



2022-2023
HANDBOOK
Kindergarten-Grade 5

MISSION STATEMENT

Cultural Arts Academy Charter School's mission is to provide a college preparatory education with exemplary cultural arts proficiency to young leaders who will profoundly impact the human condition.

Dear CAACS Family,

Welcome to Year 13! We are thrilled that your child has made history by being part of Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek's thirteenth anniversary. This handbook was designed to aid you and your child. It is not all-inclusive, but does cover most of the items that commonly concern parents and students. It is the responsibility of parents to familiarize themselves with this Parent Handbook, which is approved by the Board of Trustees and which includes official school policies with which you should be acquainted.

The handbook has been prepared by Cultural Arts Academy Charter School as a guideline to procedures, policies, and practices governing the operation of our school and the behavior of our students and school community. CAACS administrators and instructional staff members believe that it will help both parents and students to be properly informed about matters that concern all of us. Academic and extracurricular opportunities, routine day-to-day events and activities, disciplinary rules and consequences of misbehavior, academic requirements and special programs and services--all are part of this handbook, together with many other concerns which are clearly explained in the publication.

CAACS offers a challenging academic experience in a warm, supportive environment. We seek students who demonstrate the potential to meet high academic and personal standards and contribute to the vitality of our school. Because we believe that students learn from each other, it is central to our philosophy that the student body be coeducational and includes diverse economic, cultural, and racial backgrounds, as well as a variety of interests and talents. It is important that the expectations of CAACS parents be consistent with our vision and mission statements. The staff of Cultural Arts Academy Charter School continues to encourage your active involvement in your child's education. A strong partnership between home and school can greatly benefit your child as he/she grows and matures. We look forward to partnering with your family for many years to come.

Thanks you for choosing Cultural Arts Academy Charter School for your scholar's education. We have prepared the following information to explain our policies and procedures. If you have any questions after reading thru this manual, please feel free to contact us.

Warmly,

Dr. Laurie B. Midgette, Founding Principal-CEO



**An International Baccalaureate (IB) World School
The First Franklin-Covey Lighthouse Charter School in New York State**

SCHOOL GOALS

At Cultural Arts Academy Charter School our belief is that your scholar learns by doing and experiencing. The staff plays the role of facilitator, structuring the environment, guiding and redirecting your scholar toward appropriate behaviors and providing opportunities for academic achievement, social interaction, intellectual growth and emotional expression. This can be seen both in our schedule of daily activities and in our curriculum format. Our students will perform at a level that surpasses or is equal to their ability in all areas of achievement. We will promote high expectations for students in all areas: academic, artistic, physical, health, citizenship and service. In a fiscally responsible manner, we will commit the resources necessary to establish and maintain:

- A respectful, caring, and safe environment
- Research-based instruction
- Information-driven decision-making
- A focused and challenging curriculum
- Collaboration focused on improving student learning
- An active partnership with parents and community

Because our program is designed to maximize individual development, our activities focus on the process of learning. The emphasis is on the experiences of the scholar as well as the results of those experiences. At CAACS, we believe that each scholar has his or her own set of possibilities and we help those possibilities unfold.

INTERNATIONALMINDEDNESS

Cultural Arts Academy Charter School is committed to multicultural education. This means we share a commitment to human rights, dignity of the individual and social justice. On June 7, 2017, **CAACS received its first global designation** as a **Lighthouse School** leadership model from the Franklin Covey Leader In Me School program and **received full authorization as an International Baccalaureate (IB) World School** on March 26, 2019. By recognizing the impact culture has on families, we will make every effort to provide a culturally responsive environment that affirms our human differences. We seek to recognize, appreciate and respect the uniqueness of each scholar. We make the commitment to multicultural education by:

- Recognizing the beauty, value and contribution of each scholar.
- Introducing scholars to other cultures.
- Encouraging scholars to respect other cultures.
- Increasing our scholar's ability to talk and play with people who are different from them.
- Helping scholars to be team players.
- Helping scholars live happily and cooperatively in a diverse world.
- Helping scholars recognize unfair behavior and give them the knowledge and language to do something about it.

GENERAL INFORMATION:

Cultural Arts Academy Charter School is located at 1400 Linden Boulevard, between Bristol and Chester Streets. In the classroom setting, scholars learn through a variety of instructional techniques that include; dramatic play, cognitive and manipulative activities, science, mathematics, social studies, Spanish, art, music, the four strands of ELA (*reading, writing, listening, speaking*); and, the cultural arts. In addition to the classroom setting, scholars are able to play on the Cultural Arts Academy Charter School grounds during recess and for selective physical education classes. Cultural

Arts Academy Charter School currently houses 280 students in Kindergarten and Grades 1-5. The **official school hours** are from 7:30am – 3:30pm Monday – Friday. Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek admits students of any gender, race, color, religion, disability, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate based on gender, race, color, religion, disability, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, arts, athletic, and other school-administered programs.

HOURS OF OPERATION

Our school is officially open Monday – Friday 7:00am – 4:00pm when CAACS is in session.

Cultural Arts Academy Contact Information

Main Line	718-683-3300
Fax Line	718-272-1330
Website	culturalartsacademy.org
E-mail	caacs@caa-ny.org
Principal's Line	718-683-3301

ADMISSION

Application to Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek is by lottery. Children must be five years old by December 31st of the year they are supposed to enter Kindergarten in order to be placed in the lottery for each year's Kindergarten class. Only fully completed applications will be eligible for the lottery. Parents or guardians are not required to attend an open house, interview or tour a facility as a condition for accepting an application for admission to the school. An independent auditor conducts the lottery. Communication about the lottery will be given to all of the applicants as well as posted throughout the community, on the school website, and announced in the local media. Applications will be provided in English, Spanish, and Haitian Creole, the majority language other than English in the district community. Applications in other languages will be provided as necessary. Required paperwork includes emergency contact forms, immunization records, and the application. Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek staff will be available to assist families with the completion of the required paperwork. Students with Disabilities (SWD's) and English Language Learners are strongly encouraged to apply.

ENROLLMENT – Proof of Residence

Enrollment in CAACS is through lottery. The lottery application period begins November 1st and ends April 1st. To hold your student's seat, you must submit to us proof of residency. The proof of residency document must include a parent/guardian address. Acceptable documents include: a current utility bill, i.e., electric, gas, phone; or a copy of a lease or mortgage. Cell phone bills, a driver's license, or cable bills are NOT acceptable. You can mail a copy of your proof of residency to us at: 1400 Linden Boulevard, Brooklyn, New York 11212, or scan the document and email it to us at lmidgette@caa-ny.org. Please be sure to include your student's name and their relationship to the parent/guardian on the documentation you are sending in. If we do not receive your proof of residency document your student will be taken off the Accepted Students list, and their seat will be assigned to the next student on the wait list. You must also submit:

- A copy of your child's birth certificate
- Proof of immunizations
- A copy of the student's IEP (if the student qualifies for special education services) or a copy of their 504 Plan if this is applicable to your child.
- A copy of the student's most recent report card from their current school.

The Acceptance Offer – As we have a large wait list, we ask that you inform us of your decision as to whether your student will attend Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek this fall by completing the enclosed Offer Response Form to us as soon as possible. If we do not receive this form from you, your seat will be offered to a student on the waitlist. If you decide not to accept your student's place at our school, please contact Cultural Arts Academy Charter School immediately so that your child's name can be removed from the school's enrollment list. It is your responsibility to ensure that we receive your reply by the due date. It is also your responsibility to notify the school of address and/or phone number changes. If we are unable to reach you because of wrong address or phone – your child's name will be removed from our list. Each application is valid for one school year only. Students once enrolled do not need to apply for future years.

New Student Orientation Event at 1400 Linden Boulevard, Brooklyn, New York 11212

An orientation will be scheduled in May for all parents/guardians and their child(ren) who accept admission to Cultural Arts Academy Charter School. The purpose of the orientation is to meet with families to establish relationships, meet other families of accepted students, explain school expectations, outline school policies, and ensure all paperwork is in order. Families must participate in the orientation or the offer of admissions will be passed to a child on the wait list. Students are not officially enrolled until the family has attended the orientation and all paperwork listed above is received and complete. **Final acceptance of all students into Kindergarten is conditional upon the student turning 5 years of age no later than December 31, 2022.**

FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL POLICY

Cultural Arts Academy Charter School is experiencing an increase in students arriving after the first day of school, traveling for long periods of time, and departing for summer vacation early. While the Cultural Arts Academy Charter School staff understands that sometimes family travel is necessary, we cannot justify holding spaces for students who violate the Cultural Arts Academy Charter School's attendance policy when other students are waiting for a vacant seat so that they can be admitted. It is important that students be in school every day for the best learning to occur. Absences create a disruption in the classroom, cause students to miss valuable instructional time, and result in lost revenue to Cultural Arts Academy Charter School. Please consider planning family vacations during the summer months or during school holidays. Students who have an unexcused absence in the first days of school opening will be dropped from the school roster beginning September 1, 2021 (vacations are unexcused). If space is available at his or her school when the student returns, the student will be reinstated. If no space is available, the student will be unable to return to Cultural Arts Academy Charter School. If the student is ill, parents must notify the school of the absence and provide documentation.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

It is essential that every child in Cultural Arts Academy attend school regularly in order to provide continuity in the learning program and to enhance the probability of success in school. Absences for reasons other than illness or emergency situations are to be avoided. The student is responsible for missed assignments. Doctor's appointments, dentist's appointments, and vacations should be scheduled for times when school is not in session. If a child must be absent from school, we request that you call our office by 7:30 A.M. to inform us about the reason for absences. **Students are considered to be late if they arrive after 7:45am.**

The Family Specialist and/or Operations Staff will contact parents to determine the cause of a child's unexplained absence. Every effort must be made to telephone parents on the first day of a student's absence. If a parent cannot be contacted by the second day of absence, a letter or postcard is to be sent to the home. All contacts and attempted contacts must be documented and kept on file in the school. Wherever possible, outreach and intervention efforts are to be entered into the ILOG system

on ATS. CAACS will make every effort to identify and document the reasons for student absences.

Parents are expected to submit a note or letter explaining their child's absence from school. A note from a doctor or health-care professional should be provided in cases of extended (3 or more days) or frequent absence due to illness. If students have been absent from school for reasons other than illness, documentation of the reason for the absence is to be presented to the school (e.g., examination schedule of special examination, court order, etc.). Absence notes submitted by parents are to be maintained for one year after the end of the school year. **NOTE - Cut-off time with documentation is 10am.**

Students who observe the religious holy days recognized by the New York State Commissioner of Education or other holy days not recognized on the calendar distributed annually may be excused based on a parent's request in writing prior to the date of observance. Teachers must mark the student absent and absence Reason Code "05" (Absence Due to Religious/Cultural Observance) should be entered into the ATS System. Students should be informed of the alternative dates offered for religious observers when tests are given by outside testing organizations.

