



Northwoods  
Learning Center

# Parent Handbook

This Handbook is a parent's guide to understanding the operations and policies in place at Northwoods Learning Center. This Handbook does not constitute a contract for services or enrollment, either expressed or implied, or conditions of enrollment between Northwoods Learning Center and its clients.

**Clients and/or client parents/guardians are required to read, understand and comply with provisions of this handbook.**

Circumstance will require that the policies and practices described in the Handbook change from time to time. Accordingly, Northwoods Learning Center reserves the right to interpret guidelines as may be appropriate under the particular facts and circumstances and to revise, modify, rescind, delete or add to the provision of the Handbook from time to time and in its sole discretion.

Enrollment at Northwoods Learning Center is at-will. This means that a client's enrollment can be terminated at any time by the client or Northwoods Learning Center, with or without notice, and without cause. Nothing in any document or statement now in existence or hereafter created shall limit the right to terminate the enrollment at-will except pursuant to a written enrollment agreement signed by the Owner of Northwoods Learning Center and the client and/or client family. No other officer, agent, or employee of Northwoods Learning Center has the authority to revise, waive, or alter this at-will enrollment policy, which cannot be altered other than pursuant to a written agreement signed by the Owner and the client family.

This Handbook, and the policies and procedures contained in it, supersede any and all prior past practice, written representations or statements regarding the terms and conditions of your enrollment, except as may be stated in a fully signed and written enrollment contract. Any and all previous handbooks are specifically revoked. Please contact the Owner if you have any questions on any matter covered in this Handbook.

## Table of Contents

Welcome

What is ABA

Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB) guidelines

Evidence Based ABA Practices

Recommendation of Hours

Transitioning and Fading

Employee Descriptions

Parent Participation

Parents' Interaction with Employees & Dual Relationships

Non-Cohabiting Guardians

Grievances

Damaged/Missing Property

Termination of Services

Antidiscrimination/ Antiharassment Policy

Personal Health Information (PHI) storage

Mandated Reporter

Notice of Privacy Practices

Abuse and Molestation Prevention

Cultural Competence Policy

Communication

Scheduling

Drop Off and Pick Up

Summary of Scheduling Fees

Inclement Weather Policies and Procedures

Facility Health Policy

Immunizations

Toileting

Napping

Meal & Snacks

Financial Responsibility

Crisis Management

Gifts

Tour/Visitor Policy

## Welcome to the Northwoods Learning Center Family!

### Mission

To improve the quality of life for the individuals we serve and their families by delivering high quality, evidence-based Applied Behavior Analytic services to increase functional skills and decrease maladaptive behaviors.

### What is Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)?

Applied Behavior Analysis is a scientifically validated approach to understanding behavior and how it is affected by the environment. In this context, “behavior” refers to actions and skills, and “environment” includes any influence - physical or social - that might change or be changed by one’s behavior.

Since the 1960’s, therapists have been applying behavior analysis to help children with autism and related developmental disorders. Early techniques often involved adults directing most of the instruction; however, some recent naturalistic approaches encourage the child to take the lead. Through the decades of research, the field of behavior analysis has developed many techniques for increasing useful behaviors and reducing those that may cause harm or interfere with learning. Applied Behavior Analysis strives to bring meaningful and positive changes in behavior- from healthier lifestyles to the mastery of a new language.

On a practical level, the principles (how learning takes place) and methods of behavior analysis have helped many kinds of learners acquire many different skills. One such principle is Positive Reinforcement. When the desired behavior is followed by a reward, the behavior is more likely to be repeated.

At Northwoods Learning Center, we specialize in early intervention as research has shown that early treatment is vital to language development and acquisition of skills. Our team provides a range of services to help your child and your family. All programs are created from research-based strategies and developmentally appropriate curriculum. All services provided utilize the data collection and review procedures required for evidence-based ABA practices. The teaching of treatment goals is done in a one on one or group setting utilizing natural environment (NET) and Intensive Teaching (ITT) trainings.

It is important to consider potential limitations of ABA therapy. First, ABA therapy requires a significant time commitment. ABA therapy services typically involve multiple sessions per week, with each session lasting several hours. This can be demanding for both the child receiving therapy and their parents or caregivers. The time commitment may also affect the family’s daily routines and other activities. It is essential to consider the feasibility and impact of this time commitment when deciding on ABA therapy for your child. Second, the extensive hours of therapy, the expertise of trained professionals, and the personalized treatment plans can result in high costs. Insurance coverage for ABA therapy varies and not all insurance plans provide sufficient coverage. It is important to thoroughly research and understand the financial implications. Third, we live in a rural area with a limited number of professionals. This may result in being placed on a waitlist or the need to travel long distances to access ABA therapy.

When considering ABA therapy for your child, parents should carefully evaluate the above-mentioned factors and make an informed decision. Parents are encouraged to weigh the benefits and risks of ABA therapy, seek professional guidance, and determine the best course of action for the child’s needs.

### Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB) Guidelines

Northwoods Learning Center follows the Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB)’s ethical guidelines. Within these guidelines, clients have the right to effective behavior treatment, which includes individual’s rights, professional relationship, and informed consent.

#### An individual has a right to....

- Evidence-based and effective interventions
- Involvement and consent in the treatment planning process
- Services rendered or supervised by a competent behavior analyst working within their scope of training
- Programs that teach socially significant and functional skills that are tailored for the individual client
- A behavioral assessment and ongoing evaluation
- Interventions that are free of harm and aversives

#### A professional relationship requires:

- Confidentiality
- Protecting the client's dignity, health, and safety
- Helping the client select outcomes and behavior change targets
- Maintaining records
- Advocating for the client
- Providing necessary and needed services
- Evidence-based practice and least restrictive alternatives
- Not a conflict of interest

#### Guideline for "Informed Consent" is as follows:

Informed consent means that the potential recipient of services gives his/her (in our case the parent/ guardian) explicit permission before any assessment or treatment is provided. Informed consent requires more than obtaining permission. Permission must come following full disclosure and information is provided to the participant. For consent to be valid:

- The person must demonstrate the capacity to decide
- The person's decision must be voluntary
- The person must have adequate knowledge of all salient aspects of the treatment

More information can be found at [www.BACB.com](http://www.BACB.com)

Clients are the primary beneficiary of services at Northwoods Learning Center regardless of the type of insurance you have. Any conflicts that arise during services are resolved in the best interest of the client regardless of other stakeholder interest (such as third-party payors).

This policy is (1) to the extent any provision is inconsistent with applicable state law, state law controls and (2) to the extent state law provides employees with additional benefits — above and beyond those spelled out in the handbook — state law again controls.

## **Evidence-Based ABA Practices**

Northwoods Learning Center utilizes Evidence-Based Practices (EBP) as means for decision-making in order to integrate the best available evidence with client needs and circumstances, and clinical expertise. This practice allows Northwoods Learning Center to provide services uniquely matched to each client and its framework provides behavior analysts with a structure for pervasive use of the best available evidence in the complex settings in which they work.

Through the use of EBP Northwoods Learning Center is able to clearly and explicitly recognize evidence supporting intervention options, understands the importance of contextual factors including client values that contribute to decision making, and the key role of clinical expertise in the conceptualization, intervention, and evaluation of cases.

**Beware of Non-Evidence-Based Practices:** As you, as parent/guardian of a child with autism, strive to help your child, you may fall prey to deceitful claims that encourage you to try unsafe, expensive, and ineffective non-evidence-based treatments. Before beginning a treatment, parents should question whether there is a clear, scientific rationale behind the treatment and think critically about its associated risks and benefits. Parents/guardians should also ask their

healthcare provider whether the treatment has been proven effective and safe in scientific studies and whether those studies have been published in well-established, highly reputable, peer-reviewed medical journals. It is important to remember that anyone can start a journal or post a study on the internet to push the effectiveness of dangerous or useless interventions. Healthcare fraud is a huge business in the US and parents of children with autism are often targeted. Fringe treatment providers prey on desperation and fear and deceive parents with numerous unfounded claims. The following are commonly discussed treatments that are currently NOT scientifically validated: chelation, lupron therapy, hyperbaric oxygen therapy, gluten free-casein free diet, stem cell therapy, immune globulin therapy, auditory integration training, secretin injections, antifungal agent therapy, vitamin supplements, raw camel milk, marijuana therapy, nicotine patch therapy, bleach therapy, transcranial magnetic stimulation, therapeutic horseback riding, dolphin-assisted therapy, prism glasses, and holding therapy.

The risks of implementing non-evidence-based procedures include wasting valuable time and money, interference with proven effective treatments, and making a negative emotion impact on parents/guardians when the intervention proves ineffective. Some non-evidence-based treatment can even be dangerous.

If a parent/guardian requests for their child to participate in a non-evidence-based treatment, the Northwoods Learning Center team will schedule a meeting to discuss the benefits and risks associated with the desired treatment. Northwoods Learning Center does not use non-evidence-based practices during sessions and does not support practices that interfere with the client's programming, progress, or overall wellbeing.

