



133 Hoover Drive  
Rochester, NY 14615  
Ph. 585.342.4032 Fax. 585.342.4003  
Rochesterdiscovery.com

# Family Handbook 2016-2017

**“Real skills for the real world”**

Last reviewed by Board of Trustees 5.16

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### Welcome Letter

Welcome to the 2016-2017 school year at Discovery Charter School!

This Family Handbook is full of information about the school. Please keep it and refer to it during the school year. You will be notified about any changes to this handbook.

What kind of information is in the handbook?

School hours	Dress code
School calendar	Student life
Important numbers	Meals
Transportation	Expectations
After school	Parent conferences
Health	Report cards
Attendance	Getting involved
Safety	School closing
Discipline	Permission slips

Copies of several student-related policies are included in full at the back of the handbook, for your reference.

This handbook has important information for you and your child to read, discuss and understand. So that we know you have received a copy, **please review the handbook and return the signed form on this page to the office by September 2nd, 2016.**

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I have received a copy of the Discovery Charter School Family Handbook and Appendix and will read, discuss and ensure understanding of the contents.

Name of Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please Print)

Signature of Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

My child's name is: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please Print)

For members of the same family: *only one copy of this page needs to be submitted for each family/ household*

My child's name is: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please Print)

My child's name is: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please Print)

My child's name is: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please Print)

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## Discovery Charter School Family Handbook

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## Discovery Charter School Mission

Discovery Charter School (DCS) prepares students to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing world, providing children living in poverty “real skills for the real world.” With a learning environment featuring a rigorous and highly enriched curriculum, Expeditionary Learning, assessment-guided instruction, a culture of inquiry and enthusiasm, and services designed to mitigate the major negative impacts of poverty, students achieve beyond their peers and become exceptionally well prepared to engage the world wherever their interests take them.

## Expeditionary Learning

We partner with Expeditionary Learning (EL) because their design offers us a vision that allows us to implement our curriculum in a consistently rigorous, dynamic manner. EL is a comprehensive school design, recognized as an exemplary model by the US Department of Education. EL is based on ten design principles (see below for a student-friendly version and the appendices for the complete version). Learning expeditions are in-depth studies of a single theme or topic, generally lasting twelve weeks, and are the core of the curriculum. Each expedition revolves around curriculum-related projects and performances.

### Student-Friendly Design Principles

1. I am here to discover what I can do.
2. I have wonderful ideas.
3. I am responsible for my learning and help others learn.
4. I care for others. Others care for me.
5. Success is great, but mistakes help me learn.
6. We work together as friends. I compete against myself.
7. Our differences make us stronger.
8. Nature is our teacher.
9. I need time to be by myself.
10. We do excellent things for others.

## School Hours

**Arrival and Dismissal:** 7:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday; 7:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. Friday

**After School Program** (October –May): approximately 3:30-5:00 p.m., for select members of the intermediate grades

### Where to go:

All DCS students enter through the main entrance of the school into the lobby off of the bus loop.

At 7:30 a.m., students are directed to their classrooms. You are welcome to walk into the school with your child and drop him or her off. If you are driving your child, or walking with your child, please remember that students should not be left unattended and should not arrive before 7:30 a.m. If you arrive before 7:30, you may need to wait with your child outside. DCS does not guarantee supervision before 7:30 even if office staff are present. Please do not drop off your child and drive away before 7:30.

Most students will take the bus to school. Busses will stop in front of the DCS entrance where students are met by staff and directed to classrooms.

### Dismissal Procedures:

We have developed our dismissal procedures to ensure the continuous supervision and safety of your child.

### Who can pick up your child?

DCS will only release students to people designated by the student’s parent or legal guardian. The list of people authorized to pick up your child was turned in with your enrollment packet. If you would like to add/remove individuals, please go to the school office. *We will not accept a verbal notification for an unauthorized person to pick up a student. We will ask for identification from any person that does not regularly pick up your child-* please inform your designated caregiver that it is for the security of the students that these precautions are taken.

### Pick Ups and Walkers

If you are picking up a student by car *please do not park in the bus loop*. Parents need to inform the school *prior to 2:30* if student is not to follow typical dismissal process (e.g. not get on the bus).

### Late Arrival and Early Dismissal

Please escort late children into school and sign them in at the office. Remember, you **MUST** sign in your late children for safety- do not drop them off without entering the school. Children are considered tardy if they arrive after 8:00 a.m. We cannot guarantee that breakfast will be served after 8:00.

If your child needs to be released from school early for an appointment, please call the school office indicating why and what time he or she needs to leave. When you come to pick up your child, please come to the main office; you will sign them out and your child will be sent to meet you in the office. Please arrange for early dismissals to occur before 2:45 p.m. so as to avoid the hectic time at the end of the day.

### After School Care

Teachers take great care to dismiss children to the proper bus or adult caregiver. We are mindful of daily changes in families' after-school arrangements, and ask your cooperation in keeping us informed of those changes. Please call the office on each day that your child will deviate from his or her usual routine. Families need to inform the school prior to 2:30 if a student is not to take the typical bus home.

### Bus Transportation

Please be sure that our office has the most recent version of your child's transportation plan. For residents of the city of Rochester, the Rochester City School District will provide transportation on school days while they are in session. *First Student* (a bus company) will provide transportation to students who live in Rochester when RCSD is not in session. Families residing in suburban districts should plan for transporting their children on days when their district schools are not in session. If transportation is an issue for your suburban family, please contact the school and we will work to provide transportation. Changes in transportation (i.e. location where students are picked up or dropped off) typically takes between 5 and 10 school days to process, depending on how busy the transportation department is.

### Important Names and Numbers

Position:	Name	Phone	email
Director	J. Saia	342-4032 / 730-0908	jsaia@rochesterdiscovery.com
Assistant Director	S. Castner	342-4032 ext. 140	scastner@rochesterdiscovery.com
Office Manager	L. Corbett	342-4032 ext. 654	lcorbett@rochesterdiscovery.com
Nurse	S. Atwater	342-4032 ext. 609	satwater@rochesterdiscovery.com
School Counselor	K. Nowakowski	342-4032 ext. 605	knowakowski@rochesterdiscovery.com
Parent Liaison	N. Tuggles	342-4032 ext. 650	jcordova@rochesterdiscovery.com

For other staff, email = first name first initial + lastname@rochesterdiscovery.com e.g. jsmith@rochesterdiscovery.com  
School Website: www.rochesterdiscovery.com

### Bus Problems

Please contact the transportation department directly: RCSD 336-4000; EISD 339-1526; RHSD 359-5380; GCSD 966-2550

### Health

#### School Nurse

DCS has a full-time school nurse who will provide care for students who need medication, become ill or are injured during the school day.

#### When to Keep Your Child Home

Do not send your child to school if they have any of these symptoms:

- A fever of 101°F or higher
- Vomiting
- Loose bowel movements
- Pain
- Difficulty breathing
- Ringworm or other contagious Conditions
- Open or draining sores
- Severe coughing
- Active lice, bedbugs, etc.
- Rash or hives
- Pink eye
- Runny nose with thick yellow or green discharge

Please call the main office to let us know that your child is home with an illness. Per medical director orders, students cannot return to school until 24 hours after a high fever or vomiting.

### **Early Dismissal Due to Illness**

The school nurse, or a member of the leadership team if the nurse is unavailable, will decide whether your child should go home sick using the “Keep Home” criteria above. Parents or caregivers will be notified by telephone of the nature of the illness and will be asked to pick the child up within one hour of being notified. Please keep your emergency contact information up to date, so that we can reach the right people all times.

If your child becomes injured at school, you will be contacted and we will administer emergency first aid and complete an accident report for you to share with your child’s physician. In the event of serious injury requiring immediate emergency care, 911 will be called. The School Director or another staff person will go with your child to the hospital if we have not been able to reach you.

### **Medication**

The school must know about any medicine you bring to school for your child; it must be given to the nurse.

All medications, prescription and over-the-counter, should be clearly labeled with the student’s name on the original packaging and presented with written directions for administration from a physician consistent with the labeled directions. We also require written permission from the parent or guardian to give the medication to your child in school. Students requiring over-the-counter medication for temporary conditions (colds, allergies, etc.) will also receive it from the school nurse if written permission is provided by the parent. Students may not transport medication via school bus, and may not keep any medication in their school bags or in lockers/classrooms.

### **Health Records**

Students’ health records are maintained separately and confidentially from other school records, as required by law. Please be sure that all immunizations (shots) and physicals are up to date and be prepared to provide documentation.

### **Allergies**

If you have not already done so in the enrollment packet, please tell us about any allergies your child may have and provide medication (if necessary) to prevent a serious allergic reaction. This includes allergies to plants, animals, foods, medicines, and other substances.

## **Attendance**

New York State law requires that children attend school and have the opportunity to receive an education. It is important that your child attends school on time every day, and is ready to learn. If your child will be absent or tardy, please call the office directly at 342-4032 or the Parent Liaison at 342-4032 ext. 655. There is new federal/state tracking of chronically absent students. DCS is required to report any student who misses 10% or more of school (20 days at DCS for the full year) even if the absences are legal.

### **Absences and Excuse Notes**

If your child has missed school due to illness or other circumstances, please send in a written note that explains the nature of the illness or absence and the days he or she missed school. A doctor’s note is required for absences of more than three days. Parents will be notified and invited to a conference if lateness or absences are excessive. Three illegal instances of tardiness or early departure will constitute an illegal absence. Please be aware that the written excuse is required by New York State Law within five days.

The full attendance policy and summary guide (e.g. after 20 unexcused absences, Child Protective Services is contacted for educational neglect) is at the back of this handbook on page 18.

## **Safety**

While your child is at Discovery Charter School (DCS) he or she is in our care and we take that responsibility very seriously. We must protect every child in the school, and provide a safe environment where learning can take place. Please respect the restrictions that we must place on your access to the building during the school day.

### **School Visitor Policy**

While we welcome families and visitors to DCS, all visitors must first report to the school office and sign the visitor’s log book. Visitor badges must be worn at all times while in the school and should be returned before leaving the building. Parents are welcome to volunteer or observe in classrooms. Please make arrangements with the classroom teachers prior to the date on which you would like to visit. These precautions are necessary for the safety of our students and staff. Unannounced “drop ins” will be permitted at the discretion of a member of the school leadership team.

### **Bus Conduct**

Bus transportation is a privilege, not a right. Your child must behave safely on the bus. Students are under the supervision of transportation personnel while going to and from school. The following rules are enforced:

1. Students must remain seated at all times.
2. Students must use quiet voices.



3. Students must follow appropriate rules of conduct and respect while interacting with other students, bus drivers, and aides.

In order to ensure the safety of students and adults, inappropriate conduct will not be tolerated. Students who pose a concern will receive a written conduct report. Those students will meet with the school administrators and parental contact will be made. At that time a determination will be made regarding seat assignments, etc. If a child receives a number of conduct reports or the nature of the incident is severe, the child will lose their bus privileges for a determined amount of time and parents will be responsible for transporting those students to and/or from school. This brief overview will not supersede any policies of the bus companies.

### **Mandated Child Abuse Reporting**

As state mandated child abuse or neglect reporters, the nurse, counselor, teachers and administrators of DCS must file a report with New York State and/or Monroe County Department of Child Protective Services if they suspect the maltreatment or neglect of a student. All reports are confidential and will be maintained in confidential and secured files apart from the student's school records. DCS will not release the names of the individuals who have made the report, nor provide details during the investigation.

### **Internet Safety & Use Policy**

Student use of the Internet is an important component of classroom research and learning. Students and their families must sign the school's Internet use agreement (found in the enrollment packet) before being permitted to use Internet related tools. Students who do not follow the policy will have their Internet privileges suspended. Teachers supervise student Internet use.

