

22025 SW 87 AVENUE – CUTLER BAY, FLORIDA 33190

PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK

Lower School

2026-2027

Dear Parents and Students,

Welcome to an exciting year at Mater Bay Academy Lower School. Parents are an integral part of our school's success and we gladly welcome your input and suggestions throughout the year. Your collaboration is essential in promoting our school's mission as we continue to place an emphasis on individual student achievement by nurturing a positive learning environment which will enable our students to become confident, self-directed, responsible life-long learners. We are looking forward to a rewarding and exciting new year. On behalf of the administration, faculty and staff we assure you that we are committed to Mater's vision to provide an innovative challenging curriculum in a learning environment that promotes individualized instruction for all of our students. We are honored and thank you for selecting us as your ***School of Choice***!

CHARTER SCHOOL INFORMATION

Charter schools are non-profit, self-managed entities which enroll Miami-Dade County Public School students. They must be approved and monitored by the local school board, yet they are run independently. Charter schools are funded by state and local monies and are open to any student residing in the Miami-Dade County School District who would otherwise qualify to attend a regular elementary school in Miami-Dade County. Charter school students are Miami-Dade County Public School students.

MISSION & VISION

Mater Bay Academy Mission

The mission of Mater Bay Academy is to deliver a rigorous and innovative academic program-producing students who have the knowledge and skills to be self-directed, lifelong learners, which integrate technology and a wide range of educational resources within a safe learning environment. Students are expected to perform at or above grade level availing success in education.

Mater Bay Academy Vision

Our vision is to provide a structured, creative environment that enables students to ask questions, solve problems, and take risks as they gain the knowledge and skills necessary to be successful members of a global society. Mater Bay Academy is a collaborative teaching and learning environment, which encourages students to develop meaningful interactions within the curriculum.

Mater Academy, Inc. Mission

Meaningful achievement of
Academics facilitated by
Teachers, administrators, parents & the community
Enabling students to become confident, self-directed &
Responsible lifelong learners

Mater Academy, Inc. Vision

The Vision of Mater Academy, Inc. is to provide a structured, creative environment that enables students to ask questions, solve problems, and take risks as they gain the knowledge and skills necessary to be successful members of a global society. Mater Bay Academy is a collaborative teaching and learning environment which encourages students to develop meaningful interactions within the curriculum.

SCHOOL CURRICULUM

Mater Bay Academy follows the standards and objectives stated in the Florida B.E.S.T. Standards and NGSSS Florida Standards. It encompasses the core subject areas of Reading, Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. In addition, we offer classes in Spanish, Art, Music and Physical Education. Please see Fee Schedule for any possible fees related to specific classes.

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

Mrs. Cruz, Principal
Mrs. Carrion Gorri, Assistant Principal

OFFICE STAFF

Mrs. J. Quintas, Office/Registrar
Mrs. D. Quintas, Office Staff
Ms. Fernandez, School Treasurer
Ms. Bustillo, Office/Before and After School Treasurer

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Please visit https://www.materbayk12.com/board

Procedures for adding items to the board meeting agenda and filing complaints:

Procedures for Addressing Concerns

Positive relations between the School and its parents and families are a primary concern. For that reason, every effort will be made to handle disputes in the most positive way possible. The following steps have been outlined in order to facilitate resolution of such issues:

Step 1
Make an appointment to clarify issue with your student's teacher.

Step 2
Make appointment to clarify issue with the school administrator.

Step 3
Discuss concerns with Parent Involvement Representative (see below list for name and contact information).

Step 4
If the person named is not able to assist with dispute resolution or you have already discussed your concerns with them, please contact Academica.

Phone - 305-669-2906
Email - parentsupport@academica.org

Step 5
Discuss Concerns with the Chief Operating Officer (Academica will assist in establishing contact).

Step 6
State concerns at a scheduled Governing Board meeting. All complaints should be provided to the Board in writing (assistance available upon request) via Kelly Mallon / Board Liaison (contact information below) at least 3 days prior to a regular scheduled meeting.

Kelly Mallon - Board Liaison
Email: kmallon@academica.org

Please understand that: A public board meeting is the only forum in which Board Members should be addressed for disputes. Board Members cannot respond to any other direct means of contact.

Note: This policy does not replace or change any proceeding that is governed by the Code of Student Conduct or the Parent Contract.

Parent Involvement Representatives

Each charter school's governing board must appoint a representative to facilitate parental involvement, provide access to information, assist parents and others with questions and concerns, and resolve disputes. The representative must reside in the school district in which the charter school is located and may be a governing board member, a charter school employee, or an individual contracted to represent the governing board. If the governing board oversees multiple charter schools in the same school district, the governing board must appoint a separate representative for each charter school in the district.

Mater Academy Bay (4010) - J Carrion (jcarrion@materbayk12.com)

STAFF DIRECTORY

https://www.materbayk12.com/apps/staff/

SCHOOL HOURS

Lower School	
Kinder & 1st Grade	**8:20 AM – 2:30 PM**
2nd, 3rd, 4th & 5th Grade	**8:45 AM – 3:30 PM**
Early Release Day	
Kinder & 1st Grade	**8:20 AM-11:30 AM**
2nd, 3rd, 4th & 5th Grade	**8:45 AM- 12:15 PM**

Mater Bay Academy is NOT responsible for students who arrive more than thirty (20) minutes prior to the start of school. Students may not be dropped off or left unattended outside the school building prior to the start of our school day. Students will remain supervised for 15 minutes after dismissal. Students who are not picked up 15 minutes after dismissal time will be sent to the Aftercare Program and issued a fee of **$1.00 per minute**.

Early Release Dates

November 20*
December 17*
March 19*
June 1*, 2*, & 3*
*No After Care available

Teacher Planning Days

September 21
November 3
January 15, March 10
March 29, June 4

2026-2027 SCHOOL CALENDAR

MATER BAY ACADEMY

2026-2027 SCHOOL CALENDAR

JULY 2026

M	T	W	R	F
		1	2	3
6	7	8	9	10
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
27	28	29	30	31

AUGUST 2026

M	T	W	R	F
3	4	5	6	7
10	11	12	13	14
17	18	19	20	21
24	25	26	27	28
31				

SEPTEMBER 2026

M	T	W	R	F
	1	2	3	4
7	8	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25
28	29	30		

OCTOBER 2026

M	T	W	R	F
			1	2
5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16
19	20	21	22	23
26	27	28	29	30

NOVEMBER 2026

M	T	W	R	F
2	3	4	5	6
9	10	11	12	13
16	17	18	19	20
23	24	25	26	27
30				

DECEMBER 2026

M	T	W	R	F
	1	2	3	4
7	8	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25
28	29	30	31	

JANUARY 2027

M	T	W	R	F
				1
4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

FEBRUARY 2027

M	T	W	R	F
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26

MARCH 2027

M	T	W	R	F
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26
29	30	31		

APRIL 2027

M	T	W	R	F
			1	2
5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16
19	20	21	22	23
26	27	28	29	30

MAY 2027

M	T	W	R	F
3	4	5	6	7
10	11	12	13	14
17	18	19	20	21
24	25	26	27	28
31				

JUNE 2027

M	T	W	R	F
	1	2	3	4
7	8	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25
28	29	30		

August 2026
- 5-12 Teacher Planning Days
- 12 PK, K, 6 and 7-12 New to Bay: Soft Opening
- 13 First Day of School: Beginning of First Grading Period

September 2026
- 7 No School: Labor Day
- 21 Teacher Planning Day

October 2026
- 19 Start of Second Grading Period

November 2026
- 3 Teacher Planning Day
- 11 No School: Veteran's Day
- 20 Early Release Day
- 23-27 No School: Thanksgiving Break

December 2026
- 17 Early Release Day
- 18 Teacher Planning Day
- 21-31 No School: Winter Break

January 2027
- 1 No School: Winter Break
- 15 Teacher Planning Day
- 18 No School: MLK
- 19 Start of Third Grading Period

February 2027
- 15 No School: President's Day

March 2027
- 10 Teacher Planning Day
- 19 Early Release Day
- 22-26 No School: Spring Break
- 29 Teacher Planning Day
- 30 Start of Fourth Grading Period

April 2027

May 2027
- 31 No School: Memorial Day

June 2027
- 1-3 Early Release Day
- 3 Last Day of School: Early Release Day
- 4 Teacher Planning Day
- 18 Holiday

Days in Grading Period	Early Release Days
1-45	20-Nov
2-46	17-Dec
3-42	19-Mar
4-47	1-Jun
	2-Jun
	3-Jun

Teacher Planning Day · Beginning of Grading Period · Early Release Day · PK, K, 6 & 7-12 New to Bay
Holiday · First Day of School · Recess · Last Day of School

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REGISTRATION INFORMATION

APPLICATIONS

Current Mater Bay Academy students do not need to apply to the existing school as their seat is already reserved. All new applicants, including siblings, must apply on the school's website WWW.MATERBAYK12.COM for the correct incoming school year. A random selection (lottery) process will be used to select applicants. Selected applicants will be notified via the email provided on the application. Failure to respond to an offer of acceptance by the specified timeframe voids the applicant's acceptance. Applications for the following school year are available by November 1st. Notification of acceptance begins on or approximately February 15th.

