



Student and Family Handbook 2024-2025 School Year

Please sign and return the School / Family Contract attached on the back.

*****This handbook is subject to change. Any additions, changes or attachments will be provided to parents/guardians.*****

School Address	715 Ocean Terrace Building A Staten Island, NY 10301 718-274-3437
Main Office	mainoffice@bridgeprepcharter.org
Leadership Team	<p>Mr. Timothy Castanza - Executive Director and School Leader tim@bridgeprepcharter.org</p> <p>Ms. Fahron Ebanks - Director of Operations fahron@bridgeprepcharter.org</p> <p>Ms. Cheryl Otterbeck - Interim Acting Director of Teaching and Learning cotterbeck@bridgeprepcharter.org</p> <p>Mrs. RoseMarie Illuzzi - Director of Family + Community Development rosemarie@bridgeprepcharter.org</p> <p>Ms. Tiffani Policastro - Dean of Student Support tpolicastro@bridgeprepcharter.org</p> <p>Ms. Kai Boxill - Family Coordinator kboxill@bridgeprepcharter.org</p> <p>Mrs. Barbara Stella - Administrative Assistant bstella@bridgeprepcharter.org</p>
Bridge Prep Family Association	bpfacharter@gmail.com
Bridge Prep Board of Trustees	board@bridgeprepcharter.org

We are committed to establishing and maintaining an open and respectful line of communication between families and our School staff, each of whom has their own dedicated school email address. If a parent or guardian has a specific question for a teacher, they are to email them directly at their school email address.

Should additional conversation be required between the family and teacher, a member of the School Leadership Team will facilitate a follow up conversation or meeting between the parent or guardian and staff member.

ARRIVAL (DROP OFF)

Student arrival each day runs from **7:40-8:15 a.m.** No student will be permitted to enter the school building prior to 7:40 a.m. each day. Students will be provided breakfast upon their arrival, which they will eat in their classroom. **The first period of the school day begins at 8:00 a.m. Lateness for students at Bridge Prep is defined as any student arriving any time after 8:05 a.m. Please note, while our morning arrival team will still receive students until 8:15 a.m. at our Drop Off in the A Lot, students will be marked late beginning at 8:05 a.m.**

Any family that is dropping their student off at school in the morning will use the designated Bridge Prep Charter School Drop Off location in A Lot by entering through the side gate located on Ocean Terrace. Families are encouraged to approach the campus from Renwick Avenue to avoid making a left turn into the drop off location. Under no circumstances should a student be dropped off at any location other than this designated location.

Students who arrive after 8:15 a.m. should report to the Welcome Desk and be signed in by a parent or guardian. Parents and guardians must park and walk late students into the building and sign in with both School Safety and our staff at the Welcome Desk. Photo ID is required.

DISMISSAL (PICK UP)

Student dismissal runs from **3:20-3:30 p.m.** every day. Dismissal will occur outside of Building A on the campus quad. Any family that is picking up their student should not arrive on campus any earlier than 3:00 p.m. unless they have indicated to the school that they are picking their student up early.

Upon arrival to pick up a student, families should park in the Visitor Parking Lot, and walk down the stairs from the parking lot to the quad. Under no circumstances should families park on the main campus road, as this will block bus traffic and cause a safety issue on campus. Cars parked on Campus Road will not be allowed to move during dismissal.

Any changes to how your student is getting home must be emailed to the Main Office and classroom teachers by 2:00 p.m. We understand that emergencies may arise, but adherence to the above time ensures the safe dismissal of your student.

EARLY / LATE PICK UP

Unless a parent or guardian has contacted the School in advance and provided a signed note to the School explaining the situation, and/or signed the student out at the Welcome Desk, no student will be dismissed early from the school building.

If a student is planning on attending a religious education program (such as CCD), that would require the student to leave early from school on a school day, the parent or guardian will need to provide a note in writing to the Main Office and the classroom teachers with the specific details. The parent/guardian and the School will develop a plan and agreement for the logistics of the circumstance.

In order to minimize disruption for teachers and students, we ask that notification regarding early dismissals be made as far in advance as possible but not later than 9:00 a.m. on the day of the early dismissal.

We ask that you please arrive promptly to pick up your student. In the event that you are running late, please notify the school immediately. If you arrive to pick your student up prior to the designated pick-up dismissal window (3:20-3:30 p.m.), you must call the school at least 15 minutes prior to your arrival, so that your student is ready for pickup. A staff member will meet you at the Welcome Desk for you to sign out your student.

AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMMING AND ATHLETICS

Bridge Prep offers a free Academic After School Enrichment program for students 2 days per week (Monday and Wednesday), from 3:30-5:30 p.m. Additionally, we have partnered with NYCID to provide after school programming until 6:00 p.m. daily (excluding early dismissal days). For more information regarding either, please contact the Director of Teaching and Learning.

Please note, that should a student participate in both the Bridge Prep After School Enrichment Program or the NYCID After School Program, they will need to be picked up by a parent or guardian, as there is no bus service provided for transportation home.

Additionally, Bridge Prep traditionally fields athletic teams in Cross Country Track (Fall) Basketball (Winter), Cheerleading (Winter) and Track and Field (Spring) in various Staten Island Leagues. Families who have interest in these extra curricular offerings should fill out the Athletics interest form provided by the school. Each sport offered will have a designated Coordinator who will serve as the point person for the sport, in addition to our wonderful volunteer coaches. There is a participation fee for each sport and all student athletes will be mandated to follow the guidelines set forth in the School's Code of Conduct and on the specific sport's guidelines.

STUDENT DRESS CODE

In order to improve the School's educational environment, promote a more effective climate for learning, foster school unity and pride, and allow students to focus solely on learning and not on attire, the School has a dress code for students that applies to in-person school days. When students are at home for virtual learning, they are not mandated to wear their school uniform, however they must be dressed appropriately for school (ex. no pajamas).

A majority of dress code items (plain gray or navy polos, and navy bottoms) can be purchased at various retail stores, or directly through Flynn & O'Hara by visiting flynnohara.com. The school sweater and polo are available exclusively there. Bridge Prep gear can be worn if it is purchased from a school-sanctioned vendor. Families with questions about ordering items and Bridge Prep gear that students are able to wear under the Dress Code, can reach out to the Family Coordinator. Students are not permitted to wear crocs, slides, or any other footwear that do not provide adequate safety support for physical activities.

SAFE DRIVING

Bridge Prep shares our beautiful campus, known as the Petrides Educational Complex, with our neighbors from the Michael J. Petrides School, The Richard Hungerford School, and members of the District 31 administrative staff. As members of a vibrant, active educational community that welcomes over 1,500 students and staff to campus each day, it is critical that the safety of all students, staff and families comes first at all times. Each of us plays a part in ensuring a safe experience on campus, particularly when it comes to driving on and around campus.

In the interest of student safety and to honor our agreement with the rest of the Petrides Educational Complex community, we urge you to support our priority of student and traffic safety around the campus. Safe driving around the grounds improves the security for all students on the campus, including yours. We know that arrival and departure times can be stressful and that the campus parking areas can get congested, especially during inclement weather. Please allow enough time to pick-up and drop-off students safely and be sure to model respect and kindness to other drivers. When driving around the campus at all times, we ask you to please:

- Use the Bridge Prep designated drop-off/pick-up areas only.
- Drive slowly at all times on the campus (obey the speed limit).
- Cross at the crosswalks only and do not cross the street between or in front of the buses.
- Do not drive by any school buses when their lights are flashing and/or the stop sign is extended, as State law requires vehicles to stop when the lights are flashing.
- Yield to pedestrians at all times.
- Do not block crosswalks, driveways, red zones, or fire hydrants.
- Be courteous to your fellow parents or guardians, employees of all schools on the campus, and School Safety Agents or Crossing Guards.
- Remain alert and encourage others to follow these safe-driving tips.

If you choose to carpool, please notify the Main Office and your student's teacher in writing of the arrangements and the names of the adults with whom your student may be transported. Any parent or guardian with questions about Bridge Prep's drop-off/pick-up policies should connect directly with the Director of Operations. We thank you for your help and cooperation in making our school community safe!

LATENESS

The first period of the school day begins at 8:00 a.m. Lateness for students at Bridge Prep is defined as any student arriving any time after 8:05 a.m. Please note, while our morning arrival team will still receive students until 8:15 a.m. at our Drop Off in the A Lot, students will be marked late beginning at 8:05 a.m. When students arrive late for school they miss valuable time of the school day and disrupt the educational experience of other students.

Excessive lateness, which is defined as 5 unexcused latenesses, will result in a mandatory family meeting with the Dean of Student Support. Some examples of excused lateness are transportation hardships, family emergencies, and/or medical appointments. These instances must be communicated to the Main Office in writing at mainoffice@bridgeprepcharter.org. Students arriving after 8:15 a.m. should go to the Welcome Desk to be signed-in by a parent or guardian and wait for a staff member to bring them to their classroom. **Five (5) unexcused late arrivals equal 1 unexcused absence.**

ATTENDANCE POLICY

It should go without saying that in order for our students to be successful they must be present and prepared to learn every day. While we understand that circumstances arise that may cause a student to miss days of school, excessive unexcused absences will not be tolerated. **If a student is absent, without an excuse, for more than 10 days of the school year, the School may have a conversation with your family about retention in their current grade.**

If a student is not attending school for any communicable or infectious disease (RSV, flu, COVID-19, etc.) a parent or guardian **must** notify the School Nurse at nurse@bridgeprepcharter.org and health@bridgeprepcharter.org.

If a student will not be attending school for any other reason, families can report this information to the Main Office at: mainoffice@bridgeprepcharter.org as early as possible, but no later than 8:30 a.m. Early, written notice is both welcomed and appreciated. Calls should be made as far in advance as possible and can be left on the School's voicemail if necessary. If a student is not in class and the School has not been notified, their parent or guardian will be called at home and/or work. In phone calls, voice mails, and notes, please leave or list the student's name, your relationship to the student, the day(s) on which the student will be absent, and the reason for the absence.