## Recommendation of Hours

There are many factors that go into determining a recommendation for intensity and duration of ABA services. Some factors include how many goals will be targeted, the number of concerning behaviors, medical needs, and parent training needs. Throughout your child's ABA program, supervisors will reassess your child on a regular basis to see if changes in the recommended hours are needed. There are two types of ABA treatment plans:

- **Focused:** Focuses on reducing challenging behaviors, teaching replacement behaviors, and learning skills to increase personal independence. A lesser time commitment and usually less than 20 hours per week.
- **Comprehensive:** Recommended for children who display deficits in a majority of developmental domains. This type of intensive therapy begun at an early age has been scientifically proven to provide the best outcomes for the child. Comprehensive treatment also works on decreasing challenging behaviors that are interfering with the child's quality of life and independence. Comprehensive treatment is a larger time commitment and usually 20-40 hours per week.

## Transitioning and Fading

Transitions can be the result of either the child's mastery of the established goal criteria, resulting in a transition to the next higher-level goal, or due to the client's deficiency or inability to reach current goal objectives, moving the child to a lower-level goal.

When situations occur where clients are moved to lower-level goals, the prerequisite goals are re-evaluated and a new goal criteria set is established. Once the client is able to master the new goal criteria set, the original goals will be revisited, and the client will be eligible to move to the next higher-level set of goal criteria.

Fading refers to decreasing the level of assistance needed to complete a task or activity. When teaching a skill, the overall goal is for the child to eventually engage in the skill as independently as possible. The process of fading and shaping incorporate the use and withdrawal of various prompts.

Behavior reduction plans will be faded out systematically by slowly adapting or reducing one component at a time.

Discharge and transition planning from one or all treatment programs will involve a gradual step down in services. Discharge from a comprehensive ABA treatment program occurs over several months. Treatment plans will be reviewed and evaluated, and discharge planning will begin when the child has achieved specific treatment goals, as measured by appropriate standardized protocols.

The process of fading will begin once the child's progress meets specific predetermined goals.

## Employee Descriptions

- **Clinical Director:** The Clinical Director is responsible for directing the clinical services, assisting with the intake process for new families and clients, providing oversight and management of the Program Managers and Program Manager Assistants quality as well as carrying out duties of a Program Manager.
- **Program Manager:** A Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) with a Master's degree in the field of Applied Behavior Analysis, has completed between 1,000 and 1,500 hours of supervised experience in the field of ABA, has passed the Behavior Analyst Certification Board's examination and is licensed in the state of Michigan and Wisconsin to practice ABA. The primary responsibilities of a program manager are to supervise, monitor and guide the direct treatment of their case load daily by observing Behavior Technicians as they conduct treatment and provide feedback and modeling of correct treatment implementation. Their time is spent on the floor with staff and clients ensuring quality delivery of services as well as analyzing data and completing necessary paperwork to support the treatment of the children of their case load. Program managers will also meet with parents for monthly meetings to train parents on information that is crucial to carry over gains made at the center to the home environment.
- **Program Manager Assistant:** An individual who is receiving training under the supervision of a BCBA to sit for the board competency exam to become a BCBA. This person will have completed their Master's degree or is currently enrolled in a Master's program in Applied Behavior Analysis, but has not yet passed the board exam. They assist and support on case management under the oversight of their BCBA supervisor.
- **Lead Registered Behavior Technician** – Requires the individual to have demonstrated conceptual understanding of advanced principles of ABA. Leads may provide assistance to Behavior Technicians on the floor to improve the quality of treatment by offering coaching, integrity checks, and assistance during sessions.
- **Registered Behavior Technician (RBT)** – Requires the individual to have passed the Registered Behavior Technician examination.
- **Behavior Technician (BT)** – Entry level position. Requires the individual to have passed through a 40-hour classroom training and a 40-hour on the floor training.

The entire ABA Therapy team works together to make sure that your child is receiving the best possible services based on his/her individual goals. Duties and responsibilities of team members may vary and are not limited to the roles as stated above. There is no guarantee that the same BT/BCBA will be assigned to your child's case for the entire time you receive services at Northwoods Learning Center, as we encourage staff changes from time to time to facilitate generalization of skills across multiple clinicians.

## Parent Participation

Parents are integral to the success of each child. Northwoods Learning Center includes parents in all aspects of therapy from goal and objective development to treatment strategies and behavior management skills. All treatment plans provided utilize the data collection and review procedures required for evidence-based ABA practices. The consistency of programming across settings is our ultimate goal. Northwoods Learning Center's clinicians are available to train parents in the areas of behavior management and the application of intensive teaching procedures to enable parents to become part of the child's therapy team.

The level, intensity, and frequency of parent training will be included in your child's Individualized Treatment Plan but we require twice a month, one-hour parent training per month for the first 6 months of the authorization. After 6 months, we require once a month parent training.

**Parent Commitment:** To ensure effective implementation of the treatment plan/programming, Northwoods Learning Center requests the following commitments listed below as they are critical to your child's successful therapy and will attempt to correct an issue, otherwise the service plan may be terminated.

- Active participation in the development of the child's treatment plan.
- Active participation in training regarding the child's programming and behavior reduction protocols.
- Consistency with the child's treatment plan and behavior reduction protocols.
- Attend two, one-hour parent training meetings per month for the first 6 months of the authorization and then one one-hour parent training meeting per month after that at Northwoods Learning Center.
- Attend biyearly progress review meetings which will summarize your child's progress on current treatment goals over the past 6 months as well as graphs of any problem behavior that you child's team may be working on reducing. At this time, you will have the opportunity to review your child's progress to date, discuss updates, request changes, and be able to observe your child engaging in a treatment session. *Please note, this is the scheduled time to formally discuss your child's overall progress and response to treatment. You may, at any time, request to meet to review this information if you feel more frequent or emergency reviews are necessary.*
- Immediate communication via [info@northwoodsaba.com](mailto:info@northwoodsaba.com) or 906-828-2088 (if necessary) with the Supervising BCBA if unsure about how to implement a program/protocol.
- Immediate communication via email (phone if necessary) with the Clinical Director from the parent if there is a concern that a program/protocol is not being implemented correctly or working effectively.

**Procedure for Lack of Participation:** The following is an explanation of the steps that will be taken if a parent/guardian is not participating in their child's programming.

1. The first time that a parent or guardian does not meet one of the participation requirements, the BCBA will remind the parent of their required participation and try to determine what the barriers to service may be to encourage parent or guardian compliance.
2. The second time that a parent or guardian does not meet one of the participation requirements, the BCBA or Clinical Director will provide the parent or guardian with a written notice reminding the parent or guardian of the participation policy. The notice will clearly explain to the parent or guardian where their participation is lacking.
3. The third time that parent or guardian does not meet one of the participation requirements, the BCBA and Clinical Director will meet with the parent or guardian and provide them a final written notice reminding the parent or guardian of the participation policy. The notice will clearly explain to the parent or guardian where their participation is lacking. The BCBA and Clinical Director will work closely with the parent or guardian to provide the training necessary to correct the issue. Additionally, the notice will explain to the parent that if the parent or guardian does not meet the participation requirements again, the child's services will be discontinued.
4. The fourth time that a parent or guardian does not meet one of the participation requirements, the child's services will be discontinued on the grounds that Northwoods Learning Center cannot provide effective treatment and the child will be referred to a different provider.

The ABA therapy team will work closely with every parent or guardian to ensure that parent training is both helpful and effective for every parent or guardian. When issues arise, the Program Manager will work closely with the parent or guardian to determine how best to resolve the issue. Exemptions may be granted on a case-by-case basis when circumstances arise that would prevent the parent from fully participating or attending scheduled parent training meetings. These circumstances could include a parent having a baby, traveling for long periods of time, hospitalized, etc. When parents or guardians participate fully in their child's programming, they should see more progress from their child and have a better understanding of how to respond to various behaviors.



**Participation Requirements:** Please see your child's Individualized Treatment Plan.

## **Parents' Interaction with Employees & Dual Relationships**

The nature of our profession often involves that we work intensively with the clients and families we serve. For this reason, we require that parents maintain a friendly relationship with employees, but not a personal relationship. Parents acknowledge that any relationship outside the therapeutic one is completely inappropriate.

Dual relationships include, but are not limited to babysitting, acting as a nanny, bartering of services of goods, giving of gifts, friendships, sexual relationships, etc. This pertains to both past and present employees and dual relationships are also prohibited by the BACB's code of ethics. Northwoods Learning Center strives to hire the best employees; however, as at-will employees, staff may leave our company for various reasons and with or without adequate notice. Due to the confidentiality we hold with our employees and parents, we cannot go into detail about why an employee left the company. This is for the protection of Northwoods Learning Center and for our clients, however, we will make every attempt to ensure that staff changes are not disruptive to a client's services.

Parents acknowledge that Northwoods Learning Center does not ever allow employees to transport clients or client family members in their personal vehicles. In addition, if services ever take place in the home, a parent/guardian or other adult (18 or over) must be present in the home at all times while services are taking place. Services cannot take place without a responsible adult present in the home.

**Pets and Animals:** Northwoods Learning Center recognizes that some employees may have allergies or discomfort around certain animals. To prevent discomfort or distraction, we ask that you keep any non-service related animals in a secured separate room, space or area, or outside during all home visits. This policy includes the arrival or departure of the therapist. This policy refers to, but is not limited to: dogs, cats, birds, snakes, reptiles, rabbits, rats, hamsters, guinea pigs, etc. This policy excludes service animals. In the case of non-compliance, the therapist has the right to leave the premises. If there are repeated non-compliance issues, or the client is unable to follow this policy, then other arrangements may be discussed for sessions to occur outside of the home.

