





# **RISING STARS**

ACADEMY

Handbook

2023-2024

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[www.rising-stars-academy.org](http://www.rising-stars-academy.org)



Dear Students and Families-

Welcome to the Rising Stars Academy family. Each new school year gives us a renewed sense of success and promises to be a challenging and rewarding experience for all students and family members. It is the goal of the staff at Rising Stars to provide experiences that will move students towards sustainable independent living and employment.

We encourage everyone to take advantage of each opportunity that will afford learning and promote a successful future for all. Our students will experience personal growth with every classroom and community activity that is presented to them.

A large part of the in-school curriculum will rely on community members to help our students to be successful. Whether working in the community garden, serving food in our on-site restaurant, or working in our retail store, Four Circles Store & Café, our students will be given frequent opportunities to develop social skills. We welcome family members to visit and dine in our restaurant, stop in at our store, along with helping our students in our garden as they learn about growing and cultivating food and the satisfaction of harvesting the food and preparing it in the kitchen. Please visit our website [www.rising-stars-academy.org](http://www.rising-stars-academy.org) to see our hours of operation for our restaurant and bakery.

This handbook is to be used as a guide for you and your family for the opportunities and expectations that we have at Rising Stars Academy.

We are very excited to work with your families and hope that you will have instilled a sense of pride in our school, our community and our students.

Sincerely,  
Rising Stars Academy Board of Education

Robert Spada - President  
Annette Duda - Vice-President  
Charisse Cossu-Kowalski - Secretary  
Patrick Mulrenin - Treasurer  
Jennifer Faunce – Trustee

## **Mission**

To be a place for intellectually and developmentally disabled adults to belong, and develop the necessary skills to participate at their full potential within the community.

## **Vision**

Rising Stars Academy is a program for students with intellectual disabilities, ages 18 – 26, who exited high school with a Certificate of Completion. We are a learning destination that prides itself on a diverse and more than anything, real-life approach to teaching and learning. It is our belief that each and every student has the ability to succeed and with proper tools will learn skills necessary to take on professional opportunities in their futures and lead fulfilling lives.

Since the school's inception, we have grown in program offerings that always keep our focus on the three areas of skill building: Life skills, Employment skills and Intrapersonal skills.

Our curriculum is delivered through a contextual approach to learning which guides our students' understanding of every class that they are submerged into. Internal and external job sites provide more in-depth training for students who have mastered the level to be successful with these opportunities. Each lesson is followed up with a mastery check sheet that provides a snapshot of student's ability levels in each class. Those mastery lists are used to tailor the focus of each individuals learning.

The following pages outline the programs within our school for the 2023-2024 school year.

### TITLE VI, TITLE IX, SECTION 504, ADA INFORMATION

Rising Stars Academy is obligated under the law to make reasonable accommodations for individuals with handicaps. Certain due process procedures are in place to protect the rights of students and parents. If any person believes that the district has violated the law in regard to its compliance with Title VI, Title IX, Section 504, or the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), he/she may file a complaint.

# GENERAL INFORMATION

## **APPLICATION PROCESS**

All students entering Rising Stars Academy for the first time must submit all registration forms that can be found on our website at [www.rising-stars-academy.org](http://www.rising-stars-academy.org) and the following:

- Valid Birth Certificate
- State I.D. or Driver's License
- Written proof of Immunization
- One Proof of Residency (utility bill, etc.)
- Most recent IEP

A release of information form (in registration forms) is needed for transfer of school documents and other records.

Changes in address or phone numbers during the school year must be reported to the office.

## **ASSESSMENT AND TESTING**

At the beginning of each year students will be given a pre-test of skills through Corrective Reading and Math to determine knowledge level.

IEP hearings will be conducted each year to discuss student goals. The student, parent/ guardian, academy staff and other advocates shall comprise the Transition Team. The student, with input from the other team members, will identify transition goals, which will direct the development of the curriculum for the student.

## **IEP**

IEP meetings help us communicate students' progress and identify transition goals. Written notices of IEP meetings will be sent as they are scheduled. It is the hope that the invitation date is honored due to the number of special needs students enrolled at Rising Stars Academy.

## **SAFETY AND SECURITY**

For security reasons, entry will only be allowed through the main doors. A buzzer is located inside the first set of doors for you to signal the main office that you need to enter the building. Students should not enter RSA using any other door.

It is expected if a student is working on a worksite during the day, they will be on time for that job. If a student is going to be late, they must call the front office and notify them (as they should if it was a job) of their time of arrival. If a student does not call, they will likely not be allowed to work their job that day and will be in a classroom.

