



Student/Participant Handbook

2025-2026

555 Main – Corsica, SD - 57328

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Program Overview

Core Independent Center provides services to school districts who are part of the CORE Educational Cooperative. The program opened in August 2022. It was created to teach and guide secondary students with disabilities who are ages 18-21 who have completed their high school requirements. Transition planning is the process of preparing your student for the move from high school into adulthood. Transition planning involves the student, student's family, and school staff to build a plan that is based on the student's strengths and areas of need. Instruction for CORE Independent Center is designed to assist students in meeting their transition goals and objectives in the areas of:

- Self-Advocacy
- Post-Secondary
- Employment
- Recreation and Leisure
- Independent living
- Social Skills
- Community Participation

Related services are provided as determined by the student's IEP team.

Mission Statement and Vision

Core Independent Center is dedicated to empowering secondary students with disabilities, ages 18-21, to successfully transition from high school to adulthood. Through personalized, strength-based instruction and collaborative planning with students, families, school staff, and local agencies, we strive to develop essential skills in self-advocacy, employment, independent living, social engagement, and community participation. Our mission is to foster independence, confidence, and lifelong success for every student we serve.

School Hours

The school day begins at 9:00 am and ends at 2:30pm. Staff are not available to accept students until 8:45am. School dismisses at 2:30 pm. Students must be picked up by 2:30pm. If your student needs to arrive late for school or leave early, please contact Desiree Gunnare at 605-216-5221. Students' late arrivals and early departures are monitored and documented.

Attendance

Regular attendance at Core Independent Center is necessary if students are to obtain the maximum benefit from their educational experience and prepare for future employment and

integration into community activities. Each student's schedule will be determined by the district and program coordinator. Student schedules may differ from one another based on individual needs.

School Closure

In the event Core Independent Center staff are ill or need to be absent, Core Independent Center will be closed. Districts, students, and staff will be notified of the closure.

Inclement Weather

If the student's home district, Corsica-Stickney School District, or the CORE main office closes for inclement weather, the students will not come to the Center. The program coordinator will determine if conditions are not safe for transportation to occur from the student's home district to the Center and vice versa. Parents and home districts will be notified via text message, phone call, or email of the closure.

Volunteers

Parents/guardians or other individuals wishing to volunteer at Core Independent Center should contact the program coordinator to complete a request to volunteer form.

Curriculum

Core Independent Center uses multiple curricula to assist students in meeting their transition goals and objectives in the areas of: Self-Advocacy, Post-Secondary, Employment, Recreation and Leisure, Independent Living, Social Skills, and Community Participation. Curriculum includes, but is not limited to, Remedia, Project Discovery, Peers Social Skills, and Attainment.

Project Skills

If the student is participating in Project Skills, the program coordinator's involvement will depend on availability. Availability will depend on the number of students enrolled at the Core Independent Center and the location of the Project Skills site.

Progress Reporting

The Program Coordinator will provide the district with a progress report in the fall and spring semesters. In addition, the program coordinator will attend each student's annual IEP meeting.

Parent Communication & Involvement

It is important to actively involve parents in the school-related education of their children. As partners in education, regular communication with parents and students occurs through conferences, written and verbal reports, and classroom newsletters.

Parents should contact their child's teacher and or the program coordinator with questions or concerns. Parents are always welcome and encouraged to visit the school. Please make arrangements with the program coordinator at least one day in advance of the time you would like to visit.

Meals

Lunches will be provided to the students either through lunches made by the Corsica-Stickney School District or by the students during a cooking skills learning session.

There will be designated days when cooking skills will be taught and students will participate in making the meal.

Students may choose to bring their lunch.

Technology & Internet Use

Student safety on the Internet and network is an important part of each child's education program. Annually the Acceptable Network and Internet Use Policy for Students will be provided to parents/guardians for signature, and it must be returned.

