



# NETWORK-WIDE FAMILY POLICIES

*Our mission is to provide students with the academic skills and critical-thinking abilities they need to  
succeed in a college-preparatory high school.*



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## Introduction

The following sections outline network-wide policies and practices upheld at each of the schools within the Explore Schools network. These include:

- Details about the academic program and what families can expect in terms of promotional criteria, homework, support services, and other policies related to classes.
- Resources and protocols for family communication
- The Formal Complaint Policy
- Behavioral expectations and details on how the network addresses interventions and consequences, including expectations outside of the classroom
- Resources for families around student health and safety
- Technology and fair use policies with regard to the internet
- Information on attendance practices and transportation options
- Additional policies not covered by the above mentioned categories

While these are the general policies for the network, there may be changes and alterations for a given year to address extenuating circumstances, such as the need to operate a fully remote or hybrid academic program.

In addition to network-wide policies and protocols, this document also includes the vision and belief statements that guide the network's planning and decision making.

Each school also maintains a Family Student Handbook with school specific policies and protocols. It is strongly recommended that families keep a copy of their school specific handbook as well, and refer to it for policies and procedures not addressed in the following pages.

If you would like more information about anything in this document, please reach out to our Director of Special Projects, Jeremy Thomas, at [jstthomas@explorenetwork.org](mailto:jstthomas@explorenetwork.org).

# Academics

The academic program at Explore Schools is designed to ensure that all students achieve success in grades K-8 and have the academic skills and critical thinking abilities to succeed in a college-preparatory high school.

To meet that goal, students engage in the study of literacy, mathematics, social studies, science, the arts, and physical movement during each of four academic terms. Instruction in all areas is designed to engage students in meaningful rigorous material that pushes students to think critically and gain essential skills as dictated by the New York State Next Generation Learning Standards, <http://www.nysed.gov/curriculum-instruction>. To meet the needs of all students, teachers plan for instruction using internal and external assessments.

Mathematics instruction includes various types of lessons and tasks to build and reinforce our students' critical thinking skills, problem solving abilities, and fluency in mathematical facts and operations. Components of this program include a core math lesson (primarily discourse-based) that builds on prior knowledge, a spiraled review and/or math routines component to reinforce prior learning and promote fact fluency, and a reteach/support component to deepen and extend students' understanding of mathematical content. In grades K - 4, students also have a math stories lesson that promotes representing problems for deepening understanding and engaging in discussion to promote flexible thinking, problem solving, and critical thinking.

Literacy instruction includes many facets to ensure that students are able to critically think about text and communicate their ideas to the world orally and in writing. In grades K-2, reading instruction includes basic reading skills such as phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and word study (sight words, vocabulary, etc.) to create fluent, accurate readers. Students learn the content and critical-thinking skills needed to deeply comprehend text through theme-based units that include reading lessons, interactive read-aloud, whole class and small group discussion, small group reading instruction, and independent reading.

In grades 3-8, students build their knowledge and capacity to read through thinking, talking and writing about complex texts. Students build knowledge about the world by reading different text types, including but not limited to poems, novels, nonfiction books, academic papers, and newspaper articles. They engage in structured collaborative discussion in pairs, small groups, and as a whole group about the topics and texts they are reading.

Our K-8 grade students also engage in a Close Reading block, where learn to make meaning of grade-level, authentic texts. Students identify the precise central idea of the text so that they can apply what they learned about the process of identifying to central idea to any text they encounter. Students are empowered to understand how authors construct meaning through their craft and structure choices.

## Promotional Criteria

Students may be retained in their current grade level for any of the following reasons:

- Absent more than 15 times in the school year
- Tardy/Early Pick-Up more than 30 times in the school year
- Reading below grade level, as indicated by internal assessments

- Did not earn a “3” or “4” on the state exams in Math and ELA.
- Low academic performance, as indicated by internal assessments and classwork
- Qualifies as an “Excellent” or “Good” retention candidate, as indicated by a score of 1-29 on the “Lights Retention Scale”
- For students with disabilities: did not demonstrate adequate growth, as indicated by the student’s IEP goals and promotional criteria

The school reserves the right to make promotional decisions or change a student’s class at any time. Families will be notified in Term 3 if a student’s promotion is in doubt.

## Student Support Services

We at Explore Schools believe that all scholars can achieve. In service of this belief, each of Explore Schools’ campuses has a team of teachers who specialize in both academic and socio-emotional support for diverse learners. When scholars are provided with the right support (or intervention) at the right time, they excel. Therefore, support services available at each of our campuses include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Small group instruction for Literacy and Math
- At Risk Counseling
- Mandated Counseling\*
- Social Emotional Learning support
- Special Education Teacher Support Services\*
- Integrated Co-Teaching Classrooms\*
- 12:1:1 Classrooms\*
- Enrichment opportunities
- Tutoring
- Speech Therapy\*
- Occupational Therapy\*
- Para-professional support\*
- Physical Therapy\*
- Multilingual Learner Instruction

Teacher grade teams meet weekly to discuss and review student progress toward academic and socio-emotional measures. If a student is consistently not meeting these measures, school teams will provide support services to help ensure the student’s success in school. Families will be notified by letter whenever a student begins receiving support service(s), or an intervention. Throughout the duration of these support services, families are also updated regarding student progress. Once a student meets his/her goal(s), the school team will slowly remove the support service(s) to build student independence, and families are notified.

\*These support services are special education services, which are available through a referral to the Committee on Special Education and the development of an individual education plan.

## K-8 Grading Policy

Our grading policy reflects our values around sharing accurate and objective feedback with students and their families about what they know and demonstrate. It is designed so that students’ overall grades are

not disproportionately affected by one assessment grade or one day. Specific policies vary by grade band and by subject, but students will receive a final course average for each class.

## Homework (K-8)

Homework is assigned regularly in all core subjects: Math, ELA, Social Studies and Science.

Homework will be checked on a regular basis for completion and accuracy. The time expectation for homework is different for each grade level; please speak to your child's teacher about the specific time requirements for your grade.

- All homework is to be turned in to the classroom teacher or updated electronically at the beginning of the period.
- If a student has a question about a homework assignment, they should call or email their teacher. Students should also use their classmates as a resource in answering general questions, but students are responsible for completing their own work.

## Textbooks

Students may be assigned textbooks/novels. Students are responsible for turning in textbooks and novels in excellent condition. If a textbook or novel is lost or damaged, students may be held responsible for the cost of the book. Textbooks and novels range in price from \$6 to \$85. Students may not receive their final report card until they have returned all their textbooks or paid any outstanding fees.

## Preparation for High School Admission

Our mission is to provide our students with the skills and abilities they need to succeed in a college-preparatory high school. The transition to high school from Explore Schools is a big one, and students and families need to be preparing for this transition several years in advance. During the year, there will be several meetings for the families of 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th graders to discuss high school admission. Attendance at some of these meetings is mandatory for families of each student. Please read school communication for specific information pertaining to meetings you are required to attend.

## Family/School Communication

Family engagement is important to the success of every student. Together, we will achieve our mission and every student will be on a path to a college preparatory high school. To promote this involvement, Explore Schools employs the following systems and procedures to ensure there is ongoing and regular communication between school and home. Below is the main office phone number for each of our schools.

School	Address	Main Office Phone Number
Explore Lower & Upper Charter School	655 Parkside Ave. Brooklyn, NY 11226	(718) 703-4484
Empower Lower & Upper Charter School	188 Rochester Ave. Brooklyn, NY 11213	(718) 771-2090
Excel Lower Charter School	1077 Remsen Ave. Brooklyn, NY 11236	(718) 303-3245
Excel Upper Charter School	956 East 82 <sup>nd</sup> Street Brooklyn, NY 11236	(718) 272-1827
Exceed Lower Charter School	443 St. Marks Ave. Brooklyn, NY 11238	(718) 989-6702
Exceed Upper Charter School	46 McKeever Place Brooklyn, NY 11225	(347) 689-0200

## Staff Communication

All staff members have cell phones and email accounts to discuss instructional and non-instructional content. Teachers may not be accessible to communicate during hours of instruction, but all teachers will check their cell phone and email accounts and respond within one business day. If you have questions or concerns, are inquiring about daily transportation, or would like to leave a message for your child, please call the main office directly.