## **STUDENT CONDUCT**

School rules are designed for the purpose of student safety, responsibility, and organization. Students must be familiar with rules at work-based training sites. Any student who disregards these rules could face consequences:

Students will:

- Demonstrate positive, non-disruptive behavior at all times which will ensure a positive learning environment and the safety and health of others.
- Respect all staff and students at all times.
- Use positive and appropriate language at all times.
- Demonstrate positive and healthy lifestyle at all times while on school property.
- Respect the property of the school and make appropriate decisions regarding the safety of others.



- Only be on school property during school times or when authorized by staff.
- Utilize cell phones and electronic devices with permission or designated times.
- Respect others personal space and keep hands to themselves.
- Report all inappropriate incidents that may put others in danger, including property damage, bomb threats, arson, fighting, possession of weapons or possession of illegal drugs (this includes marijuana.)

## **CONSEQUENCES**

Behavior that impedes learning in class and job performance at work-based training site will receive the following consequences:

1. Verbal Warning.
2. Office contact to parents for a conference and set up a Behavior Improvement Plan with student.
3. Based on BIP, suspension from class or work-based site for 1-3 days, depending type of behavior. Removal from program may occur if behavior persists and there is lack of cooperation.

Should it be necessary to temporarily separate or suspend a student from school the following process will take place:

1. A student shall be fully informed of the infraction and discipline.
2. Upon suspension, a parent/guardian will be contacted. A conference may be requested.
3. Verbal notification may be followed with a written communication to the parent/guardian. A copy of the letter shall be placed in the student's file.

## **SCHOOL DAY TIMES**

The school day will be from 7:30 a.m. – 2:15 p.m. daily.

## **ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES**

Rising Stars Academy's attendance policies and practices encourage student success and enforce daily attendance for all students. Good attendance promotes student learning of good habits for preparation for employment. To report an absence, the students or parent/guardian must call the office on the day of the absence during normal school hours. An answering machine will be available for messages after hours.

If an absence is not reported, staff will attempt to contact the student or parent/ guardian. If the student needs to leave during the instructional day, he/she must sign out at the office.

## **STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Attend all classes on time and prepared to learn.
- Attend work-based training on time and ready to work.
- Notify the office of upcoming absences or need to leave early.

## **SCHOOL CLOSING PROCEDURES**

For the safety of students, the Superintendent may close school if hazardous weather or building conditions warrant such action. Each student should have on file in the office an emergency contact number if RSA should close during school hours, and if parent/guardian is not available. School closings will be announced on television on channels 2, 4, and 7 (between 5:00 and 6:00 a.m.)

**ALL STUDENTS AND PARENTS NEED TO BE ENROLLED IN OUR REMIND 101 NOTIFICATION SYSTEM FOR UP TO DATE CLOSINGS AND SCHOOL INFORMATION.**

## **EMERGENCY MEDICAL INFORMATION**

A listing of all medications for each student must be on file in the school office. Any changes in health conditions or medications must be made in writing. Any medication taken at school must be in the original pharmacy bottle and clearly labeled with name and dosage.

## **URGENT MEDICAL ATTENTION/ACCIDENTS**

Students needing immediate medical attention, i.e.: seizures, cuts, fractures, burns and other urgent medical problems – Rising Stars staff will contact 911 and the family respectively.

Anyone injured during school hours or while participating in school sponsored activities must report the injury to a staff person immediately.

An accident report is filed out and parents are notified of the incident. If the injury requires medical attention, the parent/guardian will be asked to pick up the student at school or a medical facility.

## **LUNCHES**

Rising Stars Academy is part of the National School and Nutrition Program. All students will be required to fill out U.S Government Free and Reduced lunch applications to pay for the food for breakfast and lunch. Our meal service will abide by federal nutrition guidelines for all students. Once your eligibility is determined for the lunch program, you will receive a notice of your standings for free or reduced meal prices. Students may choose to bring a lunch from home. Fast food is not allowed in the school for breakfast or lunch.

## **SMART BUS TRANSPORTATION**

As part of our mission at Rising Stars Academy, independence and employment are goals. One of the best ways we can prepare our students for independent life is to give them exposure to public transportation. Smart Bus has a program that your child may qualify for with respect to

receiving free – door to door service for your student.  
Applications are available in our main office.