**Aggressive Behavior:** Northwoods Learning Center employees have the right to work and provide services in a safe environment that supports personal worth and dignity through mutual respect, cooperation, and understanding. As such, Northwoods Learning Center will not tolerate any violent or aggressive behavior, discrimination, or harassment towards any of our workforce members. Any adults in the home are expected to treat employees working in their home with dignity and respect and Northwoods Learning Center will not tolerate behavior that would be considered offensive, intimidating, sexual, or unwelcome in any way. Violence and aggression, such as physical force, threatening behavior, or verbal abuse are strictly prohibited toward the employee, Client, or other members or animals within the household. If the employee feels discomfort or is concerned for their personal safety, they will leave the premises and immediately notify the Supervisor or Clinical Director who will then notify appropriate authorities if necessary. If the environment continues to remain unsafe or non-conducive to effective therapy, Northwoods Learning Center may have to discontinue services and refer the client to another service provider.

**Smoking:** Smoking in a place of work poses serious health risks and fire hazards to workforce members. It is the employer's duty to ensure a safe, smoke-free environment for all employees. During support services with Northwoods Learning Center's therapist, the client's home automatically becomes a workplace for the duration of the visit. As such, smoking inside the home is strictly prohibited during, and at least 15 minutes before the provision of services. The term smoking includes, but is not limited to: cigarettes, tobacco, marijuana, e-cigarettes, pipes, etc. In the case of non-compliance, the therapist will immediately leave the premises and notify the Supervisor or Clinical Director and will not be able to return until this policy is adhered to. If there are repeated non-compliance issues, or the client is unable to follow this policy, then other arrangements will be made for sessions outside of the home.

**Illegal Activity:** During services with Northwoods Learning Center’s therapist, the client’s home automatically becomes a workplace for the duration of the visit. As such, any illegal activity inside the home is strictly prohibited during the provision of services. The term illegal activity includes, but is not limited to sale, possession of, or taking of illicit controlled substances, vandalism, prostitution, theft, assault, etc. In the case where the therapist witnesses illegal activity in the client’s home, the therapist will immediately leave the premises and notify the Supervisor or Clinical Director, who will then notify the appropriate authorities.

**Temperature Control:** During support services with Northwoods Learning Center’s therapist, the client’s home automatically becomes a workplace for the duration of the visit. As such, we ask that you respect the therapist’s physical comfort level and ensure that the home is neither too hot, nor too cold during the duration of the visit. Between 68 degrees Fahrenheit (summer) and 74 degrees Fahrenheit (winter) is a comfortable temperature range to use as a reference point. In the case of non-compliance, the therapist will notify the Supervisor or Clinical Director and will not be able to return until this policy is followed. If there are repeated non-compliance issues or the client is unable to follow this policy, then other arrangements will be made for sessions outside of the home.

## Non-Cohabiting Guardians

As a parent or legal guardian, you have a duty to maintain and protect the child in your care. Along with those duties, legal guardians also have the right to make decisions about the child's health, welfare and general well-being.

Married, cohabiting, parents of a child are considered *joint guardians* and have equal rights in relation to the child. This arrangement allows ease in care and decision-making abilities by both guardian parents.

Likewise, non-cohabiting parents also have equal rights with regard to their child but their guardianship and its decisions are separate. In these cases, specific authorizations must be on file with Northwoods Learning Center to ensure that the needs and requirements of both the child and the non-cohabiting guardians are met.

Northwoods Learning Center requires written authorization for consent, treatment and the release of personal health information for both non-cohabiting parents and/or guardians of any minor child. All authorizations must be on file prior to the commencement of any treatment program.

## Grievances

In the event of a grievance, conflict, or complaint against Northwoods Learning Center, parents are encouraged to make an appointment with the Owner to professionally discuss and reconcile any dispute.

All [technicians](#) and [behavior analysts](#) are required to adhere to the ethics codes put forth by the BACB. As stated above parents are encouraged to make an appointment with the owner to review any ethical violations. Click on the blue link to see the specific ethics codes.

Parents/guardians also have the right to submit complaints about Northwoods Learning Center to our regulating, credentialing, and accrediting bodies.

- [Michigan Department of Health and Human Services](#)
- [Wisconsin Department of Health Services](#)
- [Behavior Analyst Certification Board](#)
- [Behavioral Health Center of Excellence](#)

Parents/guardians who report a grievance, conflict, or complaint against Northwoods Learning in good faith shall be protected. Northwoods Learning Center does not tolerate any form of threat, retaliation, or other action against parents/guardians who have reported concerns in good faith.

## Personal Property

While we do all we can to ensure your child's property is taken care of while they are in our care, accidents do occur. Please understand that what is brought with your child from home during a session is not the responsibility of Northwoods Learning Center or its staff. Please only send what is absolutely necessary for your child's session or treatment. Northwoods Learning Center is not responsible for damage done to personal items by your child, other clients in treatment or general "wear and tear" by use during treatment hours.

It is our policy that all items belonging to your child need to be labeled with his/her initials by the parent in order to show ownership of the items that come in with your child. It is not the responsibility of Northwoods Learning Center to label personal client items.

Clients are not permitted to have cell phones during their sessions. Cell phones may be left with the parent, put in a backpack, or put in our cell phone bin at the beginning of a session.

Listening devices are prohibited during sessions due to being a HIPAA violation. "AngelSense Tracker" is allowed, however the 1-way and 2-way voice feature is prohibited during sessions. Use of a listening device during sessions will result in immediate termination of services.

## Termination of Services

A client may be discharged from the services or services may be put on hold for reasons such as, but not limited to:

- If he/she has successfully completed the program designed to address the deficits relating to autism spectrum disorder when agreed upon between parents and Northwoods Learning Center supervisors.
- If he/she measures within typical age-norm ranges on relevant assessments including any barrier behavior.
- If insurance companies will no longer provide funding due to reaching treatment goals and a typically developing skill set.
- Inability to regularly participate effectively in treatment or failure to attend 80% of sessions in a month.
- Lack of sufficiently skilled staff for 2 consecutive months.
- If he/she has not demonstrated significant progress towards goals after 6 months of treatment.
- Failure to pay fees by due date indicated on individual bill (Grounds for immediate termination without advanced notice).
- Lack of parental cooperation/irreconcilable differences between the family and provider concerning important issues in treatment planning and delivery.
- Inability of parent/guardian to participate in the required goals for treatment progress.
- Inability of Northwoods Learning Center to meet the physical, mental health, or behavioral needs of the client. The parent will be referred to other community resources.
- Repeated failure to pick up the child at the scheduled time AND not paying late pick-up fees.
- Failure to complete and return required forms/documentation.
- Use of a listening device during sessions (Grounds for immediate termination of services).
- Behaviors demonstrated by the child that have the potential to injure peers or self that are outside of the scope of Northwoods Learning Center's practice or training.

If discharge is agreed upon by the clinical team to be in the near future for the client or because the child is within typical age ranges for skills and problem behavior, a meeting will be held to discuss discharge/reduction of service hours to meet the discharge goals. Discharge will be completed gradually, if possible, over a 3-6-month period, allowing time for the client and family to acclimate to reduced support levels.

Regardless of discharge reason, families will be provided with a discharge summary with recommendations for additional supports and available services that may best fit the client's current needs upon discharge.

A client will never be discharged due to discrimination. Northwoods Learning Center is committed to complying with all applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Parents must give a 2-week written notice of their intent to withdraw the client.

Northwoods Learning Center will give a 2-week written notice of our intent to discharge a client, unless:

- The client engages in severe self-injurious behavior or harmful behavior to others (for example but not limited to: drawing blood, spraining, hyper-extending or breaking joints, large tissue damage etc.) that Northwoods Learning Center staff are not trained to manage and would put other clients in likely danger if treatment were continued.
- Parents fail to pay fees owed after final notice due date is given.
- A listening device is used during services.

If a parent feels an appeal is necessary, they may submit a written appeal and a consultation will be scheduled within 2 business days to review the intended discharge. The center Owner will make the final decision.

If the discharge is a mutual decision by both Northwoods Learning Center and the parents, a termination date will be agreed upon on a per case basis and as discussed.

## **Antidiscrimination/ Antiharassment Policy**

Northwoods Learning Center does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, gender, religion, sexual orientation, or disability. Northwoods Learning Center does not condone discrimination on the basis of race, sex, gender, religion, sexual education, or disability by any of its employees, volunteers, or clients.

Northwoods Learning Center also does not condone harassment on the basis of race, sex, gender, religion, sexual orientation, or disability. Employees, volunteers, and/or clients that feel that they are being discriminated against or harassed should report the behavior immediately as an intolerant and unsafe work environment.

Harassment is defined as any verbal or physical conduct designed to threaten, intimidate or coerce an employee, volunteer, client, or any person working for or on behalf of Northwoods Learning Center. This includes but is not limited to unwanted propositions, touching, physical threats, crude jokes, comments about a person's appearance or beliefs, and generally making a person feel unsafe in their work or therapy environment.

Any person found to have violated this policy can be subject to discipline up to and including termination if an employee or being asked to leave the program if they are a client or volunteer.

## **Personal Health Information (PHI) storage**

Northwoods Learning Center understands that we deal in highly personal and sensitive information regarding both you and the child in your care. We want to reassure you that your information is securely held in accordance with HIPAA and only accessible and available to those employees on your child's team.

