



SIEMBRA CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL

Student & Family Handbook

2026–2027 School Year

524 Central Ave SW Albuquerque, NM 87102

Main Line (Physical Building): 505-243-3308

www.SiembraABQ.org

@SiembraABQ 

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An APS-Authorized Public Charter School

ADOPTED BY GOVERNING BOARD: September 9, 2026

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IMPORTANT CONTACTS & QUICK REFERENCE

Contact / Resource	Phone / Email / Website
Siembra Main Office	505-243-3308 info@siembraabq.org
School Website	www.SiembraABQ.org
Executive Director	Edward Ramirez – executivedirector@siembraabq.org
Director of Operations (Title IX Coordinator)	Contact Derrick Adkins 505-336-0415 d.adkins@siembraabq.org
APS Office of Equal Opportunity and (Title IX)	505-855-9831 eosoffice@aps.edu
McKinney-Vento / Homeless Liaison	Contact via main office Monica Baldwin m.baldwin@siembraabq.org
APS Student & Family Service Center	505-855-9040 servicecenter@aps.edu
NM Crisis & Access Line	1-855-662-7474 (24/7)
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline	988 (call or text)
National Human Trafficking Hotline	1-888-373-7888 or text BEFREE to 233733
CYFD Child Abuse Reporting	1-855-333-2093 (24/7)
NM Anti-Racism/Anti-Oppression Portal	https://bit.ly/BEAHotline
Stop Sexual Assault in Schools	stopsexualassaultinschools.org

PART I: WELCOME & INTRODUCTION

Welcome Message

Welcome to Siembra Charter High School, a public charter high school rooted in Downtown Albuquerque's Innovation District. At Siembra, students are empowered to become leaders, creators, and problem-solvers through real-world, project-based learning grounded in entrepreneurship and community engagement. We are proud to partner with students and families to create a safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environment where every student is known, challenged, and supported.

This handbook belongs to students and families. Please read it together, keep it as a reference throughout the year, and reach out anytime you have questions.

Purpose of the Handbook

This Student & Family Handbook provides an overview of Siembra Charter High School's mission, educational model, expectations, and student policies. It serves as a reference to help students and families understand how our school operates, what is expected of students, and the supports available to ensure student success. This handbook is intended to comply with applicable federal and state law and APS charter requirements. If any provision of this Handbook conflicts with governing law, the law shall control.

How to Use This Guide

This handbook is organized into the following parts:

- Part I: Welcome & Introduction
- Part II: About Siembra
- Part III: Educational Model
- Part IV: Mission-Specific Goals and Pathways
- Part V: Community and Enrollment
- Part VI: Academics and Assessment
- Part VII: Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Culture
- Part VIII: Behavior, Discipline, and Due Process
- Part IX: Title IX, Non-Discrimination, and Student Records
- Part X: Health, Safety, and Wellness
- Part XI: Annual Parent/Guardian Notification Summary

PART II: ABOUT SIEMBRA

About Siembra Charter High School

Siembra Charter High School is an APS-authorized public charter high school established in 2016 and proudly rooted in the heart of Downtown Albuquerque's Innovation District. What began as a bold startup vision has grown into a thriving, established school grounded in a unique three-pillar model with a strong industry focus on entrepreneurship and economic development.

The 2026–2027 school year is part of our second decade of impact, growth, and commitment to students and community. We are honored to continue this work, having been rechartered for July 2026 through June 2031.

Mission

The mission of Siembra Charter High School (Siembra) is to prepare academically underserved students for entrepreneurial careers that reflect the values and needs of the Albuquerque community through collaboration with entrepreneurs and an emphasis on social, emotional, and intellectual growth.

Promise

Siembra is committed to making the community a better place by engaging young people in economic development and entrepreneurship. We view young people as assets and believe they are the key to economic development in Albuquerque. We are re-imagining what school looks like and envision the institution as a vehicle for larger social change.

Vision

Siembra's vision is to unlock human potential by equipping students with the tools and skills they need to innovate through voice and opportunity. As the only entrepreneurship-focused high school in New Mexico, Siembra combines passionate and innovative educators, high-growth employers, and local entrepreneurs to offer innovative, real-world learning that prepares students for the future.

Our core entrepreneurial values are:

OPPORTUNITY: The ability to recognize an opportunity is the foundation of entrepreneurship. Siembra recognizes opportunity in every student and provides a thrilling education that is rigorous, innovative, and tuned into the lives of students and their individual needs.

CREATIVITY & IMAGINATION: Creativity and imagination are at the core of innovation. Siembra encourages students to think outside the box, explore, and pursue their passions through our network of high-growth employers and entrepreneurs.

THE ABILITY TO FAIL: For the entrepreneur, mistakes are stepping stones for success. Siembra encourages students to overcome tough challenges, see problems as opportunities, develop persistence, and fall forward.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE: Entrepreneurship is about identifying problems and finding solutions. Siembra ensures students are grounded in making a positive impact on the people around them, creating a strong future for Albuquerque.

Non-Discrimination Statement

Siembra Charter High School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, ancestry, ethnicity, religion, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, pregnancy, age, disability, religion, marital or parental status, genetic information, veteran status, HIV status, or any other protected characteristic in its programs, activities, or employment. This commitment applies to all aspects of school operations, including but not limited to admissions, academics, athletics, extracurricular activities, and discipline.

Siembra provides equal access to all educational programs, employment opportunities, services, activities, and benefits in accordance with applicable laws and regulations, including but not limited to Title IX, Title I, Americans with Disabilities Act, and the New Mexico Human Rights Act.

PART III: EDUCATIONAL MODEL

Three Pillar Model

Community Engagement

Siembra students work with the local community, making a positive impact on the people around them and creating a strong future for Albuquerque. Reciprocal relationships with the community are the foundation of a well-connected school with future pathways for its students.

Learning by Doing

Siembra students are provided with a multisensory, one-of-a-kind innovative curriculum. Students are provided with real-world opportunities to explore creativity and problem-solving and dive into project-based learning. Siembra works with the community to allow students to gain insight into various entrepreneurial settings.

Student Support

The student support pillar at Siembra focuses on 360-degree support for all students, promoting positive youth development, social-emotional and academic learning, and helping students transition into adulthood. We view our students as assets and offer high levels of support to ensure they have the opportunities and skills they need to succeed.

Siembra Entrepreneurship Certification

This industry-responsive certification is an internal Siembra-specific credential designed in collaboration with the entrepreneurial industry in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Siembra graduates receive this certification by meeting requirements in three areas:

- Entrepreneurship Classes/Credits — minimum of 3 qualifying courses
- Senior Capstone & Entrepreneurial Project-Based Learning
- Experiential Education (Work Based Learning, Internships, etc.)

Qualifying courses include Siembra Business Communications, Business Management, Financial Literacy, Academy Career Experience, Technology, CNM Introduction to Business Professionalism, CNM Introduction to Entrepreneurship, and CNM Financial Literacy.

PART IV: MISSION-SPECIFIC GOALS AND PATHWAYS

Grade-Level Breakdown

Grade Level	Focus	Key Milestones
Freshman (9th)	Foundation & Exploration	Establish entrepreneurial mindset; complete foundational electives; develop academic habits
Sophomore (10th)	Skill Development	Deepen project-based skills; begin community partnerships; explore industry areas
Junior (11th)	Application & Leadership	Begin Senior Capstone; accumulate Entrepreneurship Certification credits; lead projects
Senior (12th)	Capstone & Launch	Complete Senior Capstone project; demonstrate mastery in 22/29 Learning Outcomes; earn Entrepreneurship Certification; graduate ready for career/college

Graduation Requirements

Siembra follows all New Mexico Public Education Department (PED) graduation requirements. Students must complete required credits in English/Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies, Physical Education/Health, and electives as specified by the PED. Students are also encouraged to pursue Advanced Placement (AP), dual credit, and industry certification opportunities.

