



**Community Handbook**

**2024-25**

*Rigorous study within a caring community*

This handbook summarizes many practices and policies that are important to New Heights Charter School (“New Heights” or the “School”) students and their parents and/or guardians. It is not meant to be a complete handbook of policies relating to students and parents which can be located at 2202 W. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. Los Angeles, CA 90008. Federal and state laws, regulations and practices at the school level are subject to change.

The goal of New Heights Charter School is to provide parents with a choice in their children’s education. We require all students to understand, accept, sign, and adhere to the New Heights Charter School Community Handbook policies. All concerns or questions regarding the handbook should be directed to the Executive Director Amy Berfield at (323) 508-0155. *The Executive Director of New Heights Charter School reserves the right to amend any part of this handbook at her discretion.*

**A. NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT**

New Heights Charter School (“New Heights”) does not discriminate on the basis of sex and prohibits any acts of sex discrimination including sex-based harassment in any education program or activity that it operates, as required by California law, Title IX (20 U.S.C. § 1681 *et seq.*) and the Title IX regulations (34 C.F.R. Part 106), including in admission and employment.

Inquiries about the application of Title IX and 34 C.F.R. Part 106 may be referred to the New Heights Title IX Coordinator, the Office for Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education, or both.

All complaints and reports of conduct that may constitute sex discrimination including sex-based harassment should be submitted to our Title IX Coordinator, who can be reached at:

Jamie Parada, Operations Director  
Upper Campus Office  
3898 S. Hobart Blvd.  
Los Angeles, CA 90062  
323-508-0155, ext. 106  
[jparada@newheightscharter.org](mailto:jparada@newheightscharter.org)

A copy of New Heights’s Title IX Policy, which includes the specific rules and procedures for reporting sex discrimination and sex-based harassment occurring within New Heights’s education program or activities and for pursuing available remedies, is available on the New Heights website at: <https://resources.finalseite.net/images/v1727108522/newheightscharterorg/ssuypw06oy4ew5ulyyxz/TitleIXPOLICYEffectiveAugust120241.pdf>

## **B. VISION**

The vision of New Heights Charter School is to prepare students in grades K-8 to use their minds well and become capable, caring citizens. Students learn academic knowledge and skills in a personalized learning environment that promotes health, creativity, and understanding of the big ideas that shape our world.

New Heights promotes rigorous study within a caring, civic-minded community. Through active inquiry, in-depth learning, New Heights will support students to develop the following competencies:

- The ability to read, write, speak, calculate, experiment, and reason with clarity and precision and to creatively express oneself through the arts.
- The ability to participate thoughtfully and responsibly with concern for the common good.

The School's primary purpose is to enhance equity in educational opportunity. New Heights increases learning opportunities for all students, engages parents as essential partners, and has expanded professional development opportunities for teachers. We support students' academic achievement as well as their ability to become self-motivated, competent, lifelong learners. Our educational philosophy is based on an understanding of how to enhance student motivation to learn and how to organize learning to promote understanding.

**INTRINSIC MOTIVATION:** New Heights recognizes that children's academic, ethical, social, and emotional development is inter-related and interdependent. Students who feel connected to their school tend to have higher academic motivation and perform better academically, while being more unlikely to engage in problem behaviors.

**STUDENT UNDERSTANDING:** New Heights prepares students to transfer what they learn in school to their lives outside of school. Teachers have clearly defined learning goals for students, focus on the "big ideas" of a subject, design effective assessments of student understanding, and create engaging learning activities. Students will demonstrate their learning through a Portfolio and through Exhibitions of Mastery – public performances for parents and community.

New Heights offers a positive alternative to students and their families. The school's goal is to provide a strong foundation to students in their early years, so they can excel in the middle grades, and be fully prepared for the demands of high school and college.

## **C. WHAT IS A CHARTER SCHOOL?**

The State of California established charter school legislation with the intent of giving public schools more autonomy in exchange for increased student achievement. A charter school is a public school that was approved by the its local district, county, or by the state to operate within California through the submission of a charter.

The charter petition describes the school's goals, governance structure, insurance requirements, employee benefits, and almost every area related to the school's functioning.

### **Autonomy**

New Heights is authorized by the Los Angeles Unified School District ("LAUSD"), but operates as an independent charter school.

### **Accountability**

The state of California and LAUSD are responsible for holding New Heights Charter School accountable for meeting the goals outlined in New Heights' charter. These goals include increasing test scores and maintaining an effective learning environment. If the School does not meet these goals, the LAUSD may elect not renew the School's charter.

#### **D. ADMISSION POLICY**

New Heights is an open enrollment, tuition-free public school with no specific requirements for admission. Enrollment to the Charter School shall be open to any resident of the State of California. . Parents are invited to attend a school information session to learn about the philosophy and instructional practices of the School. Parents or Guardians must fill out a New Student Lottery Application form, which must be completed and submitted before the annual deadline. If the number of students who wish to attend New Heights exceeds the number of openings, entrance shall be determined by single random public drawing in accordance with Education Code §47605(d)(2).

#### **E. WITHDRAWAL**

If a parent or guardian wishes to withdraw or transfer a student, New Heights asks for parents or guardians to notify the Executive Director in writing at least five (5) days in advance of this transfer. In some cases, the Executive Director may want to meet with the parents or guardians to discuss the withdraw or transfer.

#### **F. GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE**

New Heights is governed by its own non-profit Board of Directors, whose major roles and responsibilities include, but not limited to, establishing and approving all major educational and operational policies, approving all major contracts, approving the school's annual budget, overseeing the school's fiscal affairs, meeting corporate requirements and selecting and evaluating the administrative staff. In addition, the Board provides oversight and support to ensure the School meets its educational goals for all students.

The Board meets at least 6 times throughout the school year in public meetings open to all parents and community members. The Board calendar is available on each school campus and on the school website at <http://www.newheightscharter.org/>.