DISMISSAL

Scholars will be brought outside by school staff and dismissed from the parking lot/recess area. Under our emergency preparedness guidelines, parents will not be permitted to walk through the building or visit classrooms before or after arrival or dismissal unless authorized. Parents are strongly encouraged to ensure that their children are appropriately dressed for all weather conditions. **NOTE - Student safety is a primary goal. In the event of emergency conditions such as weather emergencies or school wide emergencies, this policy will be adjusted accordingly.**

LATE PICK-UP

Late fees (**\$3.00 per minute/\$5.00 per minute before holidays and vacations**) will be strictly imposed.

OUR CAACS COLLEGIATE SCHOOL CULTURE

Scholar- "a person who has achieved great knowledge and is a life long learner."

Professor- "a scholar who has a college degree and is an expert in _____."

Dean- "a person with significant authority over a specific area of responsibility that impacts school culture and organization."

University- "a school where scholars learn from professors, study, conduct research, and earn a degree (diploma)."

Scholars Pledge – GRADES K-5

I am on a mission to do my best! I will always put my mind to the test! With Determination, Commitment, and Energy I will work with my classmates respectfully! It's up to me to be a success! My expectations are high and I won't accept less! Whatever I want, I must work hard to earn! I'm smart! I'm willing! And I'm ready to learn!

R.A.C.E. to Win School Rules

- Respect yourself, others, and property
- Always ask permission to speak
- Communicate with kind words
- Everyone follows directions the first time

H.A.L.L. Positions

- Hands by your sides
- All eyes facing forward
- Lips zipped
- Legs walking safely

THE CAACS REDWOOD PLEDGE –

I am a **REDWOOD**, the symbol of a **Cultural Arts Academy Charter School Scholar**. The **REDWOOD** tree is the largest, most enduring tree upon the planet. Like the **REDWOOD** tree, a **REDWOOD** Scholar has a strong network of friendships and support that provides tremendous resistance to the decay and fires that may wage in our lives. The empathy and compassion of our **REDWOOD** brotherhood and sisterhood gives us a great capacity for strengthening and healing one another. The majestic **REDWOOD**, towers over all other trees, and reflects our ambition to be the best. A **REDWOOD** Scholar has a deep-rooted foundation and unlimited growth potential for the many challenges along the journey to full maturity. I am a **REDWOOD Scholar**. My mission is to leave my authentic footprints on the planet through my service to the world that is creative, gifted, inspired and transformative.

UNIFORM POLICY

Cultural Arts Academy Charter School, as a center of learning, takes responsibility for the teaching and developing habits and attitudes conducive to acceptable wearing apparel, and good grooming. Cultural Arts Academy Charter School has a mandatory uniform policy that remains in effect for the entire school year. The purpose of the School Uniform Policy is:

1. To provide increased school safety
2. To encourage our students to experience a greater sense of school identity and belonging
3. To encourage an improvement in student behavior
4. To reduce school clothing costs
5. To encourage a high level of program participation and to improve and expand academic excellence.

Non-compliance with our uniform policy negatively affects our school culture and environment. Students may never wear clothing that:

1. Constitutes a health or safety hazard
2. Is disruptive to the educative process.

The uniform identifies a student as one attending the Cultural Arts Academy Charter School. Scholars out of uniform and/or wearing the uniform inappropriately will be addressed immediately and a representative of the school will contact the child's parent/guardian by phone to notify the parent/guardian that their child was not in compliance with the school uniform policy. Scholars are required to wear the school uniform daily, including half-days **UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTIFIED BY THE SCHOOL**. Scholars are required to wear uniforms on all field trips, including those scheduled on a Friday, unless otherwise stated in the permission slip for the field trip.

1. Clothing should fit properly. Clothing should not be more than one size too large or one size too small; it should not fit too baggy, too tight, or too long. Belts should be worn to ensure that pants remain secure around the waist.
2. Shoes or sneakers are acceptable footwear. Boots will be accepted on inclement weather days. Parent/guardian will be notified immediately if their child wears inappropriate shoes, either distracting or unsafe for daily school activities, in nature. Overcoats of any color may be worn, but must be removed while indoors.
3. Sweaters and sweatshirts and tee shirts that scholars wish to wear over their uniform on cold-weather days must be plain navy blue or red.
4. **Designs, sport team logos, and printing of any kind are prohibited.**
5. **Students may only wear jewelry that is acceptable in a corporate environment and/or for a job on Wall Street or in the White House.** Excessive or distracting jewelry may not be worn, and if requested must be taken off by a Director for safety concerns, or due to the distractive nature. The Director will call parent to explain the reason for their request if necessary.

6. Hats, caps, hoods, sweatbands, du-rags, bandanas, picks, combs, curlers, sunglasses, and headphones may not be worn inside the building. Scholars must put these inside their backpacks when entering the lobby of the building. Items not properly stowed will be confiscated by school personnel and submitted to the office for safekeeping until a parent picks up the item.
7. **Scholars are allowed to “dress up” in clothing of their choice on their birthdays (2019-2020)**, as long as the clothing complies with the rules for the corporate environment, proper fit, acceptable footwear, and acceptable jewelry.

NOTE: While it is appreciated, please understand that sending your child to school with a note explaining why s/he is not in uniform will NOT excuse him/her from any of these consequences.

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

- **Headgear** cannot be worn *inside* the building of CAACS. This includes things such as hats, caps, bandanas, scarves, towels, stocking caps, hoods, and headphones.
- **Shirts:** Must be of appropriate size and tucked in for all students. Overly tight or loose clothing is not permissible. The Principal or designee’s determination as to whether or not clothing is appropriate to the student’s body size shall be determinative and final.
- **Pants** shall be worn so that the waistband is worn at the waist. If worn, belts must be of appropriate size and fastened in a customary manner. No oversized belt buckles allowed. Overly tight leggings, leotards, or body suits are not to be worn as pants. *Pajamas are not allowed.*

EXEMPTIONS BASED UPON CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS

The right of school systems to require the mandatory wearing of uniforms has been determined not to be in violation of students or their parents/guardians Constitutional Rights.

CURRICULUM STRUCTURE

CAACS is an International Baccalaureate World School. Because we now live in a knowledge-based economy, CAACS has adopted internationally benchmarked standards and assessments in the International Baccalaureate program that will prepare students for college and career success; recruit, develop, reward, and retain effective teachers and school leaders; and, build data systems that ensure student success and create sustainability. CAACS attained IB World School status on March 26, 2019. IB World Schools incorporate the principles of the NYS Next Generation Learning Standards into existing IB frameworks. The IB recognizes that the implementation of both national and state standards will have a significant impact on public schools in the US and in IB schools worldwide that follow a US curriculum. The NYS Board of Regents adopted the newly revised English Language Arts and Mathematics Learning Standards on September 11, 2017. The revised New York State Standards aim to reimagine the educational framework for English language arts and mathematics, with the goal of better supporting educators in their instructional practice and to provide additional guidance on achieving a vision of 21st century literacy. The Next Generation Standards were designed to apply to the teaching and learning of all students in our state’s schools and are the result of collaborative and deliberate efforts between a diverse range of instructional experts, school leaders and parents. It is the intention of the Board of Regents that these standards serve the intended function in our schools: preparing our students to become lifelong learners and thinkers, as well as active participants in civil, community and professional endeavors.

THE ADVANTAGES OF AN IB-PYP EDUCATION

- IB programmes are subject to a strict accreditation process monitored by the IB, ensuring that schools provide a high-quality education.
- IB teaching methods and curriculums are research-based and draw from the best educational

practices from systems around the world.

- IB teachers are required to participate in many professional development opportunities to continually promote their awareness of current educational practices and new thinking.
- IB students develop a sense of the world around them and their responsibility to it.
- IB programmes are recognized internationally and ease global transition if families relocate.

Class subjects are not taught individually. Instead, a connection is made throughout the content areas when studying a given unit. Throughout the day, students reflect and assess themselves on their ability to show good character through exhibiting the IB Learner Profile and the 7 Habits.

Mathematics, language(s) of instruction, social studies and science need to be the responsibility of the classroom teacher: the teacher with whom the students spend most of their time. Single-subject teaching of these areas is not consistent with the PYP model of transdisciplinary learning— learning that transcends the confines of the subject areas, but is supported by them (*Making the PYP Happen* p. 67). The curriculum at each grade level is centered around six transdisciplinary themes:

- Who we are
- Where we are in place and time
- How we express ourselves
- How the world works
- How we organize ourselves
- Sharing the planet

Assessment Practices in the PYP

- Teachers will use a variety of assessment strategies and tools to provide feedback on the learning process.
- Teachers will report assessment with IB report cards, parent-teacher conferences, student – led conferences, and anecdotal records.
- Authentic assessment will be used in conjunction with other forms of assessment such as standardized tests in order to assess the essential elements of the PYP (Knowledge, Concepts, Skills, Attitudes, and Action).
- Teachers will assess the many ways students make use of their experiences.
- Rubrics, exemplars, anecdotal records, checklists, continuums, and portfolios will be used to record students’ responses and performances as a means of authentic assessment.
- **Portfolio requirements:** Our school philosophy is constructed around the understanding that the portfolios are utilized to show growth over time for students, teachers, and parents. We do believe that the main stakeholders are our students. Therefore, the portfolio is comprised mostly of student choices with reflections. The following is required to be placed in the portfolio: one piece of work from each unit of inquiry at the discretion of the student along with reflections about the choice, one writing and one math sample at the discretion of the teacher with reflection along with one sample from Spanish, art and physical education.
- **Summative assessments** will assess the conceptual understandings within central ideas.
- **The IB learner Profile** will be reported in two ways. *First*, at conferences (*student-led*); that is, students, teachers and parents will assess the growth in both the NYS Next Generation Standards and the IB Learner Profile. *Second*, IB report cards will include an anecdotal.

CHARACTER EDUCATION – The Leader In Me

Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek school implements a whole-school transformational curriculum program called **The Leader in Me**, which teaches 21st century leadership and life skills to students and creates a culture of student empowerment based on the idea that every child can be a leader. Character education and academic development carry equal value here at our school. Where our scholars’ gifts and talents may take them; if not properly developed, their

character can tear down. Our CAACS Leadership Development Framework supports college and career readiness for each of our scholars. Every K-5 Scholars Character Education class, **The Leader In Me, is now an accredited course for which they will receive a grade.** CAACS will be implementing the Measurable Results Assessment, which is a rigorously developed tool used to collect, analyze and report student outcomes related to The Leader in Me focus on leadership, character development and academics. Each Scholar's report card grade will be based on a standards-based Leader In Me rubric. It will be used to help identify strengths and areas of needed growth, develop goal-centered improvement plans, and to monitor progress toward student achievement in the area of character development. On June 7, 2017, **CAACS received our first global designation as a Lighthouse School.** The Leader in Me Lighthouse School title is awarded by FranklinCovey to honor the attainment of a well-rounded leadership model. Lighthouse Schools have achieved extraordinary results by meeting the standards laid out in the Lighthouse Criteria. When we were named a Lighthouse School, we received a Lighthouse Banner that is proudly displayed in our school. We are so proud of the work our students and staff have made to transform the academics, culture and leadership at Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek. Becoming a Lighthouse Leadership school affirms the work we are doing to meet our vision and mission for our CAACS Scholars.

