



**Opportunities** Academy

# **Student and Family Handbook**

## **Table of Contents**

<b>Culture</b>	<b>2</b>
OA Vision and Values	2
Communication with Parents and Families	2
Age of Majority	3
Uniform	3
Student Entrepreneurs	4
Student Cell Phones	4
Student Belongings	4
Student Code of Conduct	4
Discipline Policy and Procedures for Students with Disabilities	5
Reasons for Suspension	12
Due Process for Suspensions	14
Reasons for Expulsions	14
Expulsion Due Process	16
Harassment and Bullying	19
Student Restraint and Seclusion	20
<b>Academics</b>	<b>27</b>
Homework Assistance	27
Promotion and Retention	27
Year-Round Programming	27
<b>School Operations</b>	<b>28</b>
Board information	28
Enrollment	28
Statements of Compliance and Commitment Forms	29
School Schedule	29
School Closures	30
Compulsory Attendance	30
Non-Discrimination Policy and Grievance Procedure	34
Nursing	36
Student Paychecks	36
Student Searches	37
Student Transportation Policy	37
Student Technology Use Policy	39
Student Cell Phone Use	41
Tobacco Use	41
<b>Student Handbook Appendices</b>	<b>42</b>
Appendix A: Teacher Bill of Rights	42
Appendix B: Student Dues and Fees	44
Appendix C: Parent Bill of Rights	45
Appendix D: Parent Access to Instructional Materials	47
Appendix E: Parent Notice re: Storage and Administration of Epinephrine	48
Appendix F: Annual Notice re: Consent to Bill Medicaid and Share Information with LDH	49
Appendix G: Policies for Pregnant and Parenting Students	50
Appendix H: Commitments - Family Copy	50

## **Culture**

### **OA Vision and Values**

Opportunities Academy prepares students to create lives of unlimited opportunity by teaching them to self-advocate, live independently, and obtain employment.

Our values guide us as we work to achieve our vision:

- **Community**-We build, and maintain, positive relationships while collaborating on shared outcomes.
- **Gratitude**-We are gracious, and express appreciation, constantly.
- **Excellence**-We set the bar high; and we do the work to reach it.
- **Responsibility**-We rely on ourselves to take action; and we hold each other accountable,

### **Communication with Parents and Families**

Each student/parent must help us keep our records up to date with a current parent/guardian phone number, as well as a current mailing address and emergency contacts. When there is a change in any of these, please communicate that change to the front office by calling 504-503-1421. We will not release students without prior arrangements to anyone not listed as an emergency contact. Please keep this information current.

Schoolrunner Parent Access provides parents and student access to student attendance, grades, behavior and other data. Information is in real time. Your login and password will be provided by the school. Parents are also encouraged to call and/or email teachers if they have questions about a student's progress.

Quarterly IEP progress reports, IEP meetings, and regular phone calls and emails are designed to keep all parents informed regularly about student progress in daily activities at OA. Parents are also encouraged to attend regular OA Open House events to become better acquainted with our program and staff.

OA staff is committed to communicating openly and frequently with our students and families. There are several ways we will communicate throughout the year:

- Calls, texts, and emails to/from staff.
- Calls to/from main office: The main office will be open from 9 am-3 pm. We will do our best to answer any phone calls that come in during that time. If we are unable to answer the phone, please leave a message and we will reply within 24

hours. You will also receive automated phone calls and texts from the main office to inform you of important events and updates.

- **Written Communication:** OA staff will often backpack notices home regarding events, class community trips, and other important information. We ask that you read all notes sent home from school and promptly return any forms that OA may need to serve your student.
- **School Website, Social Media, and Newsletters:** Our school website, [oa.collegiateacademies.org](http://oa.collegiateacademies.org), will have the most up-to-date calendar and announcements, as well as digital copies of important documents. You can also follow us on Facebook and Instagram (@caopportunitiesacademy) to see your student in action!
- **Visits:** To arrange a visit to the school, please contact your student's teacher or call the main office. Please be mindful that we need to work around teaching and meeting schedules to thoughtfully schedule a time to meet with you and may not be able to accommodate day-of, or drop in, requests.
- **Meetings:** If the school requests a meeting with you and your child, we need to discuss something important with you. If you would like to meet with a specific teacher or administrator, please reach out to that staff member directly.

### **Age of Majority**

Immediately upon your child's 18th birthday, he/she/they will reach the age of majority in Louisiana. In accordance with the provision of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Bulletin 1706; Regulations for Implementation of the Children and Exceptionalities Act, Subpart A, when an individual with an exceptionality reaches the age of majority and has not been determined to be incompetent (meaning there is not an interdiction, tutorship, or assigned power of attorney for that individual), the local education agency shall provide any notice required by IDEA and 1706 to both the individual and his or her parents. All other rights under the Act and Bulletin transfer to the individual.

What does all of that mean? Unless you have provided OA with documentation stating that your student is under continuing tutorship, is fully interdicted under law, or that you have power of attorney, the student is now in charge of all decisions regarding his/her education and can sign for themselves on all necessary documentation.

### **Uniform**

OA does not have a uniform policy. Students are issued an OA t-shirt and sweatshirt and may be expected to wear OA items during an internship or externship, or to wear the uniform required by the student's worksite (like a branded t-shirt or polo shirt provided by the business, all black clothing, an apron, etc).

OA works with students to help them understand which clothing choices are appropriate for school or a workplace and how to be prepared to meet an employer's

expectations of appropriate attire. If a student is dressed inappropriately for school or work, they may purchase a t-shirt from the office.

In line with our values as a school and state law, our school does not discriminate or place restrictions on natural, protective, or cultural hairstyles (including, but not limited to: afros, dreadlocks, twists, locs, braids, cornrow braids, Bantu knots, curls and hairstyles to protect hair texture or for cultural significance).

### **Student Entrepreneurs**

Students may not sell any articles on school property or may not make a collection of money or materials for their own purposes or for an organization to which they belong outside of school without prior permission from the Director of Finance and Operations.

### **Student Cell Phones**

OA encourages students to have cell phones of their own and to use them appropriately and responsibly to communicate with peers, OA staff, and employers. At times, teachers may do lessons on how to use phones to make deposits to bank accounts, plan trips to access community resources via the RTA, or perform other functions for daily living.

OA may require students who will be traveling off campus independently to have a cell phone with GPS enabled to ensure that they can access the tools they need to get to and from school safely, and to communicate with OA staff while in transit.

### **Student Belongings**

OA is not responsible for the loss of any student belongings during activities that take place during the school day, or on the way to/from those activities.

### **Student Code of Conduct**

At Opportunities Academy, we do whatever it takes to make sure every student is safe (physically, emotionally, mentally, and intellectually) and has the chance to learn functional skills with minimal disruptions.

Our staff uses a variety of strategies to promote positive behavior and to correct undesired behaviors. We use positive reinforcement whenever possible, doing our best to highlight when students are making positive choices and pushing themselves to grow. We recognize and celebrate student successes. The expectations for behavior at Opportunities Academy are rooted in our core values. The standards detailed in this code of conduct exist to help our students make positive choices as they prepare to transition to adulthood.

Successful students:

1. Attend school daily. Arrive on time to school and shifts, and remain at school for the entire day.
2. Respect all members of the OA community.
3. Are accountable for the safety and well being of self, peers, and teachers.
4. Are focused on learning, completing all tasks and pushing self to try new things.
5. Take responsibility to be prepared for daily activities and complete tasks each day.
6. Respect the building and all community property.
7. Communicate appropriately with peers, OA staff, and colleagues at work.

## **Discipline Policy and Procedures for Students with Disabilities**

### *General*

Disciplinary actions give students with disabilities extra legal protections when the discipline constitutes a change in placement. If a student violates the student Code of Conduct, before consequences or punishment are imposed, the principal/designee must consider whether the student's disability caused the behavior.

While all students may be disciplined, the placement of students with disabilities cannot be "changed" when the offense is directly related to his/her disability or when the IEP or Section 504 plan is not implemented, except in the case of emergency circumstances (drugs, weapons, significant bodily injury). See Section II for more information about emergency circumstances.

### *Determining Change in Placement*

A change in placement is a legal term that applies to the situations described below. A student's school suspension that occurred in a LA local education agency (LEA) during the same school year of transfer into another LA LEA "counts" and is added to any additional suspensions in the new school.

1. More than 10 Consecutive Days of Suspension, i.e., Expulsion. Any suspension that is for more than 10 consecutive days is considered to be a change in placement.
2. More than 10 Total Days of Suspension in One School Year. A series of suspensions with days that total more than 10 total school days in a school year is a change in placement. The special education chairperson, with assistance and documentation from the Administration/Disciplinarian, monitors the number of days each student has been suspended. Students with disabilities who have not reached this 10 day threshold may be suspended under the procedures that apply to all students.
3. Additional Considerations. The following considerations apply to in-school suspension; a suspension or removal for a portion of the school day; and for suspensions from transportation.

a. In-school Suspension. An in-school suspension will not be considered as a suspension for the above purposes as long as a student is given the opportunity to continue to: appropriately participate in the general curriculum; receive IEP specified services; and participate with nondisabled children to the extent (s)he would have in the current placement. Any in-school suspension that does not meet this standard must be considered as a suspension for purposes of these procedures.

b. Suspension/Removal for Portion of School Day. Students sent home from school in the morning, because of misconduct, are considered to have a full day suspension. Students sent home in the afternoon are considered to have a half day suspension. These conditions apply unless the student's BIP specifically calls for the student to receive a shortened school day when certain behaviors are exhibited.

c. Bus Suspension. The following standards apply based on whether transportation is a related service on the IEP:

1) Bus Transportation Is IEP Service. When transportation is an IEP service, a student's removal from the bus is considered to be a suspension unless transportation is provided in some other way. In this case, transportation has been determined to be necessary for the student to access educational services.

2) Bus Transportation Is Not IEP Service. When transportation is not an IEP service, the student's removal from the bus is NOT considered to be a suspension. In this case the student/parent has the same obligations for the student to get to and from school as any nondisabled peers suspended from the bus. However, school officials should consider whether the bus behavior is similar to classroom behavior that IS addressed in an IEP and whether the bus behavior should be addressed in the IEP or through a BIP.

d. Monitoring Suspensions. Principals must have procedures in place to monitor and cumulatively total all suspensions for students with disabilities.

### C. Determining Manifestation Determination & Services.

1. Manifestation Determination. Within 10 days of any decision resulting in a change of placement the LEA representative, parent, and relevant members of the child's IEP Team (as determined by the parent and the LEA representative) must meet and determine whether the student's behavior is a manifestation of his/her disability using the Manifestation Determination form. The procedures below are used to make this determination.

#### a. Making the Decision

1) Review Relevant Information. The team participants review all relevant information in the student's file, including the IEP. If the IEP was not implemented, the team documents why it was not

implemented and whether the failure to implement the IEP impacted the student's behavior.

2) Observe Behavior. The team also reviews documentation of staff observations regarding the student's behavior. This should include an analysis of the student's behavior across settings and times throughout the school day.

3) Information from Parents. The team reviews any relevant information provided by the parents.

4) Ask Two Questions to Determine Manifestation. The team must consider the two questions below to determine if a student's behavior was manifested by his/her disability.

a) Relationship of Behavior to Misconduct. Was the conduct caused by or directly and substantially related to the student's disability? Consider whether the behavior in question has been consistent and/or has an attenuated association with the disability:

Consistent Behavior. Behavior that has been consistent across settings and across time may meet this standard.

Attenuated Association. Behavior that is not an attenuated association, such as low self esteem, to the disability would not have a direct and substantial relationship to the student's disability.

b) IEP Implementation. Was the conduct a direct result of the school's failure to follow the student's IEP? If so, the principal must ensure that immediate steps are taken so that the identified deficiencies are remedied.

b. Behavior Is Manifestation of Disability. If the relevant members of the IEP team answer yes to either question, then the student's behavior is a manifestation of his/her disability. In this case:

1) Return to Placement. Unless the IEP team agrees to a change of placement as part of the modification of the BIP, the school must return the student to the placement from which (s)he was removed. Note: this provision does not apply to students involved with weapons, drugs or serious bodily injury. (See Section II.)