Board Members: Michelle Robson, President; Erin Keller, Secretary and Financial Officer; Hyland Hubbard and Robert Madock. Parents or community members that would like the contact information for individual Board members may call 323-508-0155 or may look on the School's website information tab under Governance.

#### **G. SCHOOL INFORMATION AND PROCEDURES**

The specific calendar for each school year is set each year prior to the beginning of school and shared with parents at enrollment or orientation sessions. Copies are available online and in the School office.

##### **Arrival**

Students may arrive as early as 7:00 am. Please make sure you drop-off your child in the designated area for Before School Program and remind your child to stay in supervised areas. School will begin promptly at 8:15 a.m. at lower campus and 8:25 a.m. at upper campus.

##### **Dismissal**

On full days, School ends at 3:15 p.m. at lower campus and 3:25 p.m. at upper campus. At dismissal time, students must be picked up, stay for the after school program, or walk home. **See afterschool procedures for details which are located at: See afterschool procedures for details which are located at upper campus office.**

### **Shortened Days on Wednesday**

Each week, students will have one shortened day on Wednesday to provide time for teachers to plan collaboratively to best meet the needs of our students. **School will end early at 1:15 p.m. at lower campus and 1:25 p.m. at upper campus and the afterschool program will begin right after school ends.** Please refer to the School Calendar. Additional shortened days may be scheduled – please be sure to read announcements throughout the year.

### **After School Program**

Students are welcome to apply to participate in the after school program. The program will run from the end of school to 6:00-6:30 p.m. each day (see after school program information for details which are located at upper campus ). Some after school activities may include: homework assistance, recreation/sports, cooking, arts, and literacy tutoring.

Parents interested in participating in the After School Program need to **complete an application** and agree to the terms for the program. The application is located on both campuses.

### **Emergency Cards (2 cards)**

New emergency cards need to be completed every school year before classes begin. The cards must be turned into the Office. Please fill out new emergency cards immediately after any of the information changes.

### **Emergency Release From School**

Your child will only be released into the custody of those people who you have previously identified on the emergency card (proof of identity will be required.) People NOT identified on the emergency card can only pick-up a child if the parent or guardian has sent a hand written and signed note to the School notifying the School of this person's identity and granting permission for this person to pick-up the child (proof of identity will be required.) The School may call the parent or guardian to verify the authenticity of this note.

### **Leaving School During the Day**

If you must pick-up your child before the end of the school day, please send a note to the classroom teacher or notify the office by phone. When picking-up students early, the parent, guardian, or authorized adult should FIRST report to the office to complete an early dismissal form, and the student will be sent to the office for pick-up. Parents are asked not to enter the classroom to remove their child from class, unless previously agreed upon by the teacher or the office. **Students will not be released within the last 15 minutes of school unless previous arrangements have been made with the teacher and/or the office.**

### **Illness**

If your child is ill, please contact and inform the office, do not send him/her to school sick. If your child complains of feeling sick at school, depending on the severity, you may be contacted to pick him/her up. Please make an effort to contact your child's teacher during the first day of his/her absence.

### **California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress ("CAASPP")**

The School shall annually administer required state testing to the applicable grades (e.g., the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress.) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a parent's or guardian's written request to School officials to excuse his or her child from any or all parts of the state assessments shall be granted.

## **H. STUDENT HEALTH AND WELLNESS**

### **Lunch Program**

The School participates in the National School Lunch Program. Applications for free meals are included in the first day packets to all families and can also be obtained on the School website and in the main office. All families are encouraged to complete the application form. The application needs to be submitted within one month of the first day of school each year.

### **USDA Nondiscrimination Statement**

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the [USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form](#), (AD-3027) found online at: [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

### **Food/Nutrition**

Healthy eating helps students grow, learn, play, and feel good about themselves. At New Heights, faculty and staff help children understand and develop knowledge and skills in healthy eating. In addition, being active promotes physical and emotional well-being. When students are physically and mentally healthy, they are ready and able to learn. Our goal is to help children enjoy eating, understand the importance of food for energy and health, and cultivate respect for various cultural eating traditions.

### **Food Program**

The breakfast, lunch, and snack provided to students each day is healthy, fresh, and in compliance with current national food guidelines.

## **Food/Nutrition**

It is very important that your children eat a well-balanced diet. Please make an effort to feed your children nutritious foods every day in the proper portion sizes for their size. If your child gets hungry in between meals, please send a healthy snack with them to school, or remind your child to take advantage of the healthy snacks provided by the school.

**HEALTHY SNACKS ALLOWED TO BRING TO SCHOOL:** Foods such as fresh fruit, vegetables, yogurt, cheese, water, milk, and 100% juice.

**FOOD AND DRINK NOT ALLOWED TO BRING TO SCHOOL:** No high-sugar foods are allowed in school. Foods such as: high-sugar cookies, candy, gum, hot cheetos, etc. are not welcome. Drinks such as soda, artificially colored/flavored juices, Gatorade, Sunny Delight, and sugared waters/sports drinks should also remain at home.

**If students bring unhealthy food to school, school staff will hold the food in a safe place for students until the end of the day.** Parents will be notified if this behavior recurs more than twice. The staff reserves the right to determine if something is healthy and allowed to be eaten during school and afterschool hours on campus.

## **Birthdays and other Celebrations**

If you wish to join the class for a celebration or provide healthy, light snacks, please contact your teacher. Please do not bring flavored drinks, chips, cupcakes, cake, or anything that is not allowed as part of the school's food policy (see above). The celebration food is not meant to replace lunch for the day. Your classroom teacher will share the class birthday policy at the beginning of the school year – please follow this policy. We encourage all celebrations to occur at the end of the school day.

