



2025-2026 Family Handbook & Student Code of Conduct

3662 Poinsettia Ave SE, Grand Rapids MI 49508

(616) 243-6221

www.newbranches.org

Proudly Managed by Choice Schools Associates & Authorized by Central Michigan University

This handbook is an administrative guideline developed under Board Policy 1230.01. It supports Board policy and aligns with law and the charter contract.

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Welcome to New Branches Charter Academy!

At NBCA, we believe in building strong relationships that support learning, growth, and shared success, and we're honored to partner with your family on this journey.

NBCA is a destination school located on a vibrant 12-acre campus in Grand Rapids. We're proud to provide a positive academic and social environment where students are encouraged to grow into healthy, responsible citizens, life-long learners, and world leaders. Our commitment to environmental education sets us apart. Through hands-on, outdoor learning and self-sustaining practices, students are inspired to care for the natural world as they pursue academic excellence.

Our dedicated team of teachers, instructional coaches, support staff, custodians, food service workers and administrators all play a role in helping our students achieve great success. Each year, we work together with families to build a strong, united school community rooted in respect, character, and opportunity.

At the heart of our work are the values we live by every day: community, perseverance, responsibility, diversity, teamwork, communication, and stewardship. These principles shape how we teach, how we learn, and how we care for one another.

Thank you for trusting us with your student. We are excited to partner with you and grateful to welcome you to the NBCA family.

In partnership with you,

Tanner Maten
Principal

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1. Introduction and Overview

1.1 School Calendar

New Branches Charter Academy | 2025-2026 CALENDAR

AUGUST '25						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
					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						

11-19 Staff PD
14 Back-to-school Open House
20 First day of school
22 Early Release @ 12:10
29 No school-Labor Day

FEBRUARY '26						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
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

2 Re-enrollment begins
6 Early Release @ 12:10
13-16 Mid-winter break
17-27 Winter conferences
20 Early Release @ 12:10
27 Early Release @ 12:10

SEPTEMBER '25						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
	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				

1 No school-Labor Day
5 Early Release @ 12:10
8 GSRP Preschool begins
12 Early Release @ 12:10
19 Early Release @ 12:10
26 Early Release @ 12:10

MARCH '26						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
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				

2 Re-enrollment period ends
6 Trimester 2 ends
9 Trimester 3 begins
13 Early Release @ 12:10
16 Open Enrollment begins
20 Early Release @ 12:10
27 Early Release @ 12:10

OCTOBER '25						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
			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	

1 Fall count day
3 No school – PD day
10 Early Release @ 12:10
13-24 Fall conference weeks
17 Early Release @ 12:10
24 Early Release @ 12:10
31 Early Release @ 12:10

APRIL '26						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
			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		

3-10 No school-Spring Break
17 Open Enrollment ends
17 Early Release @ 12:10
24 Early Release @ 12:10

NOVEMBER '25						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
						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						

3 No school-PD day
7 Early Release @ 12:10
14 Early Release @ 12:10
21 Early Release @ 12:10
25 Last day Trimester 1
26-28 No school-Thanksgiving break

MAY '26						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
						1
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						

1 Early Release @ 12:10
6 Enrollment Lottery, 6:00pm
8 Early Release @ 12:10
15 Early Release @ 12:10
22-25 No school-Memorial Day
28 GSRP last day
29 Early Release @ 12:10

DECEMBER '25						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
	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			

1 Trimester 2 begins
5 Early Release @ 12:10
12 Early Release @ 12:10
19 Early Release @ 12:10
22-31 No school-holiday break

JUNE '26						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
	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				

5 Last day of school, Early release at 12:10

JANUARY '26						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
				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

1-2 No school-holiday break
9 Early Release @ 12:10
16 Early Release @ 12:10
19 No school-MLK Day
23 Early Release @ 12:10
30 Early Release @ 12:10

School hours: 8:10am-3:10pm Mon-Thurs
8:10am-12:10pm Fridays
Before School Care hours: 6:30-8:00am
After School Care hours: 3:10-6:00pm

This calendar complies with Board Policy 8210 and MCL 388.1701, requiring 1,098 instructional hours over a minimum of 180 days.

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1.2 School Hours

The regular daily school schedule begins at 8:10 AM and ends at 3:10 PM. Please call our attendance line to report absences by 8:30AM: 616-243-6221 Option 1.

GSRP Preschool through eighth grade classrooms are open at 8:00 AM for all students. Students arriving in the classroom after 8:10 AM will be considered tardy. Class activities begin promptly at 8:10 AM. Students may not arrive at school prior to 8:00 AM unless registered and pre-paid for childcare. Students will go directly to the classroom.

1.3 Attendance and Truancy Policy

To ensure compliance with state law and Board Policy 5200, parents/guardians are expected to report all absences to the school office by **9:00 a.m.** on the day of the absence. Excused absences include personal illness, medical or dental appointments, religious observances, family emergencies, mandated court appearances, and other situations approved by the school administrator. Documentation may be required for certain excused absences. Frequent tardiness or early check-outs that result in lost instructional time will be considered when determining chronic absenteeism. If a student's absences are due to a medical, mental health, or physical condition, the school will review whether the student may qualify for protections under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act or the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The school is committed to working with families to ensure all students have equitable access to learning.

Chronic Absenteeism and Truancy

Kent ISD (KISD) common attendance definitions:

- **Chronic absenteeism**; attendance is 90 percent or less of scheduled days to date. This definition includes all counted absences even if sanctioned by a parent/guardian. Chronic absenteeism can be measured at any point in the school year, such as fall count day, semester or trimester end, or when an attendance problem is identified. This category of absenteeism, if all interventions are unsuccessful, may often result in charges for the parent/guardian or the juvenile, depending on age and history.
- **Truancy**; ten unexcused absences in a school year. This definition focuses on absences not sanctioned by a parent/guardian, generally a student "skipping school," and most often may result in charges for the juvenile if other interventions prove unsuccessful.

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What will happen as a result of the first referral to the KISD truancy office?

- A Truancy Notice will be sent, via first class mail, to the home. It will direct the parent/guardian to contact the school to schedule a meeting to complete an Individual Attendance Improvement Plan (IAIP). It also contains a response form for the parent(s) to use to share information and communicate needs to the school.
- The school will receive an e-mail copy of the Truancy Notice.
- The goal of the Truancy Notice is to help facilitate a meeting with the parent/guardian and school staff to establish a dialogue and to build a cooperative relationship resulting in an Individual Attendance Improvement Plan.

When should a second referral to the KISD truancy office be made?

- In short, when progress toward the goals of the Individual Attendance Improvement Plan/Agreement is not being seen.
- If attendance drops below 91 percent for any period of two weeks or more after the Attendance Improvement Agreement is signed.
- If a student is missing or not attending at all. And
- When at least five different and sincere attendance interventions, by staff of different disciplines, have been made and documented.
- These interventions must also satisfy three statutory requirements.
 - The statute requires a meeting between student, parent, and school. This is satisfied by the attendance improvement plan meeting.
 - Outside agency support. Dependent on students age and needs, our office may refer student to Crisis Intervention Program with 17th Circuit Court.
 - Educational counseling. The purpose is to determine if any educational or programming barriers exist. Educational counseling must be by a School Guidance Counselor or a School Social Worker.

What will happen as a result of the second referral to the truancy office?

- In most cases, a letter of Truancy Action will be drafted by Kent ISD Attendance office and submitted to the school for approval. This letter is fact specific and individually composed. It will contain a synopsis of attendance interventions and attempts to date, a warning of pending legal action, and directives to the parent/guardian.
- One directive is to meet with the building principal to write and sign an Individual Attendance Improvement plan for the student. If a plan is in place, it should be updated, revised as necessary, and signed.
- If it is requested, the Kent ISD attendance officer may facilitate these meetings.

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- Just as with the Truancy Notice, the goal is still to build a collaborative relationship between the parent/guardian and the school personnel. Therefore, sincere attendance interventions should continue.

When should a third referral to the Kent ISD truancy office be made?

- If the parent/guardian refuses to meet with the principal and/or the attendance is not meeting the goals of the IAIP. What will happen as a result of the third referral to the truancy office?
- In most cases, with school approval, a petition will be sent to the prosecutor's office.
- Usually all siblings in the school district with less than acceptable attendance will be included in the referral.
- Most referrals of students over 10 years, if not currently otherwise involved with the juvenile court, will be offered social work services by Crisis Intervention Program, a prosecution diversion program. This referral is made by the attendance office. Only if this is unsuccessful, will prosecution proceed.

What is a continuing pattern?

- By agreement, the members of the Kent School-Justice Partnership, any case that is referred (first, second, or third referral) to the Kent ISD attendance office in the last third of the prior school year (March 1), and the absenteeism pattern reemerges during the first third (December 1) of the current school year, resulting in a referral, is a continuing pattern. A continuing pattern case picks up the process wherever it left off the prior spring.

The following section is quoted directly from the Kent ISD website. Families are encouraged to visit the Kent ISD website for the most up-to-date and detailed information regarding attendance, chronic absenteeism, and truancy procedures.

1.4 Make up Work for Absence from School

Students are responsible for getting and completing any work they have missed due to absence from class. Makeup work should be completed within three days of return to school for short-term absence of 1-2 days and within five days of return for absence of 3-5 days as agreed upon with the classroom teacher. In cases of extended absence of more than five days due to illness, a student may request special consideration for additional time to make up work. Parents/guardians may request this in writing.

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1.5 School Cancellation and Communication Channels

Notice of school cancellation is given by announcements on local tv (WZZM, WOODTV8) and our automated School Messenger service. The school website and front office will also provide important updates. Families are responsible for keeping contact information up to date at all times.

1.6 School Newsletter

The Academy will communicate to families primarily through email through School Messenger by the Principal or Main Office. The emails will contain information about school activities and programs as well as an updated calendar for the month.

1.7 Student Privacy and Media Consent

The school is committed to protecting the privacy and safety of all students in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and internal policy. To honor this commitment, staff and volunteers will not photograph, video record, or audio record students whose parents or guardians have submitted written notice opting out of media permissions.

Upon enrollment, families are asked to complete a media consent form indicating their preferences regarding photography, video, and audio recordings of their student. These images or recordings may be used in newsletters, social media, classroom apps, marketing materials, or news stories that promote the school's mission and culture. If a parent or guardian chooses to opt out, the school will make every effort to exclude the student from any public-facing content.

Classroom- or teacher-directed use of digital platforms (such as communication apps or learning portfolios) that include student photos or videos will not occur if parent or guardian chooses to opt out. This includes apps like ClassDojo, Seesaw, or Google Classroom. Staff will not privately share media content that features students and will only post content through approved school communication channels.

Parents and guardians may update their media consent preferences at any time by contacting the school office in writing. The school will honor all opt-out requests promptly and respectfully.

1.8 Verbal and Written Communication Policy

To promote effective, respectful, and timely communication among families, staff, and school leadership, all concerns or questions should be routed to the appropriate person

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as soon as possible. Prompt, direct communication fosters collaborative problem-solving, helps avoid misunderstandings, and ensures that each concern is addressed at the right level.

All communications should reflect our shared commitment to respectful dialogue and mutual problem-solving. For urgent concerns that impact a child's immediate health or safety, please call the school office directly.

The Academy is committed to effective communication with all families. If a parent or guardian has limited English proficiency or requires information in a different language or format, please notify the school office. We will provide translated materials or interpretation services for important school communications and meetings, in accordance with federal and state laws.

1.9 Channels of Communication

To ensure inquiries and concerns reach the appropriate staff member, please reference the chart below:

Topic	Initial Contact
Academic progress, classroom behavior, daily schedule, assignments, class procedures, field trips, student-to-student conflict, classroom expectations	Classroom Teacher
Social-emotional support, peer conflict resolution, behavior check-ins, mentoring, small group support, restorative conversations	Student Advocate
School policies, curriculum questions, special education services, behavior support programs, school-wide events, instructional methods, unresolved classroom concerns	School Leader
Attendance, dismissal changes, arrival procedures, school calendar, lost and found, registration/enrollment documents, billing and accounts, schoolwide communications,	Front Office Staff

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McKinney-Vento homeless liaison support, parent involvement, and facilities questions	
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1.10 Communication Chain of Command

If a concern is not resolved at the initial level, the following communication chain should be followed in order to ensure the issue is addressed appropriately:

- Classroom Teacher
- Student Advocate and/or Assistant School Leader *(if applicable)*
- School Leader
- Superintendent
- Chief of Staff
- Chief Executive Officer
- Academy Board of Directors – *For concerns that remain unresolved after all prior steps have been followed or that relate directly to board governance.*

Please note: Unless a matter involves an immediate safety concern, legal issue, or regulatory violation, each step should be followed in sequence. Skipping steps may delay resolution or prevent the appropriate context from being considered.

Parents and guardians are always welcome to address the Academy Board of Directors during the public comment portion of their monthly board meetings. While the Board does not respond to public comment during the meeting, all remarks are documented and taken into consideration.

1.11 Communication Expectations

Teachers and administrators strive to maintain strong, respectful communication with families. To support this, the following expectations apply:

- Response Time: Staff will respond to emails and voicemails within one school day, excluding weekends, holidays, and scheduled breaks.
- Urgent Messages: Urgent changes (such as end-of-day transportation) must be communicated by phone to the school office. Staff may not see emails or other messages during instructional hours.
- Personal Contact: Calling or texting a staff member's personal phone is discouraged, unless previously agreed upon and contextually appropriate (e.g., field trip emergency). Respecting personal boundaries helps staff maintain focus and balance.

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- **Tone and Purpose:** All communication should be courteous, student-centered, and focused on partnership. Constructive, solutions-oriented dialogue is essential to supporting students' growth and wellbeing.

By following these guidelines, we ensure communication is efficient, professional, and respectful of everyone's time and role.

2. Governance and Leadership

2.1 Mission Statement

New Branches Charter Academy will provide a positive learning environment, along with a rigorous, academic and cultural program where our children learn to become healthy, responsible citizens, life-long learners, and world leaders.

2.2 Vision Statement

New Branches Charter Academy, in partnership with educators, students, families and community stakeholders, closes the achievement gap and transforms the human culture by developing problem solvers and life-long learners who are fully prepared for high school, college, global economy careers, and world change.

2.3 Core Values

Community—We strive to create a safe environment that fosters inclusiveness and belonging by students, parents, staff, and community stakeholders.

Perseverance—We always strive to push ourselves and our students to their fullest potential.

Responsibility—Students, parents and staff are respectful to each other. Students learn to understand their responsibilities and take initiative to act upon them in their local, national and world communities.

Diversity— We embrace and value working with families with rich cultural and diverse backgrounds. We recognize that immersion in a variety of cultures will prime our students to work and live in a global economy. We celebrate and honor all the perspectives and aspects of every culture and background that creates the fabric of our school culture.

Teamwork—We provide a respectful process for open communication, collaboration and the opportunity for everyone to realize their value in our school community.

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Communication—We practice healthy, open and candid dialogue between all members of our school community. Healthy dialogue encourages necessary conversations and respects all parties.

Stewardship—We ensure that our teaching and operational principles and practices are morally sound, ethical, transparent, respectful, and honest.

2.4 Board of Directors, Authorizer, and Management Company

The Board of Directors is the governing body for the Academy. The Academy's Authorizer, Central Michigan University, appoints our board members. Meetings are scheduled for the second Monday of each Month at 6:00 PM at the Academy. Special meetings are scheduled when needed. All Board meeting notices are posted at the main entrance of the Academy and are open to the public. Academy Board of Directors contact information is listed on the school website.

The Academy Board contracts with Choice Schools Associates, LLC for management and employment services.

5251 Clyde Park Avenue Southwest
Wyoming, MI 49509
Phone: 616-785-8440
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2.5 School Administration

School Leader: Tanner Maten, Principal
Email: tannermaten@choiceschools.com
Phone: 616-243-6221 Ext.322

2.6 Title IX Coordinator

Title IX Coordinator: Tanner Maten, Principal
Email: tannermaten@choiceschools.com
Phone: 616-243-6221 Ext.322

In accordance with federal law, the Title IX Coordinator oversees complaints involving discrimination based on sex. Please see section 12.11 for additional Title IX processes and procedures.

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2.7 Governance and Accountability

In alignment with Board Policy 2700, the Academy publishes an annual P.A. 25 Report containing student achievement data, teacher qualifications, and school improvement status. It is available online and upon request.

2.8 Student Rights and Responsibilities

The Academy believes that student growth is best supported in a school environment rooted in safety, dignity, and mutual respect. We are committed to fostering a culture where every student, regardless of age, is valued, guided, and held to high expectations. Students are entitled to protections and privileges guaranteed by state and federal law. With those rights come important responsibilities to their school community.

The following rights and responsibilities form the foundation for how we learn, grow, and relate to one another:

The Right to Civil Dignity

All students have the right to be treated with kindness and respect and to learn in an environment free from bullying, harassment, and discrimination. With this right comes the responsibility to treat others with dignity and to avoid behavior that harms or excludes.

The Right to Education

Students have the right to attend a tuition-free public school and access a high-quality academic program. They are responsible for attending regularly, engaging fully, and following rules that support a productive learning environment.

The Right to Due Process

Students have the right to fair and respectful discipline, including the right to be heard and to appeal major decisions. They are expected to cooperate with school processes that promote learning and well-being.

The Right to Expression

Students may respectfully express ideas and beliefs, provided their expression does not disrupt learning, compromise safety, or violate community standards for respectful communication.

The Right to Privacy

Students have the right to reasonable privacy in personal matters and

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educational records. This right is balanced with the school's obligation to ensure safety and comply with the law.

The Right to Support and Belonging

Especially for our younger learners, students have the right to be nurtured, guided, and encouraged by trusted adults. They are responsible for doing their best, following directions, and helping their peers feel safe and included.

Expectations for student behavior, academic integrity, and community responsibility are further detailed in the school's Code of Student Conduct. This document is shared annually and is available at the end of this handbook. Parents and guardians are asked to review it with their children and return a signed acknowledgment form confirming their understanding.

3. Educational Program and Academic Policies

3.1 Educational Philosophy

3.1.1 Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) Preschool Program

The Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) is a preschool program funded by the state for four-year-old children. In order to enroll in the program each child must be at least 4 but not yet 5 years old by September 1st of this year, or be at least 4 but not yet 5 years old between September 2nd to December 1st of this year with a signed waiver. Families must provide their yearly income to determine qualifications and if the family is admitted into the GSRP program.

GSRP Program Philosophy:

GSRP is designed for children to have freedom to learn and play at his/her speed. A variety of educational and developmental activities will be available to the children as well as outdoor and indoor play time to promote physical development. All of these activities are to supplement a child's development and to promote success in experiencing the joys of learning.

GSRP Curriculum:

Connect4Learning (C4L) is a research-based curriculum comprising six units and 32 weeks of learning centers and lessons. It aims to synthesize research based approaches in four domains of learning: mathematics, science, literacy, and social-emotional development. Connect4Learning uses a project-based approach, in which children work toward a larger goal, such as playing a coral-reef scavenger hunt or converting their classroom into a museum throughout a curriculum unit. Each lesson

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can be tailored to fit the schedule and requirements of any classroom setting. Observation opportunities and individualized instruction strategies are built into the curriculum.

Teachers regularly observe and record children's behavior, experiences and interests. Based on these careful observations, teachers are able to plan activities that will promote children's growth and development. They also use these notes in parent meetings, conferences, and home visits to help parents better understand their children's development.

3.1.2 Philosophy and Method

Transitional Kindergarten (TK)

Transitional Kindergarten acts as a bridge between preschool and Kindergarten and is designed to provide our youngest learners, or students who need more time developmentally, with the pivotal skills and experiences needed for success in Kindergarten.

Entering Kindergarten at an older age is an important early predictor for student success. Some studies indicate that students who are older when they enter Kindergarten demonstrate a significant boost in academic achievement, self-confidence, and healthful attitudes about school and learning (RAND, 2007).

Transitional Kindergarten is an option for younger children, who are old enough for kindergarten, to gain social and academic experience. The program, like Kindergarten, isn't mandatory but children must have their 5th birthday by September 1 of this year, or have their 5th birthday between September 2nd to December 1st of this year with a signed waiver to be eligible.

Students who enter TK traditionally are promoted to Kindergarten the next year, thus receiving two strong, foundational years of skill learning and practice. Assessment of student progress is continuous during the school year and students must meet required benchmarks to progress.

All Kindergarten applicants are screened by credentialed teachers prior to the school year to assess the proper placement in TK or a traditional Kindergarten classroom. Teachers assess knowledge of multiple skills including letter and number recognition, writing skills, fine motor skills, and social maturity. Recommendations for placement in TK or traditional Kindergarten are made to the parent based on the screening and a decision is made collaboratively.

The standards, curricula and teacher credentialing requirements in Transitional Kindergarten are different from those in preschool. Transitional Kindergarten is aligned

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to the Common Core State Standards, is an academic program, and is taught by fully credentialed teachers. Transitional Kindergarten builds on the skills children may have learned in preschool and serves as the first of a two-year Kindergarten program.

The curriculum in Transitional Kindergarten is modified to meet the needs of younger students. Transitional Kindergarten includes an emphasis on oral language development, literacy immersion, number sense, and it provides collaborative experiences that promote cooperation, self-confidence, self-regulation, how to handle conflicts, play, and healthy attitudes about school and learning.

The Common Core State Standards provide end-of-year standards for Kindergarten. NBKA has used the Common Core Standards to design end-of-year expectations for Transitional Kindergarten that are appropriately modified to reflect the first of a two-year Kindergarten program.

Kindergarten

The kindergarten environment is designed to provide the children an opportunity to build upon the skills they have attained in the preschool classroom. The kindergarten curriculum inspires children to develop inner discipline, self-assurance, and a love of learning through a rigorous English language arts and math program designed to teach students reading, writing, speaking, and listening, while developing deep vocabulary and broad background knowledge.

Elementary, Grades 1-5

The elementary curriculum is built upon the foundation laid in the lower elementary classrooms. New materials are introduced as the child moves from concrete to abstract thinking. The curriculum is integrated, individualized, academically challenging, and meets the developmental needs of each child, intellectually, socially, physically, and emotionally. The students experience individual, small and large group lessons, and projects. Subject areas include: language arts, math, social studies and science. Children build timelines, record science experiments, research and present written reports and projects, and learn computer skills. Field trips that relate to areas of study are scheduled to enhance the child's learning experience. Organizational skills and independence are developed through the use of homework planners, and weekly schedules. Class meetings/circles encourage cooperative efforts as questions of right and wrong lead to discussions on fairness, rules, and procedures. Also, valuable opportunities for academic dialogue serve as a venue for discussions about character development, responsibility, and accountability in our personal lives.

Middle School, Grades 6-8

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With a “college to career connections” mindset, the middle school team addresses two pivotal questions: What do we want an eighth grade graduate to look like when they graduate from New Branches? What skills are necessary for success in a global economy? The overarching goal of New Branches’ Middle School educational program is getting our students to work as a team while exposing them to the world of high school, post-secondary education and the world of work. The model also offers an academic curriculum based on Common Core State Standards and Next Generation Science Standards.

