

# Welcome to Charleston County School of the Arts



2024 - 2025

## Middle School Student Handbook

**Where Talent and Vision Create the Future**

### MISSION STATEMENT

At SOA our purpose is to provide a supportive educational environment where academic and artistic challenge engage students and lead them to develop and use their talents to pursue goals and contribute to society.

**Dr. Shannon Cook**  
Principal

**Ms. Laura D. Smith**  
Middle School Assistant Principal

**Mr. Caulen Leary**  
Instructional Coach

**Mr. Robert Grant**  
Assistant Administrator

**Ms. Rachael Stallsmith**  
Middle School Counselor

**Ms. Naquita Page-Dawson**  
Middle School Counselor

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Major:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Grade:** \_\_\_\_\_

School of the Arts  
5109-B West Enterprise Street  
North Charleston, SC 29405  
843-529-4990 FAX – 843-529-4991  
<http://soa.ccsdschools.com>

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All students are issued a student agenda. This agenda is designed to assist students with time management and organizational skills. The agenda must be in the possession of the student whose name appears on the previous page at all times. Students may not loan their agenda books to others. Replacement cost is \$5

# GENERAL INFORMATION AND POLICIES

## ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE PROCEDURES

At 7:30 a.m. students who arrive on campus may enter Building 8, the Administration Building, and students must report directly to the media center and not loiter in Building 8. Our media specialists and assistants will be present to assist and supervise students. At 8:00 teachers are in place, and the breezeway gates at the car rider line and bus loop will be closed. Every effort is made to ensure accuracy in preparing this agenda book. **Charleston County School of the Arts** reserves the right to modify, add, or delete rules and regulations in this book at the discretion of the school administration.

Between 7:30 a.m. and 8:00 a.m., drivers should pull forward to the sign that reads “*Begin Un-loading Here.*” For safety reasons drivers should not ask students to meet them in any unauthorized area, including near or around the Fine Arts Building, between buildings, or in the parking lot.

When the dismissal bell rings at 3:30 p.m., students make their way to buses and cars or rehearsals and tutoring sessions. Any student who is not with a teacher after 3:50 p.m. will be directed to the media center until he or she is picked up. Our media center remains open until 5:30 p.m. and provides a location where students can meet with study groups, project teams or work independently. Students are required to sign in and middle school students’ parents must sign them out.

## MIDDLE SCHOOL BELL SCHEDULE

8:30 am–10:00 am	10:05 am-11:30 am	11:40 am-12:15 pm	12:20 pm-1:50 pm	1:55 pm–3:30 pm
1 <sup>st</sup> Block	2 <sup>nd</sup> Block	Lunch	3 <sup>rd</sup> Block	4 <sup>th</sup> Block

## BUS INFORMATION

Please find the bus at <https://www.ccsdschools.com/transportation>

## TEMPORARY BUS CHANGES

Each student is expected to ride his/her assigned bus every day unless permission to do otherwise has been approved by attendance clerk or front desk staff. When a student is changing buses, students must submit a signed note from a parent stating the following: student name, bus number student will ride, date of change, bus stop, parent name, parent’s day time phone number, parent’s signature.

Example: “John Doe” has permission to Ride Bus No. 543 on Monday, Jan 9, 2023 and will exit at the Harris Teeter on James Island. *Make sure to include the parent’s daytime phone number and signature.*

Bus Change Notes from parents SHOULD BE TURNED IN TO THE FRONT RECEPTION DESK BEFORE REPORTING TO A FIRST BLOCK CLASS. There will be no admittance to any bus, other than your assigned bus, without a “yellow temporary bus pass” from a school secretary.

Also, we are unable to accept phone or email permission from parents. For legal reasons, we must have on file in the Attendance Office a signed parent note. Students will not be able to come to the front desk at 3:30 p.m. to receive a bus pass. Parents may fax a permission note with a parent signature to 843-529-4991. Please put to the attention of Attendance Secretary. Email notices will not be accepted.

## **CAFETERIA**

Cost of meals are TBD. Cafeteria fees may be paid in advance online at [www.k12paymentcenter.com](http://www.k12paymentcenter.com). For more details on payment for school meals see the district's Nutrition Services website <https://ccsdschoolmeals.com/>.

Free and Reduced Application Link, Go to CCSD District website at <https://www.ccsdschoolmeals.com/> and click on Meal Applications, then click on the link for the Free and Reduced Application.

## **CAMPUS HOURS**

The campus is open from 7:30 am to 5:30 pm Monday – Friday. Students are not permitted on campus at other times unless accompanied by a faculty member. When students have rehearsals or performances after school, they are to remain with their teacher.