## **Health and Medical Conditions**

The School office must be notified if a student with a medical or health condition requires accommodations in order to participate in the educational program. The School office will arrange to meet with the parents to develop an accommodation plan for the students' medical condition. Students with diabetes, severe asthma, and severe allergies should have an accommodation plan at the school.

Students may not carry or use medication on campus without written consent. A student who needs to take medication during school hours must have a statement to this effect on file at the School, signed by the prescribing physician and the parent/guardian. Self-administration of medications may be permissible by special arrangement with the school office. School personnel do not prescribe or give advice regarding any kind of medication. If a child is taking medication, it is in his/her best interest to arrange a schedule so that a parent or legal guardian can administer the medication outside School hours when possible.

## **Injuries**

It is the policy of the school to treat minor injuries (scrapes, bumps, paper cuts) with ice packs, cold compresses, or band-aids as needed. When confronted with more serious injuries, school staff will contact parents, and, if appropriate, transport the students to the nearest hospital emergency department, or contact 911 for

assistance.

It is the responsibility of the parents to update school medical and emergency information.

### **Concussion/Head Injuries**

If the School offers an athletic program, parents/guardians must sign a concussion/head injury information sheet on a yearly basis if their student is an athlete on any of the School's athletic teams. This does not apply to an athlete engaging in an athletic activity during the regular school day or as part of a physical education course. The School can provide this concussion information sheet to only those parents whose students are participating in the School's athletic program, if applicable.

### **Oral Health Assessment**

Students enrolled in kindergarten in a public school or while enrolled in first grade if the pupil was not previously enrolled in kindergarten in a public school are required to have an oral health assessment completed by a dental professional. Please contact the office if you have questions about this requirement.

### **Tobacco-Free Workplace Regulations**

The use of tobacco products, including electronic smoking devices and e-cigarettes, is prohibited at all times on all property and in all buildings and vehicles owned or leased by New Heights Charter School and at school sponsored events. The use of tobacco products is outside the scope and course of employment; therefore, it is not the requirement of New Heights Charter School to provide facilities where employees may use tobacco products.

Students who violate the Tobacco-Free Workplace policy shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including suspension and shall be provided with information on tobacco cessation services available through the California Smokers' Helpline - 1-800-NO BUTTS

Employees who violate the Tobacco-Free Workplace policy shall be subject to progressive disciplinary action up to and including termination and shall be provided with information on tobacco cessation services available through the California Smokers' Helpline - 1-800-NO BUTTS.

Visitors who violate the Tobacco-Free Workplace policy shall be asked to refrain from using tobacco on school property. If they refuse, they shall be asked to leave the property. If they refuse, the Executive Director or designee shall contact law enforcement to have the person removed from campus.

### **Immunizations and Physical Examinations**

To ensure a safe learning environment for all students, the School follows and abides by the health standards set forth by the state of California. Pursuant to state and federal law, including but not limited to, those laws regarding homeless students, foster youth, and/or exemptions from immunization requirements, students will not attend school until all require records have been received. The immunization status of all students will be reviewed periodically. Those students who do not meet the State guidelines may be excluded from school until the requirements are met. Students who have been exposed to a communicable disease for which they have not been immunized may be excluded from school at the discretion of the School.

### **COVID-19 Precautions**



Student, parents, and staff are all expected to follow the most up-to-date COVID-19 health guidelines including wearing masks, distancing, hand washing, cleaning and disinfecting. Please see separate guidance on keeping safe and healthy during the COVID-19 global pandemic.

## **I. CHILD FIND OBLIGATIONS**

We are dedicated to the belief that all students can learn and must be guaranteed equal opportunity to become contributing members of the academic environment and society. We offer high quality educational programs and services for all our students in accordance with the assessed needs of each student. The School collaborates with parents, the student, teachers, and other agencies, as may be indicated, in order to appropriately serve the educational needs of each student.

### **Section 504**

The School recognizes its legal responsibility to ensure that no qualified person with a disability shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program of the School. Any student who has an objectively identified disability which substantially limits a major life activity, including, but not limited to learning, is eligible for accommodations by the School. The parent of any student suspected of needing or qualifying for accommodations under Section 504 may make a referral for an evaluation to the Executive Director. A copy of the School's Section 504 policies and procedures is available upon request.

### **Student Support and Progress Team**

Students are referred to the student support and progress team ("SSPT") to develop an intervention plan for specific identified needs related to academics or behavior. The team may include the classroom teacher, an administrator, and the student's parent/guardian. The purpose of this team is to develop and implement an action plan that will target the specific academic or behavior needs of the student as well as to identify students who may require a more individualized program or is in need of Special Education services.

### **Special Education**

The School provides special education instruction and related services in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Improvement Act ("IDEIA"), Education Code requirements, and applicable policies and procedures of the Los Angeles Unified School District. These services are available for special education students enrolled at the School.

## **J. HOME/SCHOOL COMMUNICATION**

It is very important that there is regular, ongoing communication between your home and the school each year. To stay informed of all meetings and events, please check the monthly calendar on a regular basis.

### **How to Communicate with Teachers**

- Contact the School or leave a message on the teacher's voicemail.
- Email or text the teacher.
- Leave a note with the office staff to let the teacher know you'd like an appointment with the teacher.
- See the teacher during his/her "office hours." Teachers will meet with people on a first come, first serve basis during office hours.

### **How to Communicate with the Office**

- Contact the school's general phone number which is 323-508-0155. If someone is not available to speak with you immediately, please leave a message.

- If you need to speak with someone about an issue that may take MORE than 5 MINUTES, please make an appointment with the appropriate person so he or she can give you their full attention.

NOTE: During the COVID-19 pandemic, parents will be asked to stay in the outdoor waiting area on each campus in order to talk with staff.