The school's full Internet Use Policy is found at the back of this handbook.

## **Code of Conduct /Discipline Policy**

Discovery Charter School is committed to providing a safe and orderly school environment where students may receive, and school staff deliver, a quality educational program without disruption or interference. Responsible behavior by students, staff, parents and visitors is essential.

Students may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion (i.e. getting "kicked out") from school if they:

- Are disorderly, insubordinate or disruptive
- Engage in any conduct that endangers the safety, morals, health or welfare of others

Federal and State Laws require the expulsion from school for a period of not less than one year of a student who is determined to have brought a firearm to a school, or to have possessed a firearm at school, except that the Director may modify such expulsion requirement for a student on a case-by-case basis, if such modification is in writing.

Suspensions may be imposed only by the discipline team. The discipline team consists of the School Director, The Assistant Director, The Dean of Students and their designees. A student may not return to school after a suspension, until a face-to-face meeting is held between the parent/guardian and a member of the discipline team. Any additional days missed beyond the original suspension due to a failure to attend a conference are considered illegal absences. All other disciplinary measures may be imposed by any staff member, who must inform the discipline team of such action by the end of the school day:

- Behavioral Contract:** School staff may design written agreements with students subject to punishment under this code to identify target behaviors, define expectations, and describe consequences, provided that the affected student and his or her parent(s) or guardian(s) are informed that the decision to enter into such a contract is voluntary.
- Loss of School Privileges:** After notice to the student and parent(s) or guardian(s), a student may be suspended from participation in any or all extra-curricular activities. The student and parent(s) or guardian(s) shall be given an opportunity to meet informally with a member of the discipline team or teacher involved. If possible, a member of the discipline team or teacher involved shall hold any requested meeting prior to imposing the suspension from participation in extra-curricular activities.
- In-School Short Term Suspension:** In-school suspension is at the sole discretion of the discipline team. Although DCS does not have an in-school suspension room, if there is available staff, students may be temporarily removed from the classroom and placed in another area of the school where the student will receive substantially equivalent instruction. When a staff member is unavailable, a student may be sent home for the day. If his or her parent or guardian is unavailable to pick the student up, he or she will receive an out-of-school suspension the following school day. The student and his or her parent(s) or guardian(s) will be given an opportunity for an informal conference regarding such suspension with whoever was involved in imposing the suspension if they so choose.
- Suspension from School Transportation:** As the result of misconduct occurring on a bus or other student transportation for school outings, and after notice to the student and his or her parent(s) or guardian(s), a student may be suspended from school transportation that may be offered for school outings. *The transportation department will follow their own policy for misbehavior to and from school.*

e. Out-of-School Suspension: A student suspended out-of-school is considered absent from school during the suspension days and the absences are unexcused. Any work missed must be made up in a reasonable amount of time. A suspended student may not return to school premises or attend any school sponsored activity during the term of suspension.

f. “Reverse Suspension”: Parents/Guardians may be required to attend school with their child for the day or a portion of the day in order to promote positive behaviors and clear communication and expectations between the student’s home and school.

Bullying has become an increasing problem in schools around the country. DCS proactively addresses bullying and fully complies with the Dignity for all Students Act. Both a full copy of the Discipline Policy and the DCS Code of Conduct which specifically addresses the requirements of the Dignity Act are found at the back of this handbook.

## **Additional School Policies**

### **Exhibitions of Student Learning**

Each Learning Expedition culminates with an exhibition of student learning. Attendance at Exhibition events is mandatory for every DCS student. Exhibitions are a team effort in every class, and teachers evaluate student learning through students’ performance at exhibitions. Dates for exhibitions are announced well in advance. Please speak with your child’s teachers if you will need transportation for your child.

### **Holidays and Special Events**

We understand that children and families observe a variety of holidays and family celebrations. To be sensitive to all families and to devote more time to our learning expeditions, we generally do not have holiday-themed parties in our classrooms unless specifically designed to support the NYS Social Studies curriculum. *Families wishing to observe birthdays may do so during lunch*, in cooperation with classroom teachers. Please contact your child’s teacher to discuss arrangements beforehand. Due to Health Department regulations, we respectfully require that only store-bought snack items be brought in for student birthdays. Please use the mail to deliver invitations to birthday parties, they will not be distributed at school.

### **Dress Code**

DCS has a dress code. Boys: navy blue or black pants or shorts, light blue with long or short sleeves, and post earrings only. Girls: navy blue or black pants, skirts or shorts, light blue shirts with long or short sleeves, and post earrings only. Students may wear navy blue sweaters or button-down cardigans. Socks must be worn at all times. Hooded sweatshirts with the hoods up, hats and sweatbands are not permitted. Any student not wearing appropriate clothing will be required to change or sent home that day. Sneakers or closed-toe shoes are recommended for safety.

### **Backpacks**

Please provide your child with a modestly-sized over-the-shoulders backpack for carting schoolwork and communication folders to and from school. Backpacks with wheels are dangerous and are not permitted.

### **Personal Property (including toys) and Money**

DCS asks that personal items be left at home. The school is not responsible for any lost or damaged items. Please help your child remember that jewelry, cell phones, toys, electronic games, and similar devices need to be left at home. While cell phones and electronics are permitted in backpacks (e.g. for emergency use when getting off of the bus), such items will be confiscated and may need to be picked up by a parent or guardian if the items are carried or utilized during the school day.

DCS not responsible for any electronics, cash, checks, etc. that are sent to school with children. If you choose to send money to school with your child for a school-related purpose, please place the money in a sealed envelope clearly labeled with your child’s name, the amount of money enclosed, and the purpose. Instruct your child to deliver the envelope as soon as they arrive at school.

## **Meals & Snacks**

### **USDA breakfast and lunch program**

Students who qualify for free or reduced price lunch are enrolled in the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s school meal program. Meals are provided by Julia K. Caterers. Menus are made available at least one week prior to allow families to plan their budgets and menus. *Please advise the main office of any special dietary needs or food allergies as soon as possible.*

## **Field Studies**

Field studies are educational trips that take place during the school day. Most fieldwork takes place at local museums, parks, nature centers, businesses, and historic sites, and lasts from one to eight hours. Quality work is the expectation during field study activities, just as it is during in-school activities. Going on field studies- while an integral part of the learning process- is a privilege, and students need to meet the school’s code of conduct and code of character in order to participate. Should a student fail to meet

these codes, they may not participate in the field study or be required to be escorted by a parent/guardian from home. Students who cannot attend a field study will instead be given an in-school assignment to be completed while their class is gone.

### **Permission slips**

As part of the enrollment process, a permission slip covering all field studies and excursions for the school year is on file. Classroom teachers will communicate dates and destinations of these excursions through classroom newsletters or special announcements.

### **Chaperones**

Critical to the success of field studies are the adults entrusted with the care and supervision of our students. For most field studies, a request is announced to solicit parent volunteers to chaperone. Parent involvement is an important part of our school's culture, and chaperoning on fieldwork is a great way to participate in your child's education.

Full information on the Chaperone Policy is found at the back of this handbook.

## **Recess Year Round**

We believe strongly that students, just like adults, need a break from their work. Students generally have an outdoor recess period of approximately 20 minutes daily. We have recess outside, unless it is raining or there are extreme temperatures. Please provide your child with climate appropriate apparel, including snow pants, boots, gloves, hats, and scarves during the winter months, sunscreen as needed, and sweaters or jackets.

## **Reporting Student Progress**

As an active participant in your child's education, you want to know how your child is learning and growing academically, socially, emotionally and physically. Our teachers assess student progress in a variety of ways and are able to provide you with ongoing, comprehensive information.

### **Daily Communication**

You can communicate with the school and the school will communicate with you through a school-provided daily Family Communication Folder that will be carried by your child and will include things such as newsletters, menus, student work, or announcements from the class or school. Families may also contact teachers and administrators through text messages and e-mail. If a Family Communication folder is lost or destroyed, please contact the main office. The folder will be replaced once payment is received.

### **Conferences**

Two mandatory formal parent-teacher-student conferences are held during the year. Student work samples, developmental checklists, tests and other assessment are explained at this time and provide families an opportunity to share information or concerns about their child's progress. See the school calendar for scheduled conference dates. The teacher or the parent may request additional conferences.

### **Progress Reports / Report Cards**

Report cards will be issued approximately every 50 days of school. See the school calendar for Report Card dates. Parents are expected to make an appointment with the teacher on Parent Teacher Conference Days to review their child's progress. First and third quarter report cards will not be distributed to families without a conference.

### **Individual Education Plans (IEP)**

Students with special needs have an Individual Education Plan (IEP), created by the Committee on Special Education (CSE) from their home district. Discovery Charter School teachers follow the IEP. Changes to IEPs can only be made by the CSE of the home district. Due to our small size, DCS offers some Special Education (e.g. integrated classes, resource room, and consultant teacher services for students with an IEP) but not all potential program options (e.g. 12 students- 1 teacher- 1 aide). Please contact the school if you have questions about your child's needs.

### **Homework**

It is our belief that homework should be meaningful and connected to the school day experience. To that end, teachers may send home assignments such as playing a math game, revising and completing a writing assignment, or conducting a science experiment. Additionally, families are expected to read daily with their children. Due to our longer school day and after school program, teachers will only assign the most important homework beyond daily reading. Homework, outside of reading, may not be assigned daily at the discretion of the grade level team.

### **Student Records**

Discovery Charter School complies with the Family Education Rights Act of 1974 (FERPA) in keeping student education records. Access to a student's education records is restricted. Parents may have access to their child's school records within 24 hours upon written request to the School Director. Student records must be viewed in the main office.

The full FERPA policy is found at the back of this handbook.

## Family Involvement

### Community Circle

Each Friday, our school gathers together for singing, performances, culture building, and reflection. It is a time to celebrate and share our learning and build community. This event takes place from 8:20-8:50 a.m. Families are always invited to join us and take part in this special weekly tradition.

### DCS Family Association

The Family Association (FA) is an organization of student families and staff that provides additional support for the school community. The FA participates in fund raising activities, special events, community service, and additional tasks that benefit the students of DCS and its families. If you are interested in participating in the Family Association, please contact DCS at 342-4032.

### Classroom Visitations

Family members are encouraged to participate in the daily life of their children's classrooms. We welcome family members to work with individuals or small groups, assist with lunch or class projects, and read or make presentations to the class. Please contact your child's teacher to schedule a time to visit.

### Volunteer Background Checks

We believe that families are an integral part of student learning. Contact the school to speak with the parent liaison about how you can help through volunteering at DCS.

For student safety, all regular classroom volunteers (those who volunteer in classrooms more than five days per year) must ~~attend~~ receive volunteer training/orientation, and are required by law to undergo a background check. This policy and our volunteer guidelines are sent home each year as part of the re-enrollment packet.

### Communication

Ongoing communication between home and school is critical to the success of your child at DCS. We encourage parents to send in notes, schedule conferences, text staff, email school staff, and attend school functions in order to fully understand your child's educational experience and progress. Many announcements are sent home with students in their Family Communication folders. Classroom newsletters will be sent home in Round Trip folders. Please check your child's folder *daily*.

### Communicating Concerns

Parent involvement is a very special element of our culture at DCS, and we strive to make our relationships with parents as productive and positive as possible. If you have a school-related academic, behavioral, or organizational concern, we need to hear from you. We welcome your input, and while we can't guarantee that each suggestion will be adopted, or that every issue will be resolved in the manner that you wish, we can guarantee that you will be heard, and that feedback will be thoughtfully considered.