## Family Conferences

Families and teachers have the opportunity to discuss each student's progress two times per year. It is mandatory for families to attend each of the family-teacher conferences. Each Fall and Spring, please look out for communication from your child's teacher about scheduling your conference.

## Report Cards

Report cards will be issued at the end of each term, and will be either mailed home or shared electronically. Please check in with your school's leadership team for more details about report card timing and policies.

## Classroom Visits

We have an "open-door" policy - families are encouraged to visit their child's classroom. Please make arrangements with the main office and the classroom teacher at least 24 hours prior to your visit to ensure that classroom instruction will not be interrupted and to avoid any scheduling conflicts. Be sure to check in at the main office when arriving at school.

## Formal Complaint Policy

A formal complaint is a complaint that concerns an alleged violation of law and/or charter. An individual who (or group that) has a formal complaint against a school policy or a member of the school community may follow the informal complaint procedures set forth in each school's individual handbook. Alternatively, the individual or group may file a formal complaint in writing to the Explore Schools Executive Director, Carrie Mauer.

The Executive Director will forward the complaint to the Chair of the School's Board of Trustees who shall then appoint a designee(s) from ESI who is not directly involved to review the complaint. After reviewing the complaint, the designee(s) will respond in writing to the complainant within 45 days. At this time, the Chair of the Board of Trustees or the Chair's designee(s) shall provide the complainant with written notice of the opportunity to appeal the Board's decision to the Charter Schools Institute, and a copy of the Charter Schools Institute's grievance guidelines. Carrie Mauer, the Executive Director, can be reached in the following ways:

**E-mail:** [cmauer@explorenetwork.org](mailto:cmauer@explorenetwork.org)

Mailing address:

**Carrie Mauer, Executive Director**

**Explore Schools Inc.**

**20 Jay Street, Suite 211**

**Brooklyn, NY 11201**

If, after receiving the written response from the Chair of the Board of Trustees and/or the Chair's designee, the individual or group determines that the Board has not adequately addressed their complaint, the complainant may present the complaint to the Charter Schools Institute, acting on behalf of the Board of Trustees of the State University of New York, which shall investigate and respond. If, after presentation of the complaint to the Charter Schools Institute, the individual or group determines that the Charter Schools Institute has not adequately addressed the complaint, the complainant may present the case to the State Education Department, acting on behalf of the Board of Regents, which shall investigate and respond. The Charter Schools Institute and the State Education Department each has the power and the duty to take remedial action to resolve the complaint, as appropriate. The Charter Schools Institute at the State University of New York can be contacted in the following ways:

**E-mail:** [charters@suny.edu](mailto:charters@suny.edu)

Mailing Address:

**Charter Schools Institute**

**State University of New York 41**

**State Street, Suite 700 Albany,**

**New York 12207**

Any individual or group that elects to follow the informal complaint procedures to resolve a formal complaint shall be permitted at any time to stop the informal complaint procedures and initiate the formal complaint procedures.

If an individual or group voices a complaint at a public meeting of the School's Board of Trustees or to individual trustees, trustees shall not respond to the substance of the complaint, but instead shall thank the individual or group for their time and direct them to the relevant complaint procedures.

# Behavior Expectations

## Behavioral Expectations Outside of the Classroom (Common Spaces, Field Trips, Transportation)

Both in and out of the classroom, students are expected to follow Explore Schools' behavioral expectations. This expectation extends to any form of transportation to and from school, as well as interactions through text, phone, or social media. Students are expected to maintain safety, for themselves and others, and respect the general learning environment. On field trips, students must uphold Explore Schools' behavioral expectations and follow directions of all chaperones to ensure their safety and the safety of others.

## Bullying and Harassment

All Explore Schools Charter Schools comply with the Dignity for All Students Act. The Dignity for All Students Act prohibits acts of harassment and bullying, including cyberbullying, and/or discrimination, by employees or students on school property or at a school function, including but not limited to such conduct based on a student's actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender (defined to include gender identity or expression), or sex (Education Law §12[1]). Cyberbullying is defined as harassment or bullying which takes place through any form of electronic communication (Education Law §11[8]). All Explore Schools Charter Schools reserve the right to investigate, and respond to, matters that fall into the categories of harassment, bullying, cyberbullying, and/or discrimination in or outside of school.

## Behavior Intervention Procedures

In the event that students are not meeting Explore Schools' behavioral expectations, families will be notified during each step of any behavior intervention process. In an effort to support and strengthen students' socio-emotional growth, a continuum of interventions is considered and implemented by the student's grade-team teachers. If a student does not respond to these interventions and continues to demonstrate behavior(s) that interferes with the learning process, the teacher may issue a consequence and the behavior will be tracked using an infraction slip and/or Deans List referral. Serious or repeated infractions will result in a mandatory family meeting aimed to support the student through strategic collaboration.

## Repeated Infraction Slips

These may result in a family conference and/or intervention plan, and one, or more, of the below interventions and/or consequences may be implemented.

## Intervention and Consequences

When possible, Explore Schools will use a variety of interventions and consequences before utilizing in-school or out-of-school suspension. Some examples of those interventions and consequences are listed in the table below. In more serious instances, or when previous interventions and consequences have not resulted in adequate progress, students may be suspended, as outlined later in this section.

Interventions	Consequences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behavior plan</li> <li>• Meeting with family, teacher(s) and administrator</li> <li>• Meeting with the school counselor and /or behavior counselor</li> <li>• Buddy teacher</li> <li>• Buddy student</li> <li>• Seat change</li> <li>• Special job/role</li> <li>• Reverse mentoring</li> <li>• Peer mediation</li> <li>• Individual incentive plan</li> <li>• Child Study Team /Committee on Special Education</li> <li>• Change in schedule/program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phone call home</li> <li>• Time out/Time away from class</li> <li>• Loss of field trips</li> <li>• Written apology</li> <li>• Structured recess</li> <li>• Seat change</li> <li>• School project</li> <li>• Community service</li> <li>• Lunch/recess detention</li> <li>• After school reflection (upper school)</li> <li>• In-school suspension</li> </ul>

## Suspension

The school Leadership and Culture Teams will make every effort to work proactively with families to prevent an out-of-school suspension. However, your child may be suspended at any time for the following behaviors: assault; verbal or physical abuse; vandalism; theft; false bomb threat or false emergency alarm; use of drugs, alcohol, or tobacco; gambling; leaving campus without permission; conduct which disrupts school or classroom activity or endangers the health, safety, or welfare of others; repeated violation of minor behavioral infractions; disrespect towards faculty; threatening or harassing students or staff; cheating; profane language; and/or any act which school officials reasonably conclude warrants a suspension. Behaviors, interventions, and consequences are outlined in more detail in the Behavior Matrix below.

If a student is suspended, he/she is entitled to 2 hours of alternative instruction each day. The otherwise hours of instruction will be stated on the suspension letter. During or immediately following the suspension, a post-suspension meeting with the family is mandatory and is required before the student is allowed to return to class.

## Expulsion

The following behaviors may result in a recommendation by the school officials for immediate student expulsion: selling, using, or possessing fireworks or contraband; selling or transferring alcohol, drugs, or other controlled substances or drug paraphernalia; possession of a weapon; assault; commission of a felony; and/or any act which school officials reasonably conclude warrants an expulsion. Students who

have been suspended repeatedly will be provided with intervention plans to support their improvement. Failure to improve behavior may result in a recommendation for expulsion.

## Due Process Procedures

When a student engages in behavior punishable by expulsion or a long-term suspension of more than 10 days, they are informed of their misconduct and asked to leave the class or activity in which they are participating immediately. They report to the office and share their version of the events; their families are contacted and asked to pick the child up from school. The Principal, or a member of the Culture Team, immediately notifies the student's family in writing. The notice will set a time and place for an impartial disciplinary hearing with the Hearing Officer of Explore Schools and shall inform families of their right to be accompanied by counsel or an individual of their choice.