Students and families will receive individualized Next Step Plans (NSP) annually beginning in grades 8–11, updated each year to guide academic planning and post-secondary goals, in accordance with NMSA § 22-13-1.1. Next Step Plans must be reviewed, updated, and signed annually by the student, their primary advisor, and their parent or legal guardian. During the senior year, the plan is transformed into a final actionable blueprint detailing the student's immediate next steps upon graduation. The final plan must be signed off prior to graduation to satisfy state requirements.

PART V: COMMUNITY AND ENROLLMENT

Enrollment Overview

Siembra Charter High School is open to all New Mexico students. Siembra does not discriminate in its admission policies. Admission is by lottery when applications exceed available seats, in accordance with APS and PED charter school requirements.

Enrollment Preferences

Per NMSA 1978 § 22-8B-4.1, charter schools may give enrollment preference to the following: returning students, siblings of current students, and children of staff members. Per NMSA 1978 § 22-1-4(H), military families may access early enrollment provisions. Siembra's lottery and enrollment policies are on file with the school and available upon request.

Immunizations

New Mexico law requires that all students be immunized against certain diseases before attending public school. Documentation of immunizations must be provided at enrollment. Exemptions may be granted for medical or religious reasons as allowed by NMAC § 6.12.2.8. Please contact the school office for required immunization records.

Transfers and Withdrawals

Students wishing to transfer to or from Siembra should contact the main office. Student records will be forwarded to receiving schools in accordance with FERPA. Students withdrawing before the end of the school year should follow the withdrawal process outlined by the school office.

McKinney-Vento Act: Rights of Students Experiencing Homelessness



YOUR RIGHTS AS A STUDENT EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

If you lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence — including if you are staying in a shelter, hotel/motel, car, campsite, or temporarily with others due to loss of housing — you have special rights under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

Your rights include:

- Immediate enrollment in school, even without documents normally required (immunization records, transcripts, proof of residency)
- The right to remain enrolled in your school of origin and receive transportation to that school
- Access to the same educational programs and services as all other students
- The right to receive services comparable to those provided to other students

To access these services, contact our McKinney-Vento Liaison (contact information available at the main office) at 505-243-3308. Services are confidential and you will not be penalized for your housing situation.

Foster Care Student Rights

Students in foster care have the right to educational stability under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Siembra will work with the child's caseworker and educational liaison to ensure that students in foster care receive uninterrupted access to education, including the right to remain enrolled in their school of origin when in the best interest of the child.

Immigrant Students

Siembra Charter High School welcomes all students regardless of immigration or documentation status, in accordance with NMAC regulations and the constitutional right to a public education established in Plyler v. Doe, 457 U.S. 202 (1982). Immigration status will not be used as a basis for any school decision at Siembra.

PART VI: ACADEMICS AND ASSESSMENT

Community Responsive Project-Based Learning

Siembra students engage in project-based learning that connects academics to real-world community challenges. Projects are collaboratively designed by students and educators and grounded in the three pillars: Community Engagement, Learning by Doing, and Student Support.

Mastery Learning

Siembra uses a mastery-based approach to assessment. Students demonstrate understanding of learning outcomes through multiple forms of evidence rather than traditional test-only assessments. Students are given multiple opportunities to demonstrate mastery.

Grading

School-Wide Grading Policy:

Project-Based Learning with Competency-Based Assessment and Mastery-Based Learning (Revised June 2026)

Philosophy

At Siembra Charter High School, our grading policy reflects our commitment to developing leaders through authentic learning experiences. We assess student growth and mastery of competencies through meaningful projects that prepare students for real-world success.

Definitions

Competency-Based Assessment & Grading	Mastery-Based Learning
• Grades reflect mastery of specific learning competencies, not compliance or behavior. • Students are assessed on what they know and can do; not when they learned it. • Multiple opportunities for demonstrating mastery are provided. • Competencies are clearly communicated and consistently applied across all projects. • Entrepreneurial skills and Personal Qualities (PQ) competency standards are differentiated from content mastery in the gradebook.	• Students must demonstrate proficiency before advancing to more complex concepts. • Learning is viewed as a process, with improvement celebrated and supported. * FAIL = First Attempt In Learning • Students receive specific feedback on their progress toward mastery. • Retakes and revisions are encouraged as part of the learning process towards achieving mastery.

Student Driven Project-Based Learning

Proficiency means being able to *show* that you understand and can use what you have learned to complete tasks or solve problems well. It's not just about getting the right answer once: it's about being able to keep using your skills and knowledge correctly over time. In project-based learning, proficiency is shown through:

1. **Clear Learning Goals:** Students know exactly what they need to do and set the roadmap for doing it with teacher support. The learning goals are clear, and students should understand how to reach them through differentiation and teacher feedback throughout the project.

2. **Practice and Application:** Students practice their skills and use what they have learned in real-world projects addressing community needs, entrepreneurial internships or employment, or other community-based mentorships.
3. **Improvement Through Feedback:** No one is perfect right away. Teachers and peers provide feedback so students can fix mistakes, improve, and try again until they get it right. Students are encouraged to self-reflect and evaluate their own learning journey throughout the project process.
4. **Real Results:** Students have reached proficiency when they can complete tasks with confidence and show that they can apply their learning to a variety of real-life situations and contexts. Mastery comes when all expectations have been met, and extensions and further innovations are undertaken.

Siembra Grading Rubric

Mastery Of Standards

Students are assessed for mastery of Common Core and New Mexico State Standards on all Formative and Summative Assessments/Assignments

Percent	100%	90%	80%	70%	55%
Level of Mastery	4 - Mastery / Innovating	3 - Proficient / Applying	2 - Developing Proficiency	1 - Emerging Understanding	0 - Lack of Completion
<u>Description</u>	Produces high-quality, occasionally innovative work Communicates comprehensive and nuanced understanding of concepts and contexts Consistently demonstrates sophisticated critical and creative thinking Frequently transfers knowledge and skills with independence and expertise in a variety of school-based and real-world situations	Produces good to somewhat high-quality work Communicates basic to somewhat extensive understanding of most concepts and contexts with few misunderstandings and minor gaps Often demonstrates critical and creative thinking, sometimes with sophistication Often uses knowledge and skills with flexibility in familiar school-based and real-world situations, and in some unfamiliar situations, with varying support and independence	Produces work of an acceptable quality Communicates basic understanding of many concepts and contexts with occasionally significant misunderstandings and minor gaps Begins to demonstrate some basic critical and creative thinking Is sometimes inflexible in the use of knowledge and skills, requiring support in familiar school-based and real-world situations	Produces work of limited quality Expresses misunderstandings or significant gaps in understanding for many concepts and contexts Infrequently demonstrates critical or creative thinking Generally inflexible in the use of knowledge and skills, rarely using or applying knowledge and skills effectively in school-based and real-world situations	No evidence of attempting or submitting project work.

** All content- or grade-specific rubrics should be based on this standard rubric*

Project Component	Weighted Percentage	Description
Academic Content Knowledge	40%	Demonstration of required grade-level appropriate content standards
Personal Qualities Development	20%	Demonstration of two required Personal Qualities competency standards
Community Impact or Entrepreneurial Mindset	20%	Demonstration of one required Personal Qualities competency standard (Entrepreneurial Mindset or Community Engagement and Leadership)
Reflection of Learning & Exhibition	20%	Demonstration of mid-semester reflection and goal setting. Demonstration of preparing for, participating in, and reflecting on Celebration of Learning (Exhibition) process and implementation

Final Exhibitions: Celebrations of Learning (CoLs)

At the end of each semester or project cycle, students present their learning publicly in Celebrations of Learning. These exhibitions celebrate student growth, creativity, and community impact and are a hallmark of the Siembra educational model.