Cell Phones

Cell phones are allowed in the building but are to be turned off or on silent during the day. Students may use their cell phones before the program starts, during lunch, and after the program has ended. If the students do not follow these instructions, the consequences are as follows-

- 1st offense- the phone will be taken until the end of the day.
- If this issue continues, parents will be notified, and the student will not be able to bring their phone to the Center.

Birthdays

Each classroom recognizes each student's birthday in a special way. Classroom treats should be coordinated with the teacher ahead of time to address special dietary needs.

Students Photos

Students may occasionally be photographed and recorded during school events, classroom activities, field trips, and other educational settings. These images may be used for educational, celebratory, or promotional purposes.

At the start of each school year, parents/guardians will be asked to complete a Photo Release form indicating their preferences regarding the use of their child's image.

Illness Procedure

Students will be sent home if:

1. The staff determines if the student is unwilling or unable to participate in activities or instruction due to illness.
2. The staff determines that they cannot care for the sick student without compromising their ability to care for the health and safety of the other students in the group.
3. FEVER (temperature greater than 100 degrees)-exclude until less than 100 degrees for 24 hours without fever reducing medication.
4. VOMITING-Must stay home for at least 24 hours after vomiting unless determined to be caused by a non-communicable condition. They must be able to eat and drink before coming back to school.
5. DIARRHEA-Must stay home if cannot self-contain stool.

Students should be kept home if they have any of the following symptoms:

- Fever: Fever is defined as having a temperature of 100* F or higher taken temporally. (A student needs to be fever free for a minimum of 24 hours before returning to the program, without the aid of Tylenol or any other fever reducing substance.)
- Diarrhea: runny, watery, bloody stools, or 2 or more loose stools within last 4 hours.
- Vomiting: 1 or more times in a 24-hour period. Note: Please do not bring your child if they have continuously vomited during the night.
- Breathing troubles, sore throat, swollen gland, loss of voice, or continuous coughing.
- Frequent scratching of body or scalp, lice, rash or any other spots that resemble childhood diseases, including ringworm.
- Student is irritable, continuously crying, or requires more attention than we can provide due to not feeling well.
- COVID-19- Follow current Dept of Health Guidelines at [DOH.SD.gov](https://doh.sd.gov)
- STREP THROAT-May return when they have been on antibiotics for 12 hours.
- RED Eye(s)-Must stay home if white part of the eye is red and there is yellow or green crusty or gooey matter in the eye. May return after starting medication, when eye is clear, or after consultation with healthcare provider.
- RASH-Keep your child home if they have a rash over a large part of their body, or if the rash is open, oozing, is accompanied by a fever, or it is known to be contagious.
- COLD,SORE THROAT,COUGH-May go to school with mild cold symptoms but keep them home if: -has been exposed to Covid-19, has a temperature above 100 degrees, does not have enough energy to do school work, is not able to keep from spreading

germs by washing their hands, throwing away used tissues, coughing onto their sleeve, and coughing away from other people.

Please refer to <https://doh.sd.gov/media/1u1nnepx/temporary-exclusion-school.pdf> for a full listing of recommendations from the South Dakota Department of Health

Prescription Medication Administration

For a student requiring prescription medication during the school day, the medication will be given with an order from a physician/licensed prescriber and a completed medical authorization form.

1. All medications must be in the original pharmacy-labeled container. Each container should have the name and phone number of the pharmacy, student's name, physician's name, medication name, dosage, time to be given and route (oral, inhaled, etc.).
2. Medication will be kept in a locked medication box and administered by staff.
3. Medication will be returned or destroyed when discontinued, or at the end of the school year, in accordance with the procedure for medication destruction.
4. The parent/guardian must immediately notify the school in writing of any changes in the student's prescription medication administration.

Non-Prescription Medication

All (OTC) medications (e.g. 11 cough/cold remedies, antihistamines, pain relievers, anti-inflammatories) to be administered at school must be sent in the original container. An over-the-counter authorization form is required.