## **STUDENTS SUPPLIES**

Students will have access to lockers to store any extra belongings. All locks for lockers will be supplied by Rising Stars Academy. Rising Stars Academy will supply chef coats to students working in areas that require them. Chef coats are required while working on job sites and/or in the kitchen and restaurant. Hats and chef pants are available for purchase in our retail area along with Rising Stars Academy t-shirts, sweatshirts, and backpacks. Students should keep an extra change of clothes at the school for working in the garden. We recommend blue jeans, shorts, a t-shirt and a sweatshirt, as well as boots or old tennis shoes. Please have all clothes labeled with permanent marker.

## **DRESS AND GROOMING**

Rising Stars Academy prides itself in having well-groomed students. Students are expected to dress as they would for employment. Students are expected to present themselves in a manner that will reflect the employment preparation atmosphere of our program.

Students should show neatness and cleanliness.

- Cleanliness and overall hygiene should be practiced at all times. Hair should be clean and out of eyes.
- All students are required to wear black, rubber-soled, non-skid shoes. NO shoes or boots with high heels.
- Clothing must be worn properly.
- Pants: Solid color and “docker” style pants, clean jeans, or chef pants.
- All pants must be hemmed.

- Pants must fit properly and cannot be more than one size too big. Shorts may be worn in the garden area during hot months. No shorts in the school or in the restaurant when working.
- Prohibited: No spandex, no pajamas, no tank tops, no sagging, holes, cuts or tears are permitted in clothing. No jewelry. No hats. No holiday-themed costumes and/or ensembles.

Consequences:

- 1st offense: Warning to the student
- 2nd offense: No job site; home

### **COMMUNITY BASED INSTRUCTION**

Community Based Instruction is not a field trip. It is:

- Learning experiences that take place outside of the school in community settings.
- Learning experiences that help students gain functional skill for everyday life.

This process helps students apply learned skills in locations where the skills are actually required in real-life situations. The CBI sites serve as an extension of the classroom and enhance the exploration, training and assessment opportunities of students. Teachers will integrate CBI in the curriculum when the attention involves this experience. Teachers will inform you and your student when a CBI is scheduled during the day.

### **ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

Cell phones and all other electronic devices are not to be used during school hours. All student phones are collected at the beginning of the school day and put into a locked box for the duration of the school day. Phones are

returned to the students prior to leaving at the end of the school day.

## **PARENT COMMUNICATION & INVOLVEMENT**

In addition to this Parent and Student Handbook, each family will receive an annual calendar. Monthly school newsletters will be available online and at the school office. Weekly “Friday Update” emails will be sent. Please read all communications from the student’s school thoroughly and discuss key points with the student. To communicate with the school, send a note or email to the classroom teacher, office secretary, or principal. Please be patient when busy classroom teachers and staff are unable to contact you until later in the day or evenings. Non-custodial parents may access copies of the school handbook, calendar, and newsletters online and may make an appointment to meet with teachers.

## **VOLUNTEERING**

We welcome volunteers to help with projects. All volunteers must have an approved background check on file with the school at least 24 hours in advance of volunteering.

## INTRODUCTION

Rising Stars Academy is an employment/life skill training program for special needs student ages 18-26. Our students possess disabilities ranging from cognitive impairments to autism. Our curriculum is total body approach to learning where our students are immersed daily into the programs that are offered. We feel that our students learn much more by doing, and therefore spend more time doing then sitting in a desk. Repetition is key to our students becoming successful in all that they learn. You will find that all of our current programs contain very similar skills. This enables our students to not only possess a deeper mastery of these skills, but have them understand that many skills at home and work are the similar.

Our job sites mirror what we teach whether on site or off site. We strive for consistency within all areas of learning and encourage students to try to do everything to the best of their ability.

The following is a listing of all areas of our curriculum as well as our job sites. We also have listed our expectations of student behavior and attire while at job sites. Should you have any questions about anything in this handbook, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Emily Bregier  
Superintendent  
ebregier@rsaonline.org



# **RIISING STARS**

## ACADEMY

### **ACADEMICS**

A to Z Reading  
Corrective Reading  
Real World Math  
Career Exploration/Job  
Skill Training Units  
Daily Living  
Work Force Readiness

### **ELECTIVE CLASSES**

Woodshop  
Bakery  
Food Processing  
Fiber Arts  
    Crochet, Knit, Weaving  
Sewing  
Catering/Party Planning  
Photography  
Drawing & Painting  
Theater & Stagecraft  
Cricut  
Green Screen  
Robotics  
First Aid  
Spanish  
Yoga  
Ceramics  
Epoxy Art