For safety, supervision and security reasons, students must be supervised when on campus, so we make arrangements to have a staff member in the media center until 5:30. All students not under the supervision of a teacher must exit the campus when the media center closes.

## **CLUBS, ORGANIZATIONS, AND SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES**

Charleston County School of the Arts recognizes the benefits of student involvement in extracurricular activities. SOA offers a wide range of student clubs, organizations, and service opportunities which can be viewed at <http://soa.ccsdschools.com/> - look under the student tab for more information.

## **PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES: Cell Phones, MP3 Players, iPads, etc.**

During the school day, phones and devices may be used between classes, during lunch, and before and after school. Electronic devices may be used in the cafeteria, courtyard, breezeway, and hallways but not classrooms/studios or instructional areas. The media center is considered an instructional area for students who come with a class or who are sent by teachers for classroom assignments.

- Communication devices may not be used during instructional time. Students may use communication devices during instructional time ONLY if the teacher gives explicit permission for lesson enhancement, assessment, student organization, etc.
- Speaker functions may not be used. NO content should be heard by others.
- Headphones, earbuds, and Bluetooth devices must be removed during instruction.
- Ringtones/notifications must be placed on "silent," not on audible or vibrate mode.
- Students may not activate the video, camera, or sound recording function of the device unless they are acting pursuant to the instructions of a teacher.
- The use of phones or any electronic device is forbidden during any graded class assessment (test, quiz, exam)—unless authorized by the teacher (e.g. calculators). Devices will be collected prior to assessments.
- Classrooms have a cell phone "parking lot." When directed by the teacher, cell phones must be "parked" as students enter the classroom, and picked up upon departure at the end of the block.
- Student devices must remain in the classroom during class time and not be taken to the restroom or on other hall pass visits.
- Misuse of a device will result in disciplinary action.

## **EXPECTATIONS FOR OUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY**

At SOA we believe we are a class act. School community members came together to identify the behaviors that illustrate what a class act student does. Our students are A-Accomplished, C-Considerate and T-Timely!

	<b>Learners</b>	<b>Citizens of SOA</b>	<b>Audience Members</b>	<b>Artists/Performers</b>
<b>Accomplished</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• discuss, participate and engage in class</li> <li>• self-advocate and ask for help</li> <li>• demonstrate strong work ethic, pride, and best effort</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• adhere to dress code and ID policy</li> <li>• demonstrate respect, helpfulness and integrity</li> <li>• take responsibility for their own actions and make good decisions</li> <li>• abide by SOA &amp; CCSD rules</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• show respect for performers through appropriate responses</li> <li>• avoid causing distractions and noises during performances</li> <li>• demonstrate attentive engagement during performance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• present polished, artistic performance</li> <li>• act professionally</li> <li>• take care of equipment &amp; performance space</li> </ul>
<b>Considerate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• enter/exit rooms quietly</li> <li>• listen, then speak</li> <li>• show respect for the work and effort of others through active listening, contribution, and collaboration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• dispose of trash properly</li> <li>• demonstrate respect, kindness, sensitivity for people and property</li> <li>• congratulate and celebrate others</li> <li>• contribute to the safety of SOA and others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• cell phones off and out of sight</li> <li>• remain quiet, attentive and seated during performances</li> <li>• demonstrate respect for the artistic message</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• blend with ensemble</li> <li>• avoid causing distractions during the performances of others</li> <li>• cooperate and collaborate with fellow performers and performance directors</li> <li>• demonstrate respect openness for artistic differences and feedback</li> </ul>
<b>Timely</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are on time and ready for class</li> <li>• turn assignments in when due utilizing time effectively</li> <li>• practice self-care to be at their best at school</li> <li>• work bell-to-bell</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are on time and in the right place</li> <li>• are punctual to school</li> <li>• manage time well</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are seated before start time</li> <li>• stay for entire performance when possible</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• present and ready by call time</li> <li>• have materials and equipment prepared and ready</li> <li>• are on time and in the right place</li> </ul>

**EXPECTATIONS FOR OUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY**

<p><b>Expectations Of Students</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respect teachers, administrators, and other students.</li> <li>• Come prepared to learn and succeed.</li> <li>• Come to class on time and participate actively in class every day.</li> <li>• Complete daily and long-term assignments carefully, thoroughly, and on time.</li> <li>• Follow all school rules.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Expectations of Teachers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Create relevant and engaging lessons to help students master the curriculum standards in all academic subjects.</li> <li>➤ Individualize instruction, when necessary, so all students can be successful.</li> <li>➤ Work with other teachers to provide a coherent program within the grade level, within the department, and throughout the school.</li> <li>➤ Communicate with parents regularly.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Expectations of Parents</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage students to work hard and do their best.</li> <li>• Help students organize their time, complete homework assignments and projects, and prepare for tests.</li> <li>• Support teachers, administrators, PTSA, and booster clubs.</li> <li>• Communicate with teachers.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Expectations of Administrators</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Provide a safe, caring environment where students can develop academically and artistically.</li> <li>➤ Maintain an exemplary academic and arts program.</li> <li>➤ Support faculty and students in the pursuit of excellence.</li> <li>➤ Continually evaluate and improve.</li> </ul>

