# Discovery Charter School
# Family Handbook
# 2026-2027

**1100 Camino Biscay**
**Chula Vista, CA 91910**
**Phone (619) 656-0797**
**Fax (619) 656-3899**




Neil MacGaffey, Executive Director
Erika Alamo, Principal

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# *General Information*

## Discovery Charter School Mission

**Discovery Charter School inspires passion for lifelong learning and prepares every student with the necessary knowledge and skills to be successful citizens.**

## What is a Charter School?

A charter school is a publicly funded school whereby an agreement (charter) is granted to a group of individuals to operate a school largely free from Education Code restrictions that limit innovation and student-based decisions. Charter schools are still held accountable to the same performance standards or even higher performance standards as public schools. The following are attributes that make Discovery Charter School ("DCS," "Charter School," or "School") different from regular public schools:

- Focus on Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM)
- Emphasis on 21st Century Skills: Communication, Collaboration, Career and College Readiness, Computer Literacy, Critical Thinking Skills.
- One-to-one laptop for students in grades 2 through 8; One-to-one iPads for students in kindergarten and first grades
- Instructional Aide most of the day in each kindergarten class
- Dual Language Immersion Program (English/Spanish) TK-6th grades
- After school tutoring and enrichment
- Engineering Lab, Art Studio, music instruction with instruments, and robotics to connect learning to real life experiences
- Annual Science Fair, Speech Contest, Lego-Robotics, Odyssey of the Mind, Multicultural Night, and STEAM Night
- Technology assisted in-class learning and web-based homework assignments

## Campus Information

Students are not permitted on campus prior to **7:30 am** due to lack of adult supervision (except students attending YMCA childcare). Students may enter through the main front gate, the kinder gate, or the gate on the East side of the campus. All gates are locked at 8:30 am, including the main front gate by the school office.

**Students in grades TK-6:** Elementary school students start learning at 8:15 for grades TK, K, 4th,5th, and 6th, and 8:30 for grades 1st, 2nd, and 3rd. If arriving before their class start time, students are to proceed to either the cafeteria for breakfast or to the blacktop. Students are to wait on the blacktop. Students are not to be near the classrooms since there is no supervision available in other areas. Students must walk at all times on the blacktop.

Teachers will walk out to the blacktop at their start time to pick up the class. Parents/guardians are to say their goodbyes either outside the school gate or on the blacktop entering through the gate on the east side so that the teacher can walk students to the classroom. For safety reasons and to ensure a smooth and quick transition to the start of the day, parents/guardians will not be allowed past the blacktop and will not be permitted to walk with their student to class.

**Students in grades 7 & 8:** Middle school students start learning at 8:15 am. If arriving before 8:10 am, middle school students will also report to the cafeteria for breakfast or to the middle school patio. At 8:10 am middle school students should line up at the classrooms for their teachers.

## Office Information

*Hours* – The office is open from **7:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m**. every school day.

*Use of School Phones* – The use of school phones by students is for **emergencies** only.

*Proof of Residency* – DCS **must** verify student residency **annually**. Each year parents/guardians will be required to provide proof of residency in person at the school office.

*Emergency Information* – The school must have current emergency information for each student. The emergency contact form is available at the new school online system called Power School. Please notify the office immediately of any changes to the following:

- Home address
- Home phone number
- Email address
- Cell phone number
- Work phone number
- Emergency contact person(s)
- Medical changes, conditions, and medication

Should there be an emergency during school hours, Emergency Cards are the only means of contacting you. The individuals listed on the emergency card will be the only people to whom a child will be released.

Drop Off/Pick Up Procedures *Parking Lot*—DCS has two "drop-off" areas for children who are driven to or picked up from school. The East and West loops are for pick-up and drop-off only. Parents/guardians may **NOT** utilize the loops for parking purposes.

It is highly encouraged for parents/guardians to display a name card on the dashboard with dark lettering for easy identification. Staff members are available to call and bring students to the car. Parents/guardians may not leave the car unattended at any time during pick-up and drop-off. Kindergarten through 3rd grade students will be dropped off and picked up on the West loop. Parents of TK and Kindergarten students must park in the street and walk up to the Kinder gate to pick up their child. 4th through 8th grade students will be picked

up and dropped off on the East loop. If a student has a sibling, the older sibling can be dropped off and picked up at the same gate as the younger sibling. Parents/guardians are expected to adhere to all traffic signs and traffic laws. Any violation of these traffic codes will be reported to CVPD. **Chula Vista Police will cite offenders.**

*When dropping off students,*

- Pull as far forward as possible before stopping to allow children to exit the car safely.
- Do not stop in the "drop off" lane after school unless your child is ready and waiting at the curb.
- Do not allow children to exit or enter cars in a red zone.
- Never leave a car unattended in pick up and drop off zones.
- Park only in designated parking spots.
- PLEASE do not park in STAFF or RESERVED parking areas.
- Do not block driveways, crosswalks, or other means of ingress/egress.
- Drive the speed limit.
- Do not block or park in neighbors' driveways.

*Bus Rules* – Buses are provided for children who live more than a minimum distance from Discovery Charter School. For more information and bus routes/stops, please visit www.cvesd.org.

Students are expected to follow all rules set forth by the Chula Vista Elementary School District and will be suspended from bus riding for failure to do so. Bus drivers will report any misbehavior to the school office and to the transportation department. Students are expected to comply with ALL bus safety rules, including verbal directions from the bus driver. Students in the primary grades TK – 3rd have priority to ride the bus and for students in 4th – 6th grades, riding the bus is a privilege. Middle School students are not allowed to ride the bus. On the third occasion that a bus driver reports a student misbehaving on the bus, the student will lose the privilege for that year to ride the bus.

**Cell phones must be turned off and may not be used while on the bus.**

*Walking*—Students and parents should agree upon a safe walking route to and from school. Always be sure to use sidewalks and stay within crosswalks. Students should obey all Safety Patrol Officers.

*Bicycles*—Students in grades 4-8 are permitted to ride bicycles to school. Students must obey all rules of the road, which includes wearing a helmet. **Helmets must be worn at all times.** Students may not ride bikes on the sidewalks and must walk their bicycles while on campus. There is a bike rack located near 605 for locking bicycles. Students must bring their own locks. DCS is not responsible for damage or theft of bicycles.

## School Governance

At DCS we believe in being a community of learners. As a community of learners, we all share in the responsibility of developing and implementing programs that are child-centered and focused on the development of each student's sense of self-worth. Powerful learning for all students occurs through a thinking, meaning-centered curriculum which results in skills, knowledge, attitudes and beliefs that transfer to the student's personal and professional life. The purpose of a 21st century education is to prepare every student to be:

- A person with high capacity in the 5 C's: Communication, Collaboration, College and Career Readiness, Critical Thinking Skills, Computer and Technology Literacy.
- A lifelong learner.
- A contributing member of a democratic and diverse society.
- A cooperative and productive member in the world of work.
- A multi-culturally aware citizen.

- A success in academic endeavors.

Essential to providing learning for every student is the development and implementation of our "philosophy of pedagogy" (the process of teaching). Our philosophy about how we learn is the specific set of beliefs and values. The entire school community works with Discovery Charter School's vision and mission.

At DCS, **school governance** is defined as the communication and decision-making processes that occur across and between all areas of school-wide operation. Successful governance and the implementation of the vision and mission of Discovery School's Charter depend on the ideas and active involvement of each of the school's community: students, teachers, administrators, classified staff, parents and community members. To ensure effective governance that is inclusive, efficient, reflective, and results-oriented, the governance at Discovery Charter will be organized into three branches:

The Board of Directors
The Instructional Leadership Team
English Learner Advisory Committee
Parent Advisory Committee through the Coffee with the Admin. meetings

All parties agree to make decisions that put children first and focus on the mission and vision of the school.

See Discovery's charter document for more specific information about Discovery's governance Structure, which is located at discovery.cvesd.org.

## Parent/Guardian Involvement Policy

The Charter School aims to provide all students in our school significant opportunity to receive a fair, equitable, and high-quality education, and to close educational achievement gaps while abiding by guidelines within the Elementary and Secondary Education Act ("ESEA"). The Charter School staff recognizes a partnership with families is essential to meet this goal. Our Parent and Family Engagement Policy leverages and promotes active involvement of all families as partners with schools to ensure student success. A copy of the Charter School's complete Policy is available on the school website and upon request in the main office and on the school website.

It is the obligation of the parents to be partners in the education of their children. Parents/guardians may request a full copy of the Parent Involvement Policy and Home & School Compact documents in the school office. Here are a few ways in which parents/guardians can support their child's education: **First**, learning must be valued in the home. The child must receive reinforcement that attending school and doing well in school is a priority.

**Secondly**, a child must come to school ready to learn, rested, and appropriately dressed. **Finally**, parents/guardians need to become informed about what is happening at school and offer to support its efforts in whatever manner possible. Research has shown that when parents/guardians become involved in school activities, children's behavior improves, academic achievement increases, achievement gains are sustained, and language performance improves significantly.

While not mandatory, parents/guardians are encouraged to become involved in school governance and shared decision-making process through participation in the numerous school committees including, but not limited to:

**English Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC) –** This Committee represents the interests of English

Learners. The ELAC monitors the implementation of programs and involves parents/guardians in meaningful ways that help increase language and achievement.

**Parent Teacher Committee (PTC) -** The purpose of the PTC is to promote the welfare of children in our school, at home, and within our community. It coordinates parent volunteer programs and creates and supports programs that enhance the educational experiences of Discovery's students. PTC meeting times and dates are posted on ClassDojo.

# *Policies and Procedures*

## Attendance

State law requires regular school attendance and research indicates a strong relationship between timely, consistent attendance and student progress. Therefore, at Discovery Charter School, attendance is monitored very closely.

School funding is based on actual attendance, so it is important that your child attend school every day. If your child is absent (without a valid excuse) for five days, they will be recommended for involuntary removal and will be dropped from the school enrollment. If the child returns to school, placement will be based on space available.

It is the intent of the Governing Board ("Board") of Discovery Charter School ("DCS" or the "Charter School") to ensure that students attend school every day on time. Consistent school attendance is critical to school success. Being present for classroom instructional time is essential for students to reach their goals and achieve their dreams. Chronic absenteeism has been linked to an increased likelihood of poor academic performance, disengagement from school and behavior problems.

*Absences*— When your child is absent, you must notify the school office by calling 619-656-0797. You may also send a message via email to DiscoveryCharterSchool@cvesd.org. Please call or email the day of the absence and be prepared to give your child's name, reason for absence, and the name of your child's teacher.

**Definitions**

- "*Tardy*": DCS starts at 8:15am for grades TK, Kinder, 4th 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th and 8:30am for grades 1st, 2nd and 3rd. Students shall be classified as tardy if the student arrives after that time.

- "*Unexcused Absence*": A student shall have an unexcused absence if the student is absent or is tardy for more than thirty (30) minutes without a valid excuse.

- "*Truant":* A student shall be classified as a truant if the student is absent from school without a valid excuse three (3) full days in one school year, or if the student is tardy or absent for more than any 30-minute period during the school day without a valid excuse on three (3) occasions in one school year, or any combination thereof. Any student who has once been reported as a truant and who is again absent from school without valid excuse one or more days, or tardy on one or more days, shall again be deemed a truant. Such students shall be reported to the Principal or designee.

- "*Habitual Truant*": A student shall be classified as a habitual truant if the student is reported for truancy three (3) or more times within the same school year. This generally occurs when the student is absent from school without a valid excuse for six (6) full days in one school year or if the student is tardy or absent for more than any 30-minute period during the school day without a valid excuse on five (5) occasions in one school year, or any combination thereof.

- "*Chronic Truant*": A student shall be classified as a chronic truant if the student is absent from school without a valid excuse for ten (10) percent or more of the school days in one school year, from the date of enrollment to the current date.

- *"School Attendance Review Team ("SART"):* The SART panel will be composed of either the Executive Director, Principal or Associate Principal. The SART panel will discuss the absence problem with the student's parent/guardian to work on solutions, develop strategies, discuss appropriate support services for the student and student's family, and establish a plan to resolve the attendance issue.
    1. The SART panel shall direct the parent/guardian that no further unexcused absences or tardies can be tolerated.

2. The parent/guardian shall be required to sign a contract formalizing the agreement by the parent/guardian to improve the child's attendance or face additional administrative action. The contract will identify the corrective actions required in the future, and indicate that the SART panel shall have the authority to order one or more of the following consequences for non-compliance with the terms of the contract:

    a. Parent/guardian to attend school with the child for one day
    b. After school detention program
    c. Required school counseling
    d. Loss of field trip privileges
    e. Loss of school event privileges
    f. Mandatory Saturday school
    g. Required remediation plan as set by the SART
    h. Notification to the County District Attorney

3. Notice of action recommended by the SART will be provided in writing to the parent/guardian.

**Excused Absences for Classroom Based Attendance**

Absence from school shall be excused only for health reasons, family emergencies and justifiable personal reasons, as required by law or permitted under this Attendance Policy.

A student's absence shall be excused for the following reasons:

1. Personal illness, including an absence for the benefit of the pupil's mental or behavioral health.

2. Quarantine under the direction of a county or city health officer.

3. Medical, dental, optometric, or chiropractic appointments:

    a. Students in grades 7-8, inclusive, may be excused from school for the purpose of obtaining confidential medical services without the consent of the student's parent or guardian.

4. For the purpose of attending the funeral services or grieving the death of either a member of the pupil's immediate family, or of a person that is determined by the pupil's parent or guardian to be in such close association with the pupil as to be considered the pupil's immediate family, so long as the absence is not more than five (5) days per incident. "Immediate family" means the parent or guardian, brother or sister, grandparent, or any other relative living in the household of the pupil.

5. For any of the following reasons, if an immediate family member of the pupil, or a person that is determined by the pupil's parent or guardian to be in such close association with the pupil as to be considered the pupil's immediate family, has died:

    a) To access services from a victim services organization or agency.

    b) To access grief support services.

    c) To participate in safety planning or to take other actions to increase the safety of the pupil or an immediate family member of the pupil, or a person that is determined by the pupil's parent or guardian to be in such close association with the pupil as to be considered the pupil's immediate family, including, but not limited to, temporary or permanent relocation.

Absences under this section shall not be excused for more than three (3) days per incident, unless extended on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the school administrator. "Immediate family" means the parent or guardian, brother

or sister, grandparent, or any other relative living in the household of the pupil.

6. Participation in religious instruction or exercises as follows:

    a. The student shall be excused for this purpose on no more than four (4) school days per month.

7. For the purposes of jury duty in the manner provided for by law.

8. Due to the illness or medical appointment during school hours of a child of whom the student is the custodial parent, including absences to care for a sick child. (The school does not require a note from the doctor for this excusal).

9. To permit the student to spend time with an immediate family member who is an active-duty member of the uniformed services, as defined in Education Code section 49701, and has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or has immediately returned from, deployment to a combat zone or combat support position. Absences granted pursuant to this paragraph shall be granted for a period of time to be determined at the discretion of the Charter School.

10. For the purpose of serving as a member of a precinct board for an election pursuant to Election Code section 12302.

11. Attendance at the student's naturalization ceremony to become a United States citizen.

12. Authorized parental leave for a pregnant or parenting student for up to eight (8) weeks, which may be extended if deemed medically necessary by the student's physician.

13. Authorized at the discretion of the Principal or designee, based on the facts of the student's circumstances, are deemed to constitute a valid excuse.

14. A student who holds a work permit to work for a period of not more than five (5) consecutive days in the entertainment or allied industries shall be excused from school during the period that the student is working in the entertainment or allied industry for a maximum of up to five (5) absences per school year subject to the requirements of Education Code section 48225.5.

15. In order to participate with a not-for-profit performing arts organization in a performance for a public-school student audience for a maximum of up to five (5) days per school year provided the student's parent or guardian provides a written note to the school authorities explaining the reason for the student's absence.

16. For the purpose of participating in a cultural ceremony or event. "Cultural" for these purposes means relating to the habits, practices, beliefs, and traditions of a certain group of people.

17. For the purpose of a middle or high school pupil engaging in a civic or political event as indicated below, provided that the pupil notifies the school ahead of the absence. A "civic or political event" includes, but is not limited to, voting, poll working, strikes, public commenting, candidate speeches, political or civic forums, and town halls.
    a) A middle school or high school pupil who is absent pursuant to this provision is required to be excused for only one schoolday-long absence per school year.
    b) A middle school or high school pupil who is absent pursuant to this provision may be permitted additional excused absences in the discretion of a school administrator.

18. For the following justifiable personal reasons for a maximum of five (5) school days per school year, upon advance written request by the student's parent or guardian and approval by the Principal or designee pursuant to uniform standards:
    a. Appearance in court.
    b. Observance of a holiday or ceremony of the pupil's religion (not to exceed one schoolday per semester)..
    c. Attendance at religious retreats.
    d. Attendance at an employment conference.

e. Attendance at an educational conference on the legislative or judicial process offered by a nonprofit organization.

A student who is absent due to an excused absence will be allowed to complete all assignments and tests missed during the excused absence that can be reasonably provided and will receive full credit upon satisfactory completion within a reasonable period of time. The teacher of the class from which a student is absent shall determine which tests and assignments are reasonably equivalent to, but not necessarily identical to, the tests and assignments that the student missed during the excused absence.

**Method of Verification**

When a student who has been absent returns to school, the student must present a satisfactory explanation verifying the reason for the absence. The following methods may be used to verify student absences:

1. Signed, written note or email from the student's parent/guardian or parent representative.

2. Conversation, in person or by telephone, between the verifying employee and the student's parent/guardian or parent representative. The employee shall subsequently record the following:

    a. Name of student.
    b. Name of parent/guardian or parent representative.
    c. Name of verifying employee.
    d. Date or dates of absence; and
    e. Reason for absence.

3. Visit to the student's home by the verifying employee, or any other reasonable method, which establishes the fact that the student was absent for the reasons stated. A written recording shall be made, including the information outlined above.

4. Healthcare provider verification:

    a. When excusing students for confidential medical services or verifying such appointments, Charter School staff shall not ask the purpose of such appointments but may contact a medical office to confirm the time of the appointment.
    b. A healthcare provider's note of illness will be accepted for any reported absence. When a student has had fourteen (14) absences in the school year for illness verified by methods listed in #1-#3 above without a healthcare provider's note, any further absences for illness must be verified by a healthcare provider.

Insofar as class participation is an integral part of students' learning experiences, parents/guardians and students shall be encouraged to schedule medical appointments during non-school hours.

Students should not be absent from school without their parents/guardians' knowledge or consent except in cases of medical emergency or for students in grades 7-8, inclusive, who may be excused from school for the purpose of obtaining confidential medical services without the consent of the student's parent or guardian.

**Unexcused Absences/Truancy for Classroom Based Attendance**

The Principal, or designee, shall implement positive steps to reduce truancy, including working with the family in an attempt to resolve the attendance problem. A student's progress and learning may be affected by excessive unexcused absences. In addition, the Charter School is fiscally dependent on student attendance and is negatively impacted by excessive unexcused absences. If all attempts to resolve the student's attendance problem are unsuccessful, the Charter School will implement the processes described below.

**Process for Addressing Truancy**

a. Each of the first two (2) unexcused absences or unexcused tardies over 30 minutes will result in a call home to the parent/guardian by the Principal or designee. The student's classroom teacher may also call home or send an electronic message.

b. Each of the third (3rd) and fourth (4th) unexcused absences or unexcused tardies over 30 minutes will result in a call home to the parent/guardian by the Principal or designee. In addition, the student's classroom teacher may also call home or send an electronic message, and/or the Charter School may send the parent an e-mail notification. In addition, upon reaching three (3) unexcused absences or unexcused tardies over 30 minutes in a school year, the parent/guardian will receive "**Truancy Letter #1 – Truancy Classification Notice**" from the Charter School notifying the parent/guardian of the student's "Truant" status. This letter must be signed by the parent/guardian and returned to the Charter School. This letter shall also be accompanied by a copy of this Attendance Policy. This letter, and all subsequent letter(s) sent home, shall be sent by Certified Mail, return receipt requested, or some other form of mail that can be tracked. This letter shall be re-sent after a fourth (4th) unexcused absence or unexcused tardy.

c. Upon reaching six (6) unexcused absences or unexcused tardies over 30 minutes, the parent/guardian will receive "**Truancy Letter #2 – Habitual Truant Classification Notice and Conference Request**," notifying the parent/guardian of the student's "Habitual Truant" status and a parent/guardian conference will be scheduled to review the student's records and develop an intervention plan/contract. In addition, the Charter School will consult with a school counselor regarding the appropriateness of a home visitation and/or case management.

d. Upon reaching nine (9) unexcused absences or unexcused tardies over 30 minutes, the parent/guardian will receive a "**Truancy Letter #3 – Referral to SART Meeting"** and the student will be referred to a Student Success Team (SST) and the SART.

1. If the conditions of the SART contract are not met, the student may incur additional administrative action up to and including disenrollment from the Charter School, consistent with the Involuntary Removal Process described below. If the student is disenrolled after the Involuntary Removal Process has been followed, notification will be sent within thirty (30) days to the student's last known school district of residence.

2. For all communications set forth in this process, the Charter School will use the contact information provided by the parent/guardian in the registration packet. It is the parent's or guardian's responsibility to update the Charter School with any new contact information.

3. If a student is absent five (5) or more consecutive school days without valid excuse and the student's parent/guardian cannot be reached at the number or address provided in the registration packet and does not otherwise respond to the Charter School's communication attempts, as set forth above, the student will be in violation of this Policy and the SART contract (if applicable), and may be subject to disenrollment in compliance with the Involuntary Removal Process described below.

4. Any documentation received by the Charter School regarding a student's enrollment and attendance at another public or private school (i.e., CALPADS report) shall be deemed evidence of a voluntary disenrollment and shall not trigger the Involuntary Removal Process below.

**Process for Students Who Are Not in Attendance at the Beginning of the School Year**

When a student is not in attendance on the first three (3) days of the school year, the Charter School will attempt to reach the student's parent/guardian on a daily basis for each of the first three (3) days to determine whether the student has an excused absence, consistent with the process outlined in this policy. If the student has a basis for an excused absence, the student's parent/guardian must notify the Charter School of the absence and provide documentation consistent with this policy. However, consistent with process below, students who are not in attendance by the fourth (4th) day of the school year due to an unexcused absence will be disenrolled from the Charter School roster after following the Involuntary Removal Process

described below, as it will be assumed that the student has chosen another school option.

1. Students who are not in attendance on the first (1st) day of the school year will be contacted by phone to ensure their intent to enroll in the Charter School.

2. Students who have indicated their intent to enroll but have not attended by the third (3rd) day of the school year and do not have an excused absence will receive a letter indicating the student's risk of disenrollment.

3. Students who are not in attendance by the fourth (4th) day of the school year and do not have an excused absence will receive an Involuntary Removal Notice and the CDE Enrollment Complaint Notice and Form. The Charter School will follow the Involuntary Removal Process described below, which includes an additional five (5) schooldays for the parent/guardian to respond to the Charter School and request a hearing before disenrollment.

4. Within thirty (30) calendar days of disenrollment, the Charter School will send the student's last known school district of residence a letter notifying it of the student's failure to attend the Charter School.

5. Documentation received by the Charter School regarding a student's enrollment and attendance at another public or private school (i.e., CALPADS report) shall be deemed evidence of a voluntary disenrollment and shall not trigger the Involuntary Removal Process below.

6. The Charter School will use the contact information provided by the parent/guardian in the registration packet.

**Involuntary Removal Process**

No student shall be involuntarily removed by the Charter School for any reason unless the parent or guardian of the student has been provided written notice of the Charter School's intent to remove the student ("Involuntary Removal Notice"). The Involuntary Removal Notice must be provided to the parent or guardian no less than five (5) schooldays before the effective date of the proposed disenrollment date.

The written notice shall be in the native language of the student or the student's parent or guardian or, if the student is a foster child or youth or a homeless child or youth, the student's educational rights holder. The Involuntary Removal Notice shall include:

1. The charges against the student
2. An explanation of the student's basic rights including the right to request a hearing before the effective date of the action
3. The CDE Enrollment Complaint Notice and Form

If the student's parent, guardian, or educational rights holder requests a hearing, the student shall remain enrolled and shall not be removed until a final decision is issued. As used herein, "involuntarily removed" includes disenrolled, dismissed, transferred, or terminated, but does not include suspensions or expulsions pursuant to the Charter School's suspension and expulsion policy.

Upon a parent's or guardian's request for a hearing, the Charter School will provide notice of hearing, through which the student has a fair opportunity to present testimony, evidence, and witnesses and confront and cross-examine adverse witnesses, and at which the student has the right to bring legal counsel or an advocate. The notice of hearing shall be in the native language of the student or the student's parent or guardian or, if the student is a foster child or youth or a homeless child or youth, the student's educational rights holder and shall include a copy of the Charter School's involuntary removal hearing process.

The hearing shall be adjudicated by a neutral officer. The Executive Director shall serve in the role of neutral officer unless, in the Executive Director's discretion, this duty is delegated to another individual to serve in this capacity. The hearing shall be scheduled within a reasonable time, not to exceed thirty (30) school days from the date of the request for appeal. The

hearing may be held in-person or virtually at the discretion of the assigned neutral officer. The Charter School Principal (or designee) will be given no less than fifteen (15) minutes to present any evidence in support of the recommendation for involuntary removal. The student, through parent/guardian, advocate, or legal counsel, will be given no less than fifteen (15) minutes to present evidence, testimony, and witnesses to support their appeal and may cross-examine any witness presented by the Charter School. This hearing shall be held in a confidential setting. The neutral officer shall issue a written determination as to the appeal within five (5) school days of the completion of the hearing.

If the parent/guardian is nonresponsive to the Involuntary Removal Notice, the student will be disenrolled as of the effective date set forth in the Involuntary Removal Notice. If parent/guardian requests a hearing and does not attend on the date scheduled for the hearing, the student will be disenrolled effective the date of the hearing.

If as a result of the hearing the student is disenrolled, notice will be sent to the student's last known school district of residence within thirty (30) calendar days.

A hearing decision not to disenroll the student does not prevent the Charter School from making a similar recommendation in the future should student truancy continue or re-occur.

**Referral to Appropriate Agencies or County District Attorney**

It is the Charter School's intent to identify and remove all barriers to the student's success, and the Charter School will explore every possible option to address student attendance issues with the family. For any unexcused absence, the Charter School may refer the family to appropriate school-based and/or social service agencies.

If a student's attendance does not improve after a SART contract has been developed according to the procedures above, or if the parents/guardians fail to attend a required SART meeting, the Charter School shall notify the County District Attorney's office, which then may refer the matter for prosecution through the court system. Students twelve (12) years of age and older may be referred to the juvenile court for adjudication.

**Non-Discrimination**

These policies will be enforced fairly, uniformly, and consistently without regard to the characteristics listed in Education Code section 220 (actual or perceived disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic that is contained in the definition of hate crimes set forth in Penal Code section 422.55, including immigration status, pregnancy, or association with an individual who has any of the aforementioned characteristics).

**Reports**

The Principal, or designee, shall gather and report to the Board the number of absences both excused and unexcused as well as students who are truant, and the steps taken to remedy the problem.