For a successful transition to high school, trade school and/or college and the workforce, we teach our students the following habits and skills to prepare them academically, socially, emotionally, cognitively, and morally:

- How to be career-focused and environmentally conscious.
- How to articulate and communicate ideas verbally and in writing.
- How to be organized, self-managed and motivated.
- How to question the world around them and investigate answers.
- How to be confident in their abilities.
- How to be leaders in their school and community.
- How to be highly focused and driven on work, learning and life lessons.
- How to recognize issues and find workable means for dealing with problems and work with diverse people.
- How to be a disciplined thinker that is clear, rational, open minded, and informed by evidence.
- How to implement study skills, particularly for passing tests, quizzes and other exams.
- How to have the ability and stamina to deal with a rigorous workload.
- How to work and live with integrity.
- How to have courage to stand up for what you believe in, determination, strong character-to model and make a difference, and grit.
- How to deal with stress using coping techniques.

Educational Development Plans for Seventh and Eighth Grade Students

1. At the beginning of each school year, the students work with the teachers to develop and implement Educational Development Plans (EDPs) with all seventh and eighth grade students via one-on-one goal-setting meetings.
2. The student follows the Xello program, which starts out as assessments in seventh grade and follows students through high school.
3. In collaboration with teachers, parents, students and the Principal, students will have a copy of their EDPs by mid-October toward the goal of monitoring students’ success.

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4. Teachers and Principals use the data from students' EDPs to align lessons to students' career goals, interests and educational needs.

Parents, students, and teachers frequently meet to develop career paths that consist of revisiting students' goals and making sure students are on track toward obtaining their goals and career aspirations.

3.2 Curriculum

Transitional Kindergarten-4th Grade

Wonders by McGraw Hill will be taught in Transitional Kindergarten through 4th grade. Wonders is an evidence-based K–4 ELA program that empowers students to take an active role in learning and exploration. Students will enjoy unparalleled opportunities to express and assess themselves through reading, writing, and speaking. They will encounter the right content at the right moment in their learning journey to promote strong educational outcomes for all.

5th-8th Grade English Language Arts

The language arts curriculum for grades 5-8 in English and Language Arts (ELA) is offered through EL Education. The curriculum combines standards-aligned content with effective instructional practice, bringing together the “what” and the “how” of the Common Core standards.

In our curriculum...

- Students get excited about learning through great books, compelling topics and ownership of their own learning.
- Teachers get a vision of the instructional practices that support a Common Core-aligned classroom and the tools to create it.

Four 8-week modules, with 3 units in each, comprise a full year's curriculum. Each module progresses in a standard sequence: Building Background Knowledge (Unit 1), Extended Reading and Research (Unit 2), and Extended Writing (Unit 3). Modules are linked by “big ideas” and “guiding questions” that speak to both the standards and the content. Each module is anchored by one or more books—not textbooks or anthologies—that have been carefully chosen to take the guesswork out of selecting texts. All students read the same increasingly complex texts, and teachers are given lesson-specific strategies for meeting all students' needs. Each module has 7 assessments – 3 mid-unit, 3 end-of-unit and one culminating performance task that always involves writing from evidence. Science and Social Studies content reinforces literacy strategies across the disciplines.

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Information on the 3-8 curriculum can be found at:

<http://commoncoresuccess.ededucation.org/curriculum>

Eureka Math Squared: TK-8

Eureka Math Squared is a complete, Pre-K through 12 curriculum that carefully sequences the mathematical progressions into expertly crafted modules. Eureka Math Squared provides educators with a comprehensive suite of innovative curriculum, in-depth professional development, books, and support materials. Eureka Math, a Common Core-aligned curriculum published by the non-profit Great Minds Inc., equates mathematical concepts to stories, with the aim of developing conceptual understanding. It encourages students to use various mental strategies to solve problems, and to focus on the process instead of the answer.

Eureka Math in Sync digital suite makes knowledge unstoppable by taking everything you love about Eureka Math and adding short, digestible videos for each lesson. Downloadable, fillable PDFs allow students to show their work and communicate with teachers via annotations and comments. This hybrid learning environment lets teachers and students toggle seamlessly between home and classroom without developing any knowledge gaps.

Eureka Math has many parent-friendly features including: Homework Helpers, Parent Tip Sheets in English and Spanish, Curriculum Roadmaps, video tutorials, and parent support. Parents may learn more about Eureka Math through the Great Minds website: <https://greatminds.org/math>

Social Studies TK-8:

Teachers in Michigan created the Social Studies curriculum aligned with the state standards and areas of focus for each grade level.

[Michigan Open Book Social Studies curriculum](#)

Kindergarten - Myself and Others

Students are encouraged to gain an increased awareness of themselves and the world around them in our entry level text in the series.

1st Grade - Families and Schools

Using both families and schools as a lens for study, students learn about geography, history, economics, and civics with strong connections to literacy.

2nd Grade - Community Studies

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Learn about local communities as students explore the economics, geography, history and civics standards in a unique setting - their own backyard!

3rd Grade - Michigan Studies

The Michigan Studies book consists of four major units with sections within each focused on the four main disciplines and public policy.

4th Grade - United States Studies

Using the context of the United States, students learn significant social studies concepts within an increasingly complex social environment. They examine fundamental concepts in geography, civics and government, and economics through the lens of Michigan history and the United States. Expectations that particularly lend themselves to being taught through a historic, geographic, civic, or economic lens are denoted.

5th Grade - United States History

Building upon the geography, civics and government, and economics concepts of the United States mastered in fourth grade and historical inquiry from earlier grades, the fifth grade expectations begin a more discipline-centered approach concentrating on the early history of the United States. Students begin their study of American history with American Indian peoples before the arrival of European explorers and conclude with the adoption of the Bill of Rights in 1791.

6th Grade - World Geography

Students learn map studies including the five themes of geography, focusing on spatial thinking, and regions.

7th Grade - Ancient World History

Students will focus on the history of the ancient world from Eras 1-4, and include an introduction to the study of history.

8th Grade - United States History

Students will continue to learn the history of the United States from the Civil War period to present.

Science

TK-1 Mystery Science

Students will learn through discovery and hands-on activities how the world works through this engaging science curriculum. To learn more about Mystery Science, you may visit their link at: <https://mysteryscience.com>. Science lessons are also

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incorporated in the CKLA English Language Arts curriculum for Kindergarten and 3rd grade.

2-8 Foss Science

FOSS (Full Option Science System) is a research-based science curriculum for grades K-8 developed at the Lawrence Hall of Science, University of California, Berkeley. The best way for students to appreciate the scientific enterprise, learn important scientific and engineering concepts, and develop the ability to think well is to actively participate in scientific practices through their own investigations and analyses. The FOSS Program was created specifically to provide students and teachers with meaningful experiences through engaging with this active participation in scientific practices.

Physical Education

At New Branches we take pride in our physical education classes. We realize that P.E. is an integral phase in students' physical and social development. We are committed to giving our students the best instruction possible. The aim of the physical education program at New Branches is to develop and improve students' personal fitness and motor skills by providing developmentally appropriate activities through purposeful, creative and enjoyable instruction. By incorporating challenging yet achievable tasks, the students will attain positive attitudes about physical activity and movement. In the elementary years, locomotor movement, non-locomotor movement, manipulative skills, personal behavior, and fitness levels will be monitored and assessed throughout the school year.

Social and Emotional Health	Nutrition and Physical Activity	Safety	Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs	Personal Health and Wellness	HIV & Reproductive Health
Grade K	Grade K	Grade K	Grade K	Grade K	
Grade 1	Grade 1	Grade 1	Grade 1	Grade 1	
Grade 2	Grade 2	Grade 2	Grade 2	Grade 2	
Grade 3	Grade 3	Grade 3	Grade 3	Grade 3	
Grade 4	Grade 4	Grade 4	Grade 4	Grade 4	Grade 4
Grade 5	Grade 5	Grade 5	Grade 5	Grade 5	Grade 5

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Grade 6	Grade 6	Grade 6	Grade 6	Grade 6	Grade 6
Grade 7-8	Grade 7-8	Grade 7-8	Grade 7-8	Grade 7-8	Grade 7-8

Health and Well-being Education

For grades Kindergarten through Eighth Grade, New Branches has adopted the Michigan Model for Health (Michigan Model for Health, 2014), which aims to give students the knowledge and skills needed to practice and maintain healthy behaviors and lifestyles. The model provides age-appropriate lessons addressing the most serious health challenges facing children, including: social and emotional health, nutrition and physical activity, alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs, personal health and wellness and safety and HIV. K curriculum is teacher generated, based on a reduction in concepts of the kindergarten Michigan Model expectations.

Environmental Education

We believe students should have the opportunity to be responsible citizens in caring, respecting and learning about the environment. The environmental focus begins in K and progresses and builds upon knowledge of Michigan's natural resources, environmental concerns and being stewards of the Earth.

- Every classroom offers environmentally focused lessons to build sustainability in our world such as: weather, ecosystems, landforms, climate change, recycling, energy, and water quality.
- Students have the opportunity to participate and learn from environmentally focused science events.
- Community Service: working with Groundswell and other community partners.
- Field trips/learning excursions are created to give a well-rounded experience for students TK-8. Each grade level has an identified theme with an overarching question.
- Students learn in developing outdoor classrooms including the garden.
- Students learn work habits through gardening and taking care of the campus.

Eco-Art

New Branches Charter Academy encourages creativity in all students as creativity is an integral part in a well rounded education. We pride ourselves in our unique spin on an art education that combines our environmental science focus with the elements and principles of visual arts. Eco-Art is an art form that focuses on preserving life, resources, and the ecology of Earth by either using natural items from the environment or creating art inspired by or advocating for the environment. In Eco-Art, students will learn the elements and principles of visual arts through environmentally focused lessons, project

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based learning, campus projects, and discovery. The Eco-art classroom is not defined by four walls, as the students will spend time outside, on campus, to discover the Earth's ecology. Students are encouraged to investigate pieces of art, the artists who create them, art supplies, participate in discussions, develop listening skills, respectfully listen to differences in opinions, and develop positive relationships within the classroom.

Owl University Classroom Intervention:

Teachers will differentiate instruction in the classrooms for all students. An intense 35 minute intervention time for students will be scheduled during the school day. During this time teachers will work with smaller groups of students on skills and strategies to guide students to the next level, based on NWEA assessment scores and classroom assessments.

Title 1 Small Group Interventions

A period of time will be scheduled to provide additional practice in reading and/or math to students who are performing significantly below grade level in order to help students learn the foundational skills to get them on or above grade level as measured by the NWEA Measures of Academy Progress (MAP), Essential Standards, and/or Acadience student progress. Students will meet in small groups to work on essential skills with an interventionist.

Online Intervention programs (in class and at home)

Lexia Core5 Reading and PowerUp Literacy (grades TK-8)

Built on the science of reading, Lexia® Core5® Reading is a research-proven program that accelerates the development of literacy skills for students of all abilities, helping them make the critical shift from learning to read to reading to learn.

Lexia Core5 follows an adaptive blended learning model that offers explicit, systematic, and personalized reading instruction. This approach allows educators to deliver differentiated literacy instruction to students of all abilities. By using Lexia's research-proven program, Core5 effectively reduces the risk of students not meeting grade-level standards while providing accelerated and on-track students the instruction they need to thrive. Your child will receive a login to access the program.

Lexia® PowerUp Literacy® accelerates literacy gains for students in grades 6–8 who are at risk of not meeting College- and Career-Ready Standards. Rooted in the science of reading and proven to be up to five times as effective as the average middle school reading intervention, PowerUp enables students to make multiple years of growth in a single academic year. PowerUp immerses students in an age-appropriate online learning experience that is tailored to their individual strengths and weaknesses. PowerUp's adaptive instructional model maximizes student learning and provides

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motivational tools to minimize the time required for students to start mastering grade-level skills. Your child will receive a login to access the program.

Lexia ELL

Lexia® English Language Development™ is an adaptive blended learning program that supports Emergent Bilingual students' English language acquisition through academic conversations. The program integrates speaking, listening, and grammar in the subjects of math, science, social studies, general knowledge, and biographies.

IXL is an online instruction and practice purchased by the school for students to use at home in math for all grades and science in grades 3-8 . Your child will receive a login to access the program.

3.3 Little Owlets Before and After School Care

Admission Criteria: Only students enrolled in the Academy are eligible for the Academy's Before and After School Child Care Program. Students must be pre-registered and prepaid to participate and there should not be any outstanding fees due. Interested parents should contact the front office staff that will inform you of the necessary documents for enrollment.

Before and After Care Program Hours:

6:30 AM – 8:10 AM and 3:10 PM – 6:00 PM Monday-Thursday. Fridays 6:30 AM - 8:10 AM and 12:10 PM-6:00 PM.

- Doors open at 6:30 AM. We are not prepared to accept students prior to that time.
- Any child(ren) not picked up by 6:00 PM, will be assessed a charge of \$20.00 per every 15 minutes per child.

Fees and Billing:

- Daily rate per child is \$16.00 per day when school is open.
- Payments are due on a weekly basis by 6:00 pm each Friday.
- All balances must be paid each week or services will be suspended. If a family has a balance in childcare, the child will not be able to attend.
- All payments must be made by credit card/debit card (online only, preferred method), by cash to the school office, or by check addressed to New Branches Charter Academy. Online payments may be made at <https://newbranchescharteracademy.epaytrak.com/>.
- A \$25.00 fee will be charged to your account for checks returned by your bank for any reason. A second occurrence will mandate that all future payments be paid by money order for the remainder of the school year.

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Academy withdrawal of Student from the Before and After School Program:

The Academy reserves the right to exercise immediate withdrawal of any student or individual if it is deemed that such person(s) fails to abide by the rules established for the program. A student may be withdrawn from the program if fees are not paid. Written notice will be sent to the parent/guardian explaining reasons for withdrawal.

3.4 Field Trips

The Academy supports field trips as meaningful extensions of classroom learning, aligned to curriculum and approved in advance by school leadership. In accordance with Board Policy 2340, any trip that involves overnight travel, goes out of state, or exceeds 100 miles requires prior approval from the Academy Board of Directors. All other trips must be approved by the Educational Service Provider.

Written parental or legal guardian permission is required for all students attending a field trip. Parents may sign a blanket permission form for local (walking distance) trips. A separate permission slip will be sent home and required for each trip involving travel. Emergency Medical Authorization forms must be on file and will be carried by staff on all trips.

Teachers will clearly communicate the purpose of the trip along with key details such as destination, departure and arrival times, lunch arrangements, spending money, and any special rules or expectations. Transportation will follow all Board-approved transportation policies.

The minimum supervision guideline is one adult chaperone for every ten students, with adjustments based on age or activity. Parents/guardians wishing to chaperone a group or attend a field trip must obtain the teacher's approval and have a completed volunteer application approved by the school office at least one week prior to the trip. Chaperones must meet all school volunteer requirements.

While on a field trip, students are expected to follow all Academy rules and the Code of Student Conduct. Students who disobey school rules, defy teacher authority, or have demonstrated and documented behavior that is aggressive, harassing, or intimidating at any time during the school year may be denied participation in overnight field trips. The decision will be made by the School Leader in consultation with the teacher(s) conducting the trip. Students with documented unsafe or inappropriate behavior may also be excluded from any field trip at the School Leader's discretion.

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Students will not be denied participation due to financial hardship. Families unable to cover trip costs should contact the School Leader to discuss options. Parents will always be given prior notice of field trips.

Students who are not attending a field trip are expected to attend school and will be provided alternative learning opportunities during the school day.

3.5 Report Cards / Progress Reports / Conferences

For students to be prepared and ready for instructional activities, students will be expected to be at school on time, to have completed assignments, and to have proper instructional materials with them. Teachers will provide parents with a list of supplies needed for each class.

3.5.1 Report Cards

Report cards will be issued at the end of each trimester. Parents are encouraged to discuss the information on the report card with their child and to encourage excellence in achievement and behavior. The purpose of report cards is to communicate to parents and students the child's progress on the knowledge and skills the student is working on in class and to provide insight into the child's behavior. Report Cards for all students are distributed in November, March, and June.

3.5.2 Progress Reports

During the first and second trimester, parents are expected to meet with the child's teacher(s) to review academic progress. Every elementary classroom teacher will arrange at least two planned conferences with each child's parent(s)/guardian per year. It is understood that educators shall, if necessary, arrange additional conferences with parents.

Parents may request Progress Reports at any time for their student by communicating with the child's teacher. Teachers may choose to send home weekly or monthly progress reports through PowerSchool. In the event that a student has a pending grade of failure (a 1 or 2 based on standards based grading) or a grade that would affect their status, the parent and student will receive advance notice.

Parents, guardians, and students may access their respective Powerschool Account through the Powerschool Mobile App or website (<https://powerschool.newbranches.org/public/home.html>) to view attendance, grades, and missing assignments.

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3.5.3 Parent Teacher Conferences

Conferences with educators must be scheduled during non-instructional time. It may be necessary to hold a spring conference based on the level of a child's performance to discuss promotion or retention. The teacher will notify parents if a third conference is necessary, or the parent may request a conference at any time.

3.6 Retention (including K-12 Literacy and Dyslexia Law)

At our school, students in Kindergarten through 3rd grade take state-approved reading assessments three times a year to track their literacy growth. These assessments help us identify students who may need additional support. If your child is not meeting grade-level expectations, you will be notified in writing. When a reading concern is identified, your child will receive an Individual Reading Improvement Plan (IRIP). This personalized plan outlines the specific support your child will receive during the school day and includes activities and strategies you can use at home. You will be involved in developing the IRIP and kept informed of your child's progress through regular updates. Reading support is tailored to your child's needs and may include small group or one-on-one instruction using proven, evidence-based methods. We value partnership with families and encourage open communication. You are welcome to request a meeting at any time to discuss your child's reading progress or the interventions in place.

Starting in the 2027–2028 school year, all Michigan schools will screen students in Kindergarten through 3rd grade for signs of dyslexia. If characteristics of dyslexia are identified, your child will receive reading intervention that is explicit, systematic, multisensory, and aligned with the science of reading. For students in grades 4 through 12, screening will occur when there is evidence of characteristics of dyslexia or a dyslexia diagnosis. If screening confirms characteristics of dyslexia, students will receive targeted intervention using structured literacy approaches. Instruction will be adapted to meet each student's needs to ensure reading success.

Families play a vital role in supporting literacy development. If your child has been evaluated for dyslexia or a learning disability outside of school, please share that information with us. That information can help guide how we support your child. Additionally, students who qualify may receive services under federal special education law, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

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3.7 Homework

Homework is a necessary and integral part of a child's education. The purpose of homework is to reinforce those skills and concepts taught in the learning environment and will be assigned by the classroom teacher based on student needs. Homework also includes work not finished during class time. Parental support and cooperation are very important in this area. Helping students with their homework shows you are interested in their education. A request for homework for a child that is ill should be made the first morning the child is absent. This will allow time for the educator to organize the materials. Homework may be picked up in the office the following school day morning.

READ! 20 minutes of required reading each night is the most important homework for students.

3.8 Student Portfolios

Your child's teacher will work with your child to compile a portfolio or file of their work throughout the year in key academic areas **to share with parents at conferences**. The portfolio will provide a documented record of your child's developing knowledge base, skills, and work quality and will be shared during parent-teacher conferences.

3.9 Testing and Assessment

The Academy administers state mandated assessments at grades 3rd-8th (M-STEP and PSAT). The Academy also administers a computer based adaptive assessment in math and reading three times a year in grades TK-8 (NWEA MAP) and three times a year in grades TK-7 (Acadience reading). This enables us to more effectively and accurately monitor the growth and identify the needs of our students. The results of the state assessment test, and the computer-based test, are used to guide instruction, target individual student needs, and assist in the improvement of curriculum and instruction. Parents will be sent individual scores of their children when they are available. Test scores will be included in the child's cumulative folder.

3.10 Social Emotional Learning Program

The Academy is committed to the development of children becoming responsible citizens. We work to build a strong, supportive community of learners in each classroom. Communication skills, conflict resolution, grace and courtesy, team building activities and character education are a vital part of our curriculum.

Students at NBCA participate in a combination of programs focusing on social emotional learning and character education. Students in Grades Pre K-6 will learn

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through the Harmony curriculum and students in grades 7 and 8 will use the Character Choices and Be Nice programs. These programs are designed to help students develop their personal character, become lifelong learners and transform into quality citizens within their communities.

Harmony Social Emotional Learning Curriculum, Grades PreK-8

Harmony is a social emotional learning program for Pre-K to 8 grade students designed to foster intergender communication and understanding, connection, and community both in and outside the classroom and develop boys and girls into compassionate and caring adults. Our Online Learning Portal empowers Pre-K to 8 grade teachers with everything you need to successfully integrate our social emotional learning program into your classroom, including one-click navigation for all classroom activities, SEL stories, role-playing games and sing-along songs.

Three rigorous evaluations of Harmony's components have been conducted since the program's inception. Two studies focused on fifth-grade students participating in relationship-building activities and the other study evaluated the impact of the "Buddy Up" everyday activities on preschool peer relations. All three studies utilized quasi-experimental design and found the Sanford Harmony components to have positive impact on children's peer relations when compared to control groups.

Be Nice Program

be nice. is a mental health education, bully and suicide prevention initiative that creates a positive cultural change through simple daily actions. be nice. is more than a phrase. It's an Action Plan! Students will learn what it means to notice, invite, challenge, and empower.

3.11 Character Choices Program

We believe strong character is essential to student success. Our Character Choices program focuses on nine core traits: Respect, Responsibility, Cooperation, Compassion, Good Judgment, Integrity, Perseverance, Courage, and Citizenship.

These traits are modeled, taught, and reinforced throughout the school day and embedded in classroom routines, academic instruction, and school culture. Families are encouraged to support these values at home to strengthen consistency and impact.

Whether through direct lessons, restorative practices, or daily interactions, Character Choices helps students grow into thoughtful, responsible individuals, prepared for school, life, and leadership.

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4. Student Support Services

4.1 Special Education and 504 Plans

The Academy to provide appropriate educational programs for children who are identified with disabilities and who have an approved Individual Educational Plan (IEP). The Academy embraces the instructional practice known as inclusion. When the IEP calls for pullout services, the student will be permitted to leave the classroom to work with a properly trained professional special educator. The goal of special education programming is to provide students with an educational program that best meets their individual needs in the least restrictive environment. This means that, to the maximum extent appropriate, students will be provided programs and/or within the regular education classroom with the necessary support.

The Academy enjoys an excellent working relationship with the local intermediate school district or RESA; Kent ISD. The ISD provides a parent resource center which provides parents with comprehensive resources on rights of the disabled, responsibilities of the school, support systems for parents and children, and educational programs available.

If you have concerns about your child's progress, arrange to speak with your child's teacher. For further information on all special education services and programming, contact the school leader.

4.2 Child Find / Academic Interventions

The objective of the Academy is to ensure that the child receives the instruction, support, and services needed to succeed in school. It is the Academy's intention to:

- Engage first in preventative and targeted instruction and intervention
- Design and conduct comprehensive evaluations that identify each student's individual learning needs, ensure proper implementation of Child Find, and determine the most appropriate instructional programs and accommodations based on the student's performance, educational opportunities, and response to high-quality instruction over time.
- Select every component of the evaluation based on its relevance for creating the student's instructional program.