A letter outlining the incident and a time for the hearing will be sent to the families who will also be notified over the phone. At the meeting, copies of the following will be distributed to the family:

- The school's Family-Student Handbook- this includes the school's Behavior Matrix and the school's Due Process Procedures
- Proof that parent/guardian received the Family Scholar Handbook (from the students' file in the main office)
- "Disciplinary Letter to Committee"
- "Description of Behaviors and Interventions"

Students are expelled and long-term suspensions are only upheld after being found guilty at a formal expulsion hearing with the Hearing Officer of Explore Schools. The Hearing Officer will issue a decision at the hearing. Any member of ESI or a school leader from a network school other than the host school can serve as a hearing officer as long as they have been trained on how to do so. Families may appeal the decision to the full Board by writing to the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees. The parent or guardian is permitted to speak for 5 minutes at the next regularly scheduled Board meeting, followed by questions from members of the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees will go into executive session and either uphold or overturn the decision of the Disciplinary Committee. If dissatisfied with the result, the parent or guardian may appeal the decision to the SUNY Charter Schools Institute, then to the New York Board of Regents. Students who have been expelled from any school in the Explore Schools network are not eligible for re-enrollment at Explore Schools network school, except in special circumstances, determined at the discretion of the school's administration.

Administration may use one, or a combination, of the following criteria to determine if a student is eligible for re-enrollment:

- the nature of the expellable offense;
- the student's age and grade at the time of the offense;
- the student's academic standing at the school;
- the student's over-all behavior
- The length of time the student has spent enrolled at another school

Additionally, prior to making a decision about the student's eligibility to return to the school the leadership team, in consultation with network leadership, must convene a meeting with the student and his/her family to assess the following:

- The degree to which the student has reflected on his/her behavior
- The degree to which the student expresses remorse for his/her actions
- The degree to which the student has made progress with his/her behavior
- Any remediation sought out by the family

## Behavior Matrix

At our schools, certain behaviors warrant an immediate response by administration. When these behaviors are demonstrated, we refer to the Behavior Matrix below.

Behavior Matrix		
Infractions	Teacher Moves, Interventions, Restorations, and Support	Consequences
<p><b>Level 1 -- Minor Infractions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Calling out</li> <li>• Electronic devices: possession of cell phone, or non- instructional devices during school hours</li> <li>• Food and beverages (consuming at times other than school meals), chewing gum at any time</li> <li>• Late to Class</li> <li>• Inappropriate voice level</li> <li>• Running in the hall, skipping stairs, and other playfully careless behavior</li> <li>• Uniform Violation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student is reminded of appropriate behavior and task at hand</li> <li>• Student is reminded of what he/she is like at his/her best and of past good behavior</li> <li>• Student is reminded of past poor decisions and provided with productive alternatives/choices that should be made</li> <li>• Student is given a non-verbal warning</li> <li>• Student is given a verbal warning</li> <li>• Call home to parent/guardian</li> <li>• Staff places note in student's folder informing parent/guardian of behavior</li> <li>• Verbal apology to class</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Color change, clip move, or loss of point (if applicable)</li> <li>• In-class "time away"</li> <li>• Loss of privileges</li> </ul>

Infractions	Teacher Moves, Interventions, Restorations, and Support	Consequences
<p><b>Level 2 -- Escalating Infractions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Committing a Level 1 Infraction after intervention</li> <li>• Disrespect of peers (teasing, name calling, being rude, etc.)</li> <li>• Disrespecting a staff member (being rude, rolling eyes, etc.)</li> <li>• Disruptive behavior</li> <li>• Electronic devices: use of cell phone or non-instructional devices during school hours</li> <li>• Inappropriate/threatening gestures</li> <li>• Leaving classroom without permission, running away from school personnel, misuse of hall pass, being in a location without permission</li> <li>• Littering</li> <li>• Unwanted or aggressive physical contact with peer</li> <li>• (pushing, play-fighting)</li> <li>• Weapon: playing with an object as if it is a weapon</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student is reminded of appropriate behavior and task at hand</li> <li>• Student is given a verbal warning</li> <li>• Student-Teacher-Family conference</li> <li>• Student-Family-Administrator Conference</li> <li>• Verbal or written apology to community</li> <li>• Student completes written reflection</li> <li>• Student is assigned a student or staff "buddy"/mentor</li> <li>• Student is given de-escalating coping mechanisms (ex: asking teacher for a break, taking 10 deep breaths)</li> <li>• Peer-to-peer meeting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Color change, clip move, or loss of point (if applicable)</li> <li>• In-class "time away"</li> <li>• Electronic device confiscated</li> <li>• Out-of-classroom "time away" -- referral to Dean's Office</li> <li>• In-school disciplinary action (which includes, but is not limited to, exclusion from recess, communal lunch, enrichment activities, sports, school events, trips, or activities)</li> <li>• After-school detention</li> <li>• In-school suspension</li> </ul>

Infractions	Teacher Moves, Interventions, Restorations, and Support	Consequences
<p><b>Level 3 -- Serious Infractions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Committing a Level 2 Infraction after intervention</li> <li>• Aggressive physical contact with school personnel</li> <li>• Defiance of school authority</li> <li>• Dishonesty (plagiarism, copying another student's work, forgery, lying etc.)</li> <li>• Disrespect of peers using profane language or gestures</li> <li>• Disrespect of staff using profane language or gestures</li> <li>• Fighting with peer</li> <li>• Fire alarm, tampering with apparatus</li> <li>• Gambling</li> <li>• Fire alarm, tampering with apparatus</li> <li>• Inappropriate touching</li> <li>• Leaving school grounds without permission</li> <li>• Misuse of computer resources or electronic devices (hacking, violation of internet policies, violating copyright law, damaging equipment, etc.)</li> <li>• Posting or distributing inappropriate materials (which includes, but is not limited to, unauthorized materials, defamatory or libelous materials, or threatening materials)</li> <li>• Smoking</li> <li>• Theft, or knowingly possessing property belonging to another person without permission</li> <li>• Using profane, obscene, lewd, abusive, or discriminatory language or gestures in any context (which includes, but is not limited to, slurs based upon race, ethnicity, color, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or disability)</li> <li>• Vandalism/graffiti</li> <li>• Weapon: drawing a picture of a weapon aimed at someone</li> <li>• Weapon: falsely claiming to possess a weapon</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assignments/projects which require student to reflect on behavior in writing or orally (depending on grade)</li> <li>• Call home to family</li> <li>• Student-Family-Administrator Conference</li> <li>• Verbal or written apology to community</li> <li>• Student is assigned a student or staff "buddy"/mentor</li> <li>• Recommendation for external counseling</li> <li>• Peer-to-peer meeting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Electronic device confiscated</li> <li>• Out-of-classroom "time away" -- referral to Dean's Office</li> <li>• Loss of classroom/school privileges</li> <li>• In-school disciplinary action (which includes, but is not limited to, exclusion from recess, communal lunch, enrichment activities, sports, school events, trips, or activities)</li> <li>• After-school detention</li> <li>• In-school suspension</li> <li>• Out-of-school suspension</li> <li>• Referral to law enforcement, depending upon nature of infraction and at the discretion of school personnel</li> </ul>

Infractions	Teacher Moves, Interventions, Restorations, and Support	Consequences
<p><b>Level 4 -- Egregious Infractions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Committing a Level 3 Infraction after intervention</li> <li>• Arson</li> <li>• Assault and battery of school personnel</li> <li>• Bomb threat</li> <li>• Drugs or alcohol: selling, using, possession</li> <li>• Fighting, or assault and battery, resulting in, or with the intention of causing, serious injury to a peer</li> <li>• Sexual assault or harassment</li> <li>• Threat of physical violence (empty or real), harassment, intimidation, or extreme bullying behavior</li> <li>• Weapon/Weapon-Like Object: possession or use of</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommendation for external counseling</li> <li>• Assignments/projects which require student to reflect on behavior in writing or orally (depending on grade)</li> <li>• Student-Family-Administrator Conference</li> <li>• Verbal or written apology to community</li> <li>• Disciplinary Committee Hearing with school officials and network representatives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of classroom/school privileges</li> <li>• In-school disciplinary action (which includes, but is not limited to, exclusion from recess, communal lunch, enrichment activities, sports, school events, trips, or activities)</li> <li>• After-school detention</li> <li>• In-school suspension</li> <li>• Out-of-school suspension</li> <li>• Expulsion</li> <li>• Referral to law enforcement, depending upon nature of infraction and at the discretion of school personnel</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Before moving to the "next level" for repeated infractions, staff should implement multiple interventions and supports listed. For example, a repeated Level 2 infraction should not be elevated to a Level 3 infraction unless staff have attempted to address the behavior with multiple interventions and supports.</li> <li>• Consequences are not mutually exclusive of each other, and staff may implement multiple consequences when appropriate. For example, certain infractions may warrant an out-of-school suspension and a loss of classroom privileges upon the student's return to school.</li> <li>• Serious misconduct outside of the school is considered a school disciplinary offense when evidence exists that the student's behavior or the student's continued presence at the school poses a significant detrimental impact on the learning environment and/or would create a risk of substantial disruption to the work of the school.</li> <li>• Schools reserve the right to alter consequences at their discretion. Any of the offenses listed in the matrix may result in</li> <li>• immediate expulsion depending on the severity of the action.</li> </ul>		