**FEES**

Student fees are \$57. Payments are accepted online at [ccschoolofthearts.revtrak.net](https://ccschoolofthearts.revtrak.net) Checks should be made payable to “Charleston County School of the Arts” and should not be combined with other payments such as lunch money, insurance, or PTSA dues. Included in the fee is a Student Planner/Agenda, Student ID and lanyard, combination lock for locker, and other miscellaneous expenses. The replacement costs are: Student Planner (\$5), ID and lanyard (\$5) and combination lock (\$5), if lost. Students are given 5 free replacement sticker ID’s before they must pay for both the ID and lanyard at a cost of \$5. If the 2nd ID and lanyard are lost, they will again receive 5 free replacement sticker ID’s and then on the 6th one, they must pay for the ID and lanyard again at a cost of \$5.

**FIELD TRIPS**

Field trips are an important part of school because they enhance the school curriculum by extending learning experiences outside of the classroom and help students understand the real world connections of the lessons they are learning in school. Students are strongly encouraged to attend field trips planned by their teachers.

**FIELD TRIPS & MISSING CLASS**

Students are required to notify teachers a week before missing any class due to an excused field trip; students have 3 school days following the last day missed to make up homework or tests from classes missed as a result of the field trip.

### **FIELD TRIP ATTENDANCE**

Students with a **first quarter** grade below a 60 in any class may not be allowed to attend most field trips in the **second quarter**. Students with a **first semester** grade below 60 in any class may not be allowed to attend most field trips in the second semester. Exceptions to this rule include students who miss class to:

- a. audition or perform in regional, state, and national honors events, such as All-County, All-Region, All-State, or All-National honors learning opportunities.
- b. present or perform in state or national conferences or adjudicated performances such as state conference sessions or adjudicated concert festivals.

### **FIELD TRIP REFUNDS**

To attend field trips, the school or school program must collect money ahead of time to purchase tickets, passes, and to make bus and hotel deposits before the trip. Refunds for items already purchased may not be possible, even for trips missed due to illness, family emergency, failing grades, or suspension.

### **ID BADGES**

At the beginning of the school year, middle school students will be issued a school ID and a blue SOA lanyard and must wear both each school day. Students may only wear the SOA ID issued to them for the current school year. All students and staff members are required to wear their IDs when on campus. Students without IDs will be required to purchase an ID. Students attempting to enter the campus without an ID will be directed to the front office.

### **INFORMATION ACCESS FOR PARENTS AND STUDENTS**

#### **E-BLASTS**

Some middle school teams send out electronic newsletters with information about assignments, projects, special events and field trips. Make sure teachers have all important email addresses so newsletters will be received.

#### **FACEBOOK**

SOA's Facebook page provides another source of information for the school community. For updates "like" us at <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Charleston-County-School-of-the-Arts-Middle-High-School>

#### **Canvas**

All teachers use the platform Canvas to post information about homework, assessments and important dates.

#### **PARENT PORTAL**

The PowerSchool Parent Portal gives parents and students access to real-time information about attendance and grades. Grades are posted after assignments are graded. Please check Canvas for upcoming work. Access information is available on the school's webpage at <http://soa.ccsdschools.com>. If help is needed, please email [soaparentportalhelp@charleston.k12.sc.us](mailto:soaparentportalhelp@charleston.k12.sc.us).

#### **SCHOOL WEBSITE**

SOA's website is a part of the District's Web Page management system. Class information is available through teachers' pages linked to the school's homepage. Many school-

related questions can be answered by accessing the website at <https://www.ccsdschools.com/Domain/22>.

### **LOCKERS**

Use of lockers is a privilege. Students will be held responsible for all content they place in and/or on lockers. Students may not share lockers. Lockers should remain locked when not in use. Students may not decorate lockers using any adhesive material or labeling devices. Any damage - writing, scratching, denting, etc. will be considered vandalism and will be subject to disciplinary action. Lockers are subject to search at any time. Any items left in lockers after the locker use deadline will be donated to a charitable organization.