#### **How to Communicate with your Child during the School Day**

- Contact the office and leave a message for your child. Please speak slowly when leaving your child's name and the name of your child's teacher. Your message will be given to your child as soon as possible. Your child will only be brought to the phone to speak with you if it is an emergency. (Please make all car-pool or after school pick up arrangements with your child before school starts each day.)
- The school phones are available for students to use **only** in emergency situations. Leaving lunch or money at home is not an emergency. However, if there is a special need or problem, permission to use the phone may be granted.

#### **How to bring your child their lunch, books, or other items needed for the school day DURING school hours**

- When you arrive at school, please wait in the specified area for a staff person to help you.
- The office staff will deliver the item for you.
- Please do not go directly to your child's classroom.
- Please note: Students are not allowed to heat up their food at school.

#### **COVID-19 Protocol Restricts Visitors to Campus**

**Our normal visiting procedures outlined below are not allowed during the global pandemic. Parents will need to schedule an appointment to meet with staff (outside). If parents arrive on campus without an appointment, we will try to address your needs if we can. Parents are asked to wait in the waiting area until someone can help them.**

#### **Visiting the School (NOT IN EFFECT DURING COVID-19)**

Parents are encouraged to make regular visits and volunteer at New Heights. When you come to school, please sign-in at the office BEFORE you go to the classrooms and wear a badge of identification. All school visitors, including parents, must sign in and wear a badge. All visitors, including parents, must sign-out and return the identification badge before leaving the School.

We ask that when you visit the School, you respect the instructional time of teachers and students. Please do not disturb lessons or students and teachers who are working. If you have a matter to attend to with a teacher, please find a mutually agreeable time to discuss the matter. Staff members are not available for one-on-one discussions during class time.

#### **Volunteering in the Classroom (NOT IN EFFECT DURING COVID-19)**

Parents are encouraged to support New Heights through spending volunteer time in classrooms. Each class has set-up their own system for working with parent volunteers in the classroom. Please refer to your teacher's policy.

Make sure to have a current TB test on file if you plan on regularly volunteering.

### **Resolving Problems/General Complaint Policy**

It is our sincere belief that the large majority of misunderstandings and problems can be resolved through discussion between the parent/guardian or student and the teacher and/or other appropriate school personnel. The guidelines below are designed to provide a “step-by-step” procedure for stakeholders when they are attempting to resolve a misunderstanding or problem.

Stakeholders should make every effort to gather accurate facts before contacting the school. Any problem/concern/complaint should be brought to the attention of the teacher or staff member most closely related to the problem. If the concern is not resolved satisfactorily after meeting or talking with the teacher or staff member, stakeholders are encouraged to use the steps detailed below:

1. Contact the Executive Director (“ED”) of the school and ask her to establish a conference with the appropriate person at a mutually agreeable time. This can be done through a phone call, email, or text.
2. Participate in a conference with the Executive Director. (The ED may choose to include the Student and Family Support Coordinator in this meeting in order to increase the likelihood of resolution.)
3. If stakeholders have exhausted all possibilities at the school level without resolution and the complaint falls within the scope of the Uniform Complaint process, the Director of Operations will support the stakeholder to complete the school’s Uniform Complaint form and follow the Uniform Complaint procedures (see Uniform Complaint form in your enrollment packet.)
4. If the stakeholder is not interested in completing the form or if the complaint does not fall within the scope of the Uniform Complaint process, the Director of Operations or the Executive Director will help coordinate a meeting / phone conversation/ email exchange with a member of the School’s Board of Directors. Board Member contact information, including email and phone number, are also available on the School’s website. The Executive Director / Director of Operations will work to ensure timely response of the Board Member to the stakeholder.

We are pleased that most concerns are satisfactorily resolved at step one. The other steps are provided for you as additional means of resolving your problems or concerns. Misunderstandings and problems will more likely be resolved if they are approached in a positive and courteous manner with recommendations that are realistic.

Your school staff is here to do the best job possible with your child. We can provide many educational opportunities, but it is done best when we work together as parents and teachers.

### **K. STUDENT BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS**

At all times, all students are expected to make learning their priority and be respectful of the rights of others. In order to ensure that New Heights Charter School is a caring learning community, the school must be safe at all times.

#### **We ask all students to follow the New Heights Code of Conduct:**

1. Be respectful to each other, all staff, community, and school property.
2. Follow directions the first time.
3. Participate thoughtfully in all school activities.
1. Think about and reflect on your behavior and listen for ideas that will help you.
2. Make healthy choices.
3. Try...and try again.

Any student action or intention that can be deemed as violating the code of conduct or the safety of one's self or others can result in serious consequences.

Examples of safety violations include:

- Not following directions in school and when walking off school property
- Running in class and hallways
- Littering, spitting
- Chewing gum (or other unhealthy foods)
- Verbal abuse of others (using profanity, etc.), rude talk
- Pushing, tripping, hitting, play fighting, rough housing
- Intentionally hurting another person
- Threatening others physical or emotional safety
- Inappropriate touching
- Lying

Any student action or intention that can be deemed as damaging the property of the school or others can result in serious consequences.

Examples of property violations include:

- Misusing school equipment
- Unauthorized use of equipment
- Inappropriate use of the internet
- Defacing school property or the property of others
- Stealing

**Internet Use at School**

The Internet provides an excellent means for learning, researching, and communicating. Students are provided access to the Charter School technology primarily for educational purposes. Using the Internet at New Heights Charter School is a privilege and has consequences if certain expectations are violated. All students and parents are asked to sign an Appropriate Use Agreement prior to using school technology equipment, which is located at upper/ lower office .

Students are responsible for proper behavior on School computer networks just as they are in a classroom or a school hallway. Communications on the network are often public in nature. General school rules for behavior and communications apply. Independent access to network services is provided to students who agree to act in a considerate and responsible manner. Access is a privilege, not a right.

