



Family Handbook

Amber Charter Schools provide our students with an academically rigorous and well-rounded education, along with strong character development, which will enable them to prosper in their future endeavors.

Amber Charter Elementary School **East Harlem**
220 East 106th Street
New York, NY 10029
Phone: (212) 534-9667 / Fax: (212) 534-6225

Amber Charter Elementary School **Kingsbridge**
3120 Corlear Avenue
Bronx, NY 10463
Phone: (646) 802-1140 / Fax: (212) 534-6225

Amber Charter School **Inwood** and **Kingsbridge Middle School**
532 West 215th Street
New York, NY 10034
Phone: (929) 299-1595 / Fax: (212) 534-6225

www.ambercharter.org

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Dear Amber families,

Welcome to the Amber Charter Schools community!

We are excited to have your family join us as valued partners, in the great adventure of developing your children into lifelong learners. We are committed to providing an academically rigorous and well-rounded education to all of our students and supporting their natural abilities to support their success in future endeavors.

Amber Charter Schools is a network of schools where your child/ren will grow and learn. We understand there are innumerable schools you could have chosen for your child and we do not take your decision to choose Amber lightly. Amber Charter Schools is a network of schools where your Amber Star and Amber Leader will grow and learn. All of our children in grades K-4 are Stars while our middle school children transition to Leaders. You will learn more about that as the school year progresses!

As you get to know our school-based staff members in East Harlem, Kingsbridge and Inwood, as well as our network leaders, you will understand the drive and passion with which we all do our work. Most importantly, you will realize the ways in which we work in alignment to our mission.

This Family Handbook provides rich information about Amber Charter Schools, its policies, practices and opportunities.

As always, if we can be of service, please don't hesitate to reach out to anyone in the Amber Charter Schools community. We are here to serve you and your children.

Let's start the adventure!

Veronica Almedina and Kirsys Gomez
Co-Chief Executive Officers
Amber Charter Schools

AMBER CHARTER SCHOOLS OVERVIEW

The History of Amber Charter Schools

Amber Charter School East Harlem was founded in 2000 as the first Latino-led charter school in New York State, by the Community Association of Progressive Dominicans (ACDP)¹, a community-based organization located in the heart of Washington Heights.

- For over 20 years, Amber Charter School East Harlem has provided a safe, rigorous and joyful learning educational home for hundreds of K-5 students and their families.
- Amber Charter School Kingsbridge was opened in 2016-17, incubating in Washington Heights in year 1 and then relocating to its permanent home in the Bronx in 2017.
- In 2019, Amber Charter School III was approved to open in CSD 6 (Washington Heights/Inwood). It opened during the Fall of 2021, and will grow to serve students in grades K-8.

What is a Charter School?

In December 1998, the New York State Charter Schools Act allowed the creation of independent public schools, operating based on the terms of a five-year performance contract or "charter." These schools can be created by educators, guardians, community leaders, philanthropists and nonprofit organizations and are governed by a not-for-profit board of trustees.

Charter schools are held accountable for meeting specific student performance goals and their charter can be revoked or not renewed if results are not attained. In return, charter schools are exempt from many traditional public school regulations for curriculum development, staffing and budgeting.

By giving educators more authority and evaluating schools by their student achievements, charter schools provide an innovative solution to achieve the following educational goals:

- Increase the learning opportunities and scholastic achievement for all students, especially those at-risk of academic failure
- Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods
- Provide guardians and students more educational choices within the public school system
- Create new opportunities for motivated teachers, school administrators and personnel

Like all other public schools, charter schools must meet state standards and Regents requirements, as well as state laws regarding health, safety, civil rights and student assessment. In addition, charter schools must accept all students and cannot discriminate in their admission policy.

¹ The Community Association of Progressive Dominicans (ACDP) is a highly respected organization providing services to residents of Northern Manhattan and the Bronx. ACDP was founded in 1979 and incorporated in 1980 as the first non-profit to focus on the needs of New York's Dominican immigrants and the communities in which they live. ACDP has organized the community to develop high quality programs providing direct assistance to 27,000 children and families annually.

Charter School Management Structure

The Amber Charter Schools are licensed to operate (our “charter”) by the State University of New York Charter Schools Institute (SUNY CSI). Representatives from SUNY CSI visit to observe the operations of the schools to ensure we comply with all NYS requirements.

Although we are not a New York City Department of Education school, we work with the NYC public school system in the following capacities:

- Transportation
- Special education and related services

Amber Charter Schools is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.

Amber Charter Schools holds every adult accountable for the organization’s success. The Co-Chief Executive Officers are hired by the Board of Trustees to manage all school activities that involve students, families and staff members.

The [New York City Charter School Center](#) provides more information about charter schools in New York City, and the [National Alliance of Public Charter Schools](#) provides information on charter schools across the nation.

Amber Board of Trustees

Trustee’s Name	Board Position Office (e.g. chair, treasurer, secretary)
John Gutiérrez	Board Chair
Amador Centeno	Vice Chair
Soledad Hiciano	Secretary
Frank Aldridge	Treasurer
Timothy Day	Trustee
Robyn Epps	Trustee
Li’Esha Garcia	Trustee
Miguelina German	Trustee
Lindsay Marino Long	Trustee
Brad Olsen	Trustee
Khiera Peña	Trustee
Luina Munoz-BlueSpruce	Trustee

Key Design Elements

Amber Charter Schools has not only created a system of programming producing strong academic outcomes, but more importantly, our structures and supports address the learning and developmental needs of the whole child through enrichment offerings and a comprehensive range of supports.

Amber Charter Schools:

1. Ensure a rigorous and comprehensive core academic experience
2. Support students in a multitude of ways
3. Create an educational community that celebrates culture and fosters a love of learning

1. Ensure a Rigorous and Comprehensive Core Academic Experience

Students are engaged in rigorous academic experiences, value and demonstrate discipline and hard work, and are held responsible for their learning. All of our students learn through direct skill and strategy building instruction, blended with opportunities to think critically, write creatively, make cross content connections and construct knowledge grounded in hands-on and real-world experiences. This is evident in the authentic work they produce, their performance on formative and summative assessments, their responses to thought-provoking questions and their reflections on their own learning, orally and in writing. Learning is challenging, exploratory, integrative and relevant.

Students at all grade levels receive instruction in the core subject areas:

- At least 90 minutes a day of literacy
- At least 90 minutes a day of mathematics
- At least 90 minutes a week of social studies
- At least 90 minutes a week of science

Non-core subject learning experiences are also rich and engaging:

- All students learn Spanish as a second language.
- Students have opportunities to develop their skills, knowledge and passions within visual arts, music, physical education and technology classes.

2. Student Supports

Amber Charter Schools are inclusive environments. This commitment is demonstrated through the Response to Intervention (RtI) framework, as well as small class size and low teacher/student ratio at each school.

Amber Charter Schools employ a Response to Intervention multi-level prevention framework to categorize, support and monitor students, based on benchmark and formative assessment results. This approach is reflective of the Amber Charter Schools' core belief that every student can achieve grade level learning standards. Teachers modify and differentiate core instruction for students based on the needs they exhibit, whether it is a need for intervention, and/or enrichment across content areas. Moderate and high intensity interventions (for students identified as at-risk or as formally requiring Special Education and English as a Second Language services) will be provided by special education, ESL and Title I reading teachers.

Students develop long-term, deep relationships with peers and staff members. There are teacher assistants in grades K-2, tutors in grades 3-5, and Student Support Associates in grades 6-8 to help support in classrooms. Classes average 25 students, ensuring a low teacher to student ratio.

3. Create an educational community celebrating culture and fostering a love of learning

Learning is a public and universal pursuit. Students are highly engaged in lessons, which involve projects, investigations and explorations, as well as the integration of the arts. Daily learning is interactive and collaborative, with students frequently working in pairs and teams to grapple with new concepts and skills and provide evidence of mastery. The students attending Amber Charter Schools work collaboratively, within and across classrooms and grade levels on impactful, meaningful community service projects.

Charter Accountability Goals

All adults in the Amber Charter Schools community (trustees, staff members and family members) are expected to contribute in purposeful and persistent ways to ensure the academic achievement of students and overall development of a successful school. Our accountability goals are summarized below.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS, MATHEMATICS and SCIENCE

All students at Amber Charter Schools will become proficient readers, mathematicians and scientists, as measured by the NYS English language arts, mathematics and science assessments.

Each year:

- At least 75% of students who are enrolled at an Amber Charter School for 2 or more years need to meet/exceed the standard (earn a Level 3 or 4) on NYS assessments.
- The percentages of students meeting/exceeding the standard (earning a Level 3 or 4) on NYS assessments, who are enrolled at an Amber Charter Schools for 2 or more years, need to increase and need to be higher than the local community school district.

GUARDIAN SATISFACTION

Amber Charter Schools will maintain strong guardian interest.

Each year:

- Guardian will express satisfaction with the school program, based on the school's Family Survey in which at least two-thirds of *all* families provide a positive response to each of the survey items.
- At least 90 % of families will participate in family- teacher conferences.

STUDENT SATISFACTION

Amber Charter Schools will maintain strong student enrollment, interest and engagement.

Each year, each school will have a daily student attendance rate of 95 %.

Amber Charter Schools will also be:

- In good standing under Every Student Succeeds Act (the state accountability system).
- Fiscally sound.
- In legal compliance.

OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

Contacting Staff Members

Guardians are encouraged to first call or email CLASSROOM TEACHERS with any concerns or questions. During a school day, classroom teachers are teaching their classes and will not be expected to take calls. Please expect an average response time of 48 - 72 hours after receiving your call or email.

- Amber Charter Schools' staff can also be reached via email.
 - All email addresses follow a standard format, which include the first initial of first name, followed by the last name@ambercharter.org. For example, tfernandez@ambercharter.org
- Families are encouraged to use the Parentsquare app to reach out to staff members.
- Messages can also be left with each school's Operations team, by calling the numbers below.
 - Amber Charter School East Harlem: (212) 534-9667
 - Amber Charter School Kingsbridge: (646) 802-1140
 - Amber Charter School Inwood Campus (Inwood Elementary and Kingsbridge Middle School): (929) 299-1595

Who Do I Ask?

Please contact members of our school administrative/leadership teams if you are in need of further assistance:

Who Do I Ask?	For What?
<i>Operations Associate</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Required forms (medical, etc.) ▪ Contact/escort information updates ▪ Student attendance ▪ Enrollment ▪ Requests for bus transportation ▪ Local after school programs
<i>Director of Operations</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School operations ▪ Volunteering at the school
<i>Dean of Students</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Behavioral and social concerns ▪ Discipline and safety (in school and on the bus) ▪ Uniforms ▪ Student late arrival and late pick up challenges ▪ Academic/behavioral concerns about your child in art, physical education and music classes
<i>Staff Developers</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Direct support for teacher development ▪ Support with Academic Intervention Services ▪ Support with After School Tutoring ▪ Models lessons for staff ▪ Responsible for teacher development
<i>Special Education Coordinator</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Special needs services and evaluations ▪ Coordination and scheduling of services ▪ Arranging learning resources ▪ Advocating for additional student support at home and school ▪ Family and School liaison for special education services ▪ managing progress reports for students receiving services
<i>ENL Coordinator</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ English as a New Language needs ▪ Coordination and scheduling of services ▪ Arranging learning resources
<i>Social Worker/Counselor</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Direct social support for students ▪ Support for families (structures at home, stress management, systems for success) ▪ Student attendance challenges
<i>Assistant Principal</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Academic/behavioral concerns about your child ▪ Questions and suggestions about teaching and learning

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community based supports and partnerships
Principal	<p>Principals make all efforts to be accessible to families.</p> <p>To make sure your concerns are addressed and your questions are answered as quickly as possible, the staff members listed above may be asked to address your concerns.</p>

Traveling to and from School

Yellow School Bus

Busing is only at Amber Charter School East Harlem.