Consistent with the mandates in IDEA 2004, a comprehensive evaluation includes:

- A variety of assessment tools and strategies to gather relevant functional, developmental, and academic information about the child (Sec. 300.304(b)(1))

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- An observation of the student in the learning environment, including the regular classroom setting (Sec. 300.305(a)(1))
- Determination that underperformance is not primarily the result of a visual, hearing, or motor disability; intellectual disability; emotional disturbance; cultural factors; environmental or economic disadvantage; or limited English proficiency (Sec. 300.309(a)(3)(i-vi))
- Determination that underperformance is not primarily the result of a lack of instruction, i.e., student performance data indicating that the student (a) was provided appropriate instruction in regular education settings delivered by qualified personnel (Sec. 300.309(b)(1)), and (b) received repeated assessments of achievement at reasonable intervals (Sec. 300.309(b)(2)), to ensure that underachievement is not due to lack of appropriate instruction. Additionally, consideration should be given to whether the student's attendance has significantly limited their access to instruction, as chronic absenteeism is strongly correlated with reduced academic achievement.

Also consistent with IDEA 2004, the Academy believes that:

- The determination of a specific learning disability must be made by the child's parents and a team of qualified professionals (Sec. 300.308)
- Parents must be provided with the results of repeated assessments of achievement (Sec. 300.309(b)(2))
- For students participating in a Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) program, parents must be notified about their state's policies about the collection of student performance data, strategies for increasing the child's rate of learning, and their right to request an evaluation (Sec. 300.311(a)(7)(ii))
- The MTSS process must not be used to delay or deny an evaluation but should offer data, both academic and behavioral, to help problem solve and analyze issues regarding learning and help inform the development of effective instructional plans for students found to have a Specific Learning Disability (SLD)
- Evidence of a pattern of strengths and weaknesses in performance, achievement or both should be included, and must be designed to help guide the development of the child's instructional program.

MTSS records can indicate whether or not the child (a) achieves adequately for age or grade level when provided with appropriate instruction, and (b) makes sufficient progress to meet age or grade level standards based on the child's response to scientific, research-based intervention. Evidence that the student is improving when provided with general education interventions indicates that the student is not in need of special education services, a requirement for placement in special education.

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4.3 English Language Learner (ELL) Services

The school is committed to supporting English Learners (ELs) as they develop proficiency in English while accessing grade-level academic content. In accordance with federal Title III guidelines and the Michigan Department of Education's English Learner policies, the following procedures and supports are in place:

All students enrolling in the school complete a Home Language Survey (HLS) as required by the State of Michigan. If a language other than English is indicated, students are screened for English language proficiency using the WIDA Screener (Grades 1–12) or WIDA MODEL for Kindergarten.

Students identified as English Learners receive instructional support based on their English Language Proficiency (ELP) level. Services may include:

- Designated English Language Development (ELD) instruction
- Push-in or pull-out support from an ELL specialist or trained staff
- Use of appropriate language accommodations and instructional technologies
- Ongoing collaboration between general education and ELL staff

The amount and type of support is determined by each student's ELP level, academic needs, and classroom context.

The school reviews ELL program implementation annually and ensures compliance with Civil Rights obligations, Title I and Title III funding requirements, and MDE guidelines.

4.4 McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance

The Academy is committed to supporting all students, including those experiencing homelessness. In accordance with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, students who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence have the right to:

- Immediate enrollment, even if records are unavailable at the time of registration.
- Attend their school of origin or the school nearest to their temporary home.
- Receive support services, including access to free school meals and school supplies.
- Full participation in all school programs and activities.

If your family is experiencing housing instability, please contact the school's Homeless Liaison Patty Provot for support and assistance. All information shared will remain confidential.

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5. Dress Code and Appearance

5.1 General Dress Code Guidelines

General attire:

Any fashion (dress, accessory, or hairstyle) that disrupts the educational process or presents a safety risk will not be permitted. Personal expression is permitted within these general guidelines. Students who are representing New Branches Charter Academy at an official function or public event may be required to follow specific dress requirements.

Dress should allow students to participate comfortably in a variety of physical and outdoor activities. Clothing should cover the body adequately and should not be distracting. Students who come to school inappropriately dressed will need to contact their parent/s. It is our expectation that a proper change of clothing will be provided if requested. Parents are urged to see that their children are properly dressed for inclement or cold weather. Students do not go outdoors if the temperature is below 10 degrees Fahrenheit (wind chill factor), or if there is inclement weather.

Additional guidelines for ALL STUDENTS:

- Hair should be clean and maintained. Natural hair, including braids, afros, twists, and locks, are welcome.
- Hats, hood, bonnets, or any other hair or face coverings are not to be worn in the building or on the bus.
- Clothing must be properly worn (i.e, no sagging pants, crop tops that show the belly, low-cut shirts and bottoms that have holes above fingertip length, and bottoms shorter than fingertip length).
- No spaghetti straps or tank tops
- Shoes must be worn at all times and be appropriate for the purpose (ex. Sneakers worn for PE class, shoes for outdoors, boots worn during the winter). No house shoes/slippers should be worn at school.
- Buttons, patches, pins, or other accessories and clothing that are considered offensive and disruptive (sexually suggestive, profane, obscene, tobacco or alcohol advertisements, etc.) are not permitted.
- Sunglasses, hats, coats, and jackets may be worn outdoors only, and not in class.
- Pajamas are not to be worn to school.

We will frequently have special days where exceptions will be permitted, and will be communicated, in advance to students, staff, and parents.

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The dress code policy will be enforced for all students in all grade levels. The following procedure will be used for dress code violations:

- **1st Offense:** Call parent for change of clothes and review dress code policy
- **2nd Offense:** Verbal warning, phone call home, and review dress code policy
- **3rd Offense:** Verbal warning, phone call home, review dress code policy, and parent conference
- **4th Offense:** Possible detention or suspension

5.2 Spirit Day / Jean Day Policies

Throughout the school year, we celebrate Spirit Days to build community and school pride. On these days, students may dress according to the theme announced (e.g., sports team day, pajama day, school colors). All Spirit Day attire must still follow our dress code guidelines: clothing should be school-appropriate, safe, and respectful.

5.3 Personal Property

The Academy will work with parents to protect personal property. Reasonable guidelines will contribute to our success.

School Materials: Students are responsible for taking care of school owned materials and are expected to pay replacement or damage costs if applicable.

Clothing: The Academy recognizes that all clothing is valuable and must be cared for. Proper care includes labeling articles that the child will most likely remove upon arrival at school. Items such as coats/jackets, hats, gloves, and boots should be labeled. The Academy does not assume responsibility for lost articles of clothing.

Money: Parents are encouraged to be sure the child has properly secured any money brought to school. If a large sum of money is required, parents are encouraged to see the teacher or office before or after school and make payment or the teacher will collect money upon the child's arrival at school. Parents are encouraged to place money sent to school in a sealed envelope with a note stating the reason the money is being sent. The child's name and teacher's name should be clearly written on the outside of the envelope. Parents are encouraged not to allow children to bring large amounts of money to school.

Electronic Equipment: Cellular phones, or other personal electronic devices, not school related, shall not be turned on at any time, and must be kept in a locker or backpack or under a teacher's supervision during school hours. The Academy does not assume responsibility for lost electronic devices.

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6. Health and Safety

The health and wellness of our students is a top priority. Families are expected to partner with the school to ensure a healthy and safe environment for all students.

6.1 Illness and Injury Guidelines

Students who are ill must remain at home until they are symptom-free for 24 hours without the use of medication. This includes fever, vomiting, diarrhea, or any contagious condition. Parents and guardians should notify the school office when a student is absent due to illness. The school may require a doctor's note for return in cases of communicable diseases.

The school does not have facilities to care for the children when they are sick. If your child becomes ill while at school, you will be notified using the information you provided on your Child Information Card. Please have a plan so that you, or your emergency person, will be able to pick your child up promptly if necessary. Children should not attend school when the following conditions are present:

- Temperature above 100 degrees.
- Unusual drowsiness, excessive sleep or the child appears ill.
- Vomiting two or more times in a 24-hour period.
- Three or more loose or watery bowel movements in a 24-hour period.
- Body rash with fever.
- Severe cough or difficulty breathing.
- Red swollen eyes or pus draining from eyes.
- Open areas on the skin
- Ringworm, lice, or pinworm.
- Any other confirmed communicable illnesses

6.2 Medications at School

Medications will only be administered at school with written authorization from a parent or guardian and, where applicable, a physician, in accordance with Board Policy 5330. Emergency medications (e.g., EpiPens, inhalers) must be provided directly to the school office in their original containers, accompanied by all required medical documentation.

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6.3 Immunization Requirements

In accordance with Board Policy 5320 and state law (MCL 333.9201 et seq.), all students must provide documentation of up-to-date immunizations or an authorized waiver prior to enrollment or by the first day of school. Acceptable documentation includes an official immunization record, a physician-certified medical contraindication form, or a certified nonmedical waiver issued by the local health department following a vaccine education session. Students without proper documentation may not attend school until requirements are met. When providing health information to families in grades 6, 9, or 12, schools will also include information about the meningococcal and HPV vaccines.

6.4 Physical & Mental Well-being

Our school is committed to supporting the physical and mental wellness of every student. In alignment with Board Policy 8510, we provide age-appropriate opportunities for physical activity throughout the day, including physical education, recess, and movement-based classroom activities. Students are encouraged to develop healthy habits that support lifelong wellness, such as regular exercise, balanced nutrition, and responsible screen use. Our physical education program emphasizes fitness, motor skill development, teamwork, and a positive attitude toward physical activity. We also promote nutrition education and provide clean, safe eating environments with access to fresh drinking water. Families are vital partners in reinforcing these wellness habits outside of school. Together, we aim to support the whole child physically, mentally, and emotionally.

To further support student wellness, we offer access to the School Assistance Program (SAP) through a partnership with Pine Rest Mental Health Services. This program provides free, confidential counseling with up to five sessions per episode of care for students and their household members. Counseling is available for a wide range of challenges including academic stress, anxiety, grief, and family transitions. In-the-moment phone support is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

In addition to counseling, SAP offers families access to:

- Personal Advantage, an online library of articles and tools on health, wellness, legal, and financial topics.
- Wallet Wisdom, a financial wellness resource with calculators, webinars, and planning tools.
- Free consultations on elder care, financial planning, legal concerns, infant feeding, and real estate questions.

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All SAP services are voluntary and confidential. The school is not notified when students or families use the program. Participation in SAP does not affect a student's school record or academic standing.

To access SAP,

- Call 800.442.0809
- press 1, and follow the prompts.
- When prompted, say: "I have a SAP with [Insert School Name]."

You can also visit www.pinerest.org/PAL and enter your school-specific username.

We encourage families to use this resource to promote mental well-being, strengthen family resilience, and support student success.

6.5 Concussion Awareness

In accordance with Michigan law, the Academy provides annual concussion awareness education to families of students participating in any school-sponsored athletic activity.

Before participating, students and their parent/guardian must review a concussion information sheet and sign an acknowledgment form. These forms are kept on file with the school. Coaches and school staff are trained to recognize concussion symptoms and follow proper return-to-play procedures.

If your child is injured during a school activity, we are committed to their health and recovery and will follow all return-to-learn and return-to-play protocols.

6.6 Emergency Contacts / Child Information Card

Each year, families must complete and return an Emergency Medical Authorization Form and Child Information Record. These documents provide critical contact information and medical directives in the event of illness, injury, or emergency. It is the parent or guardian's responsibility to keep this information accurate and up to date throughout the school year. A copy of the form will be maintained in an accessible file in the school office. Staff accompanying students on off-site events, such as field trips, athletic events, and competitions, are required to carry these emergency forms. Please notify the school immediately of any changes in phone numbers, emergency contacts, or medical conditions. Failure to provide updated information may delay emergency care.

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6.7 Student Accident Insurance

The Academy cares deeply about the safety and well-being of all students. At the start of each school year, families are given the option to enroll in a group student accident insurance plan offered through an outside provider. This insurance is voluntary and paid for by the parent or guardian.

Participation in certain school-sponsored athletic, co-curricular, or other higher-risk activities may require families to confirm that the student is covered under an existing insurance policy or to purchase supplemental accident insurance. A signed statement of coverage may be required before a student is allowed to participate in those activities.

Information about available student accident insurance options, including how to enroll, is available in the school office.

6.8 Pesticide Use & Prior Notification

The Academy utilizes an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach to control pests. IPM is a pest management system that utilizes all available and appropriate techniques to attain the goal of preventing pests from reaching unacceptable levels or to reduce an existing population to an acceptable level. Pest management techniques emphasize pest exclusion and biological controls. However, as with most pest control programs, chemical controls may also be utilized at our facility.

This notice has been provided in compliance with MCL324.8316. We are also required to notify you of your right to review the IPM Plan and IPM records. View the [Prior Notification Request form here](#).

6.9 Asbestos Management Plan

As per AHERA (40CFR 763.80) Rule, the Academy is required to notify all students, staff, guardians, outside contractors, and community members of the availability of the AHERA Management Plan for their inspection and review. A copy of this plan is available at the school office for your review during normal business hours or on the schools transparency website located on their school website. Periodic (6 month) inspections are performed by properly trained staff members. At this time there are no planned asbestos abatement activities for the upcoming year. Should the need for abatement arise, all building occupants and their guardians will be notified in writing in advance.

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6.10 School Safety and Emergency Procedures

The Academy conducts regular emergency drills throughout the school year to prepare students and staff for fire, tornado, and lockdown situations. These drills are required by Michigan law and are designed to ensure everyone knows what to do in case of an emergency. A record of completed drills is posted publicly on the school's website in compliance with state requirements. Parents and guardians are encouraged to talk with their children about the importance of safety preparedness.

6.10.1 Standard Emergency Response Plan

To protect the safety of students and staff during emergencies, our school uses the Standard Response Protocol (SRP), a nationally recognized framework developed by the "I Love U Guys" Foundation. SRP is a clear, action-based emergency response model designed to equip schools with consistent terminology and procedures for addressing a range of incidents, including weather events, accidents, intruders, and hazardous conditions.

The SRP provides five specific directives that guide our response to different types of emergencies. These actions are easy to learn, simple to follow, and universally understood within the school community. They are reinforced through routine training and drills throughout the school year.

These five (5) actions are used when SRP is initiated:



HOLD - In your classroom or area
Protocol used when hallways need to be kept clear of occupants.



SECURE - Get Inside. Lock Outside Doors
Protocol used to safeguard people within the building.



LOCKDOWN - Locks, Lights, Out of Sight
Protocol used to secure individual rooms and keep occupants quiet and in place.



EVACUATE - Evacuate may be followed by a location, and is used to move people from one location to a different location in or out of the building.



SHELTER - State the hazard and the safety strategy for group and self-protection.

All staff receive annual SRP and Emergency Operations Plan training. Students participate in required safety drills including lockdown, evacuation, and severe weather

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scenarios, in full compliance with state law and Board Policy. These efforts ensure that everyone on campus knows how to respond appropriately in various situations.

In the event of an emergency, families will be notified promptly through our automated messaging system by phone, text, and email as quickly as it is safe and practicable to do so. Should relocation or extended response procedures be necessary, instructions will be shared clearly and promptly. The SRP strengthens the school's overall emergency preparedness by providing a reliable and unified language and approach to safety for staff, students, and families.

6.10.2 Fire and Tornado Drills

Fire and tornado drills are regularly scheduled to educate students in safe practice in case of an emergency. The teacher will review rules of safety and evacuation routes with students. Evacuation routes and tornado watch locations are posted in each classroom and area of the Academy. The teacher or person responsible for a group of students will take attendance to determine the presence of all students who are in attendance on that day. Students and staff will return to class when the teacher is given approval via verbal or hand signaling by the School Leader or school secretary.

6.10.3 Tornado Emergencies

Students will not be dismissed from school when there is a tornado watch, warning, or actual tornado. During a tornado watch, students will remain inside the building in designated areas, local radio stations will be monitored, and staff will take safety precautions. Students will be released to their parents or guardians, or designated adults as requested. During a tornado warning or tornado, all students and staff members will remain in the building. Everyone will take shelter in designated areas and will follow outlined safety precautions. Students may be detained beyond the usual dismissal time. Parents and guardians who have come to the school to pick up students are encouraged to stay at school until the tornado warning or tornado has passed and safe conditions prevail. Out of respect for parental responsibility for their children, a student will be released to parents and guardians only.

6.10.4 Lock Down Drills

In compliance with Michigan law and in partnership with local law enforcement, the school conducts a minimum of three (3) lockdown drills each school year to prepare students and staff for emergency situations that may involve an intruder or other threat to building security.

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Lockdown drills are designed to practice procedures that help keep students and staff safe in the unlikely event of a real emergency. These drills focus on:

- Securing classroom doors and limiting visibility
- Remaining silent and out of sight
- Following directions from school personnel and first responders
- Practicing calm, orderly behavior under stress

Drills are age-appropriate and developmentally sensitive. Teachers are trained to communicate the seriousness of the drill while helping students feel safe and supported. Staff are encouraged to review and practice safety procedures in advance with students.

We understand that lockdown drills can be unsettling for some students. Teachers and support staff are available to answer questions and provide reassurance. If your child experiences anxiety related to safety drills, please contact the school so that additional support can be offered.

If a real lockdown occurs, parents and guardians will be notified as soon as it is safe to do so through official communication channels. In such events, parents and guardians should not attempt to enter the building or call staff directly. The safety and accountability of all students depend on uninterrupted emergency protocols.

7. Nutrition and Wellness

7.1 School Meals Program

Our school participates in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program, ensuring access to nutritious meals for all students. We also participate in the Community Eligibility Program (CEP), which allows us to offer free meals to every enrolled student.

Breakfast and lunch are available daily, free of charge, and prepared in our on-site kitchen. Menus are shared monthly via the school website, email, and a printed copy available in the front office. All foods served in the food service program, as well as any other school activities in which food is served, must adhere to the USDA Wellness Policy and meet the nutritional standards established by the USDA.

If a student will not be eating a school meal, families are encouraged to pack a nutritious lunch their child will enjoy and eat. To support a safe and healthy environment:

- Nuts and nut products are not allowed anywhere in the building due to allergies.

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- Large bags of candy or chips, and soda pop, are not permitted at school.
- Please send a reusable water bottle each day.
- All lunch containers, water bottles, and utensils must be labeled with the student's name.
- Include a cold pack in lunches that require refrigeration.

Students with food allergies or medical dietary restrictions must have a completed and physician-signed dietary accommodations form (CACFP Request for Special Meals and/or Accommodations) on file with the school office. Accommodations cannot be made without this documentation.

Outside food deliveries (such as DoorDash, Uber Eats, or fast food) are not permitted for students during the school day, including lunchtime. This policy exists to support food safety and minimize classroom disruption.

Meal times are structured to build student independence and foster respectful, community-centered behavior. Students are expected to clean up after themselves, practice good manners, and follow staff directions at all times.

Please contact the front office with any questions regarding meal service, accommodations, or application assistance. We are committed to ensuring all students have access to safe, healthy meals in a welcoming environment.

7.2 Snacks

The Academy is committed to promoting student wellness and supporting healthy eating habits during the school day. Students may bring a small, nutritious snack from home to eat during designated times. Elementary teachers will communicate a snack schedule, and teachers may ask families to donate pre-packaged snacks for the class when needed. Snacks should be manageable in portion and promote focus and learning. Water is the preferred beverage; non-carbonated drinks are permitted. Soda and energy drinks are not allowed.

In accordance with Board Policy 8510, all food and beverages that are provided on campus during the school day, including those brought for classroom snacks, birthday treats, or holiday celebrations, must comply with the food and beverage standards approved by the Educational Service Provider. Students are not permitted to share food, as this helps protect students with food allergies and sensitivities. Families should follow any posted classroom allergy guidelines. If your child has food allergies or dietary restrictions, please notify the school, ensure this information is recorded on the Child Information Card, and provide your child's daily snack for safety.

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These practices help support a safe, healthy, and inclusive environment for all students.

7.3 Birthday Snacks and Holiday Celebrations

Families may provide a special treat on a child's birthday. We welcome the opportunity to celebrate. Please speak to your child's teacher, in advance, about birthday treats or trinkets. Grades TK-8 have holiday parties throughout the year. All food must be pre-packaged only. Parties must comply with the section 7.2.

7.4 School Wellness Policy

The Academy promotes student health and wellness in accordance with Board Policy 8510 – School Wellness Policy. This Board-approved policy supports healthy eating, nutrition education, and regular physical activity through measurable goals and school-wide practices. All foods and beverages made available on campus during the school day, including classroom celebrations, must meet the nutrition standards established by the Board and aligned with USDA guidelines. The policy also encourages parent, guardian, and community participation in the development, implementation, and periodic review of wellness practices.

8. Arrival, Dismissal, and Transportation

8.1 Student Drop-off and Pick-up Procedures

The Academy's arrival and dismissal procedures are designed to ensure the safety and efficiency of student transitions to and from school each day. All students, parents, and staff are expected to follow the established guidelines, including designated drop-off and pick-up locations, traffic flow patterns, and supervision requirements. Families are responsible for ensuring that students arrive on time, prepared for learning, and are promptly picked up at the end of the day. Courteous and respectful behavior is expected from all individuals during these times to maintain a positive and orderly environment. Specific details regarding arrival and dismissal expectations, along with any disciplinary consequences for repeated violations, can be found in the Code of Student Conduct.

8.2 Early Dismissal and Vacation Requests

Early Dismissal

The student may need to leave school during the school day. The parent is to receive approval of the Principal or office personnel in advance by written or personal request for a justifiable reason, including such early dismissals for doctor's appointments,

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religious observations, family funerals, and other prearranged events. Medical excuse notes or other situational excuse notes are required to be submitted to the school office for such early dismissal to be excused.

Students will only be released to parents and designated adults. In child custody situations, the custodial parent must properly inform the Principal of any limitations. Excessive early dismissals and unexcused early dismissals will be viewed similarly to tardies.

Any early dismissal requests on the same day must be made before 2:00 PM. Requests after this time cause a disruption to typical dismissal routines. The school cannot guarantee these requests will be seen and communicated.

Vacations

The school discourages the practice of taking family vacations on school days or during times other than regular school vacation periods. If a student will be out of school for a family vacation, they will be responsible for making up any work upon returning. When you must schedule a family trip during Academy time, contact your child's teacher at least one (1) week in advance to discuss how your child will complete missed assignments. Time given for completion of make up work is (1) day for every day absent.

8.3 Transportation

Parents are responsible for transportation of their children to and from school if not utilizing school transportation. Parents dropping off or picking up their children are reminded to pay close attention to movement of students and vehicles in the parking area. The Handbook and Code of Conduct rules extend to the bus and any school sanctioned event on or off campus. Students are under the authority of the bus driver while they are on the bus. The driver is to enforce this Handbook and Code of Conduct and report all student behavior problems to the Principal who will be responsible for disciplinary action. Failure to follow this Handbook and Code of Conduct while on the bus may result in termination of the privilege of riding the school bus, in addition to other appropriate disciplinary actions.

Bus transportation for students is based on a first-come, first-served sign-up basis. Stops are made at common spots, not door-to-door, within a radius of four miles, where possible. Routes will then be determined based on the following factors:

- Students who live furthest from the school will be assigned first
- Students must ride the bus each day in order to use school transportation
- Students must be dropped off and picked up at the same spot

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If changes must be made to your child's transportation, you must notify the Transportation Supervisor to discuss the possible changes. All parents and guardians of students choosing to use school transportation must sign a Transportation Agreement and follow all transportation rules and regulations. If there are any daily changes, parents must call the office by 2:00 to communicate a change.