### **MEDICATION**

Due to hazards involved in handling medications, no medicine is administered at school unless a physician has prescribed it, and the physician has signed a Medication Form (CCSD website link for nursing services <https://www.ccsdschools.com/Page/1305>). Medication should be administered at home when at all possible.

Students must have an individualized School Nurse Health Information card on file for the current school year for any over-the-counter medications to be administered by the school health staff. A physician may fax (843) 800-4069 a prescription, a Medication Form or instructions to the school for prescription or over-the-counter medications if needed during school hours.

All prescription medication must be in a prescription bottle with the student's name, medication name, instructions, and required dosage on the label. A note/medication form from the physician must accompany the medicine stating the dates and times the medicine should be given. Parents should bring all medication directly to the office rather than sending medicine by a student. All medication must be stored under lock and key in the office or clinic. Medication may not be kept anywhere in the classroom or in a student's possession. The only exception to the rule is made for severe allergy, asthmatic or students with other life-threatening conditions. These exceptions must be accompanied by a self-administration order signed by the physician and other necessary parties.

### **PARENT CONFERENCES**

Parents with concerns are encouraged to communicate with teachers directly. All faculty email addresses can be found on the SOA website; faculty voicemail boxes may be accessed by calling (843) 529-4990. Parents should address classroom concerns with teachers before involving the administration. *It is not typically possible for parents to speak to teachers, counselors, or administrators without an appointment due to schedules and responsibilities.* Parent conferences must end when teachers are responsible for student instruction or supervision and can be rescheduled if necessary. In addition, CCSD has provided early release days to provide opportunities for parent conferences. Please consult the CCSD Academic Calendar for dates.

### **PHONES - USE SOA TELEPHONES**

Phone calls to parents will take place with the nurse and should not result from a student's call or text to a parent from a classroom. *Students cannot be called from class to receive phone calls.*

### **TEXTBOOKS**

Textbooks are owned by the State Department of Education, and each student is responsible for textbooks issued to him/her. The student is responsible for keeping the textbook clean and handling it carefully. Student's name, grade, and teacher should be



written on the book label in case the book is misplaced. Students will be required to pay for lost, stolen, or damaged books. If a textbook is lost, students should check immediately with teachers and with their administrator. Students should also check in the lost and found locations throughout campus. It is the student's responsibility to pay the replacement cost for any lost or stolen textbooks that were issued to him/her.

### **VISITING SOA**

For security reasons, Charleston County School of the Arts is a closed campus. Students from other schools and visitors are not allowed to accompany students to class. School of the Arts' parents are encouraged to visit the school with a scheduled appointment. Parents or guardians who wish to observe a class must notify the office at least 24 hours in advance; only one visitor per class is permitted at a time. All visitors, including parents, should enter through the front of the administration building to sign in, present a picture ID and receive a visitor badge. A visitor badge must be worn at all times while on campus as a safety and security precaution.

### **WEATHER-RELATED INFORMATION**

In the event of adverse weather conditions, please watch Charleston area stations for information on closings or delays. In the event of a two-hour delay, schools will open 2 hours later than usual. Buses will run two hours later than normal. Breakfast *will not* be served on days with a delayed opening.

Please check the CCSD website which is <https://www.ccsdschools.com/ccsd> and CCSD Facebook page to get current up to date info about weather related information.



# ACADEMICS

## CREDIT BEARING COURSES

There are several high school credit-bearing courses that eighth grade students have the opportunity to take. Students whose test scores, class grades and work ethic support placement in those classes can earn high school credit. Students and parents should be aware of the courses and policies that are in place statewide for students taking high school courses. The information below is provided to help our middle school students and parents understand the requirements and expectations for a South Carolina Diploma.

## SC HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA REQUIREMENTS

In order to receive a South Carolina High School Diploma, the student must attend the high school issuing the diploma for at least the semester immediately preceding graduation, except in the case of a bona fide change of residence to a location where the sending school will not grant the diploma.

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Diploma Requirements</b>
English/Language Arts	4 Units
Mathematics	4 Units
Science	3 Units
United States History & Constitution	1 Unit
Economics	.5 Unit
United States Government	.5 Unit
Other Social Studies Elective	1 Unit
Physical Education or Junior ROTC	1 Unit
Computer Science	1 Unit
World Language**	1 Unit
OR	
Career & Technology Education***	1 Unit
<b>TOTAL UNITS</b>	<b>17 UNITS</b>
<b>Electives:</b>	7 Units****
<b>TOTAL UNITS</b>	<b>24 Units</b>

\*\* Many colleges and the South Carolina State Department of Education recommend that college bound students earn 2 – 3 units in the same foreign language. Most four-year colleges/universities require at least two years of the same foreign language.