Busing is provided through the NYC Department of Education. Students who live between 1/2 mile and 5 miles from the school are typically granted yellow bus services. Amber Charter Schools employs bus matrons to ride all school buses assigned to our students to ensure their safety to and from school. For more information regarding eligibility for students with IEPs, you can review the guidelines we follow for exceptions at our other campuses which do not provide busing.

Student MetroCards

Amber Charter Schools distributes student MetroCards to eligible students twice during the year.

- MetroCards are good for travel to and from school between 5:30 a.m. and 8:30 p.m. only on days school is in session.
- Student MetroCards are valid for three trips each school day.
- Student MetroCards are to be used exclusively by the student to whom it was issued.

If a MetroCard is lost, stolen or damaged, please email the operations team at your school for assistance with a replacement. To learn more about student MetroCards for New York City students, click [here](#).

Walking

We strongly recommend that K-3rd grade students do not walk to school without adult supervision and should not be left unattended at the school before doors are open in the morning. The school cannot be held responsible for the safety of students before arrival or post dismissal.

As of 4th grade, students are permitted to walk to and from school with a signed Walker Permission Slip submitted via ParentSquare. Students with signed waivers will not be permitted to leave the school early on their own for any reason.

School Days and Hours

Amber Charter Schools are in session for at least **180 days** of the year.

School Hours	
Kindergarten	8:00 AM - 3:10 PM Monday – Friday
Grades 1-4	8:00 AM – 3:10 PM Monday- Friday
Grades 5-8	8:00AM- 3:10 PM Monday- Friday

Breakfast and Lunch

To avoid disruption to the instructional day, birthday treats will be handed out at the end of the school day and must have permission of the **classroom teacher in advance**. *Arranging for entertainment, pizza, classroom parties, activities, games, etc. is not appropriate or permitted during school hours, including lunchtime.*

Amber Charter Schools provides free breakfast and lunch every day.

- Breakfast is served daily 8:00 AM – 8:10 AM in the elementary school and from 7:30 - 8:00 AM in the middle school.
- Lunch is served between 10:55 AM and 1:15 PM, by grade level(s).

Breakfast and lunch are provided to students daily. While not every student qualifies for free or reduced-pay breakfast and lunch, the school has committed to cover the cost of all meals, because the money the school spends on this service ensures that each child eats well-balanced meals in school.

It is a guardian's choice whether or not a child takes advantage of eating the school breakfast and/or lunch. Families are encouraged to send a lunch to school with the child in the morning that is nutritious and healthy. Lunches are stored in the classrooms between morning arrival and lunchtime; they cannot be refrigerated or warmed at the school.

Recess

Recess is an opportunity for students to develop strengths in social interactions and expend natural energy in a positive manner. All grades participate in outdoor recess when the weather is favorable (35 degrees and above), and enjoy a more structured indoor recess time in cases of inclement weather.

All classes are accompanied to the designated recess area by adults.

Birthday Celebrations

We respect and value a family's desire to celebrate their child's birthday. Celebrating with classmates can serve as a special treat! However, our primary focus is on protecting the academic integrity of our programming. While families may choose to provide class treats or goodie bags on their child's birthday, there are school guidelines which limit the ways in which we host *all* celebrations at our schools. This allows us to maintain the flow of instruction and account for any medical needs. Therefore, we ask that you review the list below and select from the items allowed for classroom birthday parties. Please note, that as a school, we have the right to refuse any particular goods from being distributed.

ITEMS ALLOWED FOR PARTIES
Cupcakes or Muffins (No Cake that must be cut)
Water or 100% Juice Boxes
Goodie Bags (Without Candy or Nuts)
Healthy Snack (Refer to the Wellness Policy)

If you do wish to send a treat on your child’s birthday, please notify your child’s classroom teacher in advance so you can avoid any foods that may be hazardous to a student’s health due to allergies. With such notice, teachers will be able to monitor all children’s health and safety.

Goodie bags should not contain any type of candy. Suggested alternatives are fruit snacks, crackers, stickers, pencils, etc.

Treats should be pre-portioned finger foods that do not require adult assistance to cut or supervision to distribute. In an effort to set up treats for the party, treats must be dropped off by 1 PM on the day of the birthday. Amber Charter Schools encourages nonfood items or healthy snacks for celebrations.

Parties will be at the end of the day and last no more than 30 minutes. Scheduling of the party must be done in coordination with the classroom teacher at least 1 week in advance.

Holiday Celebrations

Amber Charter Schools recognizes the diverse cultures represented in its community and respects the religious beliefs of all of its members.

As one example, although many families enjoy Halloween, we do **NOT** formally celebrate this holiday in school. Instead, students participate in activities related to the fall season in their classrooms. Therefore, no costumes are allowed. Uniforms are required as usual, and no candy is distributed.

School Calendars

School based calendars are distributed by respective schools. Please reach out to your school’s operations team.

School Emergency Closings

Amber Charter Schools relies on the NYC Department of Education for closings due to inclement weather.

Announcements regarding school closings, due to inclement weather or other emergencies, can be found via:

- Parentsquare School communication [app](#)
- [Amber Charter Schools website](#)
- [WCBS 880 AM](#) radio

FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES TO SUPPORT LEARNING

Attendance

New York State law states that guardians are legally required to make sure that their child gets to school everyday, arrives on time and stays all day. This includes half days and days preceding and following vacations. Attendance is a key component of helping your child achieve success in school. Please communicate with your child's school if there are limitations or extenuating circumstances which will impact your child's ability to attend school with regularity.

A goal of our charter is **AT LEAST 95 % attendance** for every student; and frequent or extended absences from school may result in retention and put a child's continued enrollment at Amber Charter Schools at risk. Frequent absences have been shown to have a direct negative impact on learning and achievement.

Amber Charter Schools recommends families schedule appointments, extended vacations and other leaves when school is not in session to ensure continuity for students.

Absences may be *excusable* if...

- Student illness with official documentation from a doctor or medical facility
- Serious illness or death in the family with official documentation (obituary, death certificate, etc.)
- Religious observances
- Necessary physician/dentist appointments with official documentation from the doctor

All other absences are considered unexcused.

Late Arrivals and Early Releases

Amber Charter Schools strongly encourages families to make arrangements so children arrive to school on time and avoid the following:

- Disrupting the daily learning routine of the arriving child as well as all of his/her classmates.
- Missing of any work or learning that took place during their tardiness

Students who arrive after 8:11 AM are considered to be late for the start of school..

We understand that emergencies may arise where it would require students to be picked up before the dismissal time. In this case, we ask guardians to submit in writing a note or email indicating the time of pick-up. This notification should be sent to the classroom teacher and the Dean of Students. Families will be required to sign out their child at the front desk before the child is dismissed.

Action Steps to Address Patterns of Absences, Late Arrivals or Early Dismissals

Updated policy as of 21-22 SY

Absences

# of Absences	Action from School
Every absence	Family receives a daily message by 10:00 AM from Parentsquare every time a child is absent. This is done automatically. (Must be setup)
3 Absences	Warning message will be sent to family via Parentsquare by the Teacher
5 Absences	Family will receive call from Operation Associate
10 Absences	Family will receive message from Dean of Students via Parentsquare requesting meeting
15 Absences	Family will be required to meet with Assistant Principal
15 + Absences	Family will be required to meet with the Principal. School Counselors may be present at the Principal's discretion.

Tardiness

# of Tardies	Action from School
3 Tardies	Warning message will be sent to guardian via Parentsquare by the Teacher
6 Tardies	Guardian will receive call from Operation Associate
9 Tardies	Message will be sent to guardian via Parentsquare by the Director of Operations
12 Tardies	Guardian will receive message from Dean of Students or Assistant Principal via Parentsquare requesting in person meeting
15 Tardies	Guardian will be required to meet with School Counselor
21 Tardies	Guardians will be required to meet with Assistant Principal

Late Pick-Ups

It is the responsibility of families to pick up students from the school building or the bus stop on time. The failure of families to arrive on time is often upsetting to children. Particularly at bus stops, it can also be unsafe, and in some cases may constitute neglect. Families are encouraged to discuss challenges in this respect with the Dean of Students or other school leadership team members to ensure the necessary support for Amber students transitioning from school to their homes.

OFFICIAL DOCUMENTATION TO EXCUSE AN ABSENCE OR LATE ARRIVAL MAY INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

- A note from a doctor or medical facility
- A copy of a family member's death certificate in the event of this unfortunate circumstance
- Evidence of a family emergency

School Supplies

Amber Charter Schools provides the majority of school supplies for our students. If any additional supplementary materials are required, individual schools will notify families.

Homework Expectations

Homework reinforces the learning that occurs in our classrooms. Homework is assigned to establish patterns of responsibility and help students develop strong study habits.

1. All students are assigned homework every night, and on weekends. (Teachers may make shifts to this policy with the approval of the principal.)
2. Homework packets are assigned for extended vacations from school.
3. All students will go home with a book from the classroom and will be assigned 15-30 minutes of reading every night (depending on grade level).

Missed Work

We ask that families, to the best of their abilities and effort, complete missed assignments within 48 hours of absences. Homework, as stated previously, is a method for children to review concepts, terms, and ideas which were taught in classes. Trimester progress reports document homework completion, and all progress report ratings contribute to Honor Roll status. Teachers will do their best to provide makeup materials within 24-48 hours of a request.

Supporting Learning at Home

Set up a protected space that is quiet, well lit and distraction- free for your child to work on their studies at home.

- Decide when and where homework will be done.
- Once the place and time are established, ensure that the homework routine is consistently practiced.
- Give your child a healthy snack before s/he begins to work.
- Provide a quiet, comfortable place (such as the kitchen table or a desk).
- Make sure the room is well lit and there are no distractions.
- Have necessary materials available (such as pencils, markers, paper)

Suggestions for helping with homework:

- Read and discuss the meaning of directions with your child.
- Allow your child time to complete the work.
- Insist that s/he try before asking for help.
- After work is complete, go over it with your child and have him/her explain what s/he did.

Make sure your child gets adequate sleep.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) notes that adequate sleep leads to improved attention, behavior, learning, memory, emotional regulation, quality of life, and mental and physical health.

Age	Recommended Bed Time
3-5	7:00 pm
6-12	8:00 pm
13-18	9:00 pm

Not getting enough sleep each night is associated with an increase in injuries, hypertension, obesity and depression.

In addition, the AAP suggests that all screens be turned off at least 30 minutes before bedtime and that TV, computers and other screens not be allowed in children's bedrooms.

Read to and with your children. Talk with them about what they read.

- For K and 1st graders, have children explain stories in their own words and make connections to their own lives.
- For 2nd and 3rd graders, listen to them read aloud and have them reread paragraphs or pages if they have trouble. Be patient as they are learning and let them know you're proud of their effort. Help them use a dictionary or thesaurus to learn about new words they hear and discuss with them what they read.
- For 4th and 5th graders, ask them details about what they are reading – the characters, plot, setting, problem – and questions to build their comprehension (Why did that happen? How would you handle that?).
- For middle school grades, encourage them to read novels which teach them about the world around them? WProbe them to consider what they would do in the event they were faced with the same challenges?

Build their math skills and thinking.

- Point out and talk about names, colors, shapes, numbers, sizes, and quantities of objects.
- Practicing counting together – items, money, time.
- Practice measuring ingredients by cooking together.