MAJOR ASSESSMENTS

Baseline Assessments: September 2022
Quarterly Student-Led Conferences
Guided Reading and Interval Diagnostics: Intermittent
Baseline Assessments: January 2023
3rd – 5th Grade NYS Assessments: *See School Calendar*
Final Baseline Assessments: June 2023

DISCIPLINE

(Please refer to the CAACS Code of Cooperation under separate cover, for the full discipline policy)

Cultural Arts Academy Charter School is committed to ensuring that our school is a safe, secure, and supportive learning environment for all students and staff. All school community members—teachers, students, administrators, parents, counselors, social workers, safety personnel, related service providers, food service, custodial, and transportation staff—have a shared responsibility to treat one another with mutual respect. During virtual or blended learning, the CAACS Code of Cooperation (Discipline Policy) will generally remain the same. However, due to COVID-19 health guidance to socially distance, principal's suspension conferences will be conducted remotely through any secure video-conferencing platform.

Minor Infractions and Reasonable Consequences

Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek will make every reasonable effort to correct student misbehavior through school-based resources at the classroom level, and to support students in learning the skills necessary to enhance a positive school environment and avoid negative behavior. **Teachers should address the vast majority of disciplinary issues at the classroom level.** In all instances, school discipline should be reasonable, timely, fair, age-appropriate, and should match the severity of the student's misbehavior. Minor infractions can be just as disruptive to learning as severe infractions. In the classroom and in other places, teachers and staff must consistently address student behavior that interferes with learning and safety. The outcome of any consequence for misbehavior should be to reinforce for that child the parameters of acceptable behavior and to help him/her develop a better sense of how negative behavior impacts the group and himself/herself, and the effectiveness of school programs.

In and Out-of-School Suspensions, Expulsions, and Referrals to Alternative Schools

The use of measures such as out-of-school suspensions, expulsions, and referrals to alternative schools that exclude students from school will be minimized. These punitive measures have resulted in the loss of valuable instructional time and should be reserved for infractions that cannot be appropriately addressed through other interventions and disciplinary responses. Disproportionate use of out-of-school suspensions, expulsions, and referrals to alternative instruction shall be cause for corrective action by the Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek Principal and Board of Trustees.

Student Discipline Policy for Students with Disabilities

- Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek shall comply with sections 300.519-300.529 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 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.
- Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek shall maintain written records of all suspensions and expulsions of students with a disability including the name of the student, a description of the behavior engaged in, the disciplinary action taken, and a record of the number of days a student has been suspended or removed for disciplinary reasons.

DASA POLICY

STUDENT DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, AND BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION

Policy Statement

The Board of Trustees (the “Board”) for the Cultural Arts Academy Charter School (the “School”) recognizes that learning environments that are safe and supportive can increase student attendance and improve academic achievement. A student's ability to learn and achieve high academic standards, and a school's ability to educate students, is compromised by incidents of discrimination or harassment, including but not limited to bullying, taunting and intimidation. Therefore, in accordance with the Dignity for All Students Act (the “DASA”), the CAACS Board of Trustees will endeavor to create an environment free of bullying, cyber-bullying, discrimination and/or harassment and will foster civility in CAACS to prevent and prohibit conduct which is inconsistent with our school’s mission statement. This policy will be strictly enforced.

Bullying Prohibited

The CAACS Board of Trustees condemns and prohibits all forms of bullying, discrimination and/or harassment of students based on actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender, sex, or any other protected characteristic. This restriction applies to school employees, students, parents, school contractors, or visitors on School Property and at CAACS functions, events, and programs. In addition, any act of bullying, cyber-bullying, discrimination and/or harassment at School Functions, which can reasonably be expected to disrupt the education process or a student’s education materially and substantially, is strictly prohibited.

Definitions

For purposes of this policy, the following terms will be defined as follows:

1. **"CAACS School property"** means in or within (1) any building, structure, athletic playing field, playground, parking lot, or land contained within the real property boundary line of CAACS and (2) a school bus.
2. **"CAACS School function, event or program"** shall mean a CAACS school-sponsored extra-curricular event or activity, including but not limited to school concerts, sporting events, or any event where speakers are invited to speak with students. Included in this definition are

- events that take place off school property, such as competitions in other schools.
3. **"Sexual orientation"** shall mean actual or perceived heterosexuality, homosexuality, or bisexuality.
 4. **"Gender"** shall mean actual or perceived sex and shall include a person's gender identity or expression. This means that discrimination or harassment against transgendered, gay, or lesbian students is prohibited
 5. **"Harassment" and "bullying"** shall mean the creation of a hostile environment by conduct or by threats, intimidation or abuse, including cyber-bullying, that (a) has or would have the effect of unreasonably and substantially interfering with a student's educational performance, opportunities or benefits, or mental, emotional or physical well-being; or (b) reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause a student to fear for his or her physical safety; or (c) reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause physical injury or emotional harm to a student; or (d) occurs off school property and creates or would foreseeably create a risk of substantial disruption within the school environment, where it is foreseeable that the conduct, threats, intimidation or abuse might reach School property. Acts of harassment and bullying shall include, but not be limited to, those acts based on a person's actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender or sex.
 6. **"Cyber-bullying"** shall mean harassment or bullying that occurs through any form of electronic communication, such as home computers, iPads, cell phones, or other electronic devices. For example, harassing messages sent through Facebook may constitute cyber-bullying.
 7. **Threats, intimidation, or abuse** shall include verbal and non-verbal actions.
 8. **"School Bus"** means 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.
 9. **"Disability"** means (a) a physical, mental or medical impairment resulting from anatomical, physiological, genetic or neurological conditions which prevents the exercise of a normal bodily function or is demonstrable by medically accepted clinical or laboratory diagnostic techniques or (b) a record of such an impairment or (c) a condition regarded by others as such an impairment, provided, however, that in all provisions of this article dealing with employment, the term shall be limited to disabilities which, upon the provision of reasonable accommodations, do not prevent the complainant from performing in a reasonable manner the activities involved in the job or occupation sought or held.
 10. **"Discrimination"** means discrimination against any student by a student or students and/or employee or employees on school property or at a school function including, but not limited to, discrimination based on a person's actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender, or sex.
 11. **"Emotional harm"** that takes place in the context of "harassment or bullying" means harm to a student's emotional well-being through creation of a hostile school environment that is so severe or pervasive as to interfere with a student's education unreasonably and substantially.
 12. **"Employee"** means any person receiving compensation from the school or employee of a contracted service provider or worker placed within the school.

Dignity Act Coordinator

The Director of Student Support is the School's Dignity Act Coordinator. The Dignity Act Coordinator will be 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), sex, and any other characteristic protected by law. CAACS will share the coordinator's name by a) Listing such information in the Family Handbook and updates posted on the school website; b) Including such information in the Family Handbook provided to all persons in parental relation to students before the beginning of each school year; c) Providing such information to parents and persons of parental relation in at least one School mailing; and d) Posting such information in highly visible areas of the School.

The Dignity Act Coordinator will: (a) Serve as the lead person responsible for facilitating implementation of the Act; (b) Participate in required training in order to respond to human relations in the areas of (including but not limited to) actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender, sex, or any other characteristic protected by law; (c) Be accessible to students and other staff for consultation and guidance as needed relative to the Act; (d) Accept reports (either written or verbal) regarding potential violations of the Act; (e) Investigate reports of the Act; (f) report to the Board of Trustees about any findings of a violation of the Act; and (g) facilitate resolution of any claims or incidents of violations of the Act.

Training and Awareness

CAACS will establish guidelines for training all staff about the requirements of the Act. Training will be provided each school year to raise staff awareness and sensitivity of bullying, discrimination and/or harassment directed at students that are committed by students or school employees on CAACS School Property or at a CAACS School Function, program or event. Training will include ways to promote a supportive school environment that is free from bullying, cyber-bullying, discrimination and/or harassment, emphasize positive relationships. Any training or education about the Act will include demonstrations on prevention and intervention techniques to assist employees in recognizing and responding to bullying, cyber-bullying, discrimination and/or harassment as well as ensuring the safety of the victims, and reducing and addressing problems of exclusion, bias, and aggression in CAACS.

- Upon incidents of bullying, CAACS may hold additional training or disseminate educational material concerning the Act.
- Teachers and students are encouraged to suggest to the Dignity Act Coordinator other methods and procedures for training and raising awareness about the Act.
- CAACS technology may be employed to disseminate awareness of the Act.
- Rules against bullying, discrimination and/or harassment will be included in the Family Handbook, publicized CAACS school-wide and disseminated to all staff and parents.
- An age-appropriate summary of the DASA shall be distributed to all students at the beginning of each school year.
- The CAACS' policy concerning the DASA will be disseminated to employees at least once per year.
- CAACS will annually review its Family Handbook and update it if necessary, taking into consideration the effectiveness of its provisions and consistency and fairness of its administration.

Teaching Students about Bullying

CAACS instruction (The Leader-in-Me 7-Habits Program and the IB-PYP Learner Profile) will include a component on civility, citizenship, and character education. Such components shall instruct students on the principles of honesty, tolerance, personal responsibility, respect for others, observance of laws and rules, courtesy, dignity and other traits that will enhance the quality of their experiences in, and contributions to, the community. CAACS will also incorporate instruction designed to reduce any instances of harassment, discrimination, or bullying into extracurricular or school-sponsored

programs and activities. Instruction will also be provided during the school year in the safe, responsible use of the Internet and electronic communications, which will be designed to reduce instances of bullying and cyber-bullying.

Reports and Investigations of Bullying, Discrimination and/or Harassment

Any person who has been a victim or who knows of a potential incident of bullying, discrimination, or harassment is required to report it to the DASA Coordinator. CAACS School employees who witness harassment, bullying, or discrimination, or receive a report of such harassment, bullying, or discrimination must verbally notify the DASA Coordinator or the Director of Business, Accountability and Compliance no later than one school day after the employee witnesses or receives a report of harassment, bullying or discrimination. CAACS School employees must also file a written report with the DASA Coordinator and the Director of Business, Accountability and Compliance no later than two school days after making the oral report. The content of the written report should be sufficient to allow the school or the DASA Coordinator to investigate the allegation or report of violations of the Act.

All school employees are expected to participate in the investigation of any allegation of violations of the DASA. Students may make reports of harassment, bullying, or discrimination to the coordinator in person, by e-mail, or confidentially through other means.

After receiving a report of potential violation of the DASA, the CAACS Principal will promptly investigate all complaints of bullying, either formal or informal, and take prompt corrective measures, as necessary. If, after an appropriate investigation, CAACS finds that this policy has been violated, prompt corrective action will be taken to end the harassment, bullying or discrimination, and eliminate any hostile environment. CAACS may also implement other remedial measures to ensure the existence of a positive school culture and climate, prevent recurrence of the behavior, and ensure the safety of the students. Measured, balanced, and age- appropriate responses to incidents of harassment, bullying or discrimination by students will be implemented and may vary in method according to the nature of the behavior, the developmental age of the student, and the student's history of problem behaviors, if any.