Attendance

Siembra adheres to the New Mexico's Attendance for Success Act, NMSA 1978 §§ 22-12A-1 et seq., and the New Mexico Public Education Department (PED) attendance requirements. Regular attendance is essential to student success. Attendance practices emphasize prevention, early intervention, and family partnership over punitive responses.

Excused and Unexcused Absences

A parent or guardian must contact the school by 8:30 a.m. each day a student will be absent. Absences are considered excused for the following reasons, supported by documentation when appropriate:

- Illness or medical/dental appointment (physician's note may be required after three consecutive days)
- Death or serious illness of an immediate family member
- Observance of a religious holiday or event
- Legal obligation (court appearance, required government appointment)
- Approved college visit (junior/senior students; advance notice required)
- Military deployment or return of a parent/guardian
- Other circumstances approved in advance by Siembra's Executive Director.

All other absences are unexcused. Unexcused tardies and absences are documented and tracked. Students are responsible for making up all work missed, regardless of whether an absence is excused or unexcused.

Tardy Policy

Students are expected to be in their designated learning space at the start of the school day. A student arriving after the scheduled start time without prior authorization is marked tardy. Chronic tardiness disrupts learning and is addressed through progressive supports, not immediate punitive action. After three unexcused tardies in a grading period, the school will contact the parent/guardian and initiate a support plan.

Chronic Absenteeism and Intervention

A student is considered chronically absent when they miss ten (10) or more days in a school year, excused or unexcused. The New Mexico Attendance for Success Act, NMSA 2025, § 22-12A-1 et seq. requires schools to intervene progressively. Siembra's intervention sequence is as follows:

No student will be dropped, withdrawn, or disenrolled from Siembra solely due to unexcused absences without the school first exhausting all statutory intervention steps.

Siembra's statutory intervention sequence is as follows:

- 5 absences: Advisor contacts family; attendance support plan offered
- 7 absences: Administrator and social worker contact; family meeting scheduled
- 10 absences (chronic threshold): Formal attendance improvement plan issuance; referral to school support team
- 15+ Unexcused Absences (Excessive Absenteeism): If a student continues to accrue unexcused absences after the school has exhausted all prior intervention steps, Siembra is required to initiate a mandatory referral to the Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD) for educational neglect pursuant to the NM Attendance for Success Act, NMSA 1978 §§ 22-12A-1 et seq. Written notification of the referral will also be provided to the APS Charter School Office. This referral is a statutory obligation, not a punitive measure, and the school will continue to support the student and family throughout this process.

Siembra will make reasonable efforts to identify and remove barriers to attendance, including transportation challenges, health concerns, and family hardships, before pursuing legal referral.

Early Release and Sign-Out Procedure

Students may not leave campus during the school day without authorization. A parent or guardian must contact the school office in advance to sign out a student early. Students who leave campus without authorization are subject to disciplinary consequences. Parents/guardians picking up students during the school day must present valid photo identification and sign the student out through the main office.

Make-Up Work

Students who are absent, excused or unexcused, are responsible for requesting and completing any missed assignments. Teachers will provide reasonable time to complete make-up work. For extended absences due to illness or emergency, families should contact the school office as soon as possible to arrange an academic support plan.

Dual Credit and Advanced Opportunities

Siembra students may participate in dual credit courses through CNM and other approved providers, in accordance with New Mexico administrative code provision establishing Uniform Master Agreement, NMAC § 6.30.7.8. Students interested in dual credit should speak with their advisor about eligibility and scheduling.

English Language Learner (ELL) Services

Siembra provides alternative language services to meet the educational needs of all language minority students, ensuring equal access to a quality education, in accordance with the New Mexico Bilingual Multicultural Education Act, NMSA 1978 § 22-23-1 and by New Mexico Educational Standard NMAC § 6.32.2. Students who may need language support should contact the school office.

PART VII: STUDENT RIGHTS, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND CULTURE

Positive Youth Development (PYD) & Engagement

Siembra's Student Conduct Policies are based on the premise that students are being prepared for careers in entrepreneurship. The rules uphold individual constitutional and legal rights and were designed using a positive youth development framework. Disciplinary actions are aimed and geared to foster students' healthy and positive development.

Educational Opportunity and Non-Discrimination

Siembra supports equal educational opportunities for all students, free from limitations based upon ethnic or racial background, religious beliefs, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, economic, social or medical conditions, or any other protected characteristic in compliance with state and federal laws including Title I, Title IX, Section 504, and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Per NMSA 1978 § 22-5-4.3, student discipline shall not be based on a student's hairstyle, hair texture, or natural hair. Students may wear protective hairstyles and cultural or religious headdresses. Hairstyles, and cultural or religious hair coverings are not student discipline issues.

Heritage Appreciation and Cultural Diversity

Siembra Charter High School is committed to honoring and celebrating the cultural identities of all students. Students are encouraged to wear tribal or cultural regalia at graduation and at school events or activities. Siembra values diversity and strives to create an inclusive environment where every student feels respected, seen, and celebrated.

Dress Code

Siembra makes best use of the community as the classroom. Students are encouraged to dress comfortably and in a manner that supports their engagement with the Albuquerque's Downtown Community. Students are expected to wear attire that:

- Supports a safe, respectful, and inclusive learning environment
- Shows respect for themselves and others
- Does not present a health or safety concern
- Does not conflict with local or state law
- Does not significantly disrupt the instructional environment

Clothing depicting or promoting violence, illegal substances, hate speech, or other content disruptive to the school community is not permitted. When concerns arise, staff will address them through conversation, education, and reflection. Cultural and religious attire, including headdresses and traditional regalia, are always welcome.

Cell Phone and Electronic Device Policy

Cell phones and electronic devices are encouraged for student use in project-based learning, community engagement, and student support activities. They may not be used in a manner that is detrimental to a psychologically safe school culture or that threatens individual safety. The full Cell Phone Policy is available on the [school website](#) policy page.

School-Wide Rules

- Cell phones must be silenced or on vibrate during school hours.
- Phone calls require staff permission and must occur in designated areas.
- Recording (photo, video, or audio) is prohibited without staff permission and the consent of those recorded.
- Students are responsible for their own devices; the school is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged devices.
- Staff may require phones to be stored during assessments or sensitive discussions.

Exemptions

Device restrictions do not apply for documented medical needs, emergencies, or accommodations outlined in a student's Individualized Educational Plan or Section 504 plan.

Consequences for Misuse of Phones and Electronic Devices

Violation	Consequence
First Violation	Verbal warning, documentation, review of expectations
Second Violation	Family meeting; possible temporary restriction of device privileges
Third or Serious Violation	Family meeting with administration; possible device confiscation; technology improvement plan; additional consequences as determined by administration

Internet and Technology Use

Students are expected to use school-provided technology for educational purposes only. Students may not use devices for personal entertainment, unauthorized apps, inappropriate content, or bypassing security measures. All device and network activity may be monitored. The full Chromebook and Internet Use Policy is available on the [school website](#).

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tools

Students may use approved artificial intelligence (AI) tools only when authorized by a teacher. Students may not submit AI-generated work as their own unless specifically permitted by the instructor. Use of AI to cheat, plagiarize, falsify work, or circumvent learning expectations may result in disciplinary and academic consequences, including a failing grade on the assignment. The school reserves the right to determine appropriate use of AI tools and may restrict access at any time.