## Discipline Policy for Students with Disabilities

At our schools, we ensure that when scholars with IEPs, students in the evaluation process/students who “deemed to know” , and students with 504 Plans receive consequences for behavior that they receive the proper due process they are entitled to. The School recognizes that it may be necessary to suspend, remove, or otherwise discipline scholars with disabilities to address disruptive or problem behavior. The School also recognizes that scholars with disabilities are entitled to certain procedural protections throughout the discipline process. The School is committed to ensuring that the procedures followed for suspending, removing or otherwise disciplining scholars with disabilities are consistent with the procedural safeguards required by applicable laws and regulations. In the event that a scholar with a disability is suspended for more than 10 school days, the family is entitled to a Manifestation Determination Review (“MDR”). The purpose of the MDR is to determine whether or not the student’s behavior is a result of the student’s disability or a failure to implement the IEP or 504 plan. If behaviors are a function of the student’s disability, we will adjust our consequences accordingly to ensure compliance with federal and state due process regulations. If behaviors are deemed **not** to be a function of the student’s disability, nor failure to implement the IEP, then the recommended consequence will go into effect. For scholars with IEPs and students in or entering the evaluation process the MDR will be facilitated by the Committee on Special Education (CSE). For scholars with 504 Plans the MDR will be facilitated by the school. You may contact the Special Populations Leader for further details.

# Student Safety and Health

## Confidentiality Policy

Conversations between teachers, administration, and families about students, their specific educational concerns, or their past records are confidential. Information should not be shared with staff members or school community members that are not directly involved with the student. If an individual believes that this confidentiality has been violated, the individual should bring their concern to the attention of the Director of Operations. The Director of Operations will review the situation and determine if the policy has been violated. If the Director of Operations determines that an individual has violated the confidentiality policy, he or she will be subject to disciplinary action.

## Mandated Reporting

Members of the Explore Schools staff are known as “Mandated Reporters”, in compliance with state law. If a member of the staff suspects that a child is being abused or neglected, they are legally obligated to report their suspicion to the Administration for Children’s Services (ACS). Sign of abuse or neglect may include but are not limited to; patterns of lateness to school and absence from school, late pick-up from school or the school bus; consistently unkempt or dirty; signs of physical abuse.

## Safety

Any accident involving a student will be documented. The nurse or school staff member will contact the family; if the family cannot be reached, the nurse or school staff member will send a report home with the student. The family can also request to obtain a report by asking a member of the school’s operations team.

## Suicide Threat

If a student threatens their own life or the life of someone else, this will be brought immediately to the attention of the School Social Worker or Counselor. The Social Worker or Counselor will conduct a risk assessment and if the School Social Worker or Counselor feels that the child is in imminent danger, the family will be contacted, and a psychological evaluation will be required before the child can return to school. During extreme or extenuating circumstances, the school reserves the right to contact EMS in order to protect the safety and well-being of the student. This may result in EMS, along with a school staff member, transporting the student to a nearby hospital for further evaluation. When a student exhibits potentially suicidal behavior and the family refuses to cooperate with the school or to take alternative preventive measures, the School Social Worker must report this information immediately to the Administration for Children’s Services.

## Medical and Immunization Information

All students must be immunized, in compliance with New York State law, unless they receive an exemption for the Department of Health or the Department of Education’s Health Office. Students

who do not have the proper immunizations will be denied access to the school until the immunizations are administered.

Families are asked to alert their child's teacher and indicate on their child's Emergency Contact Card with information about any allergies from which their children suffer.

Please note that in emergency medical circumstances wherein the school-based nurse is unable to resolve a situation, the student will be sent to the Hospital Emergency Room for treatment. Students sent to the Hospital will be accompanied by an Explore Schools' staff member if a family member is not available to accompany the child.

The school nurse provided by Department of Health and Mental Hygiene Members is authorized to administer prescribed medication only if the family submits signed documentation from the doctor. Over-the-counter medication **CANNOT** be administered in the school.

## Student Elevator Use

If the building has a functioning elevator, students are not permitted to use the elevator unless they have a health condition documented by a doctor. Students who have permission to use the elevator must be escorted by a staff member.

## Student Meals

Explore Schools works with the Office of School Food through the New York City Department of Education to provide breakfast and lunch to students each day. Although breakfast and lunch are provided to all students free of charge, families will be required to complete an Income Inquiry form at the beginning of each school year. Refer to the School Foods website for more details about the program. Families can complete this form digitally at <https://www.applyforlunch.com/>. These forms are used to determine how much federal funding our school gets to provide additional services to students, so it is really important that you complete it as soon as possible.

If you prefer not to complete the Income Inquiry Form online, we will be sending a paper version home with your child in September. It is important that when you receive the lunch application you complete it as soon as possible.

Your privacy is important to us. All information is kept confidential. Federal regulations do not allow the Department of Education to share your information with any other agency. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact School Food at (877) 363-6325.

If your student has any food allergies, please submit signed documentation from your family doctor to the main office. Accommodations for any food allergies will not be made without documentation from your family doctor. Students may also bring their own food for breakfast, lunch, or snack. While we will have a milk chest and food warmer for school provided meals, we will not have a microwave or refrigerator available for student use for meals brought from home. Students should not bring meals that need to be heated or refrigerated. Please note that if your child requests a school lunch, they will be provided one, regardless of any other food they may have eaten or brought from home.

## Sexual Abuse and Misconduct Prevention Policy

Explore Charter Schools of Brooklyn and Explore Schools, Inc (Explore Schools) prohibits and does not tolerate sexual abuse or misconduct in the workplace or during any organization-related activity. Explore Schools provides procedures for employees, volunteers, board members or any other victims of sexual abuse or misconduct to report such acts. Those reasonably suspected or believed to have committed sexual abuse or misconduct will be appropriately disciplined, up to and including termination of employment or membership, as well as criminally prosecuted. No employee, volunteer, board member or other person, regardless of his or her title or position has the authority to commit or allow sexual abuse or misconduct.

### Definitions and Examples

The following definitions or examples of sexual abuse, misconduct or harassment, may apply to any or all of the following persons – employees, volunteers, or other third-parties.

Sexual abuse or misconduct may include, but is not limited to:

- Child sexual abuse – any sexual activity, involvement or attempt of sexual contact with a person who is a minor (under 18 years old) where consent is not or cannot be given.
- Sexual activity with another who is legally incompetent or otherwise unable to give consent.
- Physical assaults or violence, such as rape, sexual battery, abuse, molestation or any attempt to commit such acts.
- Unwanted and intentional physical conduct that is sexual in nature, such as touching, pinching, patting, brushing, massaging someone’s neck or shoulders and/or pulling against another’s body or clothes.
- Material such as pornographic or sexually explicit images, posters, calendars or objects.
- Unwelcome and inappropriate sexual activities, advances, comments, innuendoes, bullying, jokes, gestures, electronic communications or messages (e.g. email, text, social media, voicemail), exploitation, exposure, leering, stalking or invasion of sexual privacy.
- A sexually hostile environment characterized as comments or conduct that unreasonably interferes with one’s work performance or ability to do the job or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.
- Direct or implied threats that submission to sexual advances will be a condition of employment or affiliation with the organization.