There are many venues for parents to express concerns or pose questions. A parent satisfaction survey is sent to families every other year. Teachers send home monthly newsletters which contain their contact information. The members of the leadership team are available to communicate with parents via phone, text, e-mail, or in person.

In communicating concerns, we expect that parents honor the same guiding principles we have developed for our staff:

- Go directly to the source – if you have a classroom-level concern, please speak directly with your child's teachers. If you have a school-wide concern, please contact a member of the leadership team.
- Speak only for yourself – concerns are best understood when communicated directly by the person experiencing the issue – not by others attempting to represent one another.
- Involve as few people as necessary to resolve an issue – generally, an issue can be solved with a simple message or conversation between two parties.

Many miscommunications, misunderstandings, and false assumptions can be avoided by observing these guidelines. We create a settled and trusting atmosphere when we deal with issues personally and directly.

The DCS Board of Trustees will also consider complaints against the school. If families have complaints, they should be brought to the attention of the School Director. If not satisfactorily resolved, complaints should be submitted to the Board of Trustees in

writing at least five days prior to the next board meeting. The Board of Trustees will review the issue and respond in writing with its findings and determination as soon as is practical.

### **Discovery Charter School Board of Trustees**

As a charter school, DCS operates independently and reports directly to the New York State Board of Regents through the State Education Department. The DCS Board of Trustees is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the school operates in a fiscally sound manner and maintains fidelity to the philosophy, program, and policies set forth in the school's charter.

Meetings are generally held on or near 6:00 p.m. on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of each month and is always publically noticed. DCS Board meetings are open to the public. A voting family representative sits on the board. A new family representative is elected periodically. Please contact the Family Liaison if interested in being considered for the family representative seat on the board.

### **School Closings**

#### **Snow Days and Other Weather-Related Closings**

In the event the school needs to be closed due to a weather-related emergency or other event, announcements will be made on WROC-TV Channel 8 and WHAM radio. *If the Rochester City School District is not in session, DCS will not have school.* If RCSD delays opening or closes early due to inclement weather, DCS will also.

#### **Days School is Closed (Professional Development and Holidays)**

Please refer to the school calendar.

Students who observe additional religious or cultural holidays will need to bring in a written excuse to receive a legal absence.

**Appendices: FULL TEXT OF POLICIES SUMMARIZED EARLIER IN THIS FAMILY HANDBOOK:**

**POLICY ON ACCESS TO ELECTRONIC INFORMATION, SERVICES AND NETWORKS  
(Last Reviewed/Revised 5.16)**

Freedom of expression is an inalienable human right and the foundation for self-government. Freedom of expression encompasses the right to freedom of speech and the corollary right to receive information. Such rights extend to minors as well as adults. Schools facilitate the exercise of these rights by providing access to information regardless of format or technology. In a free and democratic society, access to information is a fundamental right of citizenship.

In making decisions regarding student access to the Internet, Discovery Charter School considers its own stated educational mission, goals, and objectives. Electronic information research skills are now fundamental to preparation of citizens and future employees. Access to the Internet enables students to explore thousands of libraries, databases, bulletin boards, and other resources while exchanging messages with people around the world. Discovery expects that faculty will blend thoughtful use of the Internet throughout the curriculum and will provide guidance and instruction to students in its use. As much as possible, access from school to Internet resources will be structured in ways that point students to those which have been evaluated prior to use. While students will be able to move beyond those resources to others that have not been previewed by staff, they shall be provided with guidelines and lists of resources particularly suited to learning objectives.

Outside of school, families bear responsibility for the same guidance of Internet use as they exercise with information sources such as television, telephones, radio, movies, and other possibly offensive media.

Students utilizing school-provided Internet access must first have the permission of and must be supervised by the Discovery Charter School's staff. Students utilizing school-provided Internet access are responsible for good behavior on-line just as they are in a classroom or other area of the school. The same general rules for behavior and communications apply.

The purpose of Internet access is to facilitate communications in support of research and education. To remain eligible as users, students' use must be in support of and consistent with the educational objectives of Discovery Charter School. Access is a privilege, not a right. Access entails responsibility.

Users should not expect that files stored on school-based computers will always be private. Electronic messages and files stored on school-based computers may be treated like school lockers. Administrators and faculty may review files and messages to maintain system integrity and insure that users are acting responsibly.

The following uses of school-provided Internet access are not permitted:

- A. to access, upload, download, or distribute pornographic, obscene, or sexually explicit material;
- B. to transmit obscene, abusive, sexually explicit, or threatening language;
- C. to violate any local, state, or federal statute;
- D. to vandalize, damage, or disable the property of another individual or organization;
- E. to access another individual's materials, information, or files without permission; and,
- F. to violate copyright or otherwise use the intellectual property of another individual or organization without permission.

Any violation of Discovery Charter School's policy and rules may result in loss of access to the Internet. Additional disciplinary action may be determined by the school in keeping with existing procedures and practices regarding inappropriate language or behavior. When and where applicable, law enforcement agencies may be involved.

Discovery Charter School makes no warranties of any kind, neither expressed nor implied, for the Internet access it is providing. The school will not be responsible for any damages users suffer, including—but not limited to—loss of data resulting from delays or interruptions in service. The school will not be responsible for the accuracy, nature, or quality of information stored on school diskettes, hard drives, servers, etc.; nor for the accuracy, nature, or quality of information gathered through school-provided Internet access. Discovery Charter School will not be responsible for personal property used to access school computers or networks or for school-provided Internet access. The school will not be responsible for unauthorized financial obligations or loss of privacy resulting from access to the Internet.

Parents of students at Discovery Charter School shall be provided with the following information:

Discovery Charter School is pleased to offer its students access to the Internet. The Internet is an electronic highway connecting hundreds of thousands of computers and millions of individual users all over the world. This computer technology will help propel our schools through the communication age by allowing students and staff to access and use resources from distant computers, communicate and collaborate with other individuals and groups around the world, and significantly expand their available information base. The Internet is a tool for life-long learning.

Families should be aware that some material accessible via the Internet may contain items that are illegal, defamatory, inaccurate, or potentially offensive to some people. In addition, it is possible to purchase certain goods and services via the Internet that could result in unwanted financial obligations for which a student's parent or guardian would be liable.

While the school's intent is to make Internet access available in order to further educational goals and objectives, students may find ways to access other materials as well. Even should the school institute technical methods or systems to regulate students' Internet access, those methods could not guarantee compliance with our acceptable use policy. That notwithstanding, Discovery Charter School believes that the benefits to students of access to the Internet exceed any disadvantages. Ultimately, however, parents and guardians of minors are responsible for setting and conveying the standards that their children should follow when using media and information sources.

NOTICE: This policy and all its provisions are subordinate to local, state, and federal statutes.

*Adapted from Indiana Public School Internet Acceptable Use Policy, 2001*

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**PESTICIDE APPLICATION POLICY**  
**(Last Reviewed/Revised 5.16)**

Effective July 1, 2001, New York State Education Law Section 409-H requires all public and non-public elementary and secondary schools to provide written notice to all persons in parental relation, faculty and staff regarding the potential use of pesticides periodically throughout the year.

Discovery Charter School is required to maintain a list of all persons in parental relation, faculty and staff who wish to receive 48-hour written identification of certain pesticide applications. The following applications are NOT subject to prior notification requirements:

- ❖ A school that remains unoccupied for a continuous 72-hour period following a pesticides application
- ❖ Anti-microbial products
- ❖ Nonvolatile rodenticides in tamper resistant bait stations in areas inaccessible to children
- ❖ Silica gels and other nonvolatile ready to use pastes, foams, or gels in areas inaccessible to children
- ❖ Boric acid and disodium octaborate tetrahydrate
- ❖ The application of EPA designated biopesticides
- ❖ The application of EPA designated exempt materials under 40CRF152.25
- ❖ The use of aerosol products with a directed spray in a container of 18 fluid ounces or less when used to protect individuals from imminent threat from stinging and biting insects including venomous spiders, bees, wasps, and hornets

In the event an emergency application is necessary to protect against imminent threat to human health, a good faith effort will be made to supply written notification to those on the 48-hour notification list.

If you would like to receive 48-hour prior notification of pesticide applications that are scheduled to occur, please complete the attached form and return it to the DCS Office Manager in the school's main office.

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Request for Prior Notification of Pesticide Applications

Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Evening Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_



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## **ATTENDANCE POLICY** **(Last Reviewed/Revised 5.16)**

### **Statement of Overall Objectives**

Every student has a right to educational opportunities that will enable the student to develop his or her fullest potential. Attendance policies are based on the principle that regular school attendance maximizes the student's interaction with his or her teachers and peers and is a major component of academic success. Improved school attendance generally increases student achievement. Therefore, attendance policies that provide for the early identification of attendance problems and effective methods to address them are most likely to succeed. Successful implementation of any attendance policy requires cooperation among all members of the education community, including parents/persons in parental relation, students, teachers, administrators, and support staff. DCS has set a goal for each student to attend no less than 98% of the year (i.e. less than 3 absences a year with 2 late arrivals and 2 early pickups).

### **Compulsory Education under New York State Law**

School age minors age 6-16 must attend school regularly as prescribed where the student resides. The student must attend school the entire time classes are in session (NYS Education Law 3205). The compulsory education law is designed to require school attendance and insure that no child is denied the opportunity to receive an education. New York State compulsory education laws specify that each minor child from 6 to 16 years of age, mentally and physically fit, will be in regular attendance for the entire time school is in session. At Discovery Charter School a child who becomes 5 years of age prior to December 1 during a school year is eligible to attend Kindergarten starting in August of that school year. According to State law, the school year begins July 1.

### **Description of Strategies to Meet Objectives**

DCS will: a) Create and maintain a positive school building culture by fostering a positive physical and psychological environment where the presence of strong adult role models encourages respectful and nurturing interactions between adults and students. This positive school culture is aimed at encouraging a high level of student bonding to the school, which in turn should lead to increased attendance. b) Maintain accurate record keeping to record attendance, absence, tardiness or early departure of each student. c) Develop strategies to improve school attendance for all students (e.g. Monthly 100% attendance celebrations at Community Circle).

### **Attendance/Participation Regulations**

a) The attendance policy begins upon the first day of school in August or when the student enrolls- if after the first day of school. b) It is the responsibility of the family to contact their teachers regarding missed work and tests. c) Three "illegal" instances of tardiness or early departure will constitute an "illegal" absence. d) Students who do not attend classes do not participate in the learning that takes place. Students and families should be aware that a lack of class participation is a factor that can be considered in ~~the course~~ a student's grade. For purposes of this policy, classroom participation means that a student is in class and prepared to work and is actively involved in instruction. e) A form letter will be mailed to parents/guardians starting after a student has five absences from school (see attached attendance guide for families). f) *Any student who misses five consecutive days of school without the school being notified will be considered withdrawn from the school by the family and her/his spot will be lost.* g) Excessive absences are grounds for retention ("failing" or not moving on to the next grade) regardless of individual academic results

### **Excuses:**

Within five days of a student's return to school from an absence, a written excuse from a parent or legal guardian must be received or the school must consider the absence "illegal". Tardiness or early departure must be explained with a note from the parent/guardian on the day of the event. If an excessive pattern of legal absences is identified by the Director or his or her designee, the office will investigate the validity of the excuses and reasons for absences. If the absences are found to be illegal, then they will be recorded as such.