Student Jurisdiction

Students are under the jurisdiction of Siembra Charter High School whenever they are:

- On school premises;
- Participating in school-sponsored or school-related activities, whether on or off campus;
- Traveling in vehicles authorized for school transportation;
- Off campus during the instructional day, including authorized lunch periods or other school-approved activities; or
- Engaging in conduct, whether on or off campus and during or outside the school day, that materially and substantially disrupts the educational environment, affects the safety or well-being of students or staff, involves other Siembra students, or is otherwise connected to the School or a school-sponsored activity.

Students participating in extracurricular activities may also be subject to additional rules that apply outside the regular school day and at off-campus locations.

Messages from Parents/Families During the School Day

Messages will only be delivered to students for emergencies. For non-emergency communication, the school will have students return calls. It is best to communicate plans for the day before students leave for school.

Racialized Aggression

Any aggressive act that can be characterized as racial in nature is prohibited under NMSA 1978 § 22-5-4.3(D). Incidents may be reported to the State of New Mexico Anti-Racism, Anti-Oppression Portal at <https://bit.ly/BEA hotline>. All such incidents must also be referred to the APS Office of Equal Opportunity Services.

Social Media Conduct

Student use of social media that substantially disrupts the educational environment, threatens the safety of students or staff, constitutes bullying or harassment, or violates school policies may result in school disciplinary action, regardless of whether the conduct occurs on or off campus or during or outside school hours. Students are expected to engage in responsible and respectful online behavior at all times. This includes refraining from posting content that impersonates school staff or students, discloses private information about others, or creates a hostile environment for any member of the school community.

PART VIII: BEHAVIOR, DISCIPLINE, AND DUE PROCESS

Our Approach: Restorative Practices

Mistakes are a natural part of learning and growth. At Siembra, our approach to behavior is grounded in restorative practices that focus on accountability, reflection, relationship repair, and skill-building rather than punishment alone. Siembra's focus is on a graduated and restorative system of support. Responses are developmentally appropriate, proportional to the behavior, and designed to address both immediate concerns and long-term growth.

Restorative Behavior Support Matrix

Guiding Principles

- 1. Restorative First:** Harm should be addressed through relationship-repair, mediation, and teaching.
- 2. Progressive Response:** Interventions escalate only when necessary and not automatically.
- 3. Support-Oriented:** Discipline includes access to support and interventions.
- 4. Equity Focused:** Decisions account for disability status, trauma history, cultural context, and student needs.
- 5. Safety Driven:** Staff protect student and staff safety before initiating disciplinary processes.
- 6. Due Process Protected:** All students receive fair and lawful procedural protections.

Tier 1 — Universal Classroom Strategies

Tier 1 responses are proactive, relationship-based, and used for everyday behaviors that can be addressed within the classroom or project space by an advisor or student support staff.

Behavior	Restorative Practice	Restorative Response
Tardies	Co-create entry routines; soft start activities	"I'm glad to see you. Have you had breakfast? I'll check in with you in 5 minutes."
Phone misuse (social media, games)	Co-create tech norms; planned brain breaks; use technology in project	Private redirection: "What's pulling your focus? How can I make this more engaging?"
Wandering / Not in project space	Predictable routines; movement activities; safe reset space	"We missed you. What do you need to rejoin?" Re-entry conversation.
Not engaged / Not working	Clear learning goals; chunking material; celebrate effort	Problem-solving conversations; support planning; scaffold work.
Inappropriate language	Co-create language norms; code-switching conversations	"How can your words impact others? How can you say that differently?"
Plagiarism / AI misuse	Teach ethical use of AI; model citation; authentic products	Private conversation: "Help me understand why. What support did you need from me?"

Tier 2 — Student Support and Administrator Involvement

Tier 2 responses involve Student Support staff and administration for behaviors that require additional intervention. All Tier 2 processes are documented.

Step	Substance Use/Possession	Conflict at Risk of Escalation	Attendance / Class Presence	Other Low-Risk Concerns	Related Procedures and Resources
Step 1	Student brought into private space.	Students brought into separate spaces.	Advisor will hold one-on-one meetings/conversations with student and document conversation.	Advisor will hold one-on-one meetings/conversations with student and document conversation.	Additional procedures, forms, and administrative guidance used to implement these processes are maintained by the school and available upon request where applicable.
Step 2	Admin/student support call home; send student home for the rest of day.	Admin/student support call home; send student home for rest of the day.	Advisor brings concern to staffing; grade-level staffing team makes a plan to support student.	Advisor brings concern to staffing; grade-level staffing team makes a plan to support student.	Additional procedures, forms, and administrative guidance used to implement these processes are maintained by the school and available upon request where applicable.
Step 3	Family meeting is arranged as soon as next day by grade-level social worker (work with advisor if possible).	Family meeting is arranged as soon as two days after the incident by grade-level social worker (work with advisor if possible).	Follow plan with social worker support; follow up weekly in staffing.	Follow plan with social worker support; follow up weekly in staffing.	Additional procedures, forms, and administrative guidance used to implement these processes are maintained by the school and available upon request where applicable.
Step 4	Family meeting is held with advisor & student support to talk about safety, accountability, and how to support student overall.	Family meeting is held with social worker & advisor; admin support; social worker is working with student to prepare for restorative circle/process.	Social workers call, send letters, do home visits for absent students (sometimes simultaneous with Step 3).		Additional procedures, forms, and administrative guidance used to implement these processes are maintained by the school and available upon request where applicable.
Step 5	Student returns to school; we move forward.	Restorative process or circle with other student in conflict & social worker (mediation if possible, or growth and success plan). Students return to school.	Family meeting held to create an attendance support plan with advisor and social worker.		Additional procedures, forms, and administrative guidance used to implement these processes are maintained by the school and available upon request where applicable.

Tier 3 — Severe or High-Risk Behaviors

Tier 3 behaviors are handled by Administration, the Executive Team, and Law Enforcement as appropriate. Examples include:

- Fighting (mutual combat) resulting in injury or substantial risk of serious harm
- Assault causing injury
- Use or possession of a weapon
- Distribution or sale of drugs or controlled substances
- Arson or bomb threats
- Robbery
- Sexual assault, sexual harassment
- Sex and gender discrimination under Title IX
- Vandalism causing significant property damage (over \$1,000)

Administrators must: ensure safety and separate involved students; collect student and witness statements; contact families; review video evidence; document injuries; review prior interventions and behavioral history; complete all required forms; and maintain investigative documents in the discipline file.

Disciplinary Offenses

The following behaviors may result in disciplinary action. This list is not exhaustive — any behavior that disrupts the learning environment or compromises safety may also result in discipline.

Arson: Maliciously, willfully, or negligently starting or participating in a fire or explosion on school property or at any school-related event is prohibited.

Assault / Bullying (Aggravated): Intending or performing assault with a weapon or any means of force likely to produce bodily injury, including sexual assault, is prohibited.

Assault / Bullying: Threatening physical harm to another or causing present fear of imminent danger (including threats, gestures, and verbal assaults) is prohibited.

Battery / Fighting: Hostile contact in which at least one party has contributed through verbal action and/or bodily harm is prohibited.

Battery / Fighting (Aggravated): Hostile contact with any kind of weapon or causing great bodily harm is prohibited.

Bullying: Using power aggressively in which a person/group is subjected to intentional, unwanted, and unprovoked hurtful verbal and/or physical actions, repeated on more than one occasion, including physical, verbal, emotional, racial, sexual, written, electronic, damage to property, social exclusion, and intimidation. Hazing is included in this definition.

Bomb Threat / False Alarm: Falsely stating a bomb has been placed, or interfering with a fire alarm system or giving a false alarm, is prohibited.

