

Uncommon  
Schools |

**EXCELLENCE GIRLS**

# Family Handbook

## 2016-2017

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## Mission

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Excellence Girls Charter School prepares our students to enter, succeed in, and graduate from outstanding college preparatory high schools and colleges. We cultivate in our student the knowledge, skills, and character necessary to succeed academically, embrace responsibility, and become honorable citizens and courageous leaders who embody the Excellence Girls Charter School Creed Values: Courage, Loyalty, Justice, Respect, Hope, Honesty, Scholarship, Sisterhood, and Love.

## Attendance – General

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Attendance is the first step in ensuring academic achievement. In order for scholars to reach for their personal best, they must show up and make their strongest effort at school each and every day. At Excellence Girls Charter School, regular attendance is required. Our curriculum is an ambitious one; every day is essential for students to keep pace. Parents/guardians/families are expected to ensure that their children are in school. Please do not allow your scholar to miss a day of school except for serious illnesses. Excessive absences will be considered a violation of the Teacher-Family-Scholar Commitment to Excellence, and students who miss an excessive number of days may not be promoted to the next grade.

- ***All Absences – “Excused” and “Unexcused” – Are Considered Absences:*** Any day your scholar does not attend school is considered an absence. Student illness (with doctor’s note), a death in the family, religious holiday (with parent/guardian/guardian’s notes) are all considered absences at Excellence Girls Charter School. While we appreciate a call or note from a parent, guardian, or doctor explaining the absence, the student is still considered (and marked) absent from school.
- ***Never Miss School for Appointments:*** Parents/guardians/families are responsible for scheduling medical appointments outside of school time. The best times are Friday afternoons (after 1:20 PM) or days when school is not in session. In the rare case when a student has a medical appointment during school, she should not be absent for the entire school day.
- ***Suspensions Are Considered Absences:*** If students are absent from school due to suspension, these days will be treated the same as absences.
- ***Early Dismissal:*** Students are expected to stay in school until the very end of the day (3:50 PM for regular Monday-Thursday dismissal; 1:20 PM on Fridays). Early pickups are disruptive to the learning environment. Since we are intently focused on climbing the mountain to college, we will not release students prior to the end of the school day without prior notification. Please note that departures that occur before 1:00 PM on regular days and before 12:00 PM on early release days will result in the student being marked absent for that entire day.
- ***How the School Will Keep Track of and Follow Up on Student Absences:*** The School will keep records of all student absences. If a student misses school, Excellence Girls Charter School staff will make reasonable efforts to contact the student’s parent/guardian by telephone, writing, or in person. Staff will explain the school’s strict attendance policy and request the parent/guardian’s strong support in enforcing this policy. The Dean of Students will follow up with

parents/guardians about attendance issues and letters will be sent to update families of their student's absences.

## **Attendance – Consequences for Absences**

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- ***Three Absences in a Year:*** If a student is absent three times in a Year, it is considered a serious issue. **At this point, the parent/guardian will be called by the Dean of Students.** During this call, the problem will be discussed and an attendance plan will be developed.
- ***Six Absences in a Year:*** If a student is absent six times in a year, it is considered a serious issue. **At this point, the parent/guardian will be called by the Dean of Students.** During the phone call, the problem will be discussed and an attendance plan will be developed. A letter will be sent home detailing the number of absences accumulated and our concerns.
- ***Nine Absences in a Year:*** If a student is absent nine times in a year, the student is considered a truant. **At this point, the student is at risk of not being promoted to the next grade. The parent/guardian will be called to the school to meet with the Dean of Students.** The Principal reserves the right to retain any student who misses more than nine days of school. A letter will be sent home detailing the number of absences accumulated and our concerns.
- ***Twenty Absences in a Year:*** If a student is absent twenty times in a year, the student will be considered a habitual truant. At this point, the school administration may file a written complaint with a relevant court or child services agency alleging the belief that the acts or omissions of the child are such that his/her family has service needs. The Excellence Girls Charter School Board or Board designee will submit an annual report to the State Department of Education that reports the number of habitual truants. A letter will be sent home detailing the number of absences accumulated and our concerns.

## **Attendance – Tardiness**

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Getting to school on time is a key to your child's success – at school and in life. At Excellence Girls Charter School, the learning begins from the moment scholars walk in the door. For instance, students read and complete challenging Critical Thinking problems during breakfast. Students who are late miss essential math and reading instruction, disrupt the learning of other children, and risk falling behind on our ambitious curriculum.

Late students miss academics and tardiness in general is a bad habit. One of the most common reasons that people lose their jobs is persistent tardiness to work.