### **Notice of Students who are Absent, Tardy, or Depart Early without Proper Excuse**

DCS will be responsible for annually notifying the parent/person in parental relation for a student of the proper procedure to follow for students who are absent, tardy or departs early without proper excuse. In following the guidelines on the following page, if the parent/person in parental relation cannot be reached by phone, the staff member will provide such notification by mail. If deemed necessary by appropriate school officials, or if requested by the parent/person in parental relation, a school conference shall be scheduled between the parent/person in parental relation and appropriate staff members in order to address the student's attendance.

## Attendance Guide for Families (5.16)

DCS expects regular and on time school attendance. Please see the DCS Attendance Policy for more detail.

<b>Absences</b>	<b>Late arrival or Early dismissal</b>
<p><u>Absences without DCS being notified by 8:30:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phone call, text or email to parent/guardian generally made by DCS staff</li> </ul> <p><u>After 5 absences:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5-day letter sent home with student</li> <li>• Parent/guardian signs documentation of notification of school attendance policy and current status</li> </ul> <p><u>After 10 absences:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10-day letter mailed home</li> <li>• Leadership Team Member holds a phone conference with parent/guardian</li> <li>• Parent/guardian signs documentation of notification of school attendance policy and current status</li> </ul> <p><u>After 15 absences:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School Director notified</li> <li>• 15-day letter mailed home</li> <li>• Face to face conference with member of the Leadership Team <i>(If a face to face conference is not attended within ten school days after the letter is sent home, DCS will assume the family is not interested in reenrollment for the following year.)</i></li> <li>• Parent/guardian signs documentation of notification of school attendance policy and current status</li> </ul> <p><u>After 20 absences:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance Team Member will call CPS (Child Protective Service)</li> <li>• Student considered for retention (i.e. held back to repeat grade)</li> </ul> <p><u>After 30 total absences:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Likely retention (i.e. held back to repeat grade)</li> <li>• Face to face conference with member of the Leadership Team <i>(If a face to face conference is not attended within ten days of school, DCS will assume the family is not interested in reenrollment for the following year.)</i></li> <li>• 30-day letter mailed</li> <li>• CPS updated by Attendance Team Member</li> <li>• Parent/guardian signs documentation of notification of school attendance policy and current status</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Students arriving after 8:00 will be considered late.</b></p> <p><b>All students arriving late or getting picked up early must be signed in/out at the office by an adult.</b></p> <p><b>3 illegal instances of being late and/or getting picked up early will constitute an illegal absence.</b></p> <p><u>After 9 late arrivals and/or early dismissals:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phone call, text or email to parent/guardian</li> </ul> <p><u>After 15 late arrivals and/or early dismissals:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance Team Member holds a phone conference with parent/guardian</li> <li>• Parent/guardian signs documentation of notification of school attendance policy and current status</li> <li>• School Director notified</li> </ul> <p><u>After 33 late arrivals and/or early dismissals:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School Director notified</li> <li>• 35-day late/early letter mailed</li> <li>• Parent/guardian signs documentation of notification of school attendance policy and current status</li> <li>• Attendance Team Member contacts CPS (Child Protective Services)</li> </ul> <p><u>After 45 late arrivals and/or early dismissals:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student considered for retention (i.e. held back to repeat grade)</li> <li>• Attendance Team Member or School Director hold a face to face conference with parent/guardian</li> <li>• Parent/guardian signs documentation of notification of school attendance policy and current status</li> </ul> <p><small>*All contact, or attempted contact, will be logged by school throughout the process- including parent/guardian failure to sign paperwork or meet. *The school reserves the right to modify the policy for individual circumstances (e.g. long-term hospitalization)</small></p>
<b><u>Excused Absences, Late Arrival and Early Dismissal</u></b>	<b><u>Unexcused Absences, Late Arrival and Early Dismissal</u></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Serious Illness (with a note within 5 days)</li> <li>• Doctor's Appointment (with a note within 5 days)</li> <li>• Court Appearance (with a note within 5 days)</li> <li>• Religious Observance (with a note within 5 days)</li> <li>• Death of a Close Family Member (with a note within 5 days)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vacations or family travel of any kind</li> <li>• <i>Any absences without a note within 5 days*</i></li> <li>• Missing bus or ride</li> <li>• Sick family member</li> </ul> <p><small>(per NYSED, phone calls without a note will not allow an absence to be considered legal)</small></p>

### DISCIPLINE POLICY (Last Reviewed/Revised 5.16)

To ensure that an environment is created where teaching and learning can flourish, Discovery Charter School has developed a series of rules that address proper student behavior, maintenance of order within the school and while people are engaged in school activities, and a statement of student rights and responsibilities.

School staff will ensure that parents and students are well informed of these policies both before enrollment and at the time that students sign up for enrollment in the charter school. As such, students will be completely knowledgeable about the behavior that is expected from them, and parents will be reassured that a positive and productive classroom environment will be maintained in the charter school. Parents will also be aware of the consequences for their children of disrupting the school environment. All staff will be trained in the implementation of these policies.

The discipline and order policies of the Discovery Charter School include the following components:

- I. Student Disciplinary Code
- II. Maintenance of Public Order on School Property
- III. Student Rights and Responsibilities

### **I. Student Disciplinary Code**

*Existing student discipline policies from many public school districts were examined in developing this code, and components of those district policies are evident throughout the disciplinary code of the Discovery Charter School.*

This Code sets forth the school's policy regarding how students are expected to behave when participating in school activities, on and off school grounds, and how the school will respond when students fail to behave in accordance with these rules.

In all disciplinary matters, students will be given notice and will have the opportunity to present their version of the facts and circumstances leading to the imposition of disciplinary sanctions to the staff member imposing such sanctions. Depending on the severity of the infraction, disciplinary responses include suspension (short or long term), removal from class to an alternative in-school location, detention, "reverse suspension" (where a parent or guardian is required to attend class with their child, exclusion from school activities, and expulsion. A student may not return to school after a suspension, until a face-to-face meeting is held between the parent/guardian and a member of the discipline team. Any additional days missed beyond the original suspension due to a failure to attend a conference are considered illegal absences. Where appropriate, school officials also will contact law enforcement agencies.

Definitions. For the purposes of this Code:

- "**short term suspension**" shall refer to the removal of a student from school for disciplinary reasons for a period of five or fewer days;
- "**long term suspension**" shall refer to the removal of a student from school for disciplinary reasons for a period of more than five days; and
- "**Expulsion**" shall refer to the permanent removal of a student from school for disciplinary reasons.

#### A. Short Term Suspensions

A student who is determined to have committed any of the infractions listed below shall be subject minimally to a short term suspension, unless the Leadership Team determines that an exception should be made based on the individual circumstances of the incident and the student's disciplinary record. Such student also may be subject to any of the disciplinary measures set forth in Part C of this Code, and, depending on the severity of the infraction, a long term suspension also may be imposed and referrals to law enforcement authorities may be made.

##### Disciplinary Infractions

- Continued, willful disobedience, insubordination or open and persistent defiance of proper authority
- Endangering the physical safety of another by the use of force or threats of force that reasonably place the victim in fear of imminent bodily injury
- Engaging in conduct that disrupts school or classroom activities, or endangers or threatens to endanger the health, safety, welfare, or morals of others
- Willful destruction or defacing of school property
- Engaging in acts of sexual harassment, including—but not limited to—sexually related physical contact or offensive sexual comments
- Repeatedly committing minor behavioral infractions that, in the aggregate, may be considered an infraction subject to formal disciplinary action
- Committing any other act that school officials reasonably conclude warrants a disciplinary response

##### Procedures and Due Process for Short Term Suspensions

The members of the Leadership Team may impose a short term suspension. Upon imposing a short term suspension, the member of the Leadership Team shall inform the parent/guardian of the suspension verbally or in writing, with the reason or reasons for it. The student shall be given an opportunity to deny or explain the charges. Notice shall be provided by personal delivery, express mail delivery, telephone/text/email or equivalent means reasonably calculated to assure receipt

of such notice within 24 hours of suspension. Such notice shall provide a description of the incident or incidents that resulted in the suspension and shall provide the opportunity for an informal conference with whoever has imposed the suspension. The notification and informal conference shall be in the dominant language used by the parent(s) or guardian(s) whenever feasible. Such notice and opportunity for an informal conference shall take place prior to the suspension of the student unless the student's presence in the school poses a continuing danger to persons or property or an ongoing threat of disruption to the academic process, in which case, the notice and opportunity for an informal conference shall take place as soon after the suspension as is reasonably practicable.

The decision to impose a short term suspension or removal may be appealed first to the Board of Trustees of the charter school and next to the chartering entity, the New York State Board of Regents.

### B. Long Term Suspensions and Expulsion

A student who is determined to have committed any of the infractions listed below shall be subject minimally to a long term suspension, unless the Director or Board of Trustees determines that an exception should be made based on the circumstances of the incident and the student's disciplinary record. Such student may also be subject to any of the disciplinary measures set forth in Part C, to referral to law enforcement authorities, and/or expulsion.

#### Disciplinary Infractions

- Possess, use, attempt to use, or transfer any firearm, knife, razor blade, explosive, mace, tear gas or other dangerous object of no reasonable use to the student at school
- Commit, or attempt to commit, arson on school property
- Possess, sell, distribute or use any alcoholic beverage, controlled substance, imitation controlled substance, or marijuana on school property or at school-sponsored events
- Assault any other student or staff member
- Intentionally cause physical injury to another person, except when the student's actions are reasonably necessary to protect himself or herself from injury
- Vandalize school property causing major damage
- Intense repeated bullying
- Commit any act that school officials reasonably conclude warrants a long term suspension

In addition, a student who commits any of the acts that would ordinarily result in a short term suspension may, instead or in addition, be subject to a long term suspension at the Leadership Team's discretion.

Federal and State Laws require the expulsion from school for a period of not less than one year of a student who is determined to have brought a firearm to a school, or to have possessed a firearm at school, except that the Director may modify such expulsion requirement for a student on a case-by-case basis, if such modification is in writing.

#### Procedures and Due Process for Long Term Suspensions and Expulsions

The discipline team may impose a long-term suspension. Such a suspension will typically only be imposed only after the student has been found guilty at a formal suspension hearing. In extreme circumstances, the Director may expel the student from school. Upon determining that a student's action warrants a possible long-term suspension, the Director shall verbally inform the student that he or she is being suspended and is being considered for a long-term suspension (or expulsion) and state the reasons for such actions. The Director also shall immediately notify the student's parent(s) or guardian(s) in writing. Written notice shall be provided by personal delivery, express mail delivery, or equivalent means reasonably calculated to assure receipt of such notice within 24 hours of suspension at the last known address. Where possible, notification also shall be provided by telephone. Such notice shall provide a description of the incident or incidents that resulted in the suspension and shall indicate that a formal hearing will be held on the matter, which may result in a long-term suspension (or expulsion). The notification provided shall be in the dominant language used by the parent(s) or guardian(s). At the formal hearing, the student shall have the right to be represented by counsel, question witnesses, and present evidence.

If the suspension proceeding has been initiated by the Director, the Director shall personally hear and determine the proceeding, or may—at his or her discretion—designate a hearing officer to conduct the hearing. The hearing officer's report shall be advisory only and the Director may accept or reject all or part of it. The Director's decision after the formal hearing to impose a long term suspension or expulsion may be appealed first to the Board of Trustees and next to the chartering entity, the New York State Board of Regents.

### C. Additional Disciplinary Measures

The disciplinary measures listed below may be imposed in addition to short term or long term suspensions or, if an exception has been made by the Director to the imposition of a minimum suspension, in place of such suspension. Behavior not listed in A or B (above) of this Code but determined by appropriate school staff to warrant disciplinary action, including but not limited to poor attendance, also may be subject to these additional disciplinary measures.