Network and School administrators may review files and communications to maintains system integrity and ensure that users are using the system responsibly. Users should not expect that files stored on school servers would be private. The School has the right to check the computers in order to determine what materials and who has accessed sites. Please see New Heights' internet safety policy and acceptable use of technology policy for additional details.

**“Inappropriate use”** means a use that is inconsistent with an educational purpose or that is in clear violation of this policy and the Acceptable Use Agreement. The following are not permitted:

- Playing games or online gaming.

- Downloading software, music, movies or other content in violation of licensing requirements, copyright or other intellectual property rights.
- Installing software on Charter School equipment without the permission of a teacher or other authorized Charter School staff person.
- Downloading, viewing or sharing inappropriate content, including pornographic, defamatory or otherwise offensive material.
- Conducting any activity that is in violation of school policy, the student code of conduct or local, state or federal law.
- Engaging in any activity that is harmful to other student(s), including the use of technology to harass, intimidate, bully or otherwise disrupt the educational process.
- Participating in political activities.
- Conducting for-profit business.
- Using hacking tools on the network or intentionally introducing malicious code or viruses into the Charter School's network.
- Using any software or proxy service to obscure either the student's IP address or the sites that the student visits.
- Disabling, bypassing, or attempting to disable or bypass any system monitoring, filtering or other security measures.
- Accessing or attempting to access material or systems on the network that the student is not authorized to access.

#### Consequences for Internet Violation

- Violations will result in a loss of privilege (loss of access to the Internet, loss of choice time, etc.)
- Additional disciplinary action may be determined in line with existing practice regarding any inappropriate language or behavior, in accordance with the school behavior policy, such as a Behavior Notice to parents and/or suspension.

#### Textbooks/School Materials

Students who willfully destroys, damages, defaces, cuts, or fails to return school property will be responsible for replacing the property. Parents must replace damaged or lost books or other school property up to an amount not to exceed ten thousand dollars (\$10,000), adjusted annually for inflation. When the minor and parent are unable to pay for the damages, the Charter School will provide a program of voluntary work for the minor in lieu of the payment of monetary damages. A student over the age of majority shall be liable for the same.

#### Lost and Found

Found items belong to someone else and should not be taken by the person who found the item. Any items found at the school site should be taken to the lost and found. Check for lost items in the main office. The lost and found will be cleaned out every four weeks. Items not claimed will be donated or discarded. **All items brought to school by students including jackets, lunch sacks, etc. should be clearly labeled with the child's name.**

#### Non-School Property

Personal property not related to the School's programs are **not** allowed in school. Ipods, CD Players, Game Boys or other electronic games, money, toys, pagers, cell phones, toys, gum, etc. will be confiscated and returned to the child at the end of the school day if they are brought to school. The School is not responsible for these items if they are lost at school. Students are not allowed to bring rolling backpacks/suitcases or large backpacks to school.

### **Cell Phone**

Any student who wishes to bring a cell phone to school must have their parent/guardian sign the school's cell phone policy.

The policy requires that all students give their cell phone to staff/faculty BEFORE class each day. Students are not allowed to have or use their cell phone on school campus at any time (before, during, and after school). Students who need to contact home will be allowed to use the school phones. If we find that a student has not turned in a cell phone before class, the cell phone will be taken to the office and returned to the parent, not the student, at the end of the day. If the student forgets to give an adult their cell phone 3 times, the phone will be held in the school office until the end of the school year and/or the student loses the privilege to bring the cell phone to school for the rest of the school year.

### **Electronic Devices/Personal Technology (including electronic-connected watches, headphones, ear pods, iPods, and similar devices)**

Electronic devices of any kind are not allowed on campus. This includes Apple Watches (or similar connected devices), headphones, ear pods, iPods or similar, any devices that can be used to distract students from the classroom activities, or any other device that connects to the internet. If a student brings an electronic device to school and uses it on school campus, the supervising adult will take the device and return it to the parent at the end of the day. If the student brings and uses an electronic device on campus for a second time, the school staff will hold the item until the last day of school and then return it to the parent.

### **Toys or Sports Equipment**

Students are not allowed to bring toys (or distractions of any kind) or sports equipment to school, unless they are given permission by their teacher or school counselor. If a student brings toys (or distractions of any kind) or sports equipment to school and uses them on school campus, the supervising adult will take the item and return it to the parent at the end of the day. If the student brings and uses toys (or distractions of any kind) or sports equipment on campus for a second time, the school staff will hold the items until the last day of school and then return them to the parent.

### **School Supplies, Pencil Boxes, Backpacks, Purses**

Students should not bring any school supplies from home. New Heights provides all the materials needed to be successful in class. Students may bring backpacks and purses to school, but they will be placed in a container or closet for the day so as not to provide a distraction for students.

*The school is not responsible for items brought to school.*

### **No pets on campus.**

No pets are allowed on the school campus, unless a service animal is required as part of a student's Section 504 plan or Individualized Education Program ("IEP").

### **Behavior Notices and Follow-up Actions**

If a student violates any of the School policies (including but not limited to: dress code, absence, tardiness, homework, safety of self and others, and respect of property), they may be disciplined by loss of privileges, time out in the classroom, time out in another classroom or the office, or other means determined by the teacher. If the behavior problem is significant or a particular behavior is repeated more than three (3) times, the teacher will complete a Behavior Notice. This form will outline the problem behavior, the actions the teacher took, and the required follow-up step for parents. A Behavior Notice may be completed at the discretion of the teacher or adult working with the child.

Depending upon the specific circumstances surrounding the student's behavior, a student may remain in the office or another classroom to "take a break," and an appropriate consequence will be devised. Depending on the violation, a student's parent or guardian might be contacted to immediately pick up the child and the student will remain in the office until he/she is picked up.