\*\*\* A Career and Technology unit used to meet the computer science unit required for graduation cannot be used to meet the Tech Prep unit requirement for graduation. An approved sequence of Career and Technology courses (4 units) leading to a career goal will be program completers and students will receive a Completer certificate in addition to their SC High School Diploma.

\*\*\*\* A unit of study which meets the Comprehensive Health Requirements must be included in a course completed by the student prior to graduation such as Personal Health, Community Health, Human Health and Development, Family and Consumer Sciences, Health Sciences, or Health Science Technology.

### **SOUTH CAROLINA FOUR YEAR COLLEGE REQUIREMENTS**

Students planning to attend four-year public colleges and universities in South Carolina must meet the following requirements. It is strongly suggested that students interested in attending other four-year colleges contact the schools' admissions office for specific admission requirements. Some schools may require additional courses.

<b>Subject</b>	<b>4 Year College Requirements</b>
English/Language Arts	4 Units
Mathematics	4 Units <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● CP Algebra 1 OR Algebra 1 Part1 &amp; Algebra 1 Part 2</li> <li>● Geometry</li> <li>● Algebra 2</li> <li>● 4<sup>th</sup> higher-level math class</li> </ul>
Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 3 Units</li> <li>● 1 from Biology, Chemistry or Physics</li> <li>● The third course may be from the same field as the first 2 or from an Adv. Environmental Science with lab or Marine Biology with lab for which Biology and/or Chemistry is a prerequisite.</li> </ul>
US History & Constitution	1 Unit
Economics	.5 Unit
US Government	.5 Unit
Social Studies	1 Unit
Physical Education	1 Unit
Foreign Language	2 units of the same language. Some four year universities require 3 units of the same foreign language for admission.
Electives	1 unit in Fine Arts 3 units must be from: Computer Science, English, Fine Arts, Foreign Language, Lab Science (excluding Earth Science, General Physical Science, General Environmental Science or other introductory science courses for which Biology and/or Chemistry is not a prerequisite), and Social Studies.

\*\* Two units must be taken in two different fields of physical or life sciences and selected from among biology, chemistry or physics. The third unit may be from the same field as one of the first two units (Biology, Chemistry or Physics) or from any laboratory for which Biology and/or Chemistry is a prerequisite. Courses in Earth Science, general Physical Science or introductory or general Environmental Science for which Biology and/or Chemistry is not a prerequisite will not meet this requirement. It is strongly recommended that students desiring to pursue careers in Science, Mathematics, Engineering or Technology take one course in all three fields.

## **GRADING SCALE**

SOA uses the uniform grading scale of the State of South Carolina.

## **SCHOOL COUNSELING SERVICES**

School counseling services are available to all students for academics, career or social/personal needs. A student who needs to see a counselor should let his/her teacher know. At times, school counselors may need to make contact with students' parents or guardians. According to the Charleston County School District Counselor Confidentiality notice, information of a personal nature told to your CCSD school counselor will be kept confidential EXCEPT for information that is a threat to life, health, or welfare. This information must be reported to parents or guardians. Suspected or reported abuse by a parent or guardian, must be reported to DSS and appropriate outside agencies.

Counselors can also assist with records for students. There will be a \$5.00 charge for a copy of the student's permanent record.

## **ARTS**

### **ARTISTIC PROBATION POLICY**

School of the Arts students must maintain an 80% or higher in their major arts classes to remain in good artistic standing at the School of the Arts. Students in grades 7 through 11 who earn lower than 80% in a major class for their overall year average at the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter Interim or 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter will be required to re-audition before returning to the School of the Arts in the following school year. Students who earn lower than 80% on any quarterly report card will be placed on artistic probation until they bring up their overall year average. Students on probation will be a part of a student-parent-teacher conference where all parties will agree upon and sign an Artistic Improvement Plan that outlines each person's responsibilities for bringing up the student's grade.

School of the Arts students who earn less than a 60% as an overall average in an art major class at the end of the year will not re-audition and will be directed to return to their attendance zone school. This policy is communicated to parents at the beginning of the year in the 80% letter that goes out to parents with other beginning-of-the-year forms.

We believe that setting high expectations, while assisting students in reaching those standards, will benefit both our programs and our students. Our goal is to ensure that every student has the opportunity to reach his or her potential.

### **CHANGE OF MAJOR PROCEDURE**

Students at SOA are allowed to change their art major only once. A student desiring a change of major must complete the Smart Choice Online Application by the deadline. The student will be allowed to audition for two different art areas if they choose to. Students should prepare and practice for the audition in a serious manner as each student has only one opportunity to audition. They will need to follow the audition requirements which will be posted on our website. If the student passes the audition, and there is space in the major area, the student will begin in the new art major the next school year. If the student does not pass the audition, and has earned at least an 80 for the year, he/she will be allowed to remain in the current art major. If a student auditions, but isn't able to move to the new major, he/she will be allowed to audition again. Students are allowed to change to a new major only once.

