academy. The OT tests include Bruininks-Oseretsky test of Motor Proficiency, Pitch Discrimination, Handwriting Without Tears Assessment, BASC-2, informal assessment of visual perceptual skills, SCAN-3 for students in the iLs program and the Token test for those not in the iLs program. Contact Lynn Schoeneck, OT for further information.

Speech and Language testing is also available. These include but are not limited to the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, Language Processing Test, and Expressive Vocabulary Test. If you have questions please contact Claudia Porter, Head of School and Speech, Language Pathologist.

### **Wednesday Newsletter**

The Wednesday Newsletter is emailed to families each Wednesday. Other notices frequently will come home in your child's planner so please check it daily.

### **Withdrawal from School**

Written notification to the Principal is required for withdrawal from school. This notice should include the date of the last day of attendance, the name of the transferring school, and the reason for withdrawal. We will aid your child with their transition as much as possible.

# Parent Association

Porter Parents Association (PPA) members are all parents whose child is currently enrolled at Porter Academy. PPA dues are payable at the beginning of the school year. PPA officers and committee chairpersons will:

- Better acquaint parents with the activities, programs and policies at Porter Academy
- Provide and stimulate more effective parental participation in the life of the school
- Provide for the general welfare of the school in whatever its capabilities and resources may permit, with particular emphasis on providing those extras which will enhance and enrich the lives of the students
- Raise and provide, on behalf of the school, funds to be used by the school and PPA to accomplish these purposes

## PPA Officers

President

Vice President

Secretary

PALS Chairman

## PPA Committees

Fund Raising

Scholastic Books

Bingo Night

Fall Festival & Picnic

Grandparents/Special Friend's Day

Hospitality

Homeroom Parent Coordinator

Library

Teacher Appreciation

# Financial Matters

## FUNDRAISING

The Porter Academy is a non-profit tax-exempt corporation. At the present time, we are being financed completely by tuition and contributions from present and former parents, along with a few fundraising partners. Please support these Partners who have contributed funds to our school and renew your card annually

- **Kroger** – You will find receive a Kroger letter at orientation or may attain one at any time from the Business Manager. Present this letter along with your KrogerPlus or Kroger Visa card to the cashier to activate your enrollment in the program. Each time you use your KrogerPlus or Kroger Visa card, Kroger will contribute a percentage of your eligible purchases to our school. Please share this letter with your friends and family! The letter may be copied!
- **Publix** – You will receive a Publix Cards at orientation or may attain one at any time from the Business Manager - please share them with your family and friends! Simply scan the card before paying for your purchase and Publix will donate a portion of your sale directly to our school.
- **Box Tops** – Just clip the box top logo from your everyday products and bring them into school. Each box top is worth 10 cents.
- **Target Visa and Target Red cards**

We welcome your ideas and support in this effort as we continue to actively seek other sources of funding. These include:

- Government or private grants
- Donations from parents and friends of the school
- Annual Fund
- Capitol campaign/building fund
- Other fund raisers that involve students

## Tuition and Fees

Tuition includes the academic program and books. The Testing Fee covers the cost of testing performed throughout the school year. This testing will help determine the initial placement of your child and the appropriate teaching/learning strategies, as well as to assess your child's progress throughout the school year.

Tuition and fees must be paid on time by check or money order payable to **Porter Academy, Inc.** A late fee of \$50 will be charged for any payment that is between one day and two weeks late. After two weeks, an additional late charge will be assessed at the rate of 1% per month on past due amounts. A fee of \$30 will be charged for returned checks.

## **TUITION PAYMENT POLICIES**

It is imperative that tuition be paid in accordance with the payment plan selected on your enrollment contract. There can be no exceptions to the payment schedule. Credit card payments are accepted. A fee of 2.0% for Discover Card, 2.5% for MasterCard & Visa and 3.0% for American Express will be added to each payment to cover the transaction fee. If you would like to use your credit card to make a payment, send an email to [phigginbotham@porteracademy.org](mailto:phigginbotham@porteracademy.org) and we will determine the most secure method of attaining your credit card information.

If tuition or fee payments are more than 30 days late a meeting will be set with Business Manager to discuss payment issues. Your child may not be allowed to attend classes until the plan for payment is agreed upon.

# CONTACT INFORMATION

Business Office	Pam Higginbotham
Enrollment	Barbara Ramer -ext.222
Homework	Teacher
Medication	Barbara Ramer
Principal	Barbara Ramer
School Founder	Claudia Porter -ext.223
Testing	Barbara Ramer
Tuition/Fees Payments	Pam Higginbotham

## STAFF E-MAIL

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