STUDENT ENROLLMENT/LOTTERY

Students will be admitted to Mater Bay Academy regardless of race, gender, religion or ethnic origin and our admission and dismissal procedures will be equitable for all students. The following policies apply:

1. If the number of applicants is less than or equal to the number of available slots each qualified applicant will be accepted and enrolled.
2. If the number of applicants meeting the established criteria of the charter exceeds the stated capacity of the school, or individual classroom or program, each child will be placed in a waitlist and a random lottery will take place as spots become available.
3. There will be at least one school administrator plus a member of the board and/or a representative from an independent auditing firm present at the Lottery.
4. After the Lottery is completed, students will be contacted in the rank order in which names were randomly drawn and established on the waiting list.
5. As openings arise throughout the year, the students on the waitlist will be selected from a random drawing based on the particular classroom or program availability.
6. The parent has 48 hours to accept/refuse the space and complete all required documentation for admission into program. If the parent is not able to do so, the space will go to the next child on the waiting list. Applicant names for parents who do not respond within 48 hours or who do not accept the available space will be removed from the list and requested to reapply in the future if they would like to be considered at a later date.
7. If there are more spaces than applications, the school may accept all students after the registration period has ended. If the school continues to accept applications after the initial registration period, the school will:
    A) Conduct subsequent registration periods with advertised due dates and determine whether a lottery is necessary at the end of that period; or,
    B) Conduct a "rolling" registration weekly. At the end of each week, determine whether or not a lottery is necessary.
8. Repeat steps a and b above at the end of each week or as long as the school continues to accept applications for each school year.
9. The school may choose the option of maintaining a waiting list application pool rather than a rank ordered waiting list. When the school chooses this option, it will conduct the lottery from all available applications received to date and stop when all available spaces have been filled. Each time the school has available space, it will conduct a new lottery.
10. The school may implement limited enrollment periods to target specified student populations in accordance with Florida Statute, Section 1002.33(10)(e).

All students enrolled at Mater Bay Academy Charter School are students of Miami-Dade County Public Schools.

HEALTH SCREENINGS

Tuberculosis Clinical Screening - Each student shall have proof of a tuberculosis clinical screening and appropriate follow-up prior to initial enrollment in any grade in a Miami-Dade County Public School. This screening is to be administered at the time of the Student Health Exam and within twelve (12) months prior to initial enrollment in any grade in a Miami-Dade County Public School. If the screening indicates that a follow-up skin

test is needed, a student can be admitted but only with a health provider's statement that the student is free of communicable tuberculosis and can attend school.

Immunizations (Requirements for School Entry)
1. A complete Florida Certification of Immunization – Blue Card Form DH 680 - according to grade level.
2. State of Florida School Entry Health Exam – Yellow Form DH 3040 - no older than 12 months.
3. Tuberculosis Clinical Screening, PPD or Chest X-ray.

Note: Student's that do not meet these requirements must be removed from school until all the requirements are met.

Medical Updates
It is essential to, and the parent's responsibility, to notify the school immediately of any medical updates or changes in your child's health. This includes new diagnoses, medication changes, or any conditions that may affect your child's well-being during the school day. Please ensure that any updates are accompanied by proper documentation from the attending physician.

Student-Athletes Health Forms
Instructions for Athletic Physical may be found in the Athletic section of this handbook.
Physicals are required to try out for any sport, along with enrollment of athletic insurance. School insurance is available to students during the first week of the school year.

The FHSAA/MDCPS Physical form is designated to be printed on both sides (do not print one sided).
Please review the packet and pay attention to what needs to be signed and notarized before submission.
Physical Examination MUST BE DATED AFTER JUNE 30th to be eligible for the incoming school year.

Parents: If your child suffers from asthma, epilepsy, seizures, or any other chronic medical condition, please note that in their Physical and advise the athletic trainer on the personalized Emergency Action Plan for your child.

All physicals must be completed with your PCP or at a clinic, the physician **MUST STAMP** where appropriate on the form. Without the physician's office stamp, the form **WILL NOT** be accepted.
Please **DO NOT** drop off completed physicals to the front office. They will only be accepted by the Homeroom Teacher.

SCHOOL INSURANCE

The Student Protection Plan is designed as supplemental coverage for students for injuries received while participating in school sports, extra-curricular activities, before/mini/after care, while traveling to and from school or when involved in accidents while engaged in supervised activities on the school premises. Participation in this program is voluntary; however, all students taking part in athletic activities must carry the student accident insurance. The school will provide the enrollment information to parents.

SCHOOL INFORMATION

SCHOOL HOURS

Lower School	
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Early Release Dates
November 20*
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June 1*, 2*, & 3*
*No After Care available

Teacher Planning Days
September 21
November 3
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March 29, June 4

BEFORE AND AFTER-CARE

Mater Bay Academy has established Before and After School Care Services to be available on campus. It is the parents'/guardians' responsibility to register the child and pay for such services at their option and discretion. Please contact the school office for detailed information on how to register for the Before and After School Care Program at our school. This program is offered for PreK, Lower School and Middle School students only.

Before Care	7:00 am
Sibling Care	2:30 pm – 3:30 pm
After Care	1:30 pm – 6:00 pm (Middle School – Grades 6-8) 2:30pm – 6:00 pm (PreK, Kinder & 1st grade) 3:30 pm – 6:00 pm (2nd – 5th grade)

Student insurance is available to students during the first week of the school year. Any student enrolled in the Before Care and After Care Program MUST purchase the student insurance.

ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL

ARRIVAL PROCEDURES

- All vehicles must enter the school from the south driveway and drive to the designated drop off/pick up area.
- Under no circumstances will parents be allowed to park or leave their vehicles unattended in the drop off/pick up areas.
- Students must not exit vehicles or be dropped off from the entrance lane of the school driveway or from 87th Avenue.
- The south side of the building is **exclusively** for bus drop off and pick up. Parents may not park or drop students off in this area.

DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

- All vehicles are to enter the school from the south driveway. All vehicles must enter the property on the south entrance and must exit on the north entrance once you have picked-up your child.
- Students will be dismissed by their teacher in the designated pick-up area.
- Parents are discouraged from picking up students enrolled in the After Care Program during regular dismissal times.
- Under no circumstances will parents be allowed to park or leave their vehicles unattended in the drop off/pick up areas. No vehicle will be allowed to park on the grass area to wait for another dismissal. If a parent needs to do an additional pick-up for another dismissal time, the vehicle needs to exit the property and re-enter on the south entrance for the following dismissal time and procedures.

We ask parents to refrain from holding parent conferences during dismissal as this does not allow the teacher to provide adequate supervision to the students he/she is responsible for dismissing.

The following acts are prohibited and may jeopardize student safety and the continuance of our Charter School contract:

- Dropping students off along 87th Avenue, or entrance driveway
- Blocking the Entrance/Exit of any driveway
- Vehicles may not stop or stand at any time on 87th Avenue to pick up or drop off
- Vehicles may not stack up on 87th Avenue at any time
- Drop Off and Pick Up may only be via vehicle

In addition to the issuance of citations from local law enforcement, Mater Bay Academy will implement the following consequences for violation of these rules:
1. Documented Warning
2. Incident Report/Administrative Meeting

UNAUTHORIZED VEHICLES/DISMISSAL
Mater Bay Academy prioritizes the safety and well-being of all students and, as such, will not release students to Uber, Lyft, or similar ride-share drivers. Students will only be released to parents, legal guardians, or individuals in vehicles displaying the school-issued car decals. Releasing students to unauthorized persons poses a significant and safety concern; therefore, it will not be permitted under any circumstance. We appreciate your cooperation in helping us maintain a secure environment for all students.

The above procedures may change based on the campus needs and adjustments will be made as needed to best keep the safety of our students.

SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

CONTACT INFORMATION
It is critical that the school office be notified of any change of address and/or telephone number, custody agreements or changes to the household **immediately**. During the opening of schools, official documents will be shared with parents via our website. All forms sent home will need to be returned to the school. Please ensure that the email address on file is up to date and that any blocks or filters are removed to allow for communication from the school. Failure to return the required forms by the specified deadline will be deemed acknowledgment and acceptance by the parent/guardian of the school's policies, procedures, and requirements as set forth by the school.

Mater Bay Academy will communicate news and events via the school's official website, social media pages and Finalsite:
Website: www.materbayk12.com
Instagram: @materbayacademy
Facebook: Mater Bay Academy

Private communication chats, social media pages and/or other communications not affiliated to the school are not official sources of communication and are not monitored by school officials or any other personnel. Please obtain accurate information from official school accounts only.

CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION
Parents, guardians and students are protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Acts and the Florida Statutes from individuals' access to information in student's educational records, and provide the right to challenge the accuracy of these records. These laws provide that without the prior consent of the parent, guardian, or eligible student, a student's records may not be released, expect in accordance with the provisions listed in the above-cited law. The laws provide certain exceptions to the prior consent requirement to the release of student records, which include, but are not limited to, school officials with a legitimate educational interest and lawfully issued subpoenas and court orders.

PARENT TO SCHOOL COMMUNICATION
A prime factor in our operation is the importance we place upon communication between home and school. The lines of communication must be kept open at all times so that we may be properly tuned into your child's needs.