# ATTENDANCE

As a result of the Education Improvement Act of 1984, guidelines have been established for student attendance and absences. Attendance is a requirement for promotion and/or credit. Students must attend 85 days of each 90-day course to receive 1/2 unit of credit; 170 days of yearly course to receive 1 credit.

No student who misses all or any portion of a school day, unless excused by the principal, shall be permitted to participate later that day or that evening in any extracurricular or school-sponsored, authorized or related activity or event.

Failure to attend class constitutes an absence. Students previously enrolled in the district and those residing in the state entering for the first time shall be counted absent without excuse (for promotion/credit consideration) for each day missed due to late enrollment. All absences are defined as lawful or unlawful. Students are not permitted to make up work for unlawful absences.

## LAWFUL ABSENCES

**Per state law, lawful absences have been defined as follows:**

1. Students who are ill and whose attendance in school would endanger their health or the health of others may be temporarily excused from attendance.
2. Emergency medical or dental appointments that cannot be scheduled outside of school hours. Beginning and ending times must be recorded on the appointment slip by the doctor's office and only the appointment time and minimum travel time will be excused.
3. Students in whose immediate family there is serious illness or death.
4. Students may be excused from attendance in school for recognized religious holidays of their faith.
5. Students may be excused from attendance in school if they are required to be present in a court of law. Judge or attorney verification is required in writing.
6. Students who are absent due to suspensions.
7. Students who have prearranged absences for other reasons\* and/or extreme hardships at the discretion of the principal.
8. Students may be excused from attendance in class(es) for participation in activities representing the school if they have a passing average in each class they will miss and have not been excessively absent.

\*Excused absences do not include family vacations, gatherings or celebrations

## Notes for Absences

All absences will be listed as unlawful until the student petitions the Attendance Office to change the status of the absence by bringing a written note from a parent or guardian including a verifiable excuse. All students should accept responsibility for submitting a note for any absence promptly and **within 3 days** of the absence. All business with the Attendance Office must be conducted outside of class hours. Taking class time to submit an excuse or obtain an ID card does not exempt a student from the attendance policy.

Excuses are valid only for the date(s) of absence(s) and must contain all of the information specified:

1. Student's *first and last name*
2. Date(s) of absence
3. Reason for absence(s)
4. Parent/guardian's full name and signature with date excuse is written
5. Phone number(s) where parent can be contacted for verification

Note: After 3 days, if the student has not turned in an absence note, the absence will be coded as unverified/unexcused, and the student will not be allowed to turn in any

assignments or make up tests. (No late absence notes will be accepted at the end of the year to correct this situation).

Students who are absent 3 or more consecutive days MUST bring a doctor or parent note (falling under an excused absence) within 3 days of their return to avoid becoming truant. Students have up to 3 days of return from a lawful absence to complete missed assignments. If a parent note or medical documentation is received after 3 days following their return to school, the absence will be considered lawful, but unexcused.

**Note: Students participating in approved field trips, late due to bus problems, and assigned to in-school suspension programs are not considered absent.**

All students who were previously absent, arrive late, or leave early must go through the Attendance Office. Notes for absences should be delivered to the Attendance Office either before school, during lunch, or immediately after the school day ends. Physicians' notes, excuses for legal appointments and information about a death in the family are important factors in determining if credit can be awarded.

### **Advanced Approval for Absence**

Students must complete an "Advanced Approval for Absence" form prior to the absence to be excused from class(es) to participate in activities such as:

- state and national competitions
- performances and a scheduled dress/final rehearsal related to their art major
- ceremonies honoring students

Forms are available in the Attendance Office or can be accessed on the school's website. This should be turned into the Attendance Office five (5) days in advance of the absence. See below:

1. Parent/guardian should establish and document the purpose for the absence offering a complete explanation.
2. Student should be passing ALL subjects.
3. Student should have a good attendance record.
4. Student should secure the written approval of the building level administrator.
5. Student should have approval of ALL teachers whose classes they will miss.

SOA discourages students missing school on days prior to or immediately following a holiday. Failure to follow policy will result in the absence being counted as "unexcused". An "unexcused absence" means a student will not be allowed to make up work. A number of unexcused absences can result in a truancy situation or failure to meet exam exemption requirements.

No forms are required for permission to participate in a religious observance. A parent/guardian should send a written note to the Attendance Office notifying the school of a "Religious Observance" absence. E-mail or fax notification is not accepted.