***Independent Study.*** – An Independent Study Contract is available for families who must take extended leave from school for reasons not normally excused by law. Parents must notify the Health/Attendance Office ***a minimum of two weeks prior to the absence*** in order to prepare the Independent Study Contract and must meet with an administrator prior to receiving the contract**.**

*Tardies*—It is important that students be at school on time. A student is considered tardy if he/she is not at his/her classroom when school starts.

**Perfect Attendance is defined as no absences, no unexcused tardies, no unexcused dismissals.** A student may receive perfect attendance if he or she is sent home ill by the school office. Medical appointments will be included **ONLY** with written documentation from the physician's office. Students are recognized on a yearly basis for perfect attendance.

*For a complete copy of Discovery's Attendance Policy, please visit the Discovery website or inquire at the school office.

## Birthday Celebration Policy

In accordance with DCS' wellness policy, no celebratory food or balloons (cake, cupcakes, candy, etc.) will be allowed on school site during the school day in celebration of a student's birthday. DCS recognizes the link between student health and learning and is committed to providing a school environment that promotes student wellness, proper nutrition, nutrition education, and regular physical activity for all students. DCS prohibits food items, balloons, or anything else that may distract students in celebration of a student's birthday on the school site during the school day. There will be no exceptions to this policy. DCS encourages and supports the use of non-food celebratory activities at the end of the day just before dismissal and will provide a list of suggestions to parents and guardians.

## DCS Technology/Internet Agreement and Responsible Use

While enrolled at DCS, your child will be assigned a device (either a Lenovo laptop, or iPad) as an educational tool for learning. This device will be assigned specifically to your child for the school year. Please review the policies for use of the device with your child. You and your child are required to sign this agreement before they can use and receive the device. The device ***will only be used at school and will remain on campus***.

Please note that this agreement also applies to any and all school-based technology, including internet networks.

**Device Use Policy**

- The device will be used for educational purposes only.
- Student will use the device in a responsible and ethical manner.
- Students will not download or install any applications unless instructed to do so by the teacher.
- School administration will authorize all applications added to the device.
- Students are provided access to Office365 where all their work should be stored.
- Students will not access internet/computer games with inappropriate content (e.g. violence).
- Vandalism (any malicious attempt to harm or destroy hardware, software, or data) of school equipment will not be allowed.

The Charter School believes that providing access to technology enhances the educational experience for students. However, student use of Charter School computers, networks, and Internet services is a privilege, not a right.

**Acceptable Use Agreement**The Charter School provides the following requirements for use of school-provided technology, including computers, tablets, networks, and internet services:

1. **Security.** Students shall not impair the security of Charter School technology resources. Students are expected to:
    a. Safeguard all personal passwords. Students should not share passwords with others and should change passwords frequently. Students are expected to notify an administrator immediately if they believe their student account has been compromised.
    b. Access technology only with their account or with a shared account as directed by their teacher and not to allow others to use their account or to use the accounts of others, with or without the account owner's authorization.
2. **Authorized Use.** Students may use Charter School technology resources when directed by a teacher, when technology has been designated for open student use (e.g., computers in the library), and for other educational purposes.
3. **Protection Measures.** While the Charter School is able to exercise reasonable control over content created and purchased by the Charter School, it has limited control over content accessed via the internet and no filtering system is 100% effective. Neither the Charter School nor its staff, employees,

officers, directors or volunteers shall be responsible for the failure of any technology protection measures, violations of copyright restrictions, or user mistakes, misuse or negligence. The student and parent/guardian agree not to hold the Charter School or any Charter School staff, employees, officers, directors or volunteers responsible for the failure of any technology protection measures, violations of copyright restrictions, or user mistakes, misuse or negligence. They also agree to indemnify and hold harmless the Charter School, Charter School staff, employees, officers, directors and volunteers for any damages or costs incurred. Parents/guardians are required to supervise and monitor their child's use of DCS equipment including but not limited to their child's access to the internet and any online services through such equipment any and all times during which any DCS equipment is being used by their child outside school facilities or school hours to ensure compliance with this policy.

4. **Inappropriate Use.** Charter School technology, hardware, software and bandwidth are shared and limited resources and all users have an obligation to use those resources responsibly. Students are provided access to the Charter School technology primarily for educational purposes. Students shall not use Charter School technology or equipment for personal activities or for activities that violate Charter School policy or local law. These include but are not limited to:
    a. Playing games or online gaming.
    b. Downloading software, music, movies or other content in violation of licensing requirements, copyright or other intellectual property rights.
    c. Installing software on Charter School equipment without the permission of a teacher or other authorized Charter School staff person.
    d. Downloading, viewing or sharing inappropriate content, including pornographic, defamatory or otherwise offensive material.
    e. Conducting any activity that is in violation of Charter School policy, the student code of conduct or local, state or federal law.
    f. Engaging in any activity that is harmful to other student(s), including the use of technology to harass, intimidate, bully or otherwise disrupt the educational process.
    g. Conducting for-profit business.
    h. Using hacking tools on the network or intentionally introducing malicious code or viruses into the Charter School's network.
    i. Using any software or proxy service to obscure either the student's IP address or the sites that the student visits.
    j. Disabling, bypassing, or attempting to disable or bypass any system monitoring, filtering or other security measures.
    k. Accessing or attempting to access material or systems on the network that the student is not authorized to access.
5. **No Expectation of Privacy.** Student acknowledges that computer equipment, Internet access networks, email accounts, and any other technology resources are owned by Charter School and provided to students for educational purposes. The Charter School may require staff to monitor and supervise all access to computer equipment, Internet access networks, and email accounts. To facilitate monitoring of activities, computer screens may be positioned so that they are visible to the staff member supervising the students. The Charter School reserves the right to access stored computer records and communications, files, and other data stored on Charter School equipment or sent over Charter School networks. Such communications, files, and data are not private and may be accessed during routine system maintenance; during inspection of Charter School equipment at the end of the school year/term or agreed upon to use period; and review of individual files or monitoring of individual activity when there is a reasonable suspicion that the student is engaging in an inappropriate use.
6. **Disruptive Activity.** Students should not intentionally interfere with the performance of the Charter School's network or intentionally damage any Charter School technology resources.
7. **Unauthorized Networks.** Students may not create unauthorized wireless networks to access the Charter School's network. This includes establishing wireless access points, wireless routers and open networks on personal devices.
8. **Consequences of Inappropriate Use.** Students who violate this Agreement will be subject to discipline, which may include loss of access to Charter School technology resources and/or other appropriate disciplinary or legal action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct and applicable

laws.

9. **Technology Systems/Equipment Care.** Students are not permitted to have food or drink near computers/other technology and must keep equipment and assigned areas free of vandalism.

After reading the Student Use of Technology Policy and the Acceptable Use Agreement, please complete this form to indicate that you agree with the terms and conditions provided. The signature of both the student and parent/guardian are mandatory before access may be granted to the technologies available. This document, which incorporates the Use Procedure, reflects the entire agreement and understanding of all parties. DCS encourages parents/guardians to discuss this Policy with their children to ensure their children understand and comply with this Policy.

**As a user of Charter School technologies, I have read the Student Use of Technology Policy and hereby agree to comply with it and the Acceptable Use Agreement.**

I understand that computer use is a privilege and not a right. I understand that students who violate this policy in any way will be subject to a referral and possible suspension or expulsion. I understand that if a student willfully damages DCS's property, including but not limited to DCS's technology, equipment and networks, or fails to return DCS's property that has been loaned to the student, the student's parents/guardians are liable for all damages caused by the student's misconduct up to an amount not to exceed ten thousand dollars ($10,000), adjusted annually for inflation. After notifying the student's parent or guardian in writing of the student's alleged misconduct and affording the student due process, DCS may withhold the student's grades, transcripts, until the damages have been paid, or the property has been returned. If the student and the student's parent/guardian are unable to pay for the damages or to return the property, DCS will provide a program of voluntary work for the minor in lieu of the payment of monetary damages. Upon completion of the voluntary work, the student's grades, transcripts and diploma will be released. When the minor and parent are unable to pay for the damages, the Charter School will provide a program of voluntary work for the minor in lieu of the payment of monetary damages. A student over the age of majority shall be liable for the same. (Ed. Code § 48904).

## Dress Code

The following dress code policy is strictly adhered to at DCS:

- For safety reasons, ***appropriate*** shoes must be worn at all times. Shoes must have closed toes and heel straps. No heels or platforms higher than two (2) inches, or sandals may be worn. Students should wear appropriate shoes for physical education.
- For safety reasons, dangle and hoop earrings are not permitted.
- Clothing, jewelry, hats, and accessories should be free of writing, pictures or other insignia which are: crude, vulgar, profane and/or sexually suggestive; advertising or advocating racial, ethnic or religious prejudice; advocating the use of drugs, tobacco, or alcohol.
- Hats and caps may be worn outside. Headwear worn for purposes of religious observance shall be permitted.
- Clothes should **conceal undergarments at all times**. See-through fabrics, off the-shoulder or low-cut blouses, bare midriffs, and skirts or shorts shorter than mid-thigh are not acceptable.
- In the event of a dress code violation, parents/guardians will be notified to bring a change of clothes for the student. Borrowed clothes must be laundered and returned to the school within 72 hours.

The Charter school staff reserves the right to make judgments on any article of clothing, mode of dress, or hair style which is potentially disruptive to the learning environment or compromises anyone's safety.

**NOTE: For student safety and to conform to school policy,**
**no skateboards, roller blades, roller skates/shoes, or animals are allowed on campus.**

Charter School staff must allow a service animal to accompany the handler at all times and everywhere on campus, within Charter School property, except where service animals are specifically prohibited due to health,

environmental, or safety hazards. DCS staff should direct staff, students, and other persons to refrain from petting, feeding, or deliberately startling a service animal.

## Cell Phones, Smartwatches, & Other Electronic Communication Devices Policy

*Adopted: October 15, 2024*
*Revised: October 27,2026*

The Discovery Charter School ("DCS or the "Charter School") Board of Directors recognizes the potential for cell phones, smartphones, smart watches, and electronic communication devices (hereinafter collectively referred to as "private devices") to disrupt the learning environment of the Charter School, and adopts this Policy to permit students to possess, but not use private devices while on school grounds, or school-sponsored activities, except as otherwise provided in this Policy. Students who possess any private devices must always keep them turned off, powered down, and stored in backpacks and out of view while on school grounds or at school-sponsored activities and functions. Charter School teachers, administrators, and staff will confiscate any private devices used by a student in violation of this Policy.

Except with prior consent for health reasons, display or use of electronic devices is not permitted during school hours. Electronic communication devices - including cell phones, iPads, iPods, Smart watches (ex. Apple watch or any watch which has the capability to text, make/receive phone calls, and/or take pictures or videos) must be kept in the backpack or in the student's pocket and turned off as soon as the student enters the school gate. If a student displays an electronic device or if the phone rings during the school day, the device will immediately be taken away and must be picked up from the school office by a parent/guardian. It will not be released to the student. The school is not responsible for lost, stolen or damaged electronic devices, unless in the possession of the Charter School staff. **Cell phones and other communication devices may be used once students have left the school gates**, but may not be used on the school bus or on field trips.

Private devices may be used:

- Off campus before or after school.
- When a teacher or administrator of the Charter School grants permission to a student to possess or use a private device, subject to any reasonable limitation imposed by that teacher or administrator.
- When a licensed physician determines that the possession or use of a private device is necessary for the health or well-being of the student.
- When the possession or use of a private device is required in a student's individualized education program ("IEP").

Private devices shall be turned <u>off</u> and shall <u>not</u> be used:

- During instructional classroom time, including assemblies, and any other school activity, which takes place during the regularly scheduled school day on or off campus.
- During break periods, between class periods, or during lunch.
- During events sponsored by the Charter School held before or after regular school hours.
- On field trips or excursions sponsored by the Charter School.

Possession of private devices is a privilege, which may be forfeited by any student who fails to abide by the terms of this Policy. Charter School employees shall remove any private device from a student's possession who is found to be violating this Policy. If a private device is heard ringing, beeping, or buzzing from inside a jacket, purse, backpack, or other similar article, whether within the immediate presence of the student or not, a Charter School employee may confiscate the private device. Parents/guardians will be contacted to pick up any confiscated private devices at the end of the regular school day or at the conclusion of a Charter School-sponsored activity.

Charter School is not responsible for preventing theft, loss, or damage to any private devices brought onto campus or at Charter School-sponsored activities..

## Toy Policy

Students need to be free of distractions to be at their optimal learning while at school. Toys, games, cards,

and other similar items not related to instruction and learning are not permitted at school. This rule also helps us to limit the possibility of borrowing, trading, breaking, or theft of these items.

## Field Trips

Study trips and field trips provide students with opportunities to learn and interact beyond the regular school environment. Permission slips must be completed and signed before any student may leave the school premises for a field/study trip.

**NO STUDENT WILL BE PERMITTED TO GO ON A FIELD TRIP IF THEIR BEHAVIOR HAS POTENTIAL TO CAUSE HARM OR INJURY TO THE STUDENT OR TO THE OTHER STUDENTS OR ADULTS ON THE TRIP.**

## Sponsored Field Trips & Cultural Excursions Policy

DCS recognizes and supports the concept of connecting our students with the broader community, both locally and globally, by providing field trips, cultural and art experiences, community service opportunities, and environmental education to fulfill DCS's mission and philosophy. These activities help to promote tolerance, understanding, and acceptance of others, and enrich the educational experiences of the students, as well as meet the Charter School's goal of creating passionate life-long learners.

The safety and security of our students is a primary priority when planning or participating in field trips or excursions. These activities will be carried out in an appropriate manner to maximize and ensure student safety and to minimize the Charter School's legal liability and financial cost.

Definitions

- A "*field trip or cultural excursion"* involves students leaving DCS grounds to participate in school sponsored educational opportunities in connection with DCS's course of study or school related social, educational, cultural, athletic, school band or other extracurricular or cocurricular activities.

Selection of Field Trips

The teaching team will continue to research and provide enriching learning opportunities to share with their students both within the classroom and out in the broader community. The Principal shall have the authority to approve all in-state day (non-overnight) field trips and excursions. Requests for out of state, out of country or overnight travel shall be brought before the Board of Directors for approval. The Principal will initially receive all such requests and make a recommendation to the Board of Directors as to whether the request should be approved.

The Principal will ensure that the following items will be adhered to for all DCS field trips and excursions:

1. The proposed field trip or cultural excursion relates to DCS's educational objectives
2. The correct ratio of adult to students is met for supervision of the activity
3. A means of transportation to and from the activity is provided
4. Adequate restroom facilities, food and water will be available during the activity

The Principal shall not approve any activity that he/she considers to be inherently unsafe or dangerous to students.

Permission Slips

Before a student can participate in a school-sponsored trip, the teacher shall obtain parent/guardian permission for the trip. Whenever a trip involves water activities, the parent/guardian shall provide specific permission for his/her child to participate in the water activities. The Charter School shall provide an alternative educational experience for students whose parents/guardians do not wish them to participate in a trip.

All persons making the field trip or excursion shall be deemed to have waived all claims against the Charter School or the State of California for injury, accident, illness, or death occurring during or by reason of the field trip or excursion. All adults taking out-of-state field trips or excursions and all parents/guardians of students taking out-of-state field trips or excursions shall sign a statement waiving such claims.

Items that will be included on the permission slip are:

1. An emergency phone number for the student
2. Any medications the student is required to take with the time and dosage required
3. Any medications the student is allergic to
4. Any other medical information necessary to ensure the student's safety
5. Waiver as described above

A copy of a completed and signed permission slip will be kept on the Charter School site and one copy will be given to the teacher or teachers to take on the field trip or excursion.

Voluntary Participation

The Charter School will provide alternative educational activities to those students who choose not to attend a specific field trip or excursion. Parents/guardians will have advance notice of any upcoming field trip or excursion and have the option to withdraw their permission for their child to attend that field trip or excursion.

Disciplinary Rules

Students are under the jurisdiction of the Charter School Board at all times during the field trip or excursion and all DCS policies continue to be enforced during field trips and excursions. Charter School disciplinary policies are to be adhered to at all times. (e.g. Horseplay, practical jokes, harassment, taunting, rough play, aggressive or violent behavior, profanity, viewing of pornographic material, and use of alcohol and/or controlled substances during the field trip or excursion are strictly prohibited.)

Except as otherwise required by law, a student may be excluded from the trip if their presence poses a safety or disciplinary risk.

Expenses

The Charter School may charge a fee for field trips and excursions pursuant Education Code section 35330. However, the Charter School will endeavor to keep the costs of any field trips affordable for all students' families. In no event will a student be prevented from participating in the field trip or excursion due to lack of sufficient funds. In accordance with Education Code section 35330(b), the Charter School will coordinate the efforts of community service groups to supply funds for students in need.

Supervision

The teacher who coordinated the field trip will be present to supervise the field trip or excursion, except in unusual circumstances when a replacement teacher is assigned because of an unexpected unavailability. The

Principal will be designated as the emergency contact for the group on the field trip or excursion. Any injuries or unusual incidents occurring during the field trip or excursion will be documented in writing by the coordinating teacher and given to the Charter School's Principal.

The Principal shall ensure that the field trips and excursions have an adequate number of adults attending to safely supervise the student attending the field trip or excursion.

A first aid kit shall be in the possession of or immediately available to a teacher, employee, or agent of the school during the student field trip or excursion. Whenever trips are conducted in areas known to be infested with poisonous snakes, the first aid kit taken on the trip shall contain medically accepted snakebite remedies. In addition, a teacher, employee, or agent of the school who has completed a first aid course which is certified by the American Red Cross and which emphasizes the treatment of snakebites shall participate in the trip.

Charter School employees or volunteers shall not consume alcohol or use controlled substances (except for medications taken under a physician's orders) while accompanying and supervising students on a field trip or excursion.

Accident Insurance

The Charter School provides student accident insurance which covers medical expenses arising from student injuries on campus or while participating in a Charter School-sponsored off campus activity. The family's health insurance is primary, but if there is no health insurance, the Charter School's Student Accident Insurance becomes primary. Information and applications for student accident insurance are available from the school secretary. The cost incurred by the Charter School shall be covered by the pupil or his or her parent or guardian.

Parent/Guardian Participation

As field trips and excursions are an integral part of the Charter School learning experience, parents are encouraged to participate in an assisting role with students. The Principal or the coordinating teacher will provide parents and guardians with specific supervisory guidelines prior to any Charter School group trip involving students. Topics to be included are safety regulations, emergency responses, and responsibilities of the parent volunteers and language or behavior requirements of all attendees.

A participating parent or guardian will be assigned to a specific group of students to supervise and will be responsible for these students at all times during the field trip or excursion. Under no circumstances will a parent or guardian consume alcohol or use controlled substances (except for medications taken under a physician's orders) during a field trip or excursion. The parent or guardian will notify the coordinating teacher, in advance of the field trip or excursion, should he/she be under a physician's orders and using medications.
All adults taking out-of-state field trips or excursions, and all parents or guardians of pupils taking out-of-state field trips or excursions are required to sign a statement waiving all claims against DCS, its employees, and the State of California for injury, accident, illness, or death occurring during or by reason of the field trip or excursion.

Field trip or excursion expenses for parent or guardian volunteers cannot be paid for with student organization fundraising funds or Discovery funds. Therefore, all related expenses are the responsibility of the participating adult.

Transportation

At all times during the field trip or excursion, teachers, staff and parents will use the safest mode of transportation and the safest and most direct routes of travel. If travel is not by bus, the legal occupancy limit of

ten (10) occupants (including the driver) must not be exceeded, all speed notices must be strictly adhered to, and students are to be seated with individual seatbelts at all times. When District- or school-arranged bus transportation is provided, all participating students shall travel to and from the event on the designated bus transportation. Students may not be transported to or from the event by parents, guardians, or other individuals, except as authorized by the school for emergency, health, or disciplinary reasons.

For overnight or multi-day field trips, including outdoor education programs and sixth-grade camp, students shall travel to and from the destination with the school-sponsored transportation. Students may not be dropped off at or picked up from the destination by parents, guardians, or other individuals, except when an early departure is approved by the school due to health, safety, or disciplinary circumstances.

The Charter School shall take reasonable precautions to ensure that all employees and volunteers who transport students are responsible and capable operators of the vehicles to be used and ensure compliance with the Charter School Student Transportation Policy and Driver Requirements as follows:

Employee or volunteer drivers who offer to provide transportation for a field trip or excursion must provide a copy of the following:

1. Proof of liability insurance for their vehicle with a minimum of $100K/$300K coverage.

2. A copy of their Driver's License and Vehicle Registration.

3. A written statement acknowledging that their insurance carrier is the primary agent responsible for insurance during the field trip or excursion.

4. A criminal background check conducted by the California Department of Justice ("DOJ"). Employees or volunteers whose DOJ report reveals a Driving Under the Influence conviction shall not be permitted to transport students or operate any vehicle on Charter School business for ten (10) years from the date of the conviction. Any employee or volunteer convicted of a felony shall not be permitted to transport Charter School students on Charter School business.

5. A Department of Motor Vehicles record. Employees or volunteers with driving records with two (2) points or more shall not be permitted to transport students or operate any vehicle for Charter School field trips and excursions.

Each of these items will be provided to the Principal or coordinating teacher prior to driving on a field trip or excursion.

Under no circumstances shall students transport other students.

For the volunteer's safety and that of all the students in his/her car, the following rules apply:

1. All Charter School rules apply to students in the volunteer's car. Volunteer drivers are free to appropriately manage student behavior as necessary to maintain safety.

2. All California driving laws must be followed including child restraint laws: no texting or distracted driving, hands-free phone use only.

3. No movies may be shown in vehicles.

4. No side trips allowed, including gasoline stops. Please be sure to have enough gas before leaving on the trip.

5. Maps and directions from the teacher should be reviewed prior to leaving.

6. No purchases for students should be made on the field trip including food or treats for students in the car.

7. Call the Charter School office immediately if there is a problem.

Non-School Sponsored Trips

A non-school-sponsored field trip/excursion is defined as one that is organized and promoted by an outside organization whether or not it is of educational value or is somehow connected to a particular course of study. This includes trips that are organized by organizations that may be affiliated with the Charter School (i.e., parent organizations, cultural groups, etc.):

1. Students who miss school will receive an unexcused absence.

2. Teachers are not responsible for creating schoolwork ahead of time.

3. Students must make up missed academic work.

4. The Charter School has no responsibility to provide travel.

5. Any employee of the Charter School who attends a non-sponsored field trip/excursion does so voluntarily and is not acting as an employee of the Charter School.

6. If a non-sponsored field trip/excursion is promoted on Charter School property, all materials must clearly state that this is a non-sponsored school field trip/activity.

7. No insurance coverage will be provided by the Charter School.

The Charter School assumes no legal or financial responsibility for non-sanctioned field trips.

## Discipline Guidelines

Rights of students

All students have the right to feel safe and secure,
to feel respected, and to learn to their maximum potential.
DCS values the importance of developing relationships with students and families. We believe that academics and social-emotional learning are integral components to the success of student learning. To ensure that students feel safe and welcomed, we are committed to implementing restorative practices in the school. Restorative practices is NOT the schoolwide discipline policy. It is a method we choose to restore a relationship that has been broken.

What are the key points of our Discipline Policy?