2) FBA & BIP. The IEP team must conduct or review a functional behavioral assessment (FBA) and create a behavior intervention plan (BIP) addressing ways that the school can help the student with the conduct at issue. If the student already has a BIP, it must be reviewed and modified to address how the school can better assist the student with the conduct at issue. Note: If the FBA requires a new assessment of student behavior, parental consent is required.

c. Behavior is NOT Manifestation of Disability



1) Same Consequences. If the IEP team members agree that the student's conduct was not a manifestation of his/her disability, then the student may be subject to the same consequences as all students.

2) Required Services. A student with a disability who is removed from his/her current placement must receive the following services beginning on the 11th day of cumulative suspensions during the school year. The IEP team:

- a) Identifies Services. Identifies and documents educational services the students will receive to enable the student to continue to participate in the general education curriculum, although in another setting (e.g., an interim alternative educational setting (IAES), etc.) and to progress toward meeting the goals set out in the student's IEP; and
- b) Develops/Reviews FBA/BIP. Provides, as appropriate, an FBA and BIP services and modifications, which are designed to address the behavior violation so that it does not recur.
- c) Considers Need for More Restrictive Services. May convene and modify the student's IEP. School personnel may consider any unique circumstances on a case by case basis when determining whether a change in placement, consistent with the requirements of this section, is appropriate for a student with a disability who violates a code of student conduct.

### *Weapons, Drugs or Serious Bodily Injury*

Emergency Procedures. In circumstances related to a student's use of weapons, drugs or imposition of serious bodily injury, school officials may remove a student for 45 school days by following the procedures below.

#### A. Criteria for Emergency Removal.

1. Weapons. A student carries a weapon to or possesses a weapon at school, on school premises, or to or at a school function under the school's jurisdiction. A weapon is a device, instrument, material or substance animate or inanimate that is used for or is readily capable of causing death or serious bodily injury (excluding pocket knife with a blade of less than 2 1/2 inches in length); firearms, including a starter gun; the frame or receiver of such a weapon; a muffler or silencer; any destructive device including any explosive incendiary or poison gas bombs, grenades, rockets, missiles and mines; does not include antique firearms.
2. Drugs. A student knowingly possesses or uses illegal drugs, or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance, while at school, on school premises, or at a school function under the school's jurisdiction; A controlled substance is a drug or other substance in the Federal Code that does not include a substance legally used and possessed under the supervision of a licensed healthcare professional.

Possession of alcohol and tobacco does not fall under “controlled substance.” Therefore, the principal cannot move a student to an IAES for possession of these items under this section. Instead, the removal is subject to the procedural safeguards applicable to other types of misconduct.

3. Serious Bodily Injury. A student inflicted serious bodily injury upon another person while at school, on school premises, or at a school function under the jurisdiction of the State or an LEA. Serious bodily injury involves substantial risk of death; extreme physical pain; protracted and obvious disfigurement; or protracted loss or impairment of the function of a bodily member, organ, or mental faculty.

## B. Removal

1. General. The school may immediately remove the student for up to 45 school days to an IAES. Because drugs, weapons and serious bodily injury are so dangerous to a safe school climate, a school may remove a student under these circumstances for 45 school days regardless of whether the team believes that the behavior is a manifestation of the student's disability. The 45 school days do not include those days the school is not in session, e.g., Spring Break. The IEP team may specify a removal for fewer days than the maximum 45 days.

C. Action during Removal. During the 45 school day period, the school must convene a meeting to determine whether the student's behavior is a manifestation of his/her disability. (See Section I.C. above for more information about the manifestation determination process.)

### 1. Behavior IS Manifestation of Disability

a. FBA/BIP. As discussed above, the IEP team must conduct or review an FBA and create a BIP addressing ways that the school can help the student with the conduct at issue. If the student already has a BIP, it must be reviewed and modified to address how the school can better assist the student with the conduct at issue. Note: if the FBA requires a new assessment of student behavior, parental consent is required.

b. Reevaluation. The student may be referred for a reevaluation.

c. More Intensive Services. The IEP team may meet to consider more intensive special education services upon the expiration of the 45 day IAES or sooner.

### 2. Behavior is NOT Manifestation of Disability

a. Disciplinary Hearing. If all team members determine that the conduct was not a manifestation of the student's disability, then the 45 school day emergency placement may proceed to a disciplinary proceeding afforded to all students.

b. FBA/BIP. The student must receive, as appropriate, an FBA and BIP services and modifications, which are designed to address the behavior related to the disciplinary violation so that it does not recur.

## *Appeals*

A. Reasons for Requesting an Expedited Due process Hearing

1. Parent Disagreement. Parents who disagree with the appropriateness of the alternative placement or remedial disciplinary setting or services may request an expedited due process hearing.

2. School Considers student to be Dangerous. If a school has documented reasons to believe that keeping the student in his/her current school is substantially likely to result in injury to the student or to others, the school should request an emergency hearing for the purpose of transferring the student to an IAES for up to 45 school days. Note: this standard is not as high as serious bodily injury; it does not allow for an immediate 45 school day removal.

B. Authority of Hearing Officer

1. A hearing officer may:

a. Return the student to the placement from which the student was removed if the hearing officer determines that the removal did not comply with these procedures or that the student's behavior was a manifestation of the student's disability; or

b. Order a change of placement to an IAES for not more than 45 school days if maintaining the current placement of the student is substantially likely to result in injury to the student or to others.

2. The school may repeat its request for an expedited hearing if it believes that returning the student to the original placement is substantially likely to result in injury to the student or to others.

C. Expedited Due Process Hearing Procedures.

1. An expedited hearing must occur within 20 school days of the date the request is filed. The hearing officer must make a determination within 10 school days after the hearing.

2. Unless the parents and school personnel agree in writing to waive the resolution meeting or agree to mediate the dispute:

a. A resolution meeting must occur within seven days of receiving notice of the hearing request; and

b. The hearing may proceed unless the matter has been resolved to the satisfaction of both parties within 15 days of receipt of the hearing request.

3. Evidence not disclosed to the other party three business days before the hearing is excluded, unless the parties agree otherwise. Expedited due process hearing decisions are appealable to state or federal court.

D. Placement during Appeal of Discipline Decision

1. Weapons, Drugs or Serious Bodily Injury. The student remains in the IAES pending the decision of the hearing officer or until the expiration of the 45 day or code violation time period (if less than 45 school days), whichever occurs first, unless the parent and school personnel agree otherwise.

2. Behavior Not Manifested by the student's Disability. The student remains in the IAES pending the decision of the hearing officer or until the expiration of the

45 day or code violation time period (if less than 45 school days), whichever occurs first, unless the parent and school personnel agree otherwise.

3. Behavior Is Manifested by student's Disability but Belief Behavior is Substantially Likely to Cause Injury. The student remains in the placement (s)he was in at the time of the behavior in question unless the parent and school personnel agree otherwise.

#### *Students Without IEPs or Section 504 Plans "Deemed to Have a Disability"*

In some cases, a student without a disability will be deemed to have a disability. The criteria for making this determination and the applicable procedures relevant to such a finding are discussed below.

##### A. Knowledge of suspected disability (Thought to be a student with a disability)

There are certain circumstances that would indicate a school had knowledge that a student might (or is thought to) have a disability prior to the violation of the disciplinary violation. The following three situations give rise to such legal evidence:

1. Evaluation Requested. The parent requested an evaluation.
2. Written Concern. The parent expressed concern in writing to the student's teacher or school administration about the student's need for special education and related services
3. Specific Concerns by Staff about Pattern of Behavior. The student's teacher or other school staff told school supervisory personnel of specific concerns about the student's pattern of behavior.

If any of the three factors above are present, then school officials consider disciplinary action as if the student has a disability.

##### B. NOT Deemed To Have Knowledge. This provision does not apply if:

1. Parent did not consent to an initial evaluation of the student
  2. Parent refused special education and related services for the student or
  3. The student was evaluated and was determined not to have a disability.
- If any of these three circumstances exist, the student may be subjected to the same disciplinary measures applied to those without disabilities engaging in similar behaviors.

The US Department of Education's comments to the IDEA states: a public agency will not be considered to have a basis of knowledge merely because a child receives services under the coordinated, early intervening services of the IDEA law UNLESS a parent or teacher of a child receiving early intervening services expresses a concern, in writing, to appropriate agency personnel that the child may need special education and related services.

##### C. School Personnel Have No Knowledge and Parent Subsequently Requests an Evaluation

If the parent requests an evaluation for a suspected disability after the student is sent to an IAES, the school must conduct an expedited evaluation at parental request. However, the student remains in placement, including an IAES, during the evaluation. If the student is found to have a disability, an IEP must be developed. The IEP team must then conduct a manifestation determination. If the behavior is manifested by the student's disability, the team reconsiders the student's placement in light of the new information

*Referral to and Action by Law Enforcement and Judicial Authorities*

A. Reporting Crimes. Nothing in this part prohibits school personnel from reporting a crime committed by a student with a disability to appropriate authorities or prevents State law enforcement and judicial authorities from exercising their responsibilities with regard to the application of Federal and State law to crimes committed by a student with a disability.

B. Transmittal of Records. School personnel reporting a crime committed by a student with a disability must ensure that copies of the special education and disciplinary records of the student are transmitted for consideration by the appropriate authorities to whom the agency reports the crime. Records must be transmitted only to the extent that the transmission is permitted by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

*Application of Section 504 and ADA*

Generally, students with disabilities eligible for services only under Section 504/ADA (i.e., need related and supplementary aids and services only) are entitled to the procedural safeguards specified in this section. An exception to this general rule applies to students with behavior that is not a manifestation of his/her disabilities. In this case, these students are entitled to those services normally available to nondisabled students who are suspended or removed pursuant to the school's Code of Student Conduct.

**Reasons for Suspension**

Any action taken on, or off campus, that creates a significant disruption to the safety of our school culture may be investigated by school authorities; response to such investigation may include school-based consequences that may include a suspension from school lasting up to 5 days.

At times, school personnel and families may choose to agree to a logical or restorative consequence, in addition to, or in place of (fully or partially) a traditional suspension.

The actions in the table below are the most serious and are the highest priority to correct, as they may cause harm to another person or may even be illegal. Behaviors below may result in removal from class or peer groups or suspensions. Other corrective or restorative actions may also be taken, such as parent meetings or mediations.

<b>Infraction</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Maximum Out-of-School Suspension Duration</b>
Threatening	Threaten a student or adult member of the community (If you ____, then I'll ____)	5 days

Verbal Altercation	Verbal altercation between students or verbal aggression toward adults	1 day
Destruction of Property	Vandalism, graffiti, or damage to the building or property	1 day
Obscene Behavior	Engaging in behavior of a sexual nature including consensual sexual activity or a school function; possession of sexual images in any form	5 day
Hate Speech	Using language that undermines the dignity of a race, sexual orientation, religion, ethnic background, exceptionality, etc	5 day
Bullying/ Harassment*	Unwanted or repeated written, verbal, or physical behavior, including any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture	3 day
Cyber Bullying*	Unwanted or repeated written, verbal, or physical behavior, including any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture through technology. Can occur on or off school property.	3 day
Tobacco	Using or possessing tobacco, vape, or vaping product on campus, in transit, or any school function	1 day
Lighter/ Matches	Using or possessing a lighter or matches on campus, in transit, or any school function	5 day
Trespassing	Entering a school property without permission, or when an individual who has been given prior notice that entry onto or use of the property has been denied, or who remains on the property once notified of the request to leave does not	5 day
Sexual Harassment	Intimidation, bullying, or coercion of a sexual nature. Sexual contact or behavior that occurs without the explicit consent of the recipient	5 day
Verbally or physically inciting violence	A verbal altercation where a student is trying to physically fight another person and has to be restrained/held back to ensure the safety of others or self, or encouraging acts of this nature	3 day
Theft/stealing	Theft of another's or the school's property	3 day
Alcohol or drugs	Possessing or being under the influence of alcoholic beverages or controlled substances on campus or at a school function	3 day

False Alarm	Making an intentionally erroneous claim that implies an emergency	5 day
Weapons	Carrying a weapon on campus or at a school function	5 day

\*See details on bullying on page 20.