Alcoholic Beverage and/or Drugs

A student shall not possess, use, sell, offer to sell, conceal, transmit, give attempt to purchase, or be under the influence of any alcoholic beverage or illegal or illegally used drug including steroids, counterfeit (lookalike) drugs, or controlled substances, tobacco, marijuana, CBD products, vape products, or associated paraphernalia. "Possession" includes, but is not limited to, retention on the student's person or in a purse, backpack, wallet, locker, desk, or vehicle. A student shall not possess, use, sell, offer to sell, conceal, or transmit any drug-related paraphernalia. It is not a violation of the Code of Conduct if a substance is used for medical purposes in accordance with directions for use, in accordance with a valid prescription (if the substance is a prescription drug). Such a validly used/possessed substance must be (1) if a prescription drug, authorized by a medical prescription by an authorized health-care professional and kept in the original container, which shall state the student's name and directions for use and expiration date; or (2) if an over-the-counter drug, kept in the original container, which shall state directions for use. Medications must be checked in at school to ensure the safety of all students.

Weapons

A student shall not possess, transport, transmit, conceal or attempt to possess, transport, transmit, or conceal a dangerous weapon, firearm, knife, fireworks, explosive ordnance or dangerous instrument, or "lookalike" counterfeit weapon, firearm, knife, or dangerous instrument. "Look -alike" weapons, firearms, knives, fireworks, explosive ordnance, or instruments include, but are not limited to, any object a reasonable person might consider under the circumstances a dangerous weapon, firearm, knife, fireworks, explosive ordnance or dangerous instrument. As used herein, "firearm" shall be defined as in 18 USC section 921 and shall include, but not be limited to, any weapon (including a starter gun) which will or is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive or other propellant; the frame or receiver of any such weapon; any firearm muffler or firearm silencer; or any destructive device as defined in 18 USC section 921 et seq. The definition of destructive device includes, but is not limited to, (1) any explosive, incendiary, or poisonous gas including, but not limited to, a bomb, grenade, rocket having a propellant charge of more than four ounces, missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than one quarter ounce, mine, or a device similar to any of the devices described herein or (2) any combination of parts either designed or intended for use in converting any device into any destructive device described herein and from which a destructive device may be readily assembled. As used herein, "knife" shall be defined as any instrument that possesses a pointed or sharp edged blade of metal or other rigid material and that is designed or can be used for cutting, slicing, or stabbing; this definition shall include, but is not limited to, straight razors, utility knives, box cutters, ice picks, pocket knives, switchblades, and buck knives.

Student Privacy

The privacy of each student is of utmost importance to Core Independent Center. Core Independent Center adheres to the guidelines outlined by FERPA (Family Education Rights and Privacy Act) and HIPPA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act).

Safe Learning Environment

Weapons and instruments that could cause bodily harm to another person or used for intimidation purposes are not permitted on Core Independent Center premises. Upon the discovery of such weapons on the Core Independent Center premises local law enforcement will be contacted immediately. Core Independent Center reserves the right to search book bags, and coats. Please ensure that your child does not bring knives, guns, fireworks, toy weapons or any other weapons to school. The following emergency procedures will be implemented as necessary:

- ◆ School lockdown: In the event of a threatening person/armed intruder within the Core Independent Center premises in which students and staff cannot be safely evacuated, students and staff will lock down in designated areas of their classroom.

◆ Fire: in the event of a fire alarm activation students and staff are directed to move to the closest exit of the building. Fire drills are conducted twice a year.

◆ Severe thunderstorm and/or tornado warning: In the event of a severe thunderstorm warning or a tornado warning students and staff of Core Independent Center will transition to the lowest level until time the warning have been allowed to expire. If a classroom is on a field trip at which time a severe weather warning is announced school administration will contact the teacher and/or staff with students on the field trip and ensure they are taking the appropriate measures to ensure the students are in the safest possible location. School will not dismiss during severe thunderstorms or tornado warnings until the warning is lapsed. Severe thunderstorm/tornado drills are done each spring.