Northwoods Learning Center keeps a record of our clients' information. This record contains the dates of contact with our clients, notes on client progress, and other documents related to client treatment. This record is confidential and may be released only with written consent by the client/parent/guardian. Northwoods Learning Center abides by HIPAA

regulations regarding confidentiality. To release information to a third party, Northwoods Learning Center must receive a signed "Release of Information" form from the client/parent/guardian.

Northwoods Learning Center shares information within the organization on a monthly or as-needed basis to facilitate case collaboration, peer review, as well as for supervision and billing purposes. In the event records are transported or removed from the building, they will be protected by either physical locks or password locks. Northwoods Learning Center will fax records whenever possible to maintain confidentiality.

## **Mandated Reporter**

All clinical employees of Northwoods Learning Center are mandated reporters as deemed so by Michigan state rules, regulations, and laws. This is true of all therapists, social workers, teachers, etc., and should not restrict the work to be completed. This is a state law designed to protect children from injury and should not be viewed as means to harm parents and caretakers.

This form shall serve as a reminder to the family of this fact and shall also provide insight into what this disclosure means. This disclosure shall serve as part of the client education regarding the program, and the client information packet.

Being deemed a mandated reporter, the Behavior Technician for the Northwoods Learning Center program is required by law to report any and all allegations, reports, and suspicions of child abuse, neglect, and maltreatment immediately to the appropriate identified governing body. The Behavior Technician who is the mandated reporter should also notify their immediate supervisor, who may then assist the Behavior Technician with making the report.

The Department of Human Services is the governing body identified in the state of Michigan regarding cases of child abuse, neglect, and maltreatment, and the Behavior Therapist is required and shall, therefore, report the incidents mentioned above to the appropriate governmental agency.

Any report made to the Department of Human Services were deemed necessary by them, shall constitute a separate case from the services managed by Northwoods Learning Center. Northwoods Learning Center shall play no part in decisions made by Department of Human Services and should be viewed as a separate organization.

The client shall sign a Mandated Reporter Disclosure Receipt Form that shall be kept in the client's file as evidence that the information mentioned above has been provided to the client and family.

## **Notice of Privacy Practices**

This notice describes how medical/mental health information about you may be used or disclosed and how you can get access to this information. Please review it carefully.

Northwoods Learning Center must maintain the privacy of your health information and provide you with this notice. You will be asked to sign a Release of Information Form. Once you have signed the Release of Information Form, Northwoods Learning Center employees may use or disclose your Protected Health Information (PHI) for purposes of diagnosis, treatment, obtaining payment, or to conduct healthcare operations. For example, to receive payment for our services, Northwoods Learning Center must provide information to the funding source being used.

**Other permitted and required uses and disclosures that may be made without your consent, authorization, or opportunity to object:**

Abuse or Neglect: If any Northwoods Learning Center employee suspects abuse or neglect of a child or elder, he/she is mandated to make a report to the appropriate public authorities.

Danger: If a Northwoods Learning Center employee suspects that you are in imminent danger of harming yourself or someone else, he/she is mandated to make a report to the person at risk to the public authorities.

Legal Proceedings: Northwoods Learning Center employees may disclose Personal Health Information (PHI) in response to a court order or subpoena or certain other legal proceeding.

**You have the following rights regarding the PHI that Northwoods Learning Center maintains about you:**

Right to Inspect and Copy: You have the right to inspect and request copies of information that may be used to make decisions about your care. Usually, this includes demographic and billing records but does not include case notes. To inspect and receive copies of information, you must submit a request in writing. If you request a copy of the information, Northwoods Learning Center may charge a fee for the cost of copying, mailing, or other supplies associated with your request. Northwoods Learning Center must respond to your request within fifteen (15) days of receipt.

Right to Amend: If you feel that the PHI about you is incorrect or incomplete, you may ask Northwoods Learning Center to amend the information. You have a right to request an amendment for as long as Northwoods Learning Center keeps the information. Your request for amendment must be in writing and must provide a reason supporting your request.

Right to an Accounting of Disclosures: You have the right to request an Accounting of Disclosures regarding information that Northwoods Learning Center employees have made about you. You must submit your request in writing to the above address. Your request must state a period for the disclosures, which may not be longer than six (6) years and may not include dates before 1/1/2022.

Right to Request Restrictions on Uses and Disclosures: You may request that disclosure of confidential information be limited. If Northwoods Learning Center is unable to agree to that restriction, we can discuss other options, such as referral to another provider.

Right to Limit Reception of Confidential Information: For example, you may request that Northwoods Learning Center employees only contact you at a certain telephone number or address. You do not have to give a reason for your request.

Right to a Paper Copy of this Notice of Privacy Practices: You have a right to a paper copy of this notice.

Other uses and disclosure of PHI and any disclosure of Case Notes will be made only with your written authorization. After such authorization is given, you may revoke that authorization at any time from future use. This notice may be amended as needed to comply with federal, state, and professional requirements.

## **Abuse and Molestation Prevention**

To help protect children, Northwoods Learning Center has implemented the following Abuse and Molestation Prevention policy. It is important that all Northwoods Learning Center employees understand and apply these guidelines in order to prevent abuse against children and minors. The policies contained herein provide our employees and volunteers with the definitions, guidelines, protection and prevention rules, as well as the policy Acknowledgement, which is required to be signed by all individuals interacting with children.

### **Purpose**

These procedures are designed to reduce the risk of child abuse in order to:

- Provide a safe and secure environment for children, youth, adults, visitors, volunteers, and paid employees.
- Assist Northwoods Learning Center in evaluating a person's suitability to supervise, oversee, and/or exert control over the activities of children and youth.
- Satisfy the concerns of parents and employees with a screening process for paid employees and volunteers.
- Provide a system to respond to alleged victims of sexual abuse and their families, as well as the alleged perpetrator.
- Reduce the possibility of false accusations of sexual abuse made against paid employees and volunteers.

## Definitions

The following terms used herein and are defined as follows:

- *Paid Employee*: Any employee who is paid.
- *Children/Youth/Minor*: Any person who has not reached his/her 18th birthday or the age of majority as defined by Michigan law.
- *Adult*: Any person who has reached his/her 18th birthday or as defined by Michigan law.
- *Volunteer*: Means any unpaid person engaged in or involved in activities and who is entrusted with the care and supervision of minors or a person who directly oversees and/or exerts control or oversight over minors or adults.
- *Sexual Abuse*: is defined as the use, persuasion, inducement, enticement, or coercion of any individual to engage in, or assist any other individual to engage in, conduct deemed as sexually explicit conduct, the physical act of rape, and in cases of caretaker or family relationships, statutory rape, molestation, prostitution, or other form of sexual exploitation of an individual, or incest as defined by federal and Michigan law. This includes but is not limited to any unwelcomed sexual verbal comments, remarks, sexual gestures, jokes, advances, or leering; sexual touching, fondling, molestation, assault, or any other intimate physical contact; using threats, fear or undue influence to compelling another individual to engage in a sexual act; and displaying or distribution of pornographic materials to another individual.
- *Child Emotional Abuse*: Verbal or nonverbal conduct including mental exploitation, degrading, humiliating, or threatening conduct or communications that may or may not include bullying as defined by Michigan law.

## Protection and Prevention

### Volunteer and Employee Screening Procedures

The following screening procedures are to be used with paid employees and volunteers who are entrusted with the care and supervision of minors or a person who directly oversees and/or exerts control or oversight over minors. All information collected should be maintained in confidence.

1. *Employment Application and Volunteer Application*: Any paid employee or volunteer who will work with a minor must complete the Employment Application. The statement of release included with the Application must be signed by the employee or volunteer completing the Application in order to apply for, and qualify for service.

Northwoods Learning Center applications include questions regarding:

- Current and previous residence addresses.
- Current and previous employment, to include addresses, dates, duties, titles, and reasons for leaving.
- Names and addresses of schools attended, degree(s) earned.
- References from previous employers and organizations that work with children.
- Criminal history information, as well as pending criminal charges (where not prohibited by state law).

*Applications include a statement, which the applicant should acknowledge in writing, certifying all statements provided in the application are true and complete, and any misrepresentation or omission may be grounds for rejection of the applicant or for dismissal if he or she is employed. This statement authorizes Northwoods Learning Center to contact any individual or organization listed in the application.*

2. Review all statements made in the application, paying specific attention to any gaps in time and irregular employment patterns or unexplained absence. Pursue these gaps with employers listed and in a subsequent interview.
3. Interviews will be conducted with all qualified applicants.  
*If detrimental information is uncovered but the applicant remains desirable, discuss this information with the applicant. In the event the applicant is ultimately hired or accepted as an employee or volunteer, we document the reasons for overriding the prior information. Whenever possible, Northwoods Learning Center will have an associate participate in the interview.*
4. Contact all listed references and employers for paid employees. Inquire as to the reason the applicant left and ask for any information that might help determine the applicant's suitability for the position. If a response is not received within a reasonable period of time, follow up and keep notes if possible.
5. *Criminal Background Check:* Northwoods Learning Center will conduct a criminal background check on all paid employees and volunteers who are entrusted with the care and supervision of minors or a person who directly oversees and/or exerts control or oversight over minors.

### **Confidentiality**

Information obtained through the screening, application, reference check, interview, and criminal background check will be kept in confidence, unless otherwise required by law. All information determined during the course of screenings above-referenced will remain in a secure location, with restricted access and said materials will be archived.