A student is considered absent with excuse when the student's parent or guardian has contacted the School regarding student illness, family emergency, or religious observance. All other absences will be considered unexcused, including but not limited to: family vacation, participation at sports tournaments and recreational activities, attendance at entertainment events, or when the parent or guardian has not contacted the School with a satisfactory reason.

If notification of the reason for an absence has not been provided in advance, a student returning from an absence is required to bring, on the day of their return or immediately afterwards, a note or email from their parent or guardian explaining in detail the reason for the absence. If the student made a medical visit, a note from their doctor is required.

Since repeated absence means missing instructional time, and missing instructional time affects academic achievement, excessive absences will result in lower grades. Therefore, it is imperative that students are attending their scheduled academic program, either virtually or in-person on time, every day.

If a student is absent for the first 5 days of school, without prior notice being provided to the School, the School will reach out to the parent or guardian listed on the student's enrollment documentation to discuss the student's enrollment status. If a student is absent for 5 consecutive days or more during the school year, the School will contact the student's parent or guardian via phone and email to set up an in-person conference, to discuss the attendance concern.

In accordance with NYS Education Law, any enrolled student over the compulsory attendance age in their school district shall not be dropped from enrollment at Bridge Prep unless they have been absent twenty (20) consecutive school days and the School follows the procedures outlined in NYS Education Law Section 3201.1(a).

All questions regarding student attendance and attendance records should be directed to the Dean of Student Support.

In the Classroom

At Bridge Prep, we are committed to the academic achievement of all of our Bridge Builders as well as each of their social and emotional growth. To ensure that we are all successful, we expect that **all learners**:

- Try their best everyday;
- Treat others the way they want to be treated;
- Be accepting of others' differences, including thoughts and opinions; and
- Make mistakes and learn from them.

HOMEWORK

At Bridge Prep, our focus is making sure that we develop happy and healthy students and believe in maximizing the time during the school day for student learning and assessment. We also believe that supporting and involving families in their student's academic experience is critical to student growth. While we do not assign traditional homework to students on a daily basis, classroom teachers may provide families with updates on specific subjects to describe what is happening and expected of students in the classroom within each content area. Teachers may also provide conversation starters and questions for families to use with their students, so that there can be thoughtful and authentic conversations around what is happening at school. It is expected that families talk to the learners on a daily basis and help them reflect on their progress. Throughout the year, there may be various, take home activities for students, based on their growth and ability levels, to work on for a given content area for extra practice. If families would like to request extra practice work for their student in a specific subject, they may reach out directly to their classroom teachers to discuss options further.

ASSESSMENTS

Assessments and analysis of assessment data drives instruction. Our academic team ensures that the assessment and reporting systems in place focus on state standards, are meaningful and that the data collected from these assessments provide insight into students' growth and proficiency. Teachers are then able to provide clear and targeted differentiation and personalized learning goals for students based on this data.

Our students take the standards based, nationally normed NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Assessment three times a year in ELA and Math. This virtual assessment provides the precise learning levels of students in both areas, tracking areas of strength and areas of weakness. Our team works together to analyze individual students, as well school-wide data, and make changes to their groups and the curriculum as needed.

Additionally, our students will also be taking Acadience virtually. This assessment provides teachers with tools and texts to observe and evaluate specific reading behaviors, and then interpret and use that data to plan intentional reading instruction during the whole group and structured reading blocks. The assessment provides valuable information about reading accuracy, fluency, reading rate, and within, beyond, and about the text comprehension. Students are assessed in the beginning of the year as a baseline and then again during the third trimester.

Moreover, students are given a reading readiness assessment, created by our school team and Orton Gillingham consultants, that focuses on foundational reading skills that identify appropriate grouping and targeted skill support and remediation. Each trimester, students are re-assessed to determine growth and monitor progress. The assessments enable the formation of specific groups (classes) in which students move fluidly throughout each trimester.

Teachers also utilize classroom-based formative assessments to assess and track mastery of anchor standards in both ELA and Math. To start each school year, teachers assess mastery of anchor standards from the previous grade in the beginning of this year to see which standards need to be retaught prior to the commencement of grade specific content. Data will be aggregated and disaggregated in a timely fashion and adjustments in upcoming lesson planning will be made to address what the data shows.

GRADING POLICY AND REPORT CARDS

Report cards will reflect the student's progress toward mastery of grade level skills and measure student learning. Subjects will be broken down into learning targets that reflect a teachable concept or skill. Throughout each trimester, students

engage in activities aligned to the learning targets and teachers assess the student output toward mastery of the learning target. The scale, ranging from 1-4, reflects the students’ increase in skill. Each time a new concept or skill is introduced, it may be the case that the student will have minimal prior knowledge of the skill and will thus begin at 1 which reflects that the student cannot demonstrate the skill without assistance.

Throughout the year, students will learn more and their work and understanding will increase, which may result in the achievement of a 2, which reflects partial mastery or understanding. Our goal for all students is that by the end of the academic year, their work will achieve a 3, thus meeting the expectation of the learning targets. Once students meet the target, we work toward exceeding the target, which is reflected by a 4. Teachers will routinely communicate each student’s progress toward mastering the learning target with families in a variety of ways.

GRADING SCALE

Indicator	Description
4	The learner performs above the expectations of the learning target.
3	The learner meets the expectations of the learning target.
2	The learner is approaching the expectations of the learning target – demonstrates partial understanding or performs with assistance.
1	The learner is a beginner in regards to the learning target – cannot demonstrate mastery with assistance.

BEHAVIOR AND EXPECTATIONS

Bridge Prep seeks to develop reflective leaders who are curious, critical thinkers. Our goal is to build our community of leaders and foster a love of learning by creating a safe environment where all learners are inspired to flourish, grow, and find their voice. All students will be taught the following habits, aimed to empower them with the leadership and life skills needed for long-term academic and personal success:

Habit 1: **Be Proactive.** *You’re in charge of you.*

Habit 2: **Begin with the End in Mind.** *Make a plan and set goals.*

Habit 3: **Put First Things First.** *Get important tasks done first.*

Habit 4: **Think Win-Win.** *Everyone can be happy.*

Habit 5: **Seek First to Understand, Then to Be Understood.** *Actively listen to others first, then communicate ideas clearly.*

Habit 6: **Synergize.** *Teamwork makes the dream work.*

Habit 7: **Sharpen the Saw.** *Balance is best.*

All students are expected to listen and encouraged to positively contribute in the classroom in order that learning can occur. If students’ actions are not aligned to the behaviors and expectations of the school, it should be expected that there will be consequences as well as an opportunity for students to learn from their actions.

School Environment

CONNECT SATURDAYS

On Connect Saturdays, students and their families are invited to attend school for a two-part day, with the first part of the day focused on theme-based academic intervention or enrichment, and the second part of the day organized as immersive learning experiences or student presentations of their learning. The events may include international multicultural costume, cuisine and custom fairs, STEM or robotic exhibitions, community service civic projects, and a presentation of students’ work in art classes. No matter the event, families and community members will be invited as full participants. Connect Saturday dates can be found on the school calendar.

LEARNING EXTENSIONS (FIELD TRIPS)

A key element of our school design is a focus on outside learning experiences and meaningful learning connections. A permission slip that allows students to leave the building on field trips will be sent home with the student, which must be

signed and returned or students will not be permitted to leave the building. In the event that your student has a medical need, submit all medications and their corresponding documentation to the school nurse at the start of the school year. The School's Code of Conduct must be followed on all School-sponsored field trips and transportation.

FAMILY ASSOCIATION

The Bridge Prep Family Association (BPFA) is an opportunity to work with other family members to get involved with ways to support Bridge Prep's development as well as a great opportunity to voice your suggestions or concerns and to help other families solve problems. The Family Association holds monthly meetings and work on special projects and all parents and guardians are automatically members of the Family Association. Some ways to get involved with the Family Association are as follows:

- **Run for an elected position:** The school will announce when elections will take place a few weeks in advance. Elected positions include: President, Vice President, Treasurer, Corresponding Secretary and Recording Secretary.
 - Additionally, a seat on the School's Board of Trustees is held by the president of the BPFA, or his/her designee. This process is outlined in the BPFA's by-laws, a copy of which can be provided by the BPFA directly.
- **Attend a Family Association meeting:** Meetings are usually held on the third Wednesday of each month, after school in the evening. A schedule for specific meeting dates for the year can be provided by the Family Association and/or the Family Coordinator.
- **Volunteer to help with an event or project:** Attend a meeting to find out how you can help and get involved.

If you are interested in getting involved with the BPFA, you can reach out to them directly at: bpfacharter@gmail.com.

Communication

Regular and frequent communication across the Bridge Prep community - staff families, and the wider community - has played a key role in the development and success of our school in our inaugural year and is something we take pride in as a school. This section discusses communication and engagement with families specifically. Strategies and methods of communication and engagement with stakeholders (staff, students, families, health agencies) are included in sections throughout this document.

We are committed to ensure that our families feel supported and secure in knowing that we at Bridge Prep will always have foremost the interest of our students as a whole. At Bridge Prep, our Family Coordinator serves as the liaison between our families and the school level team to manage and support communication between the school and our families and community partners. Additionally, our team collaborates with families during the school year in a variety of ways including school wide celebrations, events, shout outs and celebrations. The School Leader convenes family focus groups, each year as part of an annual evaluation of the school, in collaboration with the Board of Trustees. These focus groups, along with the school's Parent Advisory Council, provide families with the ability to provide direct feedback to the school and serve as a thought partner to the Executive Leadership.