Parents or adults may not board the school bus at any time.

9. Technology and Internet Use

9.1 Student Acceptable Use of Technology Policy

Students are encouraged to use the Academy's computers, network, devices, applications, and internet access for educational purposes under staff supervision. Students must complete a mandatory training session/program before using Academy Information & Technology Resources and/or being assigned a school email address, in accordance with [AG 7540.03](#) and [7540A](#). These tools support learning, creativity, communication, and research. Use of technology resources is a privilege, not a right, and students are expected to act responsibly, ethically, and legally at all times.

Unauthorized or inappropriate use, including violations of this policy, may result in loss of access, disciplinary action per the Student Handbook, and/or legal consequences. Before using Academy Information & Technology Resources or being issued a school email account, students will receive instruction and must sign the Student Conduct Code for Use of Computer Technology. Parents and guardians are encouraged to discuss values with their children and guide their technology use at school. Students should make choices aligned with their family's expectations as well as the Academy's standards.

The Academy's technology systems, including student use of personal communication devices (PCDs) when on school property, at school events, or connected to school systems, rely on users following the guidelines below.

Students must comply with all Academy-established cybersecurity and acceptable use procedures.

A. GENERAL TECHNOLOGY USE GUIDELINES

- Students must use Academy technology for academic purposes only.
- Internet use must relate to learning, assignments, or approved educational activities.
- Recreational use—such as gaming, streaming, or social media browsing—is not allowed.

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- Students may only use their own accounts. Sharing or using another person's username or password is prohibited.
- Students are responsible for the physical condition of devices issued to them. Devices must be returned in good condition, and any damage or loss must be reported immediately. Devices may not be repaired independently.
- Accessing, changing, or deleting others' files or impersonating other users is not permitted.
- Students may not use school devices or networks for illegal actions, including:
 - Hacking or bypassing security systems
 - Piracy or copyright infringement
 - Harassment, threats, or stalking
 - Distributing obscene or explicit content (including sexting)
 - Selling drugs or other illegal goods
- Students may only access social media platforms for educational purposes as part of a documented lesson plan or written teacher assignment. Any use outside of these parameters will result in the suspension of privileges.
- Content or activities that violate state/federal laws or school policy are prohibited.
- Using school technology for personal gain, product sales, or political campaigning (unless directly tied to coursework) is not allowed.
- Students with disabilities who qualify for a Section 504 or Individualized Education Program (IEP) will receive accommodations in accordance with their Section 504 plan or IEP. Accommodations are determined by the student's IEP or Section 504 team in accordance with the [Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#) and Section [504 of the Rehabilitation Act](#).
- All technology platforms used must be vetted for [SOPPA](#) compliance, including verification that vendors do not sell student data, use it for targeted advertising, or build student profiles beyond educational purposes.
- Parents/guardians may request activity summaries, content filtering categories, or opt out of well-being AI monitoring. Requests should be submitted in writing to the school administrator.

B. NETWORK ETIQUETTE

- All digital communication must be polite, respectful, and school-appropriate.
- Offensive, obscene, or abusive language is strictly prohibited.
- Students may not share personal information (e.g., phone numbers, addresses, passwords) without parent and teacher approval.
- Never agree to meet anyone contacted online without guardian permission.
- Students should manage their inboxes by deleting unneeded messages regularly.
- Any message that is inappropriate, threatening, or uncomfortable, especially with sexually explicit content, must be reported immediately.
- Students and staff are discouraged from accessing school systems from personal home devices due to security risks.

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- Use of school systems must comply with all district content filtering and monitoring protocols, and students may not attempt to bypass them.

C. PROHIBITED CONTENT

Students may not use Academy networks or devices to view, send, post, or share content that includes:

- Cyberbullying — repeated and hostile online behavior such as:
 - Spreading rumors or insults online
 - Sending harassing or threatening messages
 - Sharing embarrassing or explicit photos/videos
 - Posting misleading or altered images to cause harm
- Inappropriate material — including:
 - Pornographic, explicit, or obscene content
 - Hate speech or discriminatory messages
 - Graphic violence not related to schoolwork
 - Content promoting illegal activity or self-harm
 - False or defamatory claims about others
 - Commercial or for-profit advertisements (exceptions may apply for class projects)
 - Political lobbying not connected to academic assignments
 - *Note: Expressing views to elected officials is allowed and not restricted.*
- The Educational Service Provider may temporarily or permanently unblock educational content that was mistakenly filtered. All unblocking requests must be submitted using the designated form, include a documented educational purpose, and be approved by the supervising teacher and the Web Accessibility Coordinator. All decisions will be logged and reviewed quarterly. If a request is denied, the requesting staff member may appeal to the School Leader, whose decision is final.
- All filtering decisions must comply with the [Children's Internet Protection Act \(CIPA\)](#), and requests to unblock content must include a documented educational purpose.
- Temporary access to blocked educational content may be requested by submitting a justification form. Access requires approval by a teacher and administrator, with all requests logged and reviewed quarterly.
- Instructional content that includes sensitive or mature material must have a clear academic purpose, be appropriate for the students' age and developmental level, and receive prior written approval from the Superintendent.

D. COPYRIGHT AND DOWNLOADING

- Students must respect copyrights and cite all sources appropriately.
- Plagiarism, including copying online content without credit, is prohibited.
- Downloading to school hard drives is not allowed. Files may be downloaded to approved storage devices only with teacher supervision.

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- All downloaded files must be scanned for viruses.
- Students who create innovative tech projects should share them with the School Leader for possible recognition and to address ownership rights when hosted on school servers.
- All student use of copyrighted materials must follow fair use guidelines.
- Copyright violations or unauthorized use of subscription-based platforms will result in consequences aligned with academic dishonesty policies.

E. ONLINE COMMUNICATION

- Students must have staff approval to use group emails, forums, chats, or similar platforms.
- Unauthorized use of private messaging apps or chat rooms is prohibited.
- All communication through school platforms must follow school policies.
- Personal emails cannot be sent or received using school accounts or systems.
- Students are expected to use communication platforms that are accessible and compliant with district accessibility standards.

F. PRIVACY AND MONITORING

- Students have no expectation of privacy when using Academy devices or networks. All activity may be monitored. Parents/guardians may request activity summaries with reasonable notice, which will be provided in redacted form to protect other users' confidentiality.
- The Academy may monitor all files, emails, websites, and communications for compliance purposes; however, all data collection, use, and disclosure must align with [SOPPA](#) and be limited to what is educationally necessary.
- Illegal or threatening behavior will be reported to law enforcement or other appropriate authorities.
- The Academy designates a Web Accessibility Coordinator to oversee digital accessibility, content filtering, and compliance with [CIPA](#), [COPPA](#), and [ADA](#). This individual coordinates training and responds to content access requests or alerts.
- Digital content used in instruction or communication will meet accessibility standards. In cases where monitoring software interferes with a student's disability-related needs or accommodations, alternative methods of access and supervision will be developed in consultation with the student's support team.
- Vendors with access to student data must have written agreements with the Academy that include provisions for data breach notifications, data destruction timelines, and restrictions on further data sharing, consistent with [SOPPA](#) requirements.
- Parents/guardians have the right to inspect, review, and correct information maintained by third-party vendors and may request a list of all operators and platforms with whom their child's data is shared.

G. USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) TOOLS

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- Only Academy-approved AI tools may be used during school hours or on school devices.
- AI tools may support learning and creativity, but may not be used to create or complete assignments unless explicitly directed by a teacher. Students are prohibited from using AI/NLP tools to generate original work for submission unless authorized, consistent with [AG 7540.03](#).
- AI may not be used to cheat, impersonate others, or generate harmful, misleading, or false content.
- Students may not enter personal information into AI systems without consent from a parent/guardian and teacher.
- AI-generated work must be reviewed critically and cited if used; students must not present AI content as their original work.
- Misusing AI, including trying to bypass controls or create inappropriate material, may lead to loss of access or disciplinary action.
- All AI use is monitored and subject to the same rules and appeal processes as other technologies.
- AI use must comply with [FERPA](#), [COPPA](#), [SOPPA](#), and all applicable privacy laws.
- AI use must comply with the [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#), the [Children's Online Privacy Protection Act \(COPPA\)](#), and the [Student Online Personal Protection Act \(SOPPA\)](#).
- AI tools must be [SOPPA](#)-compliant, meaning any student data shared with AI vendors must be necessary for educational purposes, protected under a data sharing agreement, and not used for commercial purposes.
- Parents and guardians may opt out of student use of AI tools if they raise concerns about data privacy, algorithmic bias, or age-appropriateness. A written notice is required for this opt-out. In such cases, the Academy will provide an alternative assignment that fulfills the same academic objectives, subject to teacher approval.

H. STUDENT APPEAL PROCESS

If a student feels that a technology restriction or disciplinary action is unfair:

1. Submit a written appeal to the School Leader within 5 school days of the incident. During the appeal, temporary supervised access may be granted at the discretion of the School Leader and must be documented in writing.
2. The School Leader will respond in writing within 10 school days.
3. If unresolved, the student may request a hearing with the Technology Committee, which will issue a final decision within 15 school days.
4. During the appeal, temporary supervised access may be granted unless it poses a safety or legal concern.

J. DECISION-MAKING PROCESS FOR PERMISSIBLE USE

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- To ensure fairness and transparency, a standing Technology Committee will meet at least twice per year to review educational platforms and AI tools, recommend which tools are allowed, and address new digital trends and concerns.
- The committee uses clear criteria to evaluate tools, including compliance with [SOPPA](#), data privacy standards, educational value, safety, age-appropriateness, legality, and alignment with community standards.
- Appeals of committee decisions must be submitted within 10 school days to the school leader and will be reviewed by an independent panel with representatives from staff, parents, and administration.

K. LEGAL REFERENCES

This policy complies with the following laws and regulations:

- Board Policies 7000s (view on school website)
- [H.R. 4577, P.L. 106-554 – Children’s Internet Protection Act of 2000](#)
- [47 U.S.C. 254\(h\), \(l\) – Communications Act of 1934, as amended](#)
- [20 U.S.C. 6801 et seq. – Elementary and Secondary Education Act](#)
- [18 U.S.C. 2256, 1460, 2246 – Federal laws on child safety and explicit content](#)
- [29 U.S.C. § 794 – Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act](#)
- [42 U.S.C. § 12101 – Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#)
- [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act](#)
- [20 U.S.C. § 1232g – Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#)
- [15 U.S.C. §§ 6501–6506 – Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act \(COPPA\)](#)
- [105 ILCS 85 – Student Online Personal Protection Act \(SOPPA\)](#)

9.2 COPPA Acknowledgment

In accordance with the Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA), the Academy does not permit websites or online applications to collect personal information from students under 13 without prior verifiable parental consent. Only COPPA-compliant digital platforms that have entered into school-approved agreements may be used with students in this age group. Parents and guardians may request a full list of approved operators and opt out of specific tools.

9.3 Student Cell Phone and Personal Communication Device Policy

Students may use the school office phone to call a parent or designated caregiver for school-related reasons, with permission from a staff member. Families are expected to arrange after-school transportation plans in advance to avoid students needing to call home at dismissal.

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Across all grade levels, students may not use personal communication devices (PCDs); including cell phones, smartwatches, tablets, and similar devices, during the school day to record, photograph, or transmit audio, images, or video of other individuals unless specifically authorized by a teacher, administrator, or IEP team. Students who violate others' privacy may have their device confiscated, be required to delete the material in the presence of a parent, and face disciplinary action. If the violation involves potentially illegal activity, the device may be turned over to law enforcement.

Furthermore, PCDs may not be used in any way that could reasonably be seen as harassing, threatening, embarrassing, or discriminatory. This includes accessing, creating, or transmitting obscene content or engaging in sexting. Such conduct will be subject to school discipline and, when required, will be reported to law enforcement and child protective services.

PCD Possession & Visibility:

All PCDs must be powered off and stored in the student's backpack or in the classroom under teacher supervision during school hours. Devices may not be powered on or in view at any time during the school day.

- First offense: Device will be confiscated and returned to the student at the end of the school day.
- Second offense: Device will be confiscated and only returned to a parent/guardian during a meeting with school staff.
- Further offenses: Considered a violation of the Code of Conduct and subject to additional disciplinary action.

Students who bring PCDs to school do so at their own risk. The school is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged personal devices.

This policy aligns with Board Policy #5136. For more details, families may refer to the full board policy document.

10. Enrollment and Student Records

10.1 Enrollment and Re-enrollment Procedures

Families who do not submit completed enrollment paperwork by the stated deadline will forfeit their current seat. If seats become available after the enrollment period, they will be offered to waitlisted students in the order determined by the lottery. Any remaining seats will then be filled on a first-come, first-served basis.

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10.2 Lottery Policy

If the number of applicants exceeds the available seats in any grade, a random lottery will be conducted to determine admission. In accordance with the school's Charter Contract and applicable law, priority will be given to designated applicant groups, such as currently enrolled students' siblings. The lottery will also establish the order of the waitlist.

10.3 Entry Age for Elementary

A child is eligible to enroll in kindergarten if he or she is at least five years of age on or before **September 1** of the school year of enrollment, or is at least five years of age between September 2 to December 1 of the school year of enrollment with a signed waiver. A child becoming six years of age before December 1 must be enrolled in school on the first day of the school year in which the child's sixth birthday occurs or must satisfy one of the exceptions stated in law. A child must remain in school until their sixteenth birthday.

10.4 FERPA Rights and Student Records

In accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), parents and guardians and eligible students have the following rights:

- The right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school.
- The right to request the amendment of records believed to be inaccurate or misleading.
- The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except where FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.
- The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the school to comply with FERPA requirements.

FERPA rights transfer from the parent to the student once the student turns 18 or enters a postsecondary institution (eligible student). Requests to inspect or amend records should be submitted in writing to the school administration

10.5 Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)

The Academy values transparency and respects the rights of families. Under the federal Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA), parents and guardians and eligible students (18 years or older) have the right to:

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- Inspect instructional materials and surveys before they are administered.
- Opt their child out of participation in surveys that include sensitive information, such as political beliefs, mental health, sexual behavior, illegal behavior, or family income (other than as required by law).
- Be notified of any physical exams or screenings not required by state law.
- Review and decline the sharing of student information with third-party marketers or surveyors.

Questions or concerns may be directed to the school office or school leader.

10.6 Directory Information and Opt-Out Form

According to Board Policy 8330, the Academy may disclose appropriately designated "directory information" without written consent unless the parent or adult student advises the School to the contrary by filling out, signing, and returning the Directory Information Opt-Out Form to the Academy. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow the School to include this information in certain school publications.

The following list of uses are those the Academy would commonly disclose a student's directory information.

Common Uses of Directory Information

- Playbill /Event Program
- Annual Yearbook
- Honor roll or other recognition
- Graduation Programs
- Sports and Activity Sheets
- Colleges or post-high school institutions

Directory information, generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released, can also be disclosed to outside organizations without a parent's or adult student's prior written consent. Two (2) Federal laws require the Board to provide military recruiters, upon request, with three (3) directory information categories, names, addresses, and telephone listings unless parents and guardians or adult students have advised the Academy that they do not want their student's information disclosed without their prior written consent.

Directory Information

- Student's name
- Participation in officially recognized extra-curricular activities/sports
- Height and weight, if a member of an athletic team
- Date of graduation
- Achievement awards or honors received; honor rolls

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- Scholarships
- Photographs or videos of students participating in school activities, events, or programs

The Board will make the above information available upon a legitimate request unless a parent, guardian, or adult student has opted out of the provision of this information by returning the Opt-Out Form to the School Office within 14 days of receipt. Directory information will not be provided to any organization for profit-making purposes. If you do not wish to opt out of any of the above common uses, you do not need to take any action.

11. Family Partnership

At the heart of our academy's success is a strong partnership between home and school. We believe that families are more than just supporters of their child's education; they are essential partners in shaping a thriving school community. When schools and families work together, students are more motivated, confident, and successful.

We invite and encourage every family to be actively engaged in their child's academic, social, and character development. Whether through volunteering, attending events, or participating in classroom and school-wide activities, your involvement makes a meaningful impact. Together, we create a culture where every child is known, supported, and inspired to reach their fullest potential.

11.1 Partnership in Responsibility Statement

The Code of Student Conduct is titled "Partnership in Responsibility" in anticipation of parents, students, teachers, administration, support staff, and the Board of Directors forging a strong bond on behalf of the children of the Academy. The Partnership is based on mutual respect, responsibility, and results. Families are encouraged to embrace the partnership philosophy and translate it into action.

11.2 Parents' Rights and Responsibilities

At our academy, we believe in the foundational role families play in a child's education. We recognize that parents and guardians have a constitutionally protected right to direct the upbringing, education, and care of their children, and we strive to work in full partnership with families while upholding our responsibility to provide a safe, inclusive, and academically rigorous environment for every student.

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Our school is committed to transparency, open communication, and meaningful collaboration with parents. We value feedback, encourage involvement, and expect that all interactions between families and staff remain courteous and constructive.

Families have the right:

- To know that their child is cared for in a safe, supportive environment.
- To access their children (unless prohibited by a court order).
- To review curriculum and request that their child be excused from instructional content that conflicts with their sincerely held religious beliefs, in accordance with applicable law.
- To receive timely communication about behavioral, health, safety, or academic concerns affecting their child.
- To access school staff during normal school hours, by appointment.
- To review teacher credentials in alignment with Board Policy 2261.02 BP.
- To review their child's educational records in accordance with FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act).
- To participate in public comment at board meetings and engage in school governance as permitted by law.

Parents and Guardians Have the Responsibility To:

- Provide accurate and up-to-date emergency and contact information to the school.
- Notify the office promptly when their child will be absent or late.
- Follow school procedures for drop-off, pick-up, early dismissals, and other attendance-related matters.
- Cooperate with staff to support their child's academic, behavioral, and social-emotional development.
- Communicate respectfully with teachers, administrators, and school staff.
- Stay informed by reading school communications and reviewing school policies outlined in this handbook.
- Inform the school of significant changes at home (e.g., custody arrangements, family transitions, trauma) that may affect the student's behavior or wellbeing at school.
- Model positive engagement by attending parent-teacher conferences, school events, and educational workshops when possible.

We ask all parents and guardians to view themselves as active partners in our school community. When home and school work together in trust and transparency, children thrive.

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11.3 Helping Your Child Succeed

There is no more powerful teacher in a child's life than their parent or guardian. Establishing routines that safeguard children from worry and stress so that they can learn, and grow, is essential. As your student's guardian, you can help your child learn if you:

- Start each day with a calm beginning.
- Make sure your child is well rested with at least 9-12 hours of sleep each night.
- Encourage your child to have a healthy breakfast if not eating at school.
- Laugh and talk with your child about school experiences – listen attentively.
- Stress attendance and being on time for school each day.
- Acknowledge your child for special accomplishments.
- Keep the lines of communication open. Inform the teacher of any family situation that could influence your child's behavior.
- Have a special place for notes and notices about school events.
- Read each day to your child. Encourage reading for pleasure and utilize the public library regularly.
- Stress organization of your child's belongings.
- Encourage independence in your child by showing him/her what he/she can do by himself/herself.
- Work at home with skills taught at school.

11.4 Parent-Teacher Compact

The Student-Parent-Teacher Compact outlines the shared responsibilities of families, school staff, and students to support academic achievement and a positive school environment. It includes specific commitments from students, parents or guardians, teachers, and the principal. This compact is an important part of the Academy's family engagement efforts and is included in the Code of Conduct to ensure all stakeholders understand their role in fostering student success.

11.5 Volunteer Guidelines and Background Checks

The Academy welcomes and encourages volunteers to support our school community. All volunteers must complete a Volunteer Application each year and undergo a national background check conducted through Navigate360, the Academy's visitor management system. This check ensures individuals have not been charged with child abuse, neglect, or serious criminal offenses.

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The Academy reserves the right to approve or deny volunteer service based on the results of the background check and the individual's fitness to work with children. Providing false or misleading information, or discrepancies between submitted information and background check results, may result in immediate denial or revocation of volunteer privileges.

All volunteers must sign in at the front office using Navigate360 upon arrival. A visitor badge will be printed and must be worn visibly at all times while on school grounds. Volunteers are expected to comply with all Academy policies and maintain confidentiality regarding any student information seen or heard during their service.

All volunteers may be asked to attend an orientation meeting before working in a classroom with children. Volunteers will be under the supervision of the classroom teacher at all times, and all volunteer activities must be pre-arranged with the classroom teacher.

Volunteer opportunities may include tutoring, mentoring, classroom assistance, chaperoning, or speaking engagements. Parents, grandparents, and friends are invited to become involved. Please notify the school office if you are interested in volunteering.

To support student safety, volunteers should avoid using cell phones while working with students. Volunteers may not bring younger siblings to school or on field trips without prior approval from the School Leader. Volunteers must also receive approval from the School Leader to meet students at locations off school grounds, such as field trips.

In accordance with Board Policy 9150, the School Leader may deny or revoke visitor access if necessary to protect school safety or minimize disruption.

11.6 Parent Education Meetings

Parent education evenings may be scheduled throughout the year. Different topics will be discussed to give you the opportunity to learn more about the Academy. The Academy's parent and educator organization, Parent Ambassadors, works together for the education and enrichment of the children. This is a voluntary organization that **may hold** monthly meetings. For more information on this organization, see the front office.

11.7 Visitors

The Academy welcomes parents, guardians, and approved guests to visit the school. All visitors must report directly to the front office upon arrival, present a valid photo ID if not known to staff, and sign in using the school's visitor management system. A visitor badge will be issued and must be worn visibly at all times while on school grounds.

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Visits to classrooms or other instructional spaces must be pre-arranged with the teacher and approved by the School Leader to avoid disruption to learning. Visitors may not bring younger children during school hours without prior approval. Individuals who fail to follow visitor procedures or pose a safety concern may be denied access in accordance with Board Policy 9150.

11.8 Fundraising

Students may solicit only for Academy-sponsored activities. The Principal, or Board of Directors, when appropriate, must approve fundraisers in writing prior to announcement of fundraising activities, placing orders, or making commitments. Academy students are prohibited by Board Policy from door-to-door solicitation of any type in the community. There will be no exchange of money among students for any purpose unless authorized by the Principal.

12. Student Life and Conduct

12.1 School Wide Behavior - PBIS

Students at the Academy have the right to be treated with respect by their teachers and classmates. They are to be treated equally and fairly with dignity. All students should be included in all activities and made to feel welcome in all activities of the Academy. Teachers work to facilitate internal discipline within each child. Staff members work as coaches for children, helping them to make good decisions and reflect on bad decisions in order to determine a better choice next time.

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is an [evidence-based three-tiered framework](#) for improving and integrating all of the data, systems, and practices affecting student outcomes every day. It is a way to support everyone – especially students with disabilities – to create the kinds of schools where all students are successful.

Through classroom discussions, students acknowledge that certain behaviors, such as talking without permission, calling out, passing notes, bullying, students making fun of other students, and talking back to teachers, interfere with learning. Bullying will not be tolerated in the classroom or on school grounds and is considered intimidation and if severe enough “assault.” There are school wide behavior expectations posted throughout the buildings. These behaviors are modeled and taught to students multiple times throughout the school year.