**Discovery Discipline Policy:**
Consistent and systematic school-wide
Discipline is about teaching new behaviors to replace negative behaviors
Discipline is positive
Explicit expectations must be taught
There must be follow-through
Consequences must be meaningful/purposeful/relevant/logical

There must be a home/school connection
Discipline is progressive
***When?*** *and* ***Where?***

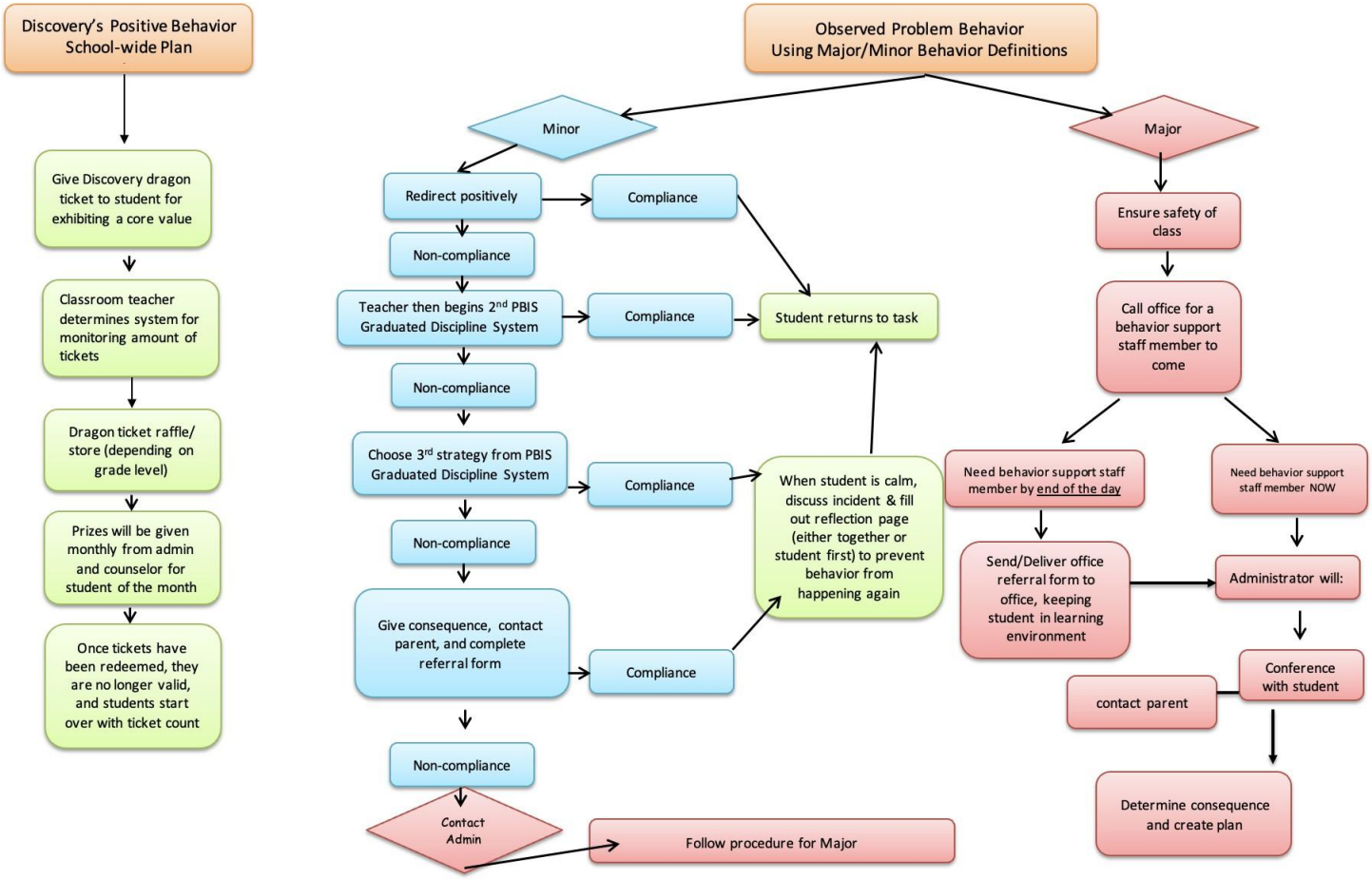
While on school grounds;
While going to or coming from school;
During the lunch period, whether on or off the school campus; or
During, going to, or coming from a school-sponsored activity.
Expectations for all students:
All students are expected to Be Safe, Respectful and Responsible and to abide by the **CORE VALUES:**
Caring
Honesty
Perseverance
Respect
Responsibility
All students are also expected to practice the following **Common Courtesies**, saying:
Please
Thank You
Good Morning/ Good Afternoon
I apologize for…
Excuse Me
See: **DCS Elementary School Rules and Behavioral Expectations for Common Areas Matrix**
To play fairly and safely on the playground and follow rules
Obey rule signs posted on the playground in the specific play areas
To respect class and School property

**Discovery Charter Elementary School**
**Rules and Behavioral Expectations for Common Areas Matrix**

| Common Area | Be Safe | Be Respectful | Be Responsible |
|---|---|---|---|
| All Common Areas | • Walk facing forward.<br>• Keep hands, feet, and objects to self<br>• Get adult help for accidents and spills.<br>• Use all equipment and materials appropriately. | • Use kind words and actions.<br>• Wait for your turn.<br>• Clean up after self.<br>• Follow directions the first time. | • Follow school rules.<br>• Remind others to follow school rules.<br>• Take proper care of all personal belongings and school equipment.<br>• Be honest. |
| Lunch Arbor | • Keep all food to self.<br>• Sit at correct table.<br>• Sit with feet on ground, bottom on bench, and facing table. | • Allow anyone to sit next to you.<br>• Use quiet voices.<br>• Leave the area cleaner than you found it. | • Get all utensils, milk, etc., when first going through the line.<br>• Raise hand and wait to be excused.<br>• Take all trash with you even if it does not belong to you. |

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|---|---|---|---|
| Playground/Recess | • Walk to and from the playground.<br>• Stay within boundaries.<br>• Be aware of activities/games around you.<br>• Freeze and hold all recess equipment when bell rings.<br>• Walk to class in a line. | • Follow game rules.<br>• Include everyone. | • Use bathrooms by portable classrooms. |
| Passing Areas, Halls, Breezeways, Sidewalks | • Stay to the right.<br>• Allow others to pass. | • Hold the door open for the person behind you.<br>• Use quiet voices. | • Stay on sidewalks. |
| Bathrooms | • Keep feet on floor.<br>• Keep water in sink.<br>• Wash and dry hands. | • Give people privacy.<br>• Use whisper voices. | • Flush toilet after use.<br>• Return to class promptly. |
| Arrival and Dismissal Areas | • Use sidewalks and crosswalks.<br>• Follow instructions of Safety Patrol.<br>• Sit on ground in single file line (bus riders in afternoon). | • Use kind words and actions.<br>• Follow adult directions the first time. | • Arrive on time.<br>• Leave on time. |
| Auditorium | • Walk facing forward.<br>• Keep hands, feet, and objects to self.<br>• Get adult help for accidents and spills. | • Use quiet voices. | • Ask for permission for leaving the area. |
| Special Events and Assemblies | • Wait for arrival and dismissal signal. | • Use audience manners.<br>• Sit on bottom. | • Follow school rules and remind others to follow school rules. |

**Discovery Charter Elementary School**
**Behavior Flow Chart**




## Student Recognition

*Descubrimiento (Discovery) Awards*—Descubrimiento Awards are presented to students during an assembly of every quarter. Honorees are recognized for outstanding academic excellence, outstanding improvement, and/or outstanding citizenship. The classroom teacher chooses the recipients. Students can also be recognized for their achievements in Fine Arts, PE, and for promotions in Safety Patrol. Parents/guardians and family members are invited to attend the awards assembly. Another form of student recognition is through our 'Monthly Shoutouts.' Teachers choose a student who is following one of our core values and the student receives an award and small prize from our Admin or School Counselor.

*Perfect Attendance*—Perfect Attendance is defined as no absences, no unexcused tardies, no unexcused dismissals. Students and parents who have perfect attendance each quarter will be recognized. Students who have perfect attendance during the school year will also be recognized.

## Student Programs and Organizations

*Safety Patrol*—Safety Patrol is comprised of 5th and 6th grade students who are selected to monitor the safe use of crosswalks before and after school.

*Student Council*—Student Council consists of elected/selected representatives from grades 4-6th with officers elected annually. The Council selects spirit activities and provides community service.

## Volunteers/Campus Visitors

Teachers will contact parents/guardians if volunteers are needed. Volunteering in the classroom must be initiated by teacher request, and the front office must be notified prior volunteers being on on campus so that staff will be prepared to welcome volunteers.

DCS must implement a safe environment program to ensure that its children can learn in the safest and most secure setting possible.

A safe environment program begins with screening all adults who work with children on a regular basis. Volunteers who have frequent or prolonged contact with students will be assessed and examined (if necessary) for tuberculosis prior to working with students.

Volunteers must carefully read the Protocols and Guidelines for Volunteers and sign the document. By signing the document, they agree to follow the protocols and guidelines. If a volunteer fails to follow one of them, they will not be allowed to volunteer for the remainder of that school year. Volunteers who volunteer two (2) or more days per week or who will volunteer outside of the direct supervision of a credentialed employee must be fingerprinted, receive background clearance, and complete Child Abuse Prevention training prior to volunteering without the direct supervision of a credentialed employee. Please see the school secretary for information on fingerprinting. When volunteering or visiting the campus, all visitors must be registered with the National Safe Schools Initiative computer system. Please bring a valid picture ID to start the registration process. A visitor badge with your photo and name will be printed and must be worn at all times when on campus. All volunteers and visitors must log out upon their departure from school.

A safe environment program requires the ongoing training of parents, educators, volunteers, and others regularly involved with minors as to the issue of child abuse, including sexual abuse.

Every regular volunteer must complete the following to volunteer at DCS each year:

- Sign a Volunteer Orientation guide.
- Receive the aforementioned TB test, Child Abuse Prevention Training, , and fingerprinting (when volunteering more than two days per week or volunteering outside of the direct supervision of a credentialed employee.)
- Volunteers must use positive reinforcement and encouragement rather than competition, comparison, or criticism.
- Volunteers must not use profanity or other inappropriate language in the presence of students or adults.
- Volunteers must dress appropriately.
- Possessing or being under the influence of alcohol or drugs is strictly prohibited. Smoking or use of any tobacco products is also prohibited.
- Comply with the Student Safety, Professional Boundaries, and Adult Misconduct Policy (Please see the complete policy in the appendices of this Handbook). Any violation of these requirements may be grounds for removal of the volunteer.

Please see the complete policyy on the website.

**Ways for Parents to Support the School**

- Help teachers with assigned tasks
- Chaperone a field trip
- Attend parent/guardian meetings at the school
- Attending Parent/guardian Conferences
- Volunteer in the library
- Volunteer for PTC Events – campout, fall, Spring event, movie nights, etc.
- Volunteer for Scholastic Book Fairs
- Join and attend Parent Organizations – English Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC), or the

Charter Board

- Various Other Needs – Various needs arise throughout the school year for people with special skills and talents, as well as helping with the previously listed events. Please know that your time and talents are appreciated at any level.

## Library Agreement

DCS requires that all classes visit the library on a basis of twice a month to check out books. Please help your child remember to return books on their library day in order to check out more books. If a book is lost or damaged beyond repair, the student's family is responsible for that damage and will need to pay for the full cost of replacement for that book. For more information see the notice below.

## Lost or Damaged School Property

If a student willfully damages the Charter School's property or the personal property of a Charter School employee, or fails to return a textbook, library book, computer/tablet or other Charter School property that has been loaned to the student, the student's parents/guardians are liable for all damages caused by the student's misconduct not to exceed ten thousand dollars ($10,000), adjusted annually for inflation. After notifying the student's parent or guardian in writing of the student's alleged misconduct and affording the student due process, the Charter School may withhold the student's grades or transcripts, until the damages have been paid. If the student and the student's parent/guardian are unable to pay for the damages or to return the property, the Charter School will provide a program of voluntary work for the minor in lieu of the payment of monetary damages. Upon completion of the voluntary work, the student's grades/transcripts will be released.

## Campus Search and Seizure

The Charter School recognizes and has determined that the occurrence of incidents which may include the possession of firearms, weapons, alcohol, controlled substances, or other items of contraband prohibited by law or Charter School rules and regulations, jeopardizes the health, safety and welfare of students and Charter School employees.

The California Constitution requires that all students and staff of public schools have the inalienable right to attend campuses which are safe, secure, and peaceful. As such, Charter School has adopted a Policy outlining the reasonable search of students and their property, student use areas, and/or student lockers and the seizure of illegal, unsafe, unauthorized or contraband items and materials through a search based upon reasonable suspicion.

A student's personal cell phone, smartphone, or other personal electronic device shall not be searched by school officials without a warrant, the student's consent, or a legitimate emergency, unless the device is lost or abandoned. An emergency is any **situation involving danger of death or serious physical injury to any person, that requires access to the information located or reasonably believed to be located on the electronic device.** If the Charter School has a good faith belief that the device is lost, stolen, or abandoned, the Charter School may only access electronic device information in order to attempt to identify, verify, or contact the owner of the device.

The Charter School is not prohibited from seizing/confiscating a student's personal electronic device, without searching its contents, if the student's use or possession of the private electronic device is in violation of Charter School rules or regulations. The complete Policy is available for review at the main office and on the school website.

## Education of Foster and Mobile Youth

**Definitions**: For the purposes of this annual notice the terms are defined as follows:

1. *"Foster youth"* means any of the following:
2. A child who has been removed from their home pursuant to Section 309 of the California Welfare and Institutions Code ("WIC").
3. A child who is the subject of a petition filed pursuant to WIC section 300 or 602 (whether or not the

child has been removed from the child's home by juvenile court).

4. A child who is the subject of a petition filed pursuant to WIC section 602, has been removed from the child's home by the juvenile court, and is in foster care.
5. A nonminor under the transition jurisdiction of the juvenile court, as described in WIC section 450, who satisfies all of the following criteria:
6. The nonminor has attained 18 years of age while under an order of foster care placement by the juvenile court.
7. The nonminor is in foster care under the placement and care responsibility of the county welfare department, county probation department, Indian tribe, consortium of tribes, or tribal organization.
8. The nonminor is participating in a transitional independent living case plan.
9. A dependent child of the court of an Indian tribe, consortium of tribes, or tribal organization who is the subject of a petition filed in the tribal court.[1]
10. A child who is the subject of a voluntary placement agreement, as defined in WIC section 11400"Former juvenile court school pupils" refers to a student who, upon completion of the student's second
    year of high school, transfers from a juvenile court school to the Charter School.
11. "Child of a military family" refers to a student who resides in the household of an active duty military member.
12. "Currently Migratory Child" refers to a child who, within the last 12-months, has moved with a parent, guardian, or other person having custody to the Charter School from another Local Educational Agency ("LEA"), either within California or from another state so that the child or a member of the child's immediate family might secure temporary or seasonal employment in an agricultural or fishing activity, and whose parents or guardians have been informed of the child's eligibility for migrant education services. This includes a child who, without the parent/guardian, has continued to migrate annually to secure temporary or seasonal employment in an agricultural or fishing activity.
13. "Newcomer pupil" is a person aged 3 to 21 years, who was not born in any of the 50 United States, the District of Columbia, or the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and has not been attending one or more schools in any one or more of the 50 United States, the District of Columbia, or the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, for more than three (3) full academic years. This also includes a "pupil participating in a newcomer program," as defined in Education Code section 51225.2, as that section read on January 1, 2023, who was enrolled in the Charter School before January 1, 2024. The Charter School may, in its discretion, also extend the rights in Education Code sections 51225.1 and 51225.2 to a "pupil participating in a newcomer program," as defined in Education Code section 51225.2, as that section read on January 1, 2023.

14. "Educational Rights Holder" ("ERH") means a parent, guardian, or responsible adult appointed by a court to make educational decisions for a minor pursuant to WIC sections 319, 361 or 726, or a person holding the right to make educational decisions for the student pursuant to Education Code section 56055.

15. "School of origin" means the school that the foster youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the foster youth was last enrolled. If the school the foster youth attended when permanently housed is different from the school in which the student was last enrolled, or if there is some other school that the foster youth attended within the immediately preceding 15 months, the Charter School liaison for foster youth, in consultation with and with the agreement of the foster youth and the ERH for the youth, shall determine, in the best interests of the foster youth, the school that shall be deemed the school of origin. For a foster youth who is an individual with exceptional needs as defined in Education Code section 56026, "school" as used in the definition of "school of origin" includes a placement in a nonpublic, nonsectarian school as defined in Education Code section 56034, subject to the requirements of Education Code section 56325.
16. "Best interests" means that, in making educational and school placement decisions for a foster youth, consideration is given to, among other factors, the opportunity to be educated in the least restrictive

[1] The Charter School shall not require an Indian tribe or tribal court representative to certify that any student is a dependent of an Indian tribe, consortium of tribes, or tribal organization.

educational program and the foster youth's access to academic resources, services, and extracurricular and enrichment activities that are available to all Charter School students.

17. "Partial coursework satisfactorily completed" includes any portion of an individual course, even if the student did not complete the entire course.

Within this notice, foster youth, former juvenile court school students, a child of a military family, a currently migratory child, and a newcomer pupil will be collectively referred to as "Foster and Mobile Youth." Within this notice, a parent, guardian, or other person holding the educational rights for a Foster and Mobile Youth will be referred to as a "parent/guardian" or "ERH."

**Foster and Mobile Youth Liaison**: The Board of Directors designates the following staff person as the Liaison for Foster and Mobile Youth:

Neil MacGaffey
Executive Director
1100 Camino Biscay, Chula Vista, CA 91910
619-656-0797

The Foster and Mobile Youth Liaison's responsibilities include but are not limited to the following:

1. Ensuring and facilitating the proper educational placement, enrollment in school, and checkout from school of foster children.
2. Assisting foster children when transferring from one school to another school in ensuring proper transfer of credits, records and grades.

**School Stability:** The Charter School will work with foster youth and their parent/guardian to ensure that each pupil is placed in the least restrictive educational programs, and has access to the academic resources, services, and extracurricular and enrichment activities that are available to all pupils, including, but not necessarily limited to, interscholastic sports. All decisions regarding a foster youth's education and placement will be based on the best interest of the child and shall consider, among other factors, educational stability and the opportunity to be educated in the least restrictive educational setting necessary to achieve academic progress.

Foster youth, currently migratory children and children of military families have the right to remain in their school of origin if it is in their best interest. The Charter School will immediately enroll a foster youth, currently migratory child or child of a military family seeking reenrollment in the Charter School as the student's school of origin (subject to the Charter School's capacity and pursuant to the procedures stated in the Charter School's charter and Board policy). If a dispute arises regarding a foster youth's request to remain in the Charter School as the school of origin, the foster youth has the right to remain in the Charter School pending the resolution of the dispute. The Charter School will also immediately enroll any foster youth, currently migratory child or child of a military family seeking to transfer to the Charter School (subject to the Charter School's capacity and pursuant to the procedures stated in the Charter School's charter and Board policy) regardless of the student's ability to meet normal enrollment documentation or uniform requirements (e.g., producing medical records or academic records from a previous school).

Foster youth, currently migratory children, and children of military families have the right to remain in their school of origin following the termination of the child's status as a foster youth, currently migratory child or child of a military family, as follows:

- For students in Kindergarten through eighth grade, inclusive, the student will be allowed to continue in the school of origin through the duration of the academic year in which the student's status changed.

If the Charter School operates an intersession program, Charter School shall grant priority access to foster youths. Notwithstanding any other law, if the foster youth will be moving during an intersession period, the

pupil's educational rights holder, or Indian custodian in the case of an Indian child, shall determine which school the pupil attends for the intersession period, if applicable. "Intersession program" means an expanded learning program offered by the Charter School on nonschooldays, including, but not limited to, summer school. "Indian custodian" is as the term is defined in Section 1903 of Title 25 of the United States Code.

**Acceptance of Course Work:** The Charter School will accept any coursework satisfactorily completed at any public school, a juvenile court school, a school in a country other than the United States, and/or a nonpublic, nonsectarian school or agency by a Foster and Mobile Youth.

The Charter School will provide Foster and Mobile Youth credit for the partial completion of courses taken while attending a public school, a juvenile court school, a school in a country other than the United States, and/or a nonpublic, nonsectarian school or agency. If the student did not complete the entire course, the Charter School shall not require the student to retake the portion of the course the student completed unless the Charter School, in consultation with the holder of educational rights for the student, finds that the pupil is reasonably able to complete the requirements in time to graduate from high school. When partial credit is awarded in a particular course, the Foster and Mobile Youth shall be enrolled in the same or equivalent course, if applicable, so that the student may continue and complete the entire course. These students shall not be prevented from taking or retaking a course to meet California State University or the University of California admission eligibility requirements.

**Student Records:** When the Charter School receives a transfer request and/or student records request for the educational information and records of a foster youth from a new local educational agency ("LEA"), the Charter School shall provide these student records within two (2) business days. The Charter School shall compile the complete educational record of the student, including but not limited to a determination of seat time, full or partial credits earned, current classes and grades, immunization and other records, and, if applicable, a copy of the student's special education records including assessments, IEPs, and/or 504 plans. All requests for student records will be shared with the Foster and Mobile Youth Liaison, who shall be aware of the specific educational record keeping needs of Foster and Mobile Youth.

The Charter School shall not lower a foster youth's grades as a result of the student's absence due to a verified court appearance, related court ordered activity, or a change the placement of the student made by a county or placing agency. If a foster youth is absent from school due to a decision to change the placement of the student made by a county or placing agency, the grades and credits of the pupil will be calculated as of the date the student left the Charter School.

In accordance with the Charter School's Educational Records and Student Information Policy, under limited circumstances, the Charter School may disclose student records or personally identifiable information contained in those records to certain requesting parties including but not limited to a foster family agency and state and local authorities within a juvenile justice system, without parent/guardian consent.

**Discipline Determinations:** If the Charter School intends to extend the suspension of any foster youth pending a recommendation for expulsion, the Charter School will invite the student's attorney and an appropriate representative from the relevant county agency to participate in the meeting at which the extension of the suspension will be discussed.

If the Charter School intends to suspend for more than ten (10) consecutive school days or expel a student with a disability who is also a foster youth due to an act for which the recommendation for expulsion is discretionary, the Charter School will invite the student's attorney and an appropriate representative from the relevant county agency to participate in the Manifestation Determination Review meeting.

**Complaints of Noncompliance:** A complaint of noncompliance with any of the requirements outlined above may be filed through the Charter School's Uniform Complaint Procedures. A copy of the Uniform Complaint Policy and Procedures is available upon request at the main office and on the school website.

**Availability of Complete Policy:** For any Foster and Mobile Youth who enrolls at the Charter School, a copy

of the Charter School's complete Education of Foster and Mobile Youth Policy shall be provided at the time of enrollment. A copy of the complete Policy is available upon request at the main office and on the school website.

## Education of Homeless Children and Youth

The term "homeless children and youth" means individuals who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence. It includes children and youths who (42 U.S.C. § 11434a):

1. Are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; or are abandoned in hospitals;
2. Have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations for human beings;
3. Are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and/or
4. Migratory children and unaccompanied youth (youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian) may be considered homeless if they meet the above definition of "homeless."

Homeless status is determined in cooperation with the parent or guardian. In the case of unaccompanied youth, status is determined by the Charter School Liaison.

**School Liaison**: The Board of Directors designates the following staff person as the School Liaison for homeless students (42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(1)(J)(ii)):

Neil MacGaffey
Executive Director
1100 Camino Biscay
Chula Vista, CA, 91910,
619-656-0797

The Charter School Liaison shall ensure that (42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(6)):

1. Homeless students are identified by Charter School personnel, through outreach and coordination activities with other entities and agencies and through the annual housing questionnaire administered by the Charter School.

2. Homeless students enroll in and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed at the Charter School.

3. Homeless students and families receive educational services for which they are eligible, including services through Head Start programs (including Early Head Start programs) under the Head Start Act, early intervention services under part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, any other preschool programs administered by the Charter School, if any, and referrals to health care services, dental services, mental health services and substance abuse services, housing services, and other appropriate services.

4. Parents/guardians are informed of the educational and related opportunities available to their children and are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children.

5. Public notice of the educational rights of homeless children is disseminated at places frequented by parents or guardians of such youths, and unaccompanied youths, including schools, shelters, public libraries, and soup kitchens, and in a manner and form understandable to the parents and guardians of homeless youth and unaccompanied youth.

6. Enrollment/admissions disputes are mediated in accordance with law, the Charter School's

charter, and Board policy.

7. Parents/guardians and any unaccompanied youth are fully informed of all transportation services, as applicable.

8. Charter School personnel providing services receive professional development and other support.
9. The Charter School Liaison collaborates with State coordinators and community and school personnel responsible for the provision of education and related services to homeless children and youths.

10. Unaccompanied youth are enrolled in school; have opportunities to meet the same challenging State academic standards as the State establishes for other children and youth; and are informed of their status as independent students under section 480 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 and that the youths may obtain assistance from the Charter School Liaison to receive verification of such status for the purposes of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid described in section 483 of the Act.

The California Department of Education publishes a list of the contact information for the Homeless Education Liaisons in the state, which is available at: ***https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/hs/***

**Housing Questionnaire:** Charter School shall administer a housing questionnaire for purposes of identifying homeless children and youth. Charter School shall ensure that the housing questionnaire is based on the best practices developed by the CDE. Charter School shall annually provide the housing questionnaire to all parents/guardians of students and to all unaccompanied youths at Charter School. The housing questionnaire shall include an explanation of the rights and protections a student has as a homeless child or youth or as an unaccompanied youth. The housing questionnaire shall be available in paper form. The housing questionnaire shall be available in English, and if fifteen (15) percent or more of the students enrolled at Charter School speak a single primary language other than English, it shall also be written in the primary language. The questionnaire shall be translated into other languages upon request of a student's parent/guardian or an unaccompanied youth. Charter School shall collect the completed housing questionnaires and annually report to the CDE the number of homeless children and youths and unaccompanied youths enrolled. (Education Code Section 48851.)

**School Stability:** The Charter School will work with homeless students and their parent/guardian to ensure that each student is placed in the least restrictive educational programs, and has access to the academic resources, services, and extracurricular and enrichment activities that are available to all students, including, but not necessarily limited to, interscholastic sports. All decisions regarding a homeless student's education and placement will be based on the best interest of the child and shall consider, among other factors, educational stability and the opportunity to be educated in the least restrictive educational setting necessary to achieve academic progress.

Homeless students have the right to remain in their school of origin if it is in their best interest. The Charter School will immediately enroll a homeless student seeking reenrollment in the Charter School as the student's school of origin (subject to the Charter School's capacity and pursuant to the procedures stated in the Charter School's charter and Board policy). The Charter School will also immediately enroll any homeless student seeking to transfer to the Charter School (subject to the Charter School's capacity and pursuant to the procedures stated in the Charter School's charter and Board policy) regardless of the student's ability to meet normal enrollment documentation or uniform requirements (e.g., producing medical records or academic records from a previous school).

Homeless students have the right to remain in their school of origin following the termination of the child's status as a homeless student as follows:

- For students in Kindergarten through eighth grade, inclusive, the student will be allowed to continue in the school of origin through the duration of the academic year in which the student's status changed.

If the Charter School operates an intersession program, Charter School shall grant priority access to homeless students. Notwithstanding any other law, if the homeless student will be moving during an intersession period, the pupil's parent, guardian, educational rights holder, Indian custodian[2] in the case of an Indian child, or, if none of the preceding are applicable, an accompanied homeless student themselves shall determine which school the pupil attends for the intersession period, if applicable. "Intersession program" means an expanded learning program offered by the Charter School on nonschooldays, including, but not limited to, summer school. "Indian custodian" is as the term is defined in Section 1903 of Title 25 of the United States Code.

**Acceptance of Course Work:** The Charter School will accept any coursework satisfactorily completed at any public school, a juvenile court school, a school in a country other than the United States, and/or a nonpublic, nonsectarian school or agency by a homeless student.

The Charter School will provide homeless students credit for the partial completion of courses taken while attending a public school, a juvenile court school, a school in a country other than the United States, and/or a nonpublic, nonsectarian school or agency. If the student did not complete the entire course, the Charter School shall not require the student to retake the portion of the course the student completed unless the Charter School, in consultation with the holder of educational rights for the student, finds that the student is reasonably able to complete the requirements in time to graduate from high school. When partial credit is awarded in a particular course, the homeless student shall be enrolled in the same or equivalent course, if applicable, so that the student may continue and complete the entire course. These students shall not be prevented from taking or retaking a course to meet California State University or the University of California admission eligibility requirements.

**Complaints of Noncompliance:** A complaint of noncompliance with any of the requirements outlined above may be filed through the Charter School's Uniform Complaint Procedures. A copy of the Uniform Complaint Policy and Procedures is available on the website.

**Availability of Complete Policy:** For any homeless student who enrolls at the Charter School, a copy of the Charter School's complete policy shall be provided at the time of enrollment. A copy of the complete Policy is available upon request at the main office and on the school website.

## Universal School Meals

## School Meals and Student Wellness

Pursuant to California law, the Charter School shall make available a nutritionally adequate breakfast and a nutritionally adequate lunch free of charge and with adequate time to eat, during each schoolday to any student who requests a meal without consideration of the student's eligibility for a federally funded free or reduced-price meal, with a maximum of one (1) free breakfast meal and one (1) free lunch meal during each schoolday. This shall apply to all pupils in kindergarten through grade eight (8).

Applications for school meals are included in the first day packets to all families and can also be obtained on the Charter School website and in the main office. All families are encouraged to complete the application form. Completed application forms can be returned to the main office. Income eligibility guidelines for federally funded free and reduced-price meals are available at: https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/rs/

Based on a parent/guardian's annual earnings, a parent/guardian may be eligible to receive the Earned Income Tax Credit from the Federal Government (Federal EITC). The Federal EITC is a refundable federal income tax credit for low-income working individuals and families. The Federal EITC has no effect on certain welfare benefits. In most cases, Federal EITC payments will not be used to determine eligibility for Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income, food stamps, low-income housing, or most Temporary Assistance For Needy

[2] "Indian custodian" means any Indian person who has legal custody of an Indian child under tribal law or custom or under State law or to whom temporary physical care, custody, and control has been transferred by the parent of such child. *Section 1903 of Title 25 of the United States Code*

Families payments. Even if you a parent/guardian does not owe federal taxes, they must file a federal tax return to receive the Federal EITC. Be sure to fill out the Federal EITC form in the Federal Income Tax Return Booklet. For information regarding your eligibility to receive the Federal EITC, including information on how to obtain the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Notice 797 or any other necessary forms and instructions, contact the IRS by calling 1-800-829-3676 or through its website at www.irs.gov.