Communication with families will be through the contact information we have on file via phone and email. Please be sure to let the Main Office know should either change throughout the school year. With the launch of our new school wide messaging app that will provide robocalls and mass messaging, which families will be able to access on any smartphone or IOS device, the School will communicate all health, safety, and other important notifications, including bus departures, meeting and event notifications and reminders, and important notices or letters. Teachers will be able to create class groups to foster direct communication to families.

BUILDING CLOSURE DUE TO EMERGENCY OR WEATHER

In the event of an emergency or poor weather conditions such as heavy snow, Bridge Prep will communicate school **building** closing decisions regarding with families via:

- School wide messaging app
- Social Media
- School Website.

Please check your local television or radio stations for relevant information regarding school cancellation. If New York City public school buildings are closed for emergency or weather, so is Bridge Prep.

Health and Safety Policies and Procedures

There are a number of requirements that Bridge Prep will meet in order to ensure the safety and security of its students and staff. Cooperation on everyone's part will go a long way in guaranteeing that the business of the School— teaching and learning— can take place. If a student or staff member is feeling ill, they must stay home.

PROTOCOLS AND RESPONSIBILITY

Bridge Prep will remain compliant with NYS Education Law § 906, which states:

- “whenever...a student in the public schools shows symptoms of any communicable or infectious disease reportable under the public health law that imposes a significant risk of infection of others in the school, he or she shall be excluded from the school and sent home immediately, in a safe and proper conveyance.”
- “the school shall immediately notify a local public health agency of any disease reportable under the public health law.” and;
- “the school nurse, or other health professionals acting upon direction or referral of the DOH, or District Medical director, may make such evaluations of teachers and any other school employees, school buildings and premises as, in their discretion, they may deem necessary to protect the health and safety of the students and staff.

All student medical information will be kept private, in compliance with FERPA and Education Law 2-d. Additionally, according to the NYS DOH, schools are prohibited from keeping records of student, faculty, staff, and visitor health data (e.g., the specific temperature data of an individual), but are permitted to maintain records that confirm individuals were screened and the result of such screening (e.g., pass/fail,cleared/not cleared).

KEEP STUDENTS AT HOME POLICY / COMMUNICABLE ILLNESS

In order to protect the health of all children in the building, please keep your student at home if you notice that they begin to show signs of an illness or contagious disease, specifically COVID-19, RSV, influenza, etc. It is very important that you let the School know by emailing us at nurse@bridgeprepcharter.org and health@bridgeprepcharter.org, as soon as possible, if your student has a communicable illness or infection. Please follow the following guidelines:

- Students testing positive for COVID-19 and are displaying symptoms must quarantine until their symptoms have lessened and they have been fever free for at least 24 hours.
- Students with fever (100.4 F), vomiting, or diarrhea should stay home until the symptoms are gone or until a doctor says it is okay to return.
- Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye) is contagious, and students with symptoms of this condition should be kept at home.

MEDICALLY NECESSARY, VIRTUAL INSTRUCTION

Every year, there are some students with medical conditions that necessitate interim educational services outside of the school building (virtually). Based on guidance provided by the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH), students who have one of the following conditions would be approved for virtual instruction, at the request of the student's parent/guardian:

- Active Cancer
- Chronic Renal Diseases
- Sickle Cell
- Gastro/Crohn's Disease
- Thalassemia
- Leukemia
- Metabolic Disorders
- Heart Conditions
- Muscular Dystrophy
- Adrenal Disorder
- Cystic Fibrosis

- Liver Disease
- Tumor
- Congenital Lung Disease
- Congenital Heart Condition
- Lymphoma
- Cerebral Ataxia
- Seizures
- Stroke
- Multiple Sclerosis

Any family with a student who is immunocompromised due to a medical condition or treatment for a medical condition that wishes to have their student receive virtual instruction should the Director of Operations. Information will be provided to the parent/guardian upon receipt of the request.

MEDICAL REQUIREMENTS

Health Information Form: This form provides important information about a student's emergency contacts, health care providers, medications taken, existing health conditions/concerns and allergies. Most importantly, it gives the School permission to initiate emergency medical treatment in the event that a parent or guardian cannot be reached. We will ask for contact information for two individuals who can be reached if the parent or guardian is not available. Parents or guardians are expected to update this information annually and when contact information changes.

Notification of Health Conditions: At the beginning of each school year, it is the parent or guardian's responsibility to inform the School if there are medical conditions that require special procedures during the school day. Families can provide this information on the Health Information Form provided by the school. If special plans or accommodations are needed, the parent or guardian will be asked to participate in health plan meetings.

Authorization to Dispense Medication Form: If a student requires medication while in school, the School must have an *Authorization to Dispense Medication Form*, filled out by the student's physician, on file. No student is allowed to bring medication to the school without the School's full knowledge. All medication must be presented in its original container from the pharmacy. Additionally, a parent must deliver all medication and medication should NEVER be sent with the student. The nurse will administer medications prescribed by a licensed prescriber and only those medications which are necessary to maintain the student in school and which must be given during school hours will be administered.

The form must be updated annually. Also, if there are any changes to the medication (including to the dosage of the medication) a new form must be completed and submitted, including an updated physician signature. We advise families to request multiple copies of this form to bring with them to all regularly scheduled doctor's appointments, in the event medications need to change.

The *Authorization to Dispense Medication Form* requirement applies to all medication, including over the counter medication (e.g., Tylenol). If a student needs to take medication during the school day, the student must have the authorization signed by their physician and a parent or guardian on file, giving the School permission to administer the medication. The form requirement also applies to asthma inhalers. Students (other than those who have been authorized to self-medicate, as described below) should go to the Main Office first to receive a pass to the Nurse for administration of medication.

Students who may need inhalers or other asthma medication on an emergency basis may be permitted to carry the inhaler if the student understands the condition and the procedures and written permission has been granted by the child's health care provider and parent. Please notify the School for this approval if you believe that your child can self-administer the inhaler or other emergency medication. Students are prohibited from carrying any over the counter medications including but not limited to: Tylenol, Aleve, Advil or Benadryl.

Students should **never** carry or take medications outside of these procedures. Any student found in possession of over the counter or prescription drugs could face significant consequences.

MEDICAL RECORDS/SCHOOL HEALTH RECORDS

In accordance with the Public Health Law, all students must have an updated *Child & Adolescent Health Examination Form* completed within a year before their enrollment) on file with the school. Bridge Prep shall not permit students to attend for more than 14 days without being in compliance with Public Health Law.

IMMUNIZATIONS

Bridge Prep will comply with Section 2164 of the New York Public Health Law and all other applicable laws regarding immunizations for students. Prior to enrollment, parents or guardians are expected to provide documentation of all required immunizations. Students who have not been immunized in accordance with New York State immunization requirements may be excluded from school until they comply with mandated requirements.

A Medical Exemption for a valid contraindication to vaccination is the **only** exception to immunizations according to New York State Law. A medical exemption must be certified by a physician licensed to practice in the State of New York and must specify which immunizations are contraindicated and why. Regardless of whether or not a student has received a medical exemption to immunization from their previous School District, Bridge Prep requires the parent or guardian to submit a **new** exemption request for the upcoming school year.

MEDICAL PROCEDURES

The school nurse is available on a daily basis to provide students with a general health consultation, medicine administration, and treatment. The nurse will work with the Main Office to maintain correspondence with students' families and as well as to coordinate vision and hearing screenings with the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and, if necessary, other community partners.

SCHOOL-BASED PREVENTION

Bed Bugs: Parents or guardians are notified if bed bugs are found in classrooms, and bed bug prevention literature will be provided.

Head Lice: The policy on lice and nits for all NYC public schools is as follows:

- Students with active head lice will continue to be excluded until they are lice-free.
- Excluded students will be examined for lice when they return to school and re-checked 14 days later to confirm that they remain free of lice.
- Students will not be excluded from school if they have nits (lice eggs).

When lice are identified, the parent or guardian will be notified, instructed in treatment of head lice and asked to pick up their student as soon as possible. The following steps will be taken upon the student's return to school:

- Students will be re-examined by the nurse.
- Students with head lice will not be allowed to re-enter until they are lice free.
- Students that have been cleared of lice will be re-examined in 14 calendar days (or closest school day if 14th day falls on weekend or holiday) by the nurse.
- Students found to have head lice on re-examination will once again be excluded until they are lice free.
- No school-wide surveillance will be conducted for nits.

WELLNESS POLICY

Throughout the school year, Bridge Prep will provide students with multiple opportunities to learn about leading a healthy lifestyle and practice mindfulness. Students will have access to educational programming, including "mindful movement" and breathing exercises, as well as learning initiatives that focus on positive thinking, a growth mindset, and making mindful, healthy choices. Community partners are invited to participate in developing strategies and events to model, foster and teach students about a healthy lifestyle.

GUIDELINES FOR OUTDOOR PLAY

Children benefit from vigorous exercise and should be given the opportunity to play outside whenever possible. Play is an integral part of child development. At Bridge Prep, we understand the importance of unstructured play time - allowing children to be children. All students will be required to wear a jacket during the fall, winter, and early spring. Students will not go outside in inclement weather or if the temperature drops below 34 degrees.

BREAKFAST / LUNCH

Bridge Prep takes part in the NYC SchoolFood Program and all students at Bridge Prep will have the opportunity to receive a free breakfast and lunch each day provided by the New York City Department of Education's Food Service program. For more information, including menus, visit <http://www.schoolfoodnyc.org/menusandrecipes/menus.htm>.

All meals served to students will comply with the relevant Child Nutrition programs, including the School Breakfast Program and National School Lunch Program. Forms will be provided for all families to complete to remain in compliance with State and Federal regulations and mandates. This form must be filled out each year even if your family's income has not changed. Please note:

- Any student who does not bring lunch from home is required to take a tray during his/her lunch period.
- School meals are listed on a monthly calendar provided by the NYC Department of Education. For students participating in the school lunch plan, families can view the monthly calendar at www.schoolfoodnyc.org.