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12.2 Suspension and Expulsion Procedures

Detentions, in and out of school suspensions, and/or expulsions are levels of consequences that are administered to students who demonstrate disobedient, disruptive, violent, disrespectful, threatening, or otherwise harmful behavior at school. Any student who has been suspended during the course of the school year may be ineligible to attend overnight field trips as a result. A student whose presence creates, or is likely to create, a specific threat or risk to the safety or well-being of the school community or any of its members will be suspended or expelled from school. The Code of Student Conduct clearly spells out the responsibilities of parents and students, appropriate and inappropriate behaviors, and consequences for unacceptable behaviors.

If a student's behaviors result in a discipline recommendation over 10 days suspension or expulsion, the school will consider the mitigating factors involved and consider using Restorative Practices as an alternative, or in addition to, suspension or expulsion. Please see the Code of Conduct for more information.

12.3 Restorative Practices

We work to help children recognize disruptive behavior and develop self-control out of respect for self and others. Disruptive students may be removed from the classroom temporarily until the teacher and or Principal is confident the student is ready to return to class as a responsible participant. A conference with parents and the Principal will be called for any student who repeatedly interferes with a teacher's ability to teach, another student's right to learn, or demonstrates an inability to improve behavior.

Students and parents need to know that the classroom teacher is authorized to suspend a student for one day for good cause. Behaviors that are considered major infractions are listed in the Code of Student Conduct and consequences for these behaviors are determined by the Principal. The Code of Conduct explains discipline procedures, including suspensions and appeals. If there is insignificant improvement in the child's behavior, the parent may be scheduled to spend a day with his/her child to observe the classroom dynamics.

12.4 Seclusion and Restraint

The Academy complies with Michigan's policy prohibiting seclusion and restraint except in cases where a student's behavior poses an imminent risk to the safety of the student or others. All interventions used are in accordance with state law and staff are trained

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annually in approved techniques. A written report will be provided to the student's parent or guardian if such an incident occurs.

12.5 OK2Say Student Safety Reporting

We are committed to creating a safe, supportive environment where every student feels protected, respected, and heard. OK2SAY is a confidential and secure program that allows students, staff, and community members to report threats or concerns related to school safety, bullying, self-harm, violence, and other troubling behaviors. It is a valuable tool that empowers individuals to speak up without fear of retaliation. By using OK2SAY, our school community helps identify and prevent issues before they escalate. All reports are taken seriously and addressed promptly in collaboration with school leadership and, when necessary, law enforcement or mental health professionals. In accordance with Michigan law, OK2SAY reporting information is available on the Academy's website and printed on the back of each student's school identification badge.

12.6 Threat Assessment and Management Policy

Our school uses the Michigan K-12 Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management (Mi-BTAM) model as part of a proactive and student-centered approach to promoting safety and well-being. BTAM is an evidence-based process designed to identify, assess, and manage threatening or concerning behaviors before they escalate. It is not a disciplinary tool or criminal investigation, but rather a compassionate intervention process focused on violence prevention and student support.

When behaviors arise that could pose a threat to school safety, a multidisciplinary team composed of school administrators, mental health professionals, special education staff, and others trained in BTAM protocols collaborates to assess the situation. The team uses a fact-based, case-specific process to gather information, evaluate concerns, and develop an individualized support and intervention plan that addresses both student needs and school safety. The process respects the rights of students under applicable laws, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

In situations where a student with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 plan is involved, the BTAM team works closely with the student's special education team to ensure compliance with legal requirements and to develop supports tailored to the student's unique needs. The emphasis is on early identification and positive intervention, not punishment or exclusion. BTAM is not zero tolerance, profiling, or

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adversarial in nature. It is a thoughtful, student-focused practice designed to foster a safe and inclusive school culture.

Parents and guardians are important partners in the BTAM process. If a student is involved in a threat assessment, families will be contacted and engaged in the process. The school is committed to handling all matters with discretion and respect, and to protecting the privacy of all involved while fulfilling its responsibility to maintain a safe school environment.

12.7 Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse or Neglect

All staff members at the Academy are considered mandated reporters under Michigan's Child Protection Law. This means they are legally required to report any suspected abuse or neglect of a child to the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. Reports are made to protect the safety and well-being of all students and are kept confidential to the extent allowed by law.

12.8 Playground and Lunchroom Behavior

Students are provided with the opportunity to engage in unstructured, open-ended, social interaction during recesses. Recess time is supervised by a classroom teacher who is responsible for student safety. Equipment appropriate for use at recess time is available through classroom teachers. Consult with your child's teacher to find out if equipment from home is appropriate for use on the school playground. Equipment brought to school should be appropriate for group activity and should be shared with other students. Equipment such as skateboards and scooters are not allowed at school.

Children are expected to maintain the same level of respect on the playground as in the classroom. Respect for self, others and materials is essential. Students who disregard this will lose the privilege of recess until the next day where they have a chance to make a different choice. Recess is an important part of the total curriculum. When recess is held outside, ALL STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO GO OUTSIDE. A student may be excused from recess for one day with a note from the parent/guardian. Extended excuses will be honored upon receipt of a physician's note. Parents are responsible to see that their child is dressed appropriately for the weather.

While on the playground, students are expected to:

- Use playground equipment and structures carefully
- Play within the designated areas and boundaries
- Share equipment and follow the rules of the game

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- Leave all personal items at home that may be damaged or endanger the safety of others. (The building Principal is authorized to make judgments on these items.)

Breakfast and Lunch Behavior

Breakfast and lunchtime provide students with another opportunity to practice social skills in an informally structured environment. During this time students are expected to: speak softly and be considerate of classmates, remain seated while eating, clean up after themselves, and be courteous to the people in charge.

Breakfast and Lunch expected behaviors:

- Students are expected to follow the Code of Student Conduct.
- Students are expected to sit while eating.
- Students are to use quiet voices when conversing with other students.
- Students are expected to use good table manners and to clean up after eating.

12.9 Interrogations and Searches

12.9.1 Student Searches by School Staff and Privacy

In accordance with Board Policy 5771 and to maintain safety and order, school administrators may search student belongings when there is reasonable suspicion that a school rule or law has been violated. This includes cubbies, backpacks, bags, lockers, electronic devices, and vehicles on school property.

Students do not have a right to privacy in school-owned storage areas such as lockers or desks. These may be inspected at any time and are subject to routine checks.

Searches of a student's person or intimate belongings will only occur in exceptional circumstances, and must be conducted by a staff member of the same gender with another adult present, unless safety requires immediate action.

The school may coordinate with law enforcement to conduct canine searches of lockers or common areas if there is reasonable suspicion of illegal substances or dangerous items. These searches do not include individual students without consent or a warrant.

All searches will be done respectfully and privately, with written documentation maintained by the School Leader.

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12.9.2 Interrogations by Law Enforcement or Outside Agencies

The school has legal custody of students during the school day and at school-sponsored events. It is the responsibility of school leadership to protect students' rights during any interaction with law enforcement or outside agencies. When a student must be questioned at school by law enforcement or agency officials:

1. A school administrator or designee will be present during the interview. If no school representative is immediately available, questioning will be delayed until one can be present, unless there is an immediate safety concern.
2. The school will make every effort to notify a parent or guardian. This includes calling all emergency contact numbers, leaving voicemails when possible, and sending emails to all addresses on file. Unless there is an imminent threat, questioning will be delayed up to one hour to allow for parent response.
3. If the student is taken into custody, the school will request that law enforcement officials follow all applicable legal procedures, including informing the student of their rights.
4. As required by law, the school permits child protective services investigators (e.g., from the Department of Health and Human Services) to interview students without parent notification in cases of suspected abuse or neglect.

12.10 Prohibition of Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying, and Hazing

The Academy will not tolerate harassment, intimidation, bullying (including cyberbullying), or hazing of any kind. This applies on school grounds, during school-sponsored activities and events, and off-campus when the conduct disrupts the school environment.

The Academy adheres to Board Policy 5517.01: Prohibition of Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying, which defines bullying and cyberbullying, outlines reporting and investigation procedures, and ensures education and discipline plans to prevent future incidents. Families are encouraged to review this policy, discuss it with their children, and report any observed or suspected incidents to school staff.

Hazing is strictly prohibited. Hazing includes any intentional, knowing, or reckless act that is directed against a student for the purpose of initiation into, affiliation with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in any group, team, or activity. This applies regardless of the student's willingness to participate. Hazing is a violation of Michigan law (MCL 750.411t) and may result in both school disciplinary action and referral to law enforcement.

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Violations of this policy will result in appropriate disciplinary consequences, up to and including suspension or expulsion. Where applicable, behavior that violates state or federal law will also be reported to the appropriate authorities.

12.11 Non-Discrimination and Sexual Harassment

The Academy does not discriminate against applicants, employees, or students on the basis of race, color, religion, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, disability, age, national origin, political belief, marital status, sex, age, height, or weight in its programs or activities. In addition, students and families who believe they have experienced discrimination based on race, color, or national origin may file a complaint under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Complaints may be submitted through the school's internal grievance process or directly to the Michigan Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights, or the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights.

Sexual harassment will not be tolerated in Academy employment practices and/or educational programs or activities.

Inquiries regarding 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, or the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, or any other federal or state regulations, may be directed to the School Leader, the Michigan Department of Education, or the Director of the Office of Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education.

Sexual Harassment

The Academy is committed to providing a working and learning environment based on dignity and respect, free of harassment or intimidation. All those associated with the Academy are expected to foster a climate that is supportive, respectful, and conducive to teaching and learning. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX) and the Department of Education's implementing regulations prohibit discrimination based on sex in federally assisted education programs and activities.

"Sexual harassment is unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment can include unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, nonverbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment of a student can deny or limit, based on sex, the student's ability to participate in or to receive benefits, services, or opportunities in the school's program. Sexual harassment of students is, therefore, a form of sex discrimination prohibited by Title IX under the circumstances provided in this guidance" ("Revised Sexual Harassment Guidance: Harassment of Students by School Employees, Other Students, or Third Parties, U. S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, January 2001).

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Sexual harassment is among the behaviors that are destructive to a positive working and learning climate, and as such is prohibited by state law, federal law, and school board policy. Any member of the school community who engages in sexual harassment as defined below will be in violation of this policy. The Employee Manual is explicit in its discussion of sexual harassment and consequences of inappropriate behavior by employees.

This policy encompasses behavior of adults towards adults or students, and students towards students or adults.

DEFINITION:

It is a violation of this policy when a person makes any sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when submission to or rejections of advances, requests or conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of the provision of benefits, privileges, employment or placement services or as a basis for the evaluation of academic achievement; or such advances, requests, or conduct have the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's education or career by creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating or sexually offensive educational or employment environment.

Sexual harassment, as defined above, may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Verbal or written harassment or abuse,
- Pressure for sexual activity,
- Repeated remarks to a person with sexual or demeaning implications,
- Unwelcome touching,
- Suggesting or demanding sexual involvement accompanied by implied or explicit threats including, but not limited to, one's grades, and job.
- Display of lewd or sexually explicit materials, inappropriate jokes, or language of a sexual nature.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

All persons associated with the Academy are responsible for:

1. Ensuring that his/her behavior does not sexually harass any other person associated with the schools.
2. Reporting any observed or experienced harassment or mistreatment immediately to the Sexual Harassment Grievance Officer and cooperating fully in the investigation of alleged sexual harassment; and
3. Actively participating in the Academy's effort to prevent sexual harassment in the schools.

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Retaliation of any form, including threats, intimidation, reprisal or harassment, towards any person who makes a sexual harassment complaint, or who assists in or participates in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing is unlawful and will not be tolerated and can be considered grounds for dismissal of staff and/or removal of a student from school.

FALSE REPORTS:

False (fabricated) claims of sexual harassment can cause permanent damage to the victim of such claims and must therefore be treated as a very serious matter. A false claim may be considered grounds for dismissal of staff, or discipline including the removal from the educational setting for a student, who makes a false claim.

CONFIDENTIALITY:

Reports and complaints of sexual harassment will be kept as confidential as possible consistent with the rights of all parties.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT GRIEVANCE OFFICER:

The Board of Directors has appointed the Chief Administrative Officer, or their designee, as the Grievance Officer who will be responsible for processing all sexual harassment complaints in accordance with the procedure outlined below.

COMPLAINT PROCEDURES:

1. What one person may consider acceptable behavior may be viewed as sexual harassment by another person. Therefore, the victim should make clear to the harasser that the behavior is offensive and must stop. If the victim is uncomfortable in addressing the harasser they should be made to feel comfortable talking to a trusted adult or a member of the school leadership team. If the harasser does not stop the behavior or the victim is uncomfortable confronting the harasser, or if the behavior warrants further action in the opinion of the victim, the victim should lodge a complaint with the School Leader/Title IX officer/contact.
2. Upon receipt of a written formal complaint submitted by the complainant, their parent or guardian, or signed by the Title IX Coordinator, the school will initiate the Title IX grievance procedure in accordance with 34 CFR §106.45. The respondent is presumed not responsible for the alleged conduct until a final determination is made following a thorough and impartial investigation. The complaint should be as specific as possible, including names, dates, times, places, witnesses, and specific words or actions which were experienced as offensive. In cases involving students, the student's parents and guardians will be notified immediately of the

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complaint, the steps to be followed, and the ways in which they will be involved in the process.

3. All complaints of sexual harassment will be promptly investigated. Depending on the circumstances, the investigation may encompass any or all of the following:
 - a. The alleged victim may write a letter to the alleged harasser describing the offensive behavior, the circumstances under which it took place, the way the behavior made the victim feel, and requesting that the harasser apologize and promise not to repeat the behavior. The School Leader/Title IX officer or assigned investigator will then meet with the alleged harasser, hear the harasser's account of the situation, present the victim's letter, and discuss the matter.
 - b. Where appropriate in the opinion of the School Leader/Title IX officer or assigned investigator a meeting will be held between the alleged victim and the alleged harasser to clarify the facts and to attempt to mediate a resolution.
 - c. The School Leader/Title IX officer or assigned investigator may interview all parties and witnesses to the alleged harassment.
4. In cases of alleged student harassers, the School Leader/Title IX officer or assigned investigator will determine if these facts constitute harassment. Disciplinary consequences such as detention, suspension, or expulsion consistent with school rules may be implemented. In cases of alleged adult harassers, the School Leader/Title IX officer or assigned investigator will report the facts of the alleged harassment and will determine if these facts constitute harassment. The School Leader/Title IX officer or assigned investigator will recommend to the Board of Directors appropriate action, which could include disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment by Choice Schools Associates, LLC.
5. If disciplinary steps are taken, copies of the reports of facts and the written decision will go to the harasser, the personnel file in cases of adult harassers, and to the parents and guardians in cases of student harassers. The victim, and his or her parents, if the victim is a student, will also be informed of the determination as to whether harassment occurred.
6. Repeated or extreme forms of harassment, violence, or civil rights infringements will result in a recommendation for expulsion or termination from the Academy.

The School Leader/Title IX officer or assigned investigator will make complete records of all sexual complaints, facts, steps taken, determinations, and resolutions, and those records will be securely maintained in the School Leader's office for a minimum of seven years, or longer if required due to ongoing litigation, appeals, or state/federal audit requirements.

The Academy follows a Title IX grievance procedure consistent with 34 CFR §106.45. This includes a clear standard of evidence (preponderance of the evidence), offering supportive measures regardless of whether a formal complaint is filed, and ensuring equitable treatment of complainants and respondents. In accordance with Title IX regulations, K–12 schools are not required to hold live hearings as part of the grievance process. Instead, a trained, impartial decision-maker will objectively review all evidence gathered during the investigation and make a final determination based on the preponderance of the evidence standard. Both parties will have equal opportunity to submit and review relevant documentation and to appeal the final outcome.

The school does not presume the respondent responsible prior to the conclusion of the investigation.

STATE and FEDERAL REMEDIES:

In addition to the above, if someone believes he/she has been subjected to sexual harassment, he/she may file a formal complaint with either or both governing agencies set forth below. The complaint process does not prohibit filing a complaint with these agencies. Each of the agencies has a short time period for filing a claim (EEOC - 180 days: MCAD - 6 months).

1. The United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)
2. State of Michigan

12.12 Title VI Non-Discrimination Policy

In accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Academy does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, or national origin in the administration of its educational programs or activities, including those that receive federal financial assistance.

Any student or parent/guardian who believes they have been subject to discrimination under Title VI may contact the School Leader or designated Title VI Coordinator to file a concern or complaint. The Academy will respond promptly and equitably to all reports.

12.13 Tobacco/Smoke-Free School Zone Policy

In accordance with Michigan law and the Michigan Clean Indoor Air Act, the use or possession of tobacco products, including smokeless tobacco, electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes, vapes), and any nicotine-delivery device, is strictly prohibited at all times

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in school buildings, on school grounds, in school vehicles, and at school-sponsored events, regardless of location.

This policy applies to all individuals: students, staff, volunteers, and visitors. Violations by students will result in disciplinary consequences as outlined in the Code of Conduct. Violations by staff or visitors may result in removal from the premises and referral to appropriate authorities.

12.14 Drug and Alcohol Use Policy

The use, possession, distribution, sale, manufacture, or being under the influence of illegal drugs, controlled substances, look-alike substances, drug paraphernalia, or alcoholic beverages is strictly prohibited on school property, during school hours, and at any school-sponsored event or activity, whether on or off campus.

Violation of this policy will result in disciplinary action, which may include suspension or expulsion, as well as notification to law enforcement and parents or guardians. The school retains the right to require medical evaluation or drug testing when there is reasonable suspicion of substance use.

In accordance with Michigan law and school board policy, students may be referred for educational or rehabilitative services when appropriate.

12.15 Weapons and Dangerous Objects Policy

In accordance with the federal Gun-Free Schools Act and Michigan state law, students shall not possess, use, transport, handle, or conceal any dangerous weapons or look-alike weapons on school property, in school vehicles, or at school-related functions.

A dangerous weapon includes, but is not limited to: firearms, knives, stun guns, explosives, air guns, and martial arts weapons. “Look-alike” weapons that appear to be real or are used in a threatening manner will be treated as actual weapons.

Possession of a firearm on school property, in a school vehicle, or at a school-sponsored event will result in a mandatory expulsion of at least one school year, as required under the Gun-Free Schools Act and MCL 380.1311. The expulsion may be modified by the Board of Directors on a case-by-case basis. All dangerous weapon incidents will be reported to law enforcement in accordance with MCL 380.1313.

This policy applies to all students and is enforced without exception.

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12.16 Annual Firearm Safety Notice

In compliance with state law (Public Acts 257 and 258 of 2024), we are providing families with a [firearm safety notice](#) developed by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. The notice includes legal requirements, safe storage practices, and access to free or low-cost gun safety devices.

This notice is available on the transparency page of our school website, in the school office, and on the Michigan Department of Education [webpage](#). This information is shared with all families as part of our legal obligations and commitment to student safety.

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12.17 Code of Conduct and Discipline Policy

Code of Student Conduct Positive Discipline Support Plan

“A Partnership in Responsibility”

Revised August 2024

Introduction

Character Education

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Code of Student Conduct

The Code of Student Conduct provides behavior guidelines for development of good social skills, students as responsible citizens, and accelerated learning school culture. All stakeholders—students, parents, administration, faculty, and support staff—enter a partnership in responsibility to build positive character in our students that prepares them for college, work, military, parenthood, and community service.

The Harmony Social Emotional Learning and be.nice programs empowers students with the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and opportunities to become responsible members of the home, school, and community.

Everyone has rights and responsibilities. The Code of Student Conduct attempts to preserve individual rights in the school community and deliver academic excellence in a safe, emotionally secure community of learners. Diversity is our strength, and we pursue productive classrooms where all students find meaning, dignity, and sense of community.

The overarching goal of the Code of Student Conduct is to teach students self-discipline and good social skills. We want to keep students in school. We have implemented a Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) system which provides a framework for progressive and constructive discipline practices and in-school interventions for minor misbehaviors. Out of school suspension is reserved for serious infractions of the Code of Student Conduct.

Parents are our most valuable partners. We seek your cooperation and participation in the ongoing development of your child's academic knowledge, skills, and attitudes and social skills. We encourage you to read and review the Code of Student Conduct with your child and encourage acceptable behavior at school.

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STUDENT RIGHTS

EDUCATION

The rights of all students are ensured by the Constitutions of the United States and the State of Michigan and by all applicable federal, state, and local statutes. These rights, including the right to an education, shall be recognized without regard to race, religion, sex, creed, ability to pay, national origin, disabling condition, or intellectual ability. Students have a right to a public education beginning with pre-kindergarten and extending through the twelfth grade.

Students, in all their diversity, are to be educated in a safe and supportive environment that fosters academic success and healthy development and that prioritizes keeping students in school.

ENVIRONMENT

Students have the right to expect a safe school environment in which to learn and a climate within the school that is conducive to learning.

RESPECT

Students have a right to expect courtesy, fairness, and respect from members of the school staff and other students.

PROPERTY

Students have a right to expect that other students and school personnel will respect their personal property.

PARTICIPATION

Students have a right to participate in school activities, subject to qualification requirements and compliance with Board of Directors policies and administrative guidelines.

EXPRESSION

Students have the right to address policies both publicly and privately, in writing and orally. Students may advocate change in any law, policy, or regulation.

APPEAL

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Students have the right to seek a review and change in policies and decisions concerning student conduct. A parent has the right to seek a change in a school policy or decision concerning his or her child.

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SECTION A: A PARTNERSHIP IN RESPONSIBILITY

The Academy is committed to respect for the rights of others. Rules governing discipline and conduct are written so that parents, students, teachers, and the Principal know what is expected of students. By working together under clearly stated and consistently enforced regulations, we can administer firm, fair and consistent discipline practices as called for by the US Department of Justice.

Parents, teachers, staff, the Principal, and the Board of Directors are responsible for helping students develop self-discipline and learn social skills required for work and college. The Code of Student Conduct delineates the partnership that the school and the larger-community share across several broad concepts.

Environment, which includes the climate of the school.

Education, which includes preparation and work habits.

Respect, which includes treatment of others.

Participation, which includes involvement in school activities; and

Expression, which includes dress and verbal and nonverbal issues.

These broad concepts appear in each statement of responsibilities contained in this handbook.

Beliefs

The following beliefs guided the development of the Code of Student Conduct:

1. That schools must be safe and secure for students and staff.
2. That students have rights and responsibilities in the learning environment.
3. That the school is for instruction and learning, and anything that distracts from the learning process must be dealt with by the Principal, faculty, and staff within progressive and positive discipline practices.
4. That students and their parents should be knowledgeable of school and classroom rules.
5. That students have a responsibility to exercise self-control over their own behavior and that teachers and support staff have the responsibility to teach students good social skills and acceptable behaviors.
6. That the responsibility for discipline is shared among students, school personnel, the Board of Directors, and parents.