Please notify us immediately if:
1. Your child has developed a communicable disease.
2. You will be out of town.
3. Your telephone number (home or work) has changed.

4. You wish to change or add to the emergency contact numbers we are to use.
5. **IF THERE IS ANY CHANGE IN TRANSPORTATION.** We will not allow a child to deviate from their regular departure routine without written or verbal verification. If there is a change in the person who is to pick up your child, we require the name of that person in writing.

PARENT/TEACHER COMMUNICATION

Conferences with individual teachers must be arranged by contacting the teacher.
Please make appointments for conferences before or after school hours. Teachers may also be available during their planning time; however, you must make an appointment during this time.
PLEASE DO NOT ENGAGE IN PARENT CONFERENCES DURING ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL OF STUDENTS, IN THE HALLWAYS OR DURING CLASSROOM TIME. Teachers will have up to 48 hours to return your call or email.

Always attempt to resolve issues/conflicts with your child's teacher first. If you are unable to resolve issues or conflicts with your child's teacher you may contact the main office to schedule an appointment with the administration.

PARENT PORTAL

Parents/guardians of all Miami-Dade County Public Schools students, including employees, have access to the Parent Portal. In order to access the information in the portal, you must first establish a parent user account. At this time, you can see and update personal information, see your child's information - including grades and attendance. Visit www.dadeschools.net for further details and instructions.

PARENT VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Mater Bay Academy highly encourages all parents/guardians to participate in volunteer opportunities throughout the academic year. Parent involvement helps strengthen the school community and enriches the educational experience for all students.

In accordance with Miami-Dade County Public Schools policies, all parents wishing to volunteer must complete the School Volunteer Registration Screening and be cleared before participating in any volunteer activities. This includes clearance for events such as field days, fundraising activities, and school assemblies or sponsored school event/activity. For safety reasons, children not enrolled at Mater Bay Academy are not permitted on campus during school hours or on school-sponsored events while parents are an assigned volunteer.

Parents who are interested in volunteering are encouraged to reach out directly to their child's teacher(s) to coordinate available opportunities. Volunteer spots will be assigned through a random selection process, with priority given to parents who have not yet participated in an event during the current school year.
Parents may volunteer in various ways, here are a few examples:

- Classroom teacher assistance (decorating or event)
- Guest speaker
- Attend Parent Teacher Organization meetings
- Assist with school events
- Donate items

Any parent/guardian who would like to volunteer in the classroom must coordinate with the classroom teacher **at least one week prior** to volunteering. All volunteers must be cleared. In addition, parents/visitors must sign in at the main office and obtain a visitor's pass. To ensure the safety of all of our students, **NO PARENTS/VISITORS WILL BE ALLOWED BEYOND THE MAIN OFFICE WITHOUT A VISITOR'S PASS. NO EXCEPTIONS! ALL VISITORS MUST BE CLEARED AND ACCOMPANIED BY A SCHOOL EMPLOYEE AT ALL TIMES!**

A student's family plays an extremely important part in his/her education. The following are areas in which parents are asked to offer support and/or assistance:

- Provide a loving, nurturing home environment which motivates the child to succeed in school
- Instill a respect for others
- Ensure punctual and regular attendance
- Become familiar with school policies and procedures

- Attend parent/guardian meetings at Mater Bay Academy
- Provide an environment conducive to learning
- Support the school's Home Learning Policies
- Stress the importance of reading on a daily basis
- Communicate with your child's teachers on a regular basis

We look forward to working together to create and foster a supportive and engaged school community!

FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS

All late charges, fees and/or monies owed to the school or any school sponsored program, must be paid by the end of the third nine weeks. Financial obligation notices will be sent as reminders throughout the school year. Account balances must be in good standing prior to events/activities.

CLASS FEES

Some classes require a class fee. A list of the fees associated with each class will be available at the beginning of the school year. Account balances must be in good standing prior to events/activities.

FEES MAY APPLY TO BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO: Field Trips, Athletics, Clubs, Honor Societies, Competitions, etc.

SCHOOL LUNCH

Students are required to bring their lunch in the morning or purchase lunch from the cafeteria. Lunch costs **$4.00**. Students may qualify for free meals or for reduced price meals. Guidelines and free/reduced lunch applications will be disseminated. All information received is confidential. Reduced price is **.40 cents** for lunch. Additional school lunches will be charged at a cost of $5.00 per meal. If a student participates in the free or reduced lunch program and chooses to purchase an additional lunch, he/she will be charged $5.00 for the additional lunch purchased. Parents may not drop off lunch or water bottles for their child during school hours. Students who do not bring lunch and/or lunch money will be provided with a school lunch and will be required to pay the money owed on the following day. **It is the parent's responsibility to monitor the student's lunch account and make sure that the student has sufficient lunch money.**

Additionally, all students must have their school ID to purchase lunch. One Free School Issued Student ID will be provided to each student at the beginning of the school year. All replacement ID's will have a $5.00 replacement fee.

All late charges, fees and/or monies owed to the school or any school sponsored program, must be paid by the end of the third nine weeks, or in the event of a withdrawal. Financial obligations may include but are not limited to: outstanding lunch balances, class fees, athletic fees, etc.

Financial obligation notices will be sent as reminders throughout the school year. Outstanding balances may affect and prevent participation in extra-curricular activities or events.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Mater Bay Academy will abide by the M-DCPS Student Attendance Reporting Procedures.
Mater Bay Academy students are expected to:

- Be present at school each and every day
- Attend class as scheduled
- Arrive at school on time and be seated in class by the ringing of the bell
- Demonstrate appropriate behavior and a readiness to learn
- Students leaving before 10:00 a.m. or arriving after 12:00 p.m. will be considered absent.

EXCUSED ABSENCES

An absence may be marked excused if proper documentation is submitted within 72 hours of the student's return.
School Board Rule 6Gx13-5A-1.041, Student Attendance - Specific responsibilities define
Excused School Absence as:

- Student Illness
  Students missing 5 or more consecutive days of school due to illness or injury must provide a written statement from a health care provider. The written statement must include all days the student has been absent from school.
- Medical Appointment
- Death in Family
- Observance of a religious holiday or service when it is mandated for all members of a faith that such a holiday or service be observed
- School sponsored event or educational enrichment activity
- Outdoor Suspensions
- Other individual student absences beyond the control of the parent/guardian or student as determined and approved by the principal or the principal's designee. The principal shall require documentation related to the condition.

UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

Any absence that does not fall into one of the above excused absence categories is to be considered unexcused. Any student who has been absent from school will be marked unexcused absence until he/she submits written documentation as specified above. Failure to provide required documentation within three (3) days upon the return to school will result in an unexcused absence. Unexcused absences do not require the teacher to provide makeup work for the student.

Unexcused absences include:

- Absences due to vacations, personal services, local non-school event, program or sporting activity
- Absences due to older students providing day care services for siblings
- Absences due to illnesses of others
- Absences due to non-compliance with immunization requirements (unless lawfully exempted)

Mater Bay Academy follows Miami Dade County Public Schools truancy procedures. Students with 10 or more total absences (excused or unexcused) may be required to provide additional documentation and attend a parent meeting with the Attendance Review Committee (ARC) and may lose participation privileges for field trips and school sponsored events.

EARLY DISMISSAL

Students who are dismissed early (on a regular school day) must be signed out by a parent or guardian in the main office. Students will not be released to persons whose names do not appear on the emergency contact card kept on file in the main office. A photo ID must be shown in order to release a student from the premises. In case of an emergency, if a person not listed on the emergency contact card must pick up a student, the parent must email a signed statement with a copy of their driver's license allowing that person to pick up their child on that specific day. It is the parent's responsibility to come to the main office and add the person to the emergency contact card for subsequent days. Students will not be released to persons whose names do not appear on the emergency contact card kept on file in the main office. **Students will not be dismissed early on any early release day (refer to school calendar for dates). Students will not be dismissed during their scheduled lunch time for safety reasons. Students will not be dismissed 30 minutes prior to dismissal time. NO EXCEPTIONS.**

TARDY POLICY

Any student who is not in their classroom by 8:20 am (grades K-1) and 8:45 am (grades 2-5) will be marked "TARDY". These students **must** report to the main office with a guardian to obtain a tardy slip to be admitted into their classroom.

ATTENDANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE

The Attendance Review Committee (ARC) is comprised of a minimum of a student services representative and an administrator designee and will provide guidance and support to students with significant absences. They are expected to:

- Provide early intervention by conveying when students reach excessive absences (excused or unexcused), tardies and or early releases.
- Convene a minimum of two (2) times per year.
- Consider all the extenuating circumstances surrounding student absences. The ARC is charged with the responsibility of prescribing activities designed to migrate the loss of instructional time and has the authority to recommend the following:
    - Make-up assignments or academic probation.
    - Possible retention in accordance with retention requirements when attendance significantly impacts academic progress.
    - Student will not participate in field trips and school sponsored events
    - Temporary or permanent withholding of semester/final grades.
    - Referral for counseling or attendance support.
- Review attendance history of student(s) exhibiting patterns of excused and/or unexcused absences and provide appropriate referrals and counseling support.