Ask about school

Asking your child about their school day, the connections made and things that were of interest, supports your child in remaining engaged with school life! In addition, it provides you with insight as to what is going well and/or adjustments you and/or the school can make to support your child.

STUDENT HEALTH AND SAFETY

Nurse

Amber Charter Schools work with the NYC Department of Education and the NYC Department of Health to provide a school nurse at each school. to maintain students' records, supervise the disbursement of medication and treat students who are ill or injured.

The nurse is responsible for all record keeping and correspondence related to these responsibilities. The school maintains an on-site Automated External Defibrillator (AED) equipment and at least two staff members are trained in use of the AED equipment and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). Vision and hearing screenings are coordinated with the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

Health Records

Cumulative health records will be stored in locked filing cabinets accessible only by authorized staff members. These records will include proof of immunization and authorization for administration of medication. All visits to the nurse, including reason and treatment, will be documented in each child's file.

Immunizations

All new students must adhere to New York State requirements for immunization before they attend.

Guardians must provide documentation that their child has received all required doses of vaccines or at least one dose of each of the required vaccines and is waiting to receive the subsequent doses at the appropriate time intervals. Required immunizations include:

- Diphtheria
- Tetanus
- Pertussis (DTaP, DTP, Tdap: 3 doses)
- Polio (IPV, OPV: 3 doses)
- Measles/Mumps/Rubella (MMR: 2 doses of measles containing vaccine and 1 dose each of mumps and rubella)
- Hepatitis B (3 doses)
- Varicella (1 dose)
- Meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MenACWY)8 (Grades 7-12 Only)

As per New York State's Department of Health, children attending daycare and pre-K through 12th grade in New York State must receive all required doses of vaccines on the recommended schedule in order to attend or remain in school. This is true unless they have a valid medical exemption to immunization. This includes all public, private, and religious schools. A medical exemption is allowed when a child has a medical condition that prevents them from receiving a vaccine. There are no nonmedical exemptions to school vaccine requirements in NYS.

The CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) establishes the recommended vaccine schedule and determines when vaccines are due.

Medications

Amber Charter Schools implement strict policies and procedures regarding the safe and secure administration of medication. The schools only administer medication that is necessary to maintain students in school and which must be given during school hours. Prescribed medication that requires administration through a subcutaneous, intramuscular, intravenous or rectal route; or prescribed medications being administered through pumps, tubes or nebulizers; or oral, topical or inhalant medication needed by non-self-directed students will be given only by the nurse or licensed practical nurses under the direction of the nurse. The nurse may designate other staff to assist self-directed students taking their own oral, topical, and inhalant medication and will provide the training and supervision necessary to perform these tasks in a safe and effective manner.

The school will require in writing both orders from a licensed prescriber and permission from guardians to administer medication. All medications, including nonprescription over the counter (OTC) drugs, must be prescribed by a licensed prescriber on an individual basis. Written orders for prescription and nonprescription OTC medications shall include:

- student's name and date of birth
- name of medication
- dosage and route of administration
- frequency and time of administration
- conditions under which medication should be administered
- date written
- prescriber's name, title, and signature
- prescriber's phone number

The school may request additional information, such as self-administration orders or potential adverse reactions. Medication orders must be renewed annually or when there is a change in medication or dosage.

Prescription medication must be delivered to the school in the original container with an appropriate label including student name; name and phone number of pharmacy; licensed prescriber's name; date and number of refills; name of medication/dosage; frequency of administration; and route of administration. Similarly, OTC medication and drug samples must be in the original manufacturer's container/package. Medications will not be transported daily to and from school; guardians will be expected to provide an adequate supply to remain at the school, which will provide locked storage, including refrigeration if required, within a secure health office. If students chronically fail to receive their medications, the school nurse will contact the guardian to address the problem. The licensed prescriber will also be informed so that the medication protocol can be reviewed, and possible adjustments made, e.g., home administration, extended release medication. Students may carry and self-administer prescribed medication under circumstances meeting the following conditions: demonstrated need, particularly as it relates to asthma or allergies; written prescriber's orders and request by guardians; and student receives effective instruction and demonstrates adequate level of responsibility.

Guardian and Emergency Contact Information

Amber Charter Schools must have **current** phone numbers on file for all guardians and adults authorized to pick up your child. Updates and changes to emergency contacts and addresses must be provided to the school Operations Team as soon as a change occurs in order to ensure the safety of students at all times.

Trusted emergency contacts

All ACS guardians are expected to identify trusted contacts who will be available in an emergency and willing to come to the school immediately upon request.

- Therefore, trusted contacts who are under age 18 and who are currently enrolled in middle or high school cannot be released from their own school in an emergency situation.
- Trusted contacts should be adults with whom the student is familiar.
- Trusted contacts must be informed by the guardian that the school may contact them to be responsible for his/her child if no guardian is available.

Anyone who picks up a child MUST:

- Be on the student's trusted contacts list
- Have identification with him/her in order for a child to be released into his/her custody.

Visiting the School

Amber Charter Schools has lifted COVID-19 visitor protocols. Families are able to enter the buildings for dropping off documents, early pickup, and scheduled meetings.

For the safety of our students, Amber Charter Schools enforces a strict no-visitation policy during outdoor recess. No adults are allowed to pick up children during recess.

Visitor Identification

To ensure that Amber Charter Schools are safe and secure learning environments for students, all visitors are required to show proper picture identification (e.g. driver's license, state ID card, passport, etc.), sign-in at the security desk, and wear a visitor's pass. All staff members have been instructed to escort any visitor immediately to the security desk for proper identification.

Elevator Use

Amber Charter Schools Inwood and Kingsbridge campuses have an elevator. Students with medical conditions or other exemptions requiring the use of the elevators may do so *if* accompanied by an adult. Visitors requiring access to the elevator may seek support from an Ops or leadership team member.

Drills Conducted

To ensure students know what to do in an emergency, Amber Charter Schools holds monthly drills to practice emergency skills and train students to stay safe should an emergency arise. The following drills are held throughout the year:

- Fire drills
- Bus safety drills
- Lockdown drills
- Evacuation drills

Internet Safety, Network Usage, Cell Phone Policy

Amber Charter Schools provides students with access to the Internet and its computer network.

Amber Charter Schools:

- a) prevents students access over its computer network to or transmission of, inappropriate material via Internet, electronic mail or other forms of direct electronic communications.
- b) prevents unauthorized access and other unlawful online activity.
- c) prevents unauthorized online disclosure, use or dissemination of personal identification information of minors.
- d) complies with the Children's Internet Protection Act [Pub. L. No. 106-554 and 47 USC 254(h)].²

Access to Inappropriate Material

To the extent practical, technology protection measures (or "Internet filters") shall be used to block or filter Internet or other forms of electronic communications or access to inappropriate information.

Students, as required by the Children's Internet Protection Act, shall be prevented from using inappropriate sites and blocking shall be applied to visual depictions of material deemed obscene or child pornography or to any material deemed harmful to minors.³

² A summary of the Children's Internet Protection Act can be accessed by going to <http://www.fcc.gov/guides/childrens-internet-protection-act>

³ CIPA definitions of terms: Technology Protection Measure: The term "technology protection measure" means a specific technology that blocks or filters Internet access to visual depictions that are:

Obscene, as that term is defined in section 1460 of title 18, United States Code; Child Pornography, as that term is defined in section 2256 of title 18, United States Code; or Harmful to minors.

Minor: A minor, as defined by the FCC, is anyone under the age of 17.

Harmful to Minors: The term "harmful to minors" means any picture, image, graphic image file or other visual depiction that:

Taken as a whole and with respect to minors, appeals to a prurient interest in nudity, sex or excretion;

Depicts, describes or represents, in a patently offensive way with respect to what is suitable for minors, an actual or simulated sexual act or sexual contact, actual or simulated normal or perverted sexual acts or a lewd exhibition of the genitals; and

Taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value as to minors.

Inappropriate Internet and Network Usage

To the extent practical, steps shall be taken to promote the safety and security of users of the Amber Charter Schools online computer network when using electronic mail, chat rooms, instant messaging and other forms of direct electronic communications.

Prevention of inappropriate internet and network usage includes:

- Unauthorized access, including so-called 'hacking,' and other unlawful activities; and
- Unauthorized disclosure, use and dissemination of personal identification information regarding minors.

Supervision and Monitoring of Students

It shall be the responsibility of all members of the Amber Charter Schools staff to supervise and monitor student usage of the online computer network and access to the Internet in accordance with this policy and the Children's Internet Protection Act.

Violations

The following are activities that directly violate Amber Charter Schools Student Internet Safety and Network Usage Policy:

- Using, transmitting, receiving or seeking inappropriate, offensive, vulgar, suggestive, obscene, abusive, harassing, belligerent, threatening, defamatory or misleading language and materials.
- Using network resources to transmit messages of ethnic, sexual-preference or gender- related slurs or jokes.
- Jeopardizing security and access to the company's network or other Internet networks by disclosing or sharing passwords or impersonating others.
- Accessing or attempting to access controversial or offensive materials.
- Engaging in cyber-bullying as defined below.

Noncompliance

Use of the computer network and the Internet is a privilege, not a right. Violation of this policy, at minimum, will cause the Student's access to the network and the Internet to be terminated.

Cyber-Bullying

Cyber-bullying defined for this policy is an aggressive behavior directed at another person using various communication technologies such as e-mails, instant messaging, texting, or sending images via cell phones, sending abusive videos, blogs, postings or comments on social media sites, virtual worlds, web pages, and/or chat rooms. For all practical purposes, aggressive behavior encompasses the intent or action to torment, threaten, harass, humiliate, and/or embarrass the victim for any period. Cyber-bullying may also be referred to as online social cruelty and/or electronic bullying.

Training and Guidelines for Teachers

Training, guidelines and lesson plans will be provided by School Counselors and implemented by a Technology Specialist or Classroom Teacher (where applicable) to students in grades K-8 who utilize internet or network resources as part of their curriculum.

Noncompliance

Students who are identified as engaging in cyber-bullying shall be subject to discipline. At a minimum, a student may lose access to the network and the Internet indefinitely. Such acts will also be reported to the student's guardians and the student may be subject to suspension or expulsion.

Sexual Act; Sexual Contact: The terms "sexual act" and "sexual contact" have the meanings given such terms in section 2246 of title 18, United States Code.

School Telephone and Personal Cell Phone Use

Students may only use the school phone with teacher permission. Teachers will use their discretion when allowing students to make calls. Guardians will only be allowed to talk to students during the school day during emergencies. Otherwise, a message will be taken and given to the child.

Students are discouraged from bringing cell phones and to school. Teachers are authorized to create a usage policy for their individual classrooms to ensure the optimum atmosphere for learning. Accordingly, Students may be asked to turn in cell phones and PDAs for safekeeping by a teacher at the start of a class period. The teacher will return the cell phone and PDA at the end of the class period.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), a federal law, requires that the ACS, with certain exceptions, obtain your written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from your child's education records. However, ACS may disclose appropriately designated "directory information" without written consent, unless you have advised the school to the contrary in accordance with school procedures. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow the ACS to include this type of information from your child's education records in certain school publications. Examples include:

- Playbill, showing a student's role in a drama production
- Annual yearbook
- Honor roll or other recognition lists
- Graduation programs
- Sports activity sheets

Directory information, which is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released, can also be disclosed to outside organizations without a guardian's prior written consent. Outside organizations include, but are not limited to, companies that manufacture class rings or publish yearbooks.