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7. That the school respects differences in discipline practices at home as long as they are within parameters of the law.
8. That students, who violate school and classroom rules, must be afforded their rights to due process, which are procedurally, morally, and legally fair and correct.
9. That students, when they violate school and classroom rules, should be assigned corrective measures with the purpose of teaching good social behaviors.
10. That disciplinary measures should be progressive, corrective, and preventive, unless the safety of students is an issue.
11. That disciplinary measures should be firm, consistent, and fair.
12. That the disciplinary measures of the school should be a problem-solving process and should focus on the causes of the infraction and learning acceptable behaviors.
13. That the assigning of disciplinary measures should be reasonable.
14. That students, who commit criminal acts, should be administered measures that are severe and swift when the safety of the general school population is at issue.

School Jurisdiction

The authority of the school over the conduct of students extends to the following locations:

1. On the school grounds during, before, and after school hours.
2. On school sponsored transportation for all school-related activities and the regular school day.
3. On the school grounds, as either a spectator or a participant at any other time when a school group is using the school.
4. Off the school grounds at any school-related activity, function, or event as a participant or a spectator.
5. When a student's conduct at any other time or place has a direct and immediate effect on maintaining order and discipline, or on protecting the safety and welfare of students or school/staff; and
6. When a student is using school telecommunications networks, accounts, school-issued electronic devices, or other school services.

Student Expression

The Principal will maintain open channels of communication through which students may express their individual or group concerns and suggestions that will be formally and informally deliberated.

We sincerely believe that continued recognition of students' rights and responsibilities will develop within our youth a student philosophy that will nurture their internal strengths, will

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deter the influence, and spread of degrading attitudes, and will perpetuate the American ideal of a responsible, democratic system of government.

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SECTION B: RESPONSIBILITIES

Student Responsibilities

Environment

1. Assist the Principal and his/her staff in the operation of a safe and orderly school, where all students can learn and develop socially.
2. Be clean and dress in compliance with school rules of sanitation and safety in a fashion that will not disrupt classroom procedures and in a manner which conforms to the Academy's dress guidelines.
3. Obey school rules and/or the law concerning use, possession, distribution or sale of tobacco, marijuana, or controlled substances as defined under the Drug Control Act, drug paraphernalia as defined by the State of Michigan, imitation controlled substances, nonprescription or prescription drugs, or alcohol on school property, on the way to and from school, or while attending school-sponsored activities.
4. Obey laws and regulations, which forbid supplying, handling, using, transmitting, or possessing any type of weapon on school property, on the way to and from school, or at any school-sponsored event.
5. Report to the Principal or her staff incidents when your safety or the safety of others may be jeopardized.

Education

1. Support all students' right and opportunity for a free appropriate public education as provided by applicable federal, state, and local statutes, without regard to race, religion, sex, creed, ability to pay, national origin, disability, or intellectual ability.
2. Take advantage of the educational opportunities offered by the school.
3. Complete all assigned work, study, and read.
4. Attend school regularly and punctually to achieve maximum learning.
5. Be prepared for learning by bringing materials and supplies to classes.

Respect

1. Be self-controlled and non-disruptive on school property and/or at school activities.
2. Be reasonable, modest, self-controlled, non-suggestive, non-intimidating, and considerate in your relationships with other students and with school employees.
3. Keep your language and gestures respectful and free of profanity or obscenities.
4. Respect private, public, and school property.
5. Be informed of laws and school rules regarding students' rights and responsibilities.

Participation

1. Support and participate in school activities, co-curricular and extra-curricular.

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2. Remain on the school campus during the school day; be punctual in carrying out your schedule and take part in classroom activities.

Expression

1. Support the right to freedom of expression.
2. Ensure that your expressions do not interfere with the educational program or activities or with the rights of others.
3. Be sensitive to others in your choice of expressive clothing that you wear or carry, ensuring that it does not express obscene, racist, or sexist language or gestures or slanderous, libelous, racist, or sexist statements.
4. Be sensitive to others in your choice of expressive words that you say or write, ensuring that they are not obscene, slanderous, libelous, racist, or sexist.
5. Ensure that your expressions do not contribute to bullying or cyber-bullying of another student.
6. NOTE: The right to freedom of expression does NOT include threats toward other students, staff or the school.

Parent Responsibilities

Environment

1. Insist that your child is clean and dressed in compliance with school rules of sanitation and safety and within the school dress guidelines.
2. Ensure that your child is free of communicable disease and in good health.
3. Support school officials in maintaining a safe and orderly school environment, free of disruptions, which interfere with teaching, learning, and safety.
4. Ensure that you and your child(ren) understand school rules and/or the law concerning students' use, possession, distribution, or sale of tobacco, marijuana, or controlled substances as defined under the Drug Control Act, drug paraphernalia as defined by the School Code of Michigan, imitation controlled substances, nonprescription or prescription drugs, or alcohol on school property, on the way to or from school, or while attending school-sponsored activities.
5. Ensure that your child understands that supplying, handling, using, transmitting, or possessing any type of weapon on school property, on the way to or from school, or at any school-sponsored event is prohibited.

Education

1. Help support education for children as provided by applicable federal, state, and local statutes, without regard to race, religion, sex, creed, ability to pay, national origin, disabling condition, or intellectual ability.

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2. Make certain your child's attendance at school is regular and punctual and all absences are properly excused.
3. Instill in your child the desire to learn.
4. Become acquainted with your child's school, staff, curriculum, and activities.
5. Ensure that your child has the necessary materials and supplies needed for classes and activities.
6. Ensure that your child has a quiet and proper place to study at home.

Respect

1. Guide your child, from the earliest years of his or her life, to develop socially acceptable standards of behavior, to exercise self-control, and to be accountable for his or her actions.
2. Teach your child, by word and example, respect for law, for the authority of the school, and for the rights and property of others.
3. Know and understand the rules your child is expected to observe at school; be aware of the consequences for violations of these rules and accept legal responsibility for your child's actions.
4. Encourage your child to respect honest work and to develop an interest in exploring broader fields of knowledge.
5. Accept the right of the Board of Directors to require respectable behavior of all students and nonstudents at all activities involving the school.
6. Help your child understand and respect the purposes of schooling, learning, and teaching.

Participation

1. Send your child to school as required by The Michigan School Code, on time, every day, ready to learn.
2. Request and attend parent-teacher conferences.
3. Attend school functions and activities with your child.
4. Volunteer for school functions or assist when possible.

Expression

1. Encourage your child to conduct him or herself in an acceptable manner.
2. Encourage your child not to make obscene gestures or libelous, racist, or sexist statements or to use intimidating tactics toward others.
3. Help your child understand when free expression steps over the line and becomes bullying, threats, or sexual harassment. None of these behaviors are protected and will result in disciplinary action.
4. Encourage your child not to interfere with the educational progress of others or the educational program by using inappropriate verbal or nonverbal expressions.

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5. Encourage your child to dress appropriately in the school uniform so that his or her appearance will not disrupt the educational process or activities.

Teacher/Staff Responsibilities

Environment

1. Reflect personal enthusiasm for teaching and learning and genuine concern for the individual student.
2. Express positive reinforcement for acceptable behavior.
3. Provide clear, reasonable classroom rules consistent with the Code of Student Conduct.
4. Project the image of your profession, your school, and education for everyone in a positive manner.
5. Be professional and be a role model for students.
6. Refer to the student's teacher or Principal any student whose behavior requires special attention.
7. Report all incidents of suspected child abuse or neglect to your Principal as required by Michigan Law.

Education

1. Guide differentiated learning activities so students learn to think and reason.
2. Provide opportunities for students to develop socially acceptable skills, attitudes, and behaviors.
3. Provide meaningful schoolwork for students with the expectation that all students will be successful.
4. Inform parents regarding student achievement and behavior and consult with parents whenever necessary.
5. Teach each student as an individual on his/her own level.
6. Communicate with the Principal regarding academic achievement.

Respect

1. Guide students to assume responsibility for their actions and to respect the rights of others.
2. Be firm, consistent, and fair in enforcing school rules on school property and at all school-sponsored activities.
3. Demonstrate by word and personal example self-discipline and respect for law.
4. Develop positive relationships with parents and students.
5. Respect the dignity of everyone.

Participation

1. Assume the rights and responsibilities of collaborative culture and shared decision making.

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2. Participate in the establishment of school rules and regulations regarding student behavior: explain these rules to students and require observance of them.
3. Assist the Principal in developing the school philosophy, objectives, and procedures for the efficient and orderly operation of the school.
4. Participate in school activities and sponsor co-curricular and extra-curricular activities.

Expression

1. Ensure that expressions by anyone do not interfere with meaningful instruction.
2. Encourage students to express themselves appropriately and respectfully.
3. Do not use language that is obscene, slanderous, racist, sexist, or sarcastic.
4. Encourage students, parents, other teachers, and other staff to use language that is not obscene, slanderous, racist, or sexist.
5. Represent your profession positively through your appearance and conduct at school and at school-sponsored events.
6. Refrain from initiation of or participation in sexual harassment activities.
7. Help educate students on the nature of bullying, cyber-bullying and harassment.

Principal Responsibilities

Environment

1. Create the best teaching-learning conditions possible for student learning.
2. Create a safe, caring school environment for everyone.
3. Take the lead in establishing reasonable rules and regulations for the orderly operation of the school.
4. Make rules and regulations known and understood by students, parents, teachers, and staff.
5. Report all incidents of suspected child abuse or child neglect as required by Michigan Law.

Education

1. Organize school schedules and teaching assignments and require effective classroom management and instruction.
2. Maintain open lines of communication between school and home and between staff and administration.
3. Offer a complement of student activities, which provide interesting activities for all students.
4. Encourage the recognition of students' accomplishments.
5. Protect instructional time and ensure the best possible conditions for learning.
6. Ensure that discipline practices are progressive, constructive, and focused on developing self-discipline and social skills for career and college success.
7. Ensure that all students are encouraged to achieve high academic standards.

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Respect

1. Be firm, fair, courteous, and consistent in all decisions affecting students, parents, and staff.
2. Demonstrate by word and personal example respect for law, self-discipline, and genuine concern for all persons.
3. Recognize that parents are a child's first teachers and listen to the concerns and suggestions of parents.

Participation

1. Provide leadership by creating a school culture where a collaborative culture can flourish, shared decision making is encouraged, and unity of purpose is achieved.
2. Become acquainted with students and parents by visiting classrooms, attending school activities and events, accepting opportunities to take part in community events, and inviting the community into the school.
3. Receive teacher or staff referrals of students with behavior problems, confer with these students, communicate with parents, and set up cooperative procedures for correcting student behavior and teaching good social skills.

Expression

1. Do not use language that is obscene, racist, sexist, libelous or sarcastic.
2. Encourage and ensure that students, parents, teachers, and other staff use appropriate expressions which are not obscene, racist, sexist, slanderous, disruptive, libelous, intimidating, or sarcastic.
3. Exemplify leadership qualities and represent your profession positively through your appearance and conduct at school, and at school-sponsored events, and in the community.
4. Ensure that students, parents, teachers, and staff members follow the appropriate dress guidelines for the school and for common decency and that guidelines are consistently and fairly enforced.
5. Be aware of and follow guidelines prohibiting bullying and sexual harassment.
6. Ensure that the school provides students and staff with education regarding appropriate online behavior and cyberbullying awareness and response.

Board of Directors and Management Responsibilities

Environment

1. Inform the community of what is expected of students and what the consequences are when rules are violated.
2. Give full support to school staff and others charged with the responsibility for managing the schools.

Education

1. Maintain a well-trained staff at all levels.

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2. Develop programs and activities, which provide for all students, including those with special needs.
3. Provide vision for the school, which includes curricular programs and activities designed to provide students with opportunities to learn and develop.

Respect

Be fair, courteous, and consistent in making decisions regarding those students whose behavior problems have been appealed to the Board of Directors in accordance with state law.

Participation

1. Become acquainted with the Academy, its staff, and students by visiting buildings regularly and by attending school activities.
2. Encourage and support participatory decision-making.

Expression

1. Provide Policies regarding appropriate expressions by students, parents, teachers, and other staff members consistent with federal, state, and local laws.
2. Ensure and protect freedom of expression for all students, parents and caretakers, publics, and constituencies.

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SECTION C: GUIDELINES FOR STUDENT BEHAVIOR

School leadership, teachers, and support staff are responsible for ensuring that meaningful and engaging instruction takes place and that students who want a high-quality education, receive it. Educators share responsibility to teach students the social and emotional skills required to achieve success in school, including interventions to monitor and change behavior until the individual student demonstrates acceptable behavior as a student and member of the school community.

Attendance

Michigan law places responsibility on each student to attend school on time, every day regularly and on each parent/guardian to send their child to school every day. The Board of Directors requires that all students attend school during the days and hours that the Academy is in session. Students are expected to be at school every possible day because they miss valuable instructional time and fall behind in their studies. Attendance is also an important habit to learn in preparation for work. Each student is expected to receive a minimum of 1,098 hours of instruction to be promoted to the next grade or receive credit in coursework.

Help Your Child Succeed in Life: Build the Habit of Good School Attendance

DID YOU KNOW?

- It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to get their child to school.
- Missing just five days of school means 30 hours of missed instruction.
- Starting in kindergarten, there is a direct link between absences and reading level.
- One in ten kindergarten and first grade students is chronically absent.
- Students who are chronically absent are 7.5 times more likely to drop out of high school.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Set a regular bedtime and morning routine.
- Lay out clothes and backpack the night before.
- Develop a back-up plan for how your child is getting to school in case something comes up. Call on a friend, family member or neighbor.
- Do not let your child stay home unless he or she is really sick. A stomachache can be a sign of anxiety or avoidance.
- Have your doctor fax or email the school directly.
- Talk to your teacher or Principal if you need additional help or resources

Parents are asked to call the school office to notify the school of their child's absence or to leave a voicemail (616-243-6221 Option 1) whenever their child will be absent from school. Parents are encouraged to notify the office manager prior to 9:00 AM. Parents are to provide valid written documentation stating the cause of absence for the absence to be excused; otherwise, the absence will be considered unexcused.

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Excused absences may be granted for the following reasons:

- A. Illness of the student. The Principal may require a doctor's statement. A doctor's statement of illness must be presented if a student is absent more than three consecutive days or more than ten absences during a semester.
- B. Illness in the immediate family, which requires absence of the student from school.
- C. Death in the immediate family (should not exceed three days).
- D. Recovery from an accident.
- E. Required court appearance. Parents are asked to notify the school in advance.
- F. Professional appointments. Parents need to notify the school in advance of the appointment and are encouraged to have the child return to school after the appointment.
- G. Religious holidays regularly observed by persons of the student's faith, provided the parent has given written notice in advance of the absence.
- H. Absences for other reasons as approved by the Principal upon request of the parent.

Upon return to school, a student is to check with his or her teacher(s) to schedule make-up work and turn in any excuse notes to the school office.

When a student accumulates 10% of total school days absent (total loss learning time due to unexcused absenteeism, tardiness, and early dismissal in combination), an absenteeism report will be submitted to the county truancy officer and the parents will attend a mandatory meeting with the Assistant Principal or Principal. This meeting will determine the course of action that will be taken, which may include the development of an attendance contract, an absenteeism report submitted to the truancy officer, possible withdrawal from the school, and possible petition to the juvenile court. If the family chooses not to participate in the meeting, or the student does not uphold the attendance contract, a second absenteeism report will be submitted to the county truancy officer. Students who are chronically absent may be recommended for retention.

We encourage family and students to strive for less than 5 absences each school year. The county office allows 5 uncounted excused absences (AU) per school year which does not count towards truancy. Any excused absences beyond 5 will be counted towards truancy (AC) absenteeism unless a physician's note is provided specifying the exact date(s) the student is to be excused and personally signed by the attending physician.

When a student is absent from school for ten consecutive days without knowledge of the Principal will be withdrawn from the Academy and the student's directory information will be reported to the truancy officer of the intermediate school district and other state and local

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agencies. The Principal will attempt to contact the student's parent/caretaker during the period of consecutive absences.

Student Arrival and Dismissal

Arrival and dismissal of students will be supervised by staff 10 minutes before school starts and 10 minutes after school dismisses. Parents may circle through the parking lot and drop-off their children at the entrance of the school; children should proceed to their designated area with their teacher. If you need to enter the building, you may park in the designated parking area. Students who are leaving school at the end of the school day are to be picked-up at the end of last regular class time. Students are to be picked-up by a parent/caretaker or person designated by the parent/caretaker and approved by the Principal immediately after school or report to after school childcare (when available and if registered). Students are not to be unsupervised at any time during the school day or before and after school.

If parents choose to have their child(ren) walk to and from school, parents must fill out a Walker Permission Form. Students in grades TK-5th grade will not be allowed to walk home alone without an older sibling.

A student who is picked up late three times will have a warning letter sent home to the parent. If a student is picked up late six times, an intervention plan will be developed with the parent and Principal.

If parents need to make any changes in the dismissal instruction of their child, please do so no later than 2:00 pm by contacting the school office.

Late Arrival

Students are tardy to school if they arrive to class after the school day begins for all students. Teachers are expected to begin opening exercises promptly and transition smoothly into instruction. A tardy student must report to the office with his/her parent/guardian upon arrival to be signed in by the parent/guardian and provide written or oral reason for tardiness to the office. The Principal, or his/her designee, will provide the student with a tardy pass to admit him or her to the class that is in session at the time.

A student who is tardy three times will receive a warning letter sent home to the parents for the parent's signature. If a student receives 6 unexcused tardies, an attendance intervention plan will be developed with the student, parent, and Principal. Tardy students interrupt learning for other students.

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There are times when a deviation from a student's normal school schedule is necessary.

Tardiness will be excused under the following circumstances:

1. Serious illness (accompanied by a parent's note or written doctor's notice)
2. Death in the family
3. Legally required presence at a court proceeding
4. School sponsored co-curricular and extra-curricular activities
5. Religious observations
6. Severe weather, fires, family tragedies
7. Pre-arranged late arrival approved by the Principal

When a child is tardy between classes, it is the responsibility of the student to receive a pass from the previous teacher. Teachers are encouraged to assist students in transition to the next class. Students arriving in the classroom after the start of class will be considered tardy. State guidelines require that all attendance must be documented and reported to the local Intermediate School District, including late arrivals.

Students are responsible for making up any work missed due to a late arrival.

Early Dismissal

The student may need to leave school during the school day. The parent is to receive approval of the Principal in advance by written or personal request for a justifiable reason, including early dismissals for doctor's appointments, religious observations, family funerals, and other pre-arranged events. Unexcused early dismissal will be counted as a tardy. Parents must report to the office to sign their child out. Students will only be released to parents and adults designated by the parent/caretaker and approved by the Principal. In child custody situations, the custodial parent must properly inform the Principal of any limitations. Michigan law calls for students to receive 1,098 hours of instruction.

Students are responsible for making up any work missed due to an early dismissal.

Expressions and Limitations

Students may exercise the right to freedom of expression through speech, assembly, petition, and other lawful means and have the right to advocate change of any law, policy, or administrative guideline. The exercise of this right may not interfere with the rights of others, nor may oral or written student opinions be used to present material that falls into one or more of the following categories:

1. Material that reasonably leads the Principal or teacher to forecast substantial disruption of, or interference with, school activities or that endangers the health or safety of students.

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2. Material that is libelous or slanderous - statements that are inaccurate or false statements that injure the person as to his or her reputation, cause personal humiliation, mental anguish, and suffering or other injuries.
3. Material that advocates the commission of a criminal act or is a criminal act as defined by the Criminal Code of the United States, the State of Michigan, the County, or the City of residence.
4. Material that is obscene as defined in the Michigan School Code, as amended.
5. Material, communications, and or actions that are considered to be bullying as defined in the Michigan School Code, as amended, and in Board Policy and administrative guidelines.

Distribution of Literature by Students and Nonstudents

The Principal or his/her designee shall coordinate distribution or display of literature by students enrolled in the school. The material must be approved by the Principal, must not be in violation of applicable Board of Directors Policy, and must bear the name of the sponsoring individuals or school organizations.

Search and Seizure

Desks, lockers, and storage spaces, which are provided to students without charge, are the property of the school. The Principal or designee may make general inspections on a periodic basis and may open desks, lockers, or storage spaces in the presence of a witness and examine the contents, including personal belongings of students, when there are reasonable grounds to believe that they contain illegal drugs, contraband, weapons, or stolen property, or that the student has violated or is violating state or federal laws, City Codes, or Policies of the Board of Directors, provided the search is conducted primarily for enforcing order and discipline in the school and not for criminal prosecution.

The Principal may also, to the full extent permitted by law and Board Policies, search and seize students and their personal effects, including electronic devices. Such a search is permissible only when there are reasonable grounds to believe that they contain evidence that the student has violated or is violating state or federal laws, City Codes, or Policies of the Board of Directors. Whenever possible, a search of a student's person or belongings will be conducted by the Principal in the presence of the student and another staff member.

Search of a student's intimate personal belongings shall be conducted only in exceptional circumstances, when the health or safety of the student or of others is immediately threatened. Reasonable efforts to locate the student shall be made prior to the search. If the student is present, the school official shall advise him/her of the circumstances justifying the search and seizure of the objects that the official believes the search may disclose. If the student is not

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present, he or she shall be informed of the search. Stolen items and items that are specifically prohibited by federal and state law, Board of Directors Policies, regulations of the County and City and or school administrative guidelines may be impounded. The student shall be given a receipt for any items impounded by school authorities, and parents shall be notified of any items impounded.

Search of a student's person shall be conducted by a staff member of the student's gender and only in exceptional circumstances, when the health and safety of the student or of others is immediately threatened. An extensive effort will be made to contact the student's parent or guardian to ensure that the responsible individual is notified of the situation and given an opportunity to be present for the search. To that end, the school will attempt to call every phone number on record as emergency contact(s) for the student. If no one responds to the phone call, the school will leave a voicemail indicating the urgency of a return call. If there is no answer at any phone number on record, the school will send an email to all emails on record. If the school is unable to locate a parent or guardian, the school may still conduct the search if the health or safety of the student or of others is immediately threatened. If there is no immediate threat to health or safety, the school will wait for one (1) hour for the parent/guardian to respond to the school's attempts to notify them of the impending search. If the parent or guardian does not respond within one (1) hour, the school will proceed with the search as authorized by law and Board policy. The school may turn the search over to the Police. The school official shall advise the student of the circumstances justifying the search and seizure of the objects that the official believes the search may disclose. Stolen items and items that are specifically prohibited by federal and state law, Board of Directors Policies, regulations of the County and City and or school administrative guidelines may be impounded. The student shall be given a receipt for any items impounded by school authorities, and parents shall be notified of any items impounded.

Prohibition of Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying (cyberspace as well)

Bullying and cyberbullying are prohibited at school. "At school" is defined as on school premises, in a school-related vehicle, at school-sponsored events, or using telecommunications access devices or a telecommunications service provider under control or ownership of the Academy. Bullying and cyberbullying that do not occur at school but cause a substantial disruption to the educational environment may be subject to disciplinary action according to Board Policy (Attached).

Bullying means any written, verbal, or physical act, or any electronic communication, including but not limited to cyberbullying, that is intended or that a reasonable person would know is likely to harm one or more pupils either directly or indirectly. Cyberbullying means any electronic communication that is intended or that a reasonable person would know is likely to harm one (1) or more pupils either directly or indirectly. Any reference to bullying includes cyberbullying.

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The Academy Board's revised anti-bullying policy is provided in addition to the Student Code of Conduct. You are encouraged to read the policy, understand that it is based upon law, and encourage your child to refrain from bullying activities/and report incidents that they observe at school.