### **Supervision Procedures**

Unless an extenuating situation exists, Northwoods Learning Center:

1. Will have adequate number of screened and trained paid employees or volunteers present at events involving minors. Supervision will increase in proportion to the risk of the activity.
2. Will monitor facilities during activities involving children.
3. Will release minors only to a parent or guardian and utilize sign-in and sign-out sheets.

### **Behavioral Guidelines for Paid Employees**

All paid employees will observe the following guidelines:

1. Do not provide alcoholic beverages, tobacco, drugs, contraband, or anything that is prohibited by law to minors.
2. The door of the client restroom will always remain at least half open. Male employees will not change the diaper or assist with toileting activities of female clients.
3. Avoid all inappropriate touching with minors. All touching shall be based on the needs of the individual being touched, not on the needs of the paid employee. In the event a minor initiates physical contact and/or inappropriate touching, it is appropriate to inform the minor that such touching is inappropriate.
4. Never engage in physical discipline of a minor. Paid employees shall not engage in activity which could be abusive to minors, including but not limited to physical, verbal, mental, emotional and sexual abuse.
5. It is imperative to maintain clear and professional boundaries at all times. If you recognize an inappropriate relationship developing between any minor and adult take action to refer the minor to another individual with supervisory authority.
6. Anyone who observes abuse of a minor will take appropriate steps to immediately intervene and provide assistance. Report any inappropriate conduct to the proper authorities and officials of Northwoods Learning Center for handling.

### **Disqualification**

No person may be entrusted with the care and supervision of minors or may directly oversee and/or exert control or oversight over minors who has been convicted of the offenses, have been on a probation or received deferred



adjudication, outlined, or presently has pending criminal charges for any offense outlined below until a determination of guilt or innocence has been made, including any person who is presently on deferred adjudication. The following offenses disqualify a person from care, supervision, control, or oversight of minors:

1. Any offense against minors as defined by state law.
2. A misdemeanor or felony offense as defined by state law that is classified as sexual assault, indecency with a minor or adult, assault of a minor or adult, injury to a minor or adult, abandoning or endangering a minor, sexual performance with a minor or adult, possession or promoting child pornography, enticing a minor, bigamy, incest, drug-related offenses, or family violence.
3. A prior criminal history of an offense against minors.

Northwoods Learning Center will respond promptly to investigate any accusation of sexual abuse. All accusations of sexual abuse will be taken seriously. It is important to be appropriately respectful to the needs and feelings of those who allege sexual abuse and those who have been accused of sexual abuse.

When an allegation is made involving sexual abuse, the person reporting the complaint is to be told about the guidelines and the procedures to be followed. A Northwoods Learning Center appointed person will begin investigating the allegations and may use the assistance of legal counsel or other consultants. If the Northwoods Learning Center appointed person is the individual accused of sexual abuse, then the next highest-ranking official of Northwoods Learning Center will conduct the investigation. The investigation will be conducted as follows:

1. Report the incident to appropriate authorities in accordance with the state mandatory reporting laws.
2. Report the matter to Northwoods Learning Center's insurance carrier.
3. Cooperate with authorities and the insurance carrier.
4. Northwoods Learning Center may suspend the alleged offender while a confidential investigation is being conducted.
5. Northwoods Learning Center (and legal counsel or other consultants) will meet with the governing body of Northwoods Learning Center and present a report on their investigation, which will include findings and recommendations of actions.
6. Northwoods Learning Center will meet with the alleged perpetrator and notify him/her of the results of the investigation and recommendations for actions.
7. Northwoods Learning Center will meet with the alleged victim, along with his/her parents or guardians, and notify them of the results of the investigation and recommendations for actions.
8. During the investigation, Northwoods Learning Center shall maintain contact with the alleged victim and his/her parents or legal guardian, and inform them of the actions taken and assist them in their process of healing.
9. Northwoods Learning Center (and legal counsel or other consultants) may meet with the alleged perpetrator, the alleged victim, and any others with knowledge of relevant facts.
10. Communicate with criminal and civil legal counsel of Northwoods Learning Center.
11. Communicate with those affected by the alleged perpetrator.
12. Hire a consultant or assign a spokesperson to respond to media or prepare a statement for the media if the need shall arise, client to the approval of Northwoods Learning Center's attorney.

## **Cultural Competence Policy**

It is the intent of Northwoods Learning Center that its employees behave in a manner representative of its ethical and/or moral commitment to provide quality treatment services to its recipients.

It is the policy of Northwoods Learning Center to maintain a written Cultural Competency and Diversity Plan that describe how the linguistic and cultural needs of our recipients are met. It is our policy to effectively provide services to recipients of all cultures, age, races, gender, sexual orientation, socio economic status, languages, ethnic backgrounds, spiritual and religious beliefs in such a way that recognizes, values, respects the worth of, and protects and preserves the dignity of every individual. Northwoods Learning Center adheres to the equal employment opportunity policy and non-discrimination practices.

Northwoods Learning Center policy is implemented by the following plan and practices.

### I. Cultural Competency and Diversity Plan Introduction

Cultural competence is an integral part of Northwoods Learning Center. Those employed by Northwoods Learning Center who are in direct contact with recipients and families will demonstrate the following:

- Recognize, value, and respect the worth of each individual recipient and family and protect and preserve the dignity of each;
- Utilize appropriate resources to ensure linguistic needs of the recipient and family are met;
- Assess recipient and family acculturation to aid in matching families with appropriate community-based resources and provide appropriate health and rehabilitation education;
- Utilize culture-specific information provided in training and/or employee orientation to assist in identifying and determining the cause of culture-based issues and miscommunication and to resolve them.

Northwoods Learning Center ensures non-discriminatory and respectful services to recipients and families by employing both internal and external cultural competency practices. Ongoing improvement and widespread dissemination of these efforts evidences Northwoods Learning Center's commitment to the provision of culturally appropriate services and care. Northwoods Learning Center, accommodates, facilitates, treats, and assists recipients with a wide variety of disabilities from mental and physical disabilities to those recipients with medical diagnosis and disorders.

All employees, recipients, and families have access to the Northwoods Learning Center Cultural Competency and Diversity Plan upon request.

### II. Internal Cultural Competency and Diversity Practices

Northwoods Learning Center seeks employees that are committed to their community, represent a variety of cultural backgrounds, and are capable of interactions in cross-cultural situations. Discrimination is not tolerated and employees will conduct services in a manner that recognizes, values, respects the worth of, and protects and preserves the dignity of every individual.

Translation services will be provided to any recipient, when necessary and requested. The interpreter will assist with translating any intake, treatment plans, evaluation, or other documents shared with family. If a client is in need of interpretive services Northwoods Learning Center calls Michigan Association for the Deaf and makes arrangements for these services.

Northwoods Learning Center will provide interpreter services to recipients and families as necessary when requested to ensure availability of effective communication regarding medical treatment, health information, or health education. Interpreters are available when technical, medical, or treatment information is to be discussed or where use of a family member or friend, as interpreter is inappropriate. If a client is bilingual, Northwoods Learning Center will invoke the assistance of a professional who will handle interpretations. Northwoods Learning Center will also seek professional assistance to handle the needs of any individual with a speech and hearing impairment.

Northwoods Learning Center will provide a comprehensive, behaviorally and theoretically based cultural competency training and education periodically, as well as on demand, as needed.

### III. External Cultural Competency Practices

Employees are notified of their responsibilities pertaining to delivering culturally competent care and may obtain a copy of the Cultural Competency and Diversity Plan by contacting their Human Resource department.

## Communication

Communication is a vital role for several reasons. Our goal at Northwoods Learning Center is to respond to all emails, phone calls, or texts within 24 hours during regular business hours. There may be times that we respond with a notification stating that we may need more time to respond.

Parents acknowledge replying to phone calls or emails from employees within 24 hours or the next business day if over a weekend or holiday. If you do not have time to respond to the communication from an employee within 24 hours, email, call or text to indicate when you will be able to respond so that we are aware that you received the communication.

**Electronic communication:** Northwoods Learning Center follows all applicable HIPAA and confidentiality regulations. Staff may use electronic communication during services to communicate treatment information to you in the form of email, phone calls, or text messages. While we do everything we can to protect your health information, limitations associated with electronic communication are present. In the event of a possible information breach, parents/guardians will be informed of the risk and recommended steps of actions.

Point of Contact	Reason
906-828-2088 Call or Text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Notify the team of an illness</li> <li>- Request schedule change</li> <li>- Ask questions about schedule</li> <li>- Notify team of dates/time your child is not available for reasons (i.e., dr. appt, vacation, etc.)</li> </ul>
<a href="mailto:office@northwoodsaba.com">office@northwoodsaba.com</a> 906-828-2088 Call or Text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ask questions or discuss concerns about your invoice, balance, etc.</li> <li>- Request tax documents, invoices, statements, receipts</li> <li>- Discuss any issue regarding insurance, CPT codes, etc.</li> <li>- Invoices will be sent from this email.</li> </ul>
<a href="mailto:info@northwoodsaba.com">info@northwoodsaba.com</a> 906-828-2088 (ask for Angela)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This email is only seen by the Owner and HR</li> <li>- Voice concerns or discuss any matter in which you would like to keep confidential.</li> </ul>
<a href="mailto:info@northwoodsaba.com">info@northwoodsaba.com</a>	A great email to use to share with others.
<a href="mailto:athiel@northwoodsaba.com">athiel@northwoodsaba.com</a> 906-828-2088 (ask for Angela)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- File a formal complaint</li> <li>- Information on privacy practices</li> </ul>

## Scheduling

### Attendance:

Consistency of treatment hours is one of the advantages of center-based treatment. Once your child’s hours are set, we do everything we can to ensure staff are available to provide coverage for those hours. A consistent schedule is important for your child’s progress and treatment efficacy. It is Northwoods Learning Center’s policy that your child MUST attend treatment at least 2 days per week for consistent sessions. Sessions must be at least 2 hours long, may not exceed 8 hours in a single session and only 1 session is allowed per day. Please keep these policies in mind and try to abide by your child’s monthly treatment schedule.

