

Telos Academy – New Parent Intake Information

We welcome you to Telos Academy! Many parents have played a very involved role in their sons academics previous to coming to Telos. This document is designed to help you understand key aspects of the academy and how you can continue to support your student as he begins his studies at the academy. Here are some questions frequently asked by new parents:

1) Who will I be communicating with about my son's academics? Should I communicate with individual teachers, academic adviser, or academic administration when I have a concern?

-There are several people at the academy that will be helping you and your son. Depending on the nature of your son's academic profile and clinical needs, you will need to access a variety of resources and people who provide them. During the first few weeks, you will be contacted by our academic administration for further discussion regarding your son's academics. Feel free to alert them to any key items you are concerned about. In addition, we encourage you to become more familiar with our staff and their respective functions so you can communicate with greater ease. Visit the following sites to learn more:

<http://telosacademy.weebly.com/contact-information.html> and <http://adviser.telosrtc.com/academic-structure.html>

2) What should I do if I see low grades or missing assignments on PowerSchool?

-Our teachers have defined standards for class assignments and assessments. Occasionally when students do not meet these standards, or require extra time to complete their work, you may see a low score or missing score. Don't panic when you see these. At Telos Academy, a score of zero is given as a placeholder when a student has not turned in an assignment. Students are offered support and extra time to complete their work and turn it in for credit during flex period.

Review with your son his scholastic experience and ask him about his learning activities during your phone calls. Teachers are expected to update grades regularly (each Friday morning) in preparation to show each student his current progress during their homeroom every week. If your son's grades are not being updated at least weekly, contact the Academic Administration for further clarification.

Each week your son's grades are reviewed multiple times by his academic adviser and other staff. Students are assigned to flex period during school to recover missing assignments or submit another attempt of an assignment for additional credit. Reach out to your son's academic adviser to get more information about your son's response to these supports.

3) What do I do if I get a report from my son that he is having trouble in school (like with a teacher/class)?

-Communicating with your son and listening to his concerns is an important thing to do throughout his journey at Telos. Avoid the tendency to solve all the problems presented by your son. Rather, ask him what his approach has been thus far, and encourage him to voice his concerns to his teachers and academic administration. Remind him that not all requests can be accommodated, but that communicating with those around him is the first step to receiving additional support. After speaking with your son, notify his primary therapist, alert them to your conversation, and ask for coaching on how to respond. Your son will continue to receive support while he works to address his concerns in a healthy way.

4) Whose job is it to monitor grades and intervene when there are missing assignments and poor test grades? What is my involvement in this?

- Our academic advisement staff routinely review student attendance and grades each week. For missing work and poor scores that can be improved, students are assigned to attend a flex period with their instructor where they can receive additional time, support, and direction. Students are not required to raise their grade higher than a particular level in order to receive most privileges, but they are given several opportunities to complete their work and learn the concepts effectively. If you are not satisfied with your son's achievement, please discuss this with his primary therapist or academic director; they can offer support and coaching on how you can best communicate your expectations to your son.

5) How much contact should I expect to have with my son's academic adviser?

-Academic advisers spend most of their focus working with individual students and the professionals at Telos. They are generally not your primary contact on behalf of the academy but are informed on your son's case and coordinate often with the academic administration and clinical staff. You will receive monthly updates from them throughout the treatment process. If you have a specific question or concern, send them an e-mail. Our students have various needs and areas of focus, so it is normal for most families to exchange a few emails during the academic quarter on priority items. Email an academic adviser to get orientation on how academic needs are met and what to expect throughout the treatment process.

6) Why does my son have absences and tardies?

-Students at Telos are directed and encouraged to engage in school and be timely in their attendance. However, absences and tardies still occur from time to time. A student may miss school because of many reasons: therapy, medical appointments, illnesses, or a refusal to attend. In each case, staff do their best to carefully document the nature of the absence. While students are supported in attending class promptly, poor time management is still allowed because responsibility for being in class is placed primarily on the student.

7) Why aren't students "made" to do their schoolwork or attend class?