◆ School Evacuation: In the event that a building emergency should occur (gas leak, explosion, etc.) it may be necessary to evacuate. Students and staff of Core Independent Center will be evacuated. Students and staff will move to the Corsica Stickney High School. Upon the event of an actual emergency parents/guardians will be notified. Parents should not attempt to enter Core Independent Center in the event that the school is participating in an emergency drill or if an actual crisis is taking place. If the crisis occurs while visiting the school, parents/guardians should take direction from the leadership. At no time, should parents impede, challenge, or obstruct school or law enforcement personnel during an emergency.

Field Trips

Field trips provide a learning experience for students. Parents/guardians are welcome to join their child on field trips. Transportation will be determined based on the number of students and parents participating. *Students will be responsible for any admission fees and meals cost.*

Bullying

Core Independent Center is committed to protecting its students, employees, and applicants for admission from bullying of any type. Core Independent Center believes that all students and employees are entitled to a safe, equitable, and harassment-free school experience. Bullying will not be tolerated and shall be just cause for disciplinary action.

Dress Code

Students are expected to dress in clothing appropriate for the weather conditions. Students should refrain from wearing clothing with offensive pictures or words, clothing that is revealing (shirts must cover the stomach and chest areas and shorts must extend past the fingertips). Shoes must be worn unless a medical condition prevents the students from doing so. Students should have a seasonally appropriate spare set of clothing brought to school if their clothing becomes soiled during the school day. Students, when appropriate, are expected to have tennis shoes available for participation in fitness activities. Students must have outside weather gear appropriate for the weather conditions. Students (as health allows) will be expected to participate in recess/exercise activities outside unless a wind chill or heat index

advisory are in place. Students participating in work experiences or community volunteering experiences are expected to have appropriate clothing for the experience.

Student Hygiene Expectations

Maintaining good personal hygiene is essential to promoting a healthy learning environment. At Core Independent Center, we encourage and support students in developing daily hygiene habits that foster both personal well-being and respect for others.

Parents/guardians are expected to ensure that their child comes to school:

- Wearing clean clothing appropriate for school activities
- Bathed or showered regularly
- With clean hair, teeth brushed, and deodorant (as developmentally appropriate)
- With any necessary personal hygiene products (toothbrush, comb, deodorant, etc.) as needed

We understand that hygiene needs evolve, especially during adolescence. Our staff is available to provide support and discretion for students who may require hygiene items during the school day.

Handwashing & Illness Prevention

To minimize the spread of illness, we teach and reinforce handwashing routines and other health practices, including:

- Washing hands after using the restroom and before meals.
- Covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue or elbow
- Staying home when sick, especially with fever, vomiting, or contagious symptoms

Please help us keep Core Independent Center healthy by following illness guidelines and encouraging your child to practice good hygiene daily.

Incident/Injury Report

Part 1: Reported By	
Person Reporting Incident:	Program Name:
Date Reported:	Time Reported
Part 2: Incident information	
Date of Incident:	Time of Incident:
Type of Incident: <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> Injury (Continue to Part 3) Accident (Continue to Part 3) Unusual Occurrence (Continue to Part 3) <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> Other (Continue to Part 3) Behavior (Continue to Part 4)	
Suspected Abuse or Neglect	

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| <input type="radio"/> | Yes, Was Child Protection Services Contacted |
| <input type="radio"/> | Yes, Was the home district or parent notified |
| <input type="radio"/> | No |

Part 3: Description and Details of Incident/Accident/Unusual Occurrence/Other	

Persons involved or witnessed incident
--

Describe event/incident. Include date, time, location, people involved, nature of incident, any antecedents leading up to incident, how clients were affected including any injuries.