If you do not want the ACS to disclose information from your child's education record without your prior written consent, you must notify the school in writing. ACS has designated the following information as directory information:

- Name
- Address
- Telephone listing
- Electronic mail address
- Photograph
- Date and place of birth
- Dates of attendance
- Participation in officially recognized school activities
- Degrees, honors and awards received
- The most recent educational agency or institution attended

To learn more about the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act, follow the [link](#).

Media Release

FERPA protects Personally Identifiable Information (“PII”), which may not be disclosed. However, certain types of PII is considered directory information which may be disclosed by a school without parental consent in certain instances. Amber Charter Schools and Amber Education Fund have designated the following information as directory information: student’s name, address, telephone listing, electronic mail address, **likeness (for possible use in video and still images for district website and social media accounts)**, age, major field of study, dates of attendance, grade level, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, the most recent educational agency or institution attended, degrees, honors and awards received. If you do not wish Amber Charter Schools or Amber Education Fund to disclose directory information from your child’s education records without prior written consent, Amber Charter Schools and Amber Education Fund request notification in writing by the **last Friday in September** of each school year, please contact your school operations team.

Email your child's school:

East Harlem: ehoperations@ambercharter.org

Kingsbridge ES: kboperations@ambercharter.org

Kingsbridge MS: kbmsoperations@ambercharter.org

Inwood: iwoperations@ambercharter.org

SCHOOL CULTURE

Dress Code - Uniforms

A dress code helps students feel like members of a learning community. Uniforms have been shown to minimize distractions and increase academic focus hence why they are mandatory at all Amber Charter Schools.

All students are expected to arrive dressed in their school uniforms on the first day of school and each school day thereafter unless prior notice has been given by school administration. This also includes days students are on field trips. Students do not change clothes or shoes for physical education or recess.

Exceptions will be made to the uniform policy in connection with the exercise of religious practices (e.g. head covers). Exemptions from the school uniform policy may be granted for religious, medical or other justifiable reasons. Guardians may submit a written request to the school principal.

At the beginning of the school year, families with children in grades K-2 are encouraged to bring a second uniform as a change of clothes, in the event of any accidents or illness.

Across all grade levels, shirts must be tucked in at all times, and shoes must be closed-toe.

To read more about our uniform, please follow the link below:

- Uniform [requirements](#)

	<u>ELEMENTARY SCHOOL</u>	<u>MIDDLE SCHOOL</u>
REGULAR UNIFORM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Light Blue collared oxford shirt with Amber logo the on left hand side (short/long sleeve) • Solid Navy tie (boys) or Cross Tie (girls) • Navy cardigan sweater with Amber logo embroidered on left hand side • Optional: Navy sweater vest with Amber logo on the left hand side • Navy pants/skirt/skort/shorts • Solid navy or black socks /stockings • Solid Navy or Solid Black shoes • NEW! Sneakers can be solid or have any combination of the following colors: Black, Navy Blue, White) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • White collared oxford shirt with Amber logo the on left hand side (short/long sleeve) • Solid Navy tie (boys) or Cross Tie (girls) • Navy cardigan sweater with Amber logo embroidered on left hand side • Optional: Navy sweater vest with Amber logo on the left hand side • Navy pants/skirt/skort/shorts • Solid navy or black socks /stockings • Solid Navy or solid Black shoes • NEW! Sneakers can be solid or have any combination of the following colors: Black, Navy Blue, White
GYM UNIFORM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solid Light Blue t-shirt with Amber logo on the left hand side (short sleeved) • Optional: Students may wear a white long sleeve shirt under their Amber gym shirt • Solid Navy Blue Sweatshirt with Amber logo on the left hand side • Navy sweatpants or Navy shorts (with or without logo) • NEW! Sneakers can be solid or have any combination of the following colors: Black, Navy Blue, White 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solid Navy Blue t-shirt with Amber logo on the left hand side (short sleeved) • Optional: Students may wear a white long sleeve shirt under their Amber gym shirt • Solid Navy Blue Sweatshirt with Amber logo on the left hand side • Navy sweatpants or Navy shorts (with or without logo) • NEW! Sneakers can be solid or have any combination of the following colors: Black, Navy Blue, White

***** All tops (Shirts & Sweaters) must have the Amber Logo on the left hand side. *****

⊘ Not Uniform: Cargo pants; leggings; jumpers; thermal shirts that can be seen; UGG boots, Crocs, knee-high boots, rain boots, winter boots; boots with heels; hoodies; jackets; any clothing item that conceals the Amber logo; and any clothing item that is not the appropriate color. If any of the kinds of boots listed above are worn to get to school, then students may change into sneakers / shoes packed in their backpacks. ⊘

Winter Weather: Students may wear boots to travel to school but must change into school shoes upon arrival to their classroom.

School Staff have the autonomy to request that students remove other types of clothing beyond the required dress code expectations, or any jewelry or accessories, if anything is determined to be distracting to learning.

If a student arrives to school and is not dressed in a manner aligned with the Amber Charter Schools dress code, the following steps will be taken to address this concern:

- Level 1 (one incident): The teacher will document it on the daily attendance form, and a member of the operation team will be responsible for tracking it on a daily basis. This staff member will contact the family that day to address the matter.
- Level 2 (two-three Incidents): The social worker will receive regular data reports and follow-up with families who are demonstrating patterns of concern in person to offer any support required at the time.
- Level 3 (four or more incidents; pattern evident; no or inconsistent improvement): A formal conference will be held by the principal or his/her designee with guardians/caregivers, and the student, when appropriate.

The school will also purchase a small number of shirts and pants to be utilized in cases of hardship, and take clean, gently worn donations from families whose children have outgrown their school shirts, pants, shorts and skirts. Please ask to speak to the Dean of Students or Principal if you need this support or would like to make a donation.

The AMBER Way and LEADERS



Achievement is reflected in our ability to seek ways to grow and improve.

Com**M**unity is demonstrated in our dedication to serving those in our care and members of the community who commit to serving alongside us.

Responsi**B**ility means that we are committed to being proactive in responding to challenges and opportunities with thoughtful solutions.

Hon**E**sty is how we hold ourselves and others accountable to the organization's policies and values regardless of the context.

Respect is defined as honoring the diverse beliefs, perspectives, opinions, and identities of all community members.

Amber STAR

Sit straight.

Track the speaker.

Ask and answer questions.

Respect your classmates by waiting your turn.

Amber LEADER

Limitless	Energy	Ambition	Decisions	Empathy	Resilience
Leaders are limitless in their potential and influence.	Energy is what we need to learn, and thrive in our lives as members of the Amber community.	Ambition is what embodies our hopes, dreams and our drive to achieve.	When we make Decisions we take the time to learn from them and before we make them we consider their impact on ourselves and others.	Empathy is necessary to make our school, our community and the world a better place.	Resilience is practiced when we continue to strive and achieve when things are challenging.

Assemblies

Amber Charter Schools believes in the power of coming together as a COMMUNITY (one of the Amber values) and one of the ways this is accomplished is during assemblies. As a COMMUNITY, students, staff, and community members will come together during various parts of the year to celebrate accomplishments and triumphs. The dates for these assemblies will be shared with families via Parentsquare.

Community Service Projects

At least monthly, Amber Charter Schools fourth graders, matched with a kindergarten, first, second or third grade class, work with their younger schoolmates to decide on, design and then implement a community service project over the course of the school year. Some projects have provided direct support to community organizations, others have expressed care or appreciation to those working within their community. Fifth graders are expected to volunteer a number of hours in the community, and prepare a reflective report related to their experiences.

As Amber Charter Schools expands its network and impact, we will replicate and expand the above model, integrating middle schoolers into the leadership roles with younger students and supporting them to forge new, innovative routes into and around the community.

Promoting Safe Choices

The Amber Charter Schools discipline code and policy exist to enable the schools to function effectively without disruption and to help strengthen the integration of students into the overall school community. The focus is on behaviors that are helpful and constructive for the community and to reduce/eliminate behaviors that weaken the community. This helps us to live in a community where everyone is respected and feels safe emotionally and physically.

School staff and students will use self-discipline to develop a positive, safe, healthy and successful school environment. Therefore, everyone is responsible for respecting and implementing the aforementioned common understandings.

Discipline procedures at Amber are designed to help the student to:

- Function creatively and effectively,
- Promote self-responsibility and accountability,
- Participate actively in the school and global community,
- Engage in the teaching and learning process,
- Involve their families as responsible and accountable members.

It is essential that:

1. We establish staff-student relationships that are based on trust and respect.
2. Self-responsibility and accountability are promoted by maximizing student involvement in making decisions and resolving problems. Students will be involved in the analysis of an incident and in the discussion of appropriate consequences (if necessary).
3. Guardians partner with the school staff and actively support school discipline policies.

Discipline Code

Amber Charter Schools Behavior Agreement

A behavior agreement ensures that there is consistent and equitable treatment of all students. It is important that all members of a school community know the disciplinary measures that can be taken when any student misbehaves or substantially disrupts a classroom.

Amber Charter Schools staff will implement the Behavior Agreement with very clear consequences for children and families. The agreement delineates clearly articulated expectations and consequences for what occurs when this agreement is violated. The Behavior Agreement covers the very important categories of:

- Behavior cards or plans
- Dress code - uniform
- Homework
- Absences and tardiness
- Safety of self and others
- Respect of property

Behavior Card System: Kindergarten through Fourth Grade

The school has implemented a mandatory behavior card discipline system across the grades in all classrooms. It is our expectation that this behavior card system will help our students to develop self-discipline and respect.

The cards are organized into colors that range from green to blue to yellow to red.

Green	Blue	Yellow	Red
Students are behaving in an appropriate manner	Students are asked to self-check and may have to take a time out.	Students will earn a more serious consequence (may be removed from class, and/or required to fill out a think sheet.	Guardian(s) will be contacted.

This system enables both teachers and students to monitor behavior and self-check. In any event, guardians will be kept aware of behavior concerns.

Behavior Plan System: Middle School

Students in grades fifth through eighth are considered Amber Leaders. This means they are expected to model for their younger schoolmates. With this position comes more responsibility and a greater sense of pride. Middle school teachers work in conjunction with the Dean of Students to develop a discipline plan geared towards the specific needs of our students. The individual plans include positive reinforcements filled with incentives that support each student to build skills that s/he can utilize for years to come.

To cultivate a positive school community, we expect the middle school LEADERS to lead by example therefore; we will not tolerate behaviors such as:

- Repeated disruption(s) of class instruction (including specials)
- Inappropriate verbal altercations (i.e. Bullying, gossiping, etc.)
- Physical altercations (i.e. Fighting)
- Refusal of daily academic activities/lessons
- Not being academically prepared with the necessary tools to complete activities/lessons

More serious and repeated refusal to follow directions will be addressed by the Dean of Students. It is essential that we all work together to make sure your child is working to their full potential and feels comfortable and safe here at Amber.

Discipline Policy

Amber Charter Schools uses the NYC Department of Education Disciplinary [Code](#) as a guideline for addressing student discipline. However, we understand that our students are individuals and reserve the right to respond to each situation based on the unique circumstances of each individual.

Alcohol, tobacco, drugs on school premises

Amber Charter Schools recognizes that the misuse of alcohol, drugs, tobacco, and other illegal substances is a serious problem with legal, physical, emotional and social implications for our students, as well as the entire community. Therefore, the consumption, sharing and/or selling, use and/or possession of alcoholic beverages, tobacco products, illegal drugs, counterfeit and other drugs, or paraphernalia for the use of such drugs is prohibited at any school-sponsored event or on school property at all times. To ensure the safety of our students, and personnel, people may be prohibited and in some instances, banned from entering school grounds or school-sponsored events when exhibiting behavioral, personal or physical characteristics indicative of having used or consumed alcohol or other substances.