### **Due Process for Suspensions**

Due Process for Suspension: [Bulletin 741 Ch. 13 §1306](#)

- Student is notified of the infraction they are accused of
- Student is given an opportunity to provide his/her account of the incident
- Parent is notified via phone of the suspension, reason, and dates of suspension/return to school
  - Must also include the date and time of the student's readmit conference with the parent
- A student may be removed from campus without due process if he/she represents a continued threat to others or the educational environment.
  - In these cases due process must be followed as soon as possible

### **Appealing a Suspension**

Parents or guardians of students who are suspended (in and out of school) have the right to appeal the school's decision by submitting a written request to the administration (handwritten or electronic submissions will be accepted). Parents must submit requests within seven days of the assigned consequence. Every effort will be made to hear the appeal within two school days of receiving the appeal. Parents have the right to counsel at the appeal. A binding decision will be provided orally and in writing shortly thereafter. Suspension will stand until the appeal. The decision of the principal, assistant principal or dean shall be final. If the student's appeal is granted, the student's record will be expunged of any reference to in or out of school suspension. During an appeal hearing, the principal or designee has the authority to:

- uphold the original decision
- uphold the original decision but change the sanction (more or less severe)
- change the original decision

The appeal process is not a rehearing of the original case. The appeal hearing is to consider if one or more of the following is present in the case:

- New facts: Discovery of substantial new facts unavailable or unheard at the time of the punishment was assigned.
- Inappropriate sanctioning: If the assigned suspension is either excessive or too lenient and is not consistent with the sanctions presented in the family handbook. The request for an appeal must include specific information indicating why the sanction is deemed inappropriate.

The decision of the administration on the merit of the case, as well as the term of

suspension, shall be final, reserving the right to the superintendent to remit any portion of the time of suspension.

### **Reasons for Expulsions**

OA is a NOLA PS Charter School and follows the expulsion policies of NOLA PS's Student Hearing Office. According to the city-wide policy, scholars may be recommended for expulsion for any reason outlined in the NOLA Public Schools [Student Hearing Office Manual](#).



## **Harassment and Bullying**

We do not tolerate any form of bullying at Opportunities Academy.

Specific types of bullying include:

- Physical—hitting, kicking, pushing.
- Verbal—using words to inflict harm or humiliate the victim.
- Reactive Bullies—uses taunting of others or spreading rumors into fighting with someone, then will fight back but claim “self-defense,” and says that they other person started it.
- Relational—excluding people from social events/rejecting others to inflict harm.
- Cyberbullying—tormented, threatened, harassed, humiliated, embarrassed or otherwise targeted by another child, preteen or teen using the Internet, interactive and digital technologies or mobile phones.

### **Definition, Behaviors Constituting Bullying, and the Effect on Others:**

"Bullying" means:

1. A pattern of any one or more of the following behaviors:
  - a. Gestures, including but not limited to obscene gestures and making faces.
  - b. Written, electronic, or verbal communications, including but not limited to calling names, threatening harm, taunting, malicious teasing, or spreading untrue rumors. Electronic communication includes but is not limited to a communication or image transmitted by email, instant message, text message, blog, online meeting platform, or social networking website through the use of a telephone, mobile phone, pager, computer, tablet or other electronic device.
  - c. Physical acts, including but not limited to hitting, kicking, pushing, tripping, choking, damaging personal property, or unauthorized use of personal property.
  - d. Repeatedly and purposefully shunning or excluding from activities.
2. Where the pattern of behavior:
  - a. is exhibited toward a student, more than once, by another student or group of students; and
  - b. occurs, or is received by, a student while on school property, at a school-sponsored or school-related function or activity, including via online learning platforms or during any online learning sessions, in any school bus or van, at any designated school bus stop, and/or in any other school or private vehicle used to transport students to and from schools or any school-sponsored activity or event.

The pattern of behavior as described above must:

1. have the effect of physically harming a student, placing the student in reasonable fear of physical harm, damaging a student's property, placing the student in reasonable fear of damage to the student's property, or
2. be sufficiently severe, persistent, and pervasive enough to (a) create an

intimidating or threatening educational environment, (b) have the effect of substantially interfering with a student's performance in school, and/or (c) have the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

### **Procedure for Reporting an Act of Bullying, including Cyberbullying:**

1. Report bullying incidents to the principal/designee and/or other school administrator. Students and parents can find the Bullying Report Forms at their school's front office or under the "Resources" page of the CA website at [www.collegiateacademies.org](http://www.collegiateacademies.org).
2. If you wish to make a report of bullying orally or through other means, notify a school administrator and they will assist with completing and submitting the form to the principal/designee on your behalf.
3. Once the principal/designee receives the reporting form, a prompt investigation of the incident will be completed in accordance with state laws and CA policy (see "Investigating an Act of Bullying" below).

The principal/designee is responsible for receiving complaints alleging violations of the bullying policy. All school employees and parents chaperoning or supervising school-sponsored functions and events are required to report alleged violations of this policy to the principal or the principal's designee. A verbal report must be reported on the same day as the employee or parents witnessed or otherwise learned of the incident and a written report must be filed no later than two days thereafter.

The victim of bullying, anyone who witnessed the bullying, and anyone who has credible information that an act of bullying has taken place may file a report as described above.

Staff receive professional development outlining how to respond in a bullying incident. They have specific steps for speaking to victims, bullies and for documenting and following up to all reported incidents.

### **Retaliation and False Reports**

Retaliation against any person who reports bullying in good faith, who is thought to have reported bullying, who files a complaint, or who otherwise participates in an investigation or inquiry concerning an allegation of bullying is prohibited conduct and is subject to disciplinary measures. Intentionally making false reports about bullying to school officials is prohibited and will result in appropriate disciplinary measures.

### **Investigating an Act of Bullying/Cyberbullying**

- Upon receiving the written bullying report form, the principal/designee will initiate an investigation the next business day during which school is in session. The investigation will be completed no later than ten school days after the date the written report was submitted.
- The investigation will include an interview of the reporter, victim, the alleged bully, and any witnesses, and include obtaining copies or photographs of any audio-visual evidence, if available.

- The principal/designee will notify the parent or legal guardian of a student under the age of eighteen of the allegation of bullying before the student can be interviewed and inform them of the right to attend the interview with the student. If, after three attempts, the parents or legal guardians of a student cannot be reached or do not respond, the student may be interviewed.
- Documented interviews of the victim, alleged offender, and witnesses must be conducted privately, separately, and confidentially. At no time will the alleged offender and victim be interviewed together.
- The investigator will collect and evaluate the facts using the form developed by the LDE.
- The principal/designee may (in accordance with Act 861 of 2012) file a complaint with the court of juvenile jurisdiction pursuant to Children's Code Article 730(8) and 731(1), or Children's Code Article 730(1), if the parent or legal guardian refuses to attend a conference or meeting regarding the student's behavior.

The highest level of confidentiality possible must be upheld regarding the submission of a complaint or a report of bullying/cyberbullying and the investigative procedures that follow.

Students at OA receive specific anti-bullying instructions in class during the school year. Students are taught the following rules for bullying:

- We will not bully others.
- We will try and help students who are being bullied.
- We will try to include students who are left out.
- If we know someone is being bullied, we will tell an adult at school and an adult at home.

### **Student Restraint and Seclusion**

In accordance with Regulations for students with Exceptionalities Act, La.R.S. §17:416.21, (Louisiana Act 328 of 2011) and revised Louisiana Bulletin 1706, Collegiate Academies has approved the following written guidelines and procedures relative to the use of seclusion and restraint by its employees.

#### *Definitions*

**Emergency** – A sudden, generally unexpected set of circumstances that requires immediate action.

**Imminent risk of harm** – An immediate and impending threat of a person causing substantial physical injury to self or others. The risk is “imminent” if it is likely to occur within a matter of moments.

**Mechanical restraint** – A Mechanical Restraint is any device or object used to limit a student's freedom of movement. This term does not include devices implemented by trained school personnel, or utilized by a student that have been prescribed by an

appropriate medical or related services professional and are used for the specific and approved purposes for which such devices were designed.

The application of any device or object used to limit a person's movement. Mechanical restraint does not include:

- Adaptive devices or mechanical supports used to achieve proper body position, balance or alignment to allow great freedom of mobility than would be possible without the use of such devices or mechanical supports;
- Vehicle safety restraints when used as intended during the transport of a student in a moving vehicle;
- Restraints for medical immobilization; or
- Orthopedically prescribed devices that permit a student to participate in activities without risk of harm.

Physical escort–Touching or holding a student with or without the use of force for the purpose of directing the student to a new location, by trained school personnel. Physical escort does not include the unforced holding of a student's hand or other physical prompts for the purpose of safely guiding the student from one task to another or directing the student in an educational activity.

Physical restraint–Physical Restraint is using bodily force to limit the movement of a student's torso, arms, legs or head. This term does not include:

- Consensual, solicited, or unintentional contact
- Momentary blocking of a student's action if the student's action is likely to result in harm to the student or any other person;
- Holding of a student, by one school employee, for the purpose of calming or comforting the student, provided the student's freedom of movement or normal access to his or her body is not restricted.
- Minimal physical contact for the purpose of safely escorting a student from one area to another; or
- Minimal physical contact for the purpose of assisting the student in completing a task or response.

Positive behavior interventions and support–A systematic approach to embed evidence-based practices and data-driven decision making when addressing student behavior in order to improve school climate and culture.

School employee–A teacher, paraprofessional, administrator, support staff member, or a provider of related services at CA, including contractual employees.

Seclusion–Seclusion is an involuntary confinement of a student alone in a room or area from which the student is physically prevented from leaving. This procedure isolates and confines a student until he or she is no longer an immediate danger to self or others. It

may be used on an individual basis for a limited time to allow the student the opportunity to regain control in a private setting.

Seclusion room—a room or other confined area, used on an individual basis, in which a student is removed from the regular classroom setting for a limited time to allow the student the opportunity to regain control in a private setting and from which the student is involuntarily prevented from leaving. This term does not include a timeout, which is a behavior management technique that is a part of an approved program, involves the monitored separation of a student in a non-locked setting, and is implemented for the purpose of calming.

Written guidelines and procedures—The written guidelines and procedures adopted by a school's governing authority regarding appropriate responses to student behavior that may require immediate intervention..

### *Seclusion and Restraint Policy*

Physical restraint is bodily force used to restrict someone's movement. No student shall be subjected to any form of mechanical restraint, or force imposed by objects or binds, by school employees under any circumstances. Physical restraints shall only be carried out by trained and certified staff members in a manner that causes no physical injury to the student, resulting in the least possible discomfort to the student, and shall never interfere with the student's breathing or ability to communicate.

Collegiate Academies (CA) believes the safety of its students is the number one priority. We believe all students have the right to be treated with dignity and respect. If a student is in crisis and has proven to be a danger to himself or others, the CA team is trained and prepared to use restraint techniques in order to keep all parties safe and unharmed. The goal of physical restraint procedures is to ensure safety for a short duration and/or until the danger of injury has passed. The CA team understands the use of physical restraint as a last resort, and is also trained in other methods of crisis de-escalation. Our schools will use prevention, positive behavior supports and conflict de-escalation to preclude the need for use of these concerns.