### Reporting Procedure

Immediately report suspected sexual abuse or misconduct to your School Leadership Team, Carrie Mauer (Executive Director), Christina Froeb (Superintendent), Rachel Modica-Russell (Managing Director of Talent), or Tiffany N. Williams (Sr. Director of Human Resources). It is not required to directly confront the person who is the source of the report, question, or complaint before notifying any of the individuals listed. Explore Schools will take every reasonable measure to ensure that those named in complaint of misconduct or are too closely associated with those involved in the complaint, will not be part of the investigative team.

### Anti-retaliation and False Allegations

Explore Schools prohibits retaliation made against any employee, volunteer, board member or other person who lodges a good faith complaint of sexual abuse or misconduct or who participates in any related investigation. Making knowingly false or malicious accusations of sexual abuse or misconduct can have serious consequences for those who are wrongly accused. Explore Schools prohibits making false or malicious sexual misconduct allegations, as well as deliberately providing false information during an

investigation. Anyone who violates this rule is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or membership and criminal prosecution.

### **Investigation and Follow-up**

Explore Schools will take all allegations of sexual abuse or misconduct seriously and will promptly, thoroughly and equitably investigate whether misconduct has taken place. The organization may utilize an outside third-party to conduct an investigation of misconduct. Explore Schools will cooperate fully with any investigation conducted by law enforcement or other regulatory/protective services agencies. Explore Schools will make every reasonable effort to keep the matters involved in the allegation as confidential as possible while still allowing for a prompt and thorough investigation.

### **Reporting to Law Enforcement or Appropriate Child or Adult Protective Services**

Explore Schools is committed to following the state and federal legal requirements for reporting allegations or incidents of sexual abuse or misconduct to appropriate law enforcement and child or adult protective services organizations. It is the policy of Explore Schools not to attempt to investigate or assess the validity or credibility of an allegation of sexual or physical abuse as a condition before reporting the allegation to proper law enforcement authorities or protective services organizations.

### **Legal Protections And External Remedies**

Sexual harassment is not only prohibited by Explore Schools but is also prohibited by state, federal, and, where applicable, local law. Aside from the internal process at Explore Schools, students/families may also choose to pursue legal remedies with the following governmental entities. While a private attorney is not required to file a complaint with a governmental agency, you may seek the legal advice of an attorney.

A complaint alleging violation of the Human Rights Law may be filed either with the Division of Human Rights (DHR) or in New York State Supreme Court. Complaints with DHR may be filed any time within one year of the harassment. If an individual did not file at DHR, they can sue directly in state court under the HRL, within three years of the alleged sexual harassment. An individual may not file with DHR if they have already filed a HRL complaint in state court. Complaining internally to Explore Schools does not extend your time to file with DHR or in court. The one year or three years is counted from date of the most recent incident of harassment. You do not need an attorney to file a complaint with DHR, and there is no cost to file with DHR. DHR will investigate your complaint and determine whether there is probable cause to believe that sexual harassment has occurred. Probable cause cases are forwarded to a public hearing before an administrative law judge. If sexual harassment is found after a hearing, DHR has the power to award relief, which varies but may include requiring your employer to take action to stop the harassment, or redress the damage caused, including paying of monetary damages, attorney's fees and civil fines.

DHR's main office contact information is: NYS Division of Human Rights, One Fordham Plaza, Fourth Floor, Bronx, New York 10458. You may call (718) 741-8400 or visit: [www.dhr.ny.gov](http://www.dhr.ny.gov).

Contact DHR at (888) 392-3644 or visit [dhr.ny.gov/complaint](http://dhr.ny.gov/complaint) for more information about filing a complaint. The website has a complaint form that can be downloaded, filled out, notarized and mailed to DHR. The website also contains contact information for DHR's regional offices across New York State.

### **Employee and Worker Screening and Selection**

As part of its sexual abuse and misconduct prevention program, Explore Schools is committed to maintaining a diligent screening program for prospective and existing employees, volunteers and others

that may have interaction with those employed by, associating with or serviced by Explore Schools. The organization may utilize a variety of methods of screening and selection, including but not limited to applications, personal interviews, criminal background checks and personal and professional references.

### **Supervision of Youth**

To provide a safe environment for minors, Explore Schools strives that a minimum of two adult workers supervise or be in attendance with minors during organization-related activities. The purpose is to avoid one-on-one interactions between adults and minors that are not easily observable by others. If individual meetings with a minor must be held in an office, keep the door open. Only conduct closed door meetings when another adult is put on notice of the meeting and the door remains unlocked.

# Technology and Internet Acceptable Use Policies

## Technology Device-Use Policy

**Note:** The term “computer” refers to Chromebooks, tablets, iPads or other devices distributed to students for instructional purposes.

Explore Charter Schools of Brooklyn may provide students with:

- Computers (including chargers), for use at home and/ or at school;
- Internet MiFi devices, or hotspots (including chargers), for use at home.

### *General Information*

- All computers and MiFi devices issued to students are the property of Explore Charter Schools of Brooklyn and are made available to students solely as tools for learning.
- Computers and MiFi devices are for use by the student to whom they are assigned and may not be used by any other individual.
- Students must comply with Explore Charter Schools of Brooklyn computer/Mifi usage standards (below), which cover procedures and requirements for using the devices, as well as with Explore Charter Schools of Brooklyn *IT Resources and Internet Acceptable Use Policy*.
- The computer/MiFi assigned to a student must be returned to the school upon the student’s withdrawal or transfer, or upon the request of Explore Charter Schools of Brooklyn. Failure to return the device may result in the family being charged the full replacement cost.
- Any damage, loss or theft of a computer or MiFi may result in families being charged up to the full replacement cost.
- Inappropriate use of a computer or MiFi that violates this policy can result in disciplinary action. Installing unapproved applications or changing the configuration of a computer or MiFi is prohibited.

### Usage Standards for Computers and MiFi Devices

- Store your devices in a safe place when not in use. Excessive scratches and scuffs to the exterior can result in repair fees.
- General hardware safety should be practiced at all times. This includes but is not limited to the following examples:
  - a. Food or drink should not be near a device.
  - b. Devices and accessories should not be used or stored near pets.
  - c. Power cords must not create a tripping hazard.
  - d. Device(s) must remain free of any writing, drawing, stickers, and labels.
  - e. Heavy objects should never be placed on top of a device.
  - f. Avoid leaving devices in extreme temperatures (e.g., outside or in a car).
  - g. Never lift a device by its screen or carry it with the screen open.
- Do not insert foreign objects (paperclips, pens, etc.) into the ports (openings) of a device.
- Make sure hands are clean before using the device. Any screen should be regularly wiped clean with a dry, clean, soft cloth. Please do NOT use spray cleaners on the screen.
- When a charger needs to be connected, be sure to line it up correctly when inserting and removing.
- If you have problems with your device, stop using it and ask your teacher for help.

- Devices should never be taken to an outside computer or IT service for any type of repairs or maintenance. Students should not attempt to repair or disassemble any part of the device. Please return your device to the Operations Team in the main office at your school for any repairs. Explore Charter Schools of Brooklyn will perform routine maintenance on all devices, as appropriate.

## Instructional Resources and Internet Acceptable Use Policy

This Instructional Resources and Internet Acceptable Use Policy covers the use of Explore Charter Schools of Brooklyn instructional technology resources in school and outside of school, including at home.

Explore Charter Schools of Brooklyn may provide students with the following instructional technology resources - referred to in the policy as “IT resources”:

- computers - including Chromebooks, iPads and tablets - for use at home and/ or at school;
- Internet MiFi devices (hotspots) for use at home;
- accounts for Google Apps for Education, which include Gmail email addresses and other web-based programs such as Google Classroom, Google Meets and Google Docs; accounts for other online-learning platforms and apps, including Zoom.

Explore Charter Schools of Brooklyn provides access to these IT resources to students for educational purposes only.

Students are required to act responsibly and appropriately when using Explore Charter Schools of Brooklyn’s IT resources. Explore Charter Schools of Brooklyn maintains the same high expectations for student behavior when using our IT resources that we have for our students at all other times, and expects students to comply with the Student Behavior Expectations outlined in our Family Student Handbook when using our IT resources.