Use and Possession of E-Cigarettes and/or Vaporizers/other Devices that may contain or dispose drugs

The use of e-cigarettes, vaporizers, and/or any other products that may typically contain nicotine among young people for illegal drug use has also become an increasing challenge in schools across the United States. The use and/or possession of e-cigarettes, vaporizers, and/or any other products that may typically contain nicotine but can be utilized for illegal drug use are **strictly** prohibited on school grounds and at school events.

Paraphernalia such as e-cigarettes, vaporizers, and/or any other products that may typically contain nicotine but can be utilized for illegal drug use shall be seized by members of the school leadership team. Amber Charter Schools reserves the right to give such paraphernalia to law enforcement, as it is deemed necessary and appropriate.

Students who use and/or possess e-cigarettes, vaporizers, and/or any other products that may typically contain nicotine but can be utilized for illegal drug use shall be subject to disciplinary action as the facts may warrant, in accordance with

the New York Citywide Code of Conduct. Please note, that we will do our best to create student supports and interventions in tandem with disciplinary responses as per the New York Citywide Disciplinary Code.

Short Term Suspension

A short-term suspension refers to an in-school removal or out-of-school removal of a student for disciplinary reasons for a period of five or fewer days. A student who has committed any of the infractions listed below shall be subject minimally to a short-term suspension, unless the Principal or designee determines that an exception should be made based on the individual circumstances of the incident and the student's disciplinary record. The Principal reserves the right to adjust the punishment for each infraction per his or her judgment.

Disciplinary Infractions

- Attempt to assault any student or staff member;
- Vandalize school property causing minor damage;
- Endanger the physical safety of another by the use of force or threats of force that reasonably places the victim in fear of imminent bodily injury;
- Engage in conduct which disrupts school or classroom activity or endanger or threaten to endanger the health, safety, welfare, or morals of others
- Engage in insubordination
- Fail to complete assignments, carry out directions, or comply with disciplinary sanctions;
- Cheat on quizzes, exams, or commit plagiarism;
- Used forged notes or excuses;
- Steal, or attempt to steal, or possess property known by the student to be stolen;
- Commit extortion;
- Engage in gambling;
- Abuse school property or equipment;
- Use obscene or abusive language or gestures;
- Engage in acts of verbal or physical sexual harassment;
- Make a false bomb threat or pull a false emergency alarm;
- Possess tobacco or alcohol;
- Wear inappropriate, insufficient, or disruptive clothing or attire, or violate the student dress policy (Except that, under no circumstances will a student be removed from class or school for violation of the dress code policy);
- Commit any other act which school officials reasonably conclude disrupts the learning environment of the school;
- Repeatedly commit minor behavioral infractions which, in aggregate, may be considered an infraction subject to formal disciplinary action.

Procedures and Due Process for Short Term Suspension

The Principal or designee may impose a short-term suspension and shall follow due process procedures consistent with federal case law pursuant to *Goss v. Lopez* (419 U.S. 565). Before imposing a short-term suspension, or other, less serious discipline, the Principal shall provide notice to inform the student of the charges against him or her, and if the student denies the charges, an explanation of the evidence against the student. A chance to present the student's version of events shall also be provided.

Before imposing a short-term suspension, the Principal or designee shall notify the guardians in writing that the student may be suspended from school. Written notice of the decision to impose suspension shall be provided within 24 hours. Notification also shall be provided by telephone and in writing. Such notice shall provide a description of the incident(s) for which suspension is proposed and shall inform the guardians of their right to request an informal conference with the Principal or designee. Such notice and informal conference shall be in the dominant language or mode of communication used by the guardian. The guardian of the student and the student shall have the opportunity to present the student's version of the incident and to have the Principal or designee ask questions of the complaining witnesses. Such notice and

opportunity for an informal conference shall take place prior to the suspension of the student unless the student's presence in the school poses a continuing danger to persons or property or an ongoing threat of disruption to the academic process, in which case the notice and opportunity for an informal conference shall take place as soon as possible after the suspension as is reasonably practicable.

The Principal's decision to impose a short-term suspension may be challenged by the guardian(s) in accordance with the School's complaint process.

LONG TERM SUSPENSION/EXPULSION

A long-term suspension refers to the removal of a student from school for disciplinary reasons for a period of more than five days. Expulsion refers to the permanent removal of a student from school for disciplinary reasons. A student who is determined to have committed any of the infractions listed below shall be subject minimally to a long-term suspension or expulsion, unless the Principal or designee determines that an exception should be made based on the circumstance of the incident and the student's disciplinary record. Such a student may also be subject to any of the disciplinary measures outlined elsewhere in this document including a referral to the appropriate law enforcement authorities.

Disciplinary Infractions

- Possess, use, attempt to use, or transfer of any firearm, knife, razor blade, explosive, mace, tear gas, or other dangerous object of no reasonable use to the student in school;
- Commit, or attempt to commit arson on school property;
- Assault any other student or staff member;
- Intentionally cause physical injury to another person, except when student's actions are reasonably necessary to protect him or herself from injury;
- Vandalize school property causing major damage;
- Commit any act which could constitute a crime or is a more egregious infraction described under "short-term suspension", which school officials reasonably conclude warrants a long-term suspension.

A student who commits any of the acts previously described as causes for short term-suspension may, instead or in addition, be subject to a long-term suspension at the Principal's or designee's discretion only if the student has committed the act at least three times in the academic year.

Procedures and Due Process for Long Term Suspension

The Principal may impose a long-term suspension. Such a suspension may be imposed only after the student has been found guilty at a formal suspension hearing. In extreme circumstances, the Principal may expel the student from school. Upon determining that a student's action warrants a possible long-term suspension, the Principal shall verbally inform the student that he or she is being suspended and is being considered for a long-term suspension (or expulsion) and state the reasons for such actions. The Principal also shall immediately notify the student's guardian(s). Written notice shall be provided by personal delivery, express mail delivery, or equivalent means reasonably calculated to assure receipt of such notice within 24 hours of suspension at the last known address. Where possible, notification also shall be provided by telephone if the school has been provided with a contact telephone number for the guardian(s). Such notice shall provide a description of the incident or incidents which resulted in the suspension and shall indicate that a formal hearing will be held on the matter which may result in a long-term suspension (or expulsion). The notification provided shall be in the dominant language used by the guardian(s). At the formal hearing, the student shall have the right to be represented by counsel, question witnesses, and present evidence.

If the Principal initiates the suspension proceeding, he or she shall personally hear and determine the proceeding or may, in his or her discretion, designate a hearing officer to conduct the hearing. The hearing officer's report shall be advisory only and the Principal may accept or reject all or part of it. The Principal's decision to impose a long-term suspension or expulsion may be challenged by the guardian through an appeal process to the Board of Trustees of the Education Corporation the details of which shall be determined. NOTE: In any instance where the Principal is directly involved in the

instance(s) at issue for a suspension or expulsion, the Principal shall appoint a designee to handle any investigation, hearing and determination.

EXPULSION

After a child's third suspension, the student's guardian may be required to come to school and to sit with the student in his or her classroom(s). Upon a student's fourth suspension in one year, the student may be referred to the Amber Board of Trustees for an expulsion hearing.

Expulsion requires Board approval. Violation of the following three infractions will be grounds for immediate action by the Board of Trustees and could result in expulsion.

1. Students may not sell, distribute, possess, or be under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
2. Students may not possess and/or use firearms, dangerous weapons or other instruments.
3. Four or more suspensions in one year.

Firearm Violations

Federal and New York law require the expulsion from school for a period of not less than one year of a student who is determined to have brought a firearm to the school, or to have possessed a firearm at school, except that the Principal may modify such expulsion requirement for a student on a case-by-case basis, if such modification is in writing, in accordance with the Federal Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994 (as amended). "Weapon," as used in this law means a "firearm," as defined by 18 USC § 921, and includes firearms and explosives. (New York Education Law §3214 effectuates this federal law.) The Principal shall refer a student under the age of sixteen who has been determined to have brought a weapon or firearm to school to a presentment agency for a juvenile delinquency proceeding consistent with Article 3 of the Family Court Act, except a student fourteen or fifteen years of age who qualifies for juvenile offender status under Criminal Procedure Law § 1.20(42). The Principal shall refer any pupil sixteen years of age or older, or a student fourteen or fifteen years of age who qualifies for juvenile offender status under Criminal Procedure Law § 1.20(42) who has been determined to have brought a weapon or firearm to school, to the appropriate law enforcement officials.

Provision of Instruction During Removal

The School will ensure that alternative educational services are provided to a child who has been suspended or removed to help that child progress in the school's general curriculum. For a student who has been suspended, alternative instruction will be provided to the extent required by applicable law. For a student who has been expelled, alternative instruction will be provided in like manner as a suspended student until the student enrolls in another school for a reasonable period thereafter or until the end of the school year.

Alternative instruction will be provided to students suspended or expelled in a way that best suits the needs of the student. Instruction for such students shall be sufficient to enable the student to make adequate academic progress and shall provide them the opportunity to complete the assignments, learn the curriculum and participate in assessments.

Instruction will take place in one of the following locations: the child's home, a contracted facility (e.g., in the school district of location), or a suspension room or other room at the school. During any removal for drug or weapon offenses, additional services shall include strategies designed to prevent such behavior from recurring. Instruction will be provided by one or more of the following individuals who shall be certified or qualified in accordance with § 2854(3)(a-1) of the Education Law and the federal No Child Left Behind Act: the student's teacher(s), aides or trained volunteers, individuals within a contracted facility, and/or a tutor hired for this purpose.

STUDENT RECORDS

The School will maintain written records of all suspensions and expulsions including the name of the student, a description of the behavior engaged in, the disciplinary action taken, and a record of the number of days a student has been suspended or removed for disciplinary reasons. The School will comply with NYSED SSEC data collection requirements and disciplinary data and submit that information to NYSED by required deadlines.

Disciplinary Policy for Students with Disabilities

In addition to the discipline procedures applicable to all students, the School shall implement the following disciplinary policy procedures with respect to students with disabilities. [A student not specifically identified as having a disability but whose school district of residence or charter school, prior to the behavior which is the subject of the disciplinary action, has a basis of knowledge—in accordance with 34 CFR 300.527(b)— that a disability exists may request to be disciplined in accordance with these provisions.] The School shall comply with sections 300.519- 300.529 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) and the following procedures, except that in the event that the following procedures are inconsistent with federal law and regulations, such federal law and regulations shall govern.

If a student violates the School's discipline code and is being considered for a suspension or removal, the School must ensure the following due process protections are provided to the student and to the student's guardian(s) in addition to those set forth in the regular education discipline code. For suspensions of five school days or less, the student's guardian(s) must be provided with a written notice, and a follow up telephone call if possible, within 24 hours of the incident leading up to the suspension which describes the basis for the suspension and explains that the guardian has the right to request an informal conference with the Principal and appropriate staff to discuss the incident and question any complaining witness against the student. For suspensions in excess of five consecutive school days, the student's guardian(s) must be provided with a written notice which indicates that the district proposes to suspend the student from school in excess of five consecutive school days, describes the basis for the proposed suspension, explains that the student has an opportunity for a fair hearing conducted by the Principal or his or her designee at which the student will have a right to question any witnesses accusing him/her of committing the misconduct charge and to present witnesses on his/her behalf. Where possible, notification must also be provided by telephone. In addition, the School will work with the Committee on Special Education (CSE) to provide alternative education to the student during the suspension as set forth below, including any special services required by the Individualized Education Program (IEP) prepared by the student's Committee on Special Education (CSE) of their district of residence. Final determination on a suspension or removal of a student, following due process, shall be made by the Principal.