Every effort should be made to prevent the need for using seclusion or restraint techniques. Environments should be structured and focused on positive interventions and supports to greatly reduce, and in many cases eliminate, the need to use restraint or seclusion. These guidelines apply for all students, not only students with disabilities. CA schools will work to ensure the following remains true:

- Seclusion and restraint must not be used as a form of discipline or punishment, as a threat to control, bully or obtain behavioral compliance, or for the convenience of school personnel
- No student should be subjected to unreasonable, unsafe, or unwarranted use of seclusion or physical restraint

- No student should be placed in seclusion or physically restrained if he or she is known to have any medical or psychological condition that precludes such action, as certified by a licensed health care provider in a written statement provided to the school in which the student is enrolled
- No student should be subjected to mechanical restraint to restrict a student's freedom of movement

Physical restraint must be used only:

- When a student's behavior presents a threat of imminent risk of harm to self or others and only as a last resort to protect the safety of self and others;
- Only to the degree necessary to stop the dangerous behavior;
- In a manner that causes no physical injury to the student, results in the least possible discomfort, does not interfere in any way with the student's breathing or ability to communicate with others, and does not place excessive pressure on the student's back or chest or that causes asphyxia; and
- In a manner that is directly proportional to the circumstances and to the student's size, age and severity of behavior.

A Seclusion Room or other confined area must:

- Be free of any object that poses a danger to the student who is placed there;
- Have an observation window;
- Have a ceiling height and heating, cooling, ventilation, and lighting system comparable to an operating classroom in the school; and
- Be of a size that is appropriate to the student's size, behavior, and chronological and developmental age.

Further, Seclusion and Restraint:

- Should be reserved for situations or conditions where there is imminent danger of serious physical harm to the student, other students, or school or program staff and other interventions are ineffective;
- Should not be used except to protect the students and others from serious harm and to defuse imminently dangerous situations in the classroom or other non-classroom school settings (e.g. hallways, cafeteria, playground, sports field);
- Only should be used by trained personnel;
- Never involve mechanical restraints to restrict student's freedom of movement.
- Never involve a drug or medication to control behavior or restrict freedom of movement (except as prescribed by a licensed physician or other qualified health professional acting under the scope of the professional's authority under State law; and administered as prescribed by the licensed physician or other qualified health professional acting under the scope of the professional's authority under State law.)

*Physical Restraint Procedures*

Collegiate Academies trains its personnel with the (CPI) Crisis Prevention Intervention Program, a nationally acclaimed training for educators and care providers in learning crisis de-escalation. CPI's Nonviolent Crisis Intervention Training Program is used to equip staff with skills, strategies, and methods for preventing or intervening if a student is in crisis. The goal of the program is to provide staff with a way to intervene and address violent behaviors while still providing for the welfare and security of all who are involved in the crisis situation. The training includes clarification of basic elements of violent behavior, identification of how a crisis may escalate and de-escalate, techniques for safe physical restraint, and taught strategies and best practices for verbal de-escalation in the hope of preventing violent behaviors.

Nonviolent Crisis Intervention Techniques in which personnel are trained include:

- CPI Children's Control Position - designed to be used with children. Involves one person doing the restraint and a monitor for safety and assistance.
- CPI Team Control Position - designed to manage individuals who have become dangerous to themselves or others. Involves two person team approach and a monitor for safety and assistance if needed.
- CPI Seated Team Control Position - designed to manage individuals who have become dangerous to themselves or others. Involves two person team approach and a monitor for safety and assistance if needed.
- CPI Disengagement Techniques - designed to be used if an individual demonstrates physical risk behavior.

In the event that a student at a CA school should need to be physically restrained, each school has a CPI trained "crisis" or emergency team that are certified in CPI techniques. This team follows all restraint and seclusion guidelines as outlined in federal and state regulations and in addition utilized best practices from CPI's to ensure that restraints are effectively used, documented and reflected upon.

Every CA employee that is certified with CPI has undergone at a minimum six hours of CPI training in an initial training year and/or a three hour refresher course to maintain certification and implementation of best CPI practices. Additionally, all trained CA members are shown how to appropriately document incidents of restraint and seclusion.

All program training and documentation is completed by certified CPI trainers. A list of all district personnel certified in CPI is maintained and follow-up refresher courses are held annually and documented.

Seclusion Procedures:

School personnel may use seclusion (isolation and confinement of the student in a separate area) only when the student poses an immediate risk of danger to self or others as more fully described below:

- The person is in control of a weapon;
- Isolation is needed to break up a fight or maintain order at the school;
- The person poses a viable threat of imminent harm to self or others or substantial destruction of school property;
- Isolation is required specified by a student's IEP, Section 504 Plan, and/or Behavior Intervention Plan;
- Other such incidents involving imminent risk of significant injury to the student or others.

Monitoring: A student placed in seclusion must be monitored/supervised at all times by an adult. Monitoring requires:

- Close, visual proximity to the student
- Release as soon as the behaviors cease that led to the isolation/seclusion
- The space where the student is secluded has adequate lighting, ventilation, heating and cooling
- The space is free of objects or items that may unreasonably expose the student to danger
- The space is designated by the school as a safe environment for temporary, safety-required seclusion

Seclusion Room: School personnel may confine a student with a disability to a seclusion room (a room or other confined area from which the student is involuntarily prevented from leaving) on an individual basis and for a limited time to allow the student the opportunity to regain control in a private setting. When the use of a seclusion room is necessary:

- The student with a disability should be escorted to the seclusion area without the use of physical force, whenever possible. School employees shall employ Crisis Prevention and Intervention (CPI) training techniques in order to support the student in transition from crisis to seclusion room.
- Physical prompts are permissible for the purpose of safely guiding the student from one area to another, but care should be taken to limit the use of physical contact with the student and to avoid the use of physical force.
- Verbal redirection and other means of positive support should be used before resorting to physical means.

Environmental and other conditions: When a seclusion room is necessary as a last resort (after less restrictive measures have been used such as positive behavioral supports, constructive and non-physical de-escalation, and restructuring of the student's environment), the following environmental and other conditions are REQUIRED:

- The student must be supervised by a school employee
- The supervising employee must be able to see and hear the student the entire time the student is confined to the seclusion room



- The seclusion room must be free of any object that poses a potential danger to the student while in the room
- The seclusion room must have an observation window of a size appropriate to the student's size, behavior, and chronological and developmental age
- The seclusion room must have a ceiling height and heating, cooling, ventilation, and lighting systems comparable to operating classrooms in the school
- The seclusion room must NOT be used as a form of discipline or punishment or to threaten or bully the student or to obtain behavioral compliance
- The seclusion room must NOT be used for the convenience of school personnel or when unreasonable, unsafe, or unwarranted
- The seclusion room IS NOT PERMITTED for use by a student has a known medical or psychological condition that precludes its use (as certified by a licensed health care provider in a written statement provided to the school).

*Monitoring & Documentation Policy:*

Monitoring: Seclusion and restraint require monitoring, documentation, and analysis of data collected:

- Continuous monitoring.
- Documentation every 15 minutes (with adjustments made accordingly).
- Student is released/removed as soon as the actions have subsided.

Documentation: All incidents of physical restraint and use of a seclusion room must be documented on the Notification of Seclusion and/or Restraint Form.

The Collegiate Academies school employee who used seclusion/restraint shall:

- Complete the Notification of Seclusion and/or Restraint Form for each incident of restraint and seclusion
- Submit the Notification of Seclusion and/or Restraint Form to the school principal, or designee, by the end of the school day in which restraint/seclusion was used.
- Ensure that all personnel incident reports have been logged in SchoolRunner.
- Ensure that all incidents for students with disabilities are appropriately logged in SER.

Parent or Guardian Notification: State regulations require that Collegiate Academies notify the parent or guardian in writing within 24 hours of each incident of restraint or seclusion. The parent/guardian will receive a copy of the Notification of Seclusion and/or Restraint Form.

This notification must include the following:

- Reason for seclusion/restraint
- Description of procedures used
- Length of time of seclusion/restraint

- Names and titles of school employees involved

Collegiate Academies schools are required to report each incident to the parent/guardian of a student, and will do so no later than the school day following the day in which seclusion/restraint occurred. Every CA school shall document all efforts at communicating with parents, including conversations, phone calls, electronic communications, and home visits, to notify the parents of a child who has been placed in seclusion or physically restrained.

*Patterns of Restraint or Seclusion use for students with Disabilities:*

When a student with a disability is involved in five (5) incidents of restraint or seclusion in a single school year, the school will convene the IEP team to review and revise the student's behavior intervention plan (BIP) to include any appropriate and necessary behavioral supports.

### **Dating Violence**

Dating violence is part of a pattern of behavior called dating abuse. It is defined as the physical, sexual, psychological, or emotional violence within a dating relationship, including stalking. It can occur in person or electronically and might occur between a current or former dating partner. Dating abuse is used to gain and maintain power and control over a dating partner, and it can come in many forms:

- Physical Abuse (hitting, pushing, hair pulling, grabbing your clothing)
- Emotional/Verbal Abuse (name-calling, putting you down, embarrassing you in public, telling you what to do or wear, threatening to hurt you or someone you love)
- Sexual Abuse (unwanted kissing or touching, unwanted sexual activity, refusing to use condoms, sexual contact with someone too drunk to consent, pressuring someone into having sex)
- Financial Abuse (controlling your access to money, controlling what you can buy, interfering with your ability to work, getting you fired by harassing you, giving you presents or money and expecting favors in return)
- Digital Abuse (telling you who you can or can't be friends with online, sending you threatening messages or tweets, using websites to keep constant tabs on you, pressuring you to send explicit photos or texts)

Teens, like all people, deserve respect in their relationships. You have a right to privacy, independence, safety, and control over your body. Some red flags of dating abuse include:

- Wants to move too quickly into the relationship.
- Does not honor your boundaries.
- Is excessively jealous and accuses you of cheating.
- Wants to know where you are all of the time and frequently calls, emails or texts you throughout the day.

- Criticizes you or puts you down; most commonly tells you that you are “crazy,” “stupid” and/or “fat,” or that no one would ever want or love you.
- Says one thing and does another.
- Takes no responsibility for their behavior and blames others.
- Insists that you stop spending time with your friends or family.
- Tells you to stop participating in things you enjoy.

If you are in an abusive relationship, help is available. Contact 1-888-411-1333 to speak with a trained advocate who can help. If you feel you are in immediate danger, call 911.

## **Academics**

### **Homework Assistance**

OA does not give homework on a regular basis, though we encourage students to complete assignments with deadlines (like turning in paperwork and submitting time sheets).

Homework Louisiana offers FREE online tutoring and academic resources for Louisiana residents from kindergarten students through adult learners. Get help in math, science, social studies, or English from a live tutor. The services can be accessed from a Louisiana public library, from your home computer, or from your mobile device by going to <http://www.homeworkla.org/>.

### **Promotion and Retention**

Students at Opportunities Academy are eligible to receive public education services until the school year in which they turn 22. Students who turn 22 after August 1 of a given school year will exit at the end of May.

Though all OA students are classified as 12th graders, students who are still working toward their Leap Connect diplomas will earn credits toward their diplomas through coursework in transition, elective, and where necessary, core content areas. OA will honor any credits earned toward a diploma at other high schools based on a student's transcripts and academic documents.

Students working toward a diploma may also need to sit for state mandated exams each spring.

Diplomas earned over the course of a school year will be issued at the end of May, aligned to the exit date of students who have turned 22 and are aging out of the program.

Students exiting the program, and those who have earned a diploma, will be celebrated in a ceremony culminating the end of the school year at the end of May.

### **Year-Round Programming**

OA is a year-round school, and students are expected to attend during summer sessions to ensure that they are receiving the academic and transition supports they need and are able to receive related services (speech, counseling, physical therapy, and occupational therapy) on an ongoing basis. Consistent attendance throughout the year will ensure that your student meets the goals outlined in his/her IEP.