Explore Charter Schools of Brooklyn maintains the right to remotely monitor student activity on all of our IT resources, including but not limited to files downloaded on computers, student emails, student communications within applications and learning platforms, and web- browsing history. Failure to comply with this IT Resources and Internet Acceptable Use Policy may result in the loss of access privileges and/or appropriate disciplinary action. Severe violations may result in civil or criminal action under New York State or Federal law.

### **Explore Charter Schools of Brooklyn Responsibilities**

As required by the Children’s Internet Protection Act (“CIPA”), Explore Charter Schools of Brooklyn actively uses internet filtering software to prevent students from accessing content – including text and pictures that are (a) obscene, (b) pornographic, or (c) harmful to minors, as well as to block unacceptable web sites. However, despite Explore Charter Schools of Brooklyn’s best efforts, it may be possible for users to access inappropriate sites. Explore Charter Schools of Brooklyn will take appropriate disciplinary action against those who attempt to disable, bypass or otherwise circumvent the content filter that has been installed in accordance with CIPA.

### **Family Expectations and Responsibilities**

Parents and guardians are responsible for monitoring their child's use of the internet and the instructional technology resources provided by Explore Charter Schools of Brooklyn, when these resources are accessed and utilized during remote learning from home, or other non-school locations.

The computer and/or MiFi device and chargers assigned to students must be returned the school upon the student's withdrawal or transfer, or upon the request by the school.

If families do not wish students to access any specific materials that are part of instruction, the parent/guardian should notify their child's teachers so that an alternative learning plan may be determined.

### **Student Expectations and Responsibilities**

Students are authorized to use Explore Charter Schools of Brooklyn IT resources to access the internet or other learning materials in accordance with the rules specified below:

- Students will use Explore Charter Schools of Brooklyn IT resources for purposes of research, education, and school-related activities, only.
- Student behavior while using Explore Charter Schools of Brooklyn IT resources is expected to follow the same high expectations we have for our students at all times, in line with the Explore Charter Schools of Brooklyn Code of Conduct; as such, students are expected and required to avoid actions that are dishonest, unkind, or invasive or otherwise violate the Explore Charter Schools of Brooklyn Code of Conduct. If a student violates this policy, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken consistent with the Code of Conduct.
- Inappropriate use of Explore Charter Schools of Brooklyn IT resources also may result in limits to or loss of use of a device.
- Students will not plagiarize works they find on the internet. Plagiarism is taking the ideas or writings of others and presenting them as if they were your own.
- Students will promptly disclose to their teacher or other school employee any message they receive that is inappropriate or makes them feel uncomfortable.
- Students are prohibited from using Explore Charter Schools of Brooklyn's IT Resources to access social media, chat sites, online video games or other content unless authorized by a teacher or school administrator for instructional purposes.
- Students are prohibited from accessing, downloading, or distributing content or materials that are not part of the curriculum.
- If a student mistakenly accesses inappropriate information, they should immediately tell their teacher.
- Students will only use the account to which they are assigned. Students are responsible for their individual accounts and will take reasonable precautions to prevent others from being able to use their account. Students will not provide their usernames or passwords to any other person except a teacher, school administrator or their parent/guardian.
- Students may not alter the configuration or functionality of their computer in any way.
- Students may not uninstall or modify any application or the operating system from their computer in any way.
- Students may not make deliberate attempts to spread computer viruses or any other malicious software. Use of or possession of "hacking" tools are prohibited.
- Explore Charter Schools of Brooklyn's IT resources - as well as any files, communications or other information the resources contain - are the property of Explore Charter Schools of Brooklyn, and are subject to control and inspection by your school's Director of Operations, leadership team members or other school designee. Students should not expect that information stored on any Explore Schools of Brooklyn IT resource is private. These IT resources and the information they contain may be accessed

by Explore Charter Schools of Brooklyn without notice in order to ensure system integrity, and that students are complying with the requirements of this policy.

- Explore Charter Schools of Brooklyn may share information found in any of its IT resources with a student's parents/guardians or appropriate authorities, and will cooperate fully with local, state or federal officials in any investigation concerning or relating to any illegal activities conducted using Explore Charter Schools of Brooklyn's IT resources.
- Students shall report any security problem or misuse of Explore Charter Schools of Brooklyn's IT resources to the teacher or principal.

# Student Attendance and Transportation

## Student Attendance

At Explore Schools we take attendance very seriously and view it as a key lever of student achievement. We track when students are absent, tardy, or leave early, and you should expect to receive communication about your student's attendance throughout the year, especially when the student is frequently absent or tardy, or leaves early often.

An automated call will alert the families of students on days when they are absent or tardy. Please contact the main office if you think you have received an absent/tardy call in error. Absences and tardies may ONLY be excused for the following reasons:

- Illness
- death in the family
- religious observance
- required court appearance
- attendance at a health clinic or hospital
- other medical visit

Appropriate documentation, given to the main office, is required to excuse an absence. A doctor's note is required for students who have been absent for two or more days due to illness. **No exceptions to Explore Schools' attendance policy are made for family vacation.** Students who have more than fifteen absences (a combination of excused and unexcused absences) or thirty tardies/early pick-ups may jeopardize promotion to the next grade level.

Explore Schools' staff will investigate any situation in which a student has more than ten unexcused absences or 15 unexcused tardies. A conference may be called with the family and a member of administration. At that time, a plan will be outlined to help make sure that the student is arriving to school every day on time. If this plan is not followed and excessive absences or tardies continue, this may be considered educational neglect and reported to the Administration for Children's Services (ACS).

## Transportation

**Full Fare Transportation- Yellow Bus Service:** Students eligible for full fare transportation may apply for yellow bus service. Yellow bus service is bus service provided from designated stops at designated times to and from schools receiving this service. To apply for yellow bus service, a student must meet the following criteria:

- The student must be in grades K-6.
- The student's residence must be in the same borough

A minimum number of students (11) must live in proximity to one another to permit creation of a route that does not extend beyond five miles when measured through all the stops on the route. If the above criteria are met and the student applies for yellow bus service, the student will be assigned to a bus stop by his or her school. If you are interested in yellow bus service for your student, please reach out to the main office. Yellow bus service also will be provided in accordance with a student's IEP.

Families will be responsible for getting their child to and from school.

**Full Fare Metro Card Transportation:** Students eligible for full fare transportation may be issued a Full-fare Metro Card by requesting one in the main office.

**Half Fare Metro Card Transportation:** Students not eligible for full-fare transportation may be issued a Half-Fare Metro Card by requesting one from the main office.

**What is a Half-Fare Metro Card?:** A Half-Fare Metro Card allows a student to travel to and from school and school-related activities on buses only.

**How Much Does a Student Pay for a Half-Fare Metro Card?:** The family/student contributes half of the cost of the fare.

**Loss of Metro Cards:** Request for the replacement of Metro Cards must be completed in writing and given to the Main Office. Explore Schools relies on the NYC DOE Office of Transportation to replace these Metro Cards, so there may be delays in processing these requests.

		DISTANCE FROM RESIDENCE TO SCHOOL			
		Less than ½ mile A*	½ mile or more, but less than 1 mile B*	1 mile or more but less than 1½ miles C*	1½ miles or more D*
GRADE LEVEL	K-2	Not Eligible**	Eligible for Full Fare Transportation		
	3-6	Transportation Not Provided	Eligible for Full Fare Transportation		
	7-12	Transportation Not Provided	Not Eligible**		Eligible for Full Fare Transportation

\*Students in these categories are not eligible for full fare transportation. These students may receive a half fare student Metro Card good for use on buses only. These half fare Metro Cards are provided as a courtesy by the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA)

## Additional Policies

### Field Trips

During registration, families grant their student permission to participate in school-related field trips that are within walking distance by completing the Handbook Sign-off Page. Families will be required to sign permission slips for any field trips that require transportation (bus or subway) and will send home permission slips prior to the trip.