The School shall maintain written records of all suspensions and expulsions of students with a disability including the name of the student, a description of the behavior engaged in, the disciplinary action taken, and a record of the number of days a student has been suspended or removed for disciplinary reasons.

Students for whom the IEP includes a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) will be disciplined in accordance with the BIP. If the BIP appears not to be effective or if there is a concern for the health and safety of the student or others if the BIP is followed with respect to the infraction, the matter will be immediately referred to the CSE of the student's district of residence for consideration of a change in the guidelines.

If a student identified as having a disability is suspended during the course of the school year for a total of eight days, such student will immediately be referred to the CSE of the student's district of residence for reconsideration of the student's educational placement. Such a student shall not be suspended for a total of more than ten days during the school year without the specific involvement of the CSE of the student's district of residence prior to the eleventh day of suspension, because such suspensions may be considered to be a change in placement. In considering the placement of students referred because of disciplinary problems, the CSE of the student's district of residence is expected to follow its ordinary policies with respect to familial notification and involvement.

The School shall work with the district to ensure that the CSE of the student's district of residence meets within 7 days of notification of any of the following: (1) The commission of an infraction by a student with a disability who has previously been suspended for the maximum allowable number of days; (2) The commission of any infraction resulting from the student's disability; (3) The commission of any infraction by a disabled student, regardless of whether the student has previously been suspended during the school year if, had such infraction been committed by a non-disabled student, the Principal would seek to impose a suspension in excess of 10 days.

Also, the School will ensure that when the suspension or removal of a student with a disability will constitute a disciplinary change of placement, the CSE will be immediately notified so that the CSE can meet its required obligations to:

- Convene a CSE meeting within 10 school days to make a manifestation determination.
- Convene a CSE meeting within 10 business days to develop a plan to conduct a functional behavioral assessment or review an existing functional behavioral assessment or behavioral intervention plan.
- Provide the student's guardian with a copy of their procedural due process rights.
- Work closely with the CSE of the students' district of residence in determining education services or
- the interim alternative educational setting consistent with the FAPE requirements.

Provision of Services during Removal

Those students removed for a period fewer than ten days will receive all classroom assignments and a schedule to complete such assignments during the time of his or her suspension. Provisions will be made to permit a suspended student to make up assignments or tests missed as a result of such suspension. The School also shall provide additional alternative instruction with the reasonable promptness and by appropriate means to assist the student, so that the student is given full opportunity to complete assignments and master curriculum, including additional instructions, phone assistance, and computer instruction.

During any subsequent removal that, combined with previous removals equals ten or more school days during the school year, but does not constitute a change in placement, services must be provided to the extent determined necessary to enable the child to appropriately progress in the general curriculum and in achieving the goals of his or her IEP. In these cases, school personnel, in consultation with the child's special education teacher, shall make the service determination.

During any removal for drug or weapon offenses [pursuant to 34 CFR §300.520(a)(2)] services will be provided to the extent necessary to enable the child to appropriately progress in the general curriculum and in achieving the goals of his or her IEP. These service determinations will be made by the CSE of the student's district of residence. The school will place students in interim alternative educational settings as appropriate and mandated by 34 CFR§300.520(a)(2).

During any subsequent removal that does constitute a change in placement, but where the behavior is not a manifestation of the disability, the services must be provided to the extent necessary to enable the student to appropriately progress in the general curriculum and in achieving the goals of his or her IEP.

The CSE of the student's district of residence will make the service determination.

Committee for Special Education Meetings (CSE)

Meetings of the CSE of the student's district of residence to either develop a behavioral assessment plan or, if the child has one, to review such plan are required when: (1) the child is first removed from his or her current placement for more than ten school days in a school year; and (2) when commencing a removal which constitutes a change in placement. The student's special education teacher (or coordinator) and the general classroom teacher will attend all meetings regarding the student initiated by the CSE from the student's home district.

Subsequently, if other removals occur which do not constitute a change in placement, the School will work with the CSE of the student's district of residence to review the child's assessment plan and its implementation to determine if modifications are necessary. If one or more members of the CSE of the student's district of residence believe that modifications are needed, then the CSE is expected to meet to modify the plan and/or its implementation.

Due Process

If discipline which would constitute a change in placement is contemplated for any student, the following steps shall be taken: (1) not later than the date on which the decision to take such action is made, the guardians of the student with a

disability shall be notified of that decision and provided the procedural safeguards notice described in 34 CFR §300.504; and (2) immediately, if possible, but in no case later than ten school days after the date on which such decision is made, the CSE of the student's district of residence and other qualified personnel shall meet and review the relationship between the child's disability and the behavior subject to the disciplinary action.

If, upon review, it is determined that the child's behavior was not a manifestation of his or her disability, then the child may be disciplined in the same manner as a child without a disability, except as provided in 34 CFR §300.121(d), which relates to the provision of services to students with disabilities during periods of removal.

Guardians may request a hearing to challenge the manifestation determination. Except as provided below, the child will remain in his or her current educational placement pending the determination of the hearing.

If a guardian requests a hearing or an appeal to challenge the interim alternative educational setting or the manifestation determination resulting from a disciplinary action relating to weapons or drugs, the child shall remain in any interim alternative educational setting pending the decision of the hearing officer or until the expiration of the time period provided for in the disciplinary action, whichever occurs first, unless the guardian and the School agree otherwise.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Supporting Every Child's Growth

Amber Charter Schools has a policy of inclusion which means we focus on identifying each child's academic and socio-emotional needs and work cooperatively with families to meet said needs. A comprehensive system of support is designed to ensure each child achieves academically and develops positive social and behavioral skills. Amber Charter Schools provides the following:

Response to Intervention

Response to Intervention is "a multi-tier approach to the early identification and support of students with learning and behavior needs." Essentially, RTI is an approach to education that helps identify and support students most at risk for falling behind key learning standards. At Amber, when there is a concern with a student's performance given the data and the insight of families and other practitioners, we adjust instruction. Some of the ways we do this are by offering differentiated instruction and diligently tracking the progress these students are making to continue modifying the instruction they receive and adjusting their materials and/or work products until adequate progress is made.

Students with Disabilities

Amber Charter Schools offer Special Education Services to students who have Individualized Education Plans (IEP's). Amber offers counseling services, speech and language services, Special Education Teacher Support Services (SETSS) and Occupational Therapy and Physical therapy.

English Language Learners

Amber Charter Schools follow the NYSED guidelines to identify English Language Learners [ELLs] and to identify the in-house services they are entitled to receive. The program we offer for English language learners (ELL) is the Freestanding Standing English as a Second Language. The English as a Second Language (ESL) program at Amber Charter Schools delivers comprehensive instruction so that the identified students can attain the goals and outcomes as set forth in our Instructional Plan. At Amber, our ESL program aims to increase English language skill (Speaking, Listening, Writing, and Reading) in order for our students to perform the equivalent to Native English speakers. We encourage taking risks and embracing challenges to inspire excellence and accountability. Each Instructional member of our school plays an important role to promote language acquisition and achievement.

Reading Intervention (Title I)

Title One is a federally-funded support program. The goal of Title One Reading is to provide extra reading help and instruction for struggling readers. We host an annual meeting to discuss the goals with the Title One funding support program. Title One instruction is specialized reading instruction that is provided through the cooperation of the classroom teacher and the Title One Reading teacher. This supplements classroom instruction and we use class and diagnostic assessments to recommend students for this additional support. Supplemental reading instruction with the Title One Reading teacher will be in small groups, multiple times per week based on need. To support the efforts of all intervention and reading instructional programs, families can support by building literacy habits and skills at home. Children who read and discuss books with regularity are more likely to succeed and make progress academically!

Academic Tutoring

Amber Charter Schools offers qualified academic tutors for grades 3-5. The academic tutors work in partnership with the teachers to establish goals for each student and assist with small group instruction. Academic tutors lead small group activities for each tutoring session based on the student's needs.

Academic tutors also supervise children during lunch and recess. The academic tutors at Amber Charter Schools are a part of the classroom community and serve as a necessary resource for the students and their academic needs.

Ensuring Social-Emotional Development

Amber Charter Schools recognizes the various needs and supports our students require are not only academic and in response we offer a number of staff members charged with supporting student's socio-emotionally.

Our Guidance Counselors are on hand at all of our schools to collaborate with families, staff, to support children at risk and with specified needs. Our counselors also work with families to maintain open lines of communication and collaboration in the event of changes in the home and life events.

Dean of Students are staff members at our schools who manage the bulk of discipline and culture in and outside of classrooms. They are often in contact with families and work with staff, families and students to maintain order, create behavior plans for students, and celebrate success!

Teachers are our first line of defense when it comes to supporting our Stars and Leaders. At Amber Charter Schools, we use Sanford Harmony to support our students to make friends, discuss their feelings and manage conflict between peers.

Enrichment

At Amber Charter Schools, we believe that children deserve the opportunity to explore their interests and gifts outside of the core academic areas. Offering a well rounded education is a cornerstone of the programming at Amber Charter Schools. Although the offerings may vary from school to school and grade level, we are committed to our students having opportunities which extend their learning!

During the School Day

- **STEAM:** You may have heard of the rising interest in STEAM across schools and educational platforms. At Amber Charter Schools, we strengthen our students' ability to troubleshoot, take risks, collaborate and normalize mistake making, and resilience through STEAM instruction. The incorporation of Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics instruction into our weekly curriculum enhances our student's abilities to think more broadly and creatively.
- **Art:** Students also benefit from art education exclusively where they get to explore with a variety of mediums and art forms. We have many artists at Amber Charter Schools!
- **Physical Education:** All children must participate in physical activities (indoor/outdoor) unless they are excused for medical reasons. Guardians will be responsible for notifying the school in advance if any special arrangements are needed. A doctor's note must be provided if a child is not allowed to exercise or go outside. Students must wear the designated uniform for physical education classes which is navy blue sweatpants and a light blue t-shirt with an Amber logo.
- **Music:** Carnegie Hall Link Up: Music education is an integral part of the Amber experience. In 3rd grade, students participate in the Carnegie Hall – Link up recorder program. This program gives students an opportunity to showcase playing the recorder at Carnegie Hall. The third graders learn to play the recorder during their weekly music class.

- **Technology:** Amber Charter Schools understands that access to technology is critical for our students to be competitive and capable agents of change in the future. Given this understanding, we boast a 1:1 ratio for technology use. This means any student attending our schools will have access to computers, or tablets aside from other classroom based tech software to enhance their understanding and learning.
- **Spanish:** As the first Latino led charter school in New York State and the demographic of the students we serve, we want to ensure that our students understand the diversity of the Spanish language and cultures of those who speak it.
- **Swimming:** Studies show that children who do not learn to swim before 3rd grade are more likely to be afraid of the water. We want our students to thrive in all areas of their life. Amber offers swimming lessons in the spring to all 2nd graders. Students must bring their swimsuits worn under their uniforms. Our staff accompanies them to the swimming pool and supervises the lessons. Licensed swim instructors, lifeguards, and their teachers monitor students and ensure safety in the pool.
- **Field Trips:** Educational and cultural field trips are an integral part of the curriculum. All students are expected to attend school trips unless your child's safety cannot be assured, in which case guardians will be asked to escort the child on the trip.

On-Site After School Programs (space limited)

Amber Charter Schools partners with various programs within our schools. If you are interested in learning more about the programming available on your campus, please contact the respective school.