Extended School Year (ESY) is offered for students with disabilities that qualify after individualized screenings as outlined by their Individualized Education Plan (IEP). If a student is determined eligible using IEP aligned eligibility criteria, the IEP team will generate an ESY IEP that outlines the goals, services and timelines that defines the services a student will get during an extended break in instruction, if needed. If you have questions about ESY services, please reach out to OA's Special Education Coordinator at [kduym@collegiateacademies.org](mailto:kduym@collegiateacademies.org).

### **Special Education Program Description**

For an overview of our school's special education program and complaint procedure, go to [collegiateacademies.org/resources](http://collegiateacademies.org/resources).

### **School Operations**

#### **Board information**

Collegiate Academies' Board of Directors is the governing body of our organization. The Board sets all policy for the school. The Board meets monthly while the school is in session. Dates of Board Meetings will be posted on the CA website [www.collegiateacademies.org](http://www.collegiateacademies.org). Meetings are open to family members and other members of the public. We encourage you to attend and meet our board!

Collegiate Academies Board Members

Stephen Rosenthal <b>Chairman</b>	Jonathan Wilson <b>Vice Chairman</b>	Doug Finegan <b>Treasurer</b>	Gregory St. Etienne <b>Secretary</b>
Oscar Brown	Ann Duplessis	Adam Hawf	Terrance Lockett
Rachell Williams	Sharonda Williams	Kevin Wilkins	

#### **Enrollment**

Opportunities Academy is an open enrollment public charter school. We participate in the OneApp process. For more information about how this process works, and the policies that govern it, visit [www.EnrollNOLAPS.com](http://www.EnrollNOLAPS.com) or a Family Resource Center.

Students interested in attending Opportunities Academy must submit a OneApp, send a current IEP, and other required documents, to the Director of Finance and Operations to verify eligibility in order to be matched with our school.

OA serves students with intellectual disabilities and autism. Students on, or eligible for, the LEAP Connect diploma track are eligible to enroll and can attend until the school year they turn 22. Students who turn 22 on or after 9/1 of a given school year may finish the year. Those who turn 22 on or before 8/31 will age out of the school at the end of the previous school year. OA must verify eligibility via a student's birth certificate and IEP or a screener performed by our contracted school psychologist.

Once matched with our school, the student and his/her parent or guardian must:

- Submit copies of the student's birth certificate, as well as the parent or guardian's proof of residency (lease, utility bill)
- Complete all enrollment paperwork
- Attend an orientation meeting

### **Statements of Compliance and Commitment Forms**

Students and families are asked to complete the following agreements upon enrollment

- FERPA Waiver allowing OA to share academic data and personal information with partners
- Medicaid Billing Consent, allowing OA to bill Medicaid for reimbursable services provided to students
- Media Waiver
- Age of Majority
- Clinic Consent Form

And the following forms on an annual basis

- State of Louisiana Health Forms

### **School Schedule**

Opportunities Academy is a year-round school, and the school's daily schedule and year-round calendar meets the state-required minimum of minutes offered and enables OA to award up to 6.5 high school credits per year to students working toward a high school diploma. Students who are earning credits must accrue enough seat time to meet Louisiana state requirements for earning credits, and may not exceed 16 absences per year (this includes suspensions). Students will not be awarded credits if their attendance does not meet the state required minimum.

All related services in a student's IEP (speech, counseling, physical therapy, and occupational therapy) are provided during the school day.

Each day begins at 8:40 am and ends at 3:30 pm. Students should plan to attend for the full day. Students who receive rides to/from school should not be dropped off

before 8:40 am or picked up after 3:30 pm, as OA is not able to provide supervision for students outside of school hours.

Given the year-round nature of our program, OA has occasional PD days to give staff time to meet compliance deadlines, hold IEP meetings, and receive training. Additionally, OA has preplanned breaks throughout the school year.

### **School Closures**

In the event of inclement weather or illness outbreak, OA follows the closure recommendations of NOLA PS. Closures are communicated via auto text/email and on OA's social media.

OA has additional days built into the yearly calendar to account for school closures. The school will notify families if the schedule needs to be amended to make up instructional time if more than three days are missed due to weather, school-wide illness, or other unanticipated reasons.

### **Attendance**

Students can only be successful if they are present, and prepared, in school every day. Our curriculum is an ambitious one; every day is essential for students to keep pace and reach their IEP goals.

While each student is ultimately responsible for her/his own attendance, families are expected to ensure that their young adults are in school. Excessive absences will be considered a violation of the parent/guardian commitment. Attendance helps to foster an attitude of responsibility and is essential to the instructional program at OA. Attendance is the first step in ensuring academic achievement. Every day is essential for our students to keep pace; every instructional minute counts. A student is considered to be in attendance when he/she is physically present at school, or is participating in an authorized school activity, and is under the supervision of authorized school personnel for at least 50% of the school day.

Absences that can be considered for excusal for the reasons listed below.

Documentation must be submitted upon the student's return to school for the following circumstances:

- Extended personal physical or emotional illness as verified by a physician or nurse practitioner (original doctor's note). Note: this means that if you are sick and stay home, but do not go to the doctor, that is an unexcused absence.
- Extended hospital stay as verified by physician or dentist (original doctor's note)
- Extended recuperation from an accident as verified by a physician or dentist
- Observation of special, recognized holidays of the student's own faith
- Visitation with a parent who is a member of the United States Armed forces or the National Guard of a state and such parent has been called to duty for or is

on leave from overseas deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting. Excused absences in this situation shall not exceed five (5) school days per year.

- Absences verified and approved by the school principal such as approved travel for education, death in the immediate family or natural disaster. For any other circumstances (i.e. legal matters, legal issues) parents must make a formal appeal in writing to the principal.

The following reasons for absenteeism are not excusable:

- Missing the school bus
- Trips not approved by the principal
- Vacations during the school year
- Birthdays and other celebrations
- Caring for a young child or elderly adult
- To work on a job
- Skipping or cutting class
- Other personal appointments

Parents/guardians are responsible for scheduling medical appointments outside of school time. In the rare case that a student has a medical appointment during the school day, the student should not be absent the entire day. Upon return, the student must bring a written excuse to the main office. All excuses shall be written by a parent/guardian or physician and submitted immediately to the school upon return.

Per NOLA PS policy, students may be dropped from OA's roster after 15 consecutive days of unexcused absences.

For information regarding attendance policies for students who are pregnant and/or parenting, please see Appendix G..

### *Tardiness*

Getting to school on time is key for your child's success. Students who are tardy miss essential instruction, disrupt the learning of others, and risk falling behind. Tardiness is a bad habit that can lead to serious consequences in student postsecondary lives. At OA, we want our students to develop strong habits and succeed in life. Our doors open to students at 8:40 each morning. Students must arrive between 8:40 am and 8:50 am. Students arriving after 9 am are considered tardy.

In cases in which a school bus arrives late, those students riding the school bus are not considered tardy. Late arrival is only excused for a valid reason with a note from a parent/guardian or a medical professional.

### *Early Check Outs*

Early pick ups can be disruptive to the learning environment, and are discouraged. Families should notify the school by calling the main office before they arrive to pick up their child early from school. In order for a student to be dismissed early, a parent or guardian must sign or provide verbal approval. The main office reserves the right to check the identification of any person checking out a student out of school and/or contact the parent or guardian to confirm the dismissal. A student who would like to leave early because he/she is not feeling well must get a staff member's approval before calling home.

Early pickups can be disruptive to the learning environment and are highly discouraged. Families should notify the school by calling the main office before they arrive to dismiss their child early from school. The individual checking the student out must be a parent or guardian or an individual listed as an emergency contact in SchoolRunner; if the individual is not listed in SchoolRunner, a parent or guardian must provide written or verbal approval. The main office reserves the right to check the identification of any person checking a student out of school.

Any official (DCFS, NOPD, or other official) seeking to take a student into protective custody shall first be required to provide proper identification as well as the student's full name, address, and date of birth. This shall not apply to arrests based on probable cause. (Per Act 324 (2022))

#### *Homebound Instruction*

If a student is unable to attend school for more than 10 consecutive days due to a qualifying illness, the school will provide a minimum of 4 hours of homebound instruction per regular school week until the student is able to return to school. Parents must provide documentation from the student's physician, or qualified nurse practitioner, for the student to receive this service. If you know in advance that your student will miss more than 10 consecutive school days because of a qualifying illness, please contact the school immediately.

#### *Consequences of Non-Attendance*

In addition to falling behind on his/her IEP goals, students with poor attendance may not be able to take advantage of certain aspects of our program, including:

- Enrolling in courses at Delgado, or engaging in activities provided through partner agencies
- Acceptance into work placements at community businesses
- Receiving pay and
- Earning credits in pursuit of a LEAP Connect Diploma



## **Non-Discrimination Policy and Complaint and Information Request Procedures**

### **Non-Discrimination Policy:**

Opportunities Academy, as a matter of policy, provides educational opportunities without regard to race, creed, color, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, disability, or age. In addition, Collegiate Academies does not permit or condone discrimination based on race, creed, color, national origin, religion, marital status, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, physical disability, or age in employment matters or assignment in programs or services provided.

If you believe you have been subject to illegal discrimination, you may make a complaint in accordance with the default procedures below, or contact the Director of Finance and Operations, Kathleen Coverick, at [kcoverick@collegiateacademies.org](mailto:kcoverick@collegiateacademies.org) or 504-503-1421 for a copy of the disability-based discrimination complaint procedures.

### **Complaint and Information Request Procedures**

Any student, parent, or legal guardian may make a complaint or request additional information from the school regarding an incident or action for any reason, including to appeal a disciplinary decision. We believe that strong relationships and frequent communication between students, parents, and our teachers/school based staff are critical to ensuring the success of our students. We also believe that collaboration between these parties is often the quickest and best way to resolve issues.

Complainants should first schedule a conference with the immediately involved school staff member to discuss the issue. For example, if the complaint is regarding internship, the parent should contact the internship teacher. Collegiate Academies reserves the right to redirect complainant(s) to the appropriate personnel if this step has not been followed.

CA has established the following procedures to solve disputes, or complaints, in a fair and prompt manner. The formal procedures described below may be implemented only after the parties have engaged in an earnest attempt to resolve matter(s) informally. At each step in the process the responsible parties will verify that all previous steps have been followed and documented. Collegiate Academies reserves the right to redirect complainant(s) to the appropriate personnel if the following procedure has not been followed.

A student, or parent/guardian of a student, who has a question or concern may choose to seek the help of the building administrator or another adult with whom they trust, such as a teacher, counselor, nurse, or psychologist.

1. If satisfaction cannot be achieved through this discussion, the student or parent should send a written complaint or request for information to the school compliance officer, Kathleen Coverick, at 2625 Thalia Street, New Orleans,

Louisiana 70113; or contact her at 504-503-1421 or kcoverick@collegiateacademies.org within 5 working days.

The written complaint or request should include:

- The issue/concern/complaint/information requested;
- What steps have been taken to resolve the situation;
- The reason for the complainant(s)' dissatisfaction with the actions already taken or information provided;
- Proposed solutions.

The compliance officer will commence an effective, thorough, objective and complete investigation of the complaint/request within ten (10) working days after receipt of the complaint. The compliance officer will consult with all individuals reasonably believed to have relevant information, including the complainant and any alleged violator(s), any witnesses to the conduct, and any victims of similar conduct that the investigator reasonably believes may exist. The investigation shall be free of stereotypical assumptions about either party. The investigation shall be carried on discreetly, maintaining confidentiality insofar as possible while still conducting an effective and thorough investigation. Throughout the entire investigation process, due process rights will be upheld. No reprisals will be taken or permitted for truthfully asserting a complaint.