Although some field trips will be free for students, certain trips will require a fee (transportation costs, entrance fees, etc.). We will make every effort to keep these fees to a minimum. In addition, when families are notified about a field trip, we may send a list of items needed for participation in the trip. Gift shops are typically not visited during field trips and purchases are not permitted. Please do not send money with your student to make a purchase from the gift shop. At times teachers will ask for a limited amount of family chaperones to attend field trips. Family chaperones are required to supervise students at all times and uphold Explore Schools' expectations. Family chaperones may not leave the field trip early and must come to and from the school with the class.

### Family Volunteer Opportunities

As a family member of an Explore Schools student, you have the opportunity to volunteer at the school. This may include helping to supervise a field trip as mentioned above, working in the office, assisting your child's teacher, or assisting at breakfast or lunch duty. Volunteers working with students must have a staff member present. To volunteer in your child's classroom or to supervise a field trip, please contact your child's teacher directly. To volunteer on a regular basis, please contact the school's main office.

### Attending School Events

Families are encouraged to attend many school events throughout the year. Invitations to events will always be communicated to families in advance via newsletters, fliers, and automated calls. Students in grades K-8 must be accompanied by a family member to attend events at school unless otherwise specified.

### Holiday Policy

Explore Schools does not endorse any religious holidays during the school year.

### Recess Procedures

Students will have recess every day. There will be indoor recess on days when there is inclement weather, such as rain or snow, or temperatures below 32 degrees Fahrenheit. Students may stay inside during recess only if the school is provided with a doctor's note stating that they may not go outside.

### Requesting Teachers

It is our policy to select each teacher's class roster at our discretion. All teachers have gone through a rigorous selection process, including a background check and professional references. Although we do

not assign students based on preference for a specific teacher, we will make every effort to ensure that your student's classroom experience is safe and meaningful. If you have a question or concern about your student's teacher, please speak to the teacher directly or to the Principal/Academic Director for your child's grade. Please note that during the school year, school administration may make determinations to switch children's classes based on academic and/or behavioral concerns. You will be contacted directly if this is being considered for your student.

## School Closing Due to Inclement Weather

In the event of inclement weather, we will follow the New York City Department of Education school closing policy. In the event that the New York City Department of Education is not in session, Explore Schools will also be closed. 1010 WINS announces all NYC DOE school closure information. If the NYC DOE is not in session and there is inclement weather, the network Managing Director of Operations will lead the determination. Families will also be notified via an automated call.

## Other Emergency School Closings

In the event of an unforeseen emergency that results in the need to close school, families will be notified via an automated call.

## Student Records

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education.

FERPA gives families certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students."

- Families or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school within 45 days of the day the School receives a request for access. Families or eligible students should submit to the Director of Operations a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The Director of Operations will make arrangements for access and notify the family or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for families or eligible students to review the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies.
- Families or eligible students have the right to request that a school correct records which they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the family or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the family or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information.
- Generally, schools must have written permission from the family or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR § 99.31):
  - School officials with legitimate educational interest;

- Other schools to which a student is transferring;
- Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
- Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
- Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
- Accrediting organizations;
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
- Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
- State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law.

Schools may disclose, without consent, “directory” information such as a student’s name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However, schools must tell families and eligible students about directory information and allow families and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them. If you wish to keep your student’s directory information confidential please notify the school’s Director of Operations in writing.

For additional information, you may call 1-800-USA-LEARN (1-800-872-5327) (voice). Individuals who use TDD may call 1-800-437-0833.

Or you may contact us at the following address:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
 U.S. Department of Education  
 400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
 Washington, D.C. 20202-8520

## Parent’s Bill of Rights for Data Privacy and Security

Parents (including legal guardians or persons in parental relationships) and Eligible Students (students 18 years and older) can expect the following: A student’s personally identifiable information (PII) cannot be sold or released for any Commercial or Marketing purpose. PII, as defined by Education Law 2-d and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA"), includes direct identifiers such as a student’s name or identification number, parent’s name, or address; and indirect identifiers such as a student’s date of birth, which when linked to or combined with other information can be used to distinguish or trace a student’s identity. Please see FERPA’s regulations at 34 CFR 99.3 for a more complete definition.

1. The right to inspect and review the complete contents of the student’s education record stored or maintained by Explore Charter Schools of Brooklyn. This right may not apply to Parents of an Eligible Student.
2. State and federal laws such as Education Law 2-d; the Commissioner of Education’s Regulations at 8 NYCRR Part 121, FERPA at 12 U.S.C. 1232g (34 CFR Part 99); Children's Online Privacy Protection Act ("COPPA") at 15 U.S.C. 6501-6502 (16 CFR Part 312); Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment ("PPRA") at 20 U.S.C. 1232h (34 CFR Part 98); and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act ("IDEA") at 20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq. (34 CFR Part 300); protect the confidentiality of a student’s identifiable information.
3. Safeguards associated with industry standards and best practices including, but not limited to, encryption, firewalls and password protection must be in place when student PII is stored or transferred.

4. A complete list of all student data elements collected by NYSED is available at [www.nysed.gov/data-privacy-security/student-data-inventory](http://www.nysed.gov/data-privacy-security/student-data-inventory) and by writing to: Chief Privacy Officer, New York State Education Department, 89 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12234.
5. The right to have complaints about possible breaches and unauthorized disclosures of PII addressed. (i) Complaints should be submitted to your child’s school’s Data Protection Officer – see table below; (ii) Complaints may also be submitted to the NYS Education Department at [www.nysed.gov/data-privacy-security/report-improper-disclosure](http://www.nysed.gov/data-privacy-security/report-improper-disclosure), by mail to: Chief Privacy Officer, New York State Education Department, 89 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12234; by email to [privacy@nysed.gov](mailto:privacy@nysed.gov); or by telephone at 518-474-0937.

Lower Schools	Data Protection Officer Contact Info	Upper Schools	Data Protection Officer Contact Info
Explore Lower Charter School	<u>Email:</u> <a href="mailto:Dpo_explore_lower@explorenetwork.org">Dpo_explore_lower@explorenetwork.org</a> <u>Phone:</u> 718-703-4484 <u>Address:</u> 655 Parkside Ave, Brooklyn, NY 11226	Explore Upper Charter School	<u>Email:</u> <a href="mailto:Dpo_explore_upper@explorenetwork.org">Dpo_explore_upper@explorenetwork.org</a> <u>Phone:</u> 718-703-4484 <u>Address:</u> 655 Parkside Ave, Brooklyn, NY 11226
Empower Lower Charter School	<u>Email:</u> <a href="mailto:Dpo_empower_lower@explorenetwork.org">Dpo_empower_lower@explorenetwork.org</a> <u>Phone:</u> 718-771-2090 <u>Address:</u> 188 Rochester Ave, Brooklyn, NY 11213	Empower Upper Charter School	<u>Email:</u> <a href="mailto:Dpo_empower_upper@explorenetwork.org">Dpo_empower_upper@explorenetwork.org</a> <u>Phone:</u> 718-771-2090 <u>Address:</u> 188 Rochester Ave, Brooklyn, NY 11213
Excel Lower Charter School	<u>Email:</u> <a href="mailto:Dpo_excel_lower@explorenetwork.org">Dpo_excel_lower@explorenetwork.org</a> <u>Phone:</u> 347-902-1758 <u>Address:</u> 1077 Remsen Ave, Brooklyn, NY 11236	Excel Upper Charter School	<u>Email:</u> <a href="mailto:Dpo_excel_upper@explorenetwork.org">Dpo_excel_upper@explorenetwork.org</a> <u>Phone:</u> 347-289-9555 <u>Address:</u> 956 E 82 <sup>nd</sup> St, Brooklyn, NY 11236
Exceed Lower Charter School	<u>Email:</u> <a href="mailto:Dpo_exceed_lower@explorenetwork.org">Dpo_exceed_lower@explorenetwork.org</a> <u>Phone:</u> 718-989-6702 <u>Address:</u> 443 St. Marks Ave, Brooklyn, NY 11238	Exceed Upper Charter School	<u>Email:</u> <a href="mailto:Dpo_exceed_upper@explorenetwork.org">Dpo_exceed_upper@explorenetwork.org</a> <u>Phone:</u> 347-689-0200 <u>Address:</u> 46 McKeever Place, Brooklyn, NY 11225

1. To be notified in accordance with applicable laws and regulations if a breach or unauthorized release of PII occurs.
2. Explore Charter Schools of Brooklyn staff that handle PII will receive training on applicable state and federal laws, policies, and safeguards associated with industry standards and best practices that protect PII.
3. Explore Charter Schools of Brooklyn contracts with vendors that receive PII will address statutory and regulatory data privacy and security requirements.