Any additional inquiries pertaining to meal eligibility and regulations should be addressed to:

Office of School of Food and Nutrition Services
44-36 Vernon Boulevard
Long Island City, NY 11101
718-720-6100

Breakfast will be served in student classrooms, while lunch will be served in a designated cafeteria space that provides the least disruption to the instructional day as well as the safest option for all students.

LUNCHES FROM HOME

In order for students to fully be present and commit on a daily basis to the rigorous academic schedule at Bridge Prep, it is important that students eat healthy, balanced meals. As such, families who decide to provide lunch from home must comply with the following guidelines. If your student is out of compliance with these requirements, inappropriate food items will be confiscated and returned at the end of day.

Foods with added sugar including candy or sweets of any kind are prohibited. Other prohibited foods and beverages for packed lunches include:

- Glass bottles;
- Soda of any kind (even diet); and
- Food that requires heat, hot water, or refrigerator.

Commercial food deliveries for students that are sent to the school will not be accepted.

FOOD ALLERGIES AND FOOD RESTRICTIONS

Bridge Prep takes allergies, food safety, and student health very seriously. We cannot guarantee a nut, milk or "allergen-free" environment, but we do have an "allergen aware" policy. Students with allergies become aware of what they can and cannot eat, and staff members are alert and careful about each student's allergies.

The school nurse works with the parent and the child's health care provider to create an allergy response plan for each child that needs one. If a child has severe allergies, we request that parents have health care providers complete the Medical Review for Severe Allergies form and complete an Allergy Response Plan.

In the case of a severe allergic reaction, the affected student is immediately given his/her prescribed medicine by trained school staff or a nurse, and school staff call 911 and contact the student's parent and health care provider. In addition, the school nurse trains school staff members to enact the student's allergy response plan in an emergency.

CPR, FIRST AID, AND AED TRAINING

All staff are trained in school health policies and procedures and protocols for health emergencies, First aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), and the use of automated external defibrillator (AED) equipment are shared with staff and members of the Building Response Team and Safety Team, who will maintain First Aid and CPR Certifications.

SCHOOL SAFETY

Bridge Prep is committed to ensuring that our school is a safe, secure, and orderly environment in which students can meet high academic standards, educators can teach toward those goals, and parents can be assured that their children are learning in a safe and positive school setting. A safe and supportive school depends upon the efforts of all members of the school community to treat one another with mutual respect.

To provide for the health, safety, and well being of students and employees and for the preservation of district resources and property, Bridge Prep has an established District Safety Plan in accordance with Commissioner's Regulations and law, which can be found on the school's website.

The District Safety Plan is created and developed based on the School Safety Plan which was created and established in collaboration with other schools on our campus. Providing an orderly plan for dealing with emergencies is an important component of the management of the schools on our campus and there are a range of emergencies. Through careful planning, the disastrous effects of an emergency can be minimized.

Bridge Prep's School Safety Plan, which is a separate document, includes details related to:

- General Building and Facilities Information;
- Assignment and Responsibilities of School Safety Agents;
- Emergency Assignments, Egresses and Relocation Sites;
- General Response Protocols;
- Procedures for mandated safety drills including: Safety and Evacuation, Shelter-In, Lockdowns, Fire Safety and Fire Drills, Hold Drills, Medical Emergencies, Shooting/Hostage Situations, and Bomb Threats;
- Safety and Evacuation Procedures for Special Needs Students/Staff; and
- Alarm Protocols.

All drills will be trauma-informed. Trauma-informed drills means avoiding tactics in training or drills that may introduce or activate prior trauma, such as use of props, actors, simulations, or other tactics intended to mimic a school shooting, incident of violence, or other emergency, or inclusion of developmentally or age-inappropriate contact; and to recognize that drills may inadvertently prompt a negative emotional or psychological response in staff or students because of previous exposure(s) to trauma.

As such, students and staff will be informed when a drill is being conducted (except for evacuation drills). Drills shall occur after annual training in emergency procedures have been provided to all students and staff. Drills will be completed on different dates, days of the week, and during different times of the school day. All families will receive notification via text message, email, and/or robocall at least a week before each drill.

Changes to any procedures around Safety Drills will be shared with all members of the Campus Safety Committee and with the Borough Safety Office. A hard copy of the Bridge Prep School Safety Plan is available in the School's Main Office. Families with any questions related to specific drills, can contact the Director of Operations.

TRANSPORTATION

Families have the option of dropping their student off/picking their student up, or requesting transportation from the New York City Department of Education's Office of Pupil Transportation (OPT). All student transportation is run by OPT and there are various bus companies that take our students to and from school. OPT determines student eligibility for busing

and MetroCards based on grade level and the distance between the student's residence and the school building. Information about bus eligibility can be found at: <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/school-life/transportation/bus-eligibility/>.

Please note that eligibility for any provided form of transportation, such as yellow school bus service, is determined by OPT and is **not** determined by Bridge Prep. Families should directly reach out to OPT with questions about their student's route and stop information for pickup and drop off.

Please email the School's Transportation Coordinator at mschneider@bridgeprepcharter.org, if you would like to change your student's type of transportation service or have an issue with their currently assigned stop. Please note that per OPT, any approved stop changes will take approximately two weeks to be implemented so please plan accordingly for that transition.

OPT also provides specialized transportation to students whose Individual Education Programs (IEPs) recommend this service or to other students with disabilities who cannot take public transportation. Specialized transportation refers to school buses that are staffed by both a school bus driver and an attendant. Instead of being picked up at a centralized stop, the student is picked up at the closest, safest stop to their residence. The school based support team or CSE IEP team at the Committee on Special Education (CSE) will address transportation needs as part of the Initial and Annual Review process of your student's IEP. Please discuss any transportation-related concerns with the CSE, who will provide you with any necessary paperwork to complete as part of the review process.

In the event the school bus is late, the parent or guardian should immediately contact the bus company directly to ask for information on the late bus.

A majority of Bridge Prep students take the bus to and from school each day. While we do not staff or control the bus that your child rides to and from school, we want to ensure all students are safe and are reminded that school rules and behavior extend while on the bus as we take these issues very seriously. It is critically important that students and families understand the rules, expectations, and procedures that come with riding the school bus.

Student Conduct Aboard Bus

All students riding the school bus are expected to follow safety rules whenever they are on the school bus. The driver is responsible for the safe operation of the vehicle, as well as making sure that students are following safety rules. Each year, Bridge Prep conducts mandated bus safety drills, where students and drivers review bus safety rules.

Bridge Prep takes negative behavior that impacts student safety very seriously and the school Code of Conduct extends to the school bus. As such, all behaviors and consequences that exist in school, also extend to the bus. Please see the specific list of behaviors below that, if violated while riding the school bus, will be subject to consequences from the school's Code of Conduct.

Riding the Bus

- Moving and being out of your seat while the bus is in motion. Bridge Prep will be assigning each student a seat on their bus, which will be shared with them and bus drivers during our bus safety drill.
- Climbing on or over the seats or playing beneath them.
- Use of inappropriate language. Inappropriate language includes curse words or negative language directed towards another student or the bus driver.
- Engaging in any physical fighting or provocations.
 - This means having one student putting their hands on another student or in their personal space.
 - Students who "play fight" with one another are considered to be violating this rule.
 - Using a backpack or jacket to hit another student.
- Using a cell phone to record or video another student or visit inappropriate websites/platforms on the bus.
- Violating another student's personal space, touching another student's personal items.
- Shouting or yelling on the bus.
- Opening or closing windows unless instructed to do so by the driver.

- Extending hands or objects out of the bus windows; having arms and legs in the aisle where they could trip or hurt someone.

As a reminder, please see the list of rules below for boarding and leaving the school bus:

- Stay as far from the edge of the road as possible. Move away from the bus quickly. Stay clear of the rear wheels. Never reach back through a window.
- Let the bus come to a full stop before approaching the door of the bus; Stay seated until the bus comes to a full stop. The driver will tell you when to go.
- Use the handrail to help keep your balance as you go up and down the steps, one at a time.
- Report anything damaged on the bus (such as seatbelts) to the driver as you leave.

Behavioral Incidents on the Bus: Process and Protocols

Should a behavioral incident occur on a school bus, protocols indicate that it is the responsibility of the bus driver and bus company to file a report of the incident, which will be provided to the school so we can issue consequences and investigate the scenario further. If the school receives a report(s) of misconduct, especially if that misconduct includes actions that result in safety concerns for one or more students, the school will investigate the report and will proceed with consequences accordingly.

Understanding that often the bus company does not provide official reports to the school, Bridge Prep will investigate a scenario reported by a student or parent, in an attempt to obtain clarity on the reported incident and determine appropriate next steps. This means members of our staff speaking with individual/groups of students to obtain clarity, as well as outreach to the specific bus driver.

Once the school receives a report of your child breaking any of the above bus rules, or after a school-based investigation related to your student breaking any of the bus rules, you will be notified and issued a warning letter of suspension. If the inappropriate behavior persists after a warning by the school, students will be subject to one of the following consequences indicated in our school handbook:

- Parent one-on-one meeting;
- Suspension from school;
- Expulsion from school.

Parents with concerns related to bus safety, including bus stop locations, the number of students on the bus, or safety issues related to the specific bus drive should contact both OPT and their child’s specific bus company directly with the specific bus route number as OPT controls and manages these buses. The school is not responsible for any items lost or damaged on the school bus and families with issues related to this topic should contact the bus company and OPT directly.

Discipline Policies and Code of Conduct

Bridge Preparatory Charter School (“Bridge Prep”, “the school”) is committed to providing a safe, orderly and nurturing environment in which students can achieve academic excellence and flourish socially and emotionally. Having a firm, clear and consistently applied discipline policy allows students and teachers to maximize class time to promote student learning. Aligned to our overall school mission, Bridge Prep commits to supporting the individual learning process for every student and our academic program and staff training and support plan is constantly refined to ensure that each student’s needs are front and center. As we support the development of our students into self-advocates, we will continue to advocate for each student’s best interests at all times.