### **UNLAWFUL ABSENCES**

Per state law, unlawful/unverified absences have been defined as follows:

1. Students absent from school without the prior knowledge of the parent.
2. Students absent from school without acceptable cause with parental knowledge.
3. Students suspended from the school bus and not reporting to school.
4. Absences in excess of ten days per year will not be considered excused with a parent/guardian note unless they are accompanied by official medical or legal documentation.

5. Students absent from class as a result of extracurricular activities not approved by school administration.
6. Absences due to out of town trips/vacations.

### **CHRONIC ILLNESSES**

Parents of a student with a chronic illness (one which recurs and may cause the student to miss excessive days) must contact the school as early as possible in the school year so that a chronic illness form can be secured and filled out by the medical doctor. School officials may contact the doctor concerning the illness. Chronic illness written verification by a doctor must be renewed each quarter and will go into effect on the date the doctor verifies the condition. Even when the school has verification of a chronic illness, absences must be excused by the standard procedure. The parent must send a note to the Attendance Office specifying whether the absence is *directly related to the chronic illness condition*.

### **EARLY DISMISSAL**

Students are expected to attend all classes each day of the school year except in the case of medical and family emergencies. According to State guidelines and in accordance with the Educational Improvement Act of 1984, no students should be called from a class for early dismissal unless it is an emergency.

The parental request for a student's early dismissal is not an excuse for an absence. The student should bring the appropriate excuse back upon his/her return to school. Example: A doctor's appointment followed by a doctor's excuse or a court appearance followed by a court note. In cases where a student must leave school before the end of the school day, please adhere to the following procedures:

1. Students are required to obtain a pass to leave early from the attendance office. This is done by bringing a handwritten note to the attendance office prior to school beginning on the day of the early dismissal. No email, fax or phone calls will be accepted. If the note isn't turned in the morning, the student won't be called out of class. Students should only leave the school between classes or at lunch time. It is the student's responsibility to inform the teacher that they will be quietly leaving the classroom at the approved time. We do not call into the class unless it is a family or medical emergency. Every effort should be made to schedule doctor or dentist appointments before or after school. Students should stagger their appointments so that they won't miss the same course. A medical statement from a physician will be required upon return to school in order for the absence to be excused.
2. Dismissal notes should include the student's full name, signature of parent/guardian, reason for dismissal, who will be picking the student up, and a phone number where the parent/guardian can be reached for verification of the early dismissal. Students will be waiting at the Attendance Office for the time written on the early dismissal note. Parents/guardians must come into the Attendance Office to sign their student out.
3. Phone calls, emails, and faxes are not accepted to call a student out from class to meet a parent at the Attendance Office or outside. If a prior early dismissal note was NOT turned in, the parent, guardian, or emergency contact must come to the Attendance Office to call the student out from class.
4. Dismissal notes for the end of blocks are required to avoid class interruptions. Students cannot be called out of classes for dismissal after 3:00 p.m.

## **CONTENT RECOVERY**

At the end of each quarter, students with a course average of 59 or below will be offered the opportunity to complete content recovery. Students who successfully recover the content will be given a 60 percent grade average for the preceding marking period.

## **ENROLLMENT AT SOA**

In order to remain in good standing, students must be on track for on time graduation. Students may not return to School of the Arts if they

- are not on track for on time graduation,
- earn less than a 60 as an overall average in an art major class at the end of the year,
- earn less than an 80 on year average of a major art class at the middle of the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter and failed the required re-audition, or
- are removed from the school at the discretion of the school or constituent board

## **TARDY POLICY**

School begins at 8:30 a.m. Students should plan to arrive at school by 8:10 a.m. in order to be in class by the time the tardy bell rings at 8:30 a.m. Students who are late to class are required to obtain a pass from the staff member who sends the student to class. If a student needs to see the school counselor, nurse, etc., the student should report to class on time and then ask for a pass to go to the counselor, the clinic, etc.

# **DISCIPLINE**

Our faculty is devoted to a consistent and clear discipline policy for students. We work to provide a safe school atmosphere in which all students can learn and grow. Our goal is to help students make appropriate choices and intervene when a pattern of behavior indicates a need for change. Clearly defined rules and consequences help us reach this goal.

## **CCSD PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE PLAN**

Please reference CCSD's Progressive Discipline Plan for information about definitions and consequences for student behavior. Go to the district website at <https://www.ccsdschools.com/Page/6902> and then click on 2023-2024 Student Code of Conduct. You will also find the Progressive Discipline Plan for Middle School at this same website

## **POLICY FOR TEACHER MANAGED BEHAVIORS**

Classroom/Teacher managed infractions should be handled by the classroom teacher and are not processed through a formal referral for disciplinary action from administration. These infractions are documented by the teacher. Cases of multiple or chronic offenses may require administrative action and referral for interventions that include the involvement of school counselors.