Every student is called upon to report any situation that he or she believes to be bullying behavior directed toward a student or an employee. Employees are required to report bullying behavior to the Principal.

Anti-Bullying Policy

Reference: The Matt Epling Safe School Law, Public Act 241 of 2011, as amended by Public Act 478 of 2014 (MCL § 380.1310b).

The Board believes that a safe and nurturing educational environment in school is necessary for students to learn and achieve high academic standards. Therefore, it is the policy of the Academy to provide a safe and nurturing environment for all of its students. Appropriate behavior, treating others with civility and respect, and refusing to tolerate harassment or bullying is expected of students, as well as administrators, faculty, staff, visitors, and volunteers.

Bullying and Cyberbullying are Prohibited

Bullying and cyberbullying of a student, whether by other students, staff, visitors, Board members, parents, guests, contractors, vendors, and volunteers, is prohibited. All pupils are protected under this policy and bullying and cyberbullying are prohibited without regard to its subject matter or motivating animus.

Definition of Bullying

"Bullying" means any written, verbal, or physical act, or any electronic communication, including, but not limited to, cyberbullying, that is intended or that a reasonable person would know is likely to harm one (1) or more pupils either directly or indirectly by doing any of the following:

- A. Substantially interfering with the educational opportunities, benefits, or programs of one (1) or more pupils.
- B. Adversely affecting the ability of a pupil to participate in or benefit from the school districts or public school's educational programs or activities by placing the pupil in reasonable fear of physical harm or by causing substantial emotional distress.
- C. Having an actual and substantial detrimental effect on a pupil's physical or mental health.
- D. Causing substantial disruption in, or substantial interference with, the orderly operation of the school.

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“Cyberbullying” means any electronic communication that is intended or that a reasonable person would know is likely to harm one (1) or more pupils either directly or indirectly by doing any of the following:

- A. Substantially interfering with the educational opportunities, benefits, or programs of one (1) or more pupils.
- B. Adversely affecting the ability of a pupil to participate in or benefit from the school district’s or public school’s educational programs or activities by placing the pupil in reasonable fear of physical harm or by causing substantial emotional distress.
- C. Having an actual and substantial detrimental effect on a pupil’s physical or mental health.
- D. Causing substantial disruption in, or substantial interference with, the orderly operation of the school.

Since “bullying” also includes “cyberbullying,” any reference in this policy to “bullying” shall also be deemed to refer to “cyberbullying.”

Bullying and cyberbullying are prohibited at school. “At school” is defined as on school premises, at school-sponsored activities or events, in a school-related vehicle, or using telecommunications access device or a telecommunications service provider if the telecommunications access device or telecommunications service provider is owned by or under the control of the school district. “Telecommunications access device” and “telecommunications service provider” mean those terms as defined in Section 219a of the Michigan Penal Code (MCL § 750.219a).

Bullying and cyberbullying that does not occur “at school,” as defined above, but that causes a substantial disruption to the educational environment may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with this policy and applicable law.

Reporting and Investigating Reports of Bullying

Every student is encouraged to report any situation that he or she believes to be bullying behavior directed toward a student to a teacher, a counselor, administrator, or other staff member. Staff members shall report any reports made by students or situations that they believe to be bullying behavior directed toward a student to the ESP. Complaints against the ESP shall be reported to the Board. The school shall ensure confidentiality for any individual who reports an act of bullying.

Under state law, a school employee, school volunteer, student, or parent or guardian who promptly reports in good faith an act of bullying to the appropriate school official designated in this policy and who makes this report in compliance with the procedures set forth in this policy is immune from a cause of action for damages arising out of the reporting itself or any failure to

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remedy the reported incident. This immunity does not apply to a school official responsible for implementing this policy or for remedying the bullying, when acting in that capacity.

Retaliation or false accusation against a target of bullying, a witness, or another person with information about an act of bullying is prohibited. Suspected retaliation should be reported in the same manner as suspected bullying behavior. Making intentionally false accusations of bullying is likewise prohibited. Retaliation and making intentionally false accusations of bullying may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.

All complaints about bullying that may violate this policy shall be promptly investigated and documented. The ESP or designee is responsible for the investigation. If the investigation results in a finding that bullying has occurred, it shall result in prompt and appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion for students, up to and including discharge for employees, and up to and including exclusion from school property for parents, guests, volunteers, and contractors. Individuals may also be referred to law enforcement officials.

The Academy may utilize restorative practices that emphasize repairing the harm to the victim and school community in the correction of bullying behavior, which may include victim-offender conferences that:

- A. Are initiated by the victim.
- B. Are approved by the victim's parent or legal guardian or, if the victim is at least 15, by the victim.
- C. Are attended voluntarily by the victim, a victim advocate, the offender, members of the school community, and supporters of the victim and the offender (the "restorative practices team"); and
- D. Would provide an opportunity for the offender to accept responsibility for the harm caused to those affected, and to participate in setting consequences to repair the harm, such as requiring the student to apologize; participate in community service, restoration of emotional or material losses, or counseling; pay restitution; or any combination of these. The selected consequences and time limits for their completion will be incorporated into an agreement to be signed by all participants.

Where the investigation results in a finding that bullying has occurred, both the parent or legal guardian of a victim of bullying and the parent or legal guardian of a perpetrator of the bullying shall be notified promptly in writing. In addition, administrators investigating alleged bullying may notify parents of the victim or perpetrator of bullying sooner than the conclusion of the investigation if circumstances dictate such earlier notification.

The Academy shall document any prohibited incident that is reported and shall document all verified incidents of bullying and the resulting consequences, including the required notification of parents or guardians and any discipline and referrals.

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The Principal is the school official responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented.

Confidentiality

The Academy will comply with all applicable laws regarding confidentiality of personally identifiable information within education records. In addition, the identity of an individual who reports an act of bullying or cyberbullying shall be and remain confidential. The Principal, or the Principal's designee, shall ensure that the name of an individual who reports an act of bullying or cyberbullying is withheld from the alleged perpetrator and the perpetrator's parent(s), legal guardian(s) and representative(s), and is redacted from any report of bullying or cyberbullying that is publicly disclosed. Please note, however, that if the person reporting the act of bullying is the victim or his/her parent/legal guardian, it may not be possible to address the behavior without disclosing the victim to the alleged perpetrator. The school will discuss this with the victim and victim's parent/legal guardian prior to any such disclosure. Such disclosure must occur prior to any victim-offender conference.

Notification

This policy will be annually circulated to parents and students, and shall be posted on the Academy website.

Reporting

As required by state statute, the Academy shall provide a report of all verified incidents of bullying and other required information to the Michigan Department of Education on an annual basis, according to the form and procedures established by the Department.

As required by state statute, the Academy's procedures with respect to bullying are contained within this policy. No administrative guidelines accompany this policy.

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SECTION D: DISCIPLINARY ACTION

Definition of Discipline

Discipline is the positive direction of behavior toward established standards of conduct, fully understood and based upon reason, judgment, and consideration of the rights of others. Ideal discipline is self-directed and self-controlled. Schools, community, and parents share the responsibility for helping students develop self-discipline. When self-control falters and self-discipline fails, disciplinary action will be used to protect the rights of others and to ensure uninterrupted instruction by teachers for students.

The Principal and the staff will carry out a positive behavior intervention program to help children and families, teachers and support staff, reflect upon their actions and be proactive instead of reactive to teach students self-discipline and acceptable social skills for school and career and college readiness. Restorative Practices are at the core of what we do and are a positive way to repair relationships and positively change behavior. Intervention options need to consider disciplinary referrals as opportunities for learning, with exclusion reserved for the most serious offenses. The consequence must be reasonable in direct relationship to the seriousness of the misconduct or the pattern of misconduct.

Certain rules and procedures are established to guide students through constructive growth and readiness for careers and college. Parents, teachers, and others responsible for the welfare and education of these students need to cooperate to interpret and enforce these rules.

Mitigating Factors to be Considered

Except as otherwise noted below with respect to possession of a firearm in a weapon free school zone, if suspension or expulsion is considered, the Academy shall consider the following factors:

- A. the student's age
- B. the student's disciplinary history
- C. whether the student has a disability
- D. the seriousness of the violation or behavior
- E. whether the violation or behavior committed by the student threatened the safety of any student or staff member
- F. whether restorative practices will be used to address the violation or behavior
- G. whether a lesser intervention would properly address the violation or behavior

Restorative Practices

If the Academy determines that it will utilize restorative practices in addition to or as an alternative to suspension or expulsion of a student, it will engage in restorative practices which emphasize repairing the harm to the victim and school community caused by the student's misconduct.

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Restorative practices may include victim-offender conferences that:

- A. Are initiated by the victim.
- B. Are approved by the victim's parent or legal guardian or, if the victim is at least 15, by the victim.
- C. Are attended voluntarily by the victim, a victim advocate, the offender, members of the school community, and supporters of the victim and the offender (the "restorative practices team"); and
- D. Would provide an opportunity for the offender to accept responsibility for the harm caused to those affected, and to participate in setting consequences to repair the harm, such as requiring the student to apologize; participate in community service, restoration of emotional or material losses, or counseling; pay restitution; or any combination of these. The selected consequences and time limits for their completion will be incorporated into an agreement to be signed by all participants.

Permanent Expulsion

The following acts of misconduct at school, as defined by state law, may be subject to permanent expulsion from all public schools in the State of Michigan:

- 1. Possession of a dangerous weapon**;
- 2. Arson
- 3. Plea, conviction or adjudication of criminal sexual conduct (regardless of where it occurred) against another student enrolled at the Academy;
- 4. Criminal Sexual Conduct at school or on school grounds;
- 5. Physical Assault at school, by a student grade 6 or above, against an employee, volunteer or contractor of the Academy.

Parents or students who are unsure of what conduct is prohibited by each act should consult with the Principal.

****Michigan law does not require the Board to permanently expel a student for possession of a dangerous weapon at school if there is clear and convincing evidence of one of the following:**

- a. The student did not possess the object for use as a weapon or for delivery to another person for use as a weapon.
- b. The student did not knowingly possess the weapon.
- c. The student did not know or have reason to know that the object constituted a dangerous weapon.
- d. The student possessed the weapon at the suggestion, request, or direction, or with the express permission, of the school or police.

There is a rebuttable presumption that permanent expulsion is not justified for a dangerous weapon, other than a firearm, if both of the following are met:

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- a. The Board determines in writing that at least one (1) of the factors listed above has been established in a clear and convincing manner; and
- b. The student has no history of suspension or expulsion.

In addition to the above, the Board will consider the mitigating factors listed above before making a decision to permanently expel a student.

If a student is permanently expelled, s/he may not attend any public school in the state of Michigan for a specified minimum duration of time. The law provides a process and timeline for parents/guardians to petition the Board for reinstatement of the student. The Principal will provide the parent/guardian with procedures to petition for the student to return to school. Parents/guardians should anticipate conditions for reinstatement being established.

For expulsions for dangerous weapons, arson, criminal sexual conduct or assault on an employee, volunteer or contractor, the student will be referred to the Department of Human Services or Department of Community Health. In compliance with Federal law, the Principal will also refer any student expelled for possession of a dangerous weapon to the appropriate law enforcement agency. Parents will receive notice of any such referral.

Additional Mandatory Discipline

For students in grades 6 and above, Michigan law also requires the Board of Directors to remove a student who engages in physical assault against another student, bomb threat or similar threat. The removal may be either a suspension or expulsion but will not be a permanent expulsion. PLEASE NOTE: While an expulsion for one of these offenses is not technically a permanent expulsion from all Michigan public schools, please understand that the local school district may choose not to allow the student to enroll for the duration of the expulsion.

Behaviors Warranting Disciplinary Action

Students are expected to meet classroom and school expectations and are subject to appropriate disciplinary action, including suspension and expulsion, as set forth in the Michigan School Code. The purpose of disciplinary decisions is to develop self-discipline and social skills required for success in college and work. The positive discipline system is based on behavior intervention supports. Behaviors that interfere with the rights of students to achieve academic success and to be educated in a safe, secure environment are categorized into three groupings, with exclusion from school reserved for most serious infractions and repeated and habitual behaviors that deter teaching and learning.

If a student feels unsafe or threatened, the student or the student's parent/guardian is encouraged to contact the Principal immediately. Individual rights include individual responsibility within the bounds of reasonable behavior expected of all members of the school

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community. This applies especially to the freedom of fellow students to receive instruction. Educators must prioritize keeping students engaged in meaningful learning.

Various types of student misconduct are listed. The list is not all-inclusive, and a student who commits an act of misconduct not listed is still subject to disciplinary action.

1. Absenteeism
2. Appropriate Use of Electronic Communication Devices
3. Alcohol and Drugs, including the use, possession, distribution, and/or sale of alcohol and/or illegal drugs, or being under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or attempted use, distribution and/or sale of alcohol and/or drugs including but not limited to, controlled substances as defined by law, marijuana, look-a-like or imitation drug substances and illegal chemical substances
4. Arson or attempted arson
5. Assault (or attempted assault) and Battery
6. Bullying/Cyber-bullying
7. Cheating/Academic Misconduct
8. Defacement of Property
9. Destruction of Property
10. Disorderly Conduct
11. Extortion
12. Failure to Serve Assigned Detention
13. False Fire Alarm or Bomb Threat
14. False Identification
15. Felony
16. Fighting
17. Fireworks
18. Forgery
19. Fraud
20. Gambling
21. Gang Activity
22. Harassment/Intimidation
23. Hazing
24. Improper, Negligent, or Reckless Operation of a Motor Vehicle
25. Inappropriate Dress
26. Insubordination/Unruly Conduct
27. Interference with School Authorities
28. Leaving school without Permission
29. Loitering
30. Microaggressions that are commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults.

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31. Persistent Disobedience
32. Possession of Inappropriate Personal Property
33. Physical Assault
34. Profanity and/or Obscenity toward Students
35. Profanity and/or Obscenity toward Staff
36. Public Display of Affection
37. Robbery
38. Sexual Assault and Battery or Other Illegal Behavior
39. Sexual Misconduct that is indecent/consensual, amorous kissing or similar displays of affection, indecent exposure, or of a sexual nature
40. Sexual Harassment (Level 1)
41. Sexual Harassment (Level 2)
42. Smoking, possession or use of tobacco products, including electronic cigarettes/vaporizers and paraphernalia
43. Tardiness
44. Technology Abuse
45. Theft or Possession of Stolen Property
46. Threat/Coercion
47. Trespassing
48. Truancy
49. Weapons: Dangerous Instruments
50. Weapons: Dangerous Weapons
51. Weapons: Use of Legitimate Tools as Weapons (including, but not limited to, pens, pencils, compasses, and combs) Weapons: Look-a-Likes
52. Any violation of this code, policies of the Board of Directors, administrative guidelines, or local, state, or federal law
53. Any other conduct considered by the Principal or teachers to be disruptive, disrespectful, or disobedient.

In the following six cases, discipline referrals must be made immediately to the Principal:

1. Fighting
2. Assault and or battery toward a teacher or another student
3. Student actions that disrupt the class to the extent that the teacher's authority is being challenged and the teacher is losing control of the class
4. Student actions which indicate the use of drugs, alcoholic beverages, or other behavior-altering substances
5. Student actions that present a danger to the safety and well-being of anyone in the school
6. Other criminal acts in violation of local, state, or federal laws.

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The Principal is to recommend long term suspension of more than ten days or expulsion for the following first-time offenses occurring on school property, at school-sponsored activities, or for school-related reasons:

1. Threats against the school
2. Arson or attempted arson, including setting fire to anything on school property
3. Assault and/or battery of an employee or student
4. Possession, use, or sale of a firearm or dangerous weapon
5. Manufacturing, growing, distribution, and/or sale of drugs and/or drug paraphernalia, including all edibles containing controlled substances
6. Extortion, attempted extortion, robbery, and/or larceny
7. Immoral conduct
8. Hazing
9. Unlawful assembly and/or riot
10. Possession, use, distribution, sale, lighting, or discharge of explosive devices
11. Students found guilty or not innocent of a crime that resulted in or could have resulted in injuries to others, regardless of where the crime occurred.

Discipline Procedures

At all times when students are under school authority, they are expected to conduct themselves in an orderly, courteous, dignified, and respectable manner. In an effort to maintain an orderly atmosphere in the school and on the school grounds, the teacher's authority extends to all students, whether or not the teacher teaches the student in class.

Disciplinary Actions

Disruptive student behavior is subject to disciplinary action by the teacher and/or Principal. Principal and staff are expected to use respectful and accountable intervention and restorative strategies, such as staff and student/parent conferences, auxiliary staff intervention and counseling programs, student programs for conflict resolution, peer mediation, anger management, anger prevention, and social skills. Intervention strategies may include anger management and conflict resolution programs for parents. Community based services may be called upon when appropriate. Actions taken by teachers may include but are not limited to:

1. Daily/weekly progress reports for students and parents
2. Time out in the classroom or other secure, supervised area
3. Conference with the student
4. Oral and/or written reprimand
5. Detention during, before and after school
6. In school alternative with another teacher
7. Relocation to another classroom for a brief period of time
8. Relocation to blended learning environment
9. Conference with a parent
10. Consultation with a behavior specialist

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11. School service assignment
12. Denial of participation in school activities
13. Give students a choice of consequences
14. One-day suspension until a satisfactory conference with a parent is held.

A discipline referral should be sent to the Principal when the teacher has exhausted in-classroom actions and feels that the student's improper behavior cannot be corrected through classroom management practices without sacrificing safety and/or learning for other students.

After consultation with the student and the teacher (if needed), the Principal will determine the course of action required to provide a safe, secure school. Action taken by a Principal toward students who are disruptive may include but is not limited to:

1. A conference with the student and/or the parents
2. A verbal and or written reprimand
3. Consultation with behavior interventionist, social worker, counselor, and outside agencies
4. Entering into Individual Student Behavior Plan (ISBP) between student, parent, teacher, and Principal/designated representative
5. Academy appointed advisor to cooperate with parent/guardian to ensure follow-through of ISBP
6. Detention
7. Focused in school academic alternatives
8. Counseling and psychological services
9. School service assignment
10. Removal from co-curricular and extra-curricular programs until ISBP satisfied
11. Referral of student and parent/guardian to a parent program
12. Out-of-school suspension (OSS) (up to five days and up to ten days with approval of the Principal's supervisor);
13. Recommendation for long-term suspension (more than ten days) with approval of the Principal's supervisor and Board of Directors
14. Recommendation for expulsion with approval of the Principal's supervisor.

The Principal, with approval of his/her supervisor, may request an emotional, behavioral, and/or chemical dependency evaluation and treatment and/or counseling recommendation with attention to applicable special education rights afforded children with disabilities.

Corporal punishment is prohibited by Michigan law and is not to be used in any situation.

Incorrigible Behavior: A child is incorrigible when the child repeatedly or habitually engages in unacceptable behavior as defined in the Code of Student Conduct and disrupts the school and

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or classroom to the extent that the Principal's and or teacher's authority is being challenged. Incurable behavior is defined by the Michigan Revised School Code as "persistent disobedience." Incurable behavior, and other patterns of behavior, may result in long-term suspension (more than ten school days) of a student from the Academy. Parents and adult caregivers enter a partnership in responsibility with the Board of Directors to cooperate with the Principal, faculty, and staff to demonstrate responsible behavior in situations involving their child. The Principal and faculty expect parents/caretakers to share responsibility for each student's responsible actions, academically and behaviorally and to enter a partnership in responsibility.

Patterns of Behavior:

1. Parents send and do not support their children at school.
 - a. Parent's low expectations: academic and behavior
 - b. Parent's reluctance to take responsibility for their own actions
 - c. Parent being disrespectful to staff through verbal and non-verbal behavior
 - d. Parent's failure to check in properly, disruption of classrooms, and assaulting employees
 - e. Failure of parents to cooperate with school in behavior improvement plan
2. Students not accepting academic responsibility for being on grade level and above.
3. Student failure to attend school responsibly (absences, tardies, and not responsible).
4. Student discipline problems.
 - a. Bringing community issues to school and trying to solve them at school.
 - b. Students having low expectations: academic and behavior.
 - c. Student's reluctance to take responsibility for their own actions.
 - d. Students talking back to teachers.
 - e. Rude, disrespectful behavior that escalates into overly aggressive behavior.
 - f. Not following teacher directions.
 - g. Leaving the classroom without the teacher's permission.
 - h. Lying about situations.
 - i. Damaging school property.

Definitions. In or Out-of-school suspensions are considered in the following classifications:

- **Short-Term:** Short-term suspensions occur when a student is suspended for one school day, up to and including ten school days. The student's rights and privileges of attending school, including extra-curricular and co-curricular activities, are suspended. The child's teacher may suspend him or her for one day or until a parent comes to school and holds a satisfactory conference with the teacher. The Principal can suspend a student for up to ten school days with approval of the Principal's supervisor.

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The Principal or designee must provide the student and the parent/guardian with oral or written notice of the misbehavior and an explanation of the situation. The student will be given the opportunity to tell the Principal his/her version of the event(s). The Principal's decision is final and not subject to appeal. The parent shall be notified in writing of the action taken.

An in-school suspension may be assigned instead of out-of-school based on the situation. A plan for the suspension will be developed by the Assistant Principal or Student Advocate. The student will be in-school but will not be participating with the class during this time under supervision. In-school suspensions may include specific workshops focusing on educating the student on appropriate behaviors and/or behavior managements, community service, restorative circles, reflective activities. Students must follow the Code of Student Conduct at all times.

- **Long-Term:** A student can be suspended for more than ten (10) days but less than sixty (60) days following approval of the Principal's recommendation by the Board of Directors or its appointed representative. Long Term Suspension from school excludes the student from regular school attendance and participation in academy activities until readmitted by the Board. The Standard of review is the preponderance of the evidence, and the school is required by law to do what is in the best interests of the school. While a student's individual situation will be considered, the decision must reflect what is best for all students and staff.
- **Expulsion:** A student can be expelled only by action of the Board of Directors based upon recommendation of the Principal or his/her designee. Expulsion from school excludes the student from regular school attendance and participation in academy activities for the duration of the expulsion. An expulsion can be from sixty (60) school days up to one hundred eighty (180) school days.
- **Notification:** A letter from the Principal or his/her designee will be sent to the student's parent(s) when the student is assigned detention or out-of-school suspension or is recommended for long-term suspension or expulsion.

The suspension notice for in or *out-of-school suspension (ten or fewer days)* shall include at least the following information:

1. Reason(s) for the suspension and date(s) of suspension are to be clearly stated
2. A parent will be contacted to establish a date and time for a readmission conference with the Principal
3. The student will not be allowed to participate in classroom and school activities during the suspension period
4. The student is not to go on school property (for out-of-school suspension)

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5. Appeal procedures shall be clearly stated in detail.

The suspension notice for long-term suspension/expulsion (greater than 10 days) shall include at least the following information:

First Notice and Invitation to Meet

1. The reason(s) for a long-term suspension or expulsion are to be clearly stated
2. A parent should be informed that an investigation is being conducted by the Principal and what the most severe recommendation might be
3. A date and time for a conference is given when a parent, accompanied by the student, are invited to come to school for a conference with the Principal or designee and/or other advisors to present and hear information
4. The student will not be allowed to participate in classroom and school activities during the suspension; and
5. The student is not to go on school property or attend school activities.
6. Information about whether the student will be able to continue to complete homework during the suspension. This is never an option for an expulsion.