Bridge Prep strives to create a positive, safe, supportive learning environment and it is our goal to avoid disruptions to the educational experience of any of our students. Our team will work to help students understand how their actions can lead to positive or negative consequences.

We understand that many students come to Bridge Prep because of the academic difficulties they are experiencing in school and that for most students, their past school experience was not positive. This means that there may be times where

students exhibit behaviors, including those that come as a result of academic frustration, that have a negative impact on the community.

When this occurs, our team will use a range of student support interventions to help the student understand and learn to manage their behavior. These interventions, listed below, are in place to **Prevent** the behavior from continuing or happening again; **Teach** the student appropriate replacement behaviors or how the behavior violated the community expectations; and **Reinforce** when students are exhibiting positive behaviors. In the event that student behavior requires disciplinary action, consequences will be logical and fitting of the student's infraction. Infractions are grouped based on the severity of the infraction and each level of infraction, in addition to the student support interventions, has a range of possible disciplinary responses that may be imposed by the School.

We strive to create positive working partnerships with each student and their family and know that we must work in partnership with families to help best meet the needs of every student. This means keeping families informed about their student's learning progress, school activities, classroom events and anything that impacts classroom learning. Regardless of the level of infraction, teachers or staff members will complete outreach to the parent or guardian of a student via email, phone call or Remind Message to discuss any incident or behavior to make them informed as well as share with them the student support intervention(s) and/or disciplinary responses being put in place. Students who miss class time will be given the opportunity to make up any work that is missed and will return to class as soon as possible.

FREQUENTLY USED STUDENT SUPPORT INTERVENTIONS

Prevent

- Seat Change
- Break Pass
- Redirection
- Outreach with parent(s)/guardian(s)
- Referral to the school's Student Support Team
- Referral to school provided Crisis Counseling
- Referral to external counseling services

Teach

- Peer Mediation
- Incentivized Behavior Tracker with Replacement Behavior
- Verbal Reminder/Warning
- Student/Teacher Conference
- School/Family Conference
- Individual Student Behavior Plan
- Student Visit to Classroom Calming Corner

Reinforce

- Positive Parent/Guardian Outreach
- Proactive Check-ins with Positive Reinforcement
- Behavior Tracker
- Class Job/Leadership Opportunity

DISCIPLINARY RESPONSES

Students who are found to have violated the school's community behavioral expectations and/or are disrupting the academic experience of other students may be subject to the following disciplinary measures, either alone or in combination with another:

- **Loss of Privileges:** A student may lose privileges based on their actions. This may include attending a field trip, party, or school wide event. In this case, parents/guardians will be notified by phone immediately.
- **Confiscation:** Teachers or other staff members may confiscate(take) items that are deemed inappropriate or distracting in the school setting, which will be returned at the end of the school day.

- **Letter Home (Written Warning)**
- **Temporary Exclusion from District-Provided Transportation:** A student may be temporarily excluded from district-provided transportation based upon their behavior on the bus. Prior to excluding a student from the bus, a conference will be arranged with the student's parent/guardian and other appropriate personnel to help resolve the student's behavioral problems on the bus and to arrange other means, if necessary, of getting the student to school. Exclusion from the bus does not mean suspension from school and shall not last for longer than five (5) consecutive days.
- **Detention:** A detention may be determined to be the logical consequence for taking learning time away from others by engaging in disruptive or distracting behaviors. Detentions last for 45 minutes and occur on a daily basis during lunch & recess or after school. Detention is a time for reflection on rule violations. In the case of any detention, the incident is discussed first with the parents/guardians by phone before the detention is served.
- **Short-term In-School or Out-of-School Suspension:** Procedures for short-term suspensions are set forth below.
- **Long-term Out-of-School Suspension:** Procedures for long-term out-of-school suspension are set forth below.
- **Expulsion:** Procedures for expulsion are set forth below.

As part of the student's return from a suspension, the school will hold a post-suspension conference to discuss additional strategies to support the student and the family moving forward and will encourage the student's parent/guardian to attend.

CODE OF CONDUCT

At Bridge Prep, we want to ensure that there is a fair and consistent Code of Conduct so that students know what is expected of them at all times. We have developed a school-wide discipline system that recognizes students for positive behavior, while ensuring that appropriate disciplinary action is taken when students do not adhere to the Code of Conduct.

Student disciplinary offenses are those actions or inactions that violate the School's Code of Conduct or interfere with the delivery of educational services, jeopardize the health, safety, and well-being of any member of the school community, or threaten the integrity and stability of the school itself.

A disciplinary offense may occur while the student is on school grounds, in the school building, (whether in-person or virtually), riding on school-provided or district-provided transportation or participating in a school-sponsored activity (whether in-person or virtually).

School-related disciplinary offenses may also include misconduct outside the school, including texting, emailing and/or activity on social media or at a school-sponsored activity off school grounds (whether in-person or virtually), when such behavior can be demonstrated to negatively affect the school learning environment or to endanger the School community.

School administration will use their professional judgment in determining which disciplinary action(s) will be most effective in dealing with the student's misconduct, taking into account the following factors:

- The student's age and maturity level;
- The nature and seriousness of the behavior and the circumstances/context in which the behavior occurred;
- The student's previous disciplinary record;
- The effectiveness of other forms of discipline;
- Information from parents/guardians, teachers and/or others, as appropriate;
- The student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP), Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP), and/or 504 Plan, if applicable;
- The student's attitude; and
- Other relevant factors.

When a student does not meet behavioral expectations and a violation of the School's Code of Conduct has occurred, clear and consistent disciplinary action will ensue, and other consequences as further described below.

The following chart of infractions is not exhaustive but provides examples of violations of the Code of Conduct that may result in disciplinary or other consequences. The chart may be modified from time to time or supplemented by Bridge Prep upon advance notice to students and families.

Behavioral infractions are categorized starting at Level 1 and increase in severity to Level 5. Each infraction will be responded to using appropriate Student Support Interventions and disciplinary measures detailed in the tables below. When required, the school will contact law enforcement authorities.

Level 1 Infractions	
Minor disrespectful behavior (e.g., eye rolling, unfriendly tone of voice)	Communicating with a voice volume that is inappropriate for the setting
Chewing gum	Bringing in possessions from home that are disruptive to the educational process (e.g., toys, gaming cards)
Possible Student Support Interventions	
Redirection	Verbal Reminder
Student/Teacher Conference	Peer Mediation
Outreach with Parent(s)/Guardian(s)	Seat Change
Student Visit to Classroom Calming Corner	Incentivized Behavior Tracker
Possible Disciplinary Responses/Consequences	
Confiscation	Letter Home (Written Warning)

Level 2 Infractions	
Repeated Level 1 infractions	Being disruptive to the educational process (e.g. making excessive noise, walking around the classroom, refusing to do partner or group work)
Littering on school grounds	Verbally dishonoring peers, staff, family member, and other community members (e.g. name-calling, mocking, teasing)
Excluding classmates from games and activities	Being in an unexpected location of the school building or campus without permission
Leaving the classroom, lunchroom, or recess area without permission	Displaying and using personal electronics equipment from home without permission (e.g. cell phones, personal gaming systems, computers)
Possible Student Support Interventions	
Outreach with parent(s)/guardian(s)	Student/Teacher Conference
School/Family Conference	Behavior Tracker
Peer Mediation	Referral to the Student Support Team

Individual Student Behavior Plan	Referral to School-Provided Crisis Counseling
Student Visit to Classroom Calming Corner	Incentivized Behavior Tracker
Possible Disciplinary Responses/Consequences	
Confiscation	Letter Home (Written Warning)

Level 3 Infractions	
Using profane, obscene, or vulgar language, gestures, or behavior	Engaging in scholastic dishonesty, including plagiarism or cheating
Shoving, pushing, or engaging in minor physical confrontational behavior with other students or staff members	Engaging in vandalism or intentional damage to school property
Being in an off-limits location of the school/building without permission	Leaving the school premises without permission of a supervising school personnel
Engaging in intimidating or bullying behavior, including cyber bullying	Throwing objects or spitting at another person
Repeated Level 2 infractions	
Possible Student Support Interventions	
Outreach with Parent(s)/Guardian(s)	Peer Mediation
School/Family Conference	Behavior Tracker
Referral to the Student Support Team	Referral to School-Provided Crisis Counseling
Individual Student Behavior Plan	Referral to External Counseling Services
Possible Disciplinary Responses	
Letter Home (Written Warning)	Confiscation
Detention	Loss of Privileges
Short-Term In-School or Out-of-School Suspension	Temporary Exclusion from District-Provided Transportation

Level 4 Infractions	
Repeated Level 3 infractions	Engaging in physically aggressive behavior which creates a substantial risk of or results in injury to others
Engaging in sexual activity or inappropriate touching	Engaging in reckless behavior that imposes a risk of serious injury to self or others

Harassment (verbal or physical behavior creating a hostile, intimidating or offensive environment; includes Sexual Harassment)	Taking or attempting to take property of the school or another person without authorization
Possession or use of tobacco (cigarettes, chewing tobacco), electronic cigarettes, or related paraphernalia (pipes, vaping devices)	Possession or use of a weapon or dangerous object
Possession or use of alcohol	Possession or use of drugs or illegal substance or drug paraphernalia
Starting a fire	Falsely activating a fire alarm or other disaster alarm
Possible Student Support Interventions	
Outreach with Parent(s)/Guardian(s)	Peer Mediation
Referral to School-Provided Crisis Counseling	Referral to the Student Support Team
Individual Student Behavior Plan	Referral to External Counseling Services
Possible Disciplinary Responses	
Detention	Confiscation
Letter Home (Written Warning)	Loss of Privileges
Short-Term In-School or Out-of-School Suspension	Temporary Exclusion from District-Provided Transportation
Long-term Out-of-School Suspension	

Level 5 Infractions	
Repeated Level 4 infractions	Making a threat
Engaging in physical aggression, including sexual aggression (compelling or forcing another to engage in sexual activity)	Causing a serious injury by engaging in reckless behavior
Inflicting or attempting to inflict serious injury upon students or others	Selling or distributing drugs or alcohol
Engaging in threatening, dangerous, or violent behavior that is gang-related	Using a weapon or firearm to threaten or to attempt to inflict injury upon school staff or other students
Possession or use of a firearm	Setting off a false alarm
Possible Student Support Interventions	
Outreach with Parent(s)/Guardian(s)	School/Family Conference
Referral to School-Provided Crisis Counseling	Referral to External Counseling Services

Possible Disciplinary Responses	
Short-Term In-School or Out-of-School Suspension	Long-term Out-of-School Suspension
Expulsion	

GUN FREE SCHOOLS ACT POLICY

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 Executive Director 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).

