

**Meridell Achievement Center
Neurobehavioral Program**

**FALCONS UNIT
HANDBOOK**

Updated 03/09

Dear Parents,

The Falcons Staff would like to welcome you and your child to Meridell. We have found that email is the most efficient way of communication. The email address for the Falcons Unit is mac.falcons@uhsinc.com. **Please remember to put the patient code in the subject line of the email.** Feel free to contact the unit with any urgent matters. Also, remember to contact the unit directly with any medication questions or unit issues. You can contact your child's therapist with any therapy related issues.

We understand it is very difficult for your child to be away from home during this time. We recommend, however, that you do not send/bring special presents or treats to your child while he is going through treatment at Meridell. Please refer to the handbook for a list of items that are NOT acceptable for the unit. Also, due to lack of space please keep items to a minimum. We do have a weekly point store where the patients are able to buy certain items of interest with the points they have earned the previous week. Also keep in mind the safety of your child and other patients when sending items. If staff decides items are inappropriate or unsafe, they will be taken up and placed in their suitcase until discharge.

Our goal is to have a safe and therapeutic environment. Thank you for your cooperation in helping us to achieve that goal.

Sincerely,

Falcons Treatment Team

Sarah Fry, RN- Charge Nurse

Important Phone Numbers:

Main: 512-528-2100 or 800-366-8656

Unit: 512-528-2423 or 512-528-2424

School Office: 512-528-2145

Phone Policies:

- ❖ Phone calls may be placed/received only to/from people on the phone list.
- ❖ Due to confidentiality, **you MUST have your child's patient code when calling.**
- ❖ Calls are limited to two 10 minute calls on assigned phone nights.
- ❖ Each patient will be assigned two phone days per week.
- ❖ Phone Times: Weekdays 6:15 PM – 8:45 PM
Weekends 10:00 AM – 8:45 PM
(Or at a convenient time for the unit)
- ❖ Nursing staff may regulate phone calls for safety reasons.
- ❖ Patients may use reward slips for extra phone calls (limited to 1 slip per shift).

Visitation:

- ❖ Visiting hours:
Weekdays 4 PM – 8PM
Weekends 10 AM – 8 PM
- ❖ Family members should call ahead to notify staff of visit.
- ❖ Families must visit outside of the unit, unless there is a safety issue.
- ❖ Families are not to visit patient rooms due to confidentiality of the other patients.
- ❖ Please have the patient code.

Mail:

- ❖ Patients can send/receive mail.
- ❖ Mail must be opened under staff supervision.
- ❖ Address:

Meridell Achievement Center
C/O Falcons Unit/Patient's Name
P.O. Box 87
Liberty Hill, TX 78642

Personal Belongings:

Patients have the right to have access to their personal belongings approved by staff. To protect the patients, items deemed potentially dangerous or inappropriate will be labeled and kept in a locked area or sent home with the parents. The unit is not responsible for lost or stolen belongings. We ask that you do not bring expensive or irreplaceable (sentimental) items to the unit.

Dress Code:

- ❖ Clothing must be in good condition and appropriate (staff's discretion)
- ❖ Clothing must not be altered (i.e. torn or written on)
- ❖ Clothing must fit appropriately—belts are encouraged
- ❖ Only 1 stud earring per ear is allowed with parental consent (no large gauge or hoop earrings).
- ❖ Body piercing while at Meridell is strictly prohibited.
- ❖ Caps are allowed outside and in the gym (must be worn facing forward).
- ❖ Sleeveless shirts may only be worn in the gym and at bedtime.
- ❖ Socks and shoes are to be worn at all times except in bed.
- ❖ Patients must be fully clothed (including undergarments) while outside of the bathroom.

Laundry:

- ❖ Patients are responsible for their own laundry (reminders and assistance are provided as need).
- ❖ Patients are assigned 2 laundry days per week.

Cafeteria Expectations:

- ❖ Eating in the cafeteria is a privilege. Patients with appropriate behaviors may go to the cafeteria.
- ❖ When restricted from the cafeteria due to inappropriate behaviors, a meal will be brought to the patient on the unit.

Religious Practices:

- ❖ We respect your personal religious beliefs.
- ❖ Please let us know of any religious concerns you may have.
- ❖ Your parents may arrange (with the Charge Nurse) for a representative from your religious community to visit.

Education:

- ❖ Education is provided by the University of Texas Charter School.
- ❖ Classes are in session Monday through Friday, for 5 hours per day. Credits earned through the University of Texas Charter School will transfer to your regular school. Failing grades and absences will also transfer.

Some items NOT allowed on the unit:

- ❖ Any glass items
- ❖ Matches, lighters, or tobacco products
- ❖ Boots of any kind
- ❖ Cd's, tapes, DVD's, IPOD's, or MP3 players
- ❖ Personal video games or video game magazines
- ❖ Magazines with alcohol, drugs, violence, or sexually provocative images
- ❖ Personal movies
- ❖ Disposable razors (electric razors may be used under direct staff supervision)
- ❖ Personal electronic equipment (with the exception of AM/FM walkman radio)
- ❖ Posters or clothing with drug, alcohol, sexual, gang, or demonic themes
- ❖ Personal snacks
- ❖ More than \$20 to be kept in an account on the unit (over \$20 must be submitted to the business office to be kept in the safe)
- ❖ Live animals of any kind
- ❖ Valuable or heavy jewelry
- ❖ Aerosol cans
- ❖ Skateboards
- ❖ Musical instruments
- ❖ Anything containing alcohol (check ingredients of ALL hygiene products)
- ❖ Large, heavy belts/belt buckles

Grievance/Complaint Procedures:

- ❖ A patient advocate is available to review any complaints or concerns that you may have.
- ❖ If/when you have a complaint, please request a patient complaint form from staff. After completing this form, ask staff where to turn it in.