Cyberbullying: Electronic communication targeting a specific student or group with intent to harm, which creates or is certain to create a hostile environment substantially interfering with the target's educational benefits, opportunities, or performance. Cyberbullying on personal devices during school or communication that affects the school campus is prohibited.

Defiance of School Personnel: Refusing to comply with a reasonable request or demand by any school official at places or times when school officials have jurisdiction is prohibited.

Disruption of the Educational Process: Any behavior or conduct that disrupts or interferes with the operation of the school, or that a school authority can reasonably forecast will cause disruption unless preventive action is taken.

Drug, Alcohol, Tobacco Use/Possession/Distribution: Students may not use, possess, distribute, or traffic alcohol or other harmful or illegal substances on school property, at school, or at any school-related event. This includes being under the influence or appearing to be under the influence. Paraphernalia (lighters, pipes, bongs, rolling papers, vape pens, etc.) is also prohibited. Tobacco and e-cigarettes are included per NMSA 1978 § 24-16-1.

Extortion: Using intimidation or the threat of violence to obtain money, information, or anything else of value from another person is prohibited.

Gang-Related Activity: Gang activity, including gang graffiti, intimidation, gang fights, initiation rituals, and wearing gang attire and colors, is prohibited.

General Disruptive Behavior: Behavior perceived by teachers or staff as disruptive and/or disrespectful that disrupts the safe and supportive learning environment.

Harassment: Any behavior intended to or having the effect of harassing, denigrating, or intimidating another person on the basis of sex, race, color, religion, national origin, age, pregnancy, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or any other legally protected category. Harassment of any protected class must be immediately referred to Derrick Adkins 505-336-0415 | d.adkins@siembraabq.org and the APS Office of Equal Opportunity Services.

Hazing: Forcing others to engage in humiliating or dangerous activities as a condition of membership in any group associated with Siembra is expressly forbidden.

Robbery: Taking the property of another through means of force or fear is prohibited.

Theft: Unauthorized possession and/or sale of property of another without the owner's consent is prohibited.

Threats: Threatening to harm or commit violence against any individual — whether verbal, written, via text, or on social media — is taken very seriously. A threat is never a joke. Students who make threats may be immediately removed from the learning environment pending a behavioral safety and threat assessment, referred to law enforcement if safety dictates, and subject to disciplinary action, up to and including a recommendation for long-term suspension or disenrollment.

 **COMPLIANCE NOTE — STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:** In accordance with IDEA and Section 504, no student with a documented disability (IEP or 504 plan) facing disciplinary action for a threat will be subjected to a change of placement, long-term suspension, or disenrollment without first convening a mandatory Manifestation Determination Review (MDR). Emergency removal from the immediate environment is permitted solely to ensure physical safety while required legal and behavioral assessments are conducted.

Trespassing: Entering or being on school grounds or in a school building without explicit permission is prohibited.

Vandalism: Deliberately, maliciously, or thoughtlessly destroying, damaging, or defacing school property or the property of another individual is prohibited.

Weapons on Campus: Possession or use of any weapon at school or any school-related event is strictly prohibited. Weapons include guns of any type (including BB guns, air guns, look-alike or toy guns), knives or sharp objects intended to harm, and pepper spray or other chemical irritants. Students found in possession of a firearm will be referred to law enforcement. The federal Gun-Free Schools Act (20 U.S.C. § 7961) requires a mandatory minimum expulsion of not less than one (1) year for any student who brings or possesses a firearm on school property or at a school-supervised setting. This period may be modified in writing by the Executive Director on a case-by-case basis. All school-related incidents of firearm possession must also be reported to CYFD as required by NMSA 1978 § 22-5-4.9. Per NMSA 30-7-2.4, it is unlawful for anyone under 19 to possess a handgun except in limited lawful circumstances.

Disciplinary Consequences

Behavior Contract: A written plan outlining targeted behaviors to correct, desired behaviors, specific supports, and consequences for success or failure. Parents/guardians must be included in the process.

Detention: Students may be assigned to detention during lunch, before, or after school at the discretion of the principal.

Family Contact/Meeting: A phone conversation and/or meeting including the student, advisor, appropriate teachers, student support members, and/or the Executive Director.

Mediation: Siembra's Support Team members work with students, families, and faculty to resolve disputes and arrive at a shared commitment to positive future interactions.

Referral to Law Enforcement: Communication with local authorities as required by law or at the request of the principal.

Restitution: Repaying or making amends to the community for damage or wrongdoing.

Short-Term Suspension (1–9 days): A period away from school for reflection. Students on short-term suspension are not allowed on school grounds or at school activities during the suspension period.

Long-Term Suspension (10+ days): A removal of 10 or more days, up to the remainder of the semester. Long-term suspensions follow Siembra's Disciplinary Hearing Procedures and all applicable due process rights.

Expulsion: A ban from Siembra's grounds and activities for a period of one year or, in some cases, permanent removal. A due process hearing is required prior to expulsion. Students may, at their own expense, be represented by an attorney.

Due Process Hearing Procedures

All students have the right to a fair hearing and appeal process. Prior to any long-term suspension or expulsion:

- The parent/guardian and student will be advised of all charges orally and in writing at least five (5) school days prior to the hearing.
- Hearings will be scheduled no sooner than five (5) and no later than ten (10) school days from parent/guardian receipt of the Notice of Discipline Hearing.
- The student/parent/guardian may appeal a determination to the Executive Director or designee in writing within ten (10) school days of the decision.
- Students or parents/guardians may choose to be represented by an attorney at their own expense.
- The severity of any sanction may not be increased through the appeal review.

SEARCH POLICY

To ensure the safety of the school community, school personnel may conduct searches of students, their personal belongings, and school property.

VEHICLE SEARCHES: Search of a student's vehicle on school property may be conducted only if a school employee has individualized reasonable suspicion that a crime or breach of the disciplinary code is being committed.

PHYSICAL SEARCHES: Search of a student's person or property may be conducted only where there is individualized reasonable suspicion that the student has committed a crime or breach of the disciplinary code. More intrusive searches (pat-downs) may only be conducted by an authorized person when there is reason to believe a student is in possession of a firearm, weapon, or dangerous drug.

STUDENT LOCKERS AND DESKS: School lockers, desks, and storage spaces are school property and may be inspected without student consent.

REFUSAL TO SUBMIT TO A SEARCH: A student's refusal to submit to a search is a disciplinary matter subject to progressive disciplinary consequences. Refusal does not, by itself, result in immediate or permanent suspension. Students retain all legal and procedural rights, including IDEA protections for students with disabilities.

Discipline Procedures for Students with Disabilities

Siembra complies with all federal and state laws governing the discipline of students with disabilities, including IDEA and applicable NM PED regulations. When a student with a disability faces disciplinary action resulting in a change of placement, the following procedures apply:

- A Manifestation Determination Review (MDR) will be conducted by the IEP team within required timelines.
- If behavior IS a manifestation of the student's disability, the student shall not be subjected to long-term suspension or expulsion; the IEP team will review and revise the IEP and/or BIP.
- If behavior is NOT a manifestation, the student may be disciplined as any other student; however, the student shall continue to receive FAPE.
- Parents/guardians will receive written notice and procedural safeguards, including the right to appeal through due process.

In cases involving weapons, illegal drugs, or serious bodily injury, SCHS may implement an interim alternative educational setting as permitted by law.

Bullying Prevention Policy

SCHS has a zero-tolerance policy for bullying and cyberbullying, in compliance with NMAC § 6.12.7 and the Safe Schools for All Students Act, NMSA 1978 § 22-35-1 et seq..