A parent/guardian may also be eligible to receive the California Earned Income Tax Credit (California EITC) starting with the calendar year 2015 tax year. The California EITC is a refundable state income tax credit for low-income working individuals and families. The California EITC is treated in the same manner as the Federal EITC and generally will not be used to determine eligibility for welfare benefits under California law. To claim the California EITC, even if you do not owe California taxes, you must file a California income tax return and complete and attach the California EITC Form (FTB 3514). For information on the availability of the credit eligibility requirements and how to obtain the necessary California forms and get help filing, contact the Franchise Tax Board at 1-800-852-5711 or through its website at www.ftb.ca.gov.

Charter School shall allow students, teachers, and staff to bring and carry water bottles. Water bottles may be excluded from libraries, computer labs, science labs, and other places where it is deemed dangerous to have drinking water. Charter School may develop additional policies regarding the types of water bottles that may be carried.

Charter School adheres to all applicable requirements regarding placement and maintenance of water bottle refilling stations on campus.

Charter School shall encourage water consumption through promotional and educational activities and signage that focus on the benefits of drinking water and highlight any water bottle filling stations that are located on campus.

## Involuntary Removal Process

No student shall be involuntarily removed by the Charter School for any reason unless the parent or guardian of the student has been provided written notice of intent to remove the student no less than five (5) schooldays before the effective date of the action ("Involuntary Removal Notice"). The written notice shall be in the native language of the student or the student's parent or guardian or, if the student is a foster child or youth or a homeless child or youth, the student's educational rights holder. The Involuntary Removal Notice shall include the charges against the student and an explanation of the student's basic rights including the right to request a hearing before the effective date of the action. The hearing shall be consistent with the Charter School's expulsion procedures. If the student's parent, guardian, or educational rights holder requests a hearing, the student shall remain enrolled and shall not be removed until the Charter School issues a final decision. As used herein, "involuntarily removed" includes disenrolled, dismissed, transferred, or terminated, but does not include suspensions or expulsions pursuant to the Charter School's suspension and expulsion policy.

Upon parent/guardian request for a hearing, the Charter School will provide notice of hearing consistent with its expulsion hearing process, through which the student has a fair opportunity to present testimony, evidence, and witnesses and confront and cross-examine adverse witnesses, and at which the student has the right to bring legal counsel or an advocate. The notice of hearing shall be in the native language of the student or the student's parent or guardian or, if the student is a foster child or youth or a homeless child or youth, the student's educational rights holder, and shall include a copy of the Charter School's expulsion hearing process.

If the parent/guardian is nonresponsive to the Involuntary Removal Notice, the student will be disenrolled as of the effective date set forth in the Involuntary Removal Notice. If the parent/guardian requests a hearing and does not attend on the date scheduled for the hearing the student will be disenrolled effective the date of the hearing.

If, as a result of the hearing, the student is disenrolled, notice will be sent to the student's last known school district of residence within thirty (30) days.

A hearing decision not to disenroll the student does not prevent the Charter School from making a similar recommendation in the future should student truancy continue or re-occur.

## Nondiscrimination Statement

The Charter School does not discriminate against any person on the basis of actual or perceived disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, race or ethnicity, immigration status, religion, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, pregnancy, or any other characteristic that is contained in the definition of hate crimes in the California Penal Code.

Charter School does not discriminate against any person on the basis of sex or gender in the operation, conduct, or administration of community youth athletics programs, or in the allocation of parks and recreation facilities and resources or school and recreation facilities and resources that support or enable these programs.

The Charter School Board of Directors ("Board") shall not refuse to approve the use or prohibit the use of any textbook, instructional material, supplemental instructional material, or other curriculum for classroom instruction or any book or other resource in a school library on the basis that it includes a study of the role and contributions of Native Americans, African Americans, Latino Americans, Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders, European Americans, LGBTQ+ Americans, persons with disabilities, or members of other ethnic, cultural, religious, or socioeconomic status groups.

Instruction and instructional materials shall be factually accurate and align with the adopted curriculum and standards and be consistent with accepted standards of professional responsibility, rather than advocacy, personal opinion, bias, or partisanship. A teacher shall not give instruction and Charter School shall not sponsor any activity that promotes a discriminatory bias on the basis of race or ethnicity, gender, religion, disability, nationality, or sexual orientation, or pursuant to a characteristic listed in Section 220. Discriminatory bias in instruction and school-sponsored activities does not require a showing of direct harm to members of a protected group. Members of a protected group do not need to be present while the discriminatory bias is occurring for the act to be considered discriminatory bias. The Board shall take corrective action if it finds that instruction or school-sponsored activities are discriminatory.

The Board shall not adopt or approve the use of any textbook, instructional material, supplemental instructional material, professional development materials, or curriculum for classroom instruction if the use of such would subject a student to unlawful discrimination pursuant to Education Code section 220, or if the professional development materials or services promote, endorse, or otherwise support actions or the use of any textbook, instructional material, supplemental instructional material, or curriculum which would subject a pupil to unlawful discrimination pursuant to Section 220.

If the Board knows or has reason to know that materials were used in a classroom, that professional development materials or services were used, or that an action occurred that violated Education Code section 220, the Board shall investigate and remediate the action, which may include, but is not limited to, the implementation of restorative justice practices.

The Charter School adheres to all provisions of federal law related to students with disabilities, including, but not limited to, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 ("ADA"), and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 ("IDEIA").

The Charter School does not discourage students from enrolling or seeking to enroll in the Charter School for any reason, including, but not limited to, academic performance, disability, neglect or delinquency, English proficiency, for being homeless or a foster/mobile youth, economic disadvantage, nationality, race, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. The Charter School shall not encourage a student currently attending Charter School to disenroll or transfer to another school based on any of the aforementioned reasons except in cases of expulsion

and suspension or involuntary removal in accordance with the Charter School's charter and relevant policies.

The Charter School does not request nor require student records prior to a student's enrollment.

The Charter School shall provide a copy of the California Department of Education Complaint Notice and Form to any parent, guardian, or student over the age of 18 at the following times: (1) when a parent, guardian, or student over of the age of 18 inquires about enrollment; (2) before conducting an enrollment lottery; and (3) before disenrollment of a student.

The Charter School is committed to providing an educational atmosphere that is free of unlawful harassment under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (sex); Titles IV, VI, and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (race, color, or national origin); The Age Discrimination Act of 1975; the IDEIA; and Section 504 and Title II of the ADA (mental or physical disability). The Charter School also prohibits sexual harassment, including cyber sexual bullying, and harassment based upon pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions, race, religion, religious affiliation, creed, color, immigration status, gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin or ancestry, physical or mental disability, medical condition, marital status, age, sexual orientation, or any other basis protected by federal, state, local law, ordinance or regulation. The Charter School does not condone or tolerate harassment of any type, including discrimination, intimidation, or bullying, including cyber sexual bullying, by any employee, independent contractor or other person with which the Charter School does business, or any other individual, student, or volunteer. This applies to all employees, students, or volunteers and relationships, regardless of position or gender.

Pursuant to California law and the California Attorney General's guidance to K-12 schools in responding to immigration issues ("Guidance"), Charter School provides equal access to free public education, regardless of a student's or their parent's or guardian's immigration status or religious beliefs.

The Charter School will promptly and thoroughly investigate any complaint of harassment and take appropriate corrective action, if warranted.

Inquiries, complaints, or grievances regarding harassment as described in this section, above, should be directed to the Charter School Uniform Complaint Procedures ("UCP") Compliance Officer:

Neil MacGaffey
Executive Director
1100 Camino Biscay
Chula Vista, CA: 91910
619-656-0797

The lack of English language skills will not be a barrier to admission or participation in the Charter School's programs or activities. The Charter School prohibits retaliation against anyone who files a complaint or who participates or refuses to participate in a complaint investigation.

## Section 504

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

## Special Education /Students with Disabilities

We are dedicated to the belief that all students can learn and must be guaranteed equal opportunity to become contributing members of the academic environment and society. The Charter School provides special

education instruction and related services in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Improvement Act ("IDEA"), Education Code requirements, and applicable policies and procedures of the San Diego County SELPA/Chula Vista Elementary School District. These services are available for special education students enrolled at the Charter School. We offer high-quality educational programs and services for all our students in accordance with the assessed needs of each student. The Charter School collaborates with parents, the student, teachers, and other agencies, as may be indicated, in order to appropriately serve the educational needs of each student.

Pursuant to the IDEA and relevant state law, the Charter School is responsible for identifying, locating, and evaluating children enrolled at the Charter School with known or suspected disabilities to determine whether a need for special education and related services exists. This includes children with disabilities who are homeless or foster youth. The Charter School shall not deny nor discourage any student from enrollment solely due to a disability. If you believe your child may be eligible for special education services, please contact Sarah Johnson, School Psychologist, 619-656-0797.

**Student Records, including Records Challenges and Directory Information and CCGI Notice**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA") affords parents and students who are 18 years of age or older ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 5 business days after the day the Charter School receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the Charter School Principal or designee a written request that identifies the records they wish to inspect. The Charter School official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA.

Parents or eligible students who wish to ask the Charter School to amend a record should write the Charter School's Principal or designee, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed and specify why it should be changed. If the Charter School decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the Charter School will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing. If the Charter School decides to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the Principal must order the correction or the removal and destruction of the information and inform the parent or eligible student of the amendment in writing.

3. The right to provide written consent before the Charter School discloses personally identifiable information ("PII") from the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to Charter School officials with legitimate educational interests. A Charter School official is a person employed by the Charter School as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel) or a person serving on the Charter School's Board of Directors. A Charter School official also may include a volunteer, consultant, vendor, or contractor outside of the Charter School who performs an institutional service or function for which the Charter School would otherwise use its own employees and who is under the direct control of the school with respect to the use and maintenance of PII from education records, such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, therapist, or contracted provider of digital educational platforms and/or services; a parent or student volunteering to serve on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee; or a parent, student, or other volunteer assisting another Charter School official in performing their tasks. A Charter School official has a legitimate educational

interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill their professional responsibility.

Upon request, the Charter School discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll, or is already enrolled, if the disclosure is for purposes of the student's enrollment or transfer.

Note that Charter School will not release information to third parties for immigration-enforcement purposes, except as required by law or court order.

4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the Charter School to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

   Student Privacy Policy Office
   U.S. Department of Education
   400 Maryland Avenue, SW
   Washington, DC 20202

5. The right to request that the Charter School not release student names, addresses and telephone listings to military recruiters or institutions of higher education without prior written parental consent.

FERPA permits the disclosure of PII from a student's education records, without consent of the parent or eligible student, if the disclosure meets certain conditions found in §99.31 of the FERPA regulations. Except for disclosures to Charter School officials, disclosures related to some judicial orders or lawfully issued subpoenas, disclosures of directory information, and disclosures to the parent or eligible student, §99.32 of the FERPA regulations requires the Charter School to record the disclosure. Parents and eligible students have a right to inspect and review the record of disclosures. A Charter School may disclose PII from the education records of a student without obtaining prior written consent of the parents or the eligible student to the following parties:

1. Charter School officials who have a legitimate educational interest as defined by 34 C.F.R. Part 99;
2. Other schools to which a student seeks or intends to enroll so long as the disclosure is for purposes related to the student's enrollment or transfer. When a student transfers schools, the Charter School will mail the original or a copy of a student's cumulative file to the receiving district or private school within ten (10) school days following the date the request is received from the public school or private school where the student intends to enroll. The Charter School will make a reasonable attempt to notify the parent or eligible student of the request for records at the parent's or eligible student's last known address, unless the disclosure is initiated by the parent or eligible student. Additionally, the Charter School will give the parent or eligible student, upon request, a copy of the record that was disclosed and give the parent or eligible student, upon request, an opportunity for a hearing;
3. Certain government officials listed in 20 U.S.C. § 1232g(b)(1) in order to carry out lawful functions;
4. Appropriate parties in connection with a student's application for, or receipt of, financial aid if it is necessary to determine eligibility, amount of aid, conditions for aid or enforcing the terms and conditions of the aid;
5. Organizations conducting certain studies for the Charter School in accordance with 20 U.S.C. § 1232g(b)(1)(F);
6. Accrediting organizations in order to carry out their accrediting functions;
7. Parents of a dependent student as defined in section 152 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986;
8. Individuals or entities, in compliance with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena. Subject to the exceptions found in 34 C.F.R. § 99.31(a)(9)(i), reasonable effort must be made to notify the parent or eligible student of the order or subpoena in advance of compliance, so that the parent or eligible student may seek a protective order;
9. Persons who need to know in cases of health and safety emergencies;
10. State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law;
11. A foster family agency with jurisdiction over a currently enrolled or former student, a short-term

residential treatment program staff responsible for the education or case management of a student, and a caregiver (regardless of whether the caregiver has been appointed as the student's educational rights holder) who has direct responsibility for the care of the student, including a certified or licensed foster parent, an approved relative or nonrelated extended family member, or a resource family, may access the current or most recent records of grades, transcripts, attendance, discipline, and online communication on platforms established by the Charter School for students and parents, and any individualized education program ("IEP") or Section 504 plan that may have been developed or maintained by the Charter School; and/or

12. A victim of an alleged perpetrator of a crime of violence or a non-forcible sex offense. The disclosure may only include the final results of the disciplinary proceedings conducted by the Charter School with respect to that alleged crime or offense. The Charter School discloses the final results of the disciplinary proceeding regardless of whether the Charter School concluded a violation was committed.

"Directory Information" is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released. The Charter School may disclose the personally identifiable information that it has designated as directory information without a parent's or eligible student's prior written consent. The Charter School has designated the following information as directory information:

1. Student's name
2. Telephone listing
3. Student's electronic mail address
4. Parent's/guardian's electronic mail address
5. Photograph/video
6. Date of birth
7. Dates of attendance
8. Grade level
9. Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
10. Weight and height of members of athletic teams
11. Degrees, honors, and awards received
12. The most recent educational agency or institution attended
13. Student ID number, user ID, or other unique personal identifier used to communicate in electronic systems that cannot be used to access education records without a PIN, password, etc. (A student's social security number, in whole or in part, cannot be used for this purpose.)

If you do not want the Charter School to disclose directory information from your child's education records without your prior written consent, you must notify the Charter School in writing at the time of enrollment or re-enrollment.

Please notify the Principal at: 619-656-0797. A copy of the complete Policy is available upon request at the main office and on the school website.

Charter School shall not release directory information regarding a student identified as a homeless child or youth under the McKinney Vento Homeless Assistance Act in the absence of parent, guardian, or eligible student's written consent, except as follows:

a. When the directory information is released for the purposes of facilitating the student's access to an oral assessment or eye examination required by Charter School, unless the parent/guardian opts out of the examination.

Please note that data collected and reported by Charter School to the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System ("CALPADS"[3]) pursuant to state law, will be shared with the California College

[3] CALPADS is a database maintained by the CDE which consists of pupil data from elementary and secondary schools relating to, among other things, demographic, program participation, enrollment, and statewide assessments data.

Guidance Initiative ("CCGI"[4]) and will:

1) Be used to provide pupils and families with direct access to online tools and resources.

2) Enable a pupil to transmit information shared with the CCGI to both of the following:

   a. Postsecondary educational institutions for purposes of admissions and academic placement.

   b. The Student Aid Commission for purposes of determining eligibility for, and increasing uptake of, student financial aid.

Please visit the CCGI website at CaliforniaColleges.edu to access resources that help students and their families learn about college admissions requirements

## Use of Student Information Learned from Social Media

The Charter School complies with all federal, state, and local guidelines regarding the gathering and/or maintenance of information about any enrolled student obtained from social media in the student's educational record. The Charter School gathers student information from social media. Such information shall be maintained in the Charter School's records with regard to the student and shall be destroyed within one (1) year after a student turns 18 years of age or within one (1) year after the student is no longer enrolled in the Charter School, whichever occurs first. A non-minor student or a student's parent or guardian may access the student's records for examination of the information, request the removal of information or corrections made to information gathered or maintained by the Charter School by contacting the Principal.

## Uniform Complaint Procedure ("UCP")

The Charter School is the local agency primarily responsible for compliance with federal and state laws and regulations governing educational programs. The Charter School shall investigate and seek to resolve complaints using policies and procedures known as the Uniform Complaint Procedure ("UCP") adopted by our Governing Board for the following types of complaints:

1. Complaints alleging unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying against any protected group on the basis of the actual or perceived characteristics of age, ancestry, color, mental disability, physical disability, ethnic group identification, immigration status, citizenship, gender expression, gender identity, gender, genetic information, nationality, national origin, race or ethnicity, religion, medical condition, marital status, sex, or sexual orientation, or on the basis of a person's association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics in any Charter School program or activity. Unlawful discrimination includes, but is not limited to, noncompliance with Education Code section 243(a) or 244.

2. Complaints alleging a violation of state or federal law or regulation governing the following programs:

   - Accommodations for Pregnant, Parenting or Lactating Students;
   - Adult Education;
   - Career Technical and Technical Education;
   - Career Technical and Technical Training;
   - Child Care and Development Programs;
   - Consolidated Categorical Aid;
   - Education or graduation of Students in Foster Care, Students who are Homeless, former Juvenile Court Students now enrolled in a public school, Migratory Children and Children of

[4] CCGI is an authorized provider of an institutional service to all California local educational agencies and part of the state's efforts to make college-going a more streamlined experience for students. The CCGI currently receives enrollment data for all public-school students enrolled in grades six through twelve from the California Department of Education ("CDE").

Military Families;
- Every Student Succeeds Act;
- Migrant Education Programs;
- Regional Occupational Centers and Programs;and/or
  State Preschool Programs.

3. Complaints alleging noncompliance with laws relating to pupil fees. A student enrolled in a public school shall not be required to pay a pupil fee for participation in an educational activity. A pupil fee includes, but is not limited to, all of the following:
   - A fee charged to a pupil as a condition for registering for school or classes, or as a condition for participation in a class or an extracurricular activity, regardless of whether the class or activity is elective or compulsory or is for credit.
   - A security deposit, or other payment, that a pupil is required to make to obtain a lock, locker, book, class apparatus, musical instrument, clothes, or other materials or equipment.
   - A purchase that a pupil is required to make to obtain materials, supplies, equipment, or clothes associated with an educational activity.

   Complaints of noncompliance with laws relating to pupil fees may be filed with the Principal.

4. Complaints alleging noncompliance with the requirements governing the Local Control Funding Formula ("LCFF") or Local Control and Accountability Plans ("LCAP") under Education Code sections 47606.5 and 47607.3, as applicable. If the Charter School adopts a School Plan for Student Achievement ("SPSA") in addition to its LCAP, complaints of noncompliance with the requirements of the SPSA under Education Code sections 64000, 64001, 65000, and 65001 shall also fall under the UCP.

Complaints alleging noncompliance regarding child nutrition programs established pursuant to Education Code sections 49490-49590 are governed by Title 7, Code of Federal Regulations ("C.F.R.") sections 210.19(a)(4), 215.1(a), 220.13(c), 225.11(b), 226.6(n), and 250.15(d) and Title 5, California Code of Regulations ("C.C.R.") sections 15580 - 15584.

Complaints alleging noncompliance regarding special education programs established pursuant to Education Code sections 56000-56865 and 59000-59300 are governed by the procedures set forth in 5 C.C.R. sections 3200-3205 and 34 C.F.R. sections 300.151-300.153.

Complaints regarding state preschool health and safety issues in local educational agencies exempt from licensing are governed by 5 C.C.R. sections 4690-4694, except as otherwise indicated.

Complaints other than complaints relating to pupil fees must be filed in writing with the following Compliance Officer:

Neil MacGaffey
Executive Director
1100 Camino Biscay
Chula Vista, CA: 91910, 619-656-0797

Only complaints regarding pupil fees, LCAP, or noncompliance with Education Code section 243 or 244 may be filed anonymously and only if the anonymous complainant provides evidence or information leading to evidence to support an allegation of noncompliance with the respective applicable laws.

Complaints alleging unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying, must be filed within six (6) months from the date the alleged discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying, occurred or the date the complainant first obtained knowledge of the facts of the alleged discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying. All other complaints under the UCP shall be filed not later than one (1) year from the date the

alleged violation occurred. For complaints relating to the LCAP, the date of the alleged violation is the date on which the Charter School's Board of Directors approved the LCAP or the annual update was adopted by the Charter School.

The Compliance Officer responsible for investigating the complaint shall conduct and complete the investigation in accordance with California regulations and the Charter School's UCP Policy. The Compliance Officer shall provide the complainant with a final written investigation report ("Decision") within sixty (60) calendar days from the Charter School's receipt of the complaint. This sixty (60) calendar day time period may be extended by written agreement of the complainant.

The complainant has a right to appeal the Charter School's Decision to the California Department of Education ("CDE") by filing a written appeal within thirty (30) calendar days of the date of the Charter School's written Decision, except if the Charter School has used its UCP to address a complaint that is not subject to the UCP requirements. The appeal must include a copy of the complaint filed with the Charter School, a copy of the Charter School's Decision, and the complainant must specify and explain the basis for the appeal of the Decision, including at least one of the following:

1. The Charter School failed to follow its complaint procedures.

2. Relative to the allegations of the complaint, the Charter School's Decision lacks material findings of fact necessary to reach a conclusion of law.

3. The material findings of fact in the Charter School's Decision are not supported by substantial evidence.

4. The legal conclusion in the Charter School's Decision is inconsistent with the law.

5. In a case in which the Charter School's Decision found noncompliance, the corrective actions fail to provide a proper remedy.

A complainant who appeals the Charter School's Decision on a UCP complaint to the CDE shall receive a written appeal decision within sixty (60) calendar days of the CDE's receipt of the appeal, unless extended by written agreement with the complainant or the CDE documents exceptional circumstances and informs the complainant.

Within thirty (30) calendar days of the date of the CDE's appeal Decision pursuant to 5 C.C.R. section 4633(f)(2) or (3), either party may request reconsideration by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction ("SSPI") or the SSPI's designee. The request for reconsideration shall specify and explain the reason(s) for contesting the findings of fact, conclusions of law, or corrective actions in the CDE's appeal Decision.

If Charter School fails to issue an investigation report within the required sixty (60) calendar day timeline, a party to a written complaint of prohibited discrimination may appeal directly to the SSPI. The complaint must provide evidence supporting the basis for direct filing and explain why immediate action is necessary.
Complaints alleging noncompliance with Education Code section 243 or 244 may be filed with the SSPI directly, and the SSPI may directly intervene without waiting for an investigation by the Charter School. The complainant shall present the SSPI with evidence that supports the basis for the direct filing and why immediate action is necessary.

If a UCP complaint is filed directly with the CDE and the CDE determines that it merits direct intervention, the CDE shall complete an investigation and provide a written decision to the complainant within sixty (60) calendar days of receipt of the complaint, unless the parties have agreed to extend the timeline or the CDE documents exceptional circumstances and informs the complainant.

If the Charter School finds merit in a UCP complaint, or the CDE finds merit in an appeal, the Charter School shall take corrective actions consistent with the requirements of existing law that will provide a remedy to the

affected student and/or parent/guardian as applicable.

A complainant may pursue available civil law remedies outside of the Charter School's complaint procedures. Complainants may seek assistance from mediation centers or public/private interest attorneys. Civil law remedies that may be imposed by a court include, but are not limited to, injunctions and restraining orders. Complainants alleging a violation of Education Code section 220, 243, 244, 51500, 51501, or 60044, may seek civil remedies after sixty (60) calendar days have elapsed from the filing of an appeal with the CDE. before pursuing civil law remedies. The moratorium does not apply to injunctive relief and is applicable only if the Charter School has appropriately, and in a timely manner, apprised the complainant of the complainant's right to file a complaint in accordance with 5 C.C.R. A copy of the UCP shall be available upon request free of charge in the main office and on the school website. For further information on any part of the complaint procedures, including filing a complaint or requesting a copy of the UCP, please contact the Principal.

**Work Permits**

Beginning August 1, 2024, any minor seeking the signature of a Charter School verifying authority on a Statement of Intent to Employ a Minor and Request for a Work Permit-Certificate of Age will be issued, before or at the time of receiving the signature of the verifying authority, a document clearly explaining basic labor rights extended to workers. An infographic explaining these rights is available at: https://laborcenter.berkeley.edu/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Know-Your-Rights-FINAL.pdf

# *Instructional Program*

## Homework Policy

Discovery Charter School teachers have established the following policies regarding homework:

**A.** The purpose of homework is to:
1. Reinforce or practice specific skills;
2. Develop/reinforce responsibility;
3. Develop/reinforce time management;
4. Inform parents of skills being taught and learned; and
5. Encourage learning outside of school.

**B.** Homework will be assigned at a student's independent level, not instructional level. Nightly reading increases comprehension, fluency, vocabulary, and vocabulary development.

**C.** Feedback to the student regarding the homework assignment will be given within a week's time.

**D.** Long-term Projects:
1. The purpose of long-term projects/assignments is to provide students with opportunities to explore topics of their choice or assigned by their teacher to a greater depth than covered in the classroom. They are not a parent/guardian assignment. (Reminders from the teacher will be given on a regular basis to prompt students to pace their work for the completion of the project).

2. Written timelines for projects/assignments will be provided by the classroom teacher. Implied skills of long-term projects/assignments are student time management and responsibility.

3. Long-term projects/ assignments will not be assigned over weekends or during breaks.

## English Learners

The Charter School is committed to the success of its English Learners and support will be offered both within academic classes and in supplemental settings for students who need additional support for English language learning. The Charter School will meet all applicable legal requirements for English Learners as they pertain to annual notification to parents, student identification, placement, program options, English Learners and core content instruction, teacher qualifications and training, reclassification to fluent English proficient status, monitoring and evaluating program effectiveness, and standardized testing requirements. The Charter School will implement policies to assure proper placement, evaluation, and communication regarding English Learners and the rights of students and parents.

## State Testing

The Charter School shall annually administer required state testing to the applicable grades (e.g., the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress ["CAASPP"].) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a parent's or guardian's written request to Charter School officials to excuse their child from any or all parts of the CAASPP shall be granted. Upon request, parents have a right to information on the level of achievement of their student on every State academic assessment administered to the student.

## Surveys About Personal Beliefs

Unless the student's parent/guardian gives written permission, a student will not be given any test, questionnaire, survey, or examination containing any questions about the student's, or the student's parents' or guardians' personal beliefs or practices in sex, family life, morality, or religion.

## Teacher Qualification Information

As the Charter School receives Title I federal funds through the Elementary and Secondary Education Act ("ESEA"), as reauthorized and amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act ("ESSA"), all parents/guardians of students attending the Charter School may request information regarding the professional qualifications of classroom teachers and/or paraprofessionals, including at a minimum:

1. Whether the student's teacher:
    a. Has met State qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction;
    b. Is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which State qualification or licensing criteria have been waived; and
    c. Is teaching in the field of discipline of the certification of the teacher; and
2. Whether the child is provided services by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications.

Upon request, the Charter School will provide the information to the parents/guardians in a timely manner. Parents/guardians may contact the Principal at 619-656-0797, neil.macgaffey@cvesd.org to obtain this information.