Any such expulsion must comply with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and its implementing regulations, for a student with or presumed to have disabilities.

“Firearm” as used in this law is defined by 18 USC § 921(a) and includes firearms and explosives.

The Executive Director shall refer to the criminal justice or juvenile delinquency system any student who brings a firearm or weapon to the school. “Weapon” as used in this context shall mean any device, instrument, material, or substance that is used for or is readily capable of causing death or serious bodily injury, except that such term does not include a pocket knife with a blade of less than two and half inches in length.

PROCEDURES AND DUE PROCESS FOR SHORT TERM SUSPENSION

A short-term suspension refers to the removal of a student from the Bridge Prep school community for disciplinary reasons for a period of up to ten (10) days. This includes in-school and out-of-school suspension.

The Executive Director may impose a short-term suspension and shall follow due process procedures consistent with applicable federal case law. Before imposing a short-term suspension, the Executive Director shall notify the student orally of the charges against them. If the student denies the misconduct, the Executive Director must provide an explanation of the evidence against them. The student shall be provided an opportunity to deny or explain the charges against them that led to the suspension.

The Executive Director shall immediately notify the student’s parent or guardian in writing that the student may be suspended from school. The written notice shall be provided by personal delivery or express mail delivery within 24 hours of the decision to impose suspension at the last known address(es) of the student’s parent or guardian. Notification also shall be provided by telephone if the school has been provided with a telephone number(s) for the purpose of contacting the parent(s) or guardian(s).

Such notice shall provide a description of the incident(s) for which suspension is proposed and shall inform the parents or guardian of their right to request an immediate informal conference with the Executive Director. Both the notice and informal conference shall be in the dominant language or mode of communication used by the parent or guardian. At the conference, the parents or guardian of the student and the student shall have the opportunity to present the student’s version of the incident and to ask questions of complaining witnesses under such procedures as the Executive Director may establish. Such notice and opportunity for an informal conference shall take place before the student is suspended unless the student’s presence in 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.

An appeal of the Executive Director’s decision to impose a short-term suspension may be made to the Bridge Prep Board of Trustees, which will make its decision based solely upon the record before it. All appeals to the Board must be in writing and submitted to the Board by email to board@bridgeprepcharter.org or by letter sent to the School. The Board of

Trustees will issue a written decision no later than thirty (30) days after receipt of the appeal. Final decisions of the Board may be appealed to the School's authorizer:

New York State Education Department
Charter School Office
89 Washington Avenue, Room 5N Mezzanine
Albany, NY 12234
(518) 474-1762

A long-term suspension refers to the removal of a student from the Bridge Prep school community for disciplinary reasons for a period of more than ten (10) days. Expulsion refers to the permanent removal of a student from school for disciplinary reasons. This is the final level of correction.

Upon determining that a student's action warrants a possible long-term suspension or expulsion, the following procedure, consistent with applicable federal case-law, shall be followed:

- The student shall immediately be removed from the class or school, as needed.
- The Executive Director shall verbally inform the student of the charges and the evidence for those charges; where applicable, the student will have the opportunity to explain their side of the events.
- The Executive Director shall immediately notify the student's parent or guardian in person or on the phone.
- The Executive Director shall provide written notice that the school is going to commence a disciplinary hearing to the student and their parent(s) or guardian(s) by personal delivery or express mail delivery as soon as possible at the last known address of the parents/guardians. Such notice shall provide a description of the incident or incidents that resulted in the suspension and shall state that a formal hearing will be held on the matter that may result in a long-term suspension or expulsion. The notification provided shall be in the dominant language used by the parents or guardians if it is known to be other than English. The notice will state that at the formal hearing, the student shall have the right to be represented by counsel, present and question witnesses, and present evidence.
- The School will set a date, time and place for the hearing, which shall be set forth in the written notice described above.
- An audio transcript of the formal hearing will be created and made available to all parties upon request.

The Executive Director, or his/her designee, shall serve as hearing officer and preside over the hearing. When the Executive Director does not serve as hearing officer, the designated hearing officer shall provide a report to the Executive Director which shall be advisory only and the Executive Director may accept or reject all or part of it. A written decision will be issued within five school days after the formal hearing to the student and his/her parent(s) or guardian(s).

An appeal from the written decision may be made to Bridge Prep's Board of Trustees ("the Board"), which will make its decision based solely upon the record before it. All appeals to the Board must be in writing and submitted to the Board by email to board@bridgeprepcharter.org or by letter sent to the School. The Board of Trustees will issue a written decision no later than thirty (30) days after receipt of the appeal. Final decisions of the Board of Trustees may be appealed to the School's authorizer:

New York State Education Department
Charter School Office
89 Washington Avenue, Room 5N Mezzanine
Albany, NY 12234
(518) 474-1762

PROVISION OF INSTRUCTION DURING REMOVAL

Bridge Prep will ensure that alternative educational services are provided to a student who has been suspended or removed to help that student progress in the general curriculum of Bridge Prep. Alternative instruction for suspended students will be of sufficient duration to enable a student to cover all class material, take all tests and quizzes, keep pace with other students, and progress to the next grade level. All suspended students are entitled to receive alternative instruction

commencing within 24 hours of the suspension or expulsion. Alternative instruction dates, times and forms will be listed on the student's suspension letter. All students will be provided with a minimum of two hours per day of alternative instruction.

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 or until the end of the school year, whichever comes first.

Instruction will take place either in-school or virtually. One or more of the following individuals will provide instruction: teacher, teacher aide, or a tutor hired for this purpose. Please note that whoever administers this instruction will meet all certification requirements as stipulated in Section 2854(3)(a-1) of the New York State Education Law.

DISCIPLINE OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

In addition to the disciplinary procedures applicable to all students, the following procedures are applicable 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 300.534—that a disability exists shall also be disciplined in accordance with these provisions. Bridge Prep shall comply with Sections 300.530-300.536 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.

Bridge Prep 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 appropriate Committee on Special Education (CSE) for any consideration of changes.

A student identified as having a disability 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 parental notification and involvement.

Bridge Prep will ensure that the Director of Specialized Instruction along with the student's teacher will attend all meetings regarding their students initiated by the CSE of the student's district of residence. These meetings could be relating to the development and implementation of behavioral intervention plans, initial referrals, change in service, annual reviews, or Manifestation Determination Reviews (MDRs), among other things.

PROVISION OF SERVICES DURING REMOVAL

Bridge Prep will place students in an interim alternative educational setting as appropriate and mandated by 34 C.F.R. §§ 300.530 and 300.531.

Any student removed for a period of fewer than 10 cumulative days during the school year will receive all classroom assignments and a schedule to complete such assignments during the time of their 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 to assist the student, so that the student is given full opportunity to complete assignments and master the curriculum, including additional instructions, virtual instruction and/or home visits and one-on-one tutoring.

During any subsequent removal that, combined with previous removals, equals 10 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 student to progress appropriately in the general curriculum and in achieving the goals of their IEP. In these cases, the Dean of Specialized Instruction, in consultation with the Executive Director and the student's special education teacher, shall make the service determination.

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 progress appropriately in the general curriculum and in achieving the goals of their IEP. The CSE of the student's district of residence will make the service determination.

During any removal for drug, weapon, controlled substance and/or serious bodily injury offenses pursuant to 34 CFR §300.530(g), services will be provided to the extent necessary to enable the student to progress appropriately in the general curriculum and in achieving the goals of their IEP. These service determinations will be made by the CSE of the student's district of residence.

ADDITIONAL DUE PROCESS (MDR)

If discipline that would constitute a change in placement is contemplated for any student with a disability, the following steps shall be taken:

- No later than the date on which the decision to take such action is made, the parent(s) or guardian 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
- 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 student's disability and the behavior that is the subject of the disciplinary action.

If, upon review, it is determined that the student's behavior was a manifestation of their disability, the IEP Team must conduct a functional behavioral assessment (FBA) (unless an FBA was conducted before the behavior that resulted in the change of placement occurred) and implement a BIP for the student, or review the existing BIP and modify it as necessary, and return the student to school unless the parent and the School agree to a change of placement as part of a modification of the student's BIP.

If, upon review, it is determined that the student's behavior was not a manifestation of their disability, then the student may be disciplined in the same manner as a student without a disability, except as provided in 34 CFR §300.530(d), which relates to the provision of services to students with disabilities during periods of removal.

A parent or guardian may request a hearing to challenge the manifestation determination. Except as provided below, the student will remain in their current educational placement pending the determination of the hearing.

If a parent or guardian requests a hearing or an appeal to challenge the interim alternative educational setting or the manifestation determination, the student 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 resulting from a disciplinary change in placement that would exceed ten consecutive school days, including a disciplinary change in placement relating to drugs, weapons, controlled substance and/or serious bodily injury offenses, whichever occurs first, unless the parent and the School agree otherwise.

STUDENTS WITH A 504 PLAN AND "DEEMED TO KNOW" STUDENTS

With regard to disciplinary actions, including suspension or expulsion, the Section 504 rights of charter school students with disabilities are the same as other students with disabilities.