Reporting Process

Any student, parent/guardian, or staff member who witnesses or is the victim of bullying should report it immediately to a teacher, advisor, or administrator. Reports may be made in person, by phone, or in writing. All reports are treated with confidentiality to the extent possible and documented for a minimum of four years.

Investigation and Response

Upon receipt of a bullying report, the principal or designee will promptly investigate. Both the alleged victim and the alleged bully will be interviewed separately. Parents/guardians of both parties will be notified. Targeted students will receive a Student Safety Support Plan as needed. Staff receive annual training on bullying prevention. This policy is published on the [school website](#).

Appeal Process

Parents/guardians who disagree with the outcome of a bullying investigation may appeal to the Executive Director or designee in writing within ten (10) school days of receiving notification of the outcome.

Restraint and Seclusion

Physical restraint or seclusion is only used when a student's behavior poses an imminent danger to themselves or others, and only after other less restrictive interventions have been considered or attempted, in compliance with NMSA 1978 § 22-5-4.12. Restraint and seclusion shall never be used as punishment or to enforce compliance. Parents/guardians will be notified when restraint or seclusion has been used.

Sexual Harassment, Violence, and Gender Discrimination

State and federal laws, including federal Title IX regulations, prohibit inappropriate sexual behaviors and discrimination based on sex and/or gender in any educational program or activity operated by Siembra. These prohibited acts include sex/gender-based harassment, sexual violence, pregnancy discrimination, failure to provide equal athletic opportunity, discriminatory application and/or enforcement of dress code, and retaliation. Title IX requirements are applicable to Siembra's students, teachers, faculty, contractors, and agents. Title IX requirements are specifically addressed in the next section IX of this Handbook, immediately below.

PART IX: TITLE IX, NON-DISCRIMINATION, AND STUDENT RECORDS

Title IX Coordinator

TITLE IX COORDINATOR — REQUIRED FEDERAL NOTICE (34 CFR § 106.8)

Siembra Charter High School's Title IX Coordinator is:

Director of Operations, Derrick Adkins
Siembra Charter High School
524 Central Ave SW, Albuquerque, NM 87102
Phone: 505-243-3308
Email: D.Adkins@siembraabq.org

The Title IX Coordinator is responsible for coordinating the school's compliance with Title IX, including receiving and investigating complaints of sex discrimination and sexual harassment. Any person may report sex discrimination, sexual harassment, or sexual misconduct to the Title IX Coordinator at any time, including during non-business hours.

TITLE IX INVESTIGATOR

The school's designated **Title IX Investigator** is:

Human Resources & Payroll Coordinator, Arryin Joseph
Siembra Charter High School
524 Central Ave SW, Albuquerque, NM 87102
Phone: 505-243-3308
Email: a.joseph@siembraabq.org

The Title IX Investigator is responsible for conducting impartial investigations of complaints referred by the Title IX Coordinator and providing findings in accordance with the school's Title IX grievance procedures.

Any person may report sex discrimination, sexual harassment, or sexual misconduct to the Title IX Coordinator at any time, including during non-business hours.

Title IX Non-Discrimination Policy

Siembra Charter High School does not discriminate on the basis of sex in its educational programs, activities, or employment, in accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. This applies to academic programs, discipline, classroom assignment, physical education, grading, and athletics.

Title IX prohibits sex/gender-based harassment, sexual violence, pregnancy discrimination, failure to provide equal athletic opportunity, discriminatory application and/or enforcement of dress code, and retaliation.

Title IX Grievance Procedure

To ensure a fair, impartial, and lawful process, Siembra strictly separates the administrative roles involved in resolving a Title IX complaint. The Title IX Coordinator manages the intake of complaints and oversees process compliance. An Investigator (who may be an independent administrator or a designated third party) will gather evidence. A separate Decision-Maker (an objective administrator not involved in the investigation) will evaluate the case and issue the final determination. Appeals will be handled by a separate Appeals Officer. While the Title IX Coordinator oversees the school's compliance and receives complaints, Siembra ensures that the Investigator, Decision-Maker, and Appeals Officer are separate, unbiased individuals who had no prior involvement in the matter.

Step 1: File a Complaint

Complaints may be filed with the Title IX Coordinator in person, by mail, by phone, or by email. Complaints must describe the alleged conduct and, if known, the name(s) of the person(s) involved. Prompt reporting is encouraged.

All Siembra's and APS employees who become aware of allegations of Title IX violations toward a student, whether by witnessing the incident or being told about it, must immediately report to Siembra's Title IX Coordinator or to [APS' Title IX Coordinator's office](#).

Step 2: Investigation

Upon receipt of a complaint, the Title IX Coordinator will promptly notify both parties and assign an investigator. Both parties will have an equal opportunity to present evidence and identify witnesses.

Formal complaints must be submitted in writing within 180 days from the date of alleged act(s), in accordance with timelines set forth by the APS Office of Civil Rights, unless the time for filing is extended by the APS Office of Equal Opportunity Services for good cause.

The Title IX Investigator shall discuss Supportive Measures with the impacted parties to help enable continuation of educational programs and activities without further sexual discrimination, sexual harassment, or other forms of sexual violence. Supportive Measures may include, but are not limited to counseling, deadline extensions, other course-related adjustment, modifications of class or work schedules, changes in locations, leaves of absence, increased security and monitoring, etc.

The Investigator will gather evidence within a reasonable time frame that is appropriate for the volume of evidence and severity and/or impact of misconduct.

Both the Complainant (person who reported allegations) and the Respondent (person accused of misconduct) shall be given the opportunity to respond to the other party's arguments and evidence.

If the Complainant is not the actual Victim, the Victim will also be given the opportunity to address the evidence and assertions made by the other parties and to provide their own statement and evidence. Title IX Investigator will coordinate the process for gathering statements and replies by the Complainant, Respondent, and Victim.

Once the Investigator has finished gathering all evidence, she will review the evidence uncovered and summarize it for the Executive Director who will make the determination based on the investigative report and all evidence gathered, relevant witness statements, documents, emails, text messages, photos, videos, or other evidence, credibility assessments based on consistency and corroboration, the school's Title IX policy and definitions.

Step 3: Determination

Following the investigation, the designated Decision-Maker will evaluate all gathered evidence. Siembra applies the Preponderance of the Evidence standard (meaning the Decision-Maker determines whether the allegation is more likely true than not) to arrive at a finding. A written determination will be issued simultaneously to both parties including findings, conclusions, rationale, and any disciplinary sanctions or remedies.

If there has been a violation, sanctions will be recommended. Sanctions and any institutional determinations / recommendations will be determined by the Decision Maker.

Complainant and Respondent will be notified of the Executive Director's determination, the investigation outcome, any sanctions issued, and appellate procedure.

Implementation of sanctions and institutional determinations shall be overseen by Siembra's Title IX Coordinator. Reporting to outside entities will be done as appropriate by Siembra's Title IX Coordinator.

Step 4: Appeals

Either party may appeal the determination to the designated Appeals Officer, who shall be selected from Siembra's Governing Board members. The Appeals Officer is a separate, unbiased individual who was not involved in the investigation or determination. Appeals must be filed to the Siembra's Title IX Coordinator within thirty (30) school days of receiving the decision, unless additional time is needed and requested of the Title IX

Coordinator. Additional time allowed for appeal shall not exceed 30 calendar days from the date of receiving Siembra's original decision.

Appeals are limited to the following grounds: procedural irregularity affecting the outcome; new evidence not reasonably available at the time of determination; or a conflict of interest or bias by the Title IX Coordinator, Investigator, or Decision-Maker. The appeal decision will be provided simultaneously in writing to both parties.