The CAACS Principal will promptly notify the appropriate local law enforcement agency if any harassment, bullying, or discrimination constitutes criminal conduct.

CAACS will annually report material incidents of bullying, discrimination and/or harassment that occurred during the school year to the New York State Education Department. Such report shall be submitted in a manner prescribed by the Commissioner, on date as determined by the Commissioner.

Reporting

The CAACS Principal will regularly report on data and trends related to harassment, bullying and discrimination to the CAACS Board of Trustees.

Prohibition on Retaliation

Any person who has reasonable cause to suspect that a student has been subjected to bullying, discrimination and/or harassment by an employee or student, on school grounds or at a school function, program, or event, who acts reasonably and in good faith and reports such information to school officials or law enforcement authorities, shall have immunity from any civil liability that may arise from making such report.

The CAACS Board of Trustees prohibits any retaliatory behavior directed at complainants, victims, witnesses and/or any other individuals who participate in the investigation of a complaint of bullying, discrimination and/or harassment.

STAFFING

Highly qualified professionals and staff with varying degrees of education, licenses and experience staff Cultural Arts Academy Charter School. **Elementary School Teachers in New York State obtain licensing in Birth-2nd Grade and/or Grades 1-6; they generalists and are licensed to teach all content areas.** General curriculum areas for which they are licensed to teach include: mathematics, including arithmetic, science, and technology; English language arts, including reading writing, listening, and speaking; social studies, including geography and United States history; Languages other than English. CAACS also employs *certified* Teaching Assistants. All staff receives on-going professional development and training to develop and strengthen their skills. Many of our staff members are certified in CPR and First Aid and we have a full-time NYC Health Department Registered Nurse. Our typical teacher-scholar ratio is 25:1. Each Kindergarten class has a certified NYS Teaching Assistant.

PARKING

We cannot guarantee that you will not get a ticket for double parking. The following rules apply:

- DO NOT double-park for more than 5 minutes. Any car that is left in this area for longer than 5 minutes may receive a ticket.
- DO NOT leave your car running. This is an illegal and unsafe practice.
- DO NOT leave children of any age unattended in the car.
- Please be respectful and courteous to our neighbors.
- **DO NOT PARK IN THE MOBILE GAS STATION.**

To live in a community is to agree to abide by the community's rules and to be considerate of one's neighbors. Business owners have the right to decide how to use their properties. If you park your vehicle on their property, they have the right to record your license plate numbers, inform the local precinct or traffic enforcement bureau and have your vehicle ticketed and towed at your expense. It is our duty to instruct our children about proper stewardship of first our and their possessions, and then the treatment of other people's belongings. Let us model the principle-centered, values-based behavior we are teaching our CAACS scholars and be considerate of our neighbors' property in the community. Let them speak well of the spirit and character of our school.

LATE PICK UP POLICY: (\$3 per minute/\$5 per minute before holidays and vacations)

Late fees will be applied to anyone who is late picking up their child after the scheduled closing time. Anytime you are late picking up your scholar, or early dropping off without prior approval from the Director of Operations or the Family Specialist, a \$3 per minute fee will be charged. This fee will be raised to \$5/minute after the third late pick up. The school sign in/out clock is the official time!

SECURITY ENTRANCE

Cultural Arts Academy Charter School has a secure entrance to assist us in limiting access to who can enter the school. **Friends and relatives who occasionally drop off or pick up your scholar will have to show proper identification.** We need to check the identification of anyone who is picking up your scholar who is unfamiliar to us. **Please help us make our entrances as secure as they can be.**

VISITOR CONTROL POLICY

Effective Monday, September 20, 2021, ALL VISITORS to the CAACS Building are required to provide proof of COVID-19 vaccination (at least 1 dose), in order to enter the building, except in the case of an emergency (police, fire department personnel, etc.). In order to enter the building, a visitor must:

- Show identification
- Provide proof of vaccination.
- Complete the daily health screening form.
- Submit to a temperature check.
- Sanitize hands upon entering and leaving.

- Wear a mask for the duration of the visit.

Exception for Visitors Policy to the CAACS Building

“Visitor” means an individual who will be physically present in our CAACS building.

The following are the only EXCEPTIONS TO THE VISITOR POLICY:

- Our CAACS Scholars
- Our CAACS Parents or guardians of scholars who are conducting registration or enrollment for their scholars, or for other purposes identified by CAACS as essential to our scholar(s)' education and unable to be completed virtually (online);
- Individuals entering our CAACS building for the limited purpose to deliver or pick up items;
- Individuals present in our CAACS school building to make repairs at times when our scholars are not present in the building;
- Individuals responding to an emergency, including police, fire, emergency medical services personnel,
- Others who need to enter the building to respond to or pick up a scholar who is experiencing an emergency.

Access to the school building is a top concern for CAACS. We are often challenged with maintaining a balance between having a user-friendly, welcoming school climate and a facility that is secure from unwanted intruders. Even our best school access control efforts will likely not guarantee that a determined outsider will not be able to gain access to the school, we must take reasonable steps to reduce the risks of unauthorized access. All school personnel assigned to the front desk are trained regarding these clearly delineated procedures. It is essential for all staff to be aware of these important guidelines as they directly affect the safety and security of everyone. There are no exceptions to the visitor control policy. **Visitor is defined as: any person in the school facility who is not a school employee or approved school volunteers. Parents and relatives of students are considered visitors for purposes of this policy.**

- Staff is trained to at least report strangers to the Principal if they do not feel safe in approaching someone they believe to be an intruder.
- Tell students not to open doors to strangers, other students, or even adults they may know.
- We have surveillance cameras to monitor and record entrance points. These cameras will serve as a deterrent and to provide a record of who was in the area. **Currently we have 25 cameras recording inside our building and perimeter.**

The Principal has the final authority to grant or deny a visitor's request to enter the building and visit the classrooms. Additionally,

1. Staff members must escort visitors around the building, unless the Principal has provided the School Safety Team with alternate information.
2. Teachers will use a designated space for meetings with parents. Any visitor without a visitor's pass will be escorted back to the security desk.
3. All visitors are to enter the building through the Main Entrance.
4. All visitors must stop at the front desk to sign in and receive a visitor's pass that must be worn at all times.
 - a. A visitor must state the exact nature of the visit, i.e. “office or person to see.”
 - b. A visitor must present one item of valid identification to the CAACS staff assigned to the security desk.
 - c. Any school staff that is expecting guests must notify Sergeant Hardy in advance of the visit, when possible.
5. The Principal or the Director of Curriculum and Instruction must approve guests that will be visiting classrooms.
6. All staff assigned to the desk will record the date, time, name, and destination of all visitors on the visitor's log.
7. The official CAACS visitor's pass will be issued at the front desk and must be worn by the

visitor for the duration of the visit. The pass must be returned to the front desk at the time of departure. The assigned CAACS personnel at the security desk will record the time of departure in the visitor's log.

- 8. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES IS A PARENT OR RELATIVE OF A STUDENT PERMITTED TO GO TO A CLASSROOM TO VISIT A STUDENT OR TEACHER UNLESS AUTHORIZED BY THE DIRECTOR OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION.**
9. Visitors shall have access to students only while an employee of the school accompanies them.
10. Visitors are not permitted to interfere with school activities and shall not attempt to instruct or discipline students.
11. Visitors, including parents, are not permitted physical contact with a student or staff members.

If there are any questions, please see the Director of Accountability and Compliance (gstewart@caa-ny.org) or the Director of Operations (rscott@caa-ny.org). If there is a problem regarding a visitor to the school or an unauthorized visit, contact either the nearest member of the School Safety Team, Dean or Administrator.

HARRASSMENT POLICY

While CAACS always encourages communication between home and school, we will not tolerate inappropriate behavior from parents toward our staff or vice versa. Our staff is entitled to courtesy, civility and respect when carrying out their duties, even in the context of legitimate criticism or disagreement. Parental support is one of the most important factors in determining a student's achievement level and, as you know, parents have an enormous impact on the behavior and attitudes of their children. Students often reflect the views of their parents toward teachers and schools; this, in turn, affects the student's achievement. Even if parental complaints about teachers and administrators are unfounded and based on rumor, the school is nevertheless put in a defensive position because all complaints must be addressed, with the exception of anonymous complaints. Anonymous complaints will be disregarded whether they come in the form of a phone call, message or letter. No one can be expected to solve a concern without knowing the origin of the complaint or without being able to confront the complainer.

When a parent contacts the Principal or any other Administrator to voice a concern about a classroom problem or practice, the first thing that we do is to refer the parent back to the teacher. We ask the teacher to call or e-mail the parent. The teacher is the professional in charge of the classroom and therefore should be the first person to respond to the concern. We ask that the teacher keep us, the administration, informed about the progress of the complaint and its resolution. The administrator should not intervene before the parent and teacher have discussed the matter themselves.

Most educators accept that a certain amount of criticism, discord and debate comes with the job. We realize that parents play an important role in the educational process. CAACS welcomes and supports a high level of cooperative parent-teacher interaction and recognize the legitimate right of parents to participate in educational decision making for their children. Teachers appreciate that parents have a legitimate right, even a duty, to express their concerns within appropriate protocols and procedures. There are, however, lines that should not be crossed. There is never any justification for verbally attacking, intimidating or threatening teachers. We have had a few instances where parents that help their children with their homework may take a low grade very personally and become overly assertive with the teacher. When the child is not performing at a level that the parents feel is appropriate, they may feel that the teacher is to blame.

CAACS is committed to maintaining a positive learning environment. Every person is valued and all individuals, staff, pupils and parents, must be treated with respect and are required to treat others with respect. Every adult and student in the CAACS school community has a right to work and learn in a safe, orderly, productive, respectful and harassment-free environment. Teachers have the right to be treated with respect and to work in an environment free from harassment and abuse. The type of behavior that we consider inappropriate from parents at CAACS includes:

- Parents coming into classrooms and yelling at teachers
- Teachers receiving angry or inappropriate comments in public
- Inappropriate comments or behavior being displayed in the classroom by Parents
- Threats received at home or at school
- Intentionally damaging school property
- Pushing or other unwelcome physical contact
- Repeated phone calls

A survey, entitled “*Bullying in the Workplace*” found that:

- Over one-half of elementary and secondary teachers have been personally bullied during their professional careers;
- Bullying by parents is the second most prevalent form of bullying, with 36% of teachers working in elementary schools and 22% of teachers working in secondary schools being bullied.