### Scheduling:

Northwoods Learning Center schedules technicians in 2-hour blocks that start on the even hours. On those hours, technicians switch clients. These technicians are considered your child’s team. Your child’s team will be most consistent if

he/she is scheduled within the allowed 2-hour blocks. Clients who are bussed to or from school are exceptions to this rule. Special circumstances must be approved through the Owner only.

Although hours of operation and day-to-day functioning seem to be similar to a daycare environment or school, Northwoods Learning Center does not operate as a “Drop in” service. Please consider your child’s schedule as a MEDICAL APPOINTMENT. Staff are scheduled 1-on-1 with your child and only during the treatment window. If you arrive late, your child’s technician is kept waiting for your arrival. If your child is sick, technicians are sent home that day.

If you are going on vacation, have existing doctor appointments or other foreseeable conflicts with your child’s treatment schedule, we require families to fill out a “Client Schedule Change Request” form located at the front desk. We ask that these requests be submitted at least 2 weeks in advance of the change if at all possible. Emails, phone calls, or word-of-mouth communications will not be accepted as a form of notification. *Northwoods Learning Center is not responsible for scheduling errors/miscommunications that have not been submitted in writing.*

### **No School Days or Early Release Days:**

Northwoods Learning Center understands that many school districts have foreseeable and scheduled breaks, days off or early release days. Because of staff availability, consistent coverage for your child’s treatment hours and a 1:1 staff to client ratio, Northwoods Learning Center cannot guarantee extra hours on these days, even if it is realized in advance. Parents may request additional hours on days off or breaks and Northwoods Learning Center will permit these requests if staff is available on a first come first serve basis. Northwoods Learning Center DOES NOT allow large changes to treatment hours over the summer break. Treatment hours are based on medical necessity and should be adhered to all year round if possible.

### **Cancellations and Missed Appointments:**

Keeping your scheduled session appointments is a vital part of the treatment process. When you make an appointment at Northwoods Learning Center, you are asking a professional to hold a specific block of time for you.

In order to be respectful of the medical needs of our clients, Northwoods Learning Center kindly requests that parents call our office promptly if you are unable to attend an appointment. To cancel any appointment, please call our office at 906-828-2088.

Emergency cancellations are assessed by the Northwoods Learning Center employees, and fees may be waived when appropriate. If you must cancel a scheduled appointment, please do so at least 1 hour in advance.

*If your child is ill and unable to make it to his/her scheduled session, please call the center no later than 1-hour prior to his/her scheduled start time. You will not be charged the cancellation fee as long as you call within 1 hour of the session start time.*

Consistent attendance is imperative for your child’s treatment at Northwoods Learning Center. It will increase the likelihood for treatment success, establish a routine that can minimize unexpected behaviors throughout the day/week, and help build a consistent team for your child. Your child’s treatment team relies on his/her attendance to complete the necessary work for helping him/her succeed. Your child’s progress will suffer drastically if attendance is not made a priority.

Parents/Caregivers will be allowed to cancel 20% of scheduled sessions within each calendar month. A \$20 fee will apply for every treatment session canceled after 20% each month.

*(“Late Cancellation” fees may also apply and be charged in addition to consecutive cancellation fees. See table on next page).*

Exceptions for pre-planned or certain brief absences will be allowed, which include the following:

- Vacation leaves with a 2-week advanced notice
- Short- or long-term medical leaves (i.e., surgery, hospitalization, inpatient stays, etc.)
- Loss of a family member
- COVID or other long-term mild/moderate illness that would require the client to miss 3 or more days in a row (sick days scattered throughout the calendar month will not be excused)

Although limited, if parents/clients would like make-up sessions to occur, parents should advise the Operations Manager/Northwoods Learning Center of this and scheduling arrangements will be made if possible. If make-up sessions are unavailable, please note that if anything becomes available in the future, arrangements can still be made if parents show continued interest.

### **Running Late:**

If for any reason you are running late for a session, please call the center as soon as possible. **The behavior technician will wait for up to 15 minutes if no call is received.** Please note your full session may not be met because other clients may be scheduled after your session. If you arrive 15-30 minutes late, fees will apply. See the fee table below.

### **Northwoods Learning Center Employee Cancels or Running Late:**

If your child's session is canceled or rescheduled by Northwoods Learning Center, you will be contacted. If the behavior technician assigned to the session is running more than 15 minutes late, you will be contacted as soon as possible. Please be advised that Northwoods Learning Center may need to cancel sessions if there are no other staff members to cover the late or absent employee.

To maintain a safe and productive work environment, Northwoods Learning Center expects employees to be reliable and punctual in reporting for scheduled appointments. Dependability and diligent attendance are requirements of employment with Northwoods Learning Center and all employees are expected to adhere to the company schedule by arriving on time for each scheduled appointment.

## **Drop off and Pick up Policy**

It is the policy of Northwoods Learning Center for a parent, guardian, or authorized individual be identified as authorized when picking up or dropping off a minor child and said person will be required to use the sign-in/sign-out sheet.

In the event that a minor client is allowed to be picked up without the supervision of a parent, guardian, or authorized individual, Northwoods Learning Center requires proper written authorization from the legal guardian of the minor client. Likewise, if a parent, guardian, or other individual is not listed as authorized with the clinic, the minor child will not be released.

In the event that a non-custodial caregiver arrives asking to pick up a client, the following actions will be taken:

1. Alert a supervisor
2. Call the client's emergency contacts until you get ahold of a parent/emergency contact and alert them of the person attempting to pick up.
3. Follow the parent's directions as to how to proceed (i.e., do not release the child, release the child with the individual, wait for parent to arrive, call 911 etc.).
4. In the event the non-custodial caregiver appears under the influence of a substance or seems agitated or aggressive, call 911.
5. In the event the parent/emergency contacts are not reachable for 30 minutes, call 911.
6. Supervisor talks to the staff present and documents the incident in the client's file.

## Drop-off

Arrive at drop-off no later than your child's scheduled start time.

If you will be more than 5 minutes late, please call the center to let the Scheduler know.

If you cannot attend that day's session, call at least 1 hour before your child's start time. A dedicated staff member arrives just for your child and needs to be notified of the cancellation before they leave their home.

The Scheduler will call to check on the child's whereabouts when it is 15 minutes past the start time of your child's session and will leave a message if there is no answer.

Late Arrival: Parent arrives 15-29 minutes late to child's session, regardless of whether they informed the center of the late arrival.

- 15-29 minutes late = \$10 late fee (the session will be canceled at 15 minutes if no call is received)
- 30+ minutes late = \$20 late fee

## Pick-up

Parents/Caregivers are allowed to pick up early at any point during the session. Northwoods Learning Center requests advanced notice of early pickups, if at all possible, in order to make scheduling arrangements for staff.

Arrive at pick-up of your child no later than your child's scheduled end time.

If you will be more than 5 minutes late, please call the center to let the Scheduler know.

The Scheduler will call when it is 15 minutes past the end time of your child's session and will leave a message if there is no answer.

The Scheduler will call again at 30 minutes past the session end time. At 30 minutes past the session end time, the Scheduler will begin calling emergency contacts for pick-up.

You are required to call BEFORE YOUR CHILD'S SCHEDULED END TIME if there is an extenuating circumstance causing you to be late.

Northwoods Learning Center allows a 15-minute grace period where no charges will be applied. You are still required to call if you are running late.

- The charges are as follows:
  - 15-29 minutes late = \$10
  - 30-44 minutes late = \$20
  - 45-59 minutes late = \$30
  - Etc.

At the 30-minute mark, Northwoods Learning Center staff will begin calling emergency contacts for pick-up.

## Summary of Scheduling Fees

### Cancellation/Late Fees

- \$20 fee for "no call no show" sessions
- \$20 fee for any session for which a parent/guardian does not call to cancel at least 1 hour prior to start time
- \$20 fee for any session missed over the 20% allowance

- \$10 fee if 15-29 minutes late to session (the session will be canceled at 15 minutes if no call is received)
- \$20 fee if 30+ minutes late
- \$10 fee if 15-29 minutes late to pick up child after session (emergency contacts will be called at 30 minutes)
- \$20 fee if 30-44 minutes late to pick up child after session
- \$30 fee if 45-59 minutes late to pick up child after session (fee will increase \$10 for each additional 15 minutes late)

## **Inclement Weather Policies and Procedures**

The following statements pertain to the policies and procedures regarding appointments and or travel during inclement weather.