After the third Behavior Notice (or any single significant incident) the following action will be taken:

- The parent/guardian will be contacted and informed of the child's violation(s).
- **The parent will be required to attend a Problem-Solving Conference at the school and to observe the child in his/her classroom(s) for at least one hour. This conference will need to be scheduled within 24 hours for a significant incident and within three (3) days for a recurring incident.** At the conference, a plan of action will be devised with the student, teacher(s), administrator, and parent to improve the child's behavior.
- If the child is referred again after the above interventions, a suspension may result.
- A student may be suspended for any single incident of unsafe or violent behavior in compliance with the School's suspension and expulsion policy.

#### **Classroom Formal Observation Time (Suspended during COVID-19 pandemic)**

The student's parent or guardian may be required to come to school and to sit with the student in his or her classroom(s) and through school activities. The observation must be for at least one (1) hour and perhaps more, depending on the violation.

#### **Suspension and Expulsion**

Any student who engages in repeated violations of the School's Code of Conduct and behavioral expectations will be required to attend a meeting with school staff and the student's parent or guardian. The School and parent will collaboratively prepare a specific, written intervention plan outlining future student conduct expectations, timelines, and consequences for failure to meet the expectations which may include, but are not limited to, suspension or expulsion.

New Heights Charter School is exempt from Education Code requirements and procedures related to student suspension and expulsion. Therefore, references in this charter to the Education Code are used as a guideline. A student may be suspended or expelled for any of the acts enumerated in Education Code § 48900 except for willful defiance, as related to school activity or school attendance that occurs at any time including, but not limited to:

- While on school grounds
- While going to or leaving from school
- During, or traveling to or from, a school-sponsored activity

The Executive Director bears primary responsibility for overseeing all student discipline and has the authority to suspend students.

**Mandatory Expulsion/Suspension:**

It is a federal mandate that a school expel, for a period of not less than one year (except on a case-by-case basis), any student who is determined to have brought a firearm to school.

The Executive Director shall immediately suspend (out of school) and recommend a student's expulsion if he or she determines that the student committed any of the following acts at school or at a school activity off school grounds:

1. Possessing, selling, or furnishing a firearm.
2. Brandishing a knife at another person.
3. Unlawfully selling a controlled substance.
4. Committing or attempting to commit a sexual assault or committing a sexual battery.
5. Possession of an explosive.

Note: Pursuant to E.C. Section 48915 (g), "knife" means any dirk, dagger, or other weapon with a fixed sharpened blade fitted primarily for stabbing; a weapon with a blade fitted primarily for stabbing; a weapon with a blade longer than 3½ inches; a folding knife with a blade that locks into place; or a razor with an unguarded blade.

**Offenses Subject to Limited Executive Director Discretion:**

The Executive Director shall recommend a student's expulsion if he or she determines that the student committed one or more of the following acts at school or at a school activity off school grounds unless the Executive Director also determines that expulsion is inappropriate:

1. Causing serious physical injury to another person, except in self-defense.
2. Possession of a knife or other dangerous object of no reasonable use to the pupil.
3. Unlawful possession of any controlled substance, except for either of the following:
  - a. The first offense for the possession of not more than one ounce of marijuana, other than concentrated cannabis.
  - b. The possession of over-the-counter medication for use by the student for medical purposes or medication prescribed for the student by a physician.
4. Robbery or extortion.
5. Assault or battery upon any school employee. Note: A serious physical injury includes, but is not limited to: "loss of consciousness, concussion, bone fracture, protracted loss or impairment of function of any bodily member or organ, wound requiring extensive suturing, and serious disfigurement." (California Penal Code Section 243)

**Offenses Subject to Broad Executive Director Discretion:**

The Executive Director has maximum discretion to recommend or not recommend expulsion when he or she determines that a student has committed any of the following offenses at any time, including, but not limited to, while on school grounds; while going to or coming from school; during the lunch period whether on or off campus; and during, or while going to or coming from, a school-sponsored activity.

1. Caused, attempted to cause, or threatened to cause physical injury to another person.
2. Willfully used force or violence upon the person of another, except in self-defense.
3. Possessed not more than one ounce of marijuana (applicable to the first offense only) or possessed alcohol.
4. Offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any controlled substance, alcoholic beverage, or an intoxicant of any



kind, and then either sold, delivered, or otherwise furnished to any person another liquid, substance, or material represented as a controlled substance, alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant.

5. Caused or attempted to cause damage to school or private property.
6. Stole or attempted to steal school property or private property.
7. Possessed or used tobacco or any tobacco products.
8. Committed an obscene act or engaged in habitual profanity or vulgarity.
9. Unlawfully possessed or unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any drug paraphernalia.
10. Disrupted school activities (school-wide activities; issued only by an administrator).
11. Knowingly received stolen school or private property.
12. Possessed an imitation firearm. "Imitation firearm" means a replica of a firearm that is so substantially similar in physical properties to an existing firearm as to lead a reasonable person to conclude it is a firearm.
13. Harassed, threatened, or intimidated a pupil who is a complaining witness or witness in a school disciplinary proceeding.
14. Committed sexual harassment (applicable to grades 4 through 8 only).
15. Caused, attempted to cause, threatened to cause, or participated in an act of hate violence (applicable to grades 4 through 8 only).
16. Intentionally engaged in harassment, threats, or intimidation against school district personnel or pupils (applicable to grades 4 through 8 only).
17. Made terroristic threats against school officials or school property, or both.
18. Offered, arranged to sell, negotiated to sell, or sold the prescription drug Soma.
19. Engaged in, or attempted to engage in, hazing.
20. Engaged in an act of bullying, including, but not limited to, bullying committed by means of an electronic act.

Students who present an immediate threat to the health and/or safety of others or themselves may also be immediately suspended and later expelled by the school's governing board upon recommendation of the Executive Director. The policy of New Heights will provide all students with an opportunity for due process and will be developed to conform to applicable federal law regarding students with exceptional needs. Please see the *Charter Petition* for detailed information regarding the school's suspension and expulsion procedures which is located on the School's website.