***For all Teacher Managed Infractions:*** Lunch detention issued; teacher will complete detention slip and provide one copy to student for parent signature

Each year a copy of the *Charleston County Student Code of Conduct* is to be reviewed by parents and students and the signed agreement returned to the SOA receptionist by September 1. *The Code of Conduct* describes appropriate behaviors and consequences for those who do not exhibit those behaviors. Consequences include suspension from school and extracurricular activities, referral for alternative placement, or referral for expulsion. We encourage parents and students to be informed of the behaviors that carry serious consequences. In addition to the *CCSD Student Code of Conduct*, expectations for School of the Arts students include the following:



- Money and valuables must be kept on a student's person. Students are always responsible for their belongings but are encouraged to leave them at home.
- Students must remain with their assigned teachers and class at all times. Students must obtain a pass from their assigned teacher to be in any other location. Students must sign in and out of school.
- The teacher workrooms are off limits to students.
- Signs may not be posted in the halls without office approval. You must use the appropriate bulletin boards.
- Students may print only school assignments. No personal notes, invitations, etc. are to be printed on school equipment.
- Students who do not follow arrival and dismissal procedures are subject to administrative referral. This includes car riders who use unauthorized locations for drop-off and pick-up.
- Students are responsible to know and stay within the designated areas for the grade level at lunch.

### **DRESS CODE**

CCSD has established a Student Dress Code. Students in violation of the dress code will be sent to the attendance office and asked if they have other clothes to change into or will be given a school-owned T-shirt and/or school-owned shorts or sweatpants.

#### **Guidelines for Attire**

- Clothing is to be worn appropriately and in the manner for which it was designed.
- Pants shall be worn at waist level.
- Undergarments shall not be exposed at any time.
- Clothing shall not reveal bare skin between upper chest and mid-thigh.
- Shorts, skirts, and dresses shall be of adequate length to assure modesty.
- Hats shall not be worn in school (unless approved for health or religious reasons).
- Shoes shall be worn at all times.

#### **Prohibited Attire**

- Clothing or other attire with words or images depicting or relating to tobacco, drugs, or alcohol
- Clothing or other attire displaying inflammatory, suggestive, racial, or other inappropriate writing, advertisement, or artwork
- Clothing or other attire displaying profanity, obscenity, violence, weapons, symbols of hate, or offensive content
- Clothing, jewelry, accessories, and/or manner of grooming which indicates or implies gang membership or affiliation
- Clothing or attire that is body contouring such as, but not limited to, leggings, jeggings, tights, or yoga pants worn without shirt or top that reaches fingertip length
- Loungewear, pajamas, and bedroom slippers
- Shirts, tops, or dresses that are backless, strapless, halter-style, cut-out, bare-shouldered, or spaghetti straps
- Extreme clothing or other attire that would interfere with the learning process, cause a disruption of the educational environment, or be a health or safety

Students found to be in violation of the dress code will be subject to corrective action.

### **HABITS OF SUCCESSFUL STUDENTS**

- Seek the advice and wisdom of parents, teachers, students, school counselor when setting academic goals or if unsure about your actions.
- Always challenge yourself, but balance class load and other activities. Don't take on obligations that exceed your time constraints, your academic abilities, or personal standards of excellence.
- Monitor deadlines and plan for them. Most often, the temptation to lie, cheat, or steal occurs at times of extreme pressure.
- ALWAYS ask for clarification if expectations, directions, or methods are not clear to you. Plagiarism, for example, is not always deliberate, so don't be caught in a violation simply because you were unsure how or whether to cite a source.
- In collaborative work, be sure responsibilities are clearly delegated and equitably distributed among all group members. Consult with teacher if difficulties develop.
- If you know in advance a deadline is going to be a problem, consult with the teacher ahead of time. Teachers are often much more accommodating when approached early, in person, and privately.
- Establish healthy study habits and routines. Reliance on short-cuts often leads to honor violations.
- Take advantage of these resources: NHS tutoring, extra-help with a teacher, writing assistance with English or Creative Writing teachers, research help from librarians.

### **SEARCH OF PERSONS OR PROPERTY**

Any person entering SOA premises shall be deemed to have consented to a reasonable search of his or her person and effects including lockers and vehicles. Please refer to CCSD Code of Conduct for the complete policy.

### **STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY**

Every student is expected to show responsibility by bringing everything he or she needs to school each day. Students will not be called from class to receive items that have been dropped off for them in the office