### **EXTERNAL WORKSITES**

Henry Ford Hospital  
TACOM Detroit Arsenal  
Crest Ford  
The Apparatus Room  
Detroit Athletic Club  
Quix Chocolate  
Hometown Hospitality Group:  
    One-Eyed Betty's, Public  
    House, and Pop's for Italian

### **INTERNAL WORKSITES**

All Star Café Kitchen  
All Star Café Restaurant  
Custodial Team  
School Office  
Four Circles Store &Cafe  
RSA Bakery  
Food Processing Plant  
Production  
Glowforge  
Aquaponics/Gardening &  
Greenhouse



# **COURSE CATALOG**

## **ACADEMICS**

### **A TO Z READING**

This program will be used with all students in the Academy, in consortium with our current Corrective Reading Program. This is a self-paced online reading program where the student reads short books/articles and self-tests for comprehension.

Teachers have access to data for tracking students' ability levels as well as to work with students who might need some extra help. This program is set up so that students can access at home to read and challenge themselves to increase to higher levels.

### **CORRECTIVE READING**

Students will complete an assessment at the beginning of the school year to determine the appropriate reading level for their needs. This research-based program is proven successful for all levels of students. Focus will be on decoding skills, fluency, and comprehension through this program. Curriculum will be delivered in a "pull out" format 1-2 times per week.

### **REAL WORLD MATH**

This curriculum will be used with all students in the Academy. Students will be engaged in real money transactions, shopping, budgeting, measurement, and inventory which will be embedded into projects completed in all classes.

### **CAREER EXPLORATION/JOB SKILL TRAINING UNITS**

This curriculum will be used with all students in the Academy. Utilizing "approved and endorsed" curriculum from *Education: Associates*, the following project-based units may be covered within classrooms. Titles rotate based on students' abilities and interests: Greenhouse, Grocery Clerk, Child Care, Animal Care, Autobody Repair, Caregiver, Carpentry, Health & Nutrition, Retail, and Small Engine Repair. Life Skills units may

include: Banking, Getting Around, Living on Your Own, Renting an Apartment, Telephone Skills, Consumer Shopping, Customer Service, Time Management, Laundry, Using Money, and/or Housekeeping.

### **DAILY LIVING**

Intrapersonal Skills - Essential skills for student's success either in the workplace or in daily living. We spend daily time working on Intrapersonal Skills by presenting social situations and modeling behavior and skills for students' development.

### **WORK FORCE READINESS**

This curriculum will be used with all students in the Academy. Students will be engaged in all workforce readiness skills including, but not limited to, intrapersonal skills, problem solving, following directions, and completing tasks. Resume building and interviewing skills will be intertwined into each lesson taught.

## **ELECTIVE CLASSES**

Our Elective Classes have been designed as another mode to help our students develop both interpersonal skills and workforce readiness skills, while having an option for areas that they might be interested in. These classes will meet one day a week for ½ of the day, and last for 10 weeks. Students will get the option of selecting 2 classes for each 10-week period. Students will be encouraged to select different classes for more exposure and to different opportunities.

***Elective options:*** (Subject to change based on availability)

**Woodshop:** Students will focus on simple woodworking projects and tool usage.

**Bakery:** Working with an RSA baker, students will learn to master a variety baked good.

**Food Processing:** Pickling/Canning – working to learn how to properly can fruits and vegetables for future use.

**Fiber Arts:** Crocheting, Knitting, Weaving – students will be taking raw fiber, repurposing scraps from garden and kitchen and dying fibers. They will learn spinning of the yarn and turn that product into fiber art delights.

**Sewing:** Learning how to use a sewing machine and making simple projects

**Catering Party Planning:** Students will learn how to plan, budget, prepare, and follow thru with putting together a simple party on a budget.

**Photography:** Students will work to study how cameras work, what types of pictures to select, take photos to store to process, and how-to matt the final product.

**Drawing & Painting:** Simple drawing and painting with different art supplies.

**Theater & Stagecraft:** Through writing, acting, creating costumes and building stage props, the “Lunch Theater” production – will be planned by the Catering Party Planning group.

**Cricut:** Students will learn to work the Cricut computer program, load the materials into the Cricut, weed the design after it has printed, and apply the design to the project.

**Green Screen:** Students use green screens and various technologies to produce videos.

**Robotics:** The robotics elective is an extension of the Robotics Team. This elective gives students time to complete the robot for our competitions. Students on the team **MUST** sign up for this elective. No other students are eligible.

**First Aid:** Students are exposed to basic first aid techniques and equipment, including an AED machine, with the hope that they will be able to take a certifiable first aid/CPR course.