CAACS, in consultation with the Board of Trustees, has a **CAACS Harassment Policy** that states that parents are expected to “communicate reasonably with school personnel employed at the school”. Furthermore, while parents are entitled to “reasonable consultation” with their child’s teacher, both the teacher and parent are required to “conduct themselves in a respectful manner”. The **CAACS Harassment Policy** also states that a person in or on school property commits a punishable offense when that person “uses threatening or abusive language” or if someone “speaks or acts in such a way as to impair the maintenance of order and discipline in or on the school property”. The **CAACS Harassment Policy** provides protection for all staff from harm. The following are types and definitions of offenses:

- **Criminal Harassment:** behavior that causes the other person to reasonably fear for their safety or the safety of others. This includes, following the person, repeatedly contacting the person directly or indirectly, stalking the person, and threatening conduct towards the person or their family.
- **Harassing telephone calls or e-mail:** it is an offense to make repeated phone calls or to send multiple e-mail with the intent to harass someone.
- **Assault:** harming someone directly or indirectly or using threats of harm to the other person or someone else. This includes all forms of assault, which may range from verbal threats to very serious crimes like aggravated sexual assault.
- **Theft:** taking something from someone either permanently or temporarily with the intent to deprive the owner of it.
- **Uttering Threats:** threats of death or bodily harm to any person, or to damage real or personal property.
- **Mischief:** includes not only willful destruction of property but can also include interference with the use, enjoyment or operation of property.

Administrators and teachers are not obligated to endure belligerent behavior from parents or vice versa. We are an 8-year old school, learning from our mistakes as we grow. Because we are not perfect, we will make some mistakes. We will make a concerted effort to fix the mistakes and move to the next level. We all have our scholars’ best interests in common. **If there is conflict between a**

parent and a teacher:

1. The first step is for the school to meet one-on-one with the parent and attempt to resolve the problem or come to an agreement.
2. If this initial meeting is unsuccessful, the principal will issue the parent(s) a **“Limited Access Letter”** which establishes the following procedures:
 - Should a parent wish to meet with the Principal or any other staff member, he or she must call the school at (718) 683-3300 to make an appointment or to arrange for a telephone conference.
 - Upon entering the building, the parent(s) must sign in at the front security desk and remain there until a staff member comes to meet them.
 - When the parent drops off his or her child for the school day, the parent must bring the student to School Safety Officer, Director of Operations, or Family Specialist at the front desk and they will make sure that the student is brought to the appropriate location for instruction. At dismissal, the student will be at the security desk with the School Safety Officer, Director of Operations, or Family Specialist where the parent can pick him or her up.
 - Should the parent unexpectedly need to pick up their child early, they must call the school prior to arriving. Upon arrival, their child will be at the security desk with the Director of Operations, Family Specialist or Safety Manager to meet the parent.
 - Trespassing on school property can result in an arrest.
3. If the parent(s) does not adhere to the **“Limited Access”** letter, the Principal will bring the parent before the Board of Trustees for a meeting. In cases where there has been a serious incident or ongoing problems with an individual, the Principal, in consultation with the Board of Trustees may bar the parent(s) from school property.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

NOTIFICATION OF ABSENCES

We appreciate an email or telephone call when your scholar will be absent from the school so that we can better plan for the daily program. If a scholar is absent due to illness, we need to be informed of this so we can inform other families, if necessary.

IMMUNIZATIONS AND HEALTH CARE SUMMARY

CAACS requires all scholars to have a complete immunization record and a Child and Adolescent Health and Examination Form on file before your scholar’s first day of school.

RE-EXAMINATION: An updated report of physical examination signed by your scholar’s doctor is required at least annually. Parents also have a responsibility to inform the school when their scholar has, or develops, any special medical condition, needs, or allergies so that we can provide for appropriated care and support. Dietary modification because of special dietary needs shall be made under the direction of a trained health care provider. Written permission from the scholar’s parents and the scholar’s health care provider is required.

ILLNESS

If your scholar exhibits any of the symptoms listed above before coming to the school, please leave him/her home. If your scholar has a fever, sore throat, diarrhea, a rash, is vomiting or experiencing any other flu symptoms while at the school, he/she will be isolated from the other scholar and is made comfortable in a quiet area of the room. We will contact you or your emergency contact (in the event we cannot find you) to make arrangements for your scholar to be taken home from the school. It is a goal of Cultural Arts Academy Charter School to provide a safe and healthy environment for all the scholars. **Cultural Arts Academy Charter School follows NYS Department of Health guidelines for Exclusion for a scholar with a communicable disease.**

If your scholar develops at home or at school:	Then keep him/her home until:
Fever – A temperature of 100 Fahrenheit auxiliary or higher, before fever reducing medication is given	The fever is normal for 24 hours without fever reducing medication.
Respiratory Symptoms – Difficult or rapid breathing or severe coughing that is constant and prevents the scholar from participating in activities	Coughing, breathing difficulties and/or other symptoms no longer affect normal activities.
Vomiting – Vomiting 1 or more times within a 24 hour period	24 hours after vomiting has stopped, or as stated on the salmon colored exclusion form (given to you if scholar was sent home from school)
Diarrhea – Having 2 abnormally loose stools that can be contained by a diaper/underwear within a 24 hour period, OR 1 loose stool that cannot be contained by a diaper/underwear within a 24 hour period. The ONLY exception to this is infants under the age of 6 months who are exclusively breast-fed.	24 hours after the last watery stool, or as stated on the salmon colored exclusion form (given to you if your scholar was sent home from school)
Rash or Skin Problems -	Rash disappears or is diagnosed as not contagious. Impetigo – 24 hours after treatment begins and lesion are dry or can be covered with bandages. Scabies – 24 hours after treatment begins Chicken Pox – until blisters have dried into scabs, about 6 – 10 days after onset.
Conjunctivitis (Pinkeye) - Tears, redness of eyelid lining, irritation followed by swelling and discharge of pus	24 hours after treatment begins. When returning to school, make sure you bring the note that was given to you when your scholar was sent home, filled out by your scholar’s clinic.
Head Lice –	First treatment is complete, no live lice eggs are seen, and you have removed ALL nits (eggs)
Strep Throat / Scarlet Fever	24 hours after treatment begins and scholar is without fever. When returning to school, make sure you bring the note that was given to you when your scholar was sent home, filled out by your scholar’s clinic.
General Lethargy – When a scholar is not able to participate in activities with reasonable comfort and requires more care than the program staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other scholar.	Condition Improves
Ringworm -	24 hours after treatment begins. When returning to school, make sure you bring the note that was given to you when your scholar was sent home, filled out by your scholar’s clinic. Please keep area covered.
Non-prescriptive medications, such as acetaminophen, cough medicine; cough drops, Orajel or aspirin, will only be administered by the School Nurse at the school if the parent or legal guardian has	

signed a consent form issued by our registered nurse. We administer only prescriptive medications under the following conditions:

- A signed and dated Medication Authorization Form completed by the parent/guardian is on file
- The medication is in the original container and labeled with the scholar's name, directions for dosage, date and physicians name.

In the event of a medical emergency requiring immediate medical attention, we will call to request police or ambulance service. We will then call the parent/guardian or the emergency contact person if the parent cannot be reached. The scholar will be transported to the nearest hospital or the hospital listed on his/her enrollment form. If a scholar is transported to a medical facility, a staff member will accompany him/her. Please keep in mind that scholars should not be given fever reducers such as Tylenol for any reason just prior to attending school. Although we try our best to prevent all scholars from becoming sick, it is not uncommon for scholar in scholar care to share illnesses, especially infants and toddlers. The school is for well scholars. Ill scholars have a difficult time functioning because they do not have the energy to cope with other scholar and the demands of a busy schedule. We realize that parents don't want to miss classes or work, but it is important for a scholar to stay home, rest and get well if illness occurs. Your scholar's health is assessed up arrival, but if symptoms of illness appear during the day, parents are contacted to pick up the sick scholar. If this occurs, we request at least 24 hours of rest, recovery and observation of the scholar at home.

TO HELP ALLEVIATE THE SPREAD OF ILLNESS, ALL SCHOLARS ARE REQUIRED TO WASH HANDS UPON ARRIVAL AT THE SCHOOL AND AT OTHER TIMES THROUGHOUT THE DAY.

SCHOLAR RETURNING AFTER ILLNESS

Scholars may return to school based on the Exclusion Chart. Scholars returning with any of the previous symptoms or illness will be excluded from Cultural Arts Academy Charter School immediately. The decision is at the discretion of the Principal or Registered Nurse. When your scholar is ready to return and medication is required, a "Medication Consent" form must be signed by the parent and given to your scholar's teacher or the school nurse.

SUPERVISION OF SCHOLAR AT CAACS

Parents are responsible for the safety and well being of their scholar any time in which you are together at the school, but CAACS staff will step in if we feel a scholar is exhibiting an unsafe practice. Please do not allow your scholar to wander or run off anywhere in the school without you. When entering and exiting the school, your scholar must remain with you at all times. They should not run ahead to their classroom or run out the main door without you – this is teaching them a very unsafe practice. We also request that you restrict your scholar from climbing on furniture or anything that is not intended for climbing. We set rules and limits to maintain expectations for scholar's behavior while they are under our supervision, so we expect the same from parents when under your supervision.

PHYSICAL EXAMINATION

ALL students must have a full physical examination completed **prior to starting school.**

IMMUNIZATION

The NYS Public Health Law, Section 2164 mandates that schools shall not permit a child to be admitted unless the parent provides the school with a certificate of immunization or proof from a physician, nurse practitioner or physician's assistant that the child is in the process of receiving the required immunizations. All immunizations must specify that exact date each immunization was administered. The Governor signed into a law a bill that eliminates the religious exemption to the requirement that students must receive certain vaccinations to attend school. This means that if you

had previously approved a religious exemption for your scholar, this exemption is no longer valid and the student will need to show proof that they have received the required vaccination(s). All students will need to be in compliance by the first day of school this year. **Religious exemption is no longer allowed.**

NUTRITION

All NYC public school students will receive free breakfast and lunch at school all year. We still need families to complete the *Family Income Inquiry Form* (<https://www.myschoolapps.com/Home/PickDistrict>), which helps our school receive money for our programs. CAACS will send a copy of this form home with your child, or you can get it from Dean Battle in the Family Resource Center. If you prefer for your scholar to bring breakfast or lunch from home, we suggest that lunches should contain a grain, protein, fruit and/or vegetable and dairy. All foods must be prepared appropriately for the scholar to eat. **CAACS Staff is prohibited from warming food up in a microwave for your scholar.** Cultural Arts Academy Charter School provides snacks for all scholars. Snack foods vary from yogurt, cookies, animal crackers, fruit snacks, etc. **NO PEANUTS/PEANUT BUTTER OR RELATED INGREDIENTS ALLOWED!**

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

BLIZZARDS / SNOW EMERGENCIES

A school-wide policy on storm day and other citywide emergency procedures for school closings and delayed school openings is necessary as a guide to students, parents and staff. Principal Midgette, in consultation with the CAACS Board of Trustees has established procedures for school closings and delayed openings on storm days. The details are as follows:

- Parents should listen to information broadcast by news radio stations. If district numbers are used, please remember that our school number is 84K792.
- The principal's decision to close or delay the opening of schools during stormy weather will be communicated to radio and television stations prior to 6:00 A.M.
- In the case of a delayed school opening, field trips will be canceled.
- When there is emergency weather conditions, school may be closed or have a 2 hour delayed opening (in our case, 9:30am). By 6:00 am, the decision is announced on:
 1. The 311 information line
 2. The Cultural Arts Academy Charter School website (culturalartsacademy.org)
 3. The Radio - 1010 AM, 880 AM, 770 AM, 1190 AM, 1280 AM, 107.5 FM and 91.5 FM
 4. Television - NY1, WCBS 2, WNBC 4, WNYW 5, WABC 7, WNYE 25 and Univision 41

In the case of an announced two-hour delayed school opening (9:30am), school buses will run 2 hours later. Any field trips and after school programs will be cancelled. In the event there is a two-hour delay in opening, children are to go to their designated bus stop two hours later than their regular time. It is expected that regular dismissal times will be adhered to. In the event that a storm intensifies during the school day, the Principal, in consultation with the Board of Trustees, may authorize an early dismissal. You should have plans in place in case of this situation. Please make emergency arrangements now with a friend, relative or neighbor that may be home during the day in the event that an early dismissal is announced and your youngster needs supervision.