Suspensions may be imposed only by the discipline team and their designees. All other disciplinary measures may be imposed by the Leadership Team, who must inform the Director of such action by the end of the school day.

- a. **Behavioral Contract:** School staff may design written agreements with students subject to punishment under this code to identify target behaviors, define expectations, and describe consequences, provided that the affected student and his or her parent(s) or guardian(s) are informed that the decision to enter into such a contract is voluntary.
- b. **Detention:** After notice to the student and parent(s) or guardian(s), and provided that there is no objection from the student and parent(s) or guardian(s) and the student has appropriate transportation home, a student may be detained after school in detention.
- c. **Loss of School Privileges:** After notice to the student and parent(s) or guardian(s), a student may be suspended from participation in any or all extra-curricular activities. The student and parent(s) or guardian(s) shall be given an opportunity to meet informally with the Director or teacher involved. If possible, the Director or teacher involved shall hold any requested meeting prior to imposing the suspension from participation in extra-curricular activities.
- d. **In-School Short Term Suspension:** Students may be temporarily removed from the classroom and placed in another area of the school where the student will receive substantially equivalent instruction. The student and his or her parent(s) or guardian(s) will be given an opportunity for an informal conference regarding such suspension with whoever was involved in imposing the suspension.
- e. **Suspension from School Transportation:** As the result of misconduct occurring on a bus or other student transportation for school outings, and after notice to the student and his or her parent(s) or guardian(s), a student may be suspended from school transportation that may be offered for school outings.
- f. **“Revers Suspension”:** Parents/Guardians may be required to attend school with their child for the day or a portion of the day in order to promote positive behaviors and clear communication and expectations between the student’s home and school.

#### D. Provision of Services during Removal or Expulsion

The Charter School will ensure that alternative educational services are provided to a child who has been long term suspended or removed to help that child progress in the school’s general curriculum. Actual instruction—not merely the provision of classroom assignments—will be provided by a certified teacher. For a student who has been expelled, alternative instruction will be provided by a certified teacher until the student enrolls in another school, two weeks or until the end of the school year, whichever comes first.

#### E. Disciplinary Procedures for Students with Disabilities

In addition to the discipline procedures applicable to all students, the following procedures are applicable to students with disabilities. The school will comply with sections 300.519-300.529 of the Code of Federal Regulations and the following procedures, except that in the event that the following procedures are inconsistent with federal law and regulations, such federal law and regulations shall govern.

1. Students for whom the Individualized Education Program (IEP) includes specific disciplinary guidelines will be disciplined in accordance with those guidelines. If the disciplinary guidelines appear not to be effective or if there is concern for the health and safety of the student or others if those guidelines are followed with respect to a specific infraction, the matter will be immediately referred to the Committee on Special Education (CSE) of the student’s district of residence for consideration of a change in the guidelines.
2. Students for whom the IEP does not include specific disciplinary guidelines may be disciplined in accordance with standard school policy relating to each infraction. The CSE of the student’s district of residence shall be notified immediately of any suspension or removal from classes, and the school shall work with the CSE to arrange appropriate alternate instruction. If there is any reason to believe that the infraction is a result of the student’s disability, the student will immediately be referred to the referring CSE. If a connection is found, no penalty may be imposed, and the school will work with the CSE to consider a possible program modification following consultation with the referring educational agency. If a student identified as having a disability is suspended during the course of the school year for a total of eight days, such student will immediately be referred to the CSE of the student’s district of residence for reconsideration of the student’s educational placement. Such a student shall not be suspended for a total of more than 10 days during the school year without the specific involvement of the district’s CSE prior to the 11th day of suspension or removal, because such suspensions or removals may be considered to be a change in placement. In considering the placement of students referred because of disciplinary problems, the CSE of the student’s district of residence is expected to follow its ordinary policies with respect to parental notification and involvement.
3. In order to keep the resident district’s CSE appropriately informed of any disciplinary actions taken, the school will notify the resident district’s CSE whenever a procedural safeguards notice is issued pursuant to 34 CFR §300.523.
4. The school shall work with the district to ensure that the CSE of the student’s district of residence meets within 7 days of notification of any of the following:

- The commission of an infraction by a student with a disability who has previously been suspended for the maximum allowable number of days.
  - The commission of any infraction that is a result of the student's disability.
  - The commission of any infraction by a disabled student, regardless of whether the student had previously been suspended during the school year if, had such infractions been committed by a non-disabled student, the Director would seek to impose a suspension or removal in excess of five days.
5. The school shall immediately notify the resident district's CSE whenever it suspends or removes a student for more than 10 school days in a year or commences a removal that constitutes a change in placement so that the CSE of the student's district of residence may meet to establish a behavioral intervention plan or modify such a plan or its implementation. The school shall work with the resident district's CSE to ensure that each student's behavior modification plan is fully implemented.

#### Protection for Children Not Yet Eligible for Special Education and Related Services

A student not specifically identified as having a disability but whose school district of residence or charter school has a basis of knowledge (in accordance with 34 CFR ss.300.527 (b)) that a disability exists prior to the behavior which is the subject of the disciplinary action may request to be disciplined in accordance with these provisions.

#### Provision of Services during Removal for Children with Disabilities

Those students removed for a period of less than ten days will receive all classroom assignments and a schedule to complete such assignments during the time of his or her suspension. Provisions will be made to permit a suspended student to make up assignments or tests missed as a result of such suspension. The school will also provide additional alternative instruction with the reasonable promptness and by appropriate means to assist the student, so that the student is given full opportunity to complete assignments and master curriculum, including additional instructions, phone assistance, computer instruction and/or home visits and one-on-one tutoring.

During any subsequent removal that, combined with previous removals, equals ten or more school days, but does not constitute a change in placement, during the school year, services will be provided to the extent necessary to enable the child to appropriately progress in the general curriculum and in achieving the goals of his or her IEP. In these cases, school personnel in consultation with the child's special education teacher shall make the determination.

During removal for drug and weapon offenses (pursuant to CFR 300.520(a)(2)), services will be provided to the extent necessary to enable the child to appropriately progress in the general curriculum and in achieving the goals of his or her IEP. These service determinations are made by the CSE of the student's district of residence. The school will place students in interim alternative educational settings as appropriate and mandated by CFR 300.520(a)(2).

During any subsequent removal that does constitute a change in placement, but where the behavior is not a manifestation of a disability, the CSE of the student's district of residence will make the service determination.

#### CSE Meetings

Meetings of the CSE of the student's district of residence to either develop a behavioral assessment plan or, if the child has one, review such plan are required when (1) the child is first removed from his or her current placement for more than 10 school days in a school year; and (2) when commencing a removal which constitutes a change in placement.

Subsequently, if other removals occur which do not constitute a change in placement, the school will work with the CSE of the student's district of residence to review the child's assessment plan and its implementation to determine if modifications are necessary. If one or more members of the CSE of the student's district of residence believe that modifications are needed, then the CSE is expected to meet to modify the plan and/or its implementation.

#### Due Process

If discipline which would constitute a change in placement is contemplated for any student, then (1) not later than the date on which the decision to take such action is made, the parents of the student with a disability shall be notified of that decision and provided the procedural safeguards notice described in 34 CFR §300.504; and (2) immediately, if possible, but in no case later than 10 school days after the date on which such decision is made, the CSE of the student's district of residence and other qualified personnel shall meet and review the relationship between the child's disability and the behavior subject to the disciplinary action.

If, upon review, it is determined that the child's behavior was not a manifestation of his or her disability, then the child may be disciplined in the same manner as a child without a disability, except as provided in 34 CFR §300.121(d) (which relates to the provision of services to students with disabilities during periods of removal).

Parents may request a hearing to challenge the manifestation determination. Except as provided below, the child will remain in his or her current educational placement during the pendency of the hearing.

If a parent requests a hearing or an appeal regarding a disciplinary action relating to weapons or drugs to challenge the interim alternative educational setting or the manifestation determination, the child shall remain in the interim alternative educational setting pending the decision of the hearing officer or until the expiration of the time period provided for in the disciplinary action, whichever occurs first, unless the parent and charter school agree otherwise.

#### Records of Student Discipline

The charter school will maintain written records of all formal suspensions and expulsions including the name of the student, a description of the behavior engaged in, the disciplinary action taken, records of all correspondence with parents, documentation of alternative instruction by a certified teacher, and a record of the number of days a student has been suspended or removed for disciplinary reasons.

## **II. Maintenance of Public Order on School Property**

The following rules shall govern the conduct of students, teachers, staff, licensees, invitees, and other persons, whether or not their presence is authorized, on all property or facilities operated under the auspices of the charter school.

These rules and penalties are not to be considered exclusive or to preclude in any way the prosecution and conviction of any person for the violation of any federal, state or local law, rule, regulation or ordinance, or the imposition of a fine or penalty provided for therein. Additionally, these rules and regulations should not be construed to limit, but rather exist in conjunction with any other codes of conduct established for the school, such as a disciplinary code and/or bill of student rights and responsibilities.

- A. Prohibited Conduct: No person, either singly or in concert, shall:
1. Willfully cause physical injury to any other person, or threaten to use force that would result in such injury.
  2. Physically restrain or detain any other person, nor remove such person from any place where he or she is authorized to remain, except as necessary to maintain the established educational process.
  3. Willfully damage or destroy school property, nor remove or use such property without authorization.
  4. Without permission, express or implied, enter into any private office or classroom of an administrative officer, teacher, or staff member.
  5. Enter or remain in any building or facility for any purpose other than its authorized use or in such a manner as to obstruct its authorized use by others.
  6. Without authorization, remain in any building or facility after it is normally closed, nor without permission enter any building or facility prior to its normal opening.
  7. Refuse to leave any building or facility after being required to do so by the Director or an authorized administrative officer or his or her designee.
  8. Willfully obstruct or interfere with the free movement of persons and vehicles.
  9. Deliberately disrupt or prevent the peaceful and orderly conduct of classes, lectures, and meetings or deliberately interfere with the freedom of any person to express his or her views, unless such disruption is necessary to maintain order of the educational process.
  10. Possess on school property any rifle, shotgun, pistol, revolver, knife, chain, club or other weapon, whether or not the person has a license to possess such weapon. Further, it is the duty of the Director to inform the police of the presence or use of any such weapon or implements used as weapons on school property.
  11. Commit acts that threaten the safety and welfare of persons on school property.
  12. Violate any federal or state statute or regulation, local ordinance or school policy.
  13. Possess, use or distribute alcohol, drugs or drug paraphernalia.
  14. Harass or coerce any person.
  15. Refuse or fail to comply with a lawful order or direction of a school official in the performance of his or her duty.
  16. Distribute or post on school property any written material, pamphlets or posters without the prior approval of the Director.
- B. Penalties and Enforcement: Penalties for violations of these rules include, but are not limited to:
- withdrawal of authorization to remain upon school property;
  - ejection;
  - arrest;
  - for students, suspension or other disciplinary action; and
  - For school employees, dismissal or other disciplinary action.
- Staff members are required to report known violations of these rules to the Director and to make reasonable efforts to stop the prohibited conduct. The Director is responsible for the enforcement of these rules.