The compliance officer shall make a written report summarizing the results of the investigation and proposed disposition of the matter, and shall provide copies to the complainant, the alleged violator, the Principal and, as appropriate, to all others directly concerned within fifteen (15) working days after receiving the complaint.

- 2.** If complainant(s) conclude that the initial response/course of action was insufficient, the complainant may request that a meeting may then be scheduled with the Principal by contacting Sophia Scott, at 2625 Thalia Street, New Orleans, Louisiana 70113/504-503-1421/sscott@collegiateacademies.org.

Prior to the meeting, the Principal will first investigate the matter to ensure that Steps 1 and 2 have been appropriately documented and completed.

After the meeting the Principal will record the complaint and/or appeal and will address any concerns regarding appeal of a disciplinary decision, or any action or inaction taken by the school administration, within five (5) working days.

- 3.** If the complainant is not satisfied with the decision of the Principal, an appeal in writing may be made to Collegiate Academies' Chief Executive Officer, Jerel Bryant within ten (10) days of receipt of the decision.

Appeals may be submitted via email to [jbryant@collegiateacademies.org](mailto:jbryant@collegiateacademies.org) or mailed to:

Collegiate Academies  
Attn: Jerel Bryant  
PO Box 5367  
New Orleans, LA 70153

Within thirty (30) working days, the Chief Executive Officer will investigate the complaint and may conduct a hearing to gather additional information before issuing a decision. The decision of the Chief Executive Officer will be final. The Board of Directors does not consider individual parent grievances except in cases related to the alleged violation of law.

Note that the above procedures are intended to provide a default process for seeking information or making a complaint where other policies or legal requirements do not apply; they do not supercede any other statutorily-mandated procedures in place for receiving, investigating, and resolving reports made pursuant to specific state or federal requirements. These include, but are not limited to, reports made pursuant to Louisiana's bullying and harassment laws and complaints of disability-based discrimination.

### **Nursing**

Being physically healthy helps students learn more effectively. For this reason, it is important to have your doctor or health center look into any problem that your child may have and to communicate with our school about any medical needs. Our school has a full-time nurse who is on site during school hours who can support your child's wellness.

Students may not carry their own medication or take any medication without the supervision of our school nurse or a trained staff member. All medication must be turned into and administered by the school nurse. This applies to all medicine, including aspirin, Tylenol, and other over-the-counter medicines. If your child requires medication during school hours, we will assist by administering medication upon completion of the required forms (an order from a licensed physician or dentist, and a letter of authorization from the parent or guardian). Please ensure the medicine is in a container (prescription bottle) that meets pharmaceutical standards and is properly labeled. The school will keep a detailed log of all medicines that are administered.

If you have further questions about this policy or nursing services provided by the school, please contact the school at 504-503-1421.

## **Student Paychecks**

OA works with Louisiana Rehabilitative Services (LRS) to open a case for students who have a goal of entering the workforce. Once students have a case with LRS, they are eligible to earn a paycheck through LRS' Work Based Learning Experience.

In order for students to receive a paycheck, they need to submit timesheets by the deadline, and complete required paperwork with LRS, including a W9 form.

### *Paycheck Deductions*

Students may not get paid for a shift if supervisors report that the student failed to meet expectations. Students may also have funds deducted if they choose to buy apparel or take a taxi/Uber/Lyft in lieu of school-provided transit or RTA.

### *Taxation on Wages*

Families should be aware that students are paid as contract employees, and taxes are not taken out of paychecks. Students are issued a 1099 at the end of January and families should expect to pay a portion of wages back as taxes.

### *Impact on SSI or SSDI Benefits*

Student wages MAY have a marginal impact on SSI or SSDI benefits your students receive. However, the combined amount of student wages and reduced SSI or SSDI benefits should exceed SSI/SSDI benefits on their own.

## **Student Searches**

The safety of our students is a primary concern of the staff at Opportunities Academy. To this end, OA may search school grounds (including rooms, desks, storage spaces) at the school's discretion. Any searches of this kind that uncover evidence of a crime or violation of school rules will be documented, along with any confiscated items; and disciplinary action may be taken.

Searching a student or their belongings requires reasonable suspicion at the time of search. Two adults shall be present at the time of any search and every effort will be made to ensure that the individual conducting the search is the same gender as the person being searched. This may not happen if there is an immediate safety threat that precludes this. Searches of this kind are documented with the basis for reasonable suspicion, confiscated items, and disciplinary action.

## **Student Transportation Policy**

Daily transportation to/from school is provided for all students in Orleans Parish who live more than one mile from their school or whose disability requires transit within a mile of school. The school bus will pick up students Monday through Friday in time to arrive at school by 8:40 am.. The bus will pick up students at the close of the school day to take

them home. If a student misses the bus for any reason, it is her/his responsibility to find a way to/from school.

### *Bus Stops*

OA contracts with a transportation service, who will be responsible for all routing, day-to-day operations, maintenance, driver training, and supervision. Prior to the start of the school year, school staff will provide student address data to the vendor for stop assignment and routing. Once routes are complete, school staff will communicate each student's bus number, stop location, pickup, and drop off times to his/her parent via phone call and text. Depending on the severity of a student's disability, a parent may be required to receive their student at the end of each day.

### *Stop Requirements*

All bus stops must meet the following requirements:

- Be within one (1) mile of a student's home
- Complies with all provisions of R.S. 32:1
- Complies with any special transportation instructions outlined in a student's IEP

If a student requires a new bus stop location because the student has moved, the school will contact the vendor to have a permanent stop assigned. All stop assignments will be communicated to the student's guardian before they are issued to the student.

If a student's IEP requires that a guardian meet the student at his or her stop, and the guardian is not present when the bus arrives, the bus driver will return the student to the school. A member of the school's staff will contact the guardian and ask that they pick up the student from school. The student will remain under the supervision of a school staff member until the guardian arrives.

If the student's guardian fails to respond or pick up the student:

- First occurrence: A school administrator will schedule a conference with the parent to review the student's transportation information and the requirement to have an adult at the stop to receive the student. The parent will also be notified that upon the second occurrence, the school may file a report with Adult Protective Services requesting an investigation. At the conference the parent will sign an acknowledgement that includes everything discussed.
- Any subsequent occurrences: The school may file a report with APS requesting an investigation for abandonment or neglect.

### *RTA Bus and Use of Other Modes of Transportation*

Each day, many students ride the RTA with support, or independently, to/from their externships and to community destinations with classmates. OA provides bus fare for such community trips. Students are expected to conduct themselves as representatives of Opportunities Academy and respect the safety of other passengers and the driver.

OA will not provide Uber, Lyft, or Taxi rides for students. If a student requests a car, the student would be responsible for paying for the expense.

Staff are prohibited from providing rides to students in their personal vehicles unless there is an emergency.

### *Bus Conduct*

Students must comply with the Student Code of Conduct while traveling on a school, or RTA, bus to/from their homes or school-sponsored activities. If a student commits an infraction covered in the Student Code of Conduct on a school bus or at the school bus stop, the school bus driver/monitor will notify the principal or designee who will require the completion of the School Bus Behavior Report. Based on the severity of the consequence, the principal's discretion for consequences include regular school-based consequences, as well as bus suspension or bus expulsion and/or assigned seating. If a child is suspended from the bus, it is the parent/guardian's responsibility to ensure that the child gets to school on time. The school will provide public bus fare for students who lose bus privileges if the student's family is unable to bring the student to school.

### *Bus Specific Conduct*

Beyond the expectations outline in the Student Code of Conduct, all students on the any bus must:

- Remain seated facing forward at all times
- Follow the instructions of the bus driver
- Keep their body inside the bus
- Avoid yelling or engaging on other activities that might distract the bus driver
- Respect the driver and all other passengers

### **Student Technology Use Policy**

Collegiate Academies provides students with the technological equipment and services necessary to succeed. This Agreement shall serve as confirmation of the parties' mutual understanding concerning the use of technological resources owned by Collegiate Academies.

Collegiate Academies allows the student to use Collegiate Academies technological equipment and services, including computers, mobile devices, and internet access, under the following terms and conditions:

1. Conditional Privilege: The student's use of the school's equipment and services is a privilege conditioned on the student's adherence to this agreement.
2. Property: All equipment provided to the student is intended for educational purposes associated with his/her enrollment at Collegiate Academies. All equipment and contents therein are the sole property of Collegiate Academies,

and remain so even if the equipment is removed from Collegiate Academies property. The student's log on credentials must be provided to authorized Collegiate Academies employees upon request.

3. Damages: If equipment in student's possession is lost, stolen, damaged, missing components, or vandalized, the student/student's family will be personally responsible for the replacement cost of the equipment. Failure to pay the assigned cost may result in loss of privileges, including but not limited to, participation in community trips, the end of year ceremony, or extracurriculars.
4. Acceptable Use: The student agrees that he/she will obey all federal and state laws and regulations when using the school's equipment and services. Under no circumstances shall a student's use of school resources interfere with, or detract from his/her learning or the learning of others.
5. Penalties for Improper Use: If the student violates this agreement and misuses the equipment or services, he/she shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.
6. Misuse of equipment and services includes, but is not limited to, the following:
  - a. Using the equipment or services for any activities deemed lewd, obscene, vulgar, or pornographic as defined by prevailing community standards, disruptive or offensive to others, or harmful to school morale, including, but not limited to, transmission of sexually explicit messages or images, ethnic, racial, or gender slurs, unwelcome propositions or love letters, or offensive comments based on any federally protected status.
  - b. Using abusive or profane language in private messages on the equipment or network; or using the equipment or network to harass, insult, or verbally attack others;
  - c. Using encryption software;
  - d. Wasteful use of limited resources provided by the school including networking bandwidth, data plan, paper;
  - e. Causing congestion of the network through lengthy downloads of files;
  - f. obtaining or sending information which could be used to make destructive devices such as guns, weapons, bombs, explosives, or fireworks;
  - g. Gaining or attempting to gain unauthorized access to resources or files;
  - h. Identifying oneself with another name or password or using an account or password of another user without proper authorization;
  - i. Using the equipment or network for financial or commercial gain without school permission;
  - j. Theft or vandalism of data, equipment, or intellectual property;
  - k. Invading the privacy of individuals;
  - l. Using the equipment or network for any illegal activity, including computer hacking and copyright or intellectual property law violations;
  - m. Introducing a virus to, or otherwise improperly tampering with, the equipment or system;
  - n. Degrading or disrupting equipment or system performance;

- o. Creating a web page or associating a web page with the school or school without proper authorization;
  - p. Attempting to gain access or gaining access to records, grades, or files from which the student is prohibited;
  - q. Providing access to the school's equipment or network to unauthorized individuals;
  - r. Taking part in any activity related to Internet use which creates a clear and present danger of the substantial disruption of the orderly operation of Collegiate Academies;
  - s. Making unauthorized copies of computer software;
  - t. Use of technology while driving;
  - u. Installing software on school computers without prior approval of authorized Collegiate Academies staff;
  - v. The use of peer to peer file sharing programs.
7. Liability for debts: The student/student's family shall be liable for any, and all, costs (debts) incurred through the improper use of school equipment or services, including penalties for copyright violations.
  8. No Expectation of Privacy: The student/student's family waives any right to privacy on all Collegiate Academies equipment and services. The student/student's family agrees that the school may monitor the student's use of the school's equipment and network, and may also examine all system activities in which the student participates, including but not limited to email, voice, written, and video transmissions. Collegiate Academies may, at times, allow technical support to remotely access any Collegiate Academies device, including all equipment provided to the student. All electronic communications to and from students regarding school and student matters must be communicated utilizing Collegiate Academies' electronic messaging systems in order to maximize and help protect the privacy of student information.
  9. Reporting Misuse, Threats, or Cyber Bullying are subject to disciplinary action per our student code of conduct.
  10. Other terms and conditions may apply.

### **Student Cell Phone Use**

At Opportunities Academy, students are encouraged to learn to use their mobile devices to communicate appropriately with peers, family, and staff as well as to responsibly communicate their whereabouts and safety.