ATTENDANCE CONSEQUENCES

Absences (Grades K-5)

After a student accumulates **10 absences**, they will no longer be eligible to participate in school field trips or other school-sponsored events.

Exceptions may be considered at the discretion of the administration only when the absences have been officially excused. To request an exception, the parent/guardian must meet with the ARC and the Assistant Principal to review the circumstances and determine whether the excused absences justify continued participation in field trips and school-sponsored activities.

Tardy Consequences (Kindergarten – Grade 2)

- 10-14 tardies = Lunch detention per tardy and student may not participate in field trips and school sponsored events
- 15 tardies = Referral and parent conference
- 20 tardies = Each tardy results in In-School Suspension (ISS)
- 25 tardies = Second referral, ISS per tardy, and parent conference

Tardy Consequences (Grade 3-5)

- 5-9 tardies = Lunch detention per tardy
- 10 tardies = Referral and parent conference and student may not participate in field trips and school sponsored events
- 11–19 tardies = Each tardy results in In-School Suspension (ISS) and a referral
- 20 tardies = Second referral, ISS per tardy, and parent conference

Excessive Early Releases

Excessive early releases disrupt instructional time and may result in attendance interventions.

After 10 Early Releases, the student may not participate in field trips and school sponsored events

MAKE-UP ASSIGNMENTS

If a graded assignment is given on a day that a student is absent, the student will automatically receive a zero in the gradebook for that assignment. Students granted an **excused absence** have the right to make up all course work within three **(3) school days** upon the return to school. After successful completion of all make-up assignments, the student cannot be penalized for that absence.

School Board Rule 6Gx13-5A-1.041, Student Attendance—Specific responsibilities.

Students are responsible for obtaining and completing all missed assignments within the timeframe established by the teacher and school policy. Once the assignment is completed and graded, the temporary zero will be replaced with the earned grade.

Makeup assignments will not be granted for unexcused absences.

ABSENCE FORM (EXCUSE FORM)

All excused absences must be submitted with the school's absence form. The form must be sent with the student and submitted to their homeroom teacher. The form may be found on the school's website under the Attendance Policy tab. The absence form must be completed to process any absences from school. The form will be used to submit any parent notes.

If a doctor's note is needed, please print the form and attach the Doctor's note to the form. Keep note that any student who has obtained 10 absences (excused or unexcused), must turn in this form with medical documentation.
Please be aware that this DOES NOT guarantee an excused absence.

MANDATORY SCHOOL UNIFORM

UNIFORM POLICY

Uniforms must be worn daily. Our uniform policy and dress code guidelines indicate appropriate school attire for normal school days. Mater Bay Academy reserves the right to interpret these guidelines and/or make changes during the school year. Students are expected to follow these guidelines with support from their parents/guardians.

School Spirit Shirts will be on sale in the campus store throughout the school year. Please purchase at least one Spirit Shirt since they will be required for Field Trips and special events. Students may also wear their Spirit Shirts and jeans on designated "Jean Days."

Kindergarten – 5th Grade		
Girls		**Boys**
Navy Blue Polo with school Logo		Navy Blue Polo with school Logo
Navy Blue & White Rugby Long Sleeve with school logo		Navy Blue & White Rugby Long Sleeve with school logo
Khaki Bermuda Shorts or Pants		Khaki Bermuda Shorts or Pants
Black or Ribbon Belt		Black Belt
All Black Sneakers (NO Logos)or Black Converse Sneakers		All Black Sneakers (NO Logos)or Black Converse Sneakers with laces
White or Black Socks		White or Black Socks
Solid Navy Blue Sweater		Solid Navy Blue Sweater
(Cardigan/Fleece with Mater Logo)		

All Students

1. Students may not wear cargo pants with pockets, unusual tailoring and/or labels are not permitted and pants may not be manufactured from jean material and must fit to the student

correctly. *Pants that are too big or too tight for the student are not acceptable and will be deemed in violation of the uniform code. Skinny style pants are not permitted.*

2. Belts must be worn at all times; belts must be black and fastened securely at waist level. *Loose or low pants will not be tolerated.*
3. All students must have their shirts tucked correctly into pants at all times and secured in place with the belt.
4. During cooler weather, a plain white or gray long sleeved shirt may be worn underneath polo shirts. Additionally, school approved sweaters may be worn. (S*weaters must be solid navy blue* ***ONLY****. Sweaters may be purchased at the uniform store or campus store ONLY.*)
5. Shoes must be closed solid black with matching laces and fastened tightly at all times. No other colors or stripes/logos may be on the shoes. Students can wear black converse.
6. Jewelry is limited to one watch, one ring and one small chain. Chains must be worn inside of shirts.
7. All uniforms must be clean and pressed at all times; good grooming of hair, skin and fingernails is expected at all times.
8. Hair may not be dyed with unnatural colors, worn unusually or maintained in unacceptable condition. Male students: Hair length must not exceed student's neck line nor cover their ears. *No "Mohawks", "Frohawks" or designs of any kinds are permitted.* **The administration will send home any student whose hair is unacceptable in condition or length.**
9. All facial hair must be properly groomed and kept neatly. It is up to the Administration's discretion what is deemed appropriate.
10. All headgear (hats, scarves, bandanas) is forbidden on school property.
11. No buttons, tags or labels may be worn on the school uniform unless school approved.
12. No visible body piercing or tattoos are allowed.

Boys Uniform

In addition to the above, boys may **NOT:**

- Wear earrings (real or clip-on).
- Wear any additional jewelry or clothing except as specified above.

Girls Uniform

In addition to the above, girls may **NOT:**

- Wear make-up other than clear lip gloss and light powder.
- Wear more than one pair of earrings. Earrings must be plain stud type or small hoops (total size must be smaller than a dime).
- Hair should be maintained with clips, rubber bands or soft hair bands only (see item 8).

Students should have enough uniform tops and bottoms that laundry issues should not interfere with the uniform policy. **Any student not wearing a complete school uniform or in violation any of the above mentioned infractions, will be issued a warning.** If a parent does not bring the uniform, disciplinary consequences will be issued to the student. A referral will be issued for continued violations of the uniform policy. Continued violation of our uniform policy will be addressed with an administration meeting. Uniforms must be worn the **first day of school.**

Official School Uniform Store Location

ALL UNIFORM WEAR
18705 SOUTH DIXIE HWY
CUTLER BAY, FL 33157

RAYS CAMPUS STORE
(Spirit Gear Only) On-Campus
See school calendar on website
for available dates & times.

GRADING AND REPORTING STUDENT PROGRESS

Instructional staff uses evaluative devices and techniques as needed to report individual achievement in relation to school goals, acceptance norms and student potential. Student grades, unsatisfactory work notices, parent reports on state assessments and/or standardized testing, parent conferences, and adult/student conferences should serve as the primary means of communicating student progress and achievement of the standards for promotion.

A student's academic grade reflects the teacher's most objective assessment of the student's academic achievement. Students have the right to receive a conduct and an effort grade consistent with their overall behavior and effort.

Specific guidelines for grading student performance and for reporting student progress are provided below and detailed in the *Student Progression Plan.* To view the plan, go to *http://ehandbooks.dadeschools.net/policies/93/index.asp*

Academic Grades: Academic grades are to reflect the student's academic progress. The grade must provide for both students and parents a clear indication of each student's academic performance as compared with norms that would be appropriate for the grade or subject. The academic grades of "A," "B," "C," "D," or "F," are not related to the student's effort and conduct grades. Grades in all subjects are to be based on the student's degree of mastery of the instructional objectives and competencies for the subject. The determination of the specific grade a student receives must be based on the teacher's best judgment after careful consideration of all aspects of each student's performance during a grading period.

Grading Scale				
Kinder	**Grades 1-5**	**NUMERICAL VALUE**	**VERBAL INTERPRETATION**	
E	A	90-100%	Outstanding progress	
G	B	80-89%	Above average progress	
S	C	70-79%	Average Progress	
M	D	60-69%	Lowest acceptable progress	
U	F	0-59%	Failure	

Effort Grades: Effort grades are utilized to convey both to students and their parent(s)/guardian(s) the teacher's evaluation of a student's effort as related to the instructional program. These grades are independent of academic and conduct grades. In assigning an effort grade, the teacher must consider the student's potential, study habits and attitude. Kindergarten students do not receive effort grades. Three numerical grades are used to reflect effort in Grades 1-5:

- An effort grade of **"1"** indicates outstanding effort on the part of the student. The student will, when necessary, complete a task again in order to improve the results. The student consistently attends to assigned tasks until completed and generally exerts maximum effort on all tasks. The student consistently works to the best of his/her ability.
- An effort grade of **"2"** indicates satisfactory effort on the part of the student. All work is approached with an appropriate degree of seriousness. The student usually finishes assignments on time and usually stays on task. The student usually works at a level commensurate with his/her ability.
- An effort grade of **"3"** reflects insufficient effort on the part of the student. Little attention is paid to completing assignments well and/or on time or to completing them in a manner commensurate with the student's ability.

Conduct Grades: Conduct grades are to be used to communicate clearly to both students and their parents the teacher's evaluation of a student's behavior and citizenship development. These grades are independent of academic and effort grades. The conduct grade must be consistent with the student's overall behavior in class and should not be based on a single criterion.