## Freedom of Information Law

Explore Schools complies with the New York State Freedom of Information Law (Article 6 of the New York Public Officers Law). This means certain school records can be made available to the public upon request because Explore Schools are publicly funded schools.

Copies of our school's FOIL policy are available in the main office. For more information about the process for requesting records please contact the school's Director of Operations who serves as the school's Records Access Officer.

## **Title I Information**

This policy is updated annually by the Title I committee. Please reach out to your school's main office if you would like to ensure you have the most updated copy. An annual open meeting is hosted at the beginning of the school year to learn more about how we participate in Title I programs.

# Explore Schools' Vision Statements

## Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Belief Statement

As an organization, we acknowledge the detrimental impact of racism and systems of oppression. We envision a pathway to equity that features excellent curriculum and instruction in response to the opportunity gap—providing our scholars with access and opportunities to succeed. We commit to reflect individually on the roles we play within systems of oppression; and we channel our individual talents and cultural sensitivity to help our scholars and local community thrive.

We do this by:

- Centering equity in our work—layering it into all of our decision-making
- Empowering our scholars through teaching that balances cognitive development and critical thinking skills, and through responsive, rigorous, standards-aligned curriculum
- Ensuring our adults have the necessary cultural competence to serve our students holistically

### DEI Common Language Definitions

- **Diversity** – At Explore, Diversity is when different groups or ideas come together with a liberated mindset to help students connect to their own identity and the broader world. We enable this through our curriculum—intentionally featuring diversity of thought in classrooms, and equipping teachers with skills to create and modify culturally relevant content. For us, diversity includes race, gender expression, nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, ability, religion, and socioeconomic status, as well as other ways people might identify differently.
- **Equity** – Equity means that everyone can access opportunities and resources to reach their full potential. At Explore, we actively work against implicit and unconscious bias, and remove the predictability of success or failure that currently correlates with any social or cultural factor. To do this, we customize the way we educate our students and make adjustments based on their individual needs.
- **Inclusion** – Inclusion is intentionally creating space for all voices to be heard, respected and valued. At Explore, this means having a culture of acceptance and opportunity—where students and adults who have diverse perspectives, beliefs and identities can be their authentic selves, pursue their personal goals and help fulfill Explore's mission.

## Anti-White Supremacy Statement

- Explore School is committed to providing a workplace that is free from bias, discrimination, and harassment. We acknowledge that historically, in our country, because of white supremacy, power, privilege, and institutionalized racism, the thoughts, actions, and feelings of White people have had more perceived value than those of People of Color. We recognize the impact these systems of oppression have on our community.
- As such, we are working to ensure that our policies and practices are designed to counter those historic (un)truths and affirm our commitment to recognizing, addressing, and eradicating all forms of white supremacy, racism, and systems of oppression.

- We vow to provide education for our staff members, to provide support in difficult situations, and to recognize our own shortcomings. We support, encourage, and expect courageous conversations around race, power, and privilege and expect that all staff members are open to and actively engaging in them.
- We ask staff members to understand and recognize how race, power, and privilege (individually, interpersonally, and institutionally) inform the ways in which they interact with coworkers, students, and families, and to ask for help when needed. We will do our due diligence to create, protect, and maintain safe spaces for all staff members.

## Explore Schools Culture Vision

At Explore Schools, we know that student culture is foundational to fulfill our mission and commitment to equity. Through prioritizing establishing student-centered classrooms, we believe we create an environment where our students can gain the academic skills and critical-thinking abilities they need to succeed in a college-preparatory high school.

This vision for student culture operates in service of our instructional vision, which is characterized by cognitive engagement, rigorous, transferrable thinking and authentic instruction.

Our schools foster a culture of achievement characterized by the following hallmarks:

- We focus on thinking and learning
  - Our students *value their own academic growth* and recognize that their effort impacts achievement
  - Our students demonstrate a *love of learning*, and teachers create a *joyful sense of urgency* in their classroom
  - We *use time well to maximize learning* and minimize distractions through intentional, clear and predictable routines and systems
- We put the needs of students first
  - We anticipate that *our students may need different things at different times*, and we work relentlessly to find creative solutions to ensure that *all* our students are successful
  - We intentionally *teach students the skills they need* to make positive decisions
  - We design and implement interventions and consequences with *the goal of changing behavior*, not punishing misbehavior
- Our schools have a palpable sense of community
  - All community members foster a spirit of *welcoming and warmth*
  - We cultivate authentic and meaningful *relationships* with students and families
  - All community members demonstrate *mutual respect* and *solve problems collaboratively*
  - All community members work together to ensure *safe and orderly* classrooms, hallways, and common spaces

# Student Media Consent and Release Form

*Throughout the school year, students may be highlighted in efforts to promote Explore Schools' activities and accomplishments. For example, students and student work may be featured in materials to train teachers and/or increase public awareness of our network schools through print media, radio, TV, the web, DVDs, displays, brochures, MTA ads, and other types of media. In addition, in the context of instruction, improving our school, sharing best practices with others, and research for educational purposes, videos or other recordings may be made of our students, student work, and classrooms, which may include student voices and images.*

I, as the guardian of \_\_\_\_\_, hereby consent and give Explore Schools and its employees, representatives, agents, and authorized media organizations permission to videotape, photograph, interview, and/or record my child or my child's school work for use in audio, video, film, or any other electronic, digital, and printed media, both during and after my child's enrollment at an Explore Schools location.

I also grant Explore Schools permission to edit, use, and reuse any such products for non-profit purposes, including but not limited to education-related purposes, events and presentations (such as conferences and workshops); school events (including website and social media images); fundraising; and classroom activities.

I am fully aware that I will not receive monetary compensation for my child's participation.

I also hereby release Explore Schools and its employees, representatives, agents, and authorized media organizations from all claims, demands, and liabilities whatsoever in connection with the above.

**OR – Sign below if you are opting to “decline” the use of your student’s image:**

As the guardian of \_\_\_\_\_, **I hereby give my consent** to the above.

As the guardian of \_\_\_\_\_, **I do NOT give my consent** to the above.

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**Please print (all information below is required of all guardians):**

Name of child \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_ City / Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Name of parent/guardian \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of parent/guardian \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

# Network-Wide Family Policies Sign-Off Page

***Please complete this form and return it to your school's Main Office.***

**Network-Wide Family Policies** – I have received the Explore Schools' Network-Wide Family Policies. I understand it is my responsibility to read the policies to understand the school's policies and procedures, and to discuss them with my child.

**Technology and Internet Acceptable Use Policies** – I have read the Explore Schools Technology and Internet acceptable use policy in this handbook and agree to the terms of the policies.

**Permission to Release Address and Phone Number** – I hereby give Explore Schools permission to print my address and phone number. I understand that this information will only be used by staff, parents and guardians who are members of the school's community.

**Field Trip Permission** – I hereby give permission for my child to walk to recreational spaces with a two-mile radius of my child's school. Notification for field trips and special activity dates and locations will be sent in advance of the field trip or special activity. I may decline my child's attendance by submitting a request in writing.

**Student Media Consent and Release Form** – I have received the Explore Schools Student Media Consent and Release Form as included in this Family Student Handbook and have returned the signed form to my school's main office.

<p><b>By signing the Family &amp; Scholar Handbook sign-off page, you are indicating that you agree* to all the policies and procedures as documented. You are committed to working together with Explore Schools to adhere to our expectations for all scholars. If you have multiple children attending Explore Schools, please list each of them below.</b></p>	
<b>Today's Date</b>	
<b>Name of Child(ren)</b>	
<b>Name of Parent/Guardian</b>	
<b>Signature of Parent/Guardian</b>	

*\*If you do not wish to agree to all of the policies and procedures, please request an alternate Parent/Guardian Sign-off page in your school's the main office.*