### III. Student Rights and Responsibilities

- A. Participation in School Activities: All students have the following rights:
1. To have the opportunity to take part in all school activities on an equal basis regardless of race, sex, national origin, creed or disability.
  2. To address the school on the same terms as any citizen.
- Similarly, all students are bound by the same rules for exclusion from school activities and public address.
- B. Records  
The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) requires a school to protect a student's privacy. The school will not disclose any information from the student's permanent records except as authorized pursuant to FERPA, or in response to a subpoena, as required by law. The parent(s) or guardian(s) of a student under 18 years of age, or a student 18 years of age or older, is entitled to access to the student's school records by submitting a written request to the Director. Further information concerning the disclosure of student information and limitations on such disclosure may be found in FERPA.
- C. Freedom of Expression
1. Students are entitled to express their personal opinions verbally, in writing, or by symbolic speech. The expression of such opinions, however, shall not interfere with the freedom of others to express themselves, and written expression of opinion must be signed by the author. Any form of expression that involves libel, slander, the use of obscenity, or personal attacks, or that otherwise disrupts the educational process, is prohibited. All forms of expression also must be in compliance with the Student Disciplinary Code, violations of which are punishable as stated in the Disciplinary Code.
  2. Student participation in the publication of school sponsored student newsletters, yearbooks, literary magazines and similar publications is encouraged as a learning and educational experience. These publications, if any, shall be supervised by qualified faculty advisors and shall strive to meet high standards of journalism. In order to maintain consistency with the school's basic educational mission, school authorities control the content of such publications.
- No person shall distribute any printed or written materials on school property without the prior permission of the Director. The Director may regulate the content of materials to be distributed on school property to the extent necessary to avoid material and substantial interference with the requirements of appropriate discipline in the operation of the school. The Director may also regulate the time, place, manner and duration of such distribution.
- D. Search and Seizure
1. A student and/or the student's belongings may be searched by a school official if the official has a reasonable suspicion to believe that a search of that student will result in evidence that the student violated the law or a school rule. Items which are prohibited on school property, or which may be used to disrupt or interfere with the educational process, may be removed from the student by school authorities.
  2. Student lockers and desks remain the property of the school, though the school is not responsible for books, clothing, or valuables left in lockers or desks. A student shall not place or keep in a locker or desk any article or material which is of a non-school nature and may cause or tend to cause the disruption of the mission of the school.
  3. The following rules shall apply to the search of school property assigned to a specific student and seizure of illegal items found therein:
    - a. School authorities will make an individual search of a student's locker or desk only when there is reasonable suspicion to believe that a student is in the possession of an item which is prohibited on school property or which may be used to disrupt or interfere with the educational process.
    - b. Searches shall be conducted under the authorization of the school Director or his/her designee.
    - c. Items which are prohibited on school property, or which may be used to disrupt or interfere with the educational process, may be removed from student lockers or desks by school authorities.
- E. Off-Campus Events  
Students at school sponsored off-campus events shall be governed by all the guidelines of the school and are subject to the authority of school officials. Failure to obey the lawful instructions of school officials shall result in a loss of eligibility to attend school sponsored off-campus events and may result in additional disciplinary measures in accordance with the Student Disciplinary Code.
- F. Discipline
1. Prohibited conduct and acceptable school responses to such conduct are set forth in the Student Disciplinary Code. In disciplinary matters, students shall have the opportunity to present their version of

the facts and circumstances leading to the imposition of disciplinary sanctions to the professional staff member imposing such sanction.

2. A student may be suspended from instruction only after his or her rights to due process have been observed.

### **DCS CODE OF CONDUCT (Last Reviewed/Revised 5.16)**

Discovery (DCS) has developed and will amend, as appropriate, a written Code of Conduct for the Maintenance of Order on School Property, including school functions, which shall govern the conduct of students, teachers and other school personnel, as well as visitors and/or vendors. The Board of Directors shall further provide for the enforcement of such Code of Conduct.

For purposes of this policy, and the implemented Code of Conduct, school property means in or within any building, structure, athletic playing field, playground, parking lot or land contained within the real property boundary line of 133 Hoover Drive Rochester NY 14615, or in or on a school bus (Education Law §11[1]); a school function shall mean a school-sponsored extracurricular event or activity (Education Law §11[2]); regardless of where such event or activity takes place, including those that take place in another state and/or another country; and a school bus shall mean every motor vehicle owned by a public or governmental agency or private school and operated for the transportation of pupils, children of pupils, teachers and other persons acting in a supervisory capacity, to or from school or school activities, or, privately owned and operated for compensation for the transportation of pupils, children of pupils, teachers and other persons acting in a supervisory capacity to or from school or school activities (Education Law §11[1] and Vehicle and Traffic Law §142);

The DCS Code of Conduct has been developed in collaboration with student, teacher, administrator, and parent organizations, school safety personnel and other school personnel.

The DCS Code of Conduct includes the following:

a) Provisions regarding conduct, dress and language deemed appropriate and acceptable on school property and at school functions, and conduct, dress and language deemed unacceptable and inappropriate on school property; provisions regarding acceptable civil and respectful treatment of teachers, school administrators, other school personnel, students and visitors on school property and at school functions; the appropriate range of disciplinary measures which may be imposed for violation of such Code; and the roles of teachers, administrators, other school personnel, the Board of Directors and parents/persons in parental relation to the student;

b) Provisions prohibiting discrimination, bullying and/or harassment (the creation of a hostile environment by conduct or by threats, intimidation or abuse) against any student, by employees (any person receiving compensation from the school or employee of a contracted service provider or worker placed within the school under public assistance employment program, pursuant to title 9-B of article 5 of the Social Services Law, and consistent with the provisions of such title for the provision of services to such district, its students or employees, directly or through contract, whereby such services performed by such person involve direct student contact- Education Law §§11[4] and 1125[3]) or students on school property or at a school function or off school property when the actions create or would foreseeably create a risk of substantial disruption within the school environment or where it is foreseeable that the conduct might reach school property, that creates a hostile environment by conduct, with or without physical contact threats, intimidation or abuse (verbal or nonverbal) of such a severe nature that:

1. Has or would have the effect of unreasonably and substantially interfering with a student's educational performance, opportunities or benefits, or mental, emotional and/or physical well-being; or
2. Reasonably cause or would reasonably be expected to cause a student to fear for his/her physical safety.

When the term "bullying" is used, even if not explicitly stated, such term includes cyber bullying, meaning such harassment or bullying that occurs through any form of electronic communication.

Such conduct shall include, but is not limited to, threats, intimidation, or abuse based on a person's actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practices, disability ((a) a physical, mental or medical impairment resulting from anatomical, physiological, genetic or neurological conditions which prevents the exercise of a normal body function or is demonstrable by medically accepted clinical or laboratory diagnostic techniques or (b) a record

of such impairment or (c) a condition regarded by others as such an impairment- Education Law §11[4] and Executive Law §292[21]), sexual orientation (actual or perceived heterosexuality, homosexuality or bisexuality- Education Law §11[5]), gender (actual or perceived sex and includes a person's gender identity or expression- Education Law Section §11[6]), or sex; provided that nothing in this subdivision shall be construed to prohibit a denial of admission into, or exclusion from, a course of instruction based on a person's gender that would be permissible under Education Law Sections 3201-a or 2854(2) (a) and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 USC Section 1681, et seq.), or to prohibit, as discrimination based on disability, actions that would be permissible under 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973;

c) Standards and procedures to assure security and safety of students and school personnel;

d) Provisions for the removal from the classroom and from school property, including a school function, of students and other persons who violate the Code;

e) Provisions prescribing the period for which a disruptive student may be removed from the classroom for each incident, provided that no such student shall return to the classroom until the School Director (or his/her designated School District administrator) makes a final determination pursuant to Education Law Section 3214(3-a)(c) or the period of removal expires, whichever is less;

f) Disciplinary and remedial measures to be taken for incidents on school property or at school functions involving the use of tobacco, the possession or use of illegal substances or weapons, the use of physical force, vandalism, violation of another student's civil rights, harassment and threats of violence- including, but not limited to, peer support groups, assignment of a mentor, corrective instruction that reemphasizes behavioral expectations, engagement of student in reflective activities, supportive intervention and/or mediation, behavioral assessment or evaluation, behavioral management plan or contract, detention, suspension or expulsion;

g) Provisions for responding to acts of discrimination, bullying and/or harassment against students by employees or students on school property, at a school function or off school property when the actions create or would foreseeable create a risk of substantial disruption within the school environment or where it is foreseeable that the conduct might reach school property, pursuant to clause (b) of this subparagraph- DCS recognizes the importance of reporting incidents of discrimination, harassment, bullying: 1.) School employees who witness harassment, bullying, and/or discrimination or receive an oral or written report of such acts shall promptly orally notify the School Director, Dean of Students or School Counselor not later than one school day afterwards, and shall also file a written report no later than two days after making the oral report 2.) The School Director, Dean of Students or Social Worker shall lead or supervise the thorough investigation of all reports of harassment, bullying and/or discrimination, and ensure that such investigation is completed promptly after receipt of any written reports 3.) When an investigation verifies a material incident of harassment, bullying, and/or discrimination, the School Director or designee shall take prompt action, reasonably calculated to end the harassment, bullying, and/or discrimination, eliminate any hostile environment, create a more positive school culture and climate, prevent recurrence of the behavior, and ensure the safety of the student or students against whom such behavior was directed. 4.) The School Director or his designee shall notify promptly the local law enforcement agency when it is believed that any harassment, bullying or discrimination constitutes criminal conduct. 5.) The School Director shall provide a regular report, at least once a year, on data and trends related to harassment, bullying, and/or discrimination to the Board of Directors. 6.) Pursuant to Education Law section 13, retaliation by any school employee or student shall be prohibited against any individual who, in good faith, reports or assists in the investigation of harassment, bullying, and/or discrimination.;

h) Provisions for detention, suspension and removal from the classroom of students, consistent with Education Law Section 3214 and other applicable federal, state and local laws, including provisions for school authorities to establish procedures to ensure the provision of continued educational programming and activities for students removed from the classroom, placed in detention, or suspended from school, which shall include alternative educational programs appropriate to individual student needs;

i) Procedures by which violations are reported and determined, and the disciplinary measures imposed and carried out;

j) Provisions ensuring the Code of Conduct and its enforcement are in compliance with state and federal laws relating to students with disabilities;

k) Provisions setting forth the procedures by which local law enforcement agencies shall be notified of Code violations which constitute a crime;

- l) Provisions setting forth the circumstances under and procedures by which parents/persons in parental relation to the student shall be notified of Code violations;
- m) Provisions setting forth the circumstances under and procedures by which a complaint in criminal court, a juvenile delinquency petition or person in need of supervision ("PINS") petition as defined in Articles 3 and 7 of the Family Court Act will be filed;
- n) Circumstances under and procedures by which referral to appropriate human service agencies shall be made;
- o) A minimum suspension period for students who repeatedly are substantially disruptive of the educational process or substantially interfere with the teacher's authority over the classroom, provided that the suspending authority may reduce such period on a case-by-case basis to be consistent with any other state and federal law. For purposes of this requirement, as defined in Commissioner's Regulations, "repeatedly is substantially disruptive of the educational process or substantially interferes with the teacher's authority over the classroom" shall mean engaging in conduct which results in the removal of the student from the classroom by teacher(s) pursuant to the provisions of Education Law Section 3214(3-a) and the provisions set forth in the Code of Conduct on four (4) or more occasions during a marking quarter;
- p) A minimum suspension period for acts that would qualify the student to be defined as a violent student pursuant to Education Law Section 3214(2-a)(a). However, the suspending authority may reduce the suspension period on a case-by-case basis consistent with any other state and federal law;
- q) A Bill of Rights and Responsibilities of Students which focuses upon positive student behavior, and a safe and supportive school climate, which shall be written in plain-language, publicized and explained in an age-appropriate manner to all students on an annual basis; and
- r) Guidelines and programs for in-service education programs for all District staff members to ensure effective implementation of school policy on school conduct and discipline, including but not limited to, guidelines on promoting a safe and supportive school climate while discouraging, among other things, discrimination, bullying and/or harassment against students by students and/or school employees; and including safe and supportive school climate concepts in the curriculum and classroom management.