## L. STUDENT ATTENDANCE

### Absence/Tardy Policy

**Absences:** Our goal is for students to miss as few school days as possible to ensure they can master all the content of their grade level. Each time you know your child will be absent, you must do the following:

1. **Same Day:** A parent or guardian must notify the school the same day of the absence by telephone, letter, fax, e-mail, or in person by 8:00 am.
2. **Next Day:** Bring a note to the office (not to teachers) from a doctor or medical facility, or appropriate court documents.

**Excused Absences:** Excused absences are absences where a student is too ill to report to school, has either a medical, legal, dental appointment, or experiences a death in the family. All other absences are **unexcused**. If the school is not notified and the student does not report to school the next day with a note, the absence will be considered unexcused.

**Chronic Absence:** Given the importance of school attendance for students’ social, emotional and academic growth, our schoolwide plan includes a goal to reduce the number of students who are chronically absent from school each year. **If a child is absent for 10% of school (excused and unexcused absences count equally), we require a conference between parent, student, and administration to devise an action plan for ensuring the child does not fall behind.** Consequences for absences and tardies are detailed below.

Number of Absences	School Actions	Legal Consequence
First and Second Absence	Teacher/staff contacts home	None
Third Absence (within the first 30 days of school)	Letter sent to parents/guardians to attend a meeting at school	First Notification of Truancy: Student is Truant
Students are at-risk for chronic attendance (missing 4 days out of 40, 5 days out of 50, 6 days out of 60, etc.)	Mandatory Attendance Meeting. Some student privileges may be lost.	California law imposes penalties which get progressively severe and could result in fines and danger of becoming labeled Chronically Truant
Eighteen or more Absences	Mandatory Attendance meeting in which consequences will be discussed. Consequences include losing privileges at school each time absenteeism increases.	Meeting referred to authorities Student is Chronically Truant.

**Tardy Policy:** All students are expected to arrive at school on time and stay until the end of the school day. A student is considered tardy if he or she is more than 10 minutes late to class. Students must sign-in on the Tardy Report in the office before going to their classroom if they arrive more than 10 minutes late. Tardiness is only excused if a student has a medical, dental, legal appointment or there has been a death in the family. All tardies require appropriate documentation (see above.) In order to eat breakfast and not be tardy for class, students should arrive at least 25 minutes prior to the start of school for breakfast. **Meetings will be required if students are tardy more than 5 times.**

**M. SCHOOL DRESS CODE**

**All students must follow the school dress code.**

**TOPS:** Shirts: White or grey polo shirt, any New Heights T-Shirt or solid orange or green T-shirt, and grey sweater. (No shirts with any writing or image on them.) Upper Campus only: Same as above with the addition of a white button-down shirt and black polo shirt.

**BOTTOMS:** Grey Shorts/Skorts/Sweatpants. Upper Campus addition only: Solid black Shorts/Skorts/Sweatpants. (No leggings or jeans allowed on either campus.)

**JACKETS:** New Heights' sweatshirt or zipper fleece. (No jackets of any kind are allowed in class. Please make sure students wear long sleeve shirts if they are cold. No hoods or hats of any kind are allowed in class.)

**Reminders:**

- Clothes must be clean and washed when students enter campus.
- COLD WEATHER: Students should wear New Heights' grey sweaters or vests if they are cold in class, or they can wear long sleeve shirts under their T-shirt and polos.
- No hoods are allowed to be worn in class at any time.
- Skorts and shorts must not be shorter than three inches above the knee.
- Pants must be appropriate size and worn at the waist.

<b>Dress Code Violations</b>	<b>Consequence</b>
One (1) - Two (2)	Teacher/office will provide clothing to wear. If the student refuses to wear clothing offered, parents will be contacted and asked to bring clothing to campus.
Three (3) - Five (5)	Teacher/office will provide clothing to wear. Staff will share a dress code violation form that requires parent/guardian signature. Signed form must be returned the next school day. Office will also call home as needed.
More than Five (5)	A formal conference takes place with the student, parent/guardian, and a school representative.

DRESS CODE SUPPORT FOR PARENTS: Parents can choose to buy grey pants, grey skorts, grey shorts, sweat pants, and polos from any vendor; however, parents may want to access: [www.FaithUniforms.com](http://www.FaithUniforms.com) to order clothing.

**N. HOMEWORK**

At New Heights Charter School we believe that homework should be minimal to allow students to engage in

other non-academic activities afterschool. However, targeted homework is an important opportunity for students to practice skills they have been taught during school. The more confident and comfortable students are with their skills, the more they can contribute and progress with their learning. Homework is also viewed as a bridge between home and school, giving students an opportunity to share their work with and involve family members.

Parents are responsible for monitoring homework assignments. Depending on their grade level, students may be assigned homework three (3) - five (5) days per week.

Each child should attempt to complete homework independently, but may need assistance. If you child needs assistance, please do not do his or her homework for him/her. As a parent, guide your child in doing the best that he or she can, allowing them to do their own work. Homework will generally require 15-30 minutes to complete in primary grades and may require as much as two (2) hours by the time your child has reached 6th grade. We expect students to share with their parents what they are learning. From time to time, parents will be asked to respond to student assignments in written form.

When homework is not completed, consequences will be enforced as outlined below. Incomplete homework is excused only with appropriate documentation from a parent or a caregiver, indicating that illness or other circumstances prevented the student from completing his/her homework. If a child is struggling to complete homework because of the difficulty of the work, please contact your child’s teacher to schedule a conference.