Following the conference, the Principal will review the facts with his/her supervisor, and they may decide to recommend long-term suspension or expulsion to the Board of Directors. The Principal or his/her supervisor will inform the parent(s) and student of the recommendation to reinstate with conditions, long-term suspension, or expulsion. If the Principal recommends long-term suspension or expulsion, the Principal or his/her supervisor will write to the President of the Board and send a copy of the notice to the parent(s) including at least the following information:

Second Notice to the Parent/Guardian of Recommendation to the Board of Directors

1. The recommended action and reason(s) for the recommendation are clearly stated
2. The right of the student and his/her parent(s) or guardian to a hearing before the Board of Directors or its designees for long-term suspension and for expulsion recommendations, including the time, date, and location of the hearing
3. The right to inspect the student's school records and related documents
4. List of all witnesses that may testify
5. The right to an adult advocate, including parents, other adult advisors up to and including legal counsel
6. The right to a hearing held in closed session if requested by the student/parent
7. Copy of Board Policy 5610 Emergency Removal, Suspension and Expulsion of Students, including discipline hearing processes and appeal procedures.

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Subsequently, the Principal will follow-up with the student and his or her parent or guardian of the time, place, and location of the hearing with the Board of Directors or its designee to ensure delivery of the notice and to respond to questions.

Students with Disabilities. Students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) are responsible for following the Code of Student Conduct. Students with disabilities may be suspended for inappropriate behavior. In making decisions concerning inappropriate behavior by students in Special Education, the teacher and the Principal are to consult with the student's Special Education resource room teacher to ensure consistency with the student's IEP. Principal is responsible for consistency with specific special education procedures.

Principal may recommend a student with disabilities for long-term suspension or expulsion (greater than ten days) by following these procedures:

1. The Principal will follow regular procedures for long-term suspension or expulsion as described above.
2. Once the Principal has made a recommendation for long-term suspension or expulsion of a student with disabilities, he or she shall hold the Manifestation Determination Review to determine:
 1. if the student is eligible for special education services
 2. if the student is appropriately placed in a special education program; and
 3. if there is a causal relationship between the student's disabling condition and the conduct for which he or she is to be disciplined.
3. The parent will be notified in writing of the time and place of the hearing and its purpose.
4. If a student with a disability is suspended or expelled, the school shall offer free and appropriate public educational services for the duration of the suspension/expulsion or until the student enrolls in another school.

Appeal Procedures

In-school Disciplinary Actions and Out-of-School Suspensions of Ten (10) School Days or Less

There is no right of appeal for discipline decisions of ten (10) school days or less. Nonetheless, should a parent disagree with disciplinary action of the school in these situations, the parent is encouraged to make an appointment with the Principal to discuss the decision. If the parent is still dissatisfied after meeting with the Principal, the parent may contact the Superintendent in

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writing within three school days of the meeting with the Principal to provide the reasons the parent believes the disciplinary action is not warranted. The Superintendent's decision is final.

Expulsions and Long-Term Suspensions (more than ten days)

Long-term suspension of more than ten days and expulsion occur when the Board of Directors or a designee terminates the student's rights and privileges to attend school, including extra-curricular and co-curricular activities. Long-term suspension is eleven (11) to fifty-nine (59) school days, while expulsion is for sixty (60) to one hundred eighty (180) school days. A permanent expulsion is for an indefinite period of time, the minimum of which is set by Michigan law. Reinstatement processes for permanently expelled students are outlined in Board Policy.

Following the Principal's recommendation for long term suspension of more than ten days or expulsion, the Board of Directors, or its designated representative, will hold a hearing within the ten days suspension period to determine whether to impose a long-term suspension or expulsion. The student and parent/guardian must be notified of the allegation, the recommended disciplinary action, the time, date, and location of the hearing, and of their right to attend and participate in the hearing. Prior to the hearing, families will be given an opportunity to review all evidence as well as a list of all persons scheduled to testify.

If the hearing is conducted by the Board of Directors, the decision is final and not subject to appeal. If it is held by a designee or hearing panel of 2 Board members, the parent may appeal the decision to the Board of Directors as follows:

Appeal requests must be made in writing by the parents to the Principal within five calendar days of receipt of the suspension decision, or the right to appeal is waived. The petition to appeal the designee's decision shall be in writing and contain the reason the designee's decision should be reviewed or reconsidered.

The parent/guardian is encouraged to provide the Board of Directors with any information that supports the parent/guardian's position.

All appeals of decisions by Board designated representatives shall be considered by the Board of Directors at its next regularly scheduled meeting. The Board shall make a final decision on the disciplinary action that is appropriate, and its decision shall be final.

CLOSING

"The Code of Student Conduct—A Partnership in Responsibility" has been developed to communicate the responsibilities that all stakeholders share in ensuring every student a safe,

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secure place for learning. Our Partnership relies on promises kept, trust, good faith, and a commitment to the well-being of all students.

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SECTION E: CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT CHECKLIST

A parent or adult caretaker is expected to read this Code of Student Conduct carefully and review each section of this handbook with his or her child. The student and the parent are expected to sign the verification form and return the entire checklist to the school.

1. THE SCHOOL HAS AUTHORITY OVER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES.
 - The school has authority over the school grounds before, during, and after school hours.
 - The school has authority off the school grounds at school-related events.
 - The school has authority over school-sponsored transportation.
 - The school has authority over activities on school-owned electronic devices regardless of where they are used.
2. LEARNING IS THE PRIMARY PURPOSE OF SCHOOL.
 - Students will be expected to behave in a way that provides for uninterrupted learning.
 - Come prepared with materials and assignments.
3. STUDENT ATTITUDES ARE IMPORTANT TO THE SCHOOL.
 - Students are expected to display positive attitudes, such as honesty, respect, tolerance, and courtesy.
4. STUDENTS ARE TO WEAR THE SCHOOL APPROVED UNIFORM.
 - Clothing must be clean and modest and consistent with dress guidelines.
 - Clothing should be free of profanity, obscenity, vulgarity, racist language, tobacco, substance or alcohol abuse.
5. STUDENTS HAVE THE RIGHT TO EXPECT A SAFE SCHOOL.
 - School staff in cooperation with parents and students must ensure safe and secure places for teaching, learning, and school-related events.
 - Weapons and acts of violence will not be tolerated.
6. STUDENTS MUST LEARN TO GET ALONG WITH OTHERS.
 - Students can expect courtesy, fairness, and respect.
 - Students must offer courtesy, fairness, and respect.
 - Bullying, harassment, and intimidation will not be tolerated.
7. STUDENTS MAY EXPRESS THOUGHTS AND OPINIONS.
 - Use suitable methods of expression and wait for an appropriate time.

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- Use of profanity or obscenity in language, gestures, and clothing will not be tolerated.
 - Threats are not protected expressions of student speech.
8. ATTENDING SCHOOL EACH DAY IS VERY IMPORTANT.
- Students should be in school, on time, every day prepared for instruction.
9. VANDALISM WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.
- Personal and school property must be respected and cared for by everybody.
 - Damage or destruction of school property will not be tolerated.
 - Damage of the property of others will not be tolerated..
10. NBCA'S CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT IS FOR ALL STUDENTS.
- Parents, students, and staff are responsible for knowing the contents of this booklet.
11. THE PRINCIPAL IS THE SCHOOL'S LEADER.
- The Principal has the right to make a final decision when rules have been broken.
12. SERIOUS MISBEHAVIOR CAN RESULT IN SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES.
- Suspension means that the student is not allowed to attend class for one or more days.
 - Long Term Suspension and Expulsion means that a student may not attend school or be present on school property.

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STUDENT AND PARENT AGREEMENTS FOR SIGNATURE (2024-2025)

27 Verification of Partnership Agreement

Students and Parents

Each student and his or her parents or adult caretaker are expected to enter into the Partnership in Responsibility outlined in the Code of Student Conduct as a condition of enrollment at the Academy. To verify that you have received the *Code of Student Conduct* and this checklist, please sign the following statement, and return it to the Academy immediately:

STUDENT: I have received and attempted to review the Family and Student Handbook & Code of Student Conduct with my parent or guardian and accept my responsibilities.

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Print Name: _____ Grade: _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN: I have received the Family and Student Handbook & Code of Student Conduct and have or will review it with my child and understand my responsibilities in the partnership.

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

Print Name: _____

TEACHER & PRINCIPAL: I have reviewed the Family and Student Handbook & Code of Student Conduct, understand its contents, and will work to fulfill my responsibilities in the partnership with parents and students.

Teacher Signature: _____ Date: _____

Principal Signature: _____ Date: _____

Failure of a student and his or her parents or guardian to sign this verification form does not relieve the student and his/her parent(s)/caretaker of their responsibilities to demonstrate appropriate behavior at the Academy at all times. If this agreement is completed

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electronically and a verified digital signature is not available, NBCA will consider a typed signature to be the same as if signed on paper.

28 OPT IN Agreement for Regular School Communications

I understand my contact information will be used for regular school communication including emails and automated phone calls and texts to my mobile device. I understand that I may not Opt In or Out of school closing or crisis communications.

Parent Signature: _____

Date: _____

Print Name: _____

28.1 FERPA Notice of Directory Information and Opt Out Form (Revised)

The School may disclose appropriately designated "directory information" without written consent, unless the parent or adult student advises the School to the contrary by filling out, signing and returning this form to the Academy. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow the School to include this type of information in certain school publications.

The following list of uses are those that the Academy would commonly disclose a student's directory information. **Please initial the ones in which you DO NOT give the Academy permission to use your student's directory information. DO NOT initial anything if you do not wish to opt out of items on this list..**

IMPORTANT: INITIAL AT 1 AND 2 MEANS YOUR CHILD WILL NOT BE INCLUDED FOR PICTURE DAY, YEARBOOK, OR FREE HEARING AND VISION SCREENING PROVIDED BY THE KCHD.

- ___ 1. Lifetouch Inc. for student photo (picture day) and annual yearbook (name, grade)
- ___ 2. Kent County Health Department for Hearing and Vision Screening
- ___ 3. Playbill – showing student's role in a play, music production, or talent shows
- ___ 4. Honor roll or other recognition
- ___ 5. Graduation Programs
- ___ 6. Sports and Activity Sheets
- ___ 7. Sharing my student's directory information with colleges or post high school institutions.

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Directory information, which is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released, can also be disclosed to outside organizations without a parent's or adult student's prior written consent. Two (2) Federal laws require the Board to provide military recruiters, upon request, with three (3) directory information categories, names, addresses, and telephone listings - unless parents or adult students have advised the Academy that they do not want their student's information disclosed without their prior written consent.

Please indicate which **Directory Information items** that you do NOT give permission for release to third parties (This opt out list does not apply to the above common list of uses unless an item on said list is checked):

Student Information	Opt Out – “X”
A. Student's names, addresses, telephone numbers, email addresses	
B. Parents’ names, addresses, telephone numbers, email addresses	
C. Student’s date and place of birth	
D. Participation in officially-recognized extra-curricular activities/sports	
E. Height and weight, if a member of an athletic team	
F. Dates of attendance and grade designation	
G. Date of graduation	
H. Current and previous educational institutions attended	
I. Achievement awards or honors received; honor rolls	
J. Scholarships	
K. Photographs or videos of students participating in school activities, events or programs, their artwork on webpages, or school social media accounts.	

The Board will make the above information available upon a legitimate request unless a parent, guardian, or adult student has opted-out of provision of this information by returning this Opt-Out Form to the School Office within 14 days of receipt. Directory information will not be provided to any organization for any profit-making purposes. ***If you do not wish to opt-out of any of the above common uses, you do not need to return this form or take any other action.***

Print Name of Student: _____

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Print Name of Person Signing and State Relationship: _____

Or state if student is an adult and signing on his/her own behalf

Signature of parent/guardian/adult student: _____

Date Received by School: _____ Staff Signature: _____

29 Student, Parent, Teacher, and Principal Compact

29.1 Student Agreement

I will work to the best of my ability. Therefore, I will strive to do the following:

- ☐ Come to school ready to learn
- ☐ Return my assignments and home activities completed and on time
- ☐ Follow the rules of the school
- ☐ Do my part in keeping my school clean and safe
- ☐ Set aside a regular time and place to complete homework
- ☐ Show my school communications and papers to a parent or guardian
- ☐ Attend school regularly and be punctual
- ☐ Have the supplies I need for class
- ☐ Show respect for myself, my school, and other students
- ☐ Always try to work to the best of my ability
- ☐ Believe that I CAN LEARN
- ☐ Ask for help when I do not understand, or I am not sure what to do

Signature: _____ Date: _____ (open house)

Signature: _____ Date: _____ (conference1)

Signature: _____ Date: _____ (conference2)

29.2 Parent/Guardian Agreement

I want and accept the responsibility of helping my child to reach his full potential. Therefore, I will encourage him or her by doing the following:

- ☐ See that my child is punctual and attends school regularly.
- ☐ Supply a nourishing breakfast and a healthy lunch and snack each day
- ☐ Support the school staff with maintaining proper discipline
- ☐ Encourage my child to be respectful of diverse cultures

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- ☐ Have a time and place for my child to do his/her homework and provide support as needed
- ☐ Have on-going communication with my child's teacher and school
- ☐ Read to my child and let him/her see me reading every day
- ☐ Encourage my child's efforts to do his or her best
- ☐ Encourage positive attitudes
- ☐ Stay aware of what my child is learning
- ☐ Attend parent-teacher conferences at least twice a year

Signature: _____ Date: _____ (open house)
 Signature: _____ Date: _____ (conference1)
 Signature: _____ Date: _____ (conference2)

29.3 Teacher Agreement

In order to succeed, students must have the opportunity. I am committed to outstanding achievement by my students and will strive to do the following:

- ☐ Provide an environment conducive to learning
- ☐ Have high expectations for my students
- ☐ Use methods and techniques that work best for the students in my classroom
- ☐ Support student learning that encourages students to try for even higher goals
- ☐ Maintain open lines of effective communication with my students and their parents
- ☐ Involve parents in learning
- ☐ Respect the students, their parents, and the diverse culture of the school
- ☐ Show the care and concern that I have for all of my students
- ☐ Make efficient and effective use of academic learning time.
- ☐ Provide a safe, secure, and caring environment for learning and developing.
- ☐ Provide an enriched and challenging curriculum utilizing the school's approved curriculum, aligned to state and national standards.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

29.4 Principal Agreement

I support high expectations across all programs and activities of the Academy and will do the following:

- ☐ Provide a safe, secure, positive atmosphere for learning.

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- ☐ Provide an environment that allows for open communication among teachers, parents, and students.
- ☐ Support school functions.
- ☐ I have reviewed the Code of Student Conduct, understand its contents, and will work to fulfill my responsibilities in the partnership with parents and student.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

This Compact should be signed at the beginning of each school year: The Compact content should be reviewed annually, at the Title I Review Meeting.

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30 Acceptable Use Policy of Technology Resources

STUDENTS – GRADES PreK - 8

The purpose of this Agreement is to grant access to and define acceptable use of the Academy's technology resources. Technology Resources are any type of instrument, device, machine, equipment, technology, or software that is capable of transmitting, acquiring, or intercepting, any telephone, electronic, data, internet, audio, video, or radio transmissions, signals, telecommunications, or services, and include without limitation (1) internal and external network infrastructure, (2) Internet and network access, (3) computers, (4) servers, (5) storage devices, (6) peripherals, (7) software, and (8) messaging or communication systems.

In exchange for the use of the Academy's Technology Resources either at school or away from school, you understand and agree to the following:

- A. Your use of the District's Technology Resources is a privilege that may be revoked by the District at any time and for any reason.
- B. You have no expectation of privacy when using the District's Technology Resources. The District reserves the right to monitor and inspect all use of its Technology Resources, including, without limitation, personal e-mail and voice-mail communications, computer files, data bases, web logs, audit trails, or any other electronic transmissions accessed, distributed, or used through the Technology Resources. The District also reserves the right to remove any material from the Technology Resources that the District, at its sole discretion, chooses to, including, without limitation, any information that the District determines to be unlawful, obscene, pornographic, harassing, intimidating, disruptive, or that otherwise violates this Agreement.
- C. The Technology Resources do not provide you a "public forum". You may not use the Technology Resources for commercial purposes or to support or oppose political positions or candidates unless expressly authorized in advance by a teacher or administrator as part of a class project or activity. You may, however, use the Technology Resources to contact or communicate with public officials.
- D. The District's Technology Resources are intended for use only by registered users. You are responsible for your account/password and any access to the Technology Resources made using your account/password. Any damage or liability arising from the use of your account/password is your responsibility. Use of your account by someone other than you are prohibited and may be grounds for suspension from the Technology Resources and other disciplinary consequences for both you and the person(s) using your account/password.
- E. You may not use the Technology Resources to engage in bullying, which is defined as: Any written, verbal, or physical act, or any electronic communication, that is intended or that a reasonable person would know is likely to harm one or more pupils either directly or indirectly by doing any of the following:
 1. Substantially interfering with educational opportunities, benefits, or programs of one or more pupils,
 2. Adversely affecting the ability of a pupil to participate in, or benefit from, the educational programs or activities by placing the pupil in reasonable fear of physical harm or by causing substantial emotional distress.
 3. Having an actual and substantial detrimental effect on a pupil's physical or mental health; or
 4. Causing substantial disruption in, or substantial interference with, the orderly operation of the school.Use of other communication/messaging devices (including devices not owned by the District) to engage in bullying may be grounds for discipline under the District's Code of Student Conduct and/or building Student Handbook.
- F. If you misuse the Technology Resources, your access to the Technology Resources may be suspended and you may be subject to other disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion. Misuse includes, but is not limited to:
 1. Accessing or attempting to access material that is "harmful to minors." Material that is "harmful to minors" includes any picture, image, graphic image file, or other visual depiction that (1) taken as a

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whole and with respect to minors, appeals to a prurient interest in nudity, sex; (2) depicts, describes, or represents, in a patently offensive way with respect to what is suitable for minors, an actual or simulated sexual act or sexual contact, actual or simulated normal or perverted sexual acts, or a lewd exhibition of the genitals; and (3) taken as a whole lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value as to minors.

2. Accessing or attempting to access material that is unlawful, obscene, pornographic, profane, or vulgar.
 3. Accessing or attempting to access material that is inappropriate for minors.
 4. Bullying (as defined in paragraph E).
 5. Sexting, which includes, without limitation, possessing, sending, or distributing nude, sexually explicit, or sexually suggestive photographs, videos, or other visual depictions of yourself or another person.
 6. Vandalism, which includes, without limitation, any malicious or intentional attempt to harm, steal, destroy, or disrupt user data, school material, or school hardware or software.
 7. Hacking, which includes, without limitation, gaining or attempting to gain access to, modifying, or obtaining copies of, information belonging to others or information you are not authorized to access.
 8. Unauthorized copying or use of licenses or copyrighted software.
 9. Plagiarizing, which includes the unauthorized distributing, copying, using, or holding out as your own, material that was written or created by someone else, without permission of, and attribution to, the author/creator.
 10. Posting or distributing confidential or inappropriate information meant to harass, intimidate, or embarrass others.
 11. Allowing someone else to use your account or password or not preventing unauthorized access to Technology Resources when leaving them unattended.
 12. Using or soliciting the use of or attempting to use or discover the account information or password of, another user.
 13. Attempting to or successfully disabling security features, including technology protection measures required under the Children's Internet Protection Act ("CIPA").
 14. Misusing equipment or altering system software without permission.
 15. Commercial for-profit activities, advertising, political lobbying, or sending mass mailings or spam. However, you may contact a public official to express an opinion on a topic of interest.
 16. Using the Technology Resources in any way that violates any federal, state, or local law or rule, or the District's Code of Conduct and/or building Handbook
- G. You must promptly disclose to your teacher or other school employee any content you view or receive over the Technology Resources that is inappropriate or that makes you feel uncomfortable, harassed, threatened, or bullied, or that contains sexually explicit content. You should not delete such content until instructed to do so by a staff member.
- H. It is the policy of the District, as a recipient of certain federal funds, to monitor the online activities of its minor students and provide technology protection measures on its computers with Internet access designed to prevent minors from accessing visual depictions that are (1) obscene. (2) child pornography; or (3) harmful to minors.
- I. It is the policy of the District to prohibit its minor students from (1) accessing inappropriate matter on the Internet; (2) engaging in hacking or other unlawful online activities; and (3) accessing materials that are harmful to minors. It is also the policy of the District to educate students about cyberbullying awareness and response, and about appropriate online behavior, including disclosing, disseminating, or using personal information, and safely and appropriately interacting with other individuals in social networking websites, chat rooms, by e-mail, and other forms of direct electronic communications.
- J. The District does not guarantee that measures described in paragraphs H and I will provide any level of safety or security or that they will successfully block all inappropriate material from the District's students. You agree that you will not intentionally engage in any behavior that was intended to be prevented by paragraphs H and I.

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- K. The District does not warrant or guarantee that its Technology Resources will meet any specific requirement, or that they will be error free or uninterrupted; nor will the District be liable for any damages (including lost data, information, or time) sustained or incurred in connection with the use, operation, or inability to use the Technology Resources.
- L. You are responsible for the proper use of the Technology Resources and will be held accountable for any damage to, or replacement of, the Technology Resources caused by your inappropriate use.

STUDENT AGREEMENT

I agree to follow this Agreement and all rules and regulations that may be added from time to time by the District or its Internet Service Provider. I also agree to follow all rules in the District's Code of Conduct and/or building Handbook. Any additional rules, regulations, and policies are available in the Board of Education adopted policies. As a condition of using the Technology Resources, I agree to release the District and its board members, agents, and employees, including its Internet Service Provider, from all liability related to my use or inability to use the Technology Resources. I understand that data I send or receive over the Technology Resources is not private. I consent to having the District monitor and inspect my use of the Technology Resources, including any electronic communications that I send or receive through the Technology Resources

I have read and understand the Acceptable Use Policy. I agree to adhere to its guidelines.

Student Signature _____ **Date** _____

PARENT AGREEMENT

I have read this Agreement and agree that as a condition of my child's use of the District's Technology Resources, I release the District and its board members, agents, and employees, including its Internet Service Provider, from all liability related to my child's use or inability to use the Technology Resources. I also indemnify the District and its board members, agents, and employees, including its Internet Service Provider, for any fees, expenses, or damages incurred as a result of my child's use, or misuse, of the District's Technology Resources.

I authorize the District to consent to the sharing of information about my child to website operators as necessary to enable my child to participate in any program, course, or assignment requiring such consent under the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act.

I understand that data my child sends or receives over the District's Technology Resources is not private. I consent to having the District monitor and inspect my child's use of the Technology Resources, including any electronic communications that my child sends or receives through the Technology Resources.

I understand and agree that my child will not be able to use the District's Technology Resources until this Agreement has been signed by both my child and me.

I understand that the Academy will maintain an active list of all websites that are used in the district that collect "personally identifiable student information" in compliance with COPPA (Children's Online Privacy and Protection Act).

I have read and understand the Acceptable Use Policy. I agree to adhere to its guidelines.

Parent Signature _____ **Date** _____

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