When students begin an externship, OA recommends that a family purchase a basic device with GPS capabilities so that students can use maps to get to a destination, ask for help when needed, and communicate with staff when they arrive safely at work.



## **Tobacco Use**

Opportunities Academy is a tobacco free campus. Use or possession of any tobacco product or vaping product by students, staff, or visitors is prohibited on school grounds and school buses.

## **Student Handbook Appendices**

### **Appendix A: Teacher Bill of Rights**

Each LEA shall provide a copy of this policy to all teachers at the beginning of each school year. Each such LEA also shall post a copy of the rights provided in this policy in a prominent place in every school and administrative building it operates; and provide such a copy to parents or legal guardians of all children attending such schools in a form and manner approved by the school board. Each LEA, and every school under its jurisdiction that maintains an internet website, shall post on such website a copy of the Teacher Bill of Rights required by this policy.

A. Respecting the authority of teachers is essential to creating an environment conducive to learning, effective instruction in the classroom, and proper administration of city, parish, and other local public schools. To maintain and protect that authority, it is important that teachers, administrators, parents, and students are fully informed of the various rights conferred upon teachers pursuant to this policy, which are:

1. a teacher has the right to teach free from the fear of frivolous lawsuits, including the right to qualified immunity and to legal defense, and to indemnification by the employing school board, pursuant to R.S. 17:416.1(C), 416.4, 416.5, and 416.11, for actions taken in the performance of duties of the teacher's employment;
2. a teacher has the right to appropriately discipline students in accordance with R.S. 17:223 and 416 through 416.16 and any city, parish, or other local public school board regulation;
3. a teacher has the right to remove any persistently disruptive student from his classroom when the student's behavior prevents the orderly instruction of other students or when the student displays impudent or defiant behavior and to place the student in the custody of the principal or his designee pursuant to R.S. 17:416(A)(1)(c);
4. a teacher has the right to have his or her professional judgment and discretion respected by school and district administrators in any disciplinary action taken by the teacher in accordance with school and district policy and with R.S.17:416(A)(1)(c);

5. a teacher has the right to teach in a safe, secure, and orderly environment that is conducive to learning and free from recognized dangers or hazards that are causing or likely to cause serious injury in accordance with R.S. 17:416.9 and 416.16;
6. a teacher has the right to be treated with civility and respect as provided in R.S. 17:416.12;
7. a teacher has the right to communicate with and to request the participation of parents in appropriate student disciplinary decisions pursuant to R.S. 17:235.1 and 416(A);
8. a teacher has the right to complete only paperwork that is not excessively burdensome that, if required by law or regulation, adheres to the law or regulation and does not result in overly cumbersome interpretations of that law or regulation;
9. a beginning teacher has the right to receive leadership and support in accordance with R.S. 17:3881, including the assignment of a qualified, experienced mentor who commits to helping him become a competent, confident professional in the classroom and offers support and assistance as needed to meet performance standards and professional expectation;
10. a teacher has the right to be afforded time during the school day or week to collaborate with other teachers.

B. No LEA shall establish policies that prevent teachers from exercising the rights listed above or in any other provisions included in R.S. 17:416-416.16.

C. The provisions of this policy shall not be construed to supersede any other state law, BESE policy, or LEA policy enacted or adopted relative to the discipline of students.

D. Each LEA shall provide a copy of this policy to all teachers at the beginning of each school year. Each such LEA also shall post a copy of the rights provided in this policy in a prominent place in every school and administrative building it operates and provide such a copy to parents or legal guardians of all children attending such schools in a form and manner approved by the school board. Each LEA and every school under its jurisdiction that maintains an internet website shall post on such website a copy of the Teacher Bill of Rights required by this policy.

AUTHORITY NOTE: Promulgated in accordance with R.S. 17:416.18.

HISTORICAL NOTE: Promulgated by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, LR 31:1268 (June 2005), amended LR 35:1100 (June 2009), LR 39:3259 (December 2013).

## **Appendix B: Student Dues & Fees**

### **Policy Statement**

Collegiate Academies (CA) schools provide robust and effective programming to scholars across academic, social, extracurricular, athletic, and other domains. As public schools, CA will strive to create these programs with minimal contributions (fees) from families and participating students. All fees requested from families will be communicated to families as early as possible, and a clear waiver process will be made available to ensure no undue economic hardship is caused by student fees (fees are recommended, not mandatory). In no case will any fee prohibited by local, state, or federal law be authorized by Collegiate Academies leadership. In no case will students be denied or delayed admission to any instructional activity or have their educational records withheld due to failure to pay a fee.

### **List of Fees**

Opportunities Academy does not collect any student dues or fees.

## **Appendix C: Parent Bill of Rights**

### §406.9. Parents' Bill of Rights for Public Schools

A. The legislature finds all of the following:

(1) That parental involvement is a significant factor in increasing student achievement.

(2) That access to student information encourages greater parental involvement.

B. Parents of public school children who have not reached the age of majority shall have all of the following rights:

(1) To examine the textbooks, curriculum, and supplemental material used in their child's classroom.

(2) To inspect their child's school records, and to receive a copy of their child's records within ten business days of submitting a written request, either electronically or on paper. Parents shall not be required to appear in person for the purposes of requesting or validating a request for their child's school records. There shall be no charge for a parent to receive such records electronically. Any charges for a paper copy of such records shall be reasonable and set forth in the official rules and regulations of the school governing authority. School records shall include all of the following:

(a) Academic records, including but not limited to results of interim or benchmark assessments.

(b) Medical or health records.

(c) Records of any mental health counseling.

(d) Records of any vocational counseling.

(e) Records of discipline.

(f) Records of attendance.

(g) Records associated with a child's screening for learning challenges, exceptionalities, plans for an Individualized Education Program, or Individual Accommodation Plan.

(h) Any other student-specific file, document, or other materials that are maintained by the school.

(3) To be notified when medical services are being offered to their child, except where emergency medical treatment is required. In cases where emergency medical treatment is required, the parent shall be notified as soon as practicable after the treatment is rendered.

(4) To be notified if a criminal action is deemed to have been committed against their child or by their child.

(5) To be notified if law enforcement personnel question their child, except in cases where the parent has been accused of abusing or neglecting the child.

(6) To be notified if their child is taken or removed from the school campus without parental permission.

- (7) That the school shall not discriminate against their child based upon the sincerely held religious beliefs of the child's family.
- (8) To receive written notice and the option to opt their child out of any surveys that include questions about any of the following:
- (a) The student's sexual experiences or attractions.
  - (b) The student's family beliefs, morality, religion, or political affiliations.
  - (c) Any mental health or psychological problems of the student or a family member.
- (9) To receive written notice and have the option to opt their child out of instruction on topics associated with sexual activity.
- (10) To receive from the school the annual school calendar, no later than thirty days prior to the beginning of the school year, and to be notified in writing as soon as feasible of any revisions to such calendar. Such calendar shall be posted to the school's website and shall include, at a minimum, student attendance days and any event that requires parent or student attendance outside of normal school days or hours.
- (11) To receive in writing each year or to view on the school's website a comprehensive listing of any required fee and its purpose and use and a description of how economic hardships may be addressed.
- (12) To receive in writing each year or to view on the school's website a description of the school's required uniform for students.
- (13) To be informed if their child's academic performance is such that it could threaten the child's ability to be promoted to the next grade level and to be offered an in-person meeting with the child's classroom teacher and school leader to discuss any resources or strategies available to support and encourage the child's academic improvement.

C. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary, a public school shall not be required to release any records or information regarding a student's medical or health records or mental health counseling records to a parent during the pendency of an investigation of child abuse or neglect conducted by any law enforcement agency or the Department of Children and Family Services where the parent is the target of the investigation, unless the parent has obtained a court order.

Acts 2014, No. 699, §1; Acts 2018, No. 547, §1.

## **Appendix D: Parent Access to Instructional Materials**

### §355. Parental access to instructional materials

A. A parent of a child attending a public elementary or secondary school shall be entitled to access to instructional materials as provided in this Section.

B. A parent is entitled to:

- (1) Review instructional materials used by or administered to the parent's child.
- (2) Review any survey before the survey is administered or distributed by a school to a student.

C. Each local school board shall adopt rules and policies for each school to make instructional materials readily available for review as provided in this Section. The rules may specify reasonable hours for review. The rules shall provide that the school shall provide access to instructional materials to a parent upon request. If a parent requests a paper copy of material that can be readily copied using school equipment, such copy shall be provided. The rules shall establish reasonable and customary fees to be collected by the school to cover the cost of providing such copies. No provision of law or school board policy shall prohibit or interfere with a parent's ability to make his own copies on school premises via mobile or other device. The principal of each school shall ensure that the school complies with such rules.

D. For purposes of this Section:

- (1) "Instructional materials" means content that conveys the knowledge or skills of a subject in the school curriculum through a medium or a combination of media for conveying information to a student. It also includes any nonsecure test, nonsecure assessment, or survey administered to a student. The term also includes books, supplementary materials, teaching aids, computer software, magnetic media, DVD, CD-ROM, computer courseware, online material, information, or services, or an electronic medium or other means of conveying information to the student or otherwise contributing to the learning process.
- (2) "Parent" means the parent or legal guardian of a child.
- (3) "Survey" means any evaluative instrument or questionnaire that is not an assessment of academic knowledge, skills, or abilities, administered as part of a state, national, or international assessment or by itself.

Acts 2014, No. 436, §1, eff. Aug. 1, 2014.

Parents can access curricular materials that are used in their student's classes by making a request in writing of the school's Director of Finance and Operations. The request should include what the parent wishes to view, including which classes, which materials, and which days/lessons they wish to see.

Parents can access information regarding the professional qualifications of their child's classroom teachers by making a request in writing of the school's Director of Finance and Operations. The following information, at a minimum, can be requested:

- (i) Whether the teacher has met State qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction

- (ii) Whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which State qualification or licensing criteria have been waived
- (iii) The baccalaureate degree major of the teacher and any other graduate certification or degree held by the teacher, and the field of discipline of the certification or degree.
- (iv) Whether the child is provided services by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications. Parents may also request information on the level of achievement of their child in each of the State academic assessments and timely notice that their child has been assigned, or has been taught for four or more consecutive weeks by, a teacher who is not highly qualified.

**Appendix E: Parent Notice re: Storage and Administration of Epinephrine**

**Notice re: storage and administration of auto-injectable epinephrine in classrooms**

As required by state law, Collegiate Academies shall maintain a supply of auto-injectable epinephrine in a secure location in each classroom assigned to a student who is deemed by their physician to be at high risk for anaphylactic reaction and incapable of self-administration of auto-injectable epinephrine.

If your child is at high risk for anaphylactic reaction and incapable of self-administration of auto-injectable epinephrine, please contact our front office to schedule a meeting with our school nurse and a member of our school operations team. In that meeting, you will be asked to provide the appropriate medical documentation, give written authorization for the student to be administered the medication, and provide a supply of auto-injectable epinephrine to be kept in each classroom.

The teacher in each classroom where auto-injectable epinephrine is stored shall be provided information regarding accessing and administering auto-injectable epinephrine, the signs and symptoms of anaphylactic reactions, and specific information regarding condition, care, and treatment of the student assigned to the classroom who is at high risk of anaphylactic reaction. The school and its employees shall incur no liability as a result of any injury sustained by the student from the good faith administration of auto-injectable epinephrine.



## **Appendix F: Annual Notice Regarding Consent to Bill Medicaid and Share Information with the Louisiana Department of Health**

Schools in Louisiana have been approved to receive partial reimbursement from Louisiana Medicaid for the cost of certain health-related services provided by Collegiate Academies to certain students. In order for Collegiate Academies to get back some of the money spent on services, Collegiate Academies needs to share with Louisiana Medicaid the following types of information about certain students: name; date of birth; gender; type of services provided, when and by whom; diagnosis (if any) and Louisiana Medicaid ID. If your child is eligible to receive services to meet his/her needs, the services may be provided by the school system and/or you may take your child to another provider that accepts Medicaid.