Nothing in this process prevents filing a complaint externally with the APS Office of Equal Opportunity Services (505-855-9831, eosoffice@aps.edu) or the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (www.ed.gov/ocr).

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is a form of gender discrimination as defined in Title IX. It is a violation of federal law and Siembra school policy. Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and verbal or written conduct of a sexual nature

Examples of sexual harassment include:

- unwelcome pressure for sexual activity;
- unwelcome sexually motivated or inappropriate physical conduct;
- unwelcome verbal or written words or symbols related to someone's gender;
- use of authority to coerce sexual favors, etc.

Sexual harassment is considered to have occurred when such conduct is made a condition of academic status, is used as a factor affecting academic standing, or substantially interferes with a student's education.

Sexual Misconduct

Sexual misconduct includes physical acts of aggression, force or threat against another student; threatening to force or coerce sexual acts; touching of private/intimate parts of the body; non-consensual intimate or otherwise sexual actions, any intimate or sexual activity with a minor, and coercing or forcing sexual intercourse. These acts must be reported to school personnel immediately. School personnel are required by state law to report such acts to local law enforcement.

Pregnant and Parenting Students

Title IX prohibits discrimination against pregnant or parenting students. Pregnant students may voluntarily remain at their home school during pregnancy, are entitled to a comparable curriculum and academic opportunities, and their academic standing may not be altered due to pregnancy or parenting status.

Retaliation

No student will suffer retaliation or intimidation for initiating a complaint, participating in an investigation, or reporting an incident. Retaliation is grounds for disciplinary action.

Section 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act

Section 504 and the ADA are federal laws that prohibit discrimination against persons with a disability. Siembra recognizes a responsibility to avoid discrimination against any person with a disability in all programs and practices. The school is responsible for identifying, evaluating, and if eligible, providing access to appropriate education services. If a parent/guardian disagrees with the school's determination, they have the right to a hearing with an impartial hearing officer.

Student Records (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 20 U.S.C. § 1232g, protects the privacy of student education records.

Parent and Student Rights Under FERPA

- Parents/guardians (or students 18+) have the right to inspect and review the student's education records.
- Parents/guardians (or students 18+) have the right to request correction of records believed to be inaccurate. If the school declines, parents/guardians have the right to a formal hearing.
- Siembra must have written permission to release information from a student's education record, with limited exceptions (school officials with legitimate educational interest, receiving schools, state/federal authorities, etc.).

Directory Information

Siembra may designate and disclose, without consent, student directory information such as name, address, phone number, and honors. Parents/guardians and eligible students are notified annually of their right to opt out of directory information disclosure. To opt out, notify the school office in writing at the start of each school year.

If European GDPR rules on data protection apply, then Siembra cannot designate nor disclose, without consent, student directory information such as name, address, phone number, and honors.

Student Data Privacy

Siembra Charter High School is committed to protecting student information and complies with all applicable federal and state student privacy laws, including FERPA (20 U.S.C. § 1232g), COPPA, and the New Mexico Student Data Privacy Act. Student information may only be collected, used, and disclosed as permitted by law.

Educational technology platforms and third-party applications used by the school shall be evaluated for student data privacy protections before implementation. The school will not knowingly allow vendors to sell or use student data for advertising or commercial purposes. Parents and eligible students have the right to request information about third-party platforms that may collect or process student data. For questions about student data privacy, contact the school main office.

PART X: HEALTH, SAFETY, AND WELLNESS

School Safety

Siembra Charter High School has a plan in place to keep students and staff safe. Safety training includes emergency response procedures, active threat response protocols, and age-appropriate preparedness drills meeting the requirements of NMSA 1978 § 22-13-14.

Safe Gun Storage

Secure firearm storage is an essential part of home safety. Parents/guardians who have firearms in the home should store them unloaded and locked, with ammunition in a separate location. For more information, see [BeSMARTforkids.org](https://www.BeSMARTforkids.org).

Communicable Diseases

Students are expected to follow all health and safety guidance from the New Mexico Department of Health (NMDOH), the CDC, and the NM PED.

- Students who are sick should stay home until fever-free for at least 24 hours without fever-reducing medication.
- Students should wash hands often, cover coughs and sneezes, and stay home when sick.
- If a student becomes ill during the school day, they should notify a staff member. Parents/guardians will be contacted to pick up the student.

Students should not come to school if they have tested positive for COVID-19 or a similar communicable illness, have symptoms, or have been in close contact with a confirmed case. Students should follow current CDC and NMDOH guidelines. Health guidance may change during the school year; updates will be shared with families as needed.

Medical Cannabis

The administration of medical cannabis to students on school grounds is governed by NMSA 1978 § 22-33-5. Parents/guardians of students who require medical cannabis during the school day must contact the school office to make appropriate arrangements in compliance with state law.

Medicine at School

Students who require medication during the school day must have a completed Medication Authorization Form on file. Prescription medications must be in the original pharmacy container with the student's name, dosage, and prescribing physician's name. Students with life-threatening conditions (severe allergies, asthma, diabetes) should have a written Emergency Action Plan on file.

Student Wellness and Mental Health

Siembra is committed to supporting the whole student — academically, socially, and emotionally. Counseling and support services are available to all students. If you or your student is experiencing a mental health crisis, please contact:

- New Mexico Crisis & Access Line: 1-855-662-7474 (24/7)
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 988 (call, text, or chat)
- Siembra school office: 505-243-3308

Special Education

Siembra provides special education services in accordance with IDEA, 34 CFR Part 300, and NMAC 6.31.2. All students suspected of having a disability are entitled to a free, full evaluation (Child Find) at no cost to the family. For information about Child Find, IEP procedures, or special education services, contact the school office.

Section 504 Services

Students with disabilities may be entitled to a Section 504 Plan. Parents/guardians and students are responsible for notifying the school as early as possible about potential 504 needs. The school is responsible for evaluating Section 504 eligibility and providing appropriate accommodations.

Suicide Prevention and Intervention

Siembra Charter High School is committed to the safety and emotional well-being of every student. The school recognizes that suicide is a leading cause of death among young people and takes all expressions of suicidal ideation, threats, or attempts seriously, in compliance with Student Suicide Prevention Act, NMSA 1978 § 22-5-4.11 and NM PED requirements.

Prevention

Siembra provides annual suicide prevention training to all staff, ensures students have access to school counselors and mental health supports, and maintains referral pathways to community mental health services. The school implements social-emotional learning programs that support student resilience and connection.

Intervention

Any staff member who becomes aware that a student may be at risk of suicide — through direct disclosure, observation, or third-party report — must immediately:

- Notify school administration and/or the school counselor without delay
- Stay with the student and ensure they are not left alone, unless the suicidal student poses danger to the Siembra member trying to help
- Refer to emergency services (911) if there is an imminent risk of harm
- Contact the student's parent or guardian

Return to school following a suicide attempt or crisis requires documentation of clinical clearance and a school re-entry plan developed with the student, family, counselor, and administration.

Postvention

In the event of a student death by suicide, the school will follow the NM PED Postvention Framework to support students, staff, and the school community, minimize contagion risk, and connect affected individuals with appropriate mental health resources.

CRISIS RESOURCES — AVAILABLE 24/7

New Mexico Crisis & Access Line: 1-855-662-7474

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 988 (call, text, or chat)

Crisis Text Line: Text HOME to 741741

Siembra Main Office (school hours): 505-243-3308

Parent and Student Complaint Procedure

Siembra Charter High School values open communication and is committed to resolving concerns fairly, promptly, and at the lowest appropriate level. This procedure applies to general complaints and concerns not covered by a specific grievance process (such as Title IX, special education, or bullying appeals, which have their own procedures described elsewhere in this handbook).