Progress Reports: Individual Progress Reports are issued every nine weeks and are a progress report of each child on an individual basis. Please study your child's progress with him/her. Please feel free to consult your child's teacher regarding his/her school progress. Digital report cards are issued the same days as identified in the Miami-Dade County School Calendar.

No Credit (NC): Any student who accumulates 10 or more hours of unexcused absences in an annual course and 5 or more hours in a semester course may be subject to the withholding of credit regardless of the student's academic grade.

HOME LEARNING ASSIGNMENTS

Home Learning Assignments are a very important part of learning since they reinforce concepts that have been learned. It is Mater Bay Academy's policy to assign homework **EVERY** night. This keeps the academic flow and a means of involving parents aligned with our curriculum goals. All students are **required** to use an agenda to keep track of their assignments.

To improve the effects of Home Learning Assignments:

- Provide your child with a quiet place which is conducive to studying and to learning.
- Show an interest in your child's home learning assignments by providing assistance and reviewing completed work. Check your child's agenda daily for home learning assignments and teacher communication.
- Do not complete any part of the home learning assignments for your child. If your child is having difficulty with their assignment please notify the teacher.
- Read with or to your children daily.

Student responsibilities for completing home learning activities:

1. Students are responsible for recording and completing all Home Learning Assignments independently. Parents may provide assistance, but students must complete the work on their own.
2. Home Learning Assignments should be done in a quiet place with good lighting and minimal disturbances.
3. If there is a problem in understanding how to complete Home Learning Assignments, students are to do the very best job possible. If a student does not understand the assignment(s), they are encouraged to bring it in the next day and ask the teacher for assistance. In this case, the homework should be completed that evening along with the regular Home Learning Assignments to the best of their ability.
4. A daily calendar can be used to keep track of home learning assignments for each night.
5. If a student is having difficulty in managing their time for homework, the student must ask the teacher for assistance with homework time management.

COLĒGIA

Colegia is a secure, cloud-based educational platform designed to enhance digital learning and communication within Academica-managed schools. It serves as a centralized hub where students can access all their educational resources, including virtual classrooms, email, school announcements, and academic tools. Students at Academica schools are required to log into Colegia daily to access their textbooks and digital platforms, check assignments, communicate with teachers, and access important school updates. The platform ensures a safe online learning environment and streamlines student engagement by integrating various academic applications in one place. Proper and consistent use of Colegia is essential for staying informed, organized, and connected within the school community.

All students must maintain an active Colegia account which includes access to student provided email and links to a variety of educational tools and programs.

TEXTBOOKS

Students will be issued textbooks at the beginning of each school year. Students must immediately inform teachers about any LOST or DAMAGED books so that they can be replaced. Parents will be responsible for the cost of the replacement book(s).

SUPPLIES
Students are expected to come to school daily prepared with all required materials; which include supplies listed on the official school supply list. In addition, each student is **REQUIRED** to purchase and bring a set of headphones for computer usage daily.

STUDENT ASSESSMENT
Students will be assessed throughout the school year through classroom, district, state and national assessments. Refer to the Miami-Dade County Public School's website for updates on district and state test dates. Mater Bay will send an annual email with specific test dates well in advance. Some of the assessments that students may take include: FAST, STAR and FSSA Science.

Assessments play a vital role in each student's education, so it is important that students are present on all scheduled testing days. **We kindly ask for doctors' appointments to be scheduled outside of testing dates, whenever possible.**

SUMMER ASSIGNMENTS
Students are required to complete and submit posted summer assignments. Our school website will have detailed information on the summer assignments required for each grade level. Students will be responsible for submitting the assignments to their teacher during the first week of the incoming school year. All assignments will be part of the class grade and will impact the students overall academic grade negatively if assignment is not submitted on time.

PROMOTION REQUIREMENTS

STUDENT PROGRESSION PLAN
The Florida Department of Education (FDOE) has developed student performance standards in language arts, mathematics, science, social science, the arts, health and physical education, and foreign language that define the skills and standards for each subject. Pursuant to Florida Statutes §1008.25, a student's progression from one grade to another is based on a student's mastery of the standards in English language arts, mathematics, science and social sciences. The state academic standards have been adopted under Florida Statutes § 1003.41, which include Florida's Benchmarks for Excellent Student Thinking (B.E.S.T.) standards (6A-1.09401). Grade progression for Miami-Dade County Public Schools' (M-DCPS) students is based, in part, on a student's mastery of the State's Standards. These grade level standards are included in the Miami-Dade County Public Schools' District Pacing Guides that support classroom instruction.

RETENTION OF THIRD GRADE STUDENTS
Per Florida Statutes § 1008.25, to be promoted to grade 4, a student must score a Level 2 or higher on the required statewide, standardized English Language Arts assessment for grade 3. If a student's reading deficiency is not remedied by the end of grade 3, as demonstrated by scoring a level 2 or higher on the statewide, standardized assessment for grade required under Florida Statutes § 1008.22, the student must be retained unless eligible for a good cause promotion.

RTI PROCESS
Students experiencing difficulties academically, socially, or emotionally should be referred to the academic intervention through the Response to Intervention (RTI) Process (Tier 2) and a Request for Assistance form. The RTI process will offer additional supplemental instruction and classroom strategies as recommended for further assistance. Academic interventions along with proper documentation of progress monitoring are required to referring a student to be evaluated.

SPECIAL EDUCATION
The School Board of Miami-Dade County ensures that all students Suspected of having a disability are identified, evaluated and provided appropriate, specially designed instruction and related services, if it is determined that the student meets the state's eligibility criteria and the parent consents to initial placement. Prior to referral for evaluation, the student must have participated in the school's Progress Monitoring Plan (PMP), Response to

Intervention (RTI) and have been referred to the school's Student Support Team (SST) to determine further interventions and future steps.

CLASSROOM PLACEMENT

Our administrative staff reviews each student's scores and performance evaluations in order to provide students with the best possible learning environment. We also consider a student's individual personality, development and character in our final decisions. **We are not in any way obligated to honor any special requests for classroom placements. In addition, students will receive classroom assignments with consideration given to their academic needs and progress.**

STUDENT CONDUCT:

Mater Bay Academy students are expected to show respect for themselves and others. Each classroom has a climate in which optimal learning can take place. Students are expected to behave in ways that are acceptable to classmates and conducive to learning. Misbehavior on the part of students can be generally corrected when parents and teachers work together.

Teachers and students must foster a mutual respect for one another. Teachers will never use corporal punishment or offensive language toward a student. The school will follow Miami-Dade County Public School's *Code of Student Conduct http://ehandbooks.dadeschools.net/policies/90/index.htm*. The following rules, regulations and due process procedures are designed to protect all members of the educational community in the exercise of their rights and responsibilities. According to the Code of Student Conduct, methods of positive reinforcement/rewards and/or loss of privileges are utilized. Administration will make the final decision on disciplinary actions.

These expectations apply to any student:
1. Anyone who is on the school property.
2. Anyone who is in attendance at school or any school-sponsored activity.
3. Anyone whose conduct at any time or in any place has a direct and immediate effect on maintaining order and discipline in the school.

Types of Disciplinary Action:

1. Verbal and Written Reprimand / Referral / Student Case Management Form (SCAM)
2. Contact with parent
3. Loss of Privileges or Loss of a School-Related Activity
4. Detention - student will be issued a detention to be served in school, during the assigned time.
5. Work Duty on Campus - student is assigned to a designated staff member to engage in active work such as cleaning, picking up, and organizing
6. In-School suspension – removal from class
7. Outdoor suspension – absence from school – student is not allowed on school grounds or at any school-related function.
8. Expulsion – student may be recommended to MDCPS for an expulsion.

Determination of disciplinary actions will be made by the administration after careful review of specific incidents. Student Case Management (SCM) referrals will be issued at the discretion of the administration. In addition, this handbook serves as acknowledgment that you have reviewed the Code of Student Conduct with your child. The online version of the Code of Student Conduct can be located in the Parent Portal or through the following website address: http://ehandbooks.dadeschools.net/policies/90/index.htm. This link may also be found on Mater Bay Academy's webpage.

BULLYING AND HARRASSMENT

Bullying or harassment of any student or employee of a public K-12 educational institution is prohibited, and in some instances, against the law, Florida Statute 1006.147.

This includes the ongoing and repeated systematical and chronic inflicting of physical or psychological distress, including through the use of technology or electronic communication (cyberbullying). Harassment is defined as

any threatening insulting, or dehumanizing gesture, use of data or computer software, or written, verbal, or physical conduct that places the victim in reasonable fear or harm, interferes with performance, and disrupts the orderly operation of the school. The Bullying and Harassment Policy may be found at: FLDOE Bullying Prevention.

ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY

Mater Bay Academy promotes a safe and supportive learning environment by protecting students and staff from conduct that poses a threat to school safety. The Zero Tolerance policy for crime and victimization may be found at: Statutes & Constitution: 1006.13

ITEMS PERMITTED/NOT PERMITTED IN SCHOOL

Students are not permitted to bring toys, games or other items of value to school. **Mater Bay Academy will not be responsible for any lost or stolen items brought to school or that have been taken away by school personnel.** Students who violate this policy maybe issued a disciplinary referral.