In the case of contract bus transportation, the principal or designee and assigned staff is to remain in school with bused children until buses arrive for dismissal or until a parent or guardian arrives to take the children home. Parent notification must be ensured to the greatest extent possible.

- Parents should also be advised to discuss contingency plans with their children in case children are released early and parents are not at home to care for them. If possible, parents should make arrangements with a relative, friend, or neighbor who is at home during the day.

- Parents of children who have medical and/or health issues requiring nursing services during the school day should be advised to use their own discretion in sending their children to school on storm days or on days with other citywide emergency conditions.
- Parents of children with disabilities should also be advised to use their own discretion as to whether they will permit their children to ride to school on stormy days or on days with other citywide emergency conditions, recognizing that travel time will necessarily be longer and that there may be delays in the schedules of the morning trip to school and in the trip home in the afternoon.

Remember to update your emergency contact card! Contact the school at 718-683-3300 or caacs@caa-ny.org if you have questions regarding this policy or the procedures.

EVACUATION DRILLS (formerly known as Fire Drills)

An evacuation drill is a method of practicing the evacuation of a school building for a fire or other emergency. Generally, the emergency system (usually an alarm) is activated and the school building is evacuated as though a real fire had occurred. Evacuation drills will be held at varying times and days (12 times) throughout the year; a combination of evacuation drills and soft lockdowns (*8 times by December 31st and 4 times in the spring*) will be conducted. All staff and scholars participate in all drills. A report of these drills will be documented. CAACS maintains an extensive Safety Plan on file in the school. It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to keep your emergency information up-to-date so that CAACS staff can contact you. We recommend carrying a cell phone or pager at all times. We will contact you and will need to have access to the lines to do so.

MISSING SCHOLAR

It is always CAACS's strict policy that no scholar is ever left alone. During transitions, a staff person will always leave the room first as a leader; and, when there is sometimes more than one teacher or staff, the other person will be the last one out of the room to assure that all scholars follow. Any trip away from the school will involve extra adult supervision. If a scholar cannot be found after a thorough search, the Building Response Protocol for a Missing Child will be activated and we will immediately notify the local police department, CAACS School Safety and the scholar's parents.

PERSONS AUTHORIZED TO PICK UP

Scholars will be released from the school ONLY to authorized persons whose names appear on the Enrollment Data or Emergency Contact Form you filled out at registration (who we would contact – not allowed to just come into the school and take scholar), or on the Scholar Release Form which needs to be filled out by the parent on the specific day in which someone else is picking up your scholar. In addition, anyone who is picking up a scholar and is unfamiliar to a staff member must show identification before the scholar can be released. **Anyone who does not provide identification will be turned away. Scholars will not be released to a person who is incapacitated due to drugs, alcohol or other narcotics, or suspected of abuse.** Staff is not expected to jeopardize their own safety, or the safety of scholars in their care. The parent or emergency contact person, or if necessary 911, will be called if staff are threatened, and/or forced to release the scholar. If the person picking up the scholar is incapacitated or suspected of abuse, the parent and the police will be called.

GENERAL SAFETY PRACTICES

- Teachers and all staff have completed background checks
- Select staff is First Aid & CPR-trained
- All staff are mandated to report any suspicion of Scholar Abuse/Neglect
- Scholars are supervised at all times and ratios maintained
- Parent Emergency information is on file in each scholar's file
- Authorized Pick Up information is on file
- If we are not familiar with the authorized pick up person we will ask to see ID and will match

- the persons ID with the emergency contact information provided by the parent
- The Security Desk and Principal's Office has a First Aid Kit
- Emergency numbers are posted in the Operations Office, Family Resource Center and Security Desk
- Emergency Exit signs are posted throughout the school building
- Staff spread out on the playground to ensure adequate and appropriate supervision
- Medication box is out of scholar's reach
- Medications administered only with written permission of parents
- Gloves are worn while handling food
- Cleaning supplies are out of scholar's reach
- Teachers fill out documentation for accidents, incidents and health related incidents.
- Latex-free gloves are available in rooms for emergencies
- Emergency numbers and a first aid kit is packed for trips outside of the school
- The Family Resource Center publishes a Weekly Newsletter keep parents and staff updated and informed regarding the children
- Health and Safety information is incorporated into the curriculum and taught to the scholar on a regular basis

PARENTS RESPONSIBILITIES FOR SAFETY

- Keep current on scholar's immunizations and check ups
- Keep sick scholar at home until 24 hours after the disappearance of all symptoms, including the disappearance of fever
- Tell your scholar's teacher if your scholar has a communicable disease
- Fill out the necessary forms to allow the school nurse to administer medications
- If your scholar will be absent from Cultural Arts Academy Charter School for sickness or other reasons, please call or email the school
- Teach your scholar good health practices at home (wiping nose with tissues, brushing teeth after meals, flushing the toilet, washing hands frequently, cleaning up after self, etc...) It helps if we are consistent with health practices at home and school
- Keep your location information current while you are at work. You must have a minimum of 2 different people to contact on our emergency contact form
- Always tell the teachers or staff if someone other than the parent will be picking up your scholar
- Bring your scholar to Cultural Arts Academy Charter School in the appropriate car safety restraints. **Keep scholars eleven years or younger in the back seat where it is safer.** If we notice that your scholar is not properly restrained, don't be offended if we say something to you about it
- **Never leave your scholar in the car unattended.**
- Do not let your scholar run ahead of you in the parking lot. Teach them to stay close for safety purposes
- Do not ask your scholar to meet you inside or allow your scholar to linger in his or her classroom while you go to pick up another scholar in a different room. When we see you arrive, we transfer responsibility for keeping your scholar supervised back to you
- Keep teacher informed about your scholar's health, mood, eating habits, family situations or anything that might affect your scholar's behavior at school

ABUSE/NEGLECT REPORTING POLICY

All CAACS staff are legally required or mandated to report abuse or neglect of a child. If there is reason to believe a scholar is being or has been neglected or physically or sexually abused we must immediately (within 24 hours) make a report. A mandated reporter who knows or has reason to

believe a scholar is or has been neglected or physically or sexually abused and fails to report is guilty of a misdemeanor. In addition, a mandated reporter who fails to report maltreatment that is found to be serious or recurring maltreatment may be disqualified from employment.

GENERAL OPERATING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

CLOTHING

During cooler weather, it is necessary for each scholar to dress appropriately. Scholars will go outside daily unless it is raining or the wind chill/temperature is excessive. Boots, mittens, a heavy jacket, snow pants and a hat will be needed to winter play. (If you fail to provide adequate clothing for outside play, we will contact you. All clothing, bags, diapers and belongings must be labeled with your scholar's full name! Cultural Arts Academy Charter School discourages clothing that promotes violent or vulgar behavior.

OUTDOORS PLAY

We believe that scholar learn best through play and hands on experiences. We also believe that the outdoors is an extension of the indoor classroom. We typically go outside twice a day for physical education and recess once the weather is warm.

BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE

Guidance techniques are designed and carried out to help the individual scholar develop self-control and to assume responsibility for his or her actions. The rules are simple and understandable and redirection, along with an explanation, is a common technique. No scholar will be punished by corporal punishment or verbal abuse. Please keep in mind that this policy also applies to parents. The following behaviors are prohibited (by ALL persons) in CAACS: Corporal punishment, including hitting, spanking, swatting, beating, shaking, pinching and other measures intended to induce physical pain or fear

- Abusive or profane language
- Threatened or actual withdrawal of food, rest or use of the bathroom
- Any form of public or private humiliation, including threats of physical punishment
- Any form of emotional abuse, including shaming, rejecting, terrorizing or isolating a scholar

If a parent has concern about another scholar's behavior, we ask that you discuss your concern with the appropriate staff or director. Under NO circumstances will you be allowed to approach the scholar in an effort to deal with the situation yourself. We consider this method to be completely inappropriate and will not be tolerated.

Please remember that young scholars need to experience interacting with other scholars on a consistent basis. Learning how to share and cooperate with others is a very difficult process for scholars, and aggressive behavior will occur. Although we do not allow this behavior to persist, it does take time for a scholar to learn a more acceptable ways of dealing with his/her anger and frustration (using appropriate words to express feelings)

The following procedures will be followed when addressing persistent unacceptable behavior that requires increased staff guidance and time:

1. Staff observe and record scholar's behavior and staff response
2. Develop a Behavior Modification Plan to address a scholar's behavior in consultation with a scholar's parents, other staff and professionals when needed. The plan will set short and long term goals. Parents must be actively involved in seeking at participating in the Behavior Modification Plan. If the inappropriate behavior continues and parents are not involved in seeking a solution, the scholar's care may be terminated.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

We encourage scholars at all age levels to solve their own problems. On a daily basis, scholars are challenged to resolve conflicts with other scholars and their environment. Depending on the age group, a teacher will intervene at different times to assure safety. By not constantly and prematurely interrupting, adults allow scholars to work through situations and develop their own solutions. Adults only intervene when guidance is apparently needed. This empowers the scholar to take care of situations and interactions.

APOLOGIES

While learning to socialize, scholars encounter peer conflicts that sometimes result in hurting another scholar. Many adult's first reaction is to have the scholar say "I'm Sorry". A scholar needs to understand their own feelings and begin empathizing with other scholar's feelings before using the abstract concept of being sorry in a genuine way. Insisting on an apology teaches a scholar how to please an adult rather than gaining an understanding for others. When a conflict arises between non-verbal scholars, we start the understanding process by modeling appropriate behavior and talking about how the other scholar feels. As scholars acquire language, we continue the process by helping the scholar with the words they need to express their feelings. The teacher facilitates the process by suggesting ways the aggressive scholar can help the upset scholar. For example, a scholar who has pushed another scholar on a will be asked to help the injured scholar. This helps them to make amends. There is a point in cognitive and social-emotional development when a scholar understands being sorry, and it is then that we encourage apologies to start.

SUSPENSION AND TERMINATION

Cultural Arts Academy Charter School reserves the right to suspend or terminate a scholar from the school (see the **CAACS CODE OF COOPERATION - Discipline Policy**), especially if the scholar's behavior endangers the safety of the scholar, other scholars, staff, or property. Inappropriate behavior includes, but is not limited to: hitting aggressively, kicking, head butting, pinching, spitting, throwing objects, inability to participate in planned activities, or demands attention because of inappropriate behavior.