When addressing discipline for students with disabilities, including students with 504 plans or those who are “presumed to have a disability,” Bridge Prep will comply with applicable legal requirements governing the discipline of a student for misconduct.

COMPLIANCE WITH THE CHILD FIND REQUIREMENTS OF IDEA

Bridge Prep will comply with the federal Child Find requirements (34 CFR §300.111), which require schools to have in place a process for identifying, locating and evaluating students with disabilities. Students enrolling for the first time in a New York public school will be screened by a team of teachers (including both regular and special education teachers) to identify any possible indication that the child may need a specialized or Individualized Education Program, or referral to the CSE of the student’s district of residence. Other students will be brought to the attention of the team if they are demonstrating any problems within the regular classroom environment. Strategies will then be implemented to address any identified special needs of the student. Should the problems persist, and a disability is suspected, the student will be referred to the CSE of the student’s district of residence for an evaluation.

SEARCH AND SEIZURE

For the safety of students and everyone in the school community, school property that is assigned to students, including lockers and desks, remain the property of the school. Students, therefore, have no expectation of privacy in these areas. School Leadership will make an individual search of a student’s bag, backpack, desk, lockers and person only when there is reasonable suspicion to believe that a student is in the possession of an item which is prohibited on school property or which may be used to disrupt or interfere with the educational process. Searches will be conducted under the authorization of the Executive Director or his/her designee. Items which are prohibited on school property, or which may be used to disrupt or interfere with the educational process, may be removed from students’ desks, bag, backpack, lockers and person by School Leadership.

NON-DISCRIMINATION

Bridge Prep welcomes all students equally. All students will be treated as individuals and different treatment based on race, color, national origin, disability status, sex, sexual orientation, religion or any other characteristic protected by local, state, or federal law will not be tolerated. Anyone who feels that he or she has been treated differently on any such basis should speak with a Social Worker, who will apprise the Executive Director of all reports. Anyone who raises any concerns of discrimination on any basis will be free from retaliation for raising such a concern.

POLICY DEFINITIONS

“*School property*” means in or within any building, structure, athletic playing field, playground, parking lot, or land contained within the real property boundary line of a public elementary or secondary school; or in or on a school bus, as defined in section 142 of the vehicle and traffic law.

“*School function*” means a school-sponsored extracurricular event or activity.

“*Harassment*” and “*Bullying*” shall mean the creation of a hostile environment by conduct or by threats, intimidation or abuse, including cyberbullying, that (a) has or would have the effect of unreasonably and substantially interfering with a student’s educational performance, opportunities or benefits, or mental, emotional or physical well-being; or (b) reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause a student to fear for his or her physical safety; or (c) reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause physical injury or emotional harm to a student; or (d) occurs off school property and creates or would foreseeably create a risk of substantial disruption within the school environment, where it is foreseeable that the conduct, threats, intimidation or abuse might reach school property. Acts of harassment and bullying shall include, but not be limited to those acts based on a person’s actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender or sex. For the purposes of this definition the term “threats, intimidation or abuse” shall include verbal and non-verbal actions.

“*Cyberbullying*” shall mean harassment or bullying as defined above, where such harassment or bullying occurs through any form of electronic communication.

DIGNITY FOR ALL STUDENTS ACT (DASA) POLICY

Bridge Prep promotes a nurturing school culture that has respect for diversity among students and between students and staff. Bridge Prep is committed to providing a supportive and safe learning environment in which all students are treated with respect and dignity so they can grow and thrive academically and socially. The ability of students to learn and our ability to educate our students are compromised when members of our school community engage in discrimination, harassment, bullying, or intimidating behavior towards others. These behaviors affect not only those who are its targets, but also those individuals who participate in and witness such acts.

In accordance with New York State's "Dignity for All Students Act" ("DASA"), Bridge Prep will promptly address incidents of harassment and/or discrimination of or by any student enrolled at the School. This includes bullying, taunting, or intimidation in all their myriad forms.

Students' Rights

No student shall be subjected to harassment or bullying, including cyberbullying, by employees or students on school property or at a school function. Additionally, no student shall be subjected to discrimination based on the student's actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender, or sex, by school employees or students on school property or at a school function.

Bridge Prep's Discipline Policy and Code of Conduct prohibits harassment and bullying, and students who engage in such behavior will be disciplined as set forth in the Code of Conduct. Further, the School reserves the right to discipline students, consistent with our Code of Conduct, who engage in harassment or bullying of students off school property under circumstances where such off-campus conduct:

1. affects the educative process;
2. endangers the health and safety of Bridge Prep students within the educational system; or
3. is reasonably believed to pose a danger to the health and safety of school students within the educational system.

This includes written and/or verbal harassment which materially and substantially disrupts the work and discipline of the school and/or which school officials reasonably forecast as being likely to materially and substantially disrupt the work and discipline of the school.

Dignity Act Coordinator (DAC)

Bridge Prep has designated the School Social Worker to serve as the Dignity Act Coordinator (DAC). The DAC is trained to handle human relations in the areas of race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender and sex.

Intervention

Intervention by adults and bystanders is an important step in preventing escalation and resolving issues at the earliest stages. The purpose of intervention, which may involve remediation according to the School's

The name and contact information for the DAC is posted on the school's website and is as follows.

Tiffani Policastro
Dean of Student Support
tpolicastro@bridgeprepcharter.org
718-274-3437

The DAC will be accessible to students and other employees for consultation and advice.

Prevention

In the school setting, we are provided the opportunity to develop our students into caring, smart well-rounded young people, and our Social Emotional Learning programming and school culture is rooted in respect for others. Students are

provided with a weekly class period for Social Emotional Learning, led by one of our Social Workers, in addition to various other forms of social emotional programming, such as individual crisis counseling and peer groups which exist to not only decrease incidents of bullying, but to help our students learn to develop supportive relationships with one another. Staff are provided with targeted support to identify the warning signs of bullying, as well as information related to their responsibility of being active participants in the prevention of bullying before overt acts occur.

In order to assure the success and fidelity of our Social Emotional programming, the School's DAC works with the entire staff to coordinate the dissemination of information on anti-bullying, implement strategies to prevent bullying, and enforce this policy. The DAC meets directly with School Leadership to provide updates and to share concerns or request needed support.

Intervention

Intervention by adults and bystanders is an important step in preventing escalation and resolving issues at the earliest stages. The purpose of intervention, which may involve remediation according to the School's Code of Conduct, is to correct the problem behavior, prevent another occurrence of the behavior and protect and prioritize the safety of the target.

Reporting and Investigation

All Bridge Prep staff members are responsible for reporting harassment, bullying or discrimination of which they have been made aware to their immediate supervisor. Any student who believes that s/he is being subjected to harassment, bullying, or discrimination, as well as any other person who has knowledge of or witnesses any possible occurrence of harassment, bullying or discrimination, shall report the harassment, bullying or discrimination to any staff member, the DAC, or to the Executive Director. A staff member who witnesses harassment, bullying or discrimination, or who receives an oral or written report of harassment, bullying or discrimination, shall promptly orally notify the Executive Director not later than one school day after witnessing, or receiving a report of, such acts and shall file a written report with the Executive Director not later than two school days after making such oral report.

The Executive Director shall promptly lead or supervise a thorough investigation of all reports of harassment, bullying or discrimination, and ensure the investigation is completed in a timely manner, and shall take appropriate action, including as necessary, referral to the next level of supervisory authority (e.g., the Board of Trustees) and/or other official designated by the Board to investigate allegations of harassment, bullying or discrimination. When an investigation reveals any verified harassment, bullying or discrimination, the School will take prompt actions that are reasonably calculated to end the harassment, bullying or discrimination, eliminate any hostile environment, create a more positive school culture and climate, and prevent recurrence of the behavior. Any such actions shall be consistent with Bridge Prep's Code of Conduct, which helps support our mission and our goal of ensuring a safe, supportive learning environment for all students that is free from discrimination and harassment. It is our goal that our students come to school every day ready to learn and participate as active members of our school community, respectful of the needs of their peers.

Follow up inquiries and/or appropriate monitoring of the alleged harasser and victim shall be made to ensure that the harassment, bullying or discrimination has not resumed and that those involved in the investigation of allegations of harassment, bullying or discrimination have not suffered retaliation.

The Executive Director shall provide a report on data and trends related to harassment, bullying and discrimination to the Board of Trustees at least once during each school year. Material incidents of harassment, bullying and/or discrimination on school grounds or at a school function will be reported to the State Education Department as required by law.

The Executive Director shall promptly notify law enforcement authorities when the Executive Director believes that any harassment/bullying or discrimination constitutes criminal conduct.

No Retaliation

Bridge Prep prohibits any retaliatory behavior directed against complainants, victims, witnesses, and/or any other individuals who report or participate in the investigation of allegations of harassment, bullying or discrimination. All

complainants and those who participate in the investigation of a complaint in conformity with state law and School policies, who have acted reasonably and in good faith, have the right to be free from retaliation of any kind.

Additional School Policies

NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY

Bridge Prep does not discriminate in admission to, access to, treatment in, or employment in its services, programs and activities, on the basis of race, color, or national origin, in accordance with the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI); on the basis of sex, in accordance with the Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; on the basis of disability, in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA); or on the basis of age, in accordance with the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1974 (ADEA). In addition, no person shall be discriminated against in admission to Bridge Prep on the basis of race, sex, color, creed, sex, ethnicity, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, age, ancestry, athletic performance, special need, proficiency in the English language or a foreign language, or prior academic achievement.

FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS & PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA) is a Federal law designed to protect the privacy of students' education records. FERPA gives families certain rights with respect to their children's education records. Those rights are as follows:

- Families or eligible students have the right to inspect and review all of the student's education records maintained by Bridge Prep. For records including information on more than one student, families are limited only to information pertaining to their child. Bridge Prep is not required to provide copies of materials in education records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for families and/or eligible students to inspect the records. Bridge Prep may charge a fee for copies.
- At Bridge Prep, student records or other identifiable information are locked and maintained in a secure location to ensure confidentiality. Records that are no longer required or need to be disposed of are done so in a manner that ensures confidentiality and security.
- Families or eligible students have the right to request that Bridge Prep correct records believed to be inaccurate or misleading. If Bridge Prep decides not to amend the record, the parent/guardian or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if Bridge Prep still decides not to amend the record, the parent/guardian and/or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record, commenting on the contested information in the record.
- Bridge Prep must have written permission from the parent/guardian or eligible student before releasing any information from a student's record. However, the law allows schools to disclose records, without consent, to the following parties:
 - School officials with legitimate educational interest;
 - Other schools to which a student is transferring;
 - Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
 - Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
 - Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of Bridge Prep;
 - Accrediting organizations;
 - Judicial orders or lawfully issued subpoenas;
 - Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies;
 - State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law.

COURT ORDERS OR SUBPOENAS

In the case of a valid court order or lawfully issued subpoena, the school will immediately notify the parent in writing of the information that is requested (unless the subpoena states otherwise). Police officers and other law enforcement agencies must also present valid court orders or lawfully issued subpoenas when requesting student information.

CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES

Child Protective Service workers may request to see a student's school records at any time and the school must comply.

ACCESSING STUDENT RECORDS

A parent/guardian may request to review their child's student file. Any person requesting to review a student file must submit a request in writing to Bridge Prep, to the attention of the Executive Director. Bridge Prep will review the request and determine whether to release the information to the requester. If the requester is not a parent/guardian, a *Consent for Release of Student Information* letter will be sent to the parent/guardian for permission. Once permission is granted to review a student's file, the requester must sign a *Record of Access* form. If a student has an IEP, the requester must also sign a *Confidential File Access Log* form in the student folder.

AMENDING OR APPEALING STUDENT RECORDS

If a parent/guardian believes the education records relating to the student contain information that is inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of the student's right to privacy, they may ask that the record be amended. A parent/guardian may express the appeal in writing to Bridge Prep, sent to the attention of the Executive Director and must include the following:

- Information that is claimed to be inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of the student's privacy rights;
- Records in which the parent/guardian believes the information is contained;
- Basis for the claim (i.e., why they believe the information is inaccurate, etc.);
- The parent's/guardian's proposed change.

The Executive Director will review the request and make a determination within 14 calendar days of receiving the letter. Bridge Prep will provide the parent/guardian with a written response to the request and explain the reason for the decision. If the action is warranted, Bridge Prep may decide to remove, modify, or expunge the information in the record. Removing, modifying, or expunging an entry is not an admission that the entry was improper or that any person acted improperly by including the entry on the record.

If the request is denied or no ruling is made in the allotted time, the parent/guardian has the right to appeal the decision to the Board of Trustees within 20 school days from the adverse ruling or failure to rule. The Board of Trustees will appoint a hearing officer. A hearing will be held within 21 calendar days after the parent/guardian files the request with the Board of Trustees and the parent/guardian will be given notice of date, place, and time of the hearing with sufficient advance notice.

A parent or guardian will be given the opportunity to present the appeal and may be assisted or represented by individuals of their choice or own expense. The hearing officer's decision must be based solely on the evidence presented at the hearing. A written report containing a summary of the evidence and the reasons for the decision will be issued 14 calendar days from the conclusion of the hearing. If necessary, the hearing officer will direct the Executive Director to amend the records accordingly and inform the parent/guardian in writing. The hearing officer's decision will be final. If the parent or guardian does not agree with the decision, the parent or guardian has the right to place a statement in the record commenting on the contested information or stating why they disagree with the decision of the hearing officer, or both.

COMPLAINTS

General Procedure for Informal Complaints

Any parent/guardian who has a concern about a school policy, academic grade, discipline decision, or anything else, is encouraged to contact the appropriate staff member at Bridge Preparatory Charter School ("Bridge Prep", "the school") by telephone or email using the staff contact information found in the school's student and family handbook, as well as on the school's website. Families with questions about who to contact with a specific concern, should reach out to the Director of Community Development. All staff members are committed to responding promptly to parent/guardian concerns. If an issue is not resolved promptly or satisfactorily, please contact the Director of Teaching and Learning, who will work to resolve conflicts fairly and informally, as quickly as possible. After reviewing the complaint, the Director of Teaching and Learning will respond in writing, by telephone, or in person depending on the circumstance.

Any individual or group may bring complaints or concerns of any kind to the Director of Teaching and Learning or to the Executive Director at any time. If the complaint is related to the academic program or school culture, please contact the

Director of Teaching and Learning. If the complaint is related to operational, financial, managerial or policy matters, please contact the Executive Director. The Director of Teaching and Learning and the Executive Director will work to resolve conflicts fairly and informally, as quickly as possible. After reviewing the complaint, the Director of Teaching and Learning or the Executive Director will respond in writing, by telephone, or in person depending on the circumstance. If the Director of Teaching and Learning is unable to resolve the matter, or if the complaint is about the Director of Teaching and Learning, please contact the Executive Director. If the Executive Director is unable to resolve the complaint to the individual or group's satisfaction, or if the complaint is about the Executive Director, the individual or group may bring their complaint to the Board of Trustees.

The Board of Trustees of Bridge Prep ("Board") shall serve as the appeals body for any complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved and shall handle any complaint about the Executive Director. Complaints may be presented to the Board in written form, by letter or via email to board@bridgeprepcharter.org. The complaint may also be shared with the Board in an open meeting of the Board of Trustees. The Board shall investigate and respond to all complaints in a timely manner.

Procedure for Formal Complaints under Section 2855 of the Charter Schools Act

Section 2855(4) of the New York Education Law (part of the New York State Charter Schools Act (CSA)) provides that any individual or group may bring a complaint directly to the Board of Trustees of Bridge Prep alleging a violation of the CSA, the School's charter, or any other provision of law relating to the management or operation of Bridge Prep. All such formal complaints should be in writing and include the following:

1. the name, address, and phone number of the complainant;
2. a detailed statement of the complaint, including the specific provision of the School's charter or law that allegedly has been violated;
3. the relief sought by the complainant; and
4. the response, if any, received from the School thus far.

The Board of Trustees will respond in writing to any complaint submitted in writing no later than 30 days from receipt of the written complaint. Depending upon the circumstances, the Board's first response to a complaint may be to advise the complainant as to the timeline for further review, investigation, and resolution of the complaint, rather than an immediate resolution of the complaint.

If the complainant believes that the Board of Trustees has not adequately addressed the formal complaint, the individual or group may then present the complaint to the School's charter entity, the Board of Regents of the University of the State of New York ("Board of Regents"). The Board of Regents has delegated authority to handle complaints concerning charter schools to the Commissioner of Education. The Charter School Office of the New York State Education Department, on behalf of the Commissioner, will investigate and respond to complaints concerning charter schools that have been appropriately filed. Upon completion of the investigation of a complaint brought to the Board of Regents, a decision will be issued by the Commissioner, which may include a remedial order as appropriate.

The process for bringing a complaint to the Board of Regents can be found here:

<http://www.nysed.gov/charter-schools/complaint-process>.

The complaint may be submitted via email to the Board of Regents at charterschools@nysed.gov, or by writing to the Board of Regents at the following address:

New York State Education Department
Charter School Office Room 5N Mezz
89 Washington Avenue Albany, NY 12234 (518) 474-1762

School / Family Contract

We are committed to providing our students, known as Bridge Builders, with a safe, structured and welcoming school environment in which they enjoy learning and develop their social emotional skills as they grow into responsible and caring young people. We view families as critical partners in the success of our students and ask your support in helping to deliver our mission and vision by agreeing to the following.

ATTENDANCE

- I will ensure that my student comes to school on time, ready to begin no later than 8:05 a.m.
- I understand that if my student has **more than 10 unexcused absences** within a school year, they may have to repeat their current grade.
- I understand that an absence is excused only if I have contacted the school and written a detailed note regarding student illnesses, family emergency, or religious observance.
- I understand that the dismissal runs from 3:20-3:30 each day, and my child is required to remain in school for the entire day.

CODE OF CONDUCT

- I agree to promote and support the rules of behavior as outlined in the Student and Family Handbook, and accept responsibility as a partner in my student's learning.
- I understand and accept the School's various infraction levels and related consequences.
- I understand that the Code of Conduct and all classroom rules and expectations account for the time that my student is learning at Bridge Prep. I understand that this includes both in-person instruction and virtual instruction.
- I understand that while my student is in school, they are not permitted to use, or have out in plain sight, cell phones, iPads, interactive watches, video game players, or other electronic devices.
- I understand that the School has a **zero** tolerance for bullying and that if my student bullies another student, they will be disciplined accordingly which may result in loss of school privileges, detention and/or suspension.
- I understand that verbal and physical aggression will not be tolerated and that if my Bridge Builder demonstrates verbal or physical aggression toward classmates and/or school staff, they will be disciplined accordingly, which may result in loss of school privileges, detention, and/or suspension from school.

SCHOOL DRESS CODE

- I will ensure that my student comes to school in apparel that is approved by the school's dress code and that if my student is virtually learning from home, while they are not required to wear the school uniform, they will be dressed appropriately for learning.

FAMILY SUPPORT

- I agree to support my student's academic work by communicating regularly with their classroom teachers.
- I agree to attend Family-Teacher conferences, family meetings, and other school-sponsored events, as scheduled by the school either virtually or in person on a regular basis.
- I agree not to send soda, candy, or gum to school with my student, as well as not to send any glass or metal containers of any kind, since students are not allowed to have these items at school.
- I agree to respond to communication from school staff members (calls, emails, or messages) promptly.

Student Name _____

Parent/Guardian Name _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____

Date _____