<p>Explain what immediate action was taken, include persons contacted.</p>
--

[illegible]

Part 4: Behavior Incident

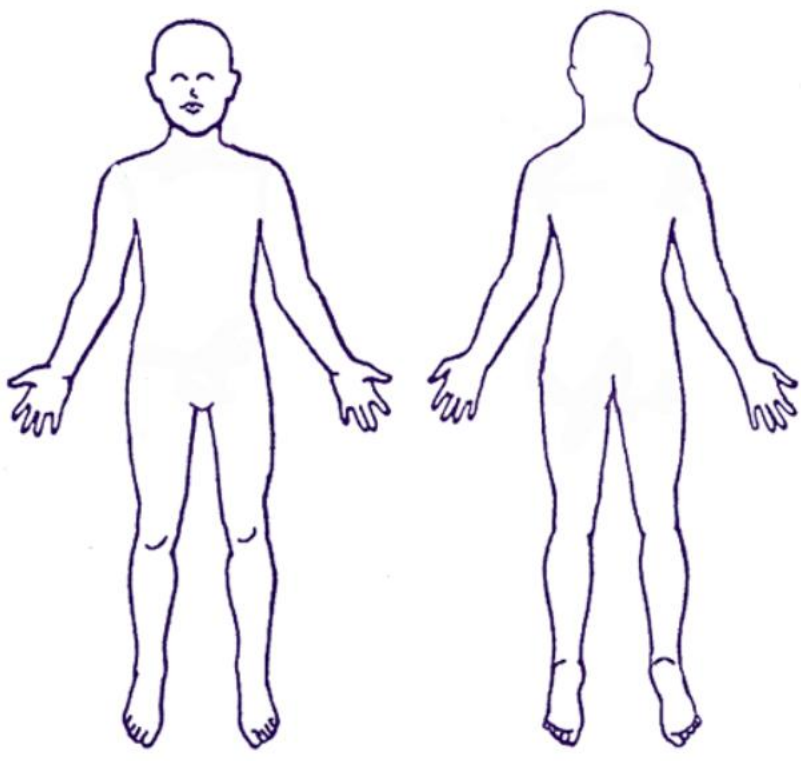
○○○	Aggressive towards Self	Injury to Self
○○	Aggressive towards Staff	Injury to Others (Client)
○	Aggressive towards others (Client)	Injury caused by Behavior episode
○○	Property Damage (list below)	Theft

Persons involved or witnessed incident

Describe event/incident. Include date, time, location, people involved, nature of incident, any antecedents leading up to incident, how clients were affected including any injuries.

Explain what immediate action was taken, include persons contacted.

List of Property Destroyed

Circle the location of injury


Signature of staff completing form _____ Date: _____

Signature of Supervisor: _____ Date: _____

Directory

Core Independence Center Program Coordinator

Desiree Gunnare- 605-216-5221

Core Educational Cooperative Director

Renee Thomas- 605-337-3178

Calendar

2025-2026 CORE Independent Center Event Calendar

July 2025						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

August 2025						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

September 2025						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

October 2025						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

November 2025						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

December 2025						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

July	
4	Independence day

August	
21	CIC Start Date

September	
1	Labor Day-CIC Closed

October	
13	Native American Day-CIC Closed
24	United Nations Day
31	Halloween

November	
2	Daylight Saving
11	Veterans Day
27-28	Thanksgiving Break

December	
24	Christmas Eve
25	Christmas Day
31	New Year's Eve
22-31	Christmas Break

January 2026						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

February 2026						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28						

March 2026						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

April 2026						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

May 2026						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

June 2026						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

January	
1	New Year's Day
1-2	Christmas Break- CIC Closed
19	Martin Luther King Jr. Day-CIC Closed

February	
2	Groundhog Day
12	Lincoln's Birthday
14	Valentines Day
18	President's Day-CIC Closed

March	
8	Daylight Saving
13	Spring Break
17	St. Patrick's Day
20	Spring Break

April	
1	April Fool's Day
3	Good Friday- CIC Closed
6	Easter Monday- CIC Closed
22	Earth Day

May	
10	Mother's Day
15	Last Day
25	Memorial Day

June	
14	Flag Day
21	Father's Day

**Please sign and return this form to the Core Independence Center
Coordinator.**

I have read the Core Independent Center District/Student Handbook.

Student's Signature _____

Parent's Signature Date _____