CONFERENCES

Conferences may be scheduled as needed by either a parent or a teacher at a mutually convenient time. Official Parent-Teacher Conferences will be held four times a year.

BIRTHDAYS

Birthdays are very special. **Scholars are allowed to "dress up" in appropriate clothing of their choice on their birthdays (2021-2022)**, as long as the clothing complies with the rules for the corporate environment, proper fit, acceptable footwear, and acceptable jewelry. We will celebrate each child's birthday during Character Education in the morning on the day of his/her birthday, or close to it. Please note that no food items can be brought in from home. Store-bought pizza and/or cupcakes are the only authorized food items. Summer birthdays may be celebrated at the end of June. **Invitations to individual birthday parties are not to be sent to school for distribution unless all children in the classroom are invited.** For inquiries or questions about birthdays, please contact Dean Scott at (718) 683-3303 or rscott@caa-ny.org.

ITEMS BROUGHT FROM HOME

Our school maintains a generous supply of materials and equipment for the scholars to use. Therefore, scholars are asked to **keep all toys and personal items at home.** This helps to avoid hurt feelings if an item is lost or broken. In addition, please do not bring gum, candy or money into the school. These items will be either thrown away or placed in your scholar's cubby. Please help your scholar understand these rules.

DATA PRIVACY

The only persons permitted to see your scholar's records will be the parent or legal guardian, CAACS staff, and legal representatives. Information will not be given to others without written consent from the parent or legal guardian. It is the policy of this school not to disclose the names of scholar who may have caused injuries to other scholars while at the school. This is a safeguard for the data privacy of each family.

TECHNOLOGY USAGE POLICY

Students are encouraged to use the school's computers/network and the Internet connection for teacher-assigned, educational work. All references to schools in this policy will mean CAACS. The term computer or computer equipment includes: system units, displays, mice, keyboards, speakers, microphones, scanners, video projectors, video cameras, printers, hubs, switches, routers patch panels, wiring, connectors, programs and any other piece of equipment or software which is part of the school's computer system. Students using a school's computers are expected to abide by the following rules:

- Students may only access the district network and/or Internet by using their assigned network account. Use of another person's account/password is prohibited. Students may not allow other users to utilize their passwords. Students may not intentionally seek information on, obtain copies of or modify files, data or passwords belonging to other users or misrepresent other users on the network.
- The Internet Usage Agreement must be read and approved, in writing, by each student and, in the case of students under the age of eighteen, the student's parent, guardian or custodian. CAACS reserves the right to filter any Internet sites.
- Students are permitted to use networked software and school-supplied software. Programs written by the student, which are part of an assignment in a school's course of study, may be run, as required, for that course of study's requirements with teacher supervision.
- Students may not download programs from the Internet nor may they copy programs from any disk, diskette, CD, jump/flash drives or other outside media. Students may not install or delete programs on the school's computers.
- Students may not use the Internet to engage in "hacking" or other unlawful activities.
- Students may not create keyboard macros in Microsoft Word or any other program. Macros written by the student which are part of an assignment in a school's course of study may be run, as required, for that course of study's requirements with teacher supervision.
- Students should only use computer programs approved by the classroom teacher.
- The school staff may review computer files or messages that are created by the student. Material may be reviewed for grading and appropriate content. It may be reviewed for any harassing or threatening material, trade secret protection and/or any vulgar or obscene content.
- Only one student may work at a single computer. Only a teacher may assign more than one student to work at a single computer.
- Students are not to send messages over the network or participate in online "chat rooms." Students may not use any email or instant messaging programs on a school's computer. A student may only use Internet e-mail when a teacher instructs him/her to do so.
- Students are not to enter the network's operating system.
- A teacher may authorize the copying of student-created work to CD's, jump/flash drives, or other outside media. The use of CD's, jump/flash drives, etc. is not permitted without permission from a teacher.
- Students may not bring food or drink into the computer lab.
- All copyright laws are to be enforced.
- Students are not to unplug or change any computer device or network connections.

- Students are not to change any display screen settings.
- Students are not to change any program's toolbars or settings.
- Students are not to add or delete any program icons on the desktop or Start Menu.
- Malicious use of the school's computers/network to develop programs that harass other users or infiltrate a computer or computer system and/or damage the software components of a computer or computing system is prohibited. Students may not use the school's computers/network in such a way that would disrupt their use by others.
- Students are not to remove, modify, damage or destroy any computer or networking equipment.
- Students are not to modify or remove any identifying labels on computer equipment.
- Students are not to modify or remove any printer settings.
- Students are to advise school staff when they observe any violation of the school's policy for the use of the school's computers.
- Students are to advise their teacher when a computer malfunctions in any way (example: a program is not opening or closing correctly). The teacher will notify the technical support staff so that the PC can be repaired.
- Exceptions to the above rules are permitted only under direct teacher supervision.

Violations of these rules may result in disciplinary action. Violations also may be referred to the appropriate legal authorities and/or other legal action may be pursued.

HOMEWORK

Homework provides an opportunity for parents to become partners in their student's learning process. Teachers give homework to strengthen children's skills in specific areas. The amount of homework should increase as a child moves through the elementary grades. If your child is routinely spending more than an hour on homework at any grade level, please discuss it with your child's teacher. Since the needs of each child are different, homework assignments may vary from child to child within each class.

GRADING POLICY (*provided under separate cover*)

Grades are designed to communicate effectively to parents and students; therefore the basis of their assignment should be clearly articulated. In assessing classroom work/performance, the focus should be placed on the student demonstrating that he or she has learned the written curriculum as defined by curriculum objectives and NYS Next Generation Learning Standards. Grades will be based on a variety of indicators.

As students progress toward mastery of the skills and concepts of curriculum, teachers will use various indicators to monitor and assess this progress. Indicators will include any or all of the following: teacher observations based on specific criteria; class discussions; projects; demonstrations; curriculum baseline exams; participation and engagement in small learning groups; reading and writing proficiency; homework; and more.

REPORT CARDS

At the end of each semester, a report card will be given to parents indicating academic performance and the achievement of the standards. A schedule of report card distribution is on the school calendar. The academic grade reflects learning gains.

SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

CAACS offers ICT/CTT Special Education model. Students with disabilities who receive *Integrated Co-Teaching (Collaborative Team Teaching)* services are educated with age appropriate peers in the general education classroom. ICT/CTT provides students the opportunity to be educated alongside their non-disabled peers with the full-time support of a special education teacher throughout the day

to assist in adapting and modifying instruction. As described in the NYC Continuum of Services for Students with Disabilities, Integrated Co-Teaching (CTT) “ensures that students master specific skills and concepts in the general education curriculum, as well as ensuring that their special education needs are being met, including meeting alternate curriculum goals.” The title of the services was changed from Collaborative Team Teaching to Integrated Co-Teaching when the service was incorporated in the New York State continuum of services. The state requires all schools to use the terminology “Integrated Co-Teaching” so that the level of services being provided to a student is clear and consistent.

FIELD TRIPS/EXTENDED LEARNING EXPERIENCE

Field trips are an important extension of our school curriculum. In order for your child to benefit from these activities, appropriate behavior from all students is necessary. CAACS reserves the right to prohibit students from attending field trips because of disruptive behavior. Parent permission slips will be signed in advance. Students will travel by school-authorized vehicles. Students will be released during the course of the trip to parents or guardians only. These releases should be arranged in advance by submitting a written request to the teacher or advisor in charge of the trip. Siblings are not permitted to attend field trips.

BUS POLICY FOR BEHAVIOR AND SAFETY

Good behavior is essential to the safety of all who ride the school bus. Sitting quietly and obeying the rules helps prevent injuries and enables the driver to function effectively without distractions. Parents and guardians **MUST** discuss transportation conduct and safety rules with their children and share the safety tips below. Make the trip to and from school both safe and enjoyable—think safety at all times. On the bus, children should talk quietly, be courteous to the driver and follow the driver's instructions. They should stay seated during the entire bus ride and keep the aisles clear.

1. RULES ON BOARDING THE BUS

- a. Stay as far from the edge of the road as possible.
- b. Let the bus come to a full stop before approaching the door of the bus.
- c. Use the handrail to help keep your balance as you go up the steps, one at a time.
- d. Report anything damaged on the bus (such as clamps for securing wheelchairs) to the driver as you leave.

2. RULES WHILE RIDING THE BUS

- a. Speak softly.
- b. Get permission before opening a window and don't throw or put anything (such as hands, head, or arms) out of the window.
- c. Don't talk to the driver while the bus is in motion, unless it is an emergency. The driver has to keep his or her mind on the road.
- d. No talking at all when the bus comes to a railroad crossing, so the driver can hear any approaching train.
- e. Keep arms and legs out of the aisle, where they could trip or hurt somebody.
- f. Sit quietly in your seat until the trip is over and the bus has come to a full stop.
- g. Keep seat belt on until the bus comes to a halt at the school or home.

3. RULES FOR LEAVING THE BUS

- a. Stay seated until the bus comes to a full stop. The driver will tell you when to go.
- b. Always use the handrail going up and down steps to protect your self from falling.
- c. Move away from the bus quickly. Stay clear of the rear wheels. Never reach back through a

window.

The parent shall have the child ready on time so that no delay occurs for other children. The driver is not required to wait more than one minute for any child who is not ready at the pick-up point. The bus driver is forbidden to blow the bus horn. For the safety of all children on the bus, it is essential that parents advise their children to obey the following rules:

1. All children must be seated on the bus at all times, with a seat belt fastened.
2. Children are not permitted to lean out bus windows; hands and heads must be kept inside the bus at all times.
3. Children should speak quietly on the bus and should not speak to the driver when the bus is in motion.
4. Children should not throw objects inside the bus or out of the bus windows.
5. No hitting, spitting or fighting is allowed on the bus; no shoving is allowed when boarding or leaving the bus.

THE PROCEDURE REGARDING MISBEHAVIOR OF CHILDREN ON SCHOOL BUSES

- A. The driver and/or escort shall first speak with the authorized school staff about the child's misbehavior. The authorized school staff shall discuss the problem with the child and with the parent.
- B. If the driver and/or escort is unable to speak to the school staff or if the child's behavior does not improve after intervention by the staff, the driver or the bus company shall notify the principal of the school and/or the special education supervisor by letter, with a copy to the Office of Pupil Transportation (OPT) and, where appropriate, the District Administrator of Special Education (DASE).
- C. The Office of Pupil Transportation shall determine the precipitating causes for the misbehavior and whether the driver or escort contributed to the difficulty. If the driver or escort is at fault, the Office of Pupil Transportation shall contact the bus company to take appropriate actions; i.e., warning, transfer, suspension.
- D. If the causes are other than the above and the child's behavior threatens the physical safety of self or others, the principal or special education supervisor shall arrange for a conference with the parent and discuss methods for resolution, such as the parent independently taking the child to school.
- E. If an emergency threatens the safety of the child or others on the ride home in the afternoon and the principal or special education supervisor cannot be reached, the Director of the Office of Pupil Transportation can decide that the bus company is not to pick up the child the following day and shall so notify the parent. The principal or supervisor will then be contacted the next day to make a final decision on excluding the child from bus service for a longer period of time and shall so advise the parent.
- F. Only the principal or special education supervisor may temporarily bar a child from transportation if all else fails. The bus driver and/or escort have no authority to take disciplinary action. Drivers and/or escorts may caution pupils, and if this is not effective, they are instructed to report the matter to the school principal or special education supervisor.
- G. The principal or special education supervisor shall arrange a conference with the parent, teacher, and other appropriate personnel to help resolve the problem and to arrange other means, if necessary, of getting the child to school. Exclusion from bus service does not mean suspension from school.
- H. The principal or special education supervisor can exclude a pupil from bus service for a maximum of five consecutive days for a particular incident determined to put the health, safety and welfare of all children on the bus in jeopardy.

