

PALs I, II, II
2016-2017
Course Syllabus

Prerequisite:

Students enrolled in these courses must have been nominated, evaluated, and interviewed by the PAL sponsor, PAL students and a campus teacher and completed summer volunteer service hours. This course is for junior and senior level students who have demonstrated a high level of trust, responsibility, respect, integrity, and leadership on within the Lake Travis ISD community.

Class Expectations:

This is only an overview of what to expect in PALS. This program is an incredibly rewarding experience and definitely worth your time and effort. In order to continue to expand the PAL[®] program in the LTISD community it will require a time commitment outside of school hours. Your role as a peer helper is to promote healthy group dynamics, self-esteem, social skills, communication skills, decision-making, problem solving, prevention education, and cultural awareness. In addition, it is also the responsibility of a PAL to serve his/her school and community. If you do not participate (in class, dress up, games, at your assignment, volunteer) or you do not uphold the positive image of a PAL, you will be asked to leave. PALS is extremely demanding, and your participation plays a vital role in the class. **You are expected to be a positive role model inside and outside of school.**

Class Conduct: All school regulations apply to this classroom. Students have the right to a classroom conducive to learning. Students are responsible for respecting others and helping to create a pleasant atmosphere. If you conduct yourself like a responsible young adult, you will be treated accordingly. For this class a positive, respectful conduct is non-negotiable and anything less than 100% will not be tolerated.

Attendance: All tardies are tracked in PALS, even from other classes. See the **Discipline Action Form*. The easiest part of any job or class is showing up. Presence is extremely important to this class. **Your PALees are depending on you.**

Materials: All PALS will need to provide themselves with a notebook of their choice for notes, reflections & weekly journal entries. Feel free to make it personal, however by law LTISD will have to keep the record of your interaction with your PALee.

Grading Policy: It is important for you to take your grades seriously in PALS!

You will receive three daily grades a week (not including tests):

- Participation Grade (Class Activities, Mandatory Volunteer Assignments, Teacher Appreciation)
- Assignment Grade
- Notebook Grade-every three weeks
- Test Grade (one after each unit of study)

1) **Finals**-There will be both a fall semester final and a spring semester final. Each semester exam will double as a unit test grade.

2) **Other class grades**- if you are not passing other classes on progress report or report card checks, you may be removed from your assignment until the grade is no longer failing. This is not a study hall and could result in removal from the program.

3) **Participation** – class participation is crucial and is weighed heavily. Participation includes all community service projects, wearing t-shirts on designated days, participating in bonding activities or class discussions.

4) **Notebook** – students will be asked to keep a Notebook (binder, no spiral or spiral paper) With three distinct sections.

- a. Section 1: Class notes: Any work which requires direct instruction prior to activities.
- b. Section 2: Activity Reflection: You will reflect on what we learned as a group and as an individual, how it adapts to our lives, how you plan to implement it into your everyday life.
- c. 2nd nine weeks, Journal entries will summarize your experience with your PALee. You will note anything of consequence or concern. Detail what you did, what worked, what didn't and what you plan to do next time.

5) **Service Hours** – Each PAL is required to document and serve **15 hours** of community service **per semester**. All opportunities to serve will be made available. PALs are encouraged to seek out community service hours outside of the high school.

6) **CAVS-Time:** You are more than welcome to participate in clubs however your priority is this class. Because Go-Time will consume time we would normally use to travel back and forth between schools you will be required to be in class by 12:00pm on days we travel to our farthest schools so you will need to report to PALs at the beginning of CAVS-Time and leave immediately. If you are a leader in your club or your presence is mandatory; see me and we can make arrangements for you to work here at Life Skills or at the annex so that you can participate in your club.

Assignment Expectations

Elementary & middle school visits:

- 1) You should be in proper dress code
 - a. No tank tops, sleeveless shirts or “spaghetti strap shirts”
 - b. No “Nike shorts or short shorts” fingertip length.
 - c. No inappropriate logos, slogans, or sayings.
- 2) Keep in mind that eyes are ALWAYS on you as a PAL. We are building up a positive image in the community. All actions need to be made with that in mind. These kids are always watching you.
- 3) Your focus is to be a friend, not a counselor. Your job is to help the PALee understand there are consequences to actions through guided communication, not play games. Focus on Big talk as opposed to small talk. Your goal is to help your PALee be better students by May than they were in October. It is not about you, it is about them.

PALs Projects: There will be several fundraisers/community service events throughout the school year. These are not voluntary. Everyone is expected to participate. Fundraisers make it possible for us to improve our games and activities, attend various events and team building exercises, and to bring in guest speakers.

Class Outline

1st 9 Weeks:

Everyday: Student will begin training during class time according to the PAL manual and Worker Assistance Program guidelines. This ensures that we are meeting the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for the course. PALs will be assigned their schools and days, and students will complete PAL interest inventories to handout to the counselors at the your assignments. Counselors will use these profiles to begin matching PALs with their PALees.

Some topics covered will include:

- Leadership Skills.
- Getting to know you.
- Communication Skills
- Group Dynamics
- Behavior
- Confidentiality
- Warning signs
- Problem Solving
- Conflict Resolution/Peer Mediation

2nd through 4th Nine Weeks

- **Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays** PALs will be visiting their assignment. You MUST check in with me before leaving campus, and it is your responsibility to get back to the high school before C-Lunch begins.
- **Thursdays** Meeting days --- Journal entries, week reflection, upcoming service hour opportunities, planning for upcoming events, volunteer commitments. PALs can also use this day to work on their particular goals and service projects.

- **Friday:** Lessons & Skill Refinement --- The officers will provide the group with bonding and leadership activities for continued growth and development of the group. Everyone is expected to participate in these activities!

Lastly you will have three big projects.

- Fall Semester- Group Music Video
- Spring Semester- Norms Videos
- Year long- Community Service Project

As your sponsor, teacher, and leader I hope that each of you will accept the challenges, dedicate your time, and give PALs 100%. I expect you to be a positive role model, work hard, participate, and most importantly have fun.

Peer Assistance and Leadership (PALs)
CODE OF ETHICS

A code of ethics is an agreement among those who commit to the program as to the norms that shall guide their behavior during their involvement in the program.

PALs shall be people of personal integrity.

PALs will:

1. Embrace the philosophy that peer helping is an effective way to address the needs and conditions of people.
2. Respect the individual's right to dignity, self-development, and self-direction.
3. Model positive behaviors and life choices: no substance use/abuse.
4. Embrace the concept of service to others for the good of the community.
5. Maintain confidentiality of information imparted during the course of program related activities with the exceptions of child abuse, sexual abuse, family dysfunction, psychotic behavior, harm to self and others, and drug and alcohol abuse.
6. Refrain from tackling situations for which they have no training and preparation.
7. Recognize, report, and know techniques to deal with stated or implied threats to their emotional or physical well-being.
8. Participate in PALs activities in and out of the classroom with a positive perspective.
9. Follow all school rules, policies and procedures. **Be mindful that they represent Lake Travis High School at all times including online.**