Assessments and Grading Systems

Assessments

Amber Charter Schools utilizes a range of assessment tools to inform and enrich the teaching and learning in classrooms. This includes but is not limited to:

- Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA)
- I-Ready computer-based assessments (literacy and mathematics)
- Teacher-created tests, quizzes, checklists and rubrics
- Curriculum-based assessments
- Interim assessments
- New York State assessments
 - English language arts and mathematics (grades 3-8)
 - Science (grade 5 & 8)

Grading

On many assessments and on trimester progress reports, Amber students are rated on a 4-point scale:

Elementary Grading bands		Middle School Grading bands	
Score	Description	Percentage	Description
1	Not meeting the standard	50%- 0% = 1	Not meeting the standards
2	Approaching the standard	65%-51% = 2	Partially meeting the standard
3	Meeting the standard	84%- 66% = 3	Meeting the standards
4	Exceeding the standard	100%- 85% = 4	Meets Standards with Distinction

Honor Roll

Students attending Amber Charter Schools have the opportunity to earn a place on the honor roll each trimester, which includes public acknowledgment and certificates. Students can achieve this distinction by meeting the four following criteria:

1. Meeting or exceeding the standard (earning a 3 or 4) in ALL content areas
2. Having three or fewer unexcused absences
3. Having three or fewer late arrivals
4. Completing ALL homework assignments
5. Having NO disciplinary action taken involving the Dean of Students.

Middle School Honor Roll Criteria

1. Leaders must have a cumulative average of 90 or above as well as an 80 or above in all classes.
2. Leaders must be in good behavioral standing.

Principal's List:

1. Leaders must have a cumulative average of 95 or above as well have an 80 or above in all classes.
2. Leaders must be in excellent behavioral standing.

Promotion and Retention Policy

All students will be promoted from one grade to the next based on the consideration of the following factors:

1. Evidence of meeting grade specific standards, as measured by internal assessments of English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies administered to all students.
 - Proficiency of skill and mastery of strategy or content knowledge, as measured by a variety of assessments (such as Developmental Reading Assessments (DRA), curriculum-based and teacher-generated quizzes, rubrics, interims, etc.)

If this criterion is not met, the following criteria will be taken into consideration regarding promotional decisions.

2. Evidence of meeting grade specific standards, as measured by standardized normed assessments in English language arts and mathematics. Standards expected:
 - At or above grade level on normed assessments (such as iReady diagnostics).

AND

3. Attendance record, including late arrivals and early releases. Standard expected:
 - Having more than TEN unexcused absences negatively contributes to a decision to promote a child. *Note, three unexcused tardies equal one absence.*

Routine cycles of reviews of student progress in meeting academic standards are embedded into the development of trimester report cards, as well as the school-wide Response to Intervention approach. Additional data is reviewed on a routine basis as well.

Students with Disabilities

Students who have Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) will receive progress reports with similar elements. In addition to objective data and comments, the report will describe the extent to which the student is meeting the annual goals of the IEP. Students must meet the promotional criteria outlined in their IEPs. Absent such criteria, school administration will take into consideration other academic and developmental factors to make promotion determinations for students formally identified with disabilities.

All final determinations regarding promotion will be made by the principal.

FAMILY/SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS, VOLUNTEERING AND INVOLVEMENT

Routine Communications to Families

Upon enrolling at our schools, families will be prompted to sign up and download [Parentsquare](#). This is the system we use to streamline all communication that is network, school and classroom based.

Important Meetings – Guardian Attendance Required

- Orientation and pre-registration (entering kindergarten students)
- Primary language interview (entering kindergarten students)
- Back to School Nights
- Family-teacher conferences
- Child Study conferences
- Suspension conferences
- Other meetings as needed

Amber Charter Schools staff members are always willing to meet with guardian(s) when meetings are scheduled in advance.

Chaperoning Field Trips

Guardians are provided with opportunities to accompany classes while they attend trips outside of the immediate school neighborhood. We encourage all students to attend so that they can experience the connections to the curriculum we have planned via these educational experiences. Some trips require a monetary contribution while most are free of charge. All students must have permission slips signed in order to attend trips.

Community Trips

What are community trips?

- A community trip is a walking trip where Amber students may take a neighborhood walk to a park, have a nature walk or go to the nearest library.
- These walking trips are **less than 0.5 mile radius** (Elementary School) and **1 mile** (Middle School) and may not always be planned.
- Community Trips do not include recess as recess is mandated for all students.
- The parent/guardian will [consent](#) to their child participating in local walking trips that will be scheduled at the discretion of the school. The parent/guardian understands that school personnel will make every effort to arrange for a safe walk route and supervision to and from the school site.

Volunteering

We encourage all families to volunteer at their child's school at least 2 hours per school year. This can be done by joining a school committee. The committees are as follows:

- **Celebration Committee** - Helps school staff with school events such as the bookfair, winter/spring event, and school dances (middle school).
- **Picture Day Committee** - Helps children get ready for taking their picture by fixing stray hairs, straightening ties, and ensuring students are in full uniform.
- **Olympic Day Committee** - Helps school staff with transporting materials to the park, setting up games, and helping classes to transition from one game to another.
- **Stepping Up Committee** - Helps school staff with folding programs prior to the ceremony as well as direct families to their seats and distribute programs on the day of the ceremony.
- **Recruitment & Enrollment** - Helps school staff with school tours, events at daycares, and promoting Amber to prospective families.
- **Social Media Committee** - Helps school staff with submitting pictures to be featured on Amber's social media or website.
- **Advocacy Committee** - Helps advocate for the Amber community in community board meetings, education consortiums, Albany advocate days and charter center events.

Family Involvement Policy / Title I

Amber Charter Schools Local Education Agency (LEA) and Title I School Family Involvement Policy, and Amber Charter Schools Family Compact, have been developed in response to Every Student Succeeds Act requirements. Title I is a federal program which makes additional resources available to help assure that all children succeed academically.

The purpose of this policy is to encourage and facilitate involvement by guardians of students participating in Title I programs. The policy shall provide the framework for organized, systematic, ongoing, informed and timely guardian involvement in relation to decisions about the Title I services within Amber. Below is the policy of Amber Charter Schools acting as both, Local Education Agency and Title I school.

Involvement Policy

LEA-level Family Involvement Policy Component:

The partnership between home and school will be supported by:

- Amber Charter Schools' infrastructure to continually assess, plan and implement strategies that build the partnership.
- A school-wide committee of guardians, teachers, and administrators to guide overall program efforts and serve as a home-school partnership network.
- Coordination of activities through the staff development system in areas of teacher in-service, assessment of teaching strengths, and communication with guardians toward the creation of the best possible learning experience of each child.
- Self-study of guardian involvement practices by teams of guardians, teachers and directors using the following seven basic principles considered essential to home-school partnerships.

- Every aspect of the school climate is open, helpful and friendly.
- Communications with guardians are frequent, clear and two-way.
- Guardians are treated as collaborators in the educational process, with a strong complementary role to play in their children’s school learning and behavior.
- Guardians are encouraged, both formally and informally, to comment on school policies and to share the decision making.
- The school administrators actively express and promote the philosophy of partnership with all families.
- The school encourages volunteer participation from guardians and the community.
- The school recognizes its responsibility to forge a partnership with all families in the school, not simply those most easily available.

School-Level Involvement Policy Component:

Amber Charter Schools invites familial participation in the following ways:

- Title I in conjunction with the Family Council, will schedule an annual meeting to inform guardians of their school’s participation in the program. It will be scheduled at the beginning of each school year. The administration will also send out letters to guardians informing them of the date and location of the meeting, and will post this information on the school website. This meeting is usually held during Back to School Night.
- If deemed necessary by the Family Council, Amber Charter Schools will offer multiple meetings such as morning and evening so as to include as many guardians as possible.
- The Family Council will hold regular meetings in accordance with its by-laws. These meetings will regularly address the joint planning review and improvement of Title I programs.
- One guardian will be elected yearly to the Board of Trustees for each school location.
- All newly-enrolled guardians will participate in Primary Language Record interviews. At these interviews, guardians will be provided with information about Title I services;
- All guardians will participate in Back to School night. At this event, guardians will be provided with information about Title I services.

Amber Charter Schools will provide guardians of participating children timely information about Title I programs.

Title I services will keep guardians updated about the types of services their children are being provided, the planned duration of service, and the goals of the services:

- The school performance profile required under section 1116 (a)(3); This compact summarizes key responsibilities of school and home.
- The child’s individual student assessment results, including an interpretation of such results. Title I services will provide these results and will go over the interpretation with the guardian at a scheduled meeting;
- A description and explanation of the curriculum in use at the school, the forms of assessment used to measure student progress, and the proficiency levels students are expected to meet. Guardians will receive this information at Primary Language Record interviews, the annual Title I meeting, the curriculum night, and the orientation for guardians at the beginning of every school year;
- Title I services will schedule guardian meetings as requested.

Technical Assistance and Support

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act is a federal law that protects the educational rights of students in temporary housing. It defines “homeless children and youths” as any student who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.

McKinney-Vento eligible students have the right to:

- receive a free, appropriate public education;

- enroll in school immediately, even if lacking documents normally required for enrollment, or having missed application or enrollment deadlines during any period of homelessness;
- enroll in school and attend classes while the school gathers needed documents;
- continue attending the school of origin, or enroll in the local attendance area school if attending the school of origin is not in the best interest of the student or is contrary to the request of the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth;
- receive transportation to and from the school of origin, if requested by the parent or guardian, or by the local liaison on behalf of an unaccompanied youth; and
- receive educational services comparable to those provided to other students, according to each student's need.

Support is provided by:

- Principal
- Family Liaison
- Title One Reading Specialist
- Guidance Counselors
- Classroom Teachers

Technical Assistance will include:

- Assistance in familial outreach through mail and telephone and email;
- Preparing and translating involvement announcements and pamphlets;
- Staff participation as presenters at Family Council events;
- Joint planning of family activities and support in preparing family information such as reading lists, family guides, and partial-immersion brochures;
- Assistance in making available electronic equipment for events;

up-to-date and effectively addresses the changing needs of the school community. The school administration will discuss ways to identify strategies for overcoming barriers to familial engagement and methods to increase participation. Policy revisions will be based on the evaluation and will be incorporated into the guardian Involvement Policy. The Co-Chief Executive Officers will be responsible for the implementation of the Policy and of revisions.

The Family Involvement Policy has been developed in conjunction with the Family Council.

Amber Charter Schools' Family Compact

Amber Charter Schools believes that school-home collaboration is essential to the achievement of its mission and objective. Amber Charter Schools recognizes guardians as children's primary educators and role models. It welcomes guardians as active and respected partners in school life and key participants in the school community.

What guardians should expect from Amber Charter Schools:

Guardians should expect Amber Charter Schools to fulfill its Charter and to meet the goals and measurable objectives outlined in its Accountability Plan. These goals are:

- All ACS students will become proficient readers and will make strong yearly progress toward mastery of English-language reading skills.
- All ACS students will become proficient in math and will make strong yearly progress toward the mastery of mathematics skills.
- All ACS students will develop proficiency in one or more of the New York State Learning Standards for the Arts.
- ACS guardians will be active participants in their children's education, school decision-making and evaluation.
- ACS will maintain strong enrollment and strong guardian interest.
- ACS will make sound decisions and effective, responsible use of financial resources to maximize student learning.
- The ACS Board will play an active role in governing and bringing resources to Amber Charter Schools;

- ACS faculty and staff will be fully engaged partners in the development of the school and their own professional development.

These goals, the measurable objectives for each goal, and how Amber Charter Schools works to meet them, are described in Amber Charter Schools’ charters, Accountability Plans, and annual Accountability Reports, as well as in the Family Handbook. All guardians receive copies of the Family Handbook and will be provided with copies of the Charters, Accountability Plans and Accountability Reports upon request.