LOST AND FOUND

CAACS maintains a lost and found where articles may be claimed. It is advisable that parents mark

their children's clothing for easy identification. We encourage parents of students to check the lost and found for articles that may have been forgotten. Each day many articles are left unclaimed. CAACS officials will not assume responsibility for lost articles or money. It is suggested that children bring only the amount of money necessary for any given day.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

Charter schools are independent Local Educational Agencies ("LEAs"), and are not subject to the NYC Chancellor's Regulations, but rather to the regulations set forth in Article 56 of the NYS Charter Act, as well as NY State Education Law. Further, the protocol and escalation process differs slightly for each authorizing entity. To file a grievance for Cultural Arts Academy Charter School, you must follow the instructions below step-by-step:

Step 1: Familiarize yourself with the school's guidelines and contact the school's leadership. Begin by contacting school leadership to try to resolve any violations, issues or complaints. Before doing so, we encourage you to familiarize yourself with the school's policies, guidelines, and reference materials. Such items include, but are not limited to, parent handbooks, student discipline policies related to your concern, dress code pamphlets, and school-issued memorandums. Determine whether or not the school's actions related to your complaint fall within the school's policies.

Contact School Leadership: Dr. Laurie Midgette, Principal-CEO at (718) 683-3322 or via email at lmidgette@caa-ny.org.

Step 2: Appeal to the school's Board of Trustees Each charter school has a Board of Trustees that is responsible for hiring and overseeing the school leader. If after contacting the school's leadership you are not satisfied with the outcome or decision pertaining to the complaint, you may appeal to the school's Board of Trustees. The Board meets publicly on a regular basis. Parents are encouraged to either contact the Board directly to schedule items on the meeting agenda or contact the school/parent committee that deals with such matters. Contact Cheryl Pemberton-Graves, Board of Trustees at cpemberton@caa-ny.org

Step 3: Appeal to the school's authorizer If after your appeal you are not satisfied with the Board of Trustees' decision, and if your complaint involves a violation of either the school's policies or its charter, you may submit a formal complaint to the school's authorizer. If the school is not an NYC DOE-authorized school, please contact your school's authorizer for more information. For NYCDOE-authorized schools, contact (212) 374-5419 and fill out the NYC DOE-Authorized Charter School Complaint Form at the end of this document.

Step 4: Appeal to the New York State Board of Regents If you are still not satisfied with the outcome after going through the first three levels of the complaint process, you may write to the New York State Board of Regents (New York State Education Department, Charter School Office, Room 465 EBA, 89 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12234), call them at (518) 474-1762, or send an email to: charterschools@mail.nysed.gov (*subject line should include the name of the school and the word "Complaint"*).

NOTE: *It is very important that before you escalate your complaint to the school's authorizer level you determine it constitutes a formal complaint involving a violation of the school's charter or of state charter law. Informal complaints that do not violate either the school's charter or state charter law should be resolved between the parent and the school's leadership.*

General Directions for Filing A Grievance

The law does not require that your grievance be in a particular format. However, in order to ensure that your grievance is thoroughly and quickly reviewed, you should provide the following:

1. A detailed statement of the nature of the complaint (including the law or provision of the charter that you allege has been violated), the names of the individuals involved, and the time, date and place.
2. The incident (s) at issue occurred.
3. What response, if any, you have received from the school board (a copy of any response should be attached) with any relevant dates.
4. Copies of any correspondence between you and the School or Board of Trustees.
5. What action or relief you are seeking.
6. Your name, address and telephone number

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

HOME – SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

We value our relationship and communication with parents, as we serve as partners in the care of your scholar. We encourage you to let us know anything that might help us in our work with your scholar – a move, developmental or medical needs, the birth of a baby, divorce or separation, death in the family, a new pet, etc... All are examples of information that can be helpful to us. Teachers will share information with you about your scholar's day on a regular basis. Although we want you to be aware of certain situations and behaviors your scholar may be exhibiting at the school, we don't expect you to "fix it" or to punish your scholar. We will handle situations that arise but just want parents to be aware of what we are doing in the classroom as it pertains to your scholar.

The CAACS Weekly Newsletter is distributed to provide information concerning school curriculum, policies, announcements events and general information concerning your scholar's education. Please read these letters so you can remain informed about school policies and procedures. Important information about instruction and enrollment are also included in the **Weekly Newsletter**.

To enhance parent-teacher-scholar communications, we ask that you refrain from talking on your cell phone while dropping off or picking up your scholar.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality of information is a very important aspect of our school. Sometimes we encounter situations such as a parent who expresses a concern about another scholar's behavior. This typically happens during parent conferences or other school meetings and events. Although we understand your concern for the welfare of your scholar, we cannot discuss detailed information about other scholars and families with you. Please keep in mind that scholars develop at very different rates and it's not realistic to expect all scholars to "behave" the way you expect them to. Some of our scholars have special needs. What is disturbing to one parent is not as upsetting to another. As professional staff, we have to decide what behavior is unacceptable and beyond what is considered typical for that age. Please know that we are always working with individual scholars and families but we cannot disclose this information to you. Parents need to be assured that we won't discuss their scholar's development or progress with others so this applies to your scholar as well.

PARENT CONFERENCES

Parents are invited to speak with classroom teachers or one of our directors at any time concerning school matters or your scholar's development. It is best to talk directly to your scholar's teacher if you have concerns regarding your scholar or their classroom, and to a director if you have concerns about a staff member, school policy or procedure. We strongly encourage all parents to sign up for a conference at the designated time during fall and spring semesters.

PARENT CONCERNS

As a school, we are in a community of scholars, parents and staff all interacting and sharing our lives together. In a community, people work closely together and hopefully interactions are positive, helpful, kind and understanding. Yet it is to be expected that from time to time, people experience some conflict, concerns and difficulties. We recognize that parenting is one of the most difficult, intense and rewarding experiences in your life. We want you to share your thoughts, hopes and dreams for your scholar. You want what is best for your scholar and we know it is your job to advocate and protect your scholar. We, as a staff, may make mistakes, create misunderstandings, and occasionally misinterpret shared information. When these mistakes occur, we want for you to tell us. As a staff, it is our goal to offer your family the best scholar care services possible. In order to meet our goal, we need your input, your suggestions, your questions and concerns.

When you have a concern, please remember ...

- Teachers want the parents to feel very satisfied with the care their scholar is receiving
- Talk to the teachers directly whenever possible. If you feel comfortable, ask your scholar's teacher first about any concern. Teachers prefer you talk with them directly, but understand if you would prefer talking with the director or principal
- Be assured that teachers do not hold a grudge against your scholar or "take it out" on your scholar after you have expressed a concern. We would not hire anyone at the school that would react in such an inappropriate manner. Actually, after expressing a concern, your scholar's teacher will be more conscientious about your issue and try to improve
- Sometimes we cannot make changes you may request due to other restrictions, but we always want to hear your suggestions. We promise to consider them seriously and respond to you in a timely manner.

PARENT VISITS

Parents are welcome to visit the school, but keep in mind it may be difficult for a scholar to cope with separating from a parent for a second time during the day. Scholars typically assume they will be picked up from the school anytime they see their parent. It is difficult for them to understand that although you are leaving, they are expected to stay. Special talents or interests you might wish to share are always welcome. Please talk to your scholar's teacher about this or see the Family Specialist, Dean Battle.

PARENTS ASSOCIATION

Cultural Arts Academy Charter School Parents Association supports the vision and mission of the school by supporting school policies and raising funds. The board will meet monthly during the academic year. If you are interested in serving, please contact Dean Battle, Family Specialist and liaison to the Parents Association - wbattle@caa-ny.org.

WHEN WE HAVE TO SAY GOODBYE TO STAFF... AN OPEN LETTER TO CAACS FAMILIES

Why might good employees choose to leave CAACS?

The first reason may be more money. Charter schools are underfunded compared to most district schools. The other reasons could include a spousal relocation, personal family issues and medical issues, conflict with others – including leadership– lack of potential to advance, boredom with the responsibilities, personal ambition or lack of recognition. Sometimes the reasons are unclear.

Why are CAACS staff members sometimes released from service?

To "let go," "dismiss," or otherwise take an employee off the payroll is one of the most difficult things a Principal has to do. It's a gut-wrenching conversation, knowing how this simple act affects a person's career, self-esteem, and livelihood. Releasing an employee also affects everyone else on our team. Once the termination conversation is over, there's another difficult task ahead: figuring out how to communicate the release to the rest of the staff as well as the larger school community of parents and students. How transparent should I be about the circumstances surrounding the employee's departure, and how might news of releasing the employee impact the school community's morale? Sometimes it becomes necessary to release an employee who was very well liked by our parents, students and staff. It becomes a concern that the released staff member may influence the morale of the existing school community by saying that he or she was unfairly terminated. Informing the school community without releasing all the details of the termination is very difficult. It is especially difficult when the person has good relations with the parents, students or remaining employees. Anger, sadness and acceptance are the natural ways to respond when a long-time or well-liked employee departs.

As for transparency, I have to balance the need to explain why the employee is suddenly no longer part of our team with protecting that person's privacy and dignity. Hence, "Today was _____'s last day. We wish him/her the best in their endeavors." As the Principal of Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek, I neither impetuously fire staff, nor will I overlook continuous offenses. I offer employees opportunities to correct issues or problems. I have numerous conversations with the employee before letting him or her go, and give him or her warnings and chances to improve. Staff can be released for a myriad of reasons: undermining leadership, arrogantly dealing with others, perpetually creating conflict, and not being able to follow the rules of the community; hence, they must be removed for the common good. I have a duty not just to employees, but to all other stakeholders as well: students, parents, and the Board of Trustees. My stewardship over this school will sometimes dictate that staff relationships with our school be involuntarily severed. I invest significant time and energy in these consequential decisions, judiciously balancing compassion and standards whenever I am considering releasing someone.

Please feel free to see the Principal if you need clarity regarding this issue. My door is open (and my office is in the lobby). You can also e-mail me at lmidgette@caa-ny.org.

Thank you for your continued support of our vision of providing your child with a world-class education!



“Where Leaders Grow Up.”