The Board of Directors shall adopt the DCS Code of Conduct only after at least one public hearing that provided for the participation of school personnel, parents/persons in parental relation, students, and any other interested parties. Copies of the Code of Conduct shall be disseminated pursuant to law and Commissioner's Regulations.

The DCS Code of Conduct shall be reviewed on an annual basis, and updated as necessary in accordance with law. DCS may establish a committee pursuant to Education Law Section 2801(5)(a) to facilitate review of its Code of Conduct and DCS's response to Code of Conduct violations. The Board of Directors shall reapprove any updated Code of Conduct or adopt revisions only after at least one (1) public hearing that provides for the participation of school personnel, parents/persons in parental relation, students, and any other interested parties. DCS shall file a copy of its Code of Conduct and any amendments, with the Charter School Office, in a manner prescribed by the Charter School Office, no later than thirty (30) days after their respective adoptions. The Board of Directors shall ensure community awareness of its Code of Conduct by:

- a) Posting the complete Code of Conduct on the Internet website including any annual updates and other amendments to the Code;
- b) Providing copies of a summary of the Code of Conduct to all students and parents or persons in parental relation to students in an age-appropriate version, written in plain language, at the beginning of each school year, and making the summary available thereafter upon request;
- c) Providing each existing teacher with access to an electronic copy of the complete Code of Conduct and notice of any amendments to the Code as soon as practicable following initial adoption or amendment of the Code; and
- d) Making complete copies available for review by students, parents or persons in parental relation to students, other school staff and other community members.

### **Dignity for All Students**

The Dignity Act was signed into law on September 13, 2010 and took effect on July 1, 2012. "New York State's Dignity for All Students Act seeks to provide the State's public elementary and secondary school students with a safe and supportive environment free from discrimination, intimidation, taunting, harassment, and bullying on school property, a school bus and/or at a school function. The Dignity Act also amended Section 801-a of New York State Education Law regarding instruction in civility, citizenship, and character education by expanding the concepts of tolerance, respect for others and dignity to include: an awareness and sensitivity in the relations of people, including but not limited to, different races, weights, national origins, ethnic groups, religions, religious practices, mental or physical abilities, sexual orientations, gender identity, and sexes." (NYSSED.gov)

In accordance with NYS Education Law, the Board of Education has adopted Policy 7550, *Dignity for All Students*, to provide a framework of support to continue to maintain a culture and climate of mutual respect in our schools. The District Code of Conduct provides expectations for students, staff, and visitors as they work and/or volunteer in our schools.

In each school, a Dignity for All Students (DASA) Coordinator is thoroughly trained to handle human relations in the areas of race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender (identity or expression) and sex. The DASA coordinators are available to assist families with any concerns.

Dignity Act Coordinators: Kristen Nowakowski- [knowakowski@rochesterdiscovery.com](mailto:knowakowski@rochesterdiscovery.com) 585-342-4032; Joseph Saia- [jsaia@rochesterdiscovery.com](mailto:jsaia@rochesterdiscovery.com) 585-342-4032

### **Privacy Rights**

As part of any investigation, DCS has the right to search all school property and equipment including DCS computers. Rooms, desks, cabinets, lockers, computers, etc. are provided by DCS for the use of staff and students, but the users do not have exclusive use of these locations or equipment and should not expect that materials stored therein will be private.

Education Law Sections 11(8), 801-a, 2801 and 3214 Family Court Act Articles 3 and 7 Vehicle and Traffic Law Section 142 8 New York Code of Rules and Regulations (NYCRR) Section 100.2

### **IN CONCLUSION**

The DCS Board of Directors acknowledges its responsibility to protect the educational climate of the school and to promote responsible student behavior. Accordingly, the Board delegates to the School Director the responsibility for assuring the implementation of this Code of Conduct for the Maintenance of Order on School Property, including school functions, which shall govern the conduct of students as well as teachers, other school personnel, and visitors.

DCS would like to acknowledge the Brighton Central School District as the model for much of this Code of Conduct

Critical to the success of field studies are the adults entrusted with the care and supervision of our students. For most field studies, a request is announced to solicit parent volunteers to chaperone. Parent involvement is an important part of our school's culture, and chaperoning on fieldwork is a great way to participate in your child's education. Chaperones perform a wide range of functions. They ensure children's safety, monitor behavior, carry out teachers' instructions, and support individuals and groups in gathering information. Chaperones help interpret exhibits and presentations, and they sometimes lead small groups of students.

Discovery Charter School takes seriously the responsibility to provide safe and productive learning experiences for students. On fieldwork, doing so requires that we make chaperone decisions that we feel are in the best interests of the class.

The following principles guide our chaperone selection process:

- The school limits the number of chaperones to suit the nature and destination of the fieldwork. Parents who are not selected as chaperones are not permitted to join the class on their own or to visit their children during the course of the field study,
- Chaperones are selected for each field study with a number of factors in mind, including individual student needs, gender balance, and previous chaperone experience.
- Chaperone selections are made based on what is best for the class, not what is best or fairest for adults.

Requirements for chaperones for day fieldwork include:

- Ability to commit to the field study for its entire duration free of other responsibilities, e.g. care of siblings, cell phone calls, or other appointments
- Ability to safely and responsibly care for a small group of students
- Ability to follow teacher directions and comply with teacher expectations for chaperones
- Ability to maintain confidentiality regarding students and other parents
- Ability to pass a required background check (for volunteering multiple times)
- Attendance at Volunteer/Chaperone training every three years

Chaperones for fieldwork are solicited by the classroom teachers and/or the parent liaison via backpack mail or phone calls. Every attempt is made to accommodate all parents wishing to attend. However, in some instances limits are placed on the number of chaperones if the means of transportation, destination, or nature of the fieldwork are best suited to fewer adults.

Expectations of parent chaperones during fieldwork include:

- Leave siblings under the care of another adult, as siblings are not permitted on fieldwork
- Dress modestly and wear clothing that is appropriate for the weather and fieldwork destination
- Ride the bus with the class
- Follow instructions of school personnel regarding schedules, behavior and academic expectations
- Maintain continuous proximity and supervision of the assigned children
- Avoid chatting with teachers and other parents during fieldwork activities
- Use student management strategies and language consistent with the school's approach
- Inform teachers of student management issues that require intervention
- Refrain from purchasing extra treats beyond what is being provided to the whole class
- Provide a level of support to students as directed by the teachers

Each field study has a carefully designed purpose and set of learning activities. The school strives to prepare chaperones in advance so that they may be most effective in supporting student learning.

Discovery Charter School (DCS) will follow all applicable requirements of the IDEA and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and implement regulations relating to the confidentiality of student records (34 CFR §300.610-627 and 34 CFR Part 99). All appropriate staff members will be trained in the requirements, and the Director, or designee, will be responsible for ensuring the confidentiality of personally identifiable information within student records. Training in these matters will be provided for school staff at the beginning of each school year.

In accordance with FERPA, parents will be allowed to inspect and review all of their student's educational records maintained by DCS. DCS will comply with a parent/guardian's request for access without undue delay, but in no case more than 10 days after it has received the request.

Before DCS makes such a disclosure of personally identifiable information relating to a student, DCS will obtain a signed and dated written consent of the parent/guardian. However, personally identifiable information may be released without the prior consent of the parent/guardian to school officials and teachers, but only if DCS determines that such persons have legitimate educational interests/need to know. A log will be maintained of those who have had access to student information.

All files that are required by law to be kept confidential shall be kept under lock, in a place and manner that restricts access to where such records are kept to only those individuals who are authorized to view these records.

DCS will ensure that the appropriate staff members receive the most current IEP for a student, and a record/log of such contact shall be kept at the school.

### **Notification of Rights under FERPA for Elementary and Secondary Schools**

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 45 days after the day Discovery Charter School (DCS) receives a request for access.  
Parents or eligible students should submit to the school director (or appropriate school official) a written request that identifies the records they wish to inspect. The 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 DCS to amend a record should write the school director (or appropriate school official), clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it should be changed. If the school decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the 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.
3. The right to provide written consent before the 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 school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the 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 school board. A school official also may include a volunteer or contractor outside of the school who performs an institutional service of function for which the 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, or therapist; 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 school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility. Upon request, the 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.
4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by DCS to comply with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by DCS to comply with the requirement of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW

See the list below of the disclosures that elementary and secondary schools may make without consent. FERPA permits the disclosure of PII from students' 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 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 school to record the disclosure. Parents and eligible students have a right to inspect and review the record of disclosures. A school may disclose PII from the education records of a student without obtaining prior written consent of the parents or the eligible student -

~To other school officials, including teachers, within the educational agency or institution whom the school has determined to have legitimate educational interests. This includes contractors, consultants, volunteers, or other parties to whom the school has outsourced institutional services or functions, provided that the conditions listed in 99.31(a)(1)(i)(B)(1) - (a)(1)(i)(B)(2) are met. (99.31(a)(1))

~To officials of another school, school system, or institution of postsecondary education where the student seeks or intends to enroll, or where the student is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes related to the student's enrollment or transfer, subject to the requirements of 99.34. (99.31(a)(2))

~To authorized representatives of the U.S. Comptroller General, the U.S. Attorney General, the U.S. Secretary of Education, or State and local educational authorities, such as the State educational agency in the parent or eligible student's State (SEA). Disclosures under this provision may be made, subject to the requirements of 99.35, in connection with an audit or evaluation of Federal- or State- supported education programs, or for the enforcement of or compliance with Federal legal requirements that relate to those programs. These entities may make further disclosures of PII to outside entities that are designated by them as their authorized representatives to conduct any audit, evaluation, or enforcement or compliance activity on their behalf. (99.31(a)(3) and 99.35)

~In connection with financial aid for which the student has applied or which the student has received, if the information is necessary to determine eligibility for the aid, determine the amount of the aid, determine the conditions of the aid, or enforce the terms and conditions of the aid. (99.31(a)(4))

~To State and local officials or authorities to whom information is specifically allowed to be reported or disclosed by a State statute that concerns the juvenile justice system and the system's ability to effectively serve, prior to adjudication, the student whose records were released, subject to 99.38. (99.31(a)(5))

~To organizations conducting studies for, or on behalf of, the school, in order to: (a) develop, validate, or administer predictive tests; (b) administer student aid programs; or (c) improve instruction. (99.31(a)(6))

~To accrediting organizations to carry out their accrediting functions. (99.31(a)(7))

~To parents of an eligible student if the student is a dependent for IRS tax purposes. (99.31(a)(8))

~To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena. (99.31(a)(9))

~To appropriate officials in connection with a health or safety emergency, subject to 99.36. (99.31(a)(10))

~Information the school has designated as "directory information" under 99.37. (99.31(a)(11))



This parent involvement policy addresses the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) commitment to shared accountability between schools and parents for high student achievement, including expanded public school choice and supplemental educational services for eligible children in low-performing schools, local development of parental involvement plans with sufficient flexibility to address local needs, and building parents' capacity for using effective practices to improve their own children's academic achievement.

New reporting provisions, added by the NCLB Act, offer parents important insight into their children's education, the professional qualifications of their teachers, and the quality of the schools they attend. The new legislation ensures that parents have the information they need to make well-informed choices for their children, more effectively share responsibility with their children's schools, and help those schools develop effective and successful academic programs. Parents now will know their children's academic strengths and weaknesses and how well schools are performing, and they will have other options and resources for helping their children if their schools are identified in need of improvement.