Inclement weather is defined as weather that has the potential to cause injury or harm when traveled in. Examples of inclement weather can take many forms and can include, but should not be limited to the following:

- Unplowed snow-covered roads, roads inadequately plowed, or icy roads
- Flash flood warnings, or flooded areas
- A dangerously low wind chill factor
- Excessively high temperatures or high heat index
- Poor air quality warnings
- Severe thunderstorm warnings, tornado warnings, or sightings for a related area

The Northwoods Learning Center employees will make any decisions regarding the weather and safety risks from the agency's standpoint. However, the client has the right to cancel appointments if there is a reasonable risk to safety. If the employee believes that the weather presents a reasonable risk to the health and safety of the client or employees, any scheduled appointments, to include home visits, planned trips, etc., shall be rescheduled. In the event of a need to reschedule an appointment, the employee shall notify the client as soon as possible by means outlined between the employee and client during the initial stages of the case (phone/email). It should be the understanding of the client that inclement weather and the dangers presented as a result can, and will, include areas that lead to the client's home or location of the planned trip. Safe conditions at the client's place, residence, or at the location of the planned trip do not exclude the dangers present in the areas that must be traveled to reach these destinations.

Parents acknowledge that it is their responsibility to provide viable contact information, which would include a method of contacting the client in the event of an emergency-type situation.

In most circumstances, the Northwoods Learning Center employees will follow the county school cancellations for the county in which Northwoods Learning Center resides. Sessions are difficult to reschedule given the times in which families are available, however, the employees will make all efforts to make accommodations. Please keep in mind that other regularly scheduled appointments may interfere with rescheduling on another day.

## **Facility Health Policy**

### **Basic Care Supplies**

Parents/Caregivers are responsible for providing everyday basic care items for their child to last through the session time. These would include diapers, wipes, food, snacks, and appropriate clothing to last through the session. In the event Northwoods Learning Center deems a child is sent to a session without sufficient basic care supplies to get them through their session, parents will be called to drop off those items within the hour or to pick up their child and return when sufficient basic care supplies can be sent with their child.

### **Sanitation & Cleanliness**

All hazardous materials including cleaning supplies/chemicals are kept in locked cabinets/closets or stored out of reach of children. Hard surfaces and bathrooms are sanitized and trash removed daily. All hard toys are sanitized on a regular rotation and when contagious illness is reported. Children and staff are required to wash hands before eating/handling food and after bathroom use or helping children in the bathroom. Hand sanitizer is always also available to staff. The treatment areas are vacuumed, swept, touchable surfaces are wiped and the garbage is emptied daily. All staff are trained in handling bodily fluid that may contain blood borne pathogens and gloves are always readily available throughout the center. If a child's clothing becomes soiled, it will be bagged and put in his/her backpack immediately. If the soiled garments occurred due to a non-emergency accident, parents will be informed of the incident at pick up.

### **Minor Injuries/Accidents**

In the case of minor accidents on site, staff are permitted to administer emergency first aid only. Staff are permitted to clean superficial wounds with soap and water and apply a clean sterile bandage only. Any non-emergency accidents will be documented on an Ouch Report, including the date, time, place, and cause of any injury (if known); any treatment provided; and name(s) of employees providing treatment. The child's parent or caregiver will be presented with the ouch report at pick up.

### **Allergies**

If your child has allergies, please discuss them in detail with the Program Manager or Clinical Director during the intake process. All food allergies are to be documented, including effects and treatment and signed by both the parent/caregiver. This information must remain in the child's file as well as in the food preparation area. The employees of the clinic will take appropriate precautions based on information provided by the client. If at any time your child develops an allergy, please let us know immediately.

### **Nut-Free Zone**

Northwoods Learning Center is a nut-free facility. This includes peanuts, as well as tree nuts, such as almonds, cashews, walnuts, pine nuts, etc. Parents should notify employees immediately if their child/children have any nut allergies.

### **Wellness Policy**

To minimize the spread of illness, Northwoods Learning Center's wellness policy requires that a session to be canceled if the client or Northwoods Learning Center employee displays one or more of the following symptoms and guidelines listed below. If your child is ill and unable to make it to his/her scheduled session, please call the center **no later than 1-hour prior to his/her scheduled start time**.

The client or employee must be free of infection and other symptoms, without the aid of medication, for 24 hours before resuming program sessions. Sessions may resume when the incubation and contagious period have passed, and the client or employee is well enough to resume normal activities. If the client or employee becomes ill during a session, the session will be immediately canceled.

- Vomiting/Diarrhea
- Temperature greater than 100 degrees
- Respiratory problems - severe coughing, rapid breathing, croup, or whooping sound after coughing
- Thick, discolored discharge from nose
- Rash or infection of the skin (e.g., ringworm, poison ivy)
- Evidence of lice, including nits
- Communicable diseases - conjunctivitis (pink eye), influenza, measles, chicken pox, strep throat, etc.

Parents acknowledge that if their child exhibits any of these above symptoms, they should contact Northwoods Learning Center to cancel their child's session. If for any reason your child did not attend school due to an illness or was sent home early due to an illness, there should be no therapy session that day. Parents agree to notify the employees within 24 hours



of the diagnosis of a serious contagious illness or parasitic infestation. Parents acknowledge that in some instances sessions will be canceled until we have written permission from a doctor saying their child is well enough to resume therapy sessions. This is for the child's well-being, along with the well-being of the employees. In the case that your child's session will be canceled due to an illness of an employee, you will be contacted immediately.

Parents need to pick up their child promptly, within one half (1/2) hour if he/she is ill as Northwoods Learning Center is not licensed to provide care for mildly ill children. If parents do not pick up their child within 30 minutes, the emergency contact will then be contacted for them to come and pick up the ill child.

We follow the guidelines developed by the *American Academy of Pediatrics* and the *American Public Health Association*. Parents who repeatedly fail to follow policies related to keeping children at home when they are ill may lead to dismissal from the program.

### **Infectious Diseases**

When a communicable disease has been introduced into the clinic, parents will be notified. The clinic also will report these occurrences to the state and local health departments when required. Parents are urged to notify the clinic when their child is known to have been exposed to a communicable disease outside the clinic.

The Program Manager or Clinical Director may determine that a child who does not appear to be fully recovered from an illness cannot be readmitted to the clinic without a statement from a physician stating that the child can return and participate in the activities of the clinic or is no longer infectious.

We reserve the right to refuse care due to illness.

In the case of impetigo, lice, ringworm, pinworms, rashes, chicken pox, thrush, etc., your child must be NON-CONTAGIOUS before returning to the clinic.

Northwoods Learning center is not responsible or liable for any vaccine-preventable spread of disease.

### **Injurious Behavior**

If at any time a child engages in injurious behavior to employees, his/herself, or other children, the Program Manager or Clinical Director is notified, and an incident report is created. The Program Manager or Clinical Director will decide how best to minimize the potential harm to the child, employees, and others. In some cases, the child can be removed from a group setting to a more traditional one-on-one therapy session. The Program Manager may reintroduce the child into the group setting at the point in time it is determined that the child needs more direct assistance. The parents will be notified of the change in treatment and any appropriate options that can be offered to remain in the group. If the Program Manager or Clinical Director feels there is a possibility of serious harm to the child or others, the parents will be contacted to pick up the child as soon as possible.

Injurious behavior may lead to dismissal from the program for the safety of the client(s) and or employees.

### **Medical Emergencies**

When a medical emergency arises, every effort will be made to contact parents, guardians, or an emergency contact. If parents or emergency contacts cannot be reached, the Program Manager and Clinical Director will decide the next step, which may consist of calling 911. In an extreme emergency, the employee may, at their discretion, call 911 before contacting the parent or guardian of the child. An authorized representative from the clinic will accompany the child and remain with him/her until their caregiver arrives. Our emergency contact information form, filled out at the time of enrollment, serves as consent for your child to be transported by ambulance to a local medical facility to receive

emergency care. Northwoods Learning Center assumes no responsibility for the costs associated with emergency care. Northwoods Learning Center employees do not transport children to medical facilities at any time. All employees receive training in CPR, first aid, fire, flood, and tornado procedures.

## Medications

Northwoods Learning Center will administer prescription medication ONLY under the following conditions:

- Parents have completed the Medication Authorization form provided by Northwoods Learning Center for each prescription and non-prescription medication. A Medication Authorization form should also be completed for emergency medications (e.g. epi-pens, seizure meds, etc.)
- All medicine must be in its original container with the client's name, dosage and administration directions.
- Medication will be stored in a locked medication box. Medicine requiring refrigeration will be kept in a covered, labeled and locked container in the refrigerator.
- We will not exceed the age-related dosage on the label of any medication without a written doctor's authorization.
- Northwoods Learning Center will maintain a Medication Log Book documenting the administration of each medication. Parents will have access to entries regarding their child if requested.
- If there is a delayed or missed dosage or if there are other errors in distribution, parents will be notified immediately and may be asked to contact their doctor for recommendations.

Non-prescription ingested medicine:

- Any medicine or supplement that is to be ingested requires a completed Medication Authorization form
- Any medicine or supplement that does not have a Medication Authorization form will NOT be administered to you child
- Please write your child's name on the container
- Any non-prescription ingested medicine will be documented in the Medication Log Book and contained in the locked medication box

Non-medicinal products:

- Lotions, oils, sunscreen, insect repellent, lip balm, diaper creams and other non-medicinal products require a completed Medication Authorization form if your child cannot administer these items his/herself
- Any medicine or supplement that does not have a Medication Authorization form will NOT be administered to your child
- Please write your child's name on the container
- Any non-medicinal products that are not ingested will NOT be documented in the Medication Log Book

The medication policy is in compliance with Michigan state [law](#) and all staff who administer medications have undergone training in compliance with Michigan state law and this policy.