## Sexual Health Education

The Charter School offers comprehensive sexual health education to its students in grades 7-8. A parent or guardian of a student has the right to excuse their child from all or part of comprehensive sexual health education, HIV prevention education, and assessments related to that education through a passive consent ("opt-out") process. The Charter School does not require active parental consent ("opt-in") for comprehensive sexual health education and HIV prevention education. Parents and guardians may:

- Inspect written and audiovisual educational materials used in comprehensive sexual health education and HIV prevention education.
- Excuse their child from participation in comprehensive sexual health education and HIV prevention education in writing to the Charter School.
- Be informed whether the comprehensive sexual health or HIV/AIDS prevention education will be taught by Charter School personnel or outside consultants. When the Charter School chooses to use outside consultants or to hold an assembly with guest speakers to teach comprehensive sexual health or HIV/AIDS prevention education, be informed of:
    - The date of the instruction
    - The name of the organization or affiliation of each guest speaker
- Request a copy of Education Code sections 51930 through 51939.

Anonymous, voluntary, and confidential research and evaluation tools to measure students' health behaviors and risks (including tests, questionnaires, and surveys containing age-appropriate questions about the student's attitudes concerning or practices relating to sex) may be administered to students in grades 7-8. A parent or guardian has the right to excuse their child from the test, questionnaire, or survey through a passive consent ("opt-out") process. Parents or guardians shall be notified in writing that this test, questionnaire, or survey is to be administered, given the opportunity to review the test, questionnaire, or survey if they wish, notified of their right to excuse their child from the test, questionnaire, or survey, and informed that in order to excuse their child they must state their request in writing to the Charter School.

A student may not attend any class in comprehensive sexual health education or HIV prevention education, or participate in any anonymous, voluntary, and confidential test, questionnaire, or survey on student health behaviors and risks if the Charter School has received a written request from the student's parent or guardian excusing the student from participation. An alternative educational activity shall be made available to students whose parents or guardians have requested that they not receive the instruction or participate in the test, questionnaire, or survey.

# *Student Health and Safety*

## Physical Examinations and Right to Refuse

A parent/guardian having control or charge of any child enrolled in the Charter School may file annually with the Principal a written and signed statement stating that the parent/guardian will not consent to a physical examination of the child. Thereupon the child shall be exempt from any physical examination, but whenever there is a good reason to believe that the child is suffering from a recognized contagious or infectious disease, the child shall be sent home and shall not be permitted to return until the school authorities are satisfied that any contagious or infectious disease does not exist.

## Concussion/Head Injuries

A concussion is a brain injury that can be caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head, or by a blow to another part of the body with the force transmitted to the head. Even though most concussions are mild, all concussions are potentially serious and may result in complications including prolonged brain damage and death if not recognized and managed properly. Because the Charter School has elected to offer an athletic program, we must immediately remove from a school-sponsored athletic activity for the remainder of the day an athlete who is suspected of sustaining a concussion or head injury during that activity.

The athlete may not return to that activity until the athlete is evaluated by, and receives written clearance from, a licensed health care provider. If the licensed health care provider determines the athlete has a concussion or head injury, the athlete shall also complete a graduated return-to-play protocol of no less than 7 days in duration under the supervision of a licensed health care provider. On a yearly basis, a concussion and head injury information sheet must be signed and returned by the athlete and the athlete's parent or guardian before the athlete initiates practice or competition. This requirement does not apply to an athlete engaging in an athletic activity during the regular school day or as part of a physical education course.

## Dangers of Synthetic Drugs

The illicit use and abuse of synthetic drugs represents an emerging and ongoing public health threat in California. The fentanyl crisis specifically, has impacted communities across the state, leading to a sharp increase in fentanyl poisonings and deaths in recent years. This notice aims to address the crisis with a preventative approach ensuring students and families are educated on the deadly consequences of recreational drug use.

A synthetic drug is a drug with properties and effects similar to a known hallucinogen or narcotic but having a slightly altered chemical structure, especially such a drug created in order to evade existing restrictions against illegal substances. Synthetic drugs include but are not limited to synthetic cannabinoids ("synthetic marijuana," "Spice," "K2"), methamphetamines, bath salts, and fentanyl.

The California Department of Public Health ("CDPH") has expounded on the extreme danger of drugs laced with fentanyl. Illicit fentanyl can be added to other drugs to make them cheaper, more powerful, and more addictive. Illicit fentanyl has been found in many drugs, including heroin, methamphetamine, counterfeit pills, and cocaine. Fentanyl mixed with any drug increases the likelihood of a fatal overdose. Furthermore, it is nearly impossible to tell if drugs have been laced with fentanyl without additional testing, because fentanyl cannot be seen, smelled, or tasted when used as a lacing agent. Social media platforms may be used as a way to market and sell synthetic drugs, such as fentanyl.

Additional information regarding fentanyl from the CDPH's Substance and Addiction Prevention Branch can be found here: https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CCDPHP/sapb/pages/fentanyl.aspx

## Opioid Information Sheet

The Charter School annually provides each athlete with an Opioid Factsheet for Patients published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The athlete and, if the athlete is 17 years of age or younger, the athlete's parent or guardian shall sign a document acknowledging receipt of the Opioid Factsheet for Patients and return that document to the Charter School before the athlete initiates practice or competition. The fact sheet is available at: https://stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/49530

## Sudden Cardiac Arrest Prevention and Automated External Defibrillators

The Charter School is invested in the health of its athletes, especially their heart health. Sudden cardiac arrest ("SCA") is when the heart stops beating, suddenly and unexpectedly. Those wishing to participate in athletics at the Charter School must review, sign, and return the information sheet on sudden cardiac arrest available via the following link: Form: Sudden Cardiac Arrest - Professional Learning (CA Dept of Education)

## Cancer Prevention Act

Students in the state are advised to adhere to current immunization guidelines, as recommended by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) of the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the American Academy of Family Physicians, regarding full human papillomavirus (HPV) immunization before admission or advancement to the eighth grade level of any private or public elementary or secondary school.

Because the vaccine is more effective when given at younger ages, two doses of HPV vaccine are recommended for all kids between the ages of 9 to 12 years, and the second dose should be given before the start of 8th grade. Kids who wait until later to get their first dose of HPV vaccine may need three doses.

HPV vaccination can prevent over 90 percent of cancers caused by HPV. HPV vaccines are very safe, and scientific research shows that the benefits of HPV vaccination far outweigh the potential risks.

## Diabetes

The Charter School will provide an information sheet regarding **type 1 diabetes** to the parent or guardian of a student when the student is first enrolled in elementary school, pursuant to Education Code Section 49452.6. The information sheet shall include, but shall not be limited to, all of the following:

1. A description of type 1 diabetes.
2. A description of the risk factors and warning signs associated with type 1 diabetes.
3. A recommendation that parents or guardians of students displaying warning signs associated with type 1 diabetes should immediately consult with the student's primary care provider to determine if immediate screening for type 1 diabetes is appropriate.
4. A description of the screening process for type 1 diabetes and the implications of test results.
5. A recommendation that, following a type 1 diagnosis, parents or guardians should consult with the pupil's primary care provider to develop an appropriate treatment plan, which may include consultation with and examination by a specialty care provider, including, but not limited to, a properly qualified endocrinologist.

A copy of the information sheet regarding type 1 diabetes is available at: https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/he/hn/type1diabetes.asp. Please contact the office if you need a copy of this information sheet or if you have any questions about this information sheet.

The Charter School will provide an information sheet regarding **type 2 diabetes** to the parent or guardian of incoming 7th grade students, pursuant to Education Code Section 49452.7. The information sheet shall include, but shall not be limited to, all of the following:

1. A description of type 2 diabetes.
2. A description of the risk factors and warning signs associated with type 2 diabetes.
3. A recommendation that students displaying or possibly suffering from risk factors or warning

signs associated with type 2 diabetes should be screened for type 2 diabetes.
4. A description of treatments and prevention of methods of type 2 diabetes.
5. A description of the different types of diabetes screening tests available.

A copy of the information sheet regarding type 2 diabetes is available at:
https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/he/hn/type2diabetes.asp.
Please contact the office if you need a copy of this information sheet or if you have any questions about this information sheet.

## Safe Storage of Firearms

The purpose of this notice is to inform and to remind parents and legal guardians of all students at the Charter School of their responsibilities for keeping firearms out of the hands of children as required by California law. There have been many news reports of children bringing firearms to school. In many instances, the child obtained the firearm(s) from his or her home. **These incidents can be easily prevented by storing firearms in a safe and secure manner, including keeping them locked up when not in use and storing them separately from ammunition.**

To help everyone understand their legal responsibilities, this notice spells out California law regarding the storage of firearms. Please take some time to review this notice and evaluate your own personal practices to assure that you and your family are in compliance with California law:

- With very limited exceptions, California makes a person criminally liable for keeping any firearm, loaded or unloaded, within any premises that are under their custody and control where that person knows or reasonably should know that a child is likely to gain access to the firearm without the permission of the child's parent or legal guardian, and the child obtains access to the firearm and thereby (1) causes death or injury to the child or any other person; (2) carries the firearm off the premises or to a public place, including to any preschool or school grades kindergarten through twelfth grade, or to any school-sponsored event, activity, or performance; or (3) unlawfully brandishes the firearm to others.
    - The criminal penalty may be significantly greater if someone dies or suffers great bodily injury as a result of the child gaining access to the firearm.
- With very limited exceptions, California also makes it a crime for a person to negligently store or leave any firearm, loaded or unloaded, on their premises in a location where the person knows or reasonably should know that a child is likely to gain access to it without the permission of the child's parent or legal guardian, unless reasonable action is taken to secure the firearm against access by the child, even where a minor **never** actually accesses the firearm.
- In addition to potential fines and terms of imprisonment, as of January 1, 2020, a gun owner found criminally liable under these California laws faces prohibitions from possessing, controlling, owning, receiving, or purchasing a firearm for 10 years.
- Finally, a parent or guardian may also be civilly liable for damages resulting from the discharge of a firearm by that person's child or ward.

The county or city may have additional restrictions regarding the safe storage of firearms. Thank you for helping to keep our children and schools safe. Remember that the easiest and safest way to comply with the law is to keep firearms in a locked container or secured with a locking device that renders the firearm inoperable.

## Human Trafficking Prevention

California has the highest number of incidents of human trafficking in the U.S., and all students may be vulnerable. The Charter School believes it is a priority to inform our students about (1) the prevalence, nature of and strategies to reduce the risk of human trafficking, techniques to set healthy boundaries, and how to safely seek assistance, and (2) how social media and mobile device applications are used for human trafficking.

In accordance with the California Healthy Youth Act, the Charter School will provide age-appropriate instruction on the prevention of human trafficking, including sexual abuse, assault, and harassment. You have the right to excuse your child from all or part of the instruction on the prevention of human trafficking. An opt-out form is available at the main office for your convenience. Your consent for this instruction is NOT

required. If we do not receive a written request to excuse your child, your child will be included in the instruction.

Information and materials for parents/guardians about the curriculum and resources on prevention of human trafficking and abuse, including sexual abuse, assault, and harassment are available on Charter School's website for your review.

## Immunizations

Pursuant to the California Health and Safety Code and the California Code of Regulations, children must provide proof of having received required immunizations (shots) before they can attend school unless they meet the requirements for an exemption. Immunization records are required for all incoming students. Verification of immunizations will be completed with written medical records from the child's doctor or immunization clinic. To ensure a safe learning environment for all students, the Charter School follows and abides by the health standards set forth by the state of California. The immunization status of all students will be reviewed periodically. Those students who are not in compliance with the State requirements must be excluded from attendance until the requirements are met. Students who have been exposed to a communicable disease for which they have not been immunized may be excluded from school at the discretion of the Charter School.

These required immunizations include:

| Child's Grade | List of shots required to attend school |
|---|---|
| **TK/K-12 Admission** | Diphtheria, Tetanus and Pertussis (DTaP) - Five (5) doses Polio - Four (4) doses<br>Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR) - Two (2) doses Hepatitis B (Hep B) - Three (3) doses<br>Varicella (chickenpox) – Two (2) doses<br><br>**NOTE:** Four doses of DTaP are allowed if one was given on or after the fourth birthday. Three doses of DTaP meet the requirement if at least one dose of Tdap, DTaP, or DTP vaccine was given on or after the seventh birthday (also meets the 7th-12th grade Tdap requirement.) One or two doses of Td vaccine given on or after the seventh birthday count towards the requirement for DTaP. Three doses of Polio are allowed if one was given on or after fourth birthday. MMR doses must be given on or after first birthday. Two doses of measles, two doses of mumps, and one dose of rubella vaccine meet the requirement, separately or combined. Combination vaccines (e.g., MMRV) meet the requirements for individual component vaccines. |
| **Entering 7th Grade** | Tetanus, reduced Diphtheria, and acellular Pertussis (Tdap) - One (1) dose<br><br>**NOTE:** At least one dose of pertussis-containing vaccine is required on or after the 7th birthday. |

## Mental Health Services

The Charter School recognizes that when unidentified and unaddressed, mental health challenges can lead to poor academic performance, increased likelihood of suspension and expulsion, chronic absenteeism, student attrition, homelessness, incarceration, and/or violence. Access to mental health services at the Charter School and in our community is not only critical to improving the physical and emotional safety of students, but it also helps address barriers to learning and provides support so that all students can learn problem-solving skills and achieve in school and, ultimately, in life. The following resources are available to your child:

Available on Campus:

- School-based counseling services – your child is encouraged to directly contact a Charter School counselor by coming into the counseling office during school hours and making an appointment to speak with a counselor. The counseling office can also be reached at 619-656-0797. Our Charter School counselors support students by providing individual sessions, group or parent consultations whenever a student is having a difficult time due to academic stress, transition to changes in their environment, or social concerns, including isolation. Counseling services, whether provided by our Charter School or by an outside provider listed herein, are voluntary.
- Special education services – if you believe your child may have a disability, you are encouraged to directly contact an administrator or the school psychologist at 619-656-0797 to request an evaluation.
- Prescription medication while on campus – if your child requires prescription medication during school hours and you would like assistance from School staff in providing this mediation to your child, please contact the school nurse at 619-656-0797.

Available in the Community:

- CVESD Family Resource Centers
- YMCA Youth and Family Services
- Douglas Young Youth and Family Services
- SDCOE - Mental Health
- SDCOE - Parent Guide to Mental Health & Wellness

Available Nationally:

- National Suicide Prevention Hotline - This organization provides confidential support for adults and youth in distress, including prevention and crisis resources. Available 24 hours at 1-800-273-8255.
- The Trevor Project - This organization provides suicide prevention and crisis intervention for LGBTQ youth between the ages of 13 and 24. Available at 1-866-488-7386 or visit ***https://www.thetrevorproject.org/***.
- Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America – This organization is a community- based mentorship program. Community-specific program information can be found online at ***https://www.bbbs.org*** or by calling (813) 720-8778.

## Oral Health Assessment

Students enrolled in transitional kindergarten or kindergarten in a public school or while enrolled in first grade if the student was not previously enrolled in kindergarten in a public school are required to present proof of having received have an oral health assessment completed by a dental professional that was performed within 12 months before the student's initial enrollment in a public school. Please contact the main office if you have questions about this requirement.

## Pregnant and Parenting Students

The Charter School recognizes that pregnant and parenting students are entitled to accommodations that provide them with the opportunity to succeed academically while protecting their health and the health of their children. A pregnant or parenting student is entitled to eight (8) weeks of parental leave, or more if deemed medically necessary by the student's physician, which the student may take before the birth of the student's infant if there is a medical necessity and after childbirth during the school year in which the birth takes place,

inclusive of any mandatory summer instruction, in order to protect the health of the student who gives or expects to give birth and the infant, and to allow the pregnant or parenting student to care for and bond with the infant. The Charter School will ensure that absences from the student's regular school program are excused until the student is able to return to the regular school program.

Upon return to school after taking parental leave, a pregnant or parenting student will be able to make up work missed during the pregnant or parenting student's leave, including, but not limited to, makeup work plans and reenrollment in courses.

Complaints of noncompliance with laws relating to pregnant or parenting students may be filed under the Uniform Complaint Procedures ("UCP") of the Charter School. The complaint may be filed in writing with the compliance officer:

Neil MacGaffey
Executive
Director
100 Camino Biscay, Chula Vista, CA 91910
619-656-0797

A copy of the UCP is available upon request at the main office and on the school website. For further information on any part of the complaint procedures, including filing a complaint or requesting a copy of the complaint procedures, please contact the Principal.

## School Bus and Passenger Safety

All students who are transported in a schoolbus or school student activity bus shall receive instruction in school bus emergency procedures and passenger safety. A copy of the complete Policy is available upon request at the main office and on the school website.

## Medication

For your child to take any medication, including over the counter medication, at school, a **DCS Medical and Parental Consent Form** must be completed. This form is available in the school health office and must be signed by you and your child's health care provider. Medication must be provided in the original container with accurate content and dosage information on the label. All medication must be checked into the nurse's office.

## School Safety Plan and Asbestos Management Plan

The Charter School has established a School Safety Plan. The Plan is available upon request at the main office.

Chula Vista Elementary School District has a current management plan for asbestos containing materials for all district portables. The plan is available for inspection at the CVESD main office during normal business hours.

## Emergency Procedures

The Charter School has procedures to be followed in the event of an earthquake, fire, or other disasters. Fire drills and disaster drills are held regularly, in accordance with state, county, and district guidelines. In the event of an emergency, school staff members will remain on duty until all children have been safely released to parents, guardians, family members, neighbors or child care personnel designated on the child's Emergency Card. Consequently, it is very important to keep your child's Emergency Card information up to date.
**AGAIN, your child will not be released to anyone other than those listed on the Emergency Card**. A copy of the School's Safety Plan is available for review in the main office.

## Notice Of Policy Regarding Immigration Enforcement Activity

**Important**: This notice summarizes the district's Policy Regarding Immigration Enforcement Activity. The complete policy is available on our website at Discovery.cvesd.org.

### OUR COMMITMENT TO ALL STUDENTS

We provide a safe, welcoming environment for all students regardless of immigration status or religious beliefs. We limit immigration enforcement activities at our facilities consistent with California law.

### YOUR RIGHTS AND PROTECTIONS

**Non-Discrimination**: We prohibit discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying based on immigration status, nationality, race, ethnicity, citizenship status, religion, national origin, or ancestry. We promptly investigate all complaints and take appropriate action.

**Enrollment**: We do not request citizenship or immigration documentation for enrollment, other than documents we might review but not retain to establish a child's birthdate. We accept various documents to establish residence (utility bills, rental agreements, pay stubs, declarations of residency) and age (birth certificates, baptism certificates, passports, or affidavits). Students experiencing homelessness may enroll even without typical documentation if otherwise eligible.

**Privacy of Information**: We do not collect or maintain information about students' or families' citizenship or immigration status except when required by law for specific education programs. If we do, we collect such information separately from enrollment and do not use it to discriminate or prevent school attendance.
**Social Security Numbers**: We do not require Social Security numbers for enrollment. We may request the last four digits of an adult household member's number only to establish eligibility for free or reduced-price meals. Students can still qualify without providing this information if they meet income requirements.

### INFORMATION SHARING LIMITS

We do not share student information that might indicate immigration or citizenship status unless authorized by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) or required by valid court orders, warrants, or subpoenas. We provide parents notice before responding to such requests (except in child abuse cases or when prohibited).
**Immigration Enforcement Officers**: Without written parental consent, we do not provide student information to immigration enforcement officers unless they present a valid judicial warrant, judicial subpoena, or court order signed by a judge. ICE administrative warrants do not authorize access to nonpublic school areas or student information.

### CAMPUS ACCESS PROCEDURES

Immigration enforcement officers carrying out immigration enforcement activities may not enter nonpublic school areas without a valid judicial warrant or court order. In the event of an enforcement activity authorized by a judicial order, our staff will:

- Request credentials and documentation from any officer
- Contact the schoolsite administrator before granting access
- Request that officers not interrupt instruction
- Document all interactions and notify parents, staff, and students pursuant to the procedures outlined in our Comprehensive School Safety Plan
- Report attempts to access campus or students to the California Department of Justice and to the Charter School Board of Directors

### ANTI-BULLYING AND HATE CRIMES

We educate students about respecting all peers and the harmful effects of bullying based on protected characteristics. We train staff to eliminate hostile environments and respond to harassment. Students who experience hate crimes have the right to report them. Review our complete Harassment, Discrimination,

Intimidation, & Bullying Policy and Uniform Complaint Procedures in the main office.

**SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES**

**Emergency Contacts**: You may update your student's emergency contact information anytime. We encourage you to include a trusted adult or multiple adults who can care for your child if you become unavailable. We use this information only for emergencies.

**Caregivers Authorization Affidavit:** We encourage families to support relative caregivers in completing a Caregivers Authorization Affidavit. We will rely on a signed, completed Affidavit to allow an authorized caregiver to enroll a student in school and to consent to school-related medical care. A parent's signature is not required on the Caregiver Authorization Affidavit. This form is available HERE.

**If Parents Are Detained**: We release students to emergency contacts or anyone with a Caregiver's Authorization Affidavit. We contact child protective services only if we cannot arrange care through provided contacts.

**Family Safety Plans**: We encourage families to develop safety plans identifying trusted adults who can care for students and locations of important documents (birth certificates, passports, medical information).

**Resources for Detained Family Members**:

- **ICE Detainee Locator**: https://locator.ice.gov/odls#/search
- **Legal Assistance**: California organizations accredited by Board of Immigration Appeals at https://www.justice.gov/eoir/recognition-accreditation-roster-reports; Self-Help Centers at http://www.courts.ca.gov/selfhelp-selfhelpcenters.htm
- **Consulates/Embassies**: Contact your country of origin's consulate for assistance

## Title IX Policy Prohibiting Discrimination on the Basis of Sex

This Title IX Policy Prohibiting Discrimination on the Basis of Sex ("Policy") contains the policies and grievance procedures of Discovery Charter School ("DCS") to address sex discrimination, including but not limited to sexual harassment, occurring within DCS's education program or activity.

DCS does not discriminate on the basis of sex and prohibits any acts of sex discrimination in any education program or activity that it operates, as required by California law, Title IX (20 U.S.C. § 1681 *et seq*.) and the Title IX regulations (34 C.F.R. Part 106), including in admission and employment.[5]

This Policy applies to conduct occurring in DCS's education programs or activities including but not limited to incidents occurring on the school campus, during school-sponsored events and activities regardless of the location, and through school-owned technology, whether perpetrated by a student, parent/guardian, employee, volunteer, independent contractor or other person with whom DCS does business.

Inquiries about the application of Title IX and 34 C.F.R. Part 106 (hereinafter collectively referred to as "Title IX") may be referred to the DCS Title IX Coordinator, the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education, or both.

### Definitions

**Prohibited Sex Discrimination**
Title IX and California law prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, including sex-based harassment and differences in the treatment of similarly situated individuals on the basis of sex with regard to any aspect of services, benefits, or opportunities provided by DCS.

**Prohibited Sexual Harassment**
Under Title IX, "sexual harassment" means conduct on the basis of sex that satisfies one or more of the following:

- An employee of DCS conditioning the provision of an aid, benefit, or service of DCS on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct;

- Unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to DCS's education program or activity; or

- "Sexual assault" as defined in 20 U.S.C. 1092(f)(6)(A)(v), "dating violence" as defined in 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(10), "domestic violence" as defined in 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(8), or "stalking" as defined in 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(30).

Under California Education Code section 212.5, sexual harassment means unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, made by someone from or in the work or educational setting, under any of the following conditions: (a) submission to the conduct is explicitly or implicitly made a term or a condition of an individual's employment, education, academic status, or progress; (b) submission to, or rejection of, the conduct by the individual is used as the basis of employment, educational or academic decisions affecting the individual; (c) the conduct has the purpose or effect of having a negative impact upon the individual's work or academic performance, or of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work or educational environment; and/or (d) submission to, or rejection of, the conduct by the individual is used as the basis for any decision affecting the individual regarding benefits and services, honors, programs, or activities available at or through DCS .

Examples of conduct that may fall within the Title IX or the Education Code definition of sexual harassment, or both:

[5]Discovery Charter School complies with all applicable state and federal laws and regulations and local ordinances in its investigation of and response to reports and complaints of misconduct prohibited by this Policy.

- Physical assaults of a sexual or sex-based nature, such as:
    - Rape, sexual battery, molestation or attempts to commit these assaults.
    - Intentional physical conduct that is sex-based or sexual in nature, such as touching, pinching, patting, grabbing, brushing against another's body, poking another's body, violence, intentionally blocking normal movement or interfering with work or school because of sex.

- Unwanted sexual advances or propositions, derogatory sex-based comments, or other sex-based conduct, such as:
    - Sexually oriented or sex-based gestures, notices, epithets, slurs, remarks, jokes, or comments about a person's sexuality or sexual experience.
    - Preferential treatment or promises of preferential treatment to an individual for submitting to sexual conduct, including soliciting or attempting to solicit any individual to engage in sexual activity for compensation or reward or deferential treatment for rejecting sexual conduct.
    - Subjecting or threats of subjecting a student or employee to unwelcome sexual attention or conduct or intentionally making the student's or employee's performance more difficult because of the student's or the employee's sex.
    - Retaliation against an individual who has articulated a good faith concern about sex-based harassment.

- Sexual or discriminatory displays or publications anywhere in the work or educational environment, such as:
    - Displaying pictures, cartoons, posters, calendars, graffiti, objections, promotional materials, reading materials, or other materials that are sexually suggestive, sexually demeaning or pornographic or bringing or possessing any such material to read, display or view in the work or educational environment.
    - Reading publicly or otherwise publicizing in the work or educational environment materials that are in any way sexually revealing, sexually suggestive, sexually demeaning or pornographic.
    - Displaying signs or other materials purporting to segregate an individual by sex in an area of the work or educational environment (other than restrooms or similar rooms).

The illustrations above are not to be construed as an all-inclusive list of sex-based harassment acts prohibited under this Policy.

**Complainant** means an individual who is alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment.

**Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment** means a written document filed and signed by a complainant who is participating in or attempting to participate in DCS 's education program or activity or signed by the Coordinator alleging sexual harassment against a respondent and requesting that DCS investigate the allegation of sexual harassment. At the time of filing a formal complaint of sexual harassment, the complainant must be participating in or attempting to participate in DCS's education program or activity.

**Party** means a complainant or respondent.

**Respondent** means a person who has been reported to be the perpetrator of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment.

**Supportive Measures** are non-disciplinary, non-punitive individualized services offered as appropriate, as reasonably available, and without fee or charge to a party before or after the filing of a formal complaint of sexual harassment or where no formal complaint has been filed. Such measures are designed to restore or preserve equal access to DCS's education program or activity without unreasonably burdening the other party, including measures designed to protect the safety of all parties or DCS's educational environment, or deter sexual harassment.