<b># of Unexcused Assignments</b>	<b>Consequences (for Grades 1 and higher)</b>
One - Four	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student will give time to complete homework during the day, after school or before school based on teacher discretion.</li> <li>• Parent will be notified.</li> </ul>
Five – Nine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student will give time to complete homework during the day, after school or before school based on teacher discretion.</li> <li>• Parent will be notified.</li> <li>• Parent and student must attend a conference with the teacher to problem-solve.</li> </ul>
Ten+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student is required to complete homework/missing classwork after school or before school based on teacher discretion.</li> <li>• Parent and Student must attend a conference with the teacher to set-up a Homework Contract for the rest of the school year.</li> </ul>

**O. PARENT/GUARDIAN’S ROLE AT NEW HEIGHTS CHARTER SCHOOL**

Parent involvement is valuable to increase the School’s understanding of each student, connect student’s learning to home culture, and provide an authentic audience for student’s work. Parents will be kept informed of their child’s progress through regular classroom and principal communications.

To best support your child, the staff and teachers at New Heights expect your participation at the fall and spring Parent-Teacher Conference and our optional Family Events scheduled throughout the year. Also, staff and

teachers may request your attendance at a meeting to discuss strategies. Your presence at these meetings is essential to ensuring student progress. *Parents and staff are expected to talk with each other in respectful tones at all times.*

**Parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring that the student completes and submits his/her homework on time and turns it in to the teacher.**

Homework is assigned to reinforce lessons taught during the school day. Students will either receive a weekly homework schedule or will be responsible for recording their own homework assignments. Homework will generally require 15-30 minutes to complete in primary grades and may require as much as two hours by the time your child has reached 6th grade.

**Parents/guardians are responsible for participating in activities at home.**

Teachers will assign *activities designed for you to complete with your child at home.* Activities include short conversations, interviews, and conversations with your child.

**Parents/guardians have the proper supplies at home to help your student complete their homework, such as:**

- a. sharpened pencils
- b. glue/tape
- c. children's  
scissors
- d. calculator
- e. ruler
- f. notebook paper
- g. dictionary

**Parents/guardians ensure their child is ready to learn**

Ensure your child arrives to school on time each day, in uniform, and ready to learn. Help us support and reinforce the school’s Code of Conduct.

**Parents/guardians monitor exposure to TV, movies, and music to avoid exposure to violence and inappropriate language.**

In order for our students to focus on their learning in school, it is critical that they spend time at home reading and talking, rather than watching the television. Also, monitoring what children watch will support students’ social development and to help them to abide by the school’s rule for behavior.

**Parents/guardians support your child’s healthy development by encouraging physical activities and healthy eating.**

Students are not allowed to bring unhealthy snacks or lunch to school. (Please refer to section on healthy eating for details.) Parents are also not allowed to bring unhealthy food onto the school campus (for students’ lunch, birthdays, or other celebrations.) Parents who volunteer to join their child’s class on field trips, are not allowed to buy unhealthy food for their child or other children.

**Parents/guardians participate in the life of the School and in cultural/educational events** such as: attending scheduled parent meetings and events, attending field trips, volunteering at school, and organizing educational events over the weekends. *Parents who spend 30 hours of time volunteering (an additional 10 hours for each additional child in your family) will be recognized at the end year Family Picnic.* Parents can use the school’s volunteer card to keep track of their hours. Please be aware, volunteering is optional and not required.

Sample List of School Meetings and Events:

- Class/School Wide Parent Meetings (at least three times a year)
- Parent/teacher/student conferences (at least twice a year)
- Exhibitions of Student Work (at least once a year)
- Family Nights
- Monthly “Tea” / Parent Sessions with the Executive Director
- School wide Community Nights and Performances
- \_\_\_\_\_Healthy Families Events

Ideas for Volunteering:

- Helping in the classroom, the school office, or for lunch
- Attending student field trips

**P. STUDENT PROMOTION AND RETENTION**

New Heights Charter School provides ongoing information to parents regarding student progress. Four (4) times during the year, parents receive formal feedback regarding students’ progress and may receive recommendations regarding additional/supplemental work that will benefit their student.

**Criteria for pupil promotion and retention decisions**

Our promotion criteria includes students' grades and other indicators of academic achievement. Student results on the Standardized Testing may be included as one indicator of academic achievement. However, Standardized Testing results are not the exclusive criterion for promotion or retention.

The identification of students who should be retained or who are at risk of being retained is based primarily on proficiency in reading between the second and third grades and between the third and fourth grades. For the remaining grade levels, identification is based on proficiency in reading, English- language arts, and mathematics. New Heights can retain or promote a student without parent or guardian approval.

### **Appeal**

New Heights has an appeal process for parents who disagree with a teacher's promotion or retention decision for their student. The process includes the following steps:

1. Parents submit a written appeal within 3 working days after the formal decision is made to retain or promote.
2. The burden is on the parent as the appealing party to show why the promotion or retention decision should be overruled.
3. A meeting will be held with the Executive Director, parent, and teacher within 2 weeks of receiving the written appeal. At this meeting, a final decision will be made.

### **Schoolwide Title I Parent Information**

Teacher Qualification: Our School receives federal Title I funds. Throughout the school year, we will be providing you with important information about this law and your child's education, such as your right to request information regarding the professional qualifications of your child's classroom teachers(s) and/or paraprofessionals. Should you have any questions regarding your child's education, please don't hesitate to call the school office at (323) 508-0155.

For more details regarding school policies, please contact the school office. Policies available in the upper campus school office include:

- Parent engagement policy
- Education for homeless students
- Pupil records, including challenges and directory information
- Uniform complaint procedure
- Title IX, harassment, intimidation, discrimination, and bullying policy



**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF NEW HEIGHTS CHARTER SCHOOL COMMUNITY HANDBOOK**

**I have read the New Heights Charter Handbook and understand the contents. I agree to abide by all of the School's policies.**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent Signature(s):**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Print Parent Name(s):**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Write Student Name(s):**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Students Grade(s):**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_