The new Title I, Part A is designed not only to help close the achievement gap between disadvantaged and minority students and their peers, but also to change the culture of America's schools so that success is defined in terms of student achievement and schools invest in every child.

The following plan lays out the respective responsibilities and commitments of the school, the administration and parents in working together for the academic success of students. In particular:

**Parents** will be involved in the joint development of the title I Plan through a variety of avenues including, but not limited to:

- parent representation on the board of Trustees
- participation in the school's Parent Organization
- annual surveys
- teacher conferences
- school planning, evaluation, and review committees

**Discovery Charter School** will aid in the planning and implementation of effective parent involvement activities to improve student academic achievement and school performance in numerous ways including, but not limited to:

- providing meeting space for a Parent Organization
- distributing meeting notices
- publishing Parent Organization articles and updates
- recommending/making presentations to parents on issues (e.g. understanding learning standards, school and student performance, opportunities for greater involvement with the school, accessing services)
- other coordination, technical assistance, and support necessary

**Discovery Charter School** will build the school's and parents' capacity for strong parental involvement in a variety of ways including, but not limited to:

- making enhancing parent involvement a regular topic at staff and Board meetings (as well as during employee evaluations)
- recommending/making presentations to the Parent Organization to develop parents' skills, confidence, and awareness of their role in interacting with the school for their child's success
- discussing parent involvement activities in every newsletter and at every parent/teacher conference

**Discovery Charter School** will coordinate and integrate Title I parental involvement strategies with those of other programs (including federal, state and local programs) by making the parent involvement strategies universal. Parents are integral to the mission of the school and have a central role in any program implemented at Discovery Charter School.

**Discovery Charter School** will conduct, with the involvement of parents, a biannual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of the parent involvement policy in improving the academic quality of the school. The evaluation will include identifying barriers (such as limited English proficiency, disability status, limited literacy, economic disadvantage, etc.) to greater participation by parents in activities authorized by Title I (such as limited English proficiency, disabilities), and use the findings of the evaluation to design strategies for more effective parental involvement and to revise, if necessary, the parental involvement policies at the school.

### **Mission**

Discovery Charter School will prepare students to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing world, providing children living in poverty "real skills for the real world." Students will be able to connect what they learn in the classroom to real world situations and achieve academically at levels that are significantly higher than the State Education Department assessment results in their home district. Through Expeditionary Learning, a positive learning environment will exist where inquiry and enthusiasm are welcome, acquired skills applied to and enhanced with the study of the real world, and a culture of teacher and staff development,

thorough assessment, and striving for exceptional results is nurtured. Technology will be used extensively. Parent and community involvement will be actively sought and harnessed. Children will leave the school exceptionally well prepared to engage the world wherever their interests take them.

Parent involvement is a significant component in the success of the school and its students.

### **Parent Involvement Benefits**

The Discovery Charter School believes that education is a partnership among the student, parent, school, and community. The academic achievement and success of our students depend on the actions, relationships, and strengths of these partnerships.

Parents and families provide their children with the foundation of their values, including education values, responsibilities, expectations, rules for home/school environment, and aspirations. Parents are the primary providers in preparing their children for school readiness and academic success. Parents' knowledge of their children's unique histories, traditions, life experiences, and learning experiences are important to their success. Parents also share knowledge about community resources and challenges, both of which are valuable and critical to their child's progress. The educational responsibility for our students is shared by parents, school, and community.

### **Parent Involvement Framework**

Discovery Charter School has developed a Family Association that will serve as the volunteer parent/community organization. The school's director (or a designee) will be present at all Family Association meetings. The Family Association will assist DCS in developing comprehensive programs of school, family, and community partnership as part of its efforts to increase parent involvement. DCS believes in the following:

- **Communicating:** Communication between home and school is regular, two-way and meaningful.
- **Parenting:** Parenting skills are promoted and supported.
- **Student Learning:** Parents play an integral role in assisting student learning.
- **Volunteering:** Parents are welcome in the school, and their support and assistance are actively sought.
- **School decision-making and advocacy:** Parents are full partners in the decisions that affect children and families.
- **Collaborating with community:** Community resources are used to strengthen the school, our families and student learning.

### **School Responsibilities and Expectations**

To successfully implement the School's beliefs in parent involvement, support will be comprised of, but not limited to the following:

- Fostering a network of sharing among parents and other members of the school community through the Parent Organization and other parent involvement opportunities.
- Disseminating information relevant to student achievement and parent's rights through community meetings, telephone contact, newsletters and the school website.
- Providing for parent participation on school decision-making teams.
- Ensuring compliance with Section 1118 (parent involvement) of the No Child Left Behind legislation. Building parents' capacity for involvement through:
  - Providing assistance to parents in understanding such topics as the State's academic content standards and the State student academic achievement standards, state and local academic assessments, the requirements of this part, and how to monitor a child's progress and work with educators to improve the academic achievement of their children;
  - Providing materials and training to help parents to work with their children to improve their children's achievement, such as literacy training and using technology, as appropriate, to foster parental involvement;
  - Educating teachers, pupil services personnel, principals, and other staff, with the assistance of parents, in the value and utility of the contributions of parents, and in how to reach out to, communicate with, and work with parents as equal partners, implement and coordinate parent programs, and build ties between parents and the school;
  - Coordinating and integrating, to the extent feasible and appropriate, parent involvement programs and activities that encourage and support parents in more fully participating in the education of their children;
  - Ensuring that information related to school and parent programs, meetings and other activities is sent to the parents of participating children in a format and, to the extent practicable, in a language the parents can understand.
- Providing an effective mechanism to ensure mutual respect and accountability in the school/parent partnership.

### **The Administration's Responsibilities and Expectations**

The director, in collaboration with parents and with the support of the DCS Family Association, will:

- Attend (or designate a representative) to participate in the Family Association representing DCS in order to:
  - Ensure that the Family Association meets on a regular basis and that the organization continues to encourage the inclusion of new parents into the organization;

- Ensure that the Family Association elects officers and holds regular meetings that are scheduled in consultation with parents and announced publicly, with all invited to attend;
- Ensure that the Family Association is maintained as a viable entity to ensure that parents, who are full partners in their child's education, have an opportunity to be included in meetings and decision-making;
- Ensure that regular elections are held to elect members to represent all parents from the school community to serve on the Family Association;
- Ensure that the school community elects one (1) parent representative to serve on the School's Board of Trustees.
- Establish and maintain an open-door policy of candid and frequent communication between the school administration and parents.

### **Parent Responsibilities and Expectations**

Parents are partners in the DCS and share responsibility for the successful education of the children. Parent involvement is the action parents take to participate in regular and meaningful communication with the school to provide an education that graduates productive citizens. All parent involvement is aimed at increasing student achievement through various levels of involvement.

Parents can be defined as any parent, guardian, and/or person in parental relation to a child or children. Parents are expected to:

- Ensure that children come to school every day prepared and ready to learn.
- Provide high-quality nutrition, adequate sleep, and exercise for their children.
- Provide a quiet, well-lit place for children to do homework and actively monitor their children's homework and level of completion.
- Review and support the School Attendance Policy (i.e. no less than 98% attendance).
- Review and support the School Discipline Policy (i.e. if a family is not ready to fully support the high expectations for behavior, DCS may not be a good choice of school).
- Attend Parent Organization meetings, parent/teacher conferences and workshops designed to increase student achievement.
- Communicate with school staff, teachers and the director as a partner in their children's academic success.

**(Last Reviewed / Revised 5.16)**

Grade retention has repeatedly been shown in educational research to be ineffective. DCS is a school where supports will be put in place to accelerate progress and every effort will be made to move all students to grade level work and beyond. The success of each and every student is a responsibility we do not take lightly.

When a teacher or parent identifies a student as having serious academic problems, the following will occur:

- 1.) Review of student's progress (e.g. areas of strength and need) by teacher (s) with parent(s)
- 2.) Consider ways to modify the student's classroom program and possible additional interventions with parent(s)
- 3.) Teacher (s) will consult with support staff if she/he has not already done so (e.g. "Response to Intervention" (RTI) team meeting)
- 4.) Implement recommendations with a scheduled time to review progress and revisit intervention effectiveness

Except in cases of extreme absenteeism\*, only parents and classroom teachers can recommend grade retention to the school director. Teachers will be an important resource to guide and inform the parent's understanding of grade retention, and the progress of the student within the academic context.

**PROCEDURES FOR PARENT-REQUESTED RETENTION CONSIDERATION**

- 1.) Parent (s) notify teacher of their desire to retain their child at the same grade the following school year and complete a "Grade Retention Request Form"
- 2.) School Director reviews all academic/developmental information as well as attendance records
- 3.) Possible Parent, Teacher, and Administrative Conference(s) to discuss
- 4.) School Director's Final Decision

All members of the DCS community including teachers, counselors, parents, administrators, and the student will work together to ensure that the student is appropriately placed and experiencing growth in academic, emotional, social, physical and intellectual areas. In determining what is best for the whole child, parent involvement is crucial.

\*Extreme absenteeism is defined at DCS as missing more than 10% of instructional days (i.e. having more than 20 unexcused absences for the 200 day school year).

Expeditionary Learning is built on ten design principles that reflect the educational values and beliefs of Outward Bound. These principles also reflect the design's connection to related thinking about teaching, learning, and the culture of schools.

#### 1. The Primacy of Self-Discovery

Learning happens best with emotion, challenge and the requisite support. People discover their abilities, values, passions, and responsibilities in situations that offer adventure and the unexpected. In Expeditionary Learning schools, students undertake tasks that require perseverance, fitness, craftsmanship, imagination, self-discipline, and significant achievement. A teacher's primary task is to help students overcome their fears and discover they can do more than they think they can.

#### 2. The Having of Wonderful Ideas

Teaching in Expeditionary Learning schools fosters curiosity about the world by creating learning situations that provide something important to think about, time to experiment, and time to make sense of what is observed.

#### 3. The Responsibility for Learning

Learning is both a personal process of discovery and a social activity. Everyone learns both individually and as part of a group. Every aspect of an Expeditionary Learning school encourages both children and adults to become increasingly responsible for directing their own personal and collective learning.

#### 4. Empathy and Caring

Learning is fostered best in communities where students' and teachers' ideas are respected and where there is mutual trust. Learning groups are small in Expeditionary Learning schools, with a caring adult looking after the progress and acting as an advocate for each child. Older students mentor younger ones, and students feel physically and emotionally safe.

#### 5. Success and Failure

All students need to be successful if they are to build the confidence and capacity to take risks and meet increasingly difficult challenges. But it is also important for students to learn from their failures, to persevere when things are hard, and to learn to turn disabilities into opportunities.

#### 6. Collaboration and Competition

Individual development and group development are integrated so that the value of friendship, trust, and group action is clear. Students are encouraged to compete not against each other but with their own personal best and with rigorous standards of excellence.

#### 7. Diversity and Inclusion

Both diversity and inclusion increase the richness of ideas, creative power, problem-solving ability, and respect for others. In Expeditionary Learning schools, students investigate and value their different histories and talents as well as those of other communities and cultures. Schools and learning groups are heterogeneous.

#### 8. The Natural World

A direct and respectful relationship with the natural world refreshes the human spirit and teaches the important ideas of recurring cycles and cause and effect. Students learn to become stewards of the earth and of future generations.

#### 9. Solitude and Reflection

Students and teachers need time alone to explore their own thoughts, make their own connections, and create their own ideas. They also need time to exchange their reflections with others.

#### 10. Service and Compassion

We are crew, not passengers. Students and teachers are strengthened by acts of consequential service to others, and one of an Expeditionary Learning school's primary functions is to prepare students with the attitudes and skills to learn from and be of service to others.