**Title IX Coordinator**

The Board of Directors of DCS ("Board") has designated the following employee as the Title IX Coordinator ("Coordinator"):

Erika Alamo
Associate Principal

1100 Camino Biscay
Chula Vista, CA: 91910
619-656-0797
Erika.alamo@cvesd.org

In the event the above-named individual becomes unavailable or unable to serve as the Coordinator, the Board has designated the following employee to serve as a temporary or interim Coordinator:

Sarah Johnson
School Psychologist
1100 Camino Biscay
Chula Vista, CA
619-656-0797
Sarah.johnson@cvesd.org

The Coordinator is responsible for coordinating DCS's efforts to comply with the requirements of Title IX, receiving reports and complaints of sex discrimination, formal complaints of sexual harassment, and inquiries about the application of Title IX to DCS, coordinating the effective implementation of supportive measures, and taking other actions as required by this Policy. The Coordinator or designee may serve as the investigator for formal complaints of sexual harassment.

**Reporting Sex Discrimination**

All employees must promptly notify the Coordinator when the employee has knowledge of or notice of allegations of sex discrimination or sexual harassment occurring within DCS's education program or activity.

Students are expected to report all incidents of misconduct prohibited by this Policy. Any student who feels they are a target of such behavior should immediately contact a teacher, counselor, the Executive Director, Coordinator, a staff person or a family member so that the student can get assistance in resolving the issue in a manner that is consistent with this Policy.

Complaints regarding such misconduct may also be made to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights. Civil law remedies, including, but not limited to, injunctions, restraining orders, or other remedies or orders may also be available to complainants.

While submission of a written report is not required, the reporting party is encouraged to submit a written report to the Coordinator. DCS will promptly and effectively investigate and respond to all oral and written complaints and reports of misconduct prohibited by this Policy. Reports may be made anonymously, but formal disciplinary action cannot be based solely on an anonymous report.

**Privacy**
DCS acknowledges and respects every individual's right to privacy. All reports and complaints shall be investigated in a manner that protects the confidentiality of the parties and the integrity of the process to the greatest extent possible. This includes but is not limited to keeping the identity of the reporter and other personally identifiable information confidential, as appropriate, except to the extent necessary to comply with the law, carry out the investigation and/or to resolve the issue, as determined by the Coordinator or designee on a case-by-case basis.

**Retaliation**
DCS prohibits any form of retaliation against any individual who files a report or complaint, testifies, assists, participates, or refuses to participate in any investigation or proceeding related to misconduct prohibited by this Policy. Such participation or lack of participation shall not in any way affect the status, grades, or work assignments of the individual.

**Response to Sexual Harassment**
DCS will respond promptly and in a manner that is not deliberately indifferent when it has actual knowledge, as defined in 34 C.F.R. § 106.30(a), of sexual harassment occurring in its education program or activity against a person in the United States.

DCS's response will treat complainants and respondents equitably by offering supportive measures to a complainant, and by following the grievance procedures for formal complaints of sexual harassment that are listed below before imposing any disciplinary sanctions or other actions that are not supportive measures on a respondent for sexual harassment under Title IX.

**Supportive Measures**

Once notified of sexual harassment or allegations of sexual harassment occurring in DCS's education program or activity against a person in the United States, the Coordinator will promptly contact the complainant to discuss the availability of supportive measures, consider the complainant's wishes with respect to supportive measures, inform the complainant of the availability of supportive measures with or without the filing of a formal complaint, and explain to the complainant the process for filing a formal complaint of sexual harassment.

Supportive measures may include but are not limited to: counseling; extensions of deadlines or other course-related adjustments; modifications of work or class schedules; mutual restrictions on contact between the parties; changes in work or on-campus housing locations; leaves of absence; increased security and monitoring of certain areas of the campus; and other similar measures.

Supportive measures will not unreasonably burden either party or be imposed for punitive or disciplinary reasons. DCS will maintain as confidential any supportive measures provided to the complainant or respondent, to the extent that maintaining such confidentiality would not impair DCS's ability to provide the supportive measures. The Coordinator is responsible for coordinating the effective implementation of supportive measures.

**Grievance Procedures**

**Scope and General Requirements**

DCS has adopted and published grievance procedures that provide for the prompt and equitable resolution of student and employee complaints alleging any action that would be prohibited under Title IX and a grievance process that complies with 34 C.F.R. § 106.45 for formal complaints of sexual harassment.

Complaints of misconduct prohibited by this Policy that do not constitute a formal complaint of sexual harassment will be addressed in accordance with DCS's Uniform Complaint Procedures, its employment discrimination complaint procedures, or the grievance procedures set forth in its Harassment, Intimidation, Discrimination, and Bullying Policy, as applicable. The following grievance procedures will apply to formal complaints of sexual harassment.

Upon receipt of a formal complaint of sexual harassment, the Coordinator or designee will promptly initiate these grievance procedures, or the informal resolution process if available, appropriate, and requested by all parties.

DCS requires that any Title IX Coordinator, investigator, decisionmaker, and any person designated by DCS to facilitate an informal resolution process not have a conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents generally or an individual complainant or respondent.

DCS will treat complainants and respondents equitably. DCS presumes that the respondent is not responsible for the alleged sexual harassment until a determination is made at the conclusion of its grievance procedures.

DCS may consolidate formal complaints of sexual harassment against more than one respondent, or by more than one complainant against one or more respondents, or by one party against another party, where the allegations of sexual harassment arise out of the same facts or circumstances.

DCS allows for the temporary delay of the grievance process or limited extension of timeframes on a case-by-case basis for good cause. Requests for extensions must be submitted to the Coordinator in writing at least one (1) business day before the expiration of the timeframe. If the grievance process is temporarily delayed or a timeframe is temporarily extended by DCS, the Coordinator or designee will notify the parties of the reason for the delay or extension in writing.

DCS will objectively evaluate all evidence that is relevant and not otherwise impermissible, including both inculpatory and exculpatory evidence.[6] Credibility determinations will not be based on a person's status as a complainant, respondent, or witness.

**Dismissal**

DCS must dismiss a formal complaint of sexual harassment for purposes of sexual harassment under Title IX if the conduct alleged:

- Would not constitute sexual harassment under Title IX even if proved;
- Did not occur in DCS 's education program or activity; or
- Did not occur against a person in the United States.

DCS may dismiss a formal complaint of sexual harassment or any of the allegations therein if:

- The respondent is no longer enrolled or employed by DCS;
- A complainant notifies the Coordinator in writing that the complainant would like to withdraw the complaint or any allegations therein; or
- Specific circumstances prevent DCS from gathering sufficient evidence to reach a determination as to the complaint or allegations therein.

Upon dismissal, the Coordinator or designee will promptly send written notice of the dismissal and reason(s) therefor simultaneously to the parties. Dismissal under Title IX does not preclude action under another applicable DCS policy.

**Notice of the Allegations**

Upon receipt of a formal complaint of sexual harassment, the Coordinator or designee will provide written notice of the allegations to the parties whose identities are known. The notice will include:

- DCS's grievance procedures and any informal resolution process;
- The allegations of sexual harassment including sufficient details known at the time and with sufficient time to prepare a response before any initial interview. Sufficient details include the identities of the parties involved in the incident(s), if known, the conduct allegedly constituting sexual harassment under Title IX, and the date(s) and location(s) of the alleged incident(s), if known;
- A statement that the respondent is presumed not responsible for the alleged conduct and a determination regarding responsibility is made at the conclusion of the grievance process;
- A statement that the parties may have an advisor of their choice, who may be, but is not required to be, an attorney, and may inspect and review evidence; and
- A statement that DCS prohibits knowingly making false statements or knowingly submitting false information during the grievance process.

**Emergency Removal**

DCS may place a non-student employee respondent on administrative leave during the pendency of the grievance procedures in accordance with DCS's policies.

DCS may remove a respondent from DCS's education program or activity on an emergency basis, in accordance with DCS's policies, provided that DCS undertakes an individualized safety and risk analysis, determines that an immediate threat to the physical health or safety of any person arising from the allegations of sexual harassment justifies removal, and provides the respondent with notice and an opportunity to challenge the decision immediately following the removal.

This provision must not be construed to modify any rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, or the Americans with Disabilities Act.

**Informal Resolution**

At any time after a formal complaint of sexual harassment is filed and prior to determining whether sexual harassment occurred under DCS's Title IX grievance procedures, DCS may offer an informal resolution process to the parties. DCS will not offer or facilitate informal resolution to resolve allegations that an employee sexually harassed a student, or when such

[6] Inculpatory means tending to impute guilt or fault, and exculpatory means tending to absolve from guilt or fault.

a process would conflict with Federal, State, or local law. Parties will not be required or pressured to agree to participate in the informal resolution process.

Before initiation of the informal resolution process, DCS will obtain the parties' voluntary, written consent to participate in the informal resolution and provide the parties with a written notice that explains:

- The allegations;
- The requirements of the informal resolution process including the circumstances under which it precludes the parties from resuming a formal complaint of sexual harassment arising from the same allegations;
- The right to withdraw and initiate or resume the grievance procedures at any time prior to agreeing to a resolution; and
- Any consequences resulting from participating in the informal resolution process, including the records that will be maintained or could be shared.

**Investigation**

In most cases, a thorough investigation will take no more than thirty (30) business days. DCS has the burden to conduct an investigation that gathers sufficient evidence to determine whether sexual harassment occurred. The investigator will review all evidence gathered through the investigation and determine what evidence is relevant and what evidence is impermissible regardless of relevance in accordance with Title IX.

The following types of evidence, and questions seeking that evidence, are impermissible (i.e., will not be used, accessed, considered, or disclosed), regardless of whether they are relevant:

- A party's records that are made or maintained by a physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, or other recognized professional or paraprofessional acting in the professional's or paraprofessional's capacity, or assisting in that capacity, and which are made and maintained in connection with the provision of treatment to the party, unless DCS obtains that party's voluntary, written consent to do so for these grievance procedures; and
- Evidence about the complainant's sexual predisposition or prior sexual behavior, unless such questions and evidence about the complainant's prior sexual behavior are offered to prove that someone other than the respondent committed the conduct alleged by the complainant, or if the questions and evidence concern specific incidents of the complainant's prior sexual behavior with respect to the respondent and are offered to prove consent.

The parties will be provided with an equal opportunity to present witnesses, to inspect and review any evidence obtained that is directly related to the allegations raised, and to have an advisor present during any investigative meeting or interview. The parties will not be prohibited from discussing the allegations under investigation or from gathering and presenting relevant evidence. A party whose participation is invited or expected at an investigative meeting or interview will receive written notice of the date, time, location, participants, and purpose of the meeting or interview with sufficient time for the party to prepare to participate.

Before the investigator completes the investigative report, DCS will send to each party and the party's advisor, if any, a copy of the evidence subject to inspection and review, and the parties will have at least ten (10) days to submit a written response for the investigator to consider prior to completing the investigation report.

The investigator will complete an investigation report that fairly summarizes relevant evidence and send a copy of the report to each party and the party's advisor, if any, at least ten (10) days prior to the determination of responsibility.

**Determination of Responsibility**

Before making a determination of responsibility, the decisionmaker must afford each party the opportunity to submit written, relevant questions that a party wants to ask of any party or witness, provide each party with the answers, and allow for additional, limited follow-up questions from each party. The decisionmaker must explain to the party proposing the questions any decision to exclude a question as not relevant.

Determinations will be based on an objective evaluation of all relevant and not otherwise impermissible evidence, and credibility determinations will not be based on a person's status as a complainant, respondent, or witness. The standard of evidence used to determine responsibility is the preponderance of the evidence standard.

Within twenty (20) business days after DCS sends the investigation report to the parties, the decisionmaker, who will not be the same person as the Coordinator or investigator, will simultaneously send the parties a written determination of whether sexual harassment occurred. The written determination will include:

- The allegations of sexual harassment;
- A description of the procedural steps taken including any notifications to the parties, interviews with parties and witnesses, site visits, and methods used to gather other evidence;
- The findings of facts supporting the determination;
- The conclusions regarding the application of DCS's code of conduct to the facts;
- The decision and rationale for each allegation;
- Any recommended disciplinary sanctions for the respondent, and whether remedies designed to restore or preserve equal access to the education program or activity will be provided to the complainant; and
- The procedures and permissible bases for appeals.

The determination regarding responsibility becomes final either on the date that DCS provides the parties with the written appeal decision, if an appeal is filed, or if an appeal is not filed, the date on which an appeal would no longer be considered timely.

**Appeals**

Either party may, within five (5) business days of their receipt of DCS's written determination of responsibility or dismissal of a formal complaint of sexual harassment, submit a written appeal to the President of the DCS Board, who will serve as the decisionmaker for the appeal or designate a decisionmaker for the appeal.

The complainant and respondent may only appeal from a determination regarding responsibility or DCS's dismissal of a formal complaint of sexual harassment or any allegations therein, on one or more of the following bases:

- Procedural irregularity that affected the outcome of the matter;
- New evidence that was not reasonably available at the time the determination regarding responsibility or dismissal was made, that could affect the outcome of the matter; or
- The Coordinator, investigator(s), or decisionmaker(s) had a conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents generally or the individual complainant or respondent that affected the outcome of the matter.

The decisionmaker for the appeal will not be the same person as the Coordinator, the investigator or the initial decisionmaker.

The decisionmaker for the appeal will: 1) notify the other party of the appeal in writing; 2) implement appeal procedures equally for the parties; 3) allow the parties to submit a written statement in support of, or challenging, the outcome within five (5) business days of notice of the appeal; and 4) within fifteen (15) business days of the appeal, provide a written decision simultaneously to the parties describing the result of the appeal and the rationale for the result.

**Consequences**

Students or employees who engage in misconduct prohibited by this Policy, knowingly make false statements or knowingly submit false information during the grievance process, may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from DCS or termination of employment. If there is a determination that sexual harassment occurred, the Coordinator is responsible for effective implementation of any remedies ordered by DCS.

**Training**

All supervisors of staff will receive sexual harassment training within six (6) months of their assumption of a supervisory position and will receive further training once every two (2) years thereafter. All Title IX Coordinators, investigators, decisionmakers, and any person who facilitates a Title IX informal resolution process will receive Title IX training and/or instruction concerning sexual harassment as required by law.

**Recordkeeping**

The records below will be maintained in a secure location until destroyed in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

- DCS sexual harassment investigation, including any determination of responsibility; any audio or audiovisual recording or transcript; any disciplinary sanctions imposed on the respondent; and any remedies provided to the complainant;
- Records of any appeal of a formal complaint or sexual harassment and the results of that appeal;
- Records of any informal resolution of a formal complaint or sexual harassment and the results of that informal resolution;
- All materials used to train Title IX Coordinators, investigators, decisionmakers, and any person who facilitates an informal resolution process; and
- Records of any actions, including any supportive measures, taken in response to a report or formal complaint of sexual harassment.

**TITLE IX SEX DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT COMPLAINT FORM**

Your Name: _____ Date: _____

Email Address: _____

Date of Alleged Incident(s): _____

Name of Person(s) you have a complaint against: _____

List any witnesses that were present: _____

Where did the incident(s) occur? _____

Please describe the events or conduct that are the basis of your complaint by providing as much factual detail as possible (i.e., specific statements and conduct; what, if any, physical contact was involved; any verbal statements etc.) (Attach additional pages, if needed):

_____

_____

_____

_____

**I hereby authorize DCS to disclose the information I have provided as it finds necessary in pursuing its investigation. I hereby certify that the information I have provided in this complaint is true and correct and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief. I further understand that providing false information in this regard could result in disciplinary action up to and including termination or expulsion from DCS.**

_____ Date: _____
Signature of Complainant

_____
Print Name

**<u>To be completed by DCS</u>:**

Received by: _____ Date: _____

Follow up Meeting with Complainant held on: _____

## Harassment, Intimidation, Discrimination, and Bullying Policy

*Adopted: October 15, 2024*
*Revised: October 27,2026*

Discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying are all disruptive behaviors, which interfere with students' ability to learn, negatively affect student engagement, diminish school safety, and contribute to a hostile school environment. As such, Discovery Charter School ("DCS") prohibits any acts of discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying altogether.

As used in this policy, discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying are described as the intentional conduct, including verbal, physical, written communication or cyber-bullying, including cyber sexual bullying, based on the actual or perceived characteristics of mental or physical disability, sex (including pregnancy and related conditions, and parental status), sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, immigration status, nationality (including national origin, country of origin, and citizenship), race or ethnicity (including ancestry, color, ethnic group identification, ethnic background, and traits associated with race, including, but not limited to, hair texture and protective hairstyles such as braids, locs, and twists), religion (including agnosticism and atheism), religious affiliation, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, age, or any combination of those characteristics, association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics or any combination of those characteristics, or based on any other characteristic protected under applicable state or federal law or local ordinance. Hereafter, such actions are referred to as "misconduct prohibited by this Policy."

To the extent possible, DCS will make reasonable efforts to prevent students from being discriminated against, harassed, intimidated, and/or bullied, and will take action to investigate, respond, address and report on such behaviors in a timely manner. DCS school staff who witness acts of misconduct prohibited by this Policy will take immediate steps to intervene when safe to do so.

This policy applies to incidents occurring on the school campus, at school-sponsored events and activities regardless of the location, through school-owned technology, and through other electronic means, whether perpetrated by a student, employee, parent/guardian, volunteer, independent contractor or other person with whom DCS does business, and all acts of DCS's Board of Directors ("Board") in enacting policies and procedures that govern DCS.

DCS complies with all applicable state and federal laws and regulations and local ordinances in its investigation of and response to reports of misconduct prohibited by this Policy.

### Definitions

**Harassment** means conduct based upon one or more of the protected characteristics listed above that is severe or pervasive, which unreasonably disrupts an individual's educational or work environment or that creates a hostile educational or work environment. Harassment includes, but is not limited to:

- Verbal conduct such as epithets, derogatory jokes, comments or slurs.
- Physical conduct including assault, unwanted touching, intentionally blocking normal movement or interfering with work or school based on any of the protected characteristics listed above.
- Retaliation for reporting or threatening to report harassment.
- Deferential or preferential treatment based on any of the protected characteristics listed above.

**Bullying** is defined as any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or by means of an electronic act. Bullying includes one or more acts committed by a student or group of students that may constitute hate violence, or creates an intimidating and/or hostile educational environment, directed toward one or more students that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:

- Placing a reasonable student [1] or students in fear of harm to that student's or those students' person or property.
- Causing a reasonable student to experience a substantially detrimental effect on the student's physical or mental health.
- Causing a reasonable student to experience a substantial interference with the student's academic performance.

- Causing a reasonable student to experience a substantial interference with the student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by DCS.

**Cyberbullying** is an electronic act that includes the transmission of harassing communication, direct threats, or other harmful texts, sounds, video or images on the Internet, social media, or other technologies using a telephone, computer, or any wireless communication device. Cyberbullying also includes breaking into another person's electronic account and assuming that person's identity in order to damage that person's reputation.

**Electronic act** means the creation or transmission originated on or off the schoolsite, by means of an electronic device, including, but not limited to, a telephone, wireless telephone, or other wireless communication device, computer, or pager, of a communication, including, but not limited to, any of the following:

- A message, text, sound, video, or image.
- A post on a social network Internet Web site including, but not limited to:
  - Posting to or creating a burn page. A "burn page" means an Internet Web site created for the purpose of having one or more of the effects as listed in the definition of "bullying," above.
  - Creating a credible impersonation of another actual student for the purpose of having one or more of the effects listed in the definition of "bullying," above. "Credible impersonation" means to knowingly and without consent impersonate a student for the purpose of bullying the student and such that another student would reasonably believe, or has reasonably believed, that the student was or is the student who was impersonated.
  - Creating a false profile for the purpose of having one or more of the effects listed in the definition of "bullying," above. "False profile" means a profile of a fictitious student or a profile using the likeness or attributes of an actual student other than the student who created the false profile.
- An act of "Cyber sexual bullying" including, but not limited to:
  - The dissemination of, or the solicitation or incitement to disseminate, a photograph or other visual recording by a student to another student or to school personnel by means of an electronic act that has or can be reasonably predicted to have one or more of the effects described in the definition of "bullying," above. A photograph or other visual recording, as described above, shall include the depiction of a nude, semi-nude, or sexually explicit photograph or other visual recording of a minor where the minor is identifiable from the photograph, visual recording, or other electronic act.
  - "Cyber sexual bullying" does not include a depiction, portrayal, or image that has any serious literary, artistic, educational, political, or scientific value or that involves athletic events or school-sanctioned activities.
- Notwithstanding the definitions of "bullying" and "electronic act" above, an electronic act shall not constitute pervasive conduct solely on the basis that it has been transmitted on the Internet or is currently posted on the Internet.

**<u>Bullying and Cyberbullying Prevention Procedures</u>**

DCS has adopted the following procedures for preventing acts of bullying, including cyberbullying.

**Cyberbullying Prevention Procedures**
DCS advises students:

- To never share passwords, personal data, or private photos online.
- To think about what they are doing carefully before posting and by emphasizing that comments cannot be retracted once they are posted.
- That personal information revealed on social media can be shared with anyone including parents, teachers, administrators, and potential employers. Students should never reveal information that would make them uncomfortable if the world had access to it.
- To consider how it would feel receiving such comments before making comments about others online.

DCS informs its employees, students, and parents/guardians of DCS's policies regarding the use of technology in and out of the classroom. DCS encourages parents/guardians to discuss these policies with their children to ensure their children understand and comply with such policies.

**Education**

DCS employees cannot always be present when bullying incidents occur, so educating students about bullying is a key prevention technique to limit bullying from happening. DCS advises students that hateful and/or demeaning behavior is inappropriate and unacceptable in our society and at DCS and encourages students to practice compassion and respect each other.

DCS educates students to accept all student peers regardless of protected characteristics (including but not limited to actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identification, physical or cognitive disabilities, race, ethnicity, religion, and immigration status) and about the negative impact of bullying other students based on protected characteristics.

DCS's bullying prevention education also discusses the differences between appropriate and inappropriate behaviors and includes sample situations to help students learn and practice appropriate behavior and to develop techniques and strategies to respond in a non-aggressive way to bullying-type behaviors. Students will also develop confidence and learn how to advocate for themselves and others, and when to go to an adult for help.

DCS informs DCS employees, students, and parents/guardians of this Policy and encourages parents/guardians to discuss this Policy with their children to ensure their children understand and comply with this Policy.

**Professional Development**
DCS annually makes available the online training module developed by the California Department of Education pursuant Education Code section 32283.5(a) to its certificated employees and all other DCS employees who have regular interaction with students.

DCS informs certificated employees about the common signs that a student is a target of bullying including:
- Physical cuts or injuries
- Lost or broken personal items
- Fear of going to school/practice/games
- Loss of interest in school, activities, or friends
- Trouble sleeping or eating
- Anxious/sick/nervous behavior or distracted appearance
- Self-destructiveness or displays of odd behavior
- Decreased self-esteem

DCS also informs certificated employees about the groups of students determined by DCS and available research to be at elevated risk for bullying and provides its certificated employees with information on existing school and community resources related to the support of these groups. These groups include but are not limited to:
- Students who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning youth ("LGBTQ") and those youth perceived as LGBTQ; and
- Students with physical or learning disabilities.

DCS encourages its employees to demonstrate effective problem-solving, anger management, and self-confidence skills for DCS's students.

**Complaint Procedures**

**Scope of the Complaint Procedures**
DCS will comply with its Uniform Complaint Procedures ("UCP") policy when investigating and responding to complaints alleging unlawful harassment, discrimination, intimidation or bullying against a protected group or on the basis of a person's association with a person or group with one or more of the protected characteristics set forth in the UCP that:
- Are written and signed;
- Filed by an individual who alleges that they have personally suffered unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying, or by one who believes any specific class of individuals has been subjected to discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying based on a protected characteristic, or by a duly authorized representative who alleges that an individual student has been subjected to discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying; and
- Submitted to the DCS UCP Compliance Officer not later than six (6) months from the date the alleged unlawful

discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying occurred, or the date the complainant first obtained knowledge of the facts of the alleged discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying.

DCS will comply with its Title IX Policy when investigating and responding to complaints alleging sex discrimination, including sex-based harassment, in its education program or activity, as applicable.

The following procedures shall be utilized for complaints of misconduct prohibited by this Policy that do not fall within the scope of DCS's Title IX Policy or comply with the writing, timeline, or other formal filing requirements of the UCP. A copy of DCS's Title IX Policy and UCP is available on the DCS website.

**Submitting a Report or Complaint**
All staff are expected to provide appropriate supervision to enforce standards of conduct and, if they observe or become aware of misconduct prohibited by this Policy, to intervene when safe to do so, call for assistance, and report such incidents. The Board requires staff to follow the procedures in this Policy for reporting alleged acts of misconduct prohibited by this Policy.

Reports and complaints of misconduct prohibited by this Policy shall be submitted to the Executive Director (or the Secretary of the Board if the complaint is against the Executive Director) as soon as possible after the incidents giving rise to the report or complaint.

Complaints regarding such misconduct may also be made to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights. Civil law remedies, including, but not limited to, injunctions, restraining orders, or other remedies or orders may also be available to complainants.

While submission of a written report is not required, and DCS will investigate and respond to all oral and written reports of misconduct prohibited by this Policy, the reporting party is encouraged to submit a written report. Reports may be made anonymously, but formal disciplinary action cannot be based solely on an anonymous report.

Students are expected to report all incidents of misconduct prohibited by this Policy and other verbal or physical abuses. Any student who feels they are a target of such behavior should immediately contact a teacher, counselor, the Executive Director, a staff person or a family member so that the student can get assistance in resolving the issue in a manner that is consistent with this Policy.

DCS acknowledges and respects every individual's right to privacy. All reports and complaints shall be investigated in a manner that protects the confidentiality of the parties and the integrity of the process to the greatest extent possible. This includes keeping the identity of the reporter and/or complainant confidential, as appropriate, except to the extent necessary to comply with applicable law, carry out the investigation and/or to resolve the issue, as determined by DCS on a case-by-case basis.

DCS prohibits any form of retaliation against any individual who files a report or complaint, testifies, assists, participates, or refuses to participate in any investigation or proceeding related to misconduct prohibited by this Policy. Such participation or lack of participation shall not in any way affect the status, grades, or work assignments of the individual. Individuals alleging retaliation in violation of this Policy may file a grievance using the procedures set forth in this Policy.

**Investigation and Response**
Upon receipt of a report or complaint of misconduct prohibited by this Policy, the Executive Director or designee will promptly initiate an investigation. In most cases, a thorough investigation will take no more than twenty-five (25) school days.

At the conclusion of the investigation, the Executive Director or designee will, to the extent possible with respect to confidentiality laws, provide the complainant with information about the investigation and resolution of the incident/situation. However, the Executive Director or designee will not reveal confidential information related to other students or employees.

If the complaint is against the Executive Director, a non-employee Board member who is not the Board President or a

parent/guardian of a student at DCS will conduct a fact-finding investigation and provide the complainant with information about the investigation and resolution of the incident/situation.

**Consequences**
Students or employees who engage in misconduct prohibited by this Policy may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from DCS or termination of employment.

**Right of Appeal**
Should a complainant find DCS's resolution unsatisfactory, for complaints within the scope of this Policy, the complainant may, within five (5) business days of notice of DCS's decision or resolution, submit a written appeal to the President of the DCS Board, who will serve as the decisionmaker for the appeal or designate a decisionmaker for the appeal. The decisionmaker for the appeal will notify the complainant of the final decision.