Some Basic Unit Expectations:

- ❖ Rooms and bathrooms must be kept clean.
- ❖ Patients may only use unit or personal belongings (NO borrowing, lending, giving, sharing, trading, or stealing from other patients).
- ❖ Only one person allowed in the bathroom at a time.
- ❖ Only the patient and his roommate are allowed in their room.
- ❖ Patients may not sit on another patient's bed.
- ❖ Posters and wall hangings must be appropriate.
- ❖ Bathrooms are locked at all times except during hygiene.
- ❖ Patients are expected to use the community bathroom except during hygiene times.
- ❖ All hygiene products are kept in a hygiene box and stored in secured area when not in use.
- ❖ Room changes may be requested and reviewed by staff during Team Meetings.
- ❖ Patients may shave (with personal electric razor) under staff supervision, during designated shaving times.
- ❖ Bedroom doors must remain fully open at all times.
- ❖ Patients are not allowed in the nurse's station unless given permission by the nurse.
- ❖ Only one patient at a time in the laundry room.
- ❖ Bed linens are to be changed at least once per week.
- ❖ Blankets and pillows must remain in the bedroom.

Color System:

The Falcons Unit utilizes a color system to track each patient's progress. Each patient starts on RED, and can progress through ORANGE, YELLOW, GREEN, BLUE, INDIGO, VIOLET and GOLD. Progression is achieved when the patient is consistently meeting milieu/therapy expectations and earning the minimum requirement of daily points. Expectations and privileges increase with each progressing color.

RED	Progress: 1 day of at least 45 points (75%)
ORANGE	Progress: 3 consecutive days of at least 45 points (75%)
YELLOW	Progress: 4 consecutive days of at least 45 points (75%) Regress: 2 consecutive days of less than 45 points
GREEN	Progress: 5 consecutive days of at least 48 points (80%) Regress: 2 consecutive days of less than 45 points
BLUE	Progress: 6 consecutive days of at least 48 points (80%) Regress: 2 consecutive days of less than 48 points
INDIGO	Progress: 7 consecutive days of at least 52 points (~87%) Regress: 2 consecutive days of less than 52 points
VIOLET	Progress: After 14 consecutive days of at least 52 points AND no freezes, patient may APPLY for GOLD status. Treatment Team will review applications during weekly Team Meeting. Regress: 2 consecutive days of less than 52 points
GOLD	Maintain: at least 56 points Regress: 2 consecutive days of less than 56 points OR more than 1 level freeze

Any verbal aggression, threats, or intimidation will result in an automatic 1 color regression (in addition to other unit consequences/precautions as determined by the Treatment Team).

Any physical aggression, sexually acting out, elopement, and self-harm will result in an automatic regression to RED (in addition to other unit consequences/precautions as determined by the Treatment Team).

Color Freeze:

When a patient's behavior drops below the expectations for his current color, he will be placed on a color freeze for a period of 24 hours. During that time, he will have Orange color privileges. If the behavior returns to the expected color by the time the freeze is reviewed, the color freeze will be lifted. If the behavior does not improve, the freeze will either be extended or the patient will receive a regression in color (as determined by the Treatment Team). The patient is permitted 2 freezes per color. The third incident would constitute a regression in color.

Precautions:

Safety Precautions---When a patient shows any type of unsafe behavior (physical aggression, sexually acting out, self-harm, etc.), he may be placed on Safety Precautions for 24 hours or until the Treatment Team can trust him to be safe. He will return to RED color privileges and must remain in staff's eyesight at all times.

Elopement/AWOL Precautions---When a patient talks about or attempts to run away from the facility, he may be placed on Elopement Precautions for 24 hours or until the Treatment Team can trust him to be safe. He will return to RED color privileges, and must surrender his shoes.

Suicide Precautions (SP)---When a patient is determined to be at serious risk of hurting himself or has shown suicidal behaviors, he may be placed on Suicide Precautions for 24 hours or until the Treatment Team can trust him to be safe. He will return to RED color privileges, and must remain in staff's eyesight at all times. All potentially dangerous items (i.e. belt, shoelaces, clothing with drawstrings, etc.) will be removed from the patient's possession.

****In order to come off of any precaution, the patient must demonstrate safe behaviors consistently, complete refocus assignments (including a safety contract), and verbally process his behaviors with his peer group (taking responsibility for his actions).**

**Falcons Unit
Acknowledgement of Receipt of Handbook**

Patient Name: _____

Medical Record # _____

I have received the Handbook for the Falcons Unit and understand that I am responsible for all information in this handbook.

In addition, I understand my rights and responsibilities which have been explained to me and are included in the handbook.

Parent Signature

Date

Patient Signature

Date