**Spanish:** The objective in Spanish class is to learn every day words and phrases and introduce the students to the culture to foster an interest in the language.

**Yoga:** A holistic approach learning about the practice and terminology of yoga, combining chair yoga with gentle stretch techniques, beginner Yoga (Hata) on mats, mental affirmation, journaling, and creating a nourishing healthy snack.

**Ceramics:** Students in this elective gain a basic understanding of ceramic materials.

**Epoxy Arts:** In Epoxy Arts, the students will be using epoxy, mica powder, and alcohol ink to make jewelry, dominos, coasters, and tumblers.

# WORKSITE TRAINING INTERNSHIPS

## EXTERNAL RSA WORKSITES

Students will be placed at off site work training internships based on responsibility, ability, and maturity demonstrated within Rising Stars Academy. Parents will be notified of this placement and the schedule when the students will be leaving the building. Transportation will be provided by RSA and students will be traveling with a Paraprofessional from RSA. Paraprofessionals will monitor students while on site.

**Henry Ford Healthcare Detroit:** Training will encompass all areas within Henry Ford Hospital dealing with food service and production.

**TACOM:** Training in food preparation, food service and restaurant maintenance.

**Crest Ford:** Training in the area of car detailing and prepping of new vehicles.

**The Apparatus Room:** Training will include food preparation and running of the Front and Back of the House.

**Detroit Athletic Club:** We have a partnership with the prestigious Detroit Athletic Club which allows our students the opportunity to work in the DAC's main kitchen prepping and plating food served to their members and guests.

**Quix Chocolate:** Quix Belgium Chocolates has our students working to mix and dip various items in their delectable chocolate as well as packaging and security of the product.

**Hometown Hospitality Group:** Students are immersed within various roles in the kitchen at Hometown's various restaurants in Ferndale including Popo's for Italian, One-Eyed Betty's, and Public House.

## **INTERNAL RSA WORKSITES**

These internal worksites mirror industry worksites and provide students a laser focus training that can be applied at future work sites.

**All Star Café Kitchen:** All areas of food production, prepping, plating, menu development, sanitation and cooking for guests within the All-Star Café (Serve Safe).

**All Star Café Restaurant:** All areas within service, including table maintenance, order taking and serving, cash register, guest satisfaction, and sanitation.

**Custodial Team:** End of the day maintenance within our building i.e. sweeping, mopping, vacuuming, dusting, garbage patrol, and bathroom cleaning.

**School Office:** Assist the Student Services Specialist with answering phones, front door security, and general office procedures.

**Four Circles Store & Café:** Maintaining the retail space with baked goods, canned items, fresh produce (when available), soaps and scrubs as well as RSA shirts, sweats, hats, etc.

**RSA Bakery:** RSA students work closely with bakers to learn different baking techniques and help with production of baked items for bakery accounts and Four Circles Store & Café.

**Food Processing Plant:** All areas of food processing experience, students will be trained on how to operated processing equipment, inventory, shipping, and receiving.

**Production:** Students measure, portion, make, and package protein bites and gluten free cookies for Beyond Juice.

**Glowforge:** Students have the opportunity to utilize the computer software to choose and manipulate designs that will be cut out on the Glowforge. When the project is cut out, they complete it by painting and assembling it for sale in in the store.

**Aquaponics/Gardening & Greenhouse:** Based on season students will work on a garden/greenhouse project they determine and get a deeper understanding of Agriscience.

## POLICY OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

In compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and the Americans with Disability Act of 1990, it will be the policy of the proposed Rising Stars Academy that no person shall, on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin or ancestry, sex, sexual orientation, gender, disability, age, height, weight, or marital status be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination during any program, activity, service, or in employment. It will be the policy of the proposed Rising Stars Academy not to discriminate on the basis of sex or handicap in admission or access to, treatment or employment in its programs and activities. The Rising Stars Academy will periodically review its educational and employment programs and activities to assure compliance with Title IX and Section 504.

## WEBSITE ADA COMPLIANCE

The RSA Board intends that its website shall be ADA compliant and accessible to all. While not all web pages can be made totally accessible, the Board will strive, to the extent technologically and economically feasible, to make its website as accessible as possible. Individuals responsible for designing, developing and producing web pages, including any third-party providers engaged by the Board, are expected to employ universal design principles to create websites that allow persons with disabilities to access the information and content. If you have any questions or complaints, please contact the Rising Stars Academy main office at 586-806-6455.