**Harassment, Intimidation, Discrimination, and Bullying Complaint Form**

Your Name: _____ Date: _____
Email Address: _____
Date of Alleged Incident(s): _____
Name of Person(s) you have a complaint against: _____
List any witnesses that were present: _____
Where did the incident(s) occur? _____

Please describe the events or conduct that are the basis of your complaint by providing as much factual detail as possible (i.e., specific statements and conduct; what, if any, physical contact was involved; any verbal statements etc.) (Attach additional pages, if needed):
_____
_____
_____
_____

**I hereby authorize DCS to disclose the information I have provided as it finds necessary in pursuing its investigation. I hereby certify that the information I have provided in this complaint is true and correct and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief.**

_____ Date: _____
Signature of Complainant

_____
Print Name

**<u>To be completed by DCS:</u>**

Received by: _____ Date: _____

Follow up Meeting with Complainant held on: _____
_____

**Student Safety, Professional Boundaries, and Adult Misconduct Policy**

*Adopted: October 15, 2024*
*Revised: October 27,2026*

Discovery Charter School ("School") is committed to providing every student with a safe, supportive, and appropriately supervised learning environment. This policy establishes the School's standards for professional boundaries between adults and students, limits on electronic and social media communication, mandated reporting obligations, and related safeguards against child abuse and misconduct.

This policy applies to all School employees, volunteers, contractors, and governing Board ("Board") members[1] (collectively referred to as "adults" herein).

The School recognizes its responsibility to make and enforce all rules and regulations governing student and adult behavior to bring about the safest and most learning-conducive environment possible. This policy is available on the School's website.

## STUDENT/ADULT PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES

Corporal Punishment

Corporal punishment shall not be used as a disciplinary measure against any student. Corporal punishment includes the willful infliction of, or willfully causing the infliction of, physical pain on a student.

For purposes of this policy, corporal punishment does not include an individual's use of force that is reasonable and necessary to protect the individual, students, staff, or other persons or to prevent damage to property.

For clarification purposes, the following examples are offered for direction and guidance of School employees, volunteers, contractors, and Board members:

A. Examples of permitted actions (i.e., not corporal punishment)

1. Stopping a student from assaulting another student;
2. Preventing a pupil from committing an act of vandalism;
3. Defending yourself from physical injury or assault by a student;
4. Forcing a pupil to give up a weapon or dangerous object;
5. Requiring a student on an athletic team to participate in strenuous physical training activities designed to strengthen or condition team members or improve their coordination, agility, or physical skills;
6. Engaging in group calisthenics, team drills, or other physical education or voluntary recreational activities.

B. Examples of prohibited actions (i.e., corporal punishment)

1. Hitting, shoving, pushing, or physically restraining a student as a means of control;
2. Making unruly students do push-ups, run laps, or perform other physical acts that cause pain or discomfort as a form of punishment;
3. Paddling, swatting slapping, grabbing, pinching, kicking, or otherwise causing physical pain.

Acceptable and Unacceptable Adult/Student Behavior

This policy is intended to guide adults in conducting themselves in a way that reflects the high standards of behavior and professionalism required of them and to specify the boundaries between such adults and students.

Although this policy gives specific, clear direction, it is each adult's obligation to avoid situations that could prompt suspicion by parents/guardians, students, colleagues, or School leaders. One viable standard that can be quickly applied, when you are unsure if certain conduct is acceptable, is to ask yourself, "Would I be engaged in this conduct if my family

or colleagues were standing next to me?"

For the purposes of this policy, the term "boundaries" is defined as acceptable professional behavior by an adult while interacting with a student, whether during school hours or outside of school hours, including through social media platforms, text messaging, and other forms of communication that do not otherwise include a student's parent/guardian. Trespassing the boundaries of a student/adult relationship is deemed an abuse of power and a betrayal of public trust.

Professional boundaries apply not only between students and staff, volunteers, contractors, and Board members, but also among and between students, and among and between adults employed, volunteering, or under contract with the School. All members of the School community are expected to maintain professional conduct that models appropriate behavior and fosters a safe and respectful learning environment. Additionally, all facilities/areas under School control shall be effectively supervised to promote a safe environment for students and individuals performing services on behalf of the School.

Some activities may seem innocent from an adult's perspective, but can be perceived as flirtation or sexual insinuation from a student's or parent/guardian's point of view. The objective of the following lists of acceptable and unacceptable behaviors is not to restrain innocent, positive relationships between adults and students, but to prevent relationships that could lead to, or may be perceived as, sexual misconduct.

Adults must understand their own responsibility for ensuring that they do not cross the boundaries as written in this policy. Disagreeing with the wording or intent of the established boundaries will be considered irrelevant for disciplinary purposes. Thus, it is crucial that all adults learn this policy thoroughly and apply the lists of acceptable and unacceptable behaviors to their daily activities. Although sincere, competent interaction with students certainly fosters learning, adult/student interactions must have boundaries surrounding potential activities, locations, and intentions.

Examples of Specific Behaviors

The following examples are not an exhaustive list and apply equally during and outside of the regular school day:

*Unacceptable Adult/Student Behaviors (Violations of this Policy)*

a. Giving gifts to an individual student that are of a personal and intimate nature.
b. Kissing of any kind.
c. Any type of unnecessary physical contact with a student in a private situation.
d. Intentionally being alone with a student away from the school.
e. Making or participating in sexually inappropriate comments.
f. Sexual jokes.
g. Seeking emotional involvement with a student for your benefit.
h. Listening to or telling stories that are sexually oriented.
i. Discussing inappropriate personal troubles or intimate issues with a student.
j. Becoming involved with a student so that a reasonable person may suspect inappropriate behavior.
k. Communication with students via an employee's personal accounts such as email, text message/direct message, and/or social media.
l. Engaging in any electronic, digital, or social media communication with a student that is not School-related.
m. Any form of grooming behavior, including conduct designed to build secrecy or inappropriate trust.

*Unacceptable Adult/Student Behaviors without Parent and Supervisor Permission*

**(These behaviors should only be exercised when adults have parent/guardian and supervisor permission.)**

a. Giving students a ride to/from school or school activities.
b. Being alone in a room with a student at school with the door closed.
c. Allowing students in your home.

*Cautionary Adults/Student Behaviors*

**(These behaviors should only be exercised when a reasonable and prudent person is prevented from using a better practice or behavior. Adults must inform a school administrator of the circumstance and occurrence prior to or immediately after the occurrence)**

a. Remarks about the physical attributes or development of anyone.
b. Excessive attention toward a particular student.
c. Sending emails, text messages/direct messages or letters to students if the content is not about school activities.
d. Sending emails, text messages/direct messages or letters to a student regarding academic, disciplinary, or other School-related matters without including the student's parent or guardian on the communication.

*Acceptable and Recommended Adult/Student Behaviors*

a. Getting parents' written consent for any after-school activity.
b. Obtaining formal approval to take students off school property for activities such as field trips or competitions.
c. Emails, text/direct messages, phone and instant messages to students within School provided platforms must be professional and pertain to school activities or classes (Communication should be limited to school technology).
d. Keeping the door open when alone with a student.
e. Keeping reasonable space between you and your students.
f. Stopping and correcting students if they cross your own personal boundaries.
g. Keeping parents informed when a significant issue develops about a student.
h. Keeping after-class discussions with a student professional and brief.
i. Asking for advice from fellow staff or administrators if you find yourself in a difficult situation related to boundaries[2].
j. Involving your supervisor if conflict arises with the student.
k. Informing the administration about situations that have the potential to become more severe[3].
l. Making detailed notes about an incident that could evolve into a more serious situation later.
m. Recognizing the responsibility to stop unacceptable behavior of students or coworkers.
n. Asking another adult to be present if you will be alone with any student with special needs.
o. Asking another adult to be present when you must be alone with a student after regular school hours.
p. Giving students praise and recognition without touching them.
q. Pats on the back, high fives, and handshakes are acceptable.
r. Keeping your professional conduct a high priority.
s. Asking yourself if your actions are worth your job and career.
t. Documenting any interaction with a student that may be crossing boundaries set forth in this policy, including any electronic communication.

## PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES AMONG ADULTS

All adults covered by this Policy are expected to interact with one another in a manner that is professional, respectful, and consistent with the School's workplace conduct standards. Adults in positions of supervisory authority shall not use that authority to coerce, manipulate, or exploit other adults in the School community. Conduct among adults that creates a hostile work environment, involves sexual harassment, or otherwise violates applicable law or School policy is prohibited and must be reported consistent with the School's applicable reporting procedures. School leadership is responsible for modeling appropriate professional relationships and for addressing complaints of adult-to-adult misconduct promptly and consistently.

## MANDATED REPORTING OBLIGATIONS

All of the following persons associated with the School are mandated reporters of known or reasonably suspected child abuse or neglect:

- All employees, regardless of role or frequency of student contact.
- All contractors whose duties require contact with or supervision of students.

- All board members.
- All volunteers who interact with students outside of the immediate supervision and control of the student's parent or guardian or a School employee.

A mandated reporter is not required to investigate, confirm, or seek corroboration before making a report. The obligation to report arises from reasonable suspicion, not certainty. Each mandated reporter has an independent, personal obligation to make a report to a child protective agency or law enforcement when that individual knows of or reasonably suspects that a child has been the victim of abuse or neglect.

Reports must be made immediately or as soon as practically possible by phone, and a written follow-up report must be submitted within 36 hours. While internal reporting to a supervisor or administrator is encouraged for operational awareness, the duty to report is not discharged by notifying a supervisor or by assuming that another person has made the report. No administrator may impede or inhibit a mandated reporter from filing a report.

Failure to make a required report is a misdemeanor under California law and may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

**ANNUAL TRAINING REQUIREMENTS**

The School shall provide annual training to all employees, contractors, board members, and volunteers on the following topics:

- Mandated reporting requirements under the California Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act, including which persons are mandated reporters, what must be reported, how to make a report, and the legal consequences of failing to report.
- Prevention of child abuse, including sexual abuse, in the school environment, including recognition of grooming behaviors, boundary violations, and other indicators of adult-to-student misconduct.
- The professional boundary standards and electronic communication requirements set forth in this Policy.
- The School's procedures for reporting concerns about staff conduct to administration.

All covered individuals must complete training within the first six weeks of each school year or within the first six weeks of hire, assignment, or commencement of volunteer services, whichever is earlier.

The School shall maintain a record of training completion dates for each individual. Training must be completed using the State Department of Social Services' online training module or an alternative module approved by the School's joint powers authority or insurance provider.

The governing board shall receive annual training on its obligations under SB 848, including with respect to the statewide reporting database once operational.

**SCHOOL SAFETY PLAN**

The School's comprehensive school safety plan shall include procedures specifically designed to address the supervision and protection of students from child abuse, neglect, and sex offenses.

The safety plan shall also address child neglect and include procedures for reporting all crimes occurring on campus or at campus-related activities, and classroom and non-classroom environments in a manner that promotes safe, easily supervised spaces for student learning and engagement

All School personnel shall receive training on the comprehensive school safety plan consistent with the requirements of SB 848.

For a copy of the complete school safety plan, please contact the main office.

**DUTY TO REPORT SUSPECTED MISCONDUCT**

When any adult reasonably suspects or believes that another individual may have crossed the boundaries specified in this policy, he or she must immediately report the matter to a School administrator. All reports shall be as confidential as possible under the circumstances. It is the administrator's duty to investigate and thoroughly report the situation. Adults must also report to the administration any awareness or concern of student behavior that crosses boundaries or where a student appears to be at risk for sexual abuse.

The School shall investigate all credible reports of policy violations or misconduct promptly and shall take appropriate corrective action. The School shall not retaliate against any person who, in good faith, reports a concern under this Policy.

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**Suicide Prevention Policy**

*Adopted: October 15, 2024*
*Revised: October 27,2026*

The Board of Directors of Discover Charter School ("DCS" or the "Charter School") recognizes that suicide is a major cause of death among youth and should be taken seriously. To attempt to reduce suicidal behavior and its impact on students and families, the Board of Directors has developed prevention strategies and intervention procedures.

In compliance with Education Code section 215, this policy has been developed in consultation with DCS and community stakeholders, DCS school-employed mental health professionals (e.g., school counselors, psychologists, social workers, nurses), administrators, other school staff members, parents/guardians/caregivers, students, local health agencies and mental health professionals, the county mental health plan, first responders, and community organizations to identify additional resources to ensure this policy is aligned and includes similar research and resources, as well as to assist in planning, implementing, evaluating, and updating the DCS's strategies for suicide prevention and intervention. DCS shall work in conjunction with local government agencies, community-based organizations, and other community supports to identify additional resources. To ensure the policies regarding suicide prevention are properly adopted, implemented, updated, and easily accessible to all. DCS shall appoint an individual (or team) to serve as the suicide prevention point of contact for DCS. The suicide prevention point of contact for DCS and the Executive Director shall ensure proper coordination and consultation with the county mental health plan if a referral is made for mental health or related services on behalf of a student who is a Medi-Cal beneficiary. this policy shall be reviewed and revised as indicated, at least every five (5) years in conjunction with the previously mentioned community stakeholders.

## Suicide Prevention Crisis Team

To ensure the policies regarding suicide prevention are properly adopted, implemented, and updated, DCS created an in-house Suicide Prevention Crisis Team ("SPCT") consisting of administrators, mental health professionals, relevant staff, parents, and middle school students. The SPCT includes the following individuals:

1. Erika Alamo, Principal
2. Sarah Johnson, School Psychologist
3. Jamala Simms, School Counselor

To ensure the SPCT reflects the student body's perspective, DCS shall designate at least one middle school student representative, when applicable, to provide consultative insights.

DCS designates the following employees to act as the primary and secondary Suicide Prevention Liaisons to lead the SPCT:

- Primary Liaison: Sarah Johnson, School Psychologist
- Sarah.johnson@cvesd.org
- 619-656-0797

- Secondary Liaison: Jamala Simms, School Counselor
- Jamala.simms@cvesd.org
- 619-656-0797

The functions of the SPCT are to:

- Review mental health related school policies and procedures;
- Provide annual updates on school data and trends;
- Review and revise school prevention policies;
- Review and select general and specialized mental health and suicide prevention training;
- Review and oversee staff, parent/guardian, and student trainings;
- Ensuring the suicide prevention policy, protocols, and resources are posted on the school website;
- Ensure compliance with Education Code section 215;
- Collaborate with community mental health organizations;
- Identify resources and agencies that provide evidence-based or evidence-informed treatment;
- Help inform and build skills among law enforcement and other relevant partners; and
- Collaborate to build community response.

**Employee Qualifications and Scope of Services**

Employees of DCS shall act only within the authorization and scope of their credential or license. While it is expected that school professionals are able to identify suicide risk factors and warning signs, screen and assess and to provide ongoing supports to youth identified at risk, the care or treatment for suicidal ideation is typically beyond the scope of services offered in the school setting.

**Suicide Awareness and Prevention Training for School Staff**

DCS, along with its partners, has carefully reviewed available staff training to ensure the curriculum is evidence-based, evidenced informed, aligned with best practices in suicide prevention, and promotes the mental health model of suicide prevention and does not encourage the use of the stress model to explain suicide.

Training and professional development shall be provided for all school staff members (certificated and classified) and other adults on campus (including substitutes and intermittent staff, volunteers, interns, tutors, coaches, and afterschool program staff).

1. All suicide prevention trainings shall be offered under the direction of mental health professionals (e.g., school counselors, school psychologists, other public entity professionals, such as psychologists, social workers, or nurses) who have received advanced training specific to suicide prevention. Charter School has collaborated with Chula Vista Elementary School District to review the training materials and content to ensure it is evidence-based, evidence-informed, and aligned with best practices.

2. Staff training is reviewed and adjusted annually based on previous professional development activities, emerging best practices, and feedback.

3. Charter School shall ensure that training is available for new hires during the school year.

4. At least annually, all staff shall receive training on prevention and protective factors such as the risk factors and warning signs of suicide, suicide prevention, intervention, referral, and postvention.

5. At a minimum, all staff shall participate in training on the core components of suicide prevention (identification of suicide risk and protective factors and warning signs, prevention, intervention, referral, and postvention). Core components of the general suicide prevention training shall include:

a. How to identify youth who may be at risk for suicide including suicide risk factors, warning signs, and protective factors.
b. Appropriate ways to approach, interact, and respond to a youth who is demonstrating emotional distress or having thoughts of suicide including skill building to ask directly about suicide thoughts.
c. Charter-approved procedures for responding to suicide risk (including programs and services in a Multi-

tiered System of Support (MTSS) and referral protocols). Such procedures will emphasize the student should be under constant supervision and immediately referred for a suicide risk assessment.

d. Charter-approved procedures identifying the role educators, school staff, and volunteers play in supporting youth and staff after a suicide or suicide death or attempt (postvention).

6. **In addition to** core components of suicide prevention, ongoing annual staff professional development for all staff shall include the following components:

a. The impact of traumatic stress on emotional and mental health.
b. Common misconceptions about suicide.
c. Charter School and community mental health and suicide prevention resources.
d. Appropriate messaging about suicide (correct terminology, safe messaging guidelines).
e. Ways to identify youth who may be at risk of suicide including suicide warning signs, risk, and protective factors.
f. Appropriate ways to approach, interact, and respond to a youth who is demonstrating emotional distress or is having thoughts of suicide. Specifically, how to talk with a student about their thoughts of suicide, including skill building to ask directly about suicide thoughts and warm handoffs.
g. Charter School-approved procedures for responding to suicide risk (including multi-tiered systems of support and referrals). Such procedures will emphasize that the student should be constantly supervised until a suicide risk assessment is completed.
h. Charter School-approved procedures for identifying the role educators, school staff, and volunteers play in supporting youth and staff after a suicide or suicide death or attempt (postvention).
i. Information regarding groups of students judged by the school, and available research, to be at elevated risk for suicide. These groups include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Youth affected by suicide.
- Youth with a history of suicide ideation or attempts.
- Youth with disabilities, mental illness, or substance abuse disorders.
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning youth.
- Youth experiencing homelessness or in out-of-home settings, such as foster care.
- Youth who have suffered traumatic experiences.
- [Charter School must Insert other Local Youth Populations Vulnerable to Depression and Suicide based upon CalSCHLS, YRBS or other school climate survey data**]**.

**Specialized Professional Development for School-based Mental Health Staff (Screening and/or Assessment**

Additional professional development in suicide risk assessment (SRA) and crisis intervention is provided to designated student mental health professionals, including but not limited to school counselors, psychologists, social workers, administrators, and nurses employed by Charter School. Training for these staff is specific to conducting SRAs, intervening during a crisis, de-escalating situations, interventions specific to preventing suicide, making referrals, safety planning, and re-entry.

Specialized Professional Training for targeted School-based mental health staff includes the following components:

- Best practices and skill building on how to conduct an effective suicide risk screening/SRA using an evidence-based, Charter School-approved tool; Patient Health Questionnaire 9 (PHQ-9) Depression Scale; BSS Beck Scale for Suicide Ideation ; National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)'s Ask Suicide-Screening Questions (ASQ) Toolkit; and the Adolescent Suicide Assessment Protocol – 20.
- Best practices on approaching and talking with a student about their thoughts of suicide and how to respond to such thinking, based on school guidelines and protocols.
- Best practices on how to talk with a student about thoughts of suicide and appropriately respond and provide support based on school guidelines and protocols.
- Best practices on follow up with parents/caregivers.
- Best practices on re-entry.

## Virtual Screenings for Suicide Risk

Virtual suicide prevention efforts include checking in with all students, promoting access to school and community-based resources that support mental wellbeing and those that address mental illness and give specific guidance on suicide prevention.

Charter School has established a protocol for assigning school staff to connect with students during distance learning and school closures. In the event of a school closure, Charter School has determined a process and protocols to establish daily or regular contact with all students. Staff understand that any concern about a student's emotional wellbeing and/or safety must be communicated to the appropriate school staff, according to Charter School protocols.

Charter School has determined a process and protocols for school-based mental health professionals to establish regular contact with high-risk students, students who are on their caseloads, and those who are identified by staff as demonstrating need. When connecting with students, staff are directed to begin each conversation by identifying the location of the student and the availability of parents or caregivers. This practice allows for the staff member to ensure the safety of the student, particularly if they have expressed suicidal thoughts.

## Parents, Guardians, and Caregivers Notification, Participation and Education

1. DCS includes parents/guardians/caregivers in suicide prevention efforts. At a minimum, the Charter School shall share this Policy with parents/guardians/caregivers by notifying them where a complete copy of the policy is available.

2. This Suicide Prevention Policy shall be easily accessible and prominently displayed on the DCS Web page and included in the parent/student handbook. Parents/guardians/caregivers are invited to provide input on the development, review, and implementation of this policy.

3. DCS shall notify the parent/guardian/caregiver when a student has been screened or screened/assessed for suicide risk regardless of outcome

4. DCS shall establish and widely disseminate a referral process to all parents/guardians/caregivers/families, so they are aware of how to respond to a crisis and are knowledgeable about protocols and school, community-based, and crisis resources.

5. Community-based organizations that provide evidence-based suicide-specific treatments shall be highlighted on the Charter School's website with treatment referral options marked accordingly.

6. Staff autoreplies during vacations or absences shall include links to resources and phone/text numbers so parents and students have information readily available.

7. All parents/guardians/caregivers may have access to suicide prevention training that addresses the following:

a. Suicide risk factors, warning signs, and protective factors.
b. How to approach and talk with their child(ren) about thoughts of suicide.
c. How to respond appropriately to the youth who has suicidal thoughts. Such responses shall include constant supervision of any child/youth judged to be at risk for suicide and referral for an immediate suicide risk assessment.
d. Charter School's referral processes and how they or their children can reach out for help, etc.

8. Parent/guardians are provided with information on suicide prevention resources including crisis hotlines, local warmlines, and school and community-based supports and crisis resources including the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, Crisis text line, and local crisis hotlines and includes information that hotlines/resources are not just for crisis but also for friends/family and referral.

9. Parents/guardians/caregivers are reminded that the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA") generally protects the confidentiality of student records, which may sometimes include counseling or crisis intervention records. However, FERPA's health or safety emergency provision permits the disclosure of personally identifiable information from a student's education records, to appropriate parties, in order to address a health or safety emergency when the disclosure is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals.

**Student Participation and Education**

Messaging about suicide has an effect on suicidal thinking and behaviors. Consequently, DCS along with its partners has carefully reviewed and will continue to review potential student curricula to ensure it includes information on recognizing and responding to signs and symptoms (within themselves and friends), learning coping skills, encourage help-seeking behavior and being knowledgeable of supports and resources.

Suicide prevention strategies may include, but not be limited to, efforts to promote a positive school climate that enhances students' feelings of connectedness with DCS and is characterized by caring staff and harmonious interrelationships among students.

DCS's instructional and student support program shall promote the healthy mental, emotional, and social development of students including, but not limited to, the development of problem-solving skills, coping skills, and resilience. The instruction shall not use the stress model to explain suicide.

DCS provides instruction to students on general mental health and suicide prevention. The Charter School's instructional curriculum shall consider the grade level and age of the students and be delivered and discussed in a manner that is sensitive to the needs of young students. The instruction is provided under the supervision of Charter School employed mental health professionals, with input from county and community mental health agencies, middle school students. The instruction is developmentally appropriate, student-centered, and includes:

a. Coping strategies for dealing with stress and trauma.
b. How to recognize behaviors (warning signs), protective factors, and life issues (risk factors) associated with suicide and mental health issues in oneself and others.
c. Help-seeking strategies for oneself and others, including how to engage school-based and community resources and refer peers for help.
d. Emphasis on reducing the stigma associated with mental illness and the fact that early prevention and intervention can drastically reduce the risk of suicide.
e. Guidance regarding the Charter School's suicide prevention, intervention, and referral procedures.

Student-focused suicide prevention education can be incorporated into classroom curricula (e.g., health classes, orientation classes, science, and physical education). DCS maintains a list of current student trainings, which is available upon request.

DCS has shared school-based supports and self-reporting procedures, so students are able to seek help if they are experiencing thoughts of suicide or if they recognize signs with peers. Although confidentiality and privacy are important, students should understand safety is a priority and if there is a risk of suicide, school staff are required to report. Charter-based mental health professionals are legally and ethically required to report suicide risk. **When reporting suicidal ideation or an attempt, school staff must maintain confidentiality and only share information limited to the risk or attempt**.

DCS supports the creation and implementation of programs and/or activities on campus that increase awareness about mental wellness and suicide prevention (e.g., Mental Health Awareness Weeks, Peer Counseling Programs, Freshman Success, and National Alliance on Mental Illness on Campus High School Clubs).

Charter School will include the following information on all student identification cards:

1.

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline/Suicide Crisis Lifeline:
  - Call or Text "988"
  - Call 1-800-273-8255
- National Domestic Violence Hotline: Call 1-800-799-7233
- Crisis Text Line: Text "HOME" to 741741
- Trevor Project: Call 1-866-488-738 or Text "START" to 678-678

2. In addition to listing the above resources on student identification cards, Charter School shall include the following language starting in the 2027 – 28 school year: "*If you or someone you know is struggling emotionally or having trouble coping, there is help. Students in distress or those who just want to talk about their problems, can call or text the phone numbers listed here for free, confidential support*."

DCS shall establish and widely disseminate a referral process to all students, so they know how to access support through school, community-based, and crisis services. Students shall be encouraged to notify a staff member when they are experiencing emotional distress or suicidal ideation, or when they have knowledge or concerns of another student's emotional distress, suicidal ideation, or attempt.

**Intervention and Emergency Procedures**

Whenever a staff member suspects or has knowledge of a student's suicidal intentions, they shall promptly notify the primary designated suicide prevention liaison. If this primary suicide prevention liaison is unavailable, the staff shall promptly notify the secondary suicide prevention liaison.

The suicide prevention liaison shall immediately notify the Executive Director or designee, who shall then notify the student's parent/guardian as soon as possible if appropriate and in the best interest of the student. Determination of notification to parents/guardians/caregivers should follow a formal initial assessment to ensure that the student is not endangered by parental notification.

The suicide prevention liaison shall also refer the student to mental health resources at DCS or in the community.

A. ***Action Plan for Suicide Attempts on Campus or During School-Sponsored Activity***

DCS shall implement the following response protocol for suicide attempts during the school day.

When a student is in imminent danger (has access to a gun, is on a rooftop, or in other unsafe conditions), a call shall be made to 911. The call shall NOT be made in the presence of the student and the student shall not be left unsupervised. Staff shall NOT physically restrain or block an exit.

When a suicide attempt or threat is reported on campus or at a school-related activity, the suicide prevention liaison shall, at a minimum:

1. Ensure the student's physical safety by one or more of the following, as appropriate:

a. providing immediate first aid as needed, until a medical professional is available.
b. Securing law enforcement and/or other emergency assistance if a suicidal act is being actively threatened

and report any medications taken, and access to weapons, if applicable.

c. Keeping the student under continuous adult supervision until the parent/guardian and/or appropriate support agent or agency can be contacted and has the opportunity to intervene.
d. Remaining calm, keeping in mind the student is overwhelmed, confused, and emotionally distressed.
e. Moving all other students out of the immediate area.
f. Not sending the student away or leaving him/her alone, even to go to the restroom.
g. Providing comfort to the student, listening and allowing the student to talk and being comfortable with moments of silence.
h. Promising privacy and help, but not promising confidentiality
i. Students should only be released to parents/guardians/caregivers/families or to a person who is qualified and trained to provide help.