What Amber Charter Schools expects from guardians:

- Guardians will support their children’s education to the best of their ability.
- Guardians will read and/or tell stories to their children at least 20 minutes per night, as the single most important way guardians can help their children
- Guardians will be familiar with and committed to supporting Amber Charter Schools mission and goals as described in this Compact.
- Guardians will read and be familiar with the Family Handbook.
- Guardians will support the school discipline code.
- Guardians will keep the emergency contact information card accurate and up-to-date.
- Guardians will return registration, health, medical, and school-meals forms promptly.
- Guardians of newly enrolled children will participate in Primary Language Record interviews.
- Guardians will maintain a high attendance rate for children and work with the school staff to overcome obstacles to regular attendance.
- Guardians will ensure that children arrive on time, well-rested, and dressed appropriately each day.
- Guardians will ensure that children are well-nourished, eating breakfast at home or participating in the school breakfast and lunch program.
- Guardians will maintain close contact with school leaders and teachers to support their child’s education, attending activities such as orientation, curriculum night, family -teacher conferences, and, as needed or desired, individual meetings.
- Guardians will work with the school to build children’s self-respect, respect for others, and appreciation of their own and others’ cultures.
- Guardians will work with the school to help children develop skills in the peaceful resolution of disputes.
- Guardians will volunteer time and skills to help the school to the greatest extent they can.
- Guardians will play an active role in the Family Council.

Amber Charter Schools Is Solutions-Oriented

Amber Charter Schools prides itself in being open to the concerns and suggestions of the school community to ensure the success of the school. Toward that end, all community members are expected to communicate with each other honestly and respectfully and encouraged to offer possible solutions that are in the best interest of the school’s students, families and staff members.

If, after attempting to address a concern with a teacher, and then a member of the academic leadership team, an individual or group believes the situation has not been adequately resolved, the formal complaint process is presented below.

Anyone wishing to formally complain about a school-related matter, other than alleging a violation of the provisions of Article 56 of the education law, must direct their complaint in writing to the Principal, who will respond within ten (10) business days.

Meirelys Ruiz, East Harlem Principal
220 East 106th Street, New York, NY 10029
Tel: (212) 534-9667 ext. 155
MRuiz@ambercharter.org

Gina Mellusi, Kingsbridge Elementary Principal
3120 Corlear Avenue, Bronx, NY 10463
Tel:(646) 802-1140 ext. 309
GMellusi@ambercharter.org

Mia Thomas, Kingsbridge Middle School Principal
532 West 215th Street, New York, NY 10034
Tel: (929) 299-1595
MThomas@ambercharter.org

Francina Yaw-Costello, Amber Inwood Elementary Principal
532 West 215th Street, New York, NY 10034
Tel: (929) 299-1595
FYaw-Costello@ambercharter.org

If the complainant is unsatisfied with this resolution, he/she may present the complaint to the Co-Chief Executive Officers, who will investigate and respond.

Veronica Almedina, Co-Chief Executive Officer 3120 Corlear Avenue, Bronx, NY 10463 Tel: 646-802-1140 co-ceos@ambercharter.org	Kirsys Gomez, Co-Chief Executive Officer 3120 Corlear Avenue, Bronx, NY 10463 Tel: 646-802-1140 co-ceos@ambercharter.org
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The Co-Chief Executive Officers or their designee shall investigate the matter as soon as possible, and the Executive Officers shall issue a written decision to the complainant within 14 days after receiving the written complaint. If the Executive Officers designate an investigator, the investigator shall make recommendations to the Executive Officers only. All final decisions regarding the complaint shall be made by the Executive officers.

If the Co-Chief Executive Officers are the subject of the complaint, or if the complainant wishes to appeal the decision made by the Chief Executive Officers, the complainant shall submit their complaint in writing to the Board of Trustees for resolution.

Any individual or group may bring a complaint to the Board of Trustees of the Amber Charter Schools ("School") alleging a violation of the provisions of Article 56 of the education law (i.e. the New York State Charter Schools Act), the School's charter, or any other provision of law relating to the management or operation of the School.

The complaint will be presented to the Board in written form. The Board may be contacted at the School's address:

Amber Charter Schools, 3120 Corlear Avenue Bronx, NY 10463. Attn: Board Secretary.

The Board shall respond at or prior to the next public meeting of the Board. Every effort will be

made to respectfully address the matter to the satisfaction of the individual or group who presented the complaint. The Board, as necessary, shall direct the Co-Chief Executive Officers to act upon the complaint and report to the Board. The Board shall render a determination in writing, as necessary.

If, after presentation of the complaint to the Board, the individual or group determines that the Board has not adequately addressed the complaint, the complainant may present the complaint to the State University Trustees through the Charter Schools Institute, Amber Charter Schools' authorizer, which shall investigate and respond.

Section 2855 (4) of the NYS Charter Schools Act provides a formal complaint process for use by individuals (including guardians) or groups who believe that a charter school has violated a term of its charter, a provision of the NYS Charter Schools Act, or any other provision of law relating to the management or operation of the charter school.

The process requires that any and all complaints be brought first to the school administration or the school's Board of Trustees. All complaints must be submitted in writing. If the Board of Trustees has not adequately addressed the complaint, or if, after a reasonable period of time, the Board of Trustees or its designee does not respond to the complaint in writing, then the individual or group has the right to bring the complaint to the entity that authorized the charter school (the "Charter Entity" or "Authorizer"), which in this case is the SUNY Charter Schools Institute.

Please complete the [SUNY Formal Complaint Form](#) and email it along with the school board's decision to: charters@suny.edu or by U.S. Postal Service to the SUNY Charter Schools Institute 353 Broadway Albany, NY 12246. If, after presentation of the complaint to the Charter Schools Institute, the individual or group determines that the Charter Schools Institute has not adequately addressed the complaint, the complainant may present the case to the NYSED Board of Regents, which shall investigate and respond.

All complaints brought to the Board of Regents/Commissioner concerning charter schools must be submitted in writing to the State Education Department's Charter School Office, either via mail at: Charter School Office, NYS Education Department, 89 Washington Avenue, Room 5N Mezz, Albany, NY 12234, or via email to: charterschools@nysed.gov. The subject line of the email should read: Complaint: [Name of School].

The Charter Schools Institute and the Board of Regents have the power and the duty to take remedial action as appropriate.

ENROLLMENT INFORMATION

Student Admissions Policy

Anti-Discrimination Criteria and Allowable Admission Preferences

Amber Charter Schools is nonsectarian and does not discriminate in admissions, educational programs, or employment against any individual on account of that individual's sex, race, color, religion, age, sexual orientation, handicap or national or ethnic origin. Additionally, admission to the school is not limited on the basis of a student's intellectual ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, athletic ability or disability. Any child who is qualified under the laws of New York State for admission to a New York City public school is qualified for admission to the school. A child entering kindergarten must be five years of age by December 31st of the same year.

Lottery Enrollment Approach

Re-Enrollment

As is standard practice, each school disseminates an Intent to Return form to all students in the spring of each year. The form will ask guardians to indicate if their child will be returning to the school the following September or request a transfer to another campus.

Siblings

A preference for siblings of current or new students helps to create and maintain a community of families within the school and strengthens student retention over many years.

Community School District Residents

Amber Charter Schools is committed to serving the communities in which the schools are located, and charter schools must give a statutory admissions preference to students residing within the geographical boundaries of the school district or CSD in which the charter school is located. This means that Amber Charter School East Harlem gives preferences to students living in NYC Community School District (CSD) 4, Amber Charter School Kingsbridge gives preference to students living in NYC CSD 10, Amber Charter School Inwood gives preference to students living in NYC (CSD) 6.

Scheduled Application and Enrollment Period

The application process begins when a guardian completes an application form. A bilingual representative is present at all guardian meetings and open houses to assist guardians in filling out the admission application, as well as by phone to respond to guardian questions and/or concerns. In addition, applications are provided in Spanish for guardians who feel more comfortable submitting applicant information in Spanish. It will provide the school with basic information about their child, such as name, address, date of birth and number of siblings applying to the school. All applications must be received on or before the application deadline. Once received, the application will be time-stamped, photocopied to a separate secured file, and entered into a database. All information provided on the application will be verified with the applicant's family, in particular the student's age, address, and sibling status.

The school shall offer to eligible students each year the opportunity to enroll within a week of the application deadline of April 1st, unless the number of applications exceeds the capacity of the grade level or building. In such cases, students shall be accepted from among applicants by a lottery, allowing enrollment preference will be given to pupils as stated below in Lottery Enrollment Preference.

Lottery Process

The lottery will be held within a week of the application deadline. The date, time and location of the lottery will be publicly noticed, consistent with Public Officers Law § 104. The lottery criteria (or chances) will be shared with applicants before the lottery takes place and will be included on the admissions application as well. The lottery is open to the public and an impartial guest is invited to witness the proceedings.

The eligible applicants are notified within 48 hours of their acceptance or position on the waitlist via email, letter, phone call, or posting to families' SchoolMint account. The waiting list is valid for the academic school year.

Enrollment Process

After the lottery is held, accepted students will receive a digital acceptance letter with a detailed explanation of the enrollment packet items and submission deadlines, and a list of documents that guardians need to submit to enroll their child, including birth certificate, proof of address, up-to-date immunization records and completed physical examination record.

Students who were not accepted will receive an email with the waitlist number drawn from the night of the lottery notifying them that they will be placed on a waiting list. Should openings become available, the waitlisted students will be contacted in the order they were pulled in the lottery.

Guardians of children who are transferring from other schools are encouraged, but not required, to share recent report cards as well as assessment results, particularly in literacy and/or math. Guardians of students identified with disabilities are asked to share current Individualized Education Plans (IEPs).

Transfer Requests within Amber Charter Schools

Guardians of students currently enrolled at any of our Amber Charter Schools are eligible to transfer their child(ren) between Amber Charter School East Harlem, Amber Charter School Kingsbridge, and Amber Charter School Inwood by completing and submitting a Transfer Request Form to the principal at any time during the school year *before* the month of March. Requests are reviewed and a determination will be communicated in writing to the guardian within fourteen (14) business days from receipt of the request.

Amber Charter Schools maintain complete discretion in determining whether to grant the request. Factors considered include, but are not limited to:

- a) The grade levels served at the requested school
- b) Seat availability at the requested school
- c) Specific challenges or hardships unique to the family or the students
- d) Specific challenges or hardships unique to the school

Process:

Indicate interest in transferring on Intent to Return Form, to be submitted by the first week in March.

The school will provide you with a Transfer Request Form, to be submitted by March 31st.

the guardian will be informed of the decision within 14 business days of receipt of request.

If transfer granted, guardians must accept by the first week in May.

Discharge/Unenrolling to attend other schools

Amber Charter Schools request that guardians provide at least two weeks' notice prior to a student's transfer from Amber Charter Schools to another school for any reason. Such notice allows the school to complete the necessary paperwork as well as transfer student records. Proper notification also enables the school to fill the upcoming vacant spot with a student from the waitlist. [Discharge forms](#) would be submitted to the school's operations team and must include the name and address of the new school the child will attend.

Student Records

Amber Charter Schools requires families to complete and submit the following items as part of the registration process:

- Application for Student Admission
- Online Enrollment Forms
- Trusted Adult Release Forms (media release and walking trip forms)
- Application for Free and Reduced-Price School Meals
- New Admission Examination Form (including Immunization Record)
- Home Language Questionnaire
- Copy of the student's birth certificate
- Two Proof of address (copy of a current bill)
- Family/School Contract
- If family decides to discharge from ACS, a guardian must complete discharge form

Guardians must notify the Operations team of any changes to a student's name, address, phone number, or any other information provided at the time of registration. Changes must be communicated in writing.