If you would like your child to self-administer medication, please write so on number six (6) of the Medication Authorization form.

## Seizures

All clinical staff are trained and certified in seizure recognition and first aid by the Epilepsy Foundation. If your child has a history of seizures, a seizure action plan will be created for your child and placed in the front of their programming binder. All staff will be specifically trained on the administration of emergency seizure medications if your child is prescribed them.

## **Pandemic**

In the event of a pandemic within the area, Northwoods Learning Center may close for an undetermined amount of time to ensure prevention of further spread of disease. We will follow any requirements issued by the Department of Public Health.

## **Immunizations**

Northwoods Learning Center recognizes the right for each family to choose what is best for their child regarding vaccinations. Vaccination status does not qualify or disqualify any individuals from treatment, although record of vaccination history may be requested for your child's file for reporting purposes. Northwoods Learning Center is not responsible or liable for any vaccine preventable spread of disease. If your child has a communicable disease and has attended his/her sessions, please report this to your Program Manager immediately so he/she can take the proper steps to notify families of the exposure.

## **Toileting**

If your child uses wipes and/or wears diapers, pull-ups, pads, feminine hygiene products etc., these items are to be provided by the parent(s) and are to be kept in your child's personal backpack/bag that he/she brings with them each day. Backpacks/bags should be replenished each night or morning before your child returns to treatment with enough to last them for the day. If your child is physically unable to stand for diaper changes, a changing mat is available on site and is sanitized after each use. Your child's specific toilet training plan will be discussed with you during initial assessments and throughout treatment if applicable. If your child is toilet training, please provide enough sets of underwear, pants, and socks to get them through each day. Please also keep an extra set of clothing (pants, socks, underwear, shirt) in your child's backpack at all times in case of accidents or in the event clothing gets soiled/dirty. If clothing needs to be changed, soiled/dirty clothing will be put in a plastic bag and sent home in your child's backpack. On occasion, if supplies run out, Northwoods Learning Center has back-up diapers and wipes for emergency use. A charge will be instituted of \$1.00 per Northwoods Learning Center diaper used.

## **Napping**

If you wish for your child to nap during treatment hours, they will be provided with a cot that is wiped after each use with sanitizer spray. You may also choose to send a blanket/sleeping bag and/or pillow for your child to use during naps. These items can be stored in the area where your child's personal belongings are kept.

## **Meals & Snacks**

All snacks, meals, and drinks are to be provided by parents during the day. Please pack a backpack with your child daily that includes:

- Lunch packed in a lunch box (we can store this in the refrigerator)
- Snacks enough for that day's session
- Water bottle or drinks for the day

Please label all personal items with your child's name, clearly visible.

If a primary meal is not provided for a client and we cannot get ahold of parents/caregivers to provide one, a meal will be provided and a \$10 charge will be instituted.

Children will not share food items. Any allergy information will be collected upon enrollment. Please indicate if food restrictions are due to allergies or are simply dietary restrictions. This will help guide Northwoods Learning Center staff’s reaction if a restricted food item is accidentally consumed by your child.

Microwave-safe plates and bowls as well as spoons and forks are provided at the center. Northwoods Learning Center’s dishes will be hand-washed after each use. If you wish to send your own dishes or utensils, please put your child’s name on each item. Items from home will not be washed during treatment hours but rinsed and placed back in the lunch bag.

Mealtime is a time to work on social, independent feeding, self-care, and tolerance targets.

Snacks are offered at least every 3 hours a child is at Northwoods Learning Center. Snacks are typically offered around 10 A.M. and 2 P.M. for day-time enrolled clients, and upon arrival for after-school clients or when requested. Lunch is scheduled at either 11:30 A.M. or 12:00 P.M.

**Financial Responsibility**

Northwoods Learning Center aims to help as many families as possible, and we seek out various funding opportunities, including insurance, state, county, and self-funding.

**Insurance:** Northwoods Learning Center will ensure that all pre-authorization, assessment, and progress reports are completed and submitted before the due dates to continue ongoing therapy. You and your insurance provider may be responsible for any charges or portions of charges that will not be covered. Northwoods Learning Center will release all necessary paperwork to the client, legal guardian, parent, or caregiver as requested.

See our website or call the center for an updated list of insurance companies we are in network with.

**State or county-funded:** If your insurance is funded through the state or county, Northwoods Learning Center will ensure all assessment and progress reports are completed and submitted before the due date to continue ongoing therapy. Northwoods Learning Center promises to not exceed the total funded amount without the expressed consent of the client, legal guardian, or parent/caregiver. However, if you request additional sessions above and beyond the funded amount, you will be responsible for payment of these additional services. Before beginning any additional sessions, the case manager will be notified and a client contract will be signed with the total amount of sessions above the funded amount.

**Self-Funded:** Northwoods Learning Center and the parent/caregiver will determine the number of ABA therapy hours per week and supervision per month, but at a minimum, the BACB requires supervision occur for 10% of hours spent providing behavior analytic services each month (or 1 hour of supervision for every 10 hours of ABA therapy provided).

- Payment must be made before the service occurs (pre-pay).
- Payment must be received on or before the due date as written on the invoice.

If payment is not received before services occur, Northwoods Learning Center reserves the right to place services on hold until payment is received in full.

<b>Pre-pay Rates</b>
Behavior Technician 50/hr
Supervisor 100/hr

Parents/caregivers are given at least 60 days’ notice of any fee changes.

Time is billed in 15 minutes increments.

The terms of this agreement will continue until either party provides written notice of termination request. Termination will take place 30 days from the date of the request and termination reports (a minimum of 1 hour billed at the Supervisor rate) will be provided at the time of termination. If a notice of termination is not provided in writing, one week of service will be billed to you.

### **Fees:**

Fees may be charged for the following:

- Late drop-off
- Late pick-up
- Session cancelations
- Use of consumable basic care supplies provided by the Northwoods Learning Center facility
- Late payments
- Insufficient funds charges

### **Invoices:**

Northwoods Learning Center will invoice families every 2 weeks. You will receive an itemized invoice with a breakdown of the date of service, time of service, and service type. Self-pay invoices will be sent out before the service is to occur.

The parents/guardians of the child receiving services remain completely responsible for the full payment of all services, including late payment fees. We accept payment via check.

**There is a \$25.00 Returned Check Fee for all checks returned by the bank.**

**Late payments postmarked after due date printed on the invoice will result in an additional charge of 1%.**

- **If no payment is received by the due date, a second invoice will be sent with the fee added, new total and new due date.**
- **If no payment is received by the due date for the second invoice, a third invoice will be sent with the fee added, new total and new due date.**
- **If no payment is received by the due date for third invoice, a FINAL invoice will be sent with the fee added, new total and new due date.**
- **If no payment is received by the due date for FINAL invoice, services will be suspended immediately until fees are paid and/or the invoice amount will be sent to collections.**

## **Crisis Management**

Northwoods Learning Center certifies staff in Safety Care.

If a client escalates and is exhibiting crisis-level behavior according to the criteria outlined in Safety Care, Safety Care trained staff immediately assist and provide guidance as needed. Safety Care strategies will be used to de-escalate and maintain safety in the situation which may include transportation, physical intervention, and/or restraint according to Safety Care techniques. If a client continues to escalate to increasingly dangerous behavior, the Program Manager or Clinical Director will be called immediately and will determine if police or medical assistance are necessary. Emergency responses to new or unexpected crisis situations/behavior may occur. Northwoods Learning Center staff may use Safety Care strategies, without an explicit behavior plan in place or without being consented to, if the situation meets Safety Care criteria, in attempts to keep the client, staff, and environment safe. Staff will attempt less restrictive measures whenever possible. Behavior support plans will likely be developed in response to such an event.

## Gifts

Northwoods Learning Center’s employees, volunteers or workforce members may not accept any gifts of any kind in connection with their service to Northwoods Learning Center in accordance with the BACB’s code of ethics.

### A gift refers to the following:

- Money
- Any item of value, service, loan, or promise
- Discount or rebate for which something of equal or greater value is not exchanged.
- Payments for travel, entertainment and food

### The term “gift” does not include:

- Handmade items by and from children, such as a drawing or painting
- Edible gifts of nominal value (less than \$10) that are shared with a wide range of colleagues at Northwoods Learning Center
- Any discount or rebate made in the regular course of business and offered to the general public without regard to the individual’s connection with Northwoods Learning Center
- Plaques or trophies
- Campaign contributions

If an employee or workforce member receives a gift prohibited by this policy, the gift giver will be reminded of this policy and the employee will graciously decline or return the gift. If the gift is anonymous, the recipient must deliver the gift to the Clinical Director, who will convey the gift to a charitable organization.

## Tour/Visitor Policy

There are times where outside guests may be invited into the clinic. This may include prospective clients wanting to visit the center, a parent wanting to show the clinic to another family member, or an employee interviewing for a position with the company. Outside guests may come in contact with clients and potentially private health information (PHI) inadvertently during their visit. All visits should be scheduled in advance so staff can ensure that PHI is secure. Guests are also required to sign a release form prior to their visit, letting them know that they may come in contact with private information.

*Information provided in the Parent Handbook is subject to change. If significant changes are made, parents will be asked to sign and date a Parent Handbook Acknowledgement Form indicating they have read, understand and agree to the changes.*