In addition, electronic devices used in violation of the Code of Student Conduct will be confiscated and will remain in the office until the end of the following day after which a parent or guardian must come to the office to retrieve it. The school is not responsible for any inconvenience this may cause. Any lost items will be discarded at the end of the week.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES POLICIES

STUDENT EMAILS

All students will receive a school issued email address which is to be used solely for school communication. It is expected that students use their school issued email to communicate with staff/faculty. Students are expected to sign-in and check their email account on a frequent and consistent basis as students are responsible for all information sent to them via their system-assigned email account. The use of student email is a privilege, not a right.

ALERT: WIRELESS COMMUNICATION DEVICES

Wireless communication devices include two-way communication devices, including cellular phones, mobile phones, portable computers, personal organizers, smart watches and similar wireless devices.

Effective July 1, 2025: In accordance with Florida state law and School Board policy, the following rules apply:

For Students in Grades K-8:

- Use of wireless communication devices is prohibited during the entire school day (bell to bell).
- Devices must be turned off and completely out of sight during school hours.
- Any visible device is subject to confiscation

A student may possess a wireless communications device while the student is on school property or in attendance at a school function; however, elementary and middle school students may not use a wireless communications device during the school day.

INTERNET USE POLICY

Access and use of the Internet is a privilege, not a right, and its use must support the educational objectives of the school. Students must always get permission from their teachers prior to using the internet. Students who violate the following internet usage policy may lose any and all internet usage privileges.

The school requires the following of its staff, students and parents:

- No recording, either photographic or audio/visual in nature may be made on school property without the express permission of the administration.

- No document or media that exists or is produced in reference to the school, its staff or students including photographs, letters, yearbooks and other material may be published where it is accessible to the public without the express permission of the administration.
- No staff member, student or parent may use the Mater Bay Academy name or any of its logos for identification purposes in any public forum or media. The term "public forum or media" also includes but is not limited to publicly accessible websites and web forums.
- Mater Bay Academy students are prohibited from using the school internet to access "chat rooms" at any time.

Excerpt from: Code of Student Conduct Board Rule 6Gx13-6A1.112

ALERT: UTILIZATION OF THE INTERNET AND INAPPROPRIATE USE OF COMPUTERS

Over the past few years, computers have become common household devices and popular in our schools and media centers. Students are encouraged to use computers, networks, and online telecommunication such as the Internet and electronic mail (e-mail). While exercising the right to use available technology, students must be aware of their responsibility as users. Advancement of technology has enabled many students with the access and opportunity to commit offenses that violate the Code of Student Conduct.

The following are examples of improper uses of technology and are violations of the Code of Student Conduct:

- Using the network to send or receive obscene or lewd material;
- Using the network to make threats against anyone or the school;
- Sending electronic mail that threatens to do bodily harm to another student that might be considered assault or cyber-bullying;
- Downloading pirated software (is comparable to stealing);
- Willfully and knowingly obtaining an unauthorized access to or "hacking" into the school's computer system (constitutes vandalism);
- Using, without authorization, school property or a school computer or other electronic device and damaging a school's computer system or causing the computer to "crash" (constitutes a "computer-related" crime leading to criminal charges).

These are only a few examples of violations committed through electronic means. The school administration will evaluate and determine the appropriate level of infraction under the Code of Student Conduct. Refer to the School Board Rule 6Gx13-6A-1.112 for further explanation.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

All Mater Bay Academy students are expected to be honest in what they carry out, present and submit as their work. This means that all parts of all works submitted for assessments, whether internal or external, must either be original to the student or must be properly cited.

Academic Dishonesty/Malpractice may involve:

- Copying materials from a textbook, the internet, or another student and presenting it as one's own work.
- Collusion.
- Taking unauthorized materials into an examination room (e.g. electronic devices other than a permitted calculator, notes, smartphones, etc.) regardless of whether this material is used or potentially contains information pertinent to the examination.
- Misconduct during an examination, including any attempt to disrupt the examination or distract another student.
- Exchanging or in any way supporting, or attempting to support, the passing of information that is related to an examination.
- Failing to comply with the instructions of the teacher/proctor or other members of the school's staff responsible for the conduct of the examination.
- Impersonating another student.
- Stealing/Copying examination papers.
- Using an unauthorized calculator during examination.
- Disclosing or discussing the content of an examination paper with a person outside of the immediate school community within 24 hours of the end of examination.

*This list above is by no mean exhaustive.

Actions to be taken by the school if a student is found guilty of academic dishonesty/malpractice

- Meeting with administration
- Zero earned grade for the assignment
- Student placed on academic probation for the school year.

DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP

Digital citizenship is a concept which helps teachers, technology leaders and parents understand what students should know to use technology appropriately. With the growth of technology there is a need to talk about responsible use of technology. Digital Citizenship refers to the ability to think critically, behave safely, and participate responsibly in our digital world. The following skills are essential for student users to harness the full potential of technology for learning and for college and career readiness.

- Internet Safety
- Privacy & Security
- Relationships & Communications
- Digital Footprint & Reputation
- Self-Image & Identity
- Information Literacy
- Creative Credit & Copyright

Teachers and staff will promote, model and establish policies for safe, legal and ethical use of digital information and technology. Digital Citizenship responsibility may include but is not limited to, refraining from posting something the student may later regret, protecting the student's and the school's integrity, refraining from cyberbullying, use of proper digital etiquette, avoid visiting websites that are not educationally related and avoid sharing personal information.

USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) TOOLS (e.g., ChatGPT)

Mater Bay Academy recognizes that artificial intelligence (AI) tools, such as ChatGPT and other AI-powered platforms, are increasingly being used in educational settings. These tools can support learning, creativity, and productivity when used appropriately. However, the use of AI must be aligned with the school's values of academic integrity, responsible technology use, and personal accountability.

Acceptable Use Guidelines:

- Students may use AI tools for brainstorming, editing, or studying **with teacher approval**.
- AI-generated content must be **properly credited** and may not be submitted as original work when assignments require personal effort or understanding.
- Teachers may integrate AI tools into classroom instruction as part of the curriculum where appropriate.

Prohibited Uses:

- Submitting AI-generated work (in full or in part) as a student's own on assignments, essays, or assessments unless explicitly allowed by the teacher.
- Using AI to bypass learning processes or engage in academic dishonesty.
- Relying on AI for inappropriate or harmful content creation, including offensive or misleading information.

Accountability and Academic Integrity:

- All AI use must comply with the school's **Academic Integrity Policy.**
- Students found misusing AI tools may face consequences, including loss of credit for the assignment, parent notification, or further disciplinary action.

Parental Support and Oversight:

- Parents are encouraged to talk with their children about the ethical and safe use of AI.
- Teachers and staff are available to guide students on how to use AI tools effectively and responsibly.

e-LEARNING

Every classroom at Mater Bay Academy is equipped with cutting-edge technology designed to enhance the tools for teaching and learning. Through our one-on-one initiative, each student has access to a personal device that supports interactive, individualized, and digital learning experiences across all subject areas. Our classrooms feature interactive Promethean Boards, and our Science Labs are outfitted with advanced tools that promote

hands-on exploration and inquiry. To ensure meaningful technology integration, our faculty participates in ongoing professional development focused on the latest advancements in educational technology.

SPECIAL EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

All special events and activities must be pre-approved by the administration. Birthday party celebrations including treats for students are not permitted during school hours. The birthday party celebration schedule MUST be adhered to in all grade levels.

CLUBS

Mater Bay Academy students may participate in a wide variety of activities, including student council, subject-area clubs, honor societies, service clubs, and class activities. School-sponsored clubs may be curriculum related or non-curriculum related.

Curriculum-related clubs are student groups whose goals are an extension of the activities and objectives in a particular subject area within the school's curriculum. Conversely, non-curriculum related clubs are students groups whose goals are special interest oriented and not directly related to the curriculum. Meetings of non-curriculum related clubs may be scheduled at times when instruction is not taking place, either before or after school hours.

Non-School Sponsored Clubs

The State of Florida prohibits the participation of public school students in Fraternities or Sororities, or any other secret society whose active membership is comprised wholly or partly by public school students and its members are selected based on the decision of its members, and not on the rules of the school.

Students and parent/guardian must read and sign the Miami-Dade County Public Schools Contract for Student Participation in Interscholastic Competitions or Performances (FM-7155) (06/12). In addition, alternatives to suspension may include exclusion from grade level class events and/or activities.

FIELD TRIPS

All trips planned by the school are for specific educational purposes and approved by the administration. Participation in field trips requires the student to present a field trip form signed by the parent/guardian to his/her teacher in advance. Students going on a field trip must assume the responsibility for any necessary fee. Please keep in mind that once the field trip has been paid, the school will not issue a refund. If a hardship exists where a student cannot afford the cost of the field trip, please notify the teacher. Field trip chaperones will be selected by classroom teachers, preference will be given to parents who have not attended previous trips. **Parent chaperones may not bring siblings on field trips as they are not covered by insurance.** All parents attending field trips must be cleared through the Volunteer Safety Program and must wear the designated school spirit shirt. In addition, parent chaperones must provide their own transportation to and from field trip sites.

Students will not be released to **anyone** during a field trip for **any reason**. Authorized persons who wish to have student released early must report to the main office to sign out the child and wait for the child to return with their class from the field trip.