2. Document the incident in writing as soon as feasible.

3. Follow up with the parent/guardian and student in a timely manner to provide referrals to appropriate services as needed and coordinate and consult with the county mental health plan if a referral is made for mental health or related services on behalf of a student who is a Medi-Cal beneficiary. **Determination of notification to parents/guardians/caregivers should follow a formal initial assessment to ensure that the student is not endangered by parental notification**.

4. After a referral is made, DCS shall verify with the parent/guardian that the follow-up treatment has been accessed. Parents/guardians will be required to provide documentation of care for the student. If parents/guardians refuse or neglect to access treatment for a student who has been identified to be at risk for suicide or in emotional distress, the suicide prevention liaisons shall meet with the parent to identify barriers to treatment (e.g., cultural stigma, financial issues) and work to rectify the situation and build understanding of the importance of care. If follow-up care is still not provided, DCS should consider contacting Child Protective Services to report neglect of youth.

5. Provide access to counselors or other appropriate personnel to listen to and support students and staff who are directly or indirectly involved with the incident at DCS.

6. Provide an opportunity for all who respond to the incident to debrief, evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies used, and make recommendations for future actions.

B. ***Action Plan for Off Campus Suicide Attempts***

In the event a suicide occurs or is attempted during the school day on the DCS campus, the suicide prevention liaison shall follow the crisis intervention procedures contained in DCS's safety plan. After consultation with the Principal or designee and the student's parent/guardian about facts that may be divulged in accordance with the laws governing confidentiality of student record information, the Principal or designee may provide students, parents/guardians, and staff with information, counseling, and/or referrals to community agencies as needed. DCS staff may receive assistance from DCS counselors or other mental health professionals in determining how best to discuss the suicide or attempted suicide with students.

In the event a suicide occurs or is attempted off the DCS campus and unrelated to school activities, the Principal or designee shall take the following steps to support the student:

1. Contact the parent/guardian and offer support to the family.

2. Discuss with the family how they would like DCS to respond to the attempt while minimizing widespread rumors among teachers, staff, and students.

3. Obtain permission from the parent/guardian to share information to ensure the facts regarding the crisis are correct.

4. The suicide prevention liaisons shall handle any media requests.

5. Provide care and determine appropriate support to affected students.

6. Offer to the student and parent/guardian steps for re-integration to school. Re-integration may include obtaining a written release from the parent/guardian to speak with any health care providers; conferring with the student and parent/guardian about any specific requests on how to handle the situation; informing the student's teachers about possible days of absences; allowing accommodations for make-up work (being understanding that missed assignments may add stress to the student); appropriate staff maintaining ongoing contact with the student to monitor the student's actions and mood; and working with the parent/guardian to involve the student in an aftercare plan; providing parents/guardians/caregivers/families local emergency numbers for after school and weekend emergency contacts.

**Supporting Students during or after a Mental Health Crisis**

Students shall be encouraged through the education program and in DCS activities to notify a teacher, the Principal, another DCS administrator, psychologist, DCS counselor, suicide prevention liaisons, or other adult when they are experiencing thoughts of suicide or when they suspect or have knowledge of another student's suicidal intentions. DCS shall implement the following steps during or after a crisis:

1. Treat every threat with seriousness and approach with a calm manner; make the student a priority.
2. Listen actively and non-judgmentally to the student. Let the student express their feelings.
3. Acknowledge the feelings and do not argue with the student.
4. Offer hope and let the student know they are safe, and that help is available. Do not promise confidentiality or cause stress.
5. Explain calmly and get the student to a skilled mental health professional or designated staff to further support the student.
6. Keep close contact with the parents/guardians/caregivers/families and mental health professionals working with the student.

**Re-Entry to School After a Suicide Attempt**

A student who has verbalized ideation or attempted suicide is at a higher risk for suicide in the months following the crisis. Having a streamlined and well-planned re-entry process ensures the safety and wellbeing of students who have previously attempted suicide and reduces the risk of another attempt. An appropriate re-entry process is an important component of suicide prevention. Involving students in planning for their return to school provides them with a sense of control, personal responsibility, and empowerment.

DCS shall implement the following steps upon the student's re-entry:

1. The Principal shall obtain a written release of information signed by parents/ guardians/caregivers/families and providers.
2. School mental health professionals shall confer with the student and parents/guardians/ caregivers/families about any specific requests on how to handle the situation.
3. School-based mental health professionals shall confer with the student and parents/ guardians/caregivers/families to develop a safety plan.
4. School- based mental health professionals shall inform the student's teachers about possible days of absences.

5. Teachers and administrators shall allow accommodations for student to make up work (understanding that missed assignments may add stress to student).
6. Mental health professionals or trusted staff members shall maintain ongoing contact to monitor student's actions and mood.
7. School-based mental health professionals shall work with parents/guardians/caregivers/ families to involve the student in an aftercare plan.
8. School-based mental health professionals shall provide parent's/guardians/caregivers/ families local emergency numbers for after school and weekend emergency contacts.

**Messaging About Suicide Prevention**

DCS along with its partners shall:

1. Thoroughly and regularly review with its partners, all materials and resources used in awareness efforts to ensure they align with best practices for safe and effective messaging about suicide.
2. Ensure that all communications, documents, materials related to messaging about suicide focus on warning signs as well as risk, prevention, and protective factors, avoid discussing details about methods of suicide, avoid oversimplifying (i.e. identifying singular cause of suicide), avoid sensational language, and only includes clear, respectful, people-first language that encourages an environment free of stigma. As part of safe messaging for suicide, we use specific terminology when referring to actions related to suicide or suicidal behavior:

| **Use** | **Do Not Use** |
|---|---|
| **"Died by suicide"**<br>**or**<br>**"Took their own life"** | **"Committed suicide"**<br>**Note:** Use of the word "commit" can imply crime/sin |
| **"Attempted suicide"** | **"Successful" or "unsuccessful"**<br>**Note:** There is no success, or lack of success, when dealing with suicide |

3. Provide suicide prevention resources in parent/student handbooks and on school-issued identification cards for staff and students, on school websites, and during any mental health or suicide prevention skill-building activity for students or parents/families and professional development for staff.

**Responding After a Suicide Death (Postvention)**

A death by suicide in the school community (whether by a student or staff member) can have devastating consequences on the school community, including students and staff. DCS shall follow the below action plan for responding to a suicide death, which incorporates both immediate and long-term steps and objectives:

The suicide prevention liaison shall:

1. Coordinate with the Principal to conduct an initial meeting of the Suicide Prevention Crisis Team to:

a. Confirm death and cause.
b. Identify a staff member to contact deceased's family (within 24 hours).
c. Enact the Suicide Postvention Response.
d. Notify all staff members (ideally in-person or via phone, not via e-mail or mass notification).

2. Coordinate an all-staff meeting, to include:

a. Notification (if not already conducted) to staff about suicide death.
b. Emotional support and resources available to staff.
c. Notification to students about suicide death and the availability of support services (if this is the protocol that is decided by administration).
d. Share information that is relevant and that which you have permission to disclose.

3. Prepare staff to respond to needs of students regarding the following:

a. Review signs of emotional distress and suicide ideation.
b. Review of protocols for referring students for support/assessment.
c. Develop and provide supports to staff in responding to student reactions.
d. Talking points for staff to notify students.
e. Share school and community-based resources available to students (on and off campus).

4. Identify students significantly affected by suicide death and other students at risk of imitative behavior and immediately refer them to a school-based mental health professional.

5. Identify students affected by suicide death but not at risk of imitative behavior.

6. Communicate with the larger school community about the suicide death and availability of support services. Staff shall not share explicit, graphic, or dramatic content, including the manner of death.

7. Consider (in consultation with the family) funeral arrangements for family and school community.

- If possible, suggest the funeral occur outside of school hours.
- Encourage parents/guardians of students to attend funeral/memorial with their children.
- Request family approval to attend and staff a table for resources to be available at the funeral, if possible, to remind students and the community of available resources.
- Offer a safe space on campus for students to utilize if needed before/after funeral or memorial service.
- Acknowledge there may be a high rate of absenteeism on the day of the funeral and school officials should make appropriate accommodations for staff and students to attend.

8. Respond to memorial requests in respectful and non-harmful manner; responses should be handled in a thoughtful way and their impact on other students should be considered.

9. Identify media spokesperson to cover story without the use of explicit, graphic, or dramatic content, if needed.

10. Utilize and respond to social media outlets:
- Identify what platforms students are using to respond to suicide death.
- Identify and encourage staff and students to monitor social media outlets.

11. Include long-term suicide postvention responses:

a. Consider important dates (i.e., anniversary of death, deceased birthday, graduation, or other significant event) and how these will be addressed.
b. Support siblings, close friends, teachers, and/or students of deceased.
c. Consider long-term memorials and how they may impact students who are emotionally vulnerable and at

risk of suicide.

## Suspension and Expulsion Policy and Procedures

*Adopted: October 15, 2024*
*Revised: October 27,2026*

**Policy**

The Suspension and Expulsion Procedures have been established in order to promote learning and protect the safety and wellbeing of all students at the Charter School. Although charter schools are exempt from school district procedures and process for suspensions and expulsions, in creating these procedures, the Charter School has reviewed Education Code Section 48900 et seq. which describe the offenses for which students at non-charter schools may be suspended or expelled, and the procedures governing those suspensions and expulsions, in order to establish its list of offenses for suspensions and expulsions. The provisions that follow are largely consistent with the language of the Education Code with regard to suspension/expulsion triggering conduct. The Charter School will periodically review its policies and procedures surrounding suspensions, expulsions, and involuntary removals, and may modify of the lists of offenses for which students are subject to suspension, expulsion or involuntary removal, and the procedures associated therewith, so long as not materially different from the charter petition.

Similarly, the procedures for student suspension, expulsion, and involuntary removal, and may be amended from time to time without the need to seek a material revision of the charter so long as the amendments comport with legal requirements.

Charter School staff shall enforce disciplinary policies and procedures fairly and consistently among all students. This Policy and its Procedures will be printed and distributed annually as part of the Student Handbook which will clearly describe discipline expectations.

Corporal punishment shall not be used as a disciplinary measure against any student. Corporal punishment includes the willful infliction of or willfully causing the infliction of physical pain on a student. For purposes of this Policy, corporal punishment does not include an employee's use of force that is reasonable and necessary to protect the employee, students, staff or other persons or to prevent damage to school property.

The Charter School administration shall ensure that students and their parents/guardians[1] are notified in writing upon enrollment of all discipline and involuntary removal policies and procedures.

Suspended or expelled students shall be excluded from all school and school-related activities unless otherwise agreed during the period of suspension or expulsion.

A student identified as an individual with disabilities or for whom the Charter School has a basis of knowledge of a suspected disability pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 ("IDEA") or who is qualified for services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ("Section 504") is subject to the same grounds for suspension and expulsion and is accorded the same due process procedures applicable to general education students except when federal and state law requires additional or different procedures. The Charter School will follow all applicable federal and state laws, including but not limited to the applicable provisions of the Education Code, when imposing any form of discipline on a student identified as an individual with disabilities or for whom the Charter School has a basis of knowledge of a suspected disability or who is otherwise qualified for such services or protections in according due process to such students.

No student shall be involuntarily removed by the Charter School for any reason unless the parent/guardian of the student has been provided written notice of intent to remove the student no less than five (5) school days before the effective date of the action. The written notice shall be in the native language of the student or the student's parent/guardian, and shall inform the student and the student's parent/guardian, of the basis for which the student is being involuntarily removed and

the student's parent/guardian's, right to request a hearing to challenge the involuntary removal. If a student's parent/guardian requests a hearing, the Charter School shall utilize the same hearing procedures specified in the Classroom Based Attendance Policy, before the effective date of the action to involuntarily remove the student. If the student's parent/guardian requests a hearing, the student shall remain enrolled and shall not be removed until the Charter School issues a final decision. As used herein, "involuntarily removed" includes disenrolled, dismissed, transferred, or terminated, but does not include removals for misconduct which may be grounds for suspension or expulsion as enumerated below. Students may be involuntarily removed for reasons including, but not limited to, failure to comply with the terms of the student's independent study written agreement pursuant to Education Code Section 51747(g).

**Procedures**

A. **Alternative Means of Correction**

For a student facing discipline for a discretionary offense listed below, the Principal or designee may, whenever practicable, provide alternatives to suspension or expulsion. These alternatives shall use a research-based framework with age-appropriate strategies that improve behavioral and academic outcomes while addressing and correcting the student's specific misbehavior.

Charter School shall not suspend or expel any student based solely on the fact that they are truant, tardy, or otherwise absent from school activities. Violations of Charter School's attendance expectations shall be addressed in accordance with Charter School's Classroom Based Attendance Policy and/or Independent Study Policy, as applicable.

Students may not be suspended or expelled for willful defiance or disruption. Alternatively, Charter School staff may refer a student who engages in willful defiance and/or disruption to the Principal or designee for appropriate and timely in-school interventions or supports. Within five (5) business days, the Principal or designee shall:

1. Document the actions taken and save the document to the student's record
2. Inform the referring staff member what actions were taken and if none, the rationale used for not providing any appropriate or timely in-school interventions or supports.

For a student who has been suspended, or for whom other means of correction have been implemented, for an incident of racial bullying, harassment, or intimidation, Charter School may require all students associated with the incident(s) to engage in restorative justice practices and/or cultural sensitivity programs.

Charter School may utilize the Multi-Tiered System of Supports, which includes restorative justice practices, trauma-informed practices, social and emotional learning, and schoolwide positive behavior interventions and support, to help students gain critical social and emotional skills, receive support to help transform trauma-related responses, understand the impact of their actions, and develop meaningful methods for repairing harm to the school community.

B. **Grounds for Suspension and Expulsion of Students**

A student may be suspended or expelled for prohibited misconduct if the act is related to school activity or school attendance occurring at any time including but not limited to: a) while on school grounds; b) while going to or coming from school; c) during the lunch period, whether on or off the school campus; or d) during, going to, or coming from a school-sponsored activity.

C. **Enumerated Offenses**

1. Discretionary Suspension and Expulsion Offenses: Students may be suspended when the Principal or designee determines the student:

a. Caused, attempted to cause, or threatened to cause physical injury to another person.

b. Willfully used force or violence upon the person of another, except self-defense.

c. Unlawfully possessed, used, or otherwise furnished, or was under the influence of any controlled substance, as

defined in Health and Safety Code Sections 11053-11058, alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant of any kind. Students who voluntarily disclose their use of a controlled substance, alcohol, or an intoxicant of any kind in order to seek help through services or supports shall not be suspended solely for that disclosure.

d. Unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any controlled substance as defined in Health and Safety Code Sections 11053-11058, alcoholic beverage or intoxicant of any kind, and then sold, delivered or otherwise furnished to any person another liquid substance or material and represented same as controlled substance, alcoholic beverage or intoxicant.

e. Committed or attempted to commit robbery or extortion.

f. Caused or attempted to cause damage to school property or private property, which includes but is not limited to electronic files and databases.

g. Stole or attempted to steal school property or private property, which includes but is not limited t, electronic files and databases.

h. Possessed or used tobacco or products containing tobacco or nicotine products, including but not limited to cigars, cigarettes, miniature cigars, clove cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, snuff, chew packets and betel. This section does not prohibit the use of a student's own prescription products by a student. Students who voluntarily disclose their use of a tobacco product in order to seek help through services or supports shall not be suspended solely for that disclosure.

i. Committed an obscene act or engaged in habitual profanity or vulgarity.

j. Unlawfully possessed or unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any drug paraphernalia, as defined in Health and Safety Code Section 11014.5.

k. Knowingly received stolen school property or private property, which includes but is not limited to, electronic files and databases.

l. Possessed an imitation firearm, i.e.: a replica of a firearm that is so substantially similar in physical properties to an existing firearm as to lead a reasonable person to conclude that the replica is a firearm.

m. Harassed, threatened, or intimidated a student who is a complaining witness or witness in a school disciplinary proceeding for the purpose of preventing that student from being a witness and/or retaliating against that student for being a witness.

n. Unlawfully offered, arranged to sell, negotiated to sell, or sold the prescription drug Soma.

o. Engaged in, or attempted to engage in, hazing. For the purposes of this policy, "hazing" means a method of initiation or preinitiation into a student organization or body, whether or not the organization or body is officially recognized by an educational institution, which is likely to cause serious bodily injury or personal degradation or disgrace resulting in physical or mental harm to a former, current, or prospective student. For purposes of this policy, "hazing" does not include athletic events or school-sanctioned events.

p. Made terroristic threats against school officials and/or school property, which includes but is not limited to, electronic files and databases. For purposes of this policy, "terroristic threat" shall include any statement, whether written or oral, by a person who willfully threatens to commit a crime which will result in death, great bodily injury to another person, or property damage in excess of one thousand dollars ($1,000), with the specific intent that the statement is to be taken as a threat, even if there is no intent of actually carrying it out, which, on its face and under the circumstances in which it is made, is so unequivocal, unconditional, immediate, and specific as to convey to the person threatened, a gravity of purpose and an immediate prospect of execution of the threat, and thereby causes that person reasonably to be in sustained fear for their own safety or for their immediate family's safety, or for the protection of school property, which includes but is not limited to, electronic files and databases, or the personal property of the person threatened or their immediate family.

q. Committed sexual harassment, as defined in Education Code Section 212.5. For the purposes of this policy, the conduct described in Section 212.5 must be considered by a reasonable person of the same gender as the victim to be sufficiently severe or pervasive to have a negative impact upon the individual's academic performance or to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment. This provision shall apply to students in any

of grades 4 to 8, inclusive.

r. Caused, attempted to cause, threatened to cause or participated in an act of hate violence, as defined in Education Code Section 233(e). This provision shall apply to students in any of grades 4 to 8, inclusive.

s. Intentionally harassed, threatened or intimidated school personnel or volunteers and/or a student or group of students to the extent of having the actual and reasonably expected effect of materially disrupting class work, creating substantial disorder and invading the rights of either school personnel or volunteers and/or student(s) by creating an intimidating or hostile educational environment. This provision shall apply to students in any of grades 4 to 8, inclusive.

t. Engaged in an act of bullying, including, but not limited to, bullying committed by means of an electronic act.

1. "Bullying" means any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or by means of an electronic act, and including one or more acts committed by a student or group of students which would be deemed hate violence or harassment, threats, or intimidation, which are directed toward one or more students that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:

i. Placing a reasonable student (defined as a student, including, but is not limited to, a student with exceptional needs, who exercises average care, skill, and judgment in conduct for a person of their age, or for a person of their age with exceptional needs) or students in fear of harm to that student's or those students' person or property.

ii. Causing a reasonable student to experience a substantially detrimental effect on their physical or mental health.

iii. Causing a reasonable student to experience substantial interference with their academic performance.

iv. Causing a reasonable student to experience substantial interference with their ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by the Charter School.

2. "Electronic Act" means the creation or transmission originated on or off the schoolsite, by means of an electronic device, including, but not limited to, a telephone, wireless telephone, or other wireless communication device, computer, or pager, of a communication, including, but not limited to, any of the following:

i. A message, text, sound, video, or image.

ii. A post on a social network Internet Web site including, but not limited to:

a. Posting to or creating a burn page. A "burn page" means an Internet Web site created for the purpose of having one or more of the effects as listed in subparagraph (1) above.

b. Creating a credible impersonation of another actual student for the purpose of having one or more of the effects listed in subparagraph (1) above. "Credible impersonation" means to knowingly and without consent impersonate a student for the purpose of bullying the student and such that another student would reasonably believe, or has reasonably believed, that the student was or is the student who was impersonated.

c. Creating a false profile for the purpose of having one or more of the effects listed in subparagraph (1) above. "False profile" means a profile of a fictitious student or a profile using the likeness or attributes of an actual student other than the student who created the false profile.

iii. An act of cyber sexual bullying.

i. For purposes of this policy, "cyber sexual bullying" means the dissemination of, or the solicitation or incitement to disseminate, a photograph or other visual recording by a student to another student or to school personnel by means of an electronic act that has or can be reasonably predicted to have one or more of the effects described in subparagraphs (i) to (iv), inclusive, of paragraph (1). A photograph or other visual recording, as described above, shall include the depiction of a nude, semi-nude, or sexually explicit photograph or other visual recording of a minor where the minor is identifiable from the photograph, visual recording, or other electronic act.

b. For purposes of this policy, "cyber sexual bullying" does not include a depiction, portrayal, or image that has any serious literary, artistic, educational, political, or scientific value or that involves athletic events or school-sanctioned activities.

3. Notwithstanding subparagraphs (1) and (2) above, an electronic act shall not constitute pervasive conduct solely on the basis that it has been transmitted on the Internet or is currently posted on the Internet.

u. A student who aids or abets, as defined in Penal Code Section 31, the infliction or attempted infliction of physical injury on another person may be subject to suspension, but not expulsion. However, if a juvenile court finds that the student committed a crime of physical violence as an aider or abettor, and the victim suffered great bodily injury or serious bodily injury, the student may be subject to suspension and/or expulsion for causing, attempting to cause, or threatening to cause physical injury to another person, and/or willfully using force or violence upon the person of another, except self-defense.

v. Possessed, sold, or otherwise furnished any knife or other dangerous object of no reasonable use to the student unless, in the case of possession of any object of this type, the student had obtained written permission to possess the item from a certificated school employee, with the Principal or designee's concurrence.
w. Assault or battery, as defined in Penal Code sections 240 and 242, upon any school employee.

2. Non-Discretionary Suspension and Expulsion Offenses: Students must be suspended and recommended for expulsion when it is determined the student:

a. Possessed, sold, or otherwise furnished any firearm, explosive, or other destructive device unless, in the case of possession of any device of this type, the student had obtained written permission to possess the item from a certificated school employee, with the Principal or designee's concurrence.
b. Brandished a knife at another person.

c. Unlawfully sold a controlled substance listed in Health and Safety Code Section 11053, et seq.

d. Committed or attempted to commit a sexual assault as defined in Penal Code Sections 261, 266c, 286, 287, 288, or 289 or former Section 288a of the Penal Code or committed a sexual battery as defined in Penal Code Section 243.4

If the Administrative Panel or Board of Directors determines that a student has brought a firearm or destructive device, as defined in Section 921 of Title 18 of the United States Code, on to campus or to have possessed a firearm or destructive device on campus, the student shall be expelled for one year, pursuant to the Federal Gun Free Schools Act of 1994. In such instances, the student shall be provided due process rights of notice and a hearing as required in this policy.

The Charter School applies the following definitions:

- The term "knife" means (A) any dirk, dagger, or other weapon with a fixed, sharpened blade fitted primarily for stabbing; (B) a weapon with a blade fitted primarily for stabbing; (C) a weapon with a blade longer than 3½ inches; (D) a folding knife with a blade that locks into place; or (E) a razor with an unguarded blade.

- The term "firearm" means (A) any weapon (including a starter gun) which will or is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive; (B) the frame or receiver of any such weapon; (C) any firearm muffler or firearm silencer; or (D) any destructive device. Such term does not include an antique firearm.
- The term "destructive device" means any explosive, incendiary, or poison gas, including but not limited to: (A) bomb; (B) grenade; (C) rocket having a propellant charge of more than four ounces; (D) missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than one-quarter ounce; (E) mine; or (F) device similar to any of the devices described in the preceding clauses.

**D. Suspension Procedure**

A student may be suspended by the Charter School Principal or designee. Suspensions shall be initiated according to the following procedures:

1. Conference

Suspension shall be preceded, if practicable, by a conference conducted by the Principal or designee with the student and the student's parent/guardian and, whenever practical, the teacher, supervisor or Charter School employee who referred the student to the Principal or designee. The conference may be held in-person, telephonically, or via other electronic means.

The conference may be omitted if the Principal or designee determines that an emergency situation exists. An "emergency situation" involves a clear and present danger to the lives, safety or health of students or Charter School personnel. If a student is suspended without this conference, the student and student's parent/guardian shall be notified of the student's

right to return to school for the purpose of a conference.

At the conference, the student shall be informed of the reason for the disciplinary action and the evidence against the student and shall be given the opportunity to recount their version of the incident and provide any evidence in their defense. This conference should be held within two (2) school days, unless the student waives this right or is physically unable to attend for any reason including, but not limited to, incarceration or hospitalization. Penalties shall not be imposed on a student for failure of the student's parent or guardian to attend a conference. Reinstatement of the suspended student shall not be contingent upon attendance by the student's parent/guardian, at the conference.

2. Notice to Parents/Guardians

At the time of the suspension, the Principal or designee shall make a reasonable effort to contact the parent/guardian in person, by email, or by telephone. Whenever a student is suspended, the parent/guardian shall be notified in writing of the suspension. This notice shall include:

a. the specific offense(s) committed by the student,
b. duration and dates of the suspension,
c. the date the student may return to school following the suspension, and
d. an explanation of the evidence that supports the charges.

If Charter School officials wish to ask the parent/guardian to confer regarding matters pertinent to the suspension, the notice may request that the parent/guardian respond to such requests without delay.

3. Suspension Time Limits/Recommendation for Expulsion

Suspensions, when not including a recommendation for expulsion, shall not exceed five (5) consecutive school days per suspension. Upon a recommendation of expulsion by the Principal or designee, the student and the student's parent/guardian will be invited to an in-person, telephonic, or virtual conference to determine if the suspension for the student should be extended pending an expulsion hearing. In such instances when the Charter School has determined a suspension period shall be extended, such extension shall be made only after a conference is held with the student and the student's parent/guardian, unless the student and the student's parent/guardian fail to attend the conference.

This determination will be made by the Principal or designee upon either of the following: 1) the student's presence will be disruptive to the education process; or 2) the student poses a threat or danger to others. Upon either determination, the student's suspension will be extended pending the results of an expulsion hearing.

4. Homework Assignments During Suspension

In accordance with Education Code Section 47606.2(a), upon the request of a parent, a legal guardian or other person holding the right to make education decisions for the student, or the affected student, a teacher shall provide to a student in any of grades 1 to 12, inclusive, who has been suspended from school for two (2) or more school days, the homework that the student would otherwise have been assigned.

In accordance with Education Code Section 47606.2(b), if a homework assignment that is requested pursuant to Section 47606.2(a) and turned into the teacher by the student either upon the student's return to school from suspension or within the timeframe originally prescribed by the teacher, whichever is later, is not graded before the end of the academic term, that assignment shall not be included in the calculation of the student's overall grade in the class.

**E. Notice to Teachers**

The Charter School shall notify teachers of each student who has engaged in or is reasonably suspected to have engaged in any of the acts listed in Education Code Section 49079 and the corresponding enumerated offenses set forth above.

**F. Involuntary Removal for Unexcused Absences**

As charter schools are schools of choice and as a charter school student who fails to attend school is potentially depriving another student of their opportunity to enroll, a student may be involuntarily removed as described within the Charter School's Board adopted Classroom Based Attendance Policy after notice and an opportunity for a parent/guardian or other educational rights holder to request a hearing prior to any involuntary removal.