With one-time written parental permission, Collegiate Academies seeks partial reimbursement for services provided by Louisiana Medicaid including, among others, a hearing test or eye exam; occupational or speech or physical therapy; some school nurse visits; and counseling services. After the initial permission is given, this annual notice is provided each year.

Please be advised of the following:

1. Collegiate Academies cannot require families to sign up for Louisiana Medicaid in order to receive the health related and/or special education services to which the student is entitled.
2. Collegiate Academies cannot require families to pay anything towards the cost of a student's health-related and/or special education services.
3. Collegiate Academies is given permission to share information with and request reimbursement from Louisiana Medicaid:
  - a. This will not affect the students available lifetime coverage or other Louisiana Medicaid; nor will it in any way limit the family's use of Louisiana Medicaid benefits outside of school.
  - b. The permission will not affect the student's special education services or IEP rights in any way, if the student is eligible to receive them.
  - c. The permission will not lead to any changes in the student's Louisiana Medicaid rights; and
  - d. The permission will not lead to any risk of losing eligibility for other Medicaid funded programs.
4. Once the permission is given, families have the right to change their mind and withdraw permission at any time.
5. If permission is withdrawn, Collegiate Academies will continue to be responsible for providing the student with the services, at no cost to the family.

If a parent wishes to withdraw previously given written consent, please contact the district at Collegiate Academies.

## **Appendix G: Policies for Pregnant and Parenting Students**

Collegiate Academies is committed to creating and maintaining a community where all individuals enjoy freedom from discrimination, including discrimination on the basis of sex, as mandated by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX). Sex discrimination, which can include discrimination based on pregnancy, marital status, or parental status, is prohibited and illegal in educational programs and activities, hiring, leave policies, employment policies, and health insurance coverage. Collegiate Academies hereby establishes a policy and associated procedures for ensuring the protection and equal treatment of pregnant individuals, persons with pregnancy--related conditions, and new parents.

Under the Department of Education's (DOE) Title IX regulations, an institution that receives federal funding "shall not discriminate against any student, or exclude any student from its education program or activity, including any class or extracurricular activity, on the basis of such student's pregnancy, childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, or recovery therefrom." According to the DOE, appropriate treatment of a pregnant student includes granting the student leave "for so long a period of time as is deemed medically necessary by the student's physician," and then effectively reinstating the student to the same status as was held when the leave began.

This generally means that pregnant students will be treated the same way as someone who has a temporary disability. Extended deadlines, make-up assignments (e.g., papers, quizzes, tests, and presentations), tutoring, independent study, and virtual instruction may be available, in addition to other assistive supports identified. The Title IX Coordinator has the authority to determine that such accommodations are necessary and appropriate, and to inform teachers and other school Administrators of the need to modify policies accordingly.

As with disability accommodations, information about pregnant students' requests for accommodations will be shared with teachers and staff only to the extent necessary to provide the reasonable accommodation. Staff will regard all information associated with such requests as private and will not disclose this information unless necessary. Administrative responsibility for these accommodations lies with the network or school-based Title IX Coordinator, who will maintain all appropriate documentation related to accommodations.

Students are encouraged to work with their teachers and Collegiate Academies support systems to devise a plan for how to best address the conditions as pregnancy progresses, anticipate the need for leaves, minimize the academic impact of their absence, and get back on track as efficiently and comfortably as possible. The Title IX Coordinator will assist with plan development and implementation as needed.

## **SCOPE OF POLICY**

This policy applies to all aspects of Collegiate Academies program, including, but not limited to, educational programs and activities and extracurricular activities.

## **DEFINITIONS**

- Caretaking: caring for and providing for the needs of a child.
- Medical Necessity: a determination made by a health care provider (of the student's choosing) that a certain course of action is in the patient's best health interests.
- Parenting: the raising of a child by the child's parents in the reasonably immediate post-partum period.
- Pregnancy and Pregnancy-Related Conditions: include (but are not limited to) pregnancy, childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, conditions arising in connection with pregnancy, and recovery from any of these conditions.
- Pregnancy Discrimination: includes treating an individual affected by pregnancy or a pregnancy-related condition less favorably than similar individuals not so affected, and includes a failure to provide legally mandated leave or accommodations.
- Pregnant Student/Birth-Parent: refers to the student who is or was pregnant. This policy and its pregnancy-related protections apply to all pregnant persons, regardless of gender identity or expression.
- Reasonable Accommodations: (for the purposes of this policy) changes in the academic environment or typical operations that enables pregnant students or students with pregnancy-related conditions to continue to pursue their studies and enjoy the equal benefits of Collegiate Academies.

## **REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION OF STUDENTS AFFECTED BY PREGNANCY, CHILDBIRTH, OR RELATED CONDITIONS**

- Collegiate Academies and its employees will not require students to limit their studies as the result of pregnancy or pregnancy-related conditions.
- The benefits and services provided to students affected by pregnancy will be no less than those provided to students with other temporary medical conditions.
- Students with pregnancy-related disabilities, like any student with a short-term or temporary disability, are entitled to reasonable accommodations so that they will not be disadvantaged in their courses of study, and may seek assistance from the Title IX Coordinator.
- No artificial deadlines or time limitations will be imposed on requests for accommodations, but Collegiate Academies is limited in its ability to implement accommodations retroactively.

- Reasonable accommodations may include, but are not limited to:
  - Providing accommodations requested by a pregnant student to protect the health and safety of the student and/or the pregnancy (such as allowing the student to maintain a safe distance from hazardous substances);
  - Making modifications to the physical environment (such as accessible seating);
  - Providing mobility support;
  - Extending deadlines and/or allowing the student to make up tests or assignments missed for pregnancy-related absences;
  - Excusing medically-necessary absences;
  - Homebound instructional services per Collegiate Academies homebound services policy; and/or
  - Allowing breastfeeding students reasonable time and space to pump breast milk in a location that is private, clean, and reasonably accessible.
    - Bathroom stalls do not satisfy this requirement.

#### **ATTENDANCE AND LEAVE FOR PREGNANT AND PARENTING STUDENTS<sup>1</sup>**

- Students will not be required to take a leave of absence, or withdraw from or limit their studies or other activities, as the result of pregnancy, childbirth, or related conditions. This does not require modification of essential elements of any academic program.
- Students needing a leave of absence under this policy will provide notice of the intent to take leave as soon as practicable and no less than 30 calendar days prior to the initiation of leave.
- Students are entitled to medical leave of at least 6 weeks related to pregnancy, childbirth, and parenting, which can be extended to 8 weeks for Cesarean Birth or 12 weeks for other medical necessity as certified by a physician.
- Any absence due to conditions related to pregnancy or parenting, including but not limited to labor, delivery, and recovery; prenatal and postnatal medical appointments and other medically necessary pregnancy-related absences, a child's illness or medical appointment; and legal appointments related to pregnancy or parenting, including but not limited to adoption, custody, and visitation, will be excused.
  - Acceptable documentation for the absences include a note from a licensed physician or permission from the parent.
- Parenting students, regardless of whether they are the birth parent, are entitled to a minimum 10 days of excused absences after the birth of a child.
- At the conclusion of any pregnancy-related or parenting-related period of absence, students will be allowed to make up missed work in a reasonable

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<sup>1</sup> [Act 472](#) Compliance

amount of time that shall not be less than the number of days the student was absent, and choose from various options to make up the work, including retaking a semester, participating in an online course credit recovery program, being granted six weeks to continue at the same pace and finish at a later date, or receiving home-based instruction services.

### **BREASTFEEDING ACCOMMODATIONS**

- Lactating students are entitled to reasonable accommodations on campus for breast-feeding purposes, including access to a private and secure room, permission to bring a breast pump to campus, access to a power source for a breast pump or any other lactation equipment, and access to safely store breast milk.
- Lactating students are entitled to a reasonable amount of time to express breast milk or breastfeed a child while at school; and
- Students will not incur an academic penalty as a result of use, during the school day, of the reasonable breastfeeding accommodations and will be provided the opportunity to make up any work missed due to such use.

### **CHILD CARE:**

- Schools will assist parenting students in identifying child care providers, as needed.

### **NO RETALIATION OR HARASSMENT**

- Harassment of any student or other member of the Collegiate Academies community based on sex, gender, gender identity or expression, pregnancy, or parental status is prohibited.
- Teachers, administrators, and other Collegiate Academies employees are prohibited from interfering with students' right to take leave, seek reasonable accommodation, or otherwise exercise their rights under this policy.
- Teachers, administrators, and other Collegiate Academies employees are prohibited from retaliating against students for exercising the rights articulated by this policy, including imposing or threatening to impose negative educational outcomes because students request leave or accommodation, file a complaint, or otherwise exercise their rights under this policy.

## Appendix H: Commitments - Family Copy

### 1. Attendance

Per Bulletin 741, OA asks all students and families to commit to the following:

Students will

- attend school on time daily, except when absent for reasons due to illness or other excused absence;
- demonstrate significant effort toward completing all required assignments; and
- follow school and classroom rules.

Families will

- ensure that his/her child attends school daily except for excused absences;
- ensure that his/her child arrives at school on time each day;
- attend all required parent and teacher or principal conferences.

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Parent Signature

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Student Signature

### 2. Transportation

1. Permission is valid throughout the period of enrollment in Opportunities Academy program.

2. Off campus activities, planned by the responsible staff, are a significant part of the program's curriculum and the student's IEP to further develop their ability to participate effectively in the community, jobs, and independent living. The community-based activities will include: Working at various internships or externships which will include at times leaving the school campus and riding the RTA buses (or using rideshare apps), shopping at stores, visiting college campuses, riding the bus, or other activities that are similar in nature to those listed..

3. At times this year, the student will navigate to/from community activities and/or externship opportunities independently using the RTA buses. Student will have the support of OA staff AND will follow all OA guidelines to ensure safe access to the community and make smart decisions when alone or with classmates.

Student has my permission to participate in the above student instructional activities.

OR

I grant my own permission to participate in the above student instructional activities as I am over the Age of Majority and responsible for my own decisions regarding my education.

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Parent Signature

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Student Signature

### 3. Acknowledgement of Receipt of Handbook

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Parent Signature

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Student Signature

## Appendix H: Commitments - School Copy

### 1. Attendance

Per Bulletin 741, OA asks all students and families to commit to the following:

Students will

- attend school on time daily, except when absent for reasons due to illness or other excused absence;
- demonstrate significant effort toward completing all required assignments; and
- follow school and classroom rules.

Families will

- ensure that his/her child attends school daily except for excused absences;
- ensure that his/her child arrives at school on time each day;
- attend all required parent and teacher or principal conferences.

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Parent Signature

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Student Signature

### 2. Transportation

1. Permission is valid throughout the period of enrollment in Opportunities Academy program.

2. Off campus activities, planned by the responsible staff, are a significant part of the program's curriculum and the student's IEP to further develop their ability to participate effectively in the community, jobs, and independent living. The community-based activities will include: Working at various internships or externships which will include at times leaving the school campus and riding the RTA buses (or using rideshare apps), shopping at stores, visiting college campuses, riding the bus, or other activities that are similar in nature to those listed.

3. At times this year, the student will navigate to/from community activities and/or externship opportunities independently using the RTA buses. Student will have the support of OA staff AND will follow all OA guidelines to ensure safe access to the community and make smart decisions when alone or with classmates.

Student has my permission to participate in the above student instructional activities.

OR

I grant my own permission to participate in the above student instructional activities as I am over the Age of Majority and responsible for my own decisions regarding my education.

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Parent Signature

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Student Signature

### 3. Acknowledgement of Receipt of Handbook

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Parent Signature

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Student Signature