Students with outstanding financial obligations will be unable to participate in extracurricular events and activities until their account is brought up to date.

Students with 10 or more absences, tardies and/or early releases will be unable to participate in field trips and school sponsored activities.

ATHLETICS

Eligibility/Student Contracts

Participation is a Privilege:

Participation in interscholastic athletics by a student is a privilege, not a right. To earn this privilege, students must abide by the rules and meet standards of academic performance and personal behavior that are related to school purposes.

Local Rules May Be More Stringent:
Mater Bay may adopt more stringent rules for the students under their supervision.

Academic Requirements:
A lower school student can NOT have any D's or F's as class grade at conclusion of each semester in order to participate.

Attendance Requirements:
Students must abide by the school attendance and tardy policy. In addition, any student athlete who is absent from school on the day of a practice or game may not attend practice or the scheduled game.

Physical Evaluation Requirement:
A student must have a physical evaluation each year and be certified as being physically fit to participate in interscholastic athletic programs prior to participating in interscholastic athletic competition or engaging in any practice, tryout, or workout, or other physical activity associated with the student's candidacy for an interscholastic team. A physical evaluation shall be valid for a period not to exceed one calendar year from the date of the practitioner's signature. The student cannot be allowed to participate in any activity related to interscholastic athletic programs until the fully executed physical evaluation form is on file in the school. To access the forms, please visit the schools website Mater Bay Athletic Page - Physical Forms

Physical Examination must be dated <u>after</u> June 30th to be eligible for the incoming school year.

For more detailed information, please visit the school's website.

Any student interested in participating in interscholastic sports must purchase school insurance prior to participation at any level. Additional information on the school's athletic programs may be obtained from the main office or school's website and/or social media postings.

A student is eligible to participate in interscholastic sports if he/she:

- Physical Examination must be dated after June 30th to be eligible for the incoming school year.
- Presents an original birth certificate
- Has a cumulative school grade point average of 2.0 or above on a 4.0 un-weighted grading scale
- Always adheres to the principles of good sportsmanship and the ethics of competition
- Student athletic contract must be signed

Students are declared ineligible:

- By the principal due to lack of attendance, improper conduct, or other valid reasons as deemed by the principal.

GENERAL INFORMATION

INCREMENT/HAZARDOUS WEATHER PROCEDURES

Arrival and dismissal procedures may be delayed due to hazardous weather conditions. Please be patient and continue to follow drop-off/pick-up procedures to ensure your child's safety. Tardies may be suspended due to hazardous weather at the discretion of the administration.

CLOSING OF SCHOOL DUE TO WEATHER CONDITIONS

The emergency closing of school due to weather is at the discretion of the Superintendent of MDCPS. Mater Bay Academy will follow the Miami-Dade County Public Schools closure policies in case of weather emergencies. Please be attentive to local news channels and/or radio for cancellation of school.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

Student and employee safety are a primary concern of the Miami-Dade County Public School (M-DCPS) System. The Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) was created to provide school personnel with the necessary leadership skills and knowledge needed to respond to critical incidents or other related emergencies that may occur in our schools /community. All schools have a site-specific plan to address all types of critical incidents. These plans

address the individual needs of the school, and provide guidelines for devising methods for communicating with the staff, students, parents/guardians, and the media during a critical incident or an emergency. Some of the protective action procedures include the evacuation of students/staff from the building(s), evacuation of the disabled and if necessary the relocation of students/staff from the school campus, lockdown procedures and holding/dismissing students during school and community emergencies. Some important tips for parent/guardians to remember during a Critical Incident are as follows:

- Remain calm;
- Monitor media outlets for updates and official messages from M-DCPS;
- Do not flood the school with telephone calls; and
- If the school is on lockdown, wait until the lockdown is lifted before going to the school.

All school administrators, Regional Center Superintendents/Directors and all M-DCPS Police officers have been adequately trained in the school EOP and are prepared to respond immediately during a critical incident or emergency to provide safety for all students and staff.

Accident Reports
Any student who witnesses an accident or is injured in school should report it immediately to the nearest staff member. The school's registrar or administrator will assist the person in obtaining and filling out the accident/ incident report.

Code Yellow/Code Red
In the event of an emergency, the primary responsibility of all school personnel is to provide for the safety of all students. In the event a school administrator announces a possible threat to students and staff safety exists within the community (Code Yellow), or an imminent threat to students and staff safety exists within the school (Code Red) students, faculty and staff will comply with all the procedures outlined in the Miami-Dade County Public Schools Critical Incident Response Plan and remain on lockdown until a school administrator makes an "All Clear" announcement.

Closing of School
The emergency closing of a school for any cause, such as weather or in which the safety of individuals may be endangered, is at the discretion of the Superintendent of Schools. Mater Bay Academy follows the same protocol of closure of schools as MDCPS. Please keep informed through local announcements.

Fire Drills
Ten fire drills will take place according to the Miami-Dade County Public School Policy and Emergency Procedures. At the sound of the emergency bell, students must stop what they are doing and follow the teacher's instructions. They must clear the building promptly by the prescribed route. Any student who is in the hallway or the restroom at the sound of the emergency bell must proceed to the nearest exit and locate the teacher. Students, teacher and staff must remain outside the building until permission is given to re-enter.

VISITORS

FOR THE SAFETY OF ALL OF OUR STUDENTS, **ALL VISITORS** must report to the main office to obtain a visitor's pass. Only persons with pertinent business are permitted on school grounds. Children, including family members, who are not currently enrolled at Mater Bay Academy will not be permitted on school grounds during school hours. Instructional time is precious and must not be interrupted by parent visits. Please schedule appointments with your child's teacher to avoid unnecessary interruptions. All visitors must be cleared through the Volunteer Safety Program.

ACCIDENTS/ILLNESSES

Parents will be notified immediately in case of illness or an accident. In the event that a parent cannot be located, the person(s) named on the emergency contact card will be contacted. **It is your responsibility to make sure that these numbers are current and accurate**. Please notify the office immediately of any accident or injury which occurred during arrival or departure from school.

Students who are ill should remain at home to minimize the risk of passing the illness onto others. Please notify us of any contagious illness your child has so we may alert other parents. In addition, please notify the school of any chronic condition your child may have.

AUTHORIZATION FOR MEDICATION

Miami-Dade County School Board policy "prohibits school personnel from administering any prescribed medication without parental consent and a medication authorization form signed by the child's physician and parent(s)."

In order for medication to be administered to your child, we must have an AFM (Authorization for Medication Form). This form is available in the office and must be kept on record. This form must be completed by a pediatrician or a family doctor.

Medication must be in its original container labeled with the following information: The child's name, dosage, name of the drug, physician's name and the name and phone number of the pharmacy that filled the prescription. **Rigid guidelines are followed in administering medication.** For example, office personnel designated to dispense medication are required to count the number of pills the student brings to school and document it in the student medication log.

WITHDRAWALS

Please notify the school office of your child's withdrawal or transfer at least one day in advance. In order to process a withdrawal from the school, the parent/guardian must come into the school office and complete the necessary paperwork to process a transfer. A transfer involves notification of a change in school and the return of textbooks, library books and payment of any/all monies owed to the school.

LOST AND FOUND

A lost and found area will be designated in the Main Office. To minimize the quantity of lost and found articles, we ask that you please write *your child's name* on everything he/she brings to school. Due to CDC guidelines, all lost and found items will be discarded at the end of the week.

FLORIDA HARM PREVENTION AND THREAT MANAGEMENT MODEL

Florida Statute, Section 1001.212(12), requires the Florida Department of Education's Office of Safe Schools to develop a statewide behavioral threat management operational process, a Florida-specific behavioral threat assessment instrument, and a threat management portal. Florida's Harm Prevention and Threat Management Model was designed to identify, assess, manage, and monitor threats to schools, school staff, and students.

The goal of all school safety efforts is to *prevent* violence or harm to members of the school community. Threat management uses a methodology that identifies students exhibiting threatening or other concerning behavior, gathers information to assess the risk of harm to themselves or others, and identifies appropriate interventions to prevent violence and promote successful outcomes. The process applies a non-punitive assessment to distinguish between innocuous and serious situations. The aim of the threat management process is to intervene at the earliest stage to provide assistance to students and to alter or disrupt concerning behavior for the benefit of the student and school.

The Florida Harm Prevention and Threat Management Model's process is a systematic, fact-based method designed to identify, using threat assessment protocols, whether behaviors or communications constitute a concern for violence or harm to another person. Upon a determination that a risk of violence exists, the threat management process then results in determining the level of concern and appropriate management of the person posing the concern to mitigate the risk of harm and remove them from the pathway to violence. The classification of an individual is based on their presenting risk and needs and balanced against protective factors. The Florida Model assigns a Low, Medium, or High level of concern (also called threat levels) to each concerning behavior or threat reported to the threat management team that cannot be summarily closed as unfounded. There are four possible dispositions:

Unfounded Determination
An unfounded determination means that there is not a sufficient factual basis to support the allegation, or it can be determined that the threats were never made; what was said was clearly not a threat; or the incident/behavior of concern did not happen or rise to the level of posing a threat or concern of harm to the school community. In sum, an unfounded threat has no factual basis to support the allegation. The reporting person may simply have been mistaken about the concerning behavior. No threat management action is needed when a threat allegation is deemed unfounded. This disposition is appropriate only when it is clear there is no factual basis to support the allegation; the case should be advanced to the next step if there is any doubt.