Step 1 — Direct Communication

The parent, guardian, or student should first attempt to resolve the concern directly with the staff member involved. Most issues are resolved at this level through respectful conversation. This contact should occur within ten (10) school days of the event or issue giving rise to the concern.

Step 2 — Principal/Administrator Review

If the concern is not resolved in Step 1, or if the concern involves the conduct of a staff member directly, the parent/guardian or student may submit a written complaint to the school Principal or designated administrator. The complaint should describe the issue, dates, and resolution sought. The administrator will acknowledge receipt within three (3) school days and issue a written response within ten (10) school days.

Step 3 — Executive Director Review

If the concern remains unresolved after Step 2, the complainant may appeal in writing to the Executive Director within ten (10) school days of receiving the Step 2 response. The Executive Director will respond in writing within fifteen (15) school days.

Step 4 — Governing Board

If the concern is still unresolved, the complainant may request the matter be placed on the agenda of the next regular Governing Board meeting, in accordance with the Board's public participation procedures. The Board's decision is final at the school level.

Nothing in this procedure prevents a parent, guardian, or student from filing a complaint at any time with the APS Charter School Division, the New Mexico Public Education Department, or any applicable state or federal agency.

Visitors and Volunteers

Visitor Check-In Procedures

All visitors, including parents and guardians, must check in at the main office upon arrival and present a valid government-issued photo ID. Visitors will receive a visitor badge and must wear it visibly at all times while on campus. Visitors must sign out at the office before leaving. Unannounced or unescorted visitors are not permitted in classrooms or instructional areas.

The school reserves the right to deny access to campus to any individual whose presence may disrupt the educational environment or compromise student safety, in accordance with NMSA 1978 § 22-5-4.7 and APS Procedural Directive PK13.

Volunteer Procedures

Siembra welcomes volunteers who wish to support the school's mission. Volunteers working directly with students or in unsupervised settings must complete a background check and fingerprinting process prior to beginning service, in accordance with NMSA 1978 § 22-5-4.4 and APS requirements. Background check forms are available at the school office.

All volunteers must check in at the main office, wear a visitor badge, and remain in designated areas. Volunteers serve at the discretion of school administration and are expected to follow all school policies. Volunteers may be deemed Siembra's agents in certain circumstances.

Student Release and Custody Documentation

Siembra Charter High School will only release students to individuals who are listed as authorized to pick up the student in the school's enrollment records. All authorized adults must present valid photo identification at the time of pick-up. Students will not be released to unauthorized individuals regardless of the adult's relationship to the student.

In cases involving court orders affecting custody, parental rights, or student pick-up, parents and guardians are responsible for providing the school with a copy of the applicable court order. The school will honor valid court orders on file. When the school does not have a court order on file restricting parental rights, both parents (or all legal guardians) are generally treated as having equal rights to access the student during the school day.

Any change to an authorized pick-up list must be submitted in writing to the school office by a parent or legal guardian. The school is not responsible for actions taken in good faith reliance on information provided by parents or guardians.

Transportation

Siembra Charter High School does not operate its own transportation service. Transportation to and from school is the responsibility of students and families.

Students who qualify for McKinney-Vento services (see Part V) may be entitled to transportation assistance to their school of origin. Contact the McKinney-Vento Liaison at the main office for information.

APS may provide transportation services to eligible students pursuant to APS transportation policies. Families should contact APS Transportation directly for information regarding eligibility and routes: (505) 883-7470.

Students who travel to and from school by any means — including walking, biking, public transit, rideshare, or personal vehicle — are expected to comply with school jurisdiction expectations for conduct on the way to and from school (see Student Jurisdiction in Part VII).

Student Fees, Fines, and Charges

As a public charter school, Siembra Charter High School does not charge tuition. Students may not be required to pay fees that are necessary to access a free public education.

The following may apply in limited circumstances:

- Participation fees for optional extracurricular activities (e.g., field trips, enrichment programs) may be charged where the activity is not required for academic credit. No student will be denied participation in a required academic program due to inability to pay.
- Students who damage or lose school-issued property (including Chromebooks or textbooks) may be charged a replacement or repair fee proportionate to the damage and consistent with APS Procedural Directive PJ43.
- Families who cannot afford applicable fees may request a fee waiver from the school office. Fee waivers will be granted in cases of demonstrated financial hardship without penalty to the student.

A schedule of any applicable fees is available from the school main office and will be distributed to families at the start of each school year.

Mandatory Reporting

All Siembra Charter High School employees are mandatory reporters under New Mexico law NMSA 1978 § 32A-4-3. Mandatory reporters are legally required to immediately report any reasonable suspicion of child abuse, neglect, or educational neglect to the New Mexico Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD). This duty to report cannot be waived, overridden by school administration, or deferred pending internal investigation.

Reports may be made to CYFD at any time, 24 hours a day, seven days a week:

- CYFD Statewide Hotline: 1-855-333-2093 (24/7)
- Local CYFD Office: contact via the main hotline

Staff are not required to investigate or confirm abuse before reporting. A good-faith report made to CYFD is protected by law from civil or criminal liability. Failure to report known or reasonably suspected child abuse or neglect is a criminal offense under New Mexico law.

In addition to CYFD reporting, staff must notify the Executive Director or designee when a mandatory report is made, unless the report involves the Executive Director, in which case the Governing Board Chair should be notified directly.

PART XI: ANNUAL PARENT/GUARDIAN NOTIFICATION SUMMARY

New Mexico PED and federal law require that parents/guardians receive annual notification of several rights and policies. By receiving this handbook, you are provided notice of the following:

FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act)

You have the right to inspect and review your student's education records, request correction of records, and control disclosure of records to third parties. To opt out of directory information disclosure, notify the school office in writing at the start of each school year. See Part IX for full details.

Special Education / Child Find (IDEA)

All students with suspected disabilities are entitled to a free evaluation and, if eligible, to special education services (FAPE). If you suspect your student may have a disability, contact the school office.

Parents/guardians of students receiving special education services have procedural safeguards available upon request.

Section 504 (Rehabilitation Act)

Students with physical or mental impairments that substantially limit one or more major life activities may be entitled to accommodations under Section 504. Contact the school office if you believe your student may need Section 504 accommodations.

Title IX (Sex Discrimination & Sexual Harassment)

Siembra does not discriminate on the basis of sex. If you or your student have experienced sex discrimination or sexual harassment, contact the Title IX Coordinator (see Part IX) or the APS Office of Equal Opportunity Services at 505-855-9831.

Anti-Bullying Policy

Siembra has a written bullying prevention, reporting, investigation, and response policy (see Part VIII). A copy is available on the [school website](#) and upon request. Staff receive annual training on bullying prevention. Reports are documented and retained for a minimum of four years.

McKinney-Vento Homeless Student Rights

Students experiencing housing instability have the right to immediate enrollment, the right to remain in their school of origin, and the right to transportation. Contact the McKinney-Vento Liaison at the school main office for confidential assistance.

Non-Discrimination Notice

Siembra does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or any other protected characteristic. Internal complaints may be filed with the Title IX Coordinator. External complaints may be filed with the APS Office of Equal Opportunity Services (505-855-9831) or the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights.

Student / Parent / Guardian Acknowledgment

Please sign and return this page to the school office. Returning this page confirms that you and your student have received and reviewed the Siembra Student & Family Handbook for 2026–2027.

Student Name (print): _____ Grade: _____

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Name (print): _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Phone: _____ Email: _____

Language Access Notice

If you need this handbook in another language, please contact the school office at 505-243-3308 or servicecenter@aps.edu. Translation assistance is available at no cost to families.