-At Telos we strongly hold to the principles of insightful choices and personal accountability. Under the guidance of the primary therapists, our staff go to great effort to educate our students about the consequences of their choices but do not coerce students to make decisions against their will except in matters of safety. Rather, we expect all students to learn by experiencing the outcomes of both their positive and negative decisions. While this approach can sometimes cause disappointment when a student limits his possibilities by making poor choices, it is our belief that the long term development of insight and independence far outweighs the short-term consequences of compulsion. Our aim is to teach students how to use the resources available to them and then experience the results of accountability. We strive to support them through the short term consequences of their actions and help them develop insight.

8) Is Telos Academy staffed during school breaks? Who do I contact during school breaks when problems arise?

-When the academy goes on scheduled break, many (if not all) academic staff are off site while school is out of session. Please send e-mail communication to the academic director during these breaks for critical needs. Although it is not possible to anticipate every need in advance, we kindly request that you alert our academic team to any needs or concerns previous to these breaks so questions may be fielded prior to staff departing for their scheduled leave. If you did not receive a school calendar please visit the Academy webpage to access one. <http://telosacademy.weebly.com/school-calender.html>

9) What is my role when things are going well?

-Be sure to celebrate the success and marked improvement your son experiences while at Telos. Point out moments where he takes advantage of his resources in a healthy way and when he reaches his goals. Avoid the temptation to move too quickly to the next stage of achievement before allowing your son (and yourself) to take a moment to bask in the warmth of accomplishment. Find ways to explore with your son how it feels to have a stronger handle on his progress, and reflect on what is contributing to his success. As you move onward, you will want to identify these factors and seek to replicate them in future settings.

Telos Academy provides a significant amount of structure and support which almost all students respond very positively to. When a student has success, our standard approach is to allow him time to root down in his routines and good habits. Over the process of a few academic quarters, we slowly taper the support and structure around him. We have learned that transitioning a student into a new environment after only a short month or two of success can have inherent risks.

10) What is my role when things are not going well?

-When someone close to us endures challenge or disappointment, our response can have a great effect. Our words and actions can serve as valuable support or, if we are not careful, can compound their discouragement. Follow the consultant pattern and seek to listen and understand your son's perspective on any element of the program where he is struggling. Validate his feelings. Once you feel you accurately understand his perspective, share this with his primary therapist and academic adviser, and ask what can be done. Resist the urge to immediately jump in and resolve all his concerns. Our clinical staff will walk you through how to best navigate the challenges your son expresses. As hundreds of students have enrolled at Telos Academy, we have identified patterns of best practice and effective management. While not every issue will be resolved promptly, you can be assured that you have a team of people willing to assist.

11) What does Telos Academy do to accommodate the needs of my student who has a learning disability?

-A large percentage of our students have been diagnosed with mild/moderate learning disabilities. At Telos, we offer several standard accommodations that offer structure and support that leads to success for all students. These accommodations include extra time on assignments, breaking down large tasks into smaller elements that are more manageable, occasional breaks from class to decompress and process with a staff member, high oversight on assignments, step-by-step instruction for complicated tasks, additional teacher support in flex hour (which occurs each school day during lunch), and more. We also honor IEP mandated accommodations for students who need more intense aid. Our special education coordinator takes the lead in overseeing that proper action is taken to provide students with the necessary assistance and our academic advisement staff regularly collect data on how our students are receiving these supports.

12) How does the academy support my student's executive dysfunction?

-Including the standard supports listed above, Telos Academy also provides specific attention to executive dysfunction. In each class, students have access to a list of scripts to employ when they are struggling. Our teachers are trained regularly on how to identify and support executive function deficits. For students with *critical* executive dysfunction, formal coaching may be introduced once a student reaches Sun Phase. This intervention works best with students who show a willingness to receive coaching and invest their focus into improvement by practicing hard skills and developing strong routines. We have seen dramatic enhancements on past students' ability to manage demands in both school and outside the classroom.

Thank you for your trust and willingness to allow us to work with your son. For more information and resources relating to Telos Academy, please visit the following websites:

<http://adviser.telosrtc.com/>
<http://telosacademy.weebly.com/>