Low Level of Concern
Low levels of concern in a school setting are generally expressions of anger, frustration, fear, or anxiety that are noticeable but do not represent a serious concern. A Low level of concern designation is appropriate where a person poses a threat of violence or exhibits other concerning behavior that is minimal and it appears that any underlying issues can be resolved easily. This level means the concern for future violence toward another person is low. There may nonetheless be significant concerns about the person but at that time, the concern for violence toward another is at the low end of the spectrum.

Medium Level of Concern
A Medium level of concern designation is appropriate where the person does not appear to pose an immediate threat of violence, but the person exhibits behaviors that indicate a potential intent to harm or exhibits other concerning behavior that requires intervention. This level suggests that violence toward another may occur, and although the situation is not urgent, violence cannot be ruled out. The threat management team may not have complete or completely accurate information to guide the outcome of the assessment.

High Level of Concern
A High level of concern designation is appropriate where the person poses a threat of violence, exhibits behaviors that indicate both a continuing intent to harm and an effort to acquire the capacity to carry out a plan, and may also exhibit other concerning behavior that requires immediate intervention and protective measures for the target. This level suggests the student of concern is reaching a critical point on the pathway to violence from which they perceive it may be difficult to turn back. A High level of concern requires immediate and continuing attention from threat management resources to ensure violence does not occur.

The level of concern will determine the next steps in the threat management process and whether the threat management team may choose to implement, or whether they will be required to implement, a Student Support Management Plan (SSMP). The SSMP is part of the threat management process. The SSMP is not punitive or part of a disciplinary process. The SSMP is a student support and management plan that uses direct and indirect interventions to help create an environment less likely to produce violence. The SSMP identifies mandatory action steps that are needed to ensure school safety and responses that can help support the student of concern and make positive outcomes more likely. The SSMP is implemented by the threat management team imposing requirements on the student. Under the SSMP, a student of concern may be required to refrain from certain conduct or may be required to engage in certain actions that are designed to prevent harm to others. The action steps selected will comprise the SSMP. The resources and other support the student needs will differ depending on the information gathered during the assessment, including the mental health interviews when applicable and identified protective measures. The SSMP is established for a specified period based on the level of concern and is reviewed each month by the School-Based Threat Management Team.

Threat management is a proactive approach to preventing violence and other unwanted outcomes. It is important to recognize that threat management is not punitive but that a student's underlying conduct may violate laws or school/district regulations, and these actions may result in punitive action separate from and unrelated to the threat management process. All threats or reports of concerning behavior should be taken seriously and thoroughly reviewed to determine their merit and the level of concern. The threat management process is ongoing and ends only when the threat management team deems it appropriate under the circumstances, or responsibility is transferred to another threat management team. Remember, if you see something, say something. Effective threat management relies on all school employees, volunteers, and service providers reporting any threat or concerning behavior. All students, parents, guardians and caregivers are *strongly encouraged* to report any threat or concerning behavior.

For additional information on The Florida Harm Prevention and Threat Management Model, please contact the school.

Additionally, we work with FortifyFL, a Florida app that can be found on our school's website for reporting suspicious activity that allows students, staff and parents instantly relay information to appropriate law enforcement agencies and school officials.



Mater Bay Academy Lower School

22025 SW 87th Avenue
Miami, FL. 33190
305-969-5989
www.materbayk12.com

PARENT & STUDENT HANDBOOK
AGREEMENT VERIFICATION FORM
2026-2027

Thank you for choosing Mater Bay Academy as your School of Choice! Our Parent & Student Handbook can be found on-line on our website at www.materbayk12.com**. Please read and review the handbook with your child. If you are unable to access the internet, please feel free to pass by the main office and request a copy.**

Once you have read the handbook, please complete the form below.

PLEASE SIGN AND RETURN THIS FORM TO YOUR CHILD'S HOMEROOM TEACHER:

I have read Mater Bay Academy's (a Miami-Dade County Public Charter School) *Parent & Student Handbook*, including the uniform policy and the *M-DCPS* Code of Student Conduct which can be accessed at: *http://www.dadeschools.net/ehandbook/Code/index.htm*.

As a parent I understand the importance of these documents and agree to abide by all of the policies and procedures contained therein.

Name of Student: _____

Teacher: _____ Grade: _____

_____
(Signature of Parent/Guardian) (Date)

_____
(Signature of Student) (Date)

MATER ACADEMY, INC.
ADHERES TO A POLICY OF NONDISCRIMINATION IN THE EDUCATIONAL AND WORK ENVIRONMENT

DISCRIMINATION / HARASSMENT

It is the policy of our school that all students and employees be treated with respect. We affirmatively strives to provide a workplace and educational environment free from discrimination and harassment (including sexual harassment), as required by law. Through this policy, we establish our intent to provide equal access, opportunity, and treatment to students in the provision of educational programs and activities and to applicants and employees in all aspects of employment. Slurs, innuendos, hostile treatment, violence, or verbal or physical conduct against a student or employee reflecting on his/her race, ethnic or national origin, gender or any other of the categories described below, will NOT be tolerated by our school.

This Policy Covers the Following Protected Categories:

AGE - This category prevents denial of employment and/or educational opportunities because of a person's age.

CITIZENSHIP STATUS - This category prevents denial of employment and/or educational opportunities because of a person's citizenship or immigration status.

COLOR - This category prevents denial and/or educational opportunities because of a person's skin tone. Color discrimination can occur within the same race; for example someone who has a darker complexion may discriminate against someone that has a lighter complexion.

DISABILITY - This category prevents denial of employment and/or educational opportunities because of a person has, or is perceived to have a permanent impairment that substantially limits or prevents a major life activity; for example: walking, seeing, hearing, talking, sitting, or standing.

ETHNIC/NATIONAL ORIGIN - This category prevents denial of employment and/or educational opportunities because of a person's ancestors' place of origin; or because an individual has the physical, cultural or linguistic characteristics of a particular group.

GENDER - This category prevents denial of employment and/or educational opportunities because of a person's gender or sex.

GENDER IDENTITY - This category prevents denial of employment and/or educational opportunities because of a person's gender-related identity, appearance, expression or behavior, regardless of the individual's assigned sex at birth.

GENETIC INFORMATION (GINA) - This category prevents denial of equal employment and/or harassment because of a person's genetic information; it ensures that individuals are not treated differently because of genetic information.

LINGUISTIC PREFERENCE - This category prevents denial of employment and/or educational opportunities because of the language a person speaks.

MARITAL STATUS - This category prevents denial of employment and/or educational opportunities because of a person's marital status; i.e. single, married, widowed, or divorced.

POLITICAL BELIEFS - This category prevents denial of employment and/or educational opportunities because of a person's support and/or affiliation or lack thereof with a particular political party.

PREGNANCY - This category prevents denial of employment and/or educational opportunities for women who are pregnant.

RACE - This category prevents denial of employment and/or educational opportunities because of a person's race. The five federally recognized racial categories are American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian, Black or African American, Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and White. Persons from a mixed racial backgrounds do not need to prove their exact heritage in order to assert that they have been discriminated against based on race. Likewise, this category covers persons being discriminated against because they are married to persons of a different race other than their own.

RELIGION - This category prevents denial of employment and/or educational opportunities because of a person's sincerely held religious beliefs.

SEX - This category prevents denial of equal employment and/or educational opportunities because of a person's male or female gender.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION - This category prevents denial of equal employment and/or educational opportunities because a person is, or is perceived to be, lesbian, gay, bisexual, or heterosexual.

SOCIAL AND FAMILY BACKGROUND - This category prevents denial of employment and/or educational opportunities because of a person's socio-economic, family and/or educational background.

Sexual Harassment will NOT be tolerated.

TITLE IX OF THE EDUCATION AMENDMENTS OF 1972 PROHIBITS SEXUAL HARASSMENT WHICH INCLUDES: UNWELCOME SEXUAL ADVANCES; REQUESTS FOR SEXUAL FAVORS; AND OTHER VERBAL OR PHYSICAL CONDUCT OF A SEXUAL NATURE, WHEN:

- Submission to such conduct is made, either explicitly or implicitly, a term or condition of employment or participation in an educational program;
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment or educational decisions affecting such individual; or
- Such conduct has the purpose of effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or educational environment. Unwelcome verbal or physical sexual conduct must be either severe or pervasive.

RETALIATION AGAINST A STUDENT OR EMPLOYEE WHO FILES A COMPLAINT IS PROHIBITED BY LAW

Retaliation occurs when an employer takes an adverse action against an employee because he or she engaged in a protected activity, such as complaining about discrimination or threatening to file a charge of discrimination. An employee cannot file a complaint of retaliation unless he/she has filed a charge of discrimination, participated in an investigation or opposed an unlawful employment practice.

For additional information about Title IX or any other discrimination/harassment concerns contact:

Academica / ESP
General Counsel
6340 Sunset Drive
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Phone: (305) 669-2906
Email: cpapa@academica.org

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