### **Definition of Tardiness**

Our doors open at 7:00 AM each morning. Students must arrive between 7:00 AM and 7:11 AM.

**Students arriving after 7:11 AM (as measured by the school's clocks) are marked tardy.** In cases when a school bus arrives late, those students riding the bus are not considered tardy.

### **Consequences for Tardiness**

The following is a schedule of consequences for tardiness:

- **Three Tardies in a Quarter:** If a student is late three times in a Quarter, it is considered a serious issue. **At this point, the parent/guardian may be called by the Dean of Students.** The problem will be discussed and an “On Time” plan will be developed.
- **Three Tardies Equals One Absence:** Every three tardies will equal one absence and be recorded as such in the student’s file.
- **Seven Tardies in a Year:** If a student is late seven times in a year, it is considered a serious issue. **At this point, the parent /guardian may be called to discuss this with the Dean of Students**The problem will be discussed and an “On Time” plan will be developed.

Since every three tardies will be recorded as an absence, **excessive tardiness is a truancy problem.** If a student is **absent nine times** (and some or all of these absences may actually be due to excessive tardiness), **the student will be at risk of not being promoted to the next grade.**

Students with excessive tardies may also be considered habitual truants. In such cases, the school administration may file a written complaint with a relevant court or child services agency alleging the belief that the acts or omissions of the child are such that his/her family has service needs.

## **Arrival and Dismissal Policy**

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### **Arrival**

- The school officially opens to students at 7:00 AM each day. Students must arrive by 7:10 AM.
- All students will enter the school through the building’s entrance on Madison Street. Students and families arriving tardy after 7:15 AM will enter through the building’s entrance on Monroe Street.
- Unless students and families have made an appointment with individual teachers or other staff beforehand, students and families must remain outside the building until 7:00 AM.

### **Dismissal**

- Monday-Thursday, the school day officially ends at 3:50 PM.
- On Friday, the school day officially ends at 1:20 PM.
- It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to ensure a timely pick up of his/her child from school and/or from the school bus stop (Please see *School Bus Transportation*). Late pick ups will not be tolerated. The Dean of Students will contact the families of those students who are picked up late.
- No student will be allowed to leave the school without an adult escort.
- No student will be allowed to leave the school with an adult who is not their legal guardian unless one of the two have been completed:
  - The guardian has submitted a signed, written note to the School in advance that specifies the name, address, and working phone number for the adult as well as specific days for pick-up
  - The guardian calls or talks in person with the Operations Team at the school and it is confirmed that this adult is someone who will be a frequent pick up person. Families MUST submit a release

form (provided in the Fall) listing the names and information for any individuals, besides parents/guardians, who regularly are authorized to pick up their children.

## **Life's Work**

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At Excellence Girls Charter School, homework is called Life's Work because we see it an essential part of our scholar's life and an essential part of our educational program. It is designed to reinforce skills taught in the classroom, to help students develop a deeper understanding of concepts, and to promote good study habits. **Life's Work will be assigned EVERY night and during the summer months at Excellence Girls Charter School.** This means that families must help students with their Life's Work in ways that include reading instructions out loud to younger students, creating routines at home for students to follow each day, and providing a quiet, organized place to work.

**Life's Work includes 20-30 minutes of required reading every night (including weekends, holidays, and summer months), for which a parent/guardian signature on the reading log is required. Life's Work must be completed in full and in accordance with Excellence Girls Charter School's high standards for hard work and professional presentation.**

All students are provided with Life's Work Folders that include a nightly Reading Log. Life's Work Folders are designed to teach students essential organizational skills. **The Reading Logs must be filled out properly with a parent/guardian signature, and all assigned Life's Work must be completed and in the folder.** There are high standards for Life's Work. All Life's Work must be neat, clean, and thorough. Life's Work folders are turned in to teachers each morning as soon as students arrive at school.

**If Life's Work is late, missing, incomplete, or of poor quality, or if the Reading Log is not completed properly, then the student may face in-school consequences.** Moreover, since bringing all necessary books and supplies is part of Life's Work, students may also face consequences if they do not bring all necessary books and supplies.

Parents/guardians will receive a letter home each time and a phone call home Life's Work is not completed and/or the Reading Log is not signed. Parent/s guardians will receive a phone call every day a scholar doesn't complete their Life's Work. We expect and need family support to make sure all the Life's Work gets done according to TOP QUALITY standards.

## **Independent Reading**

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Research shows that the #1 way to improve a student's reading skills is to have them READ, READ, READ. The students who read the most outside of school are the students who are the best readers and who score highest on reading tests. **Supporting your child's independent reading at home is the best way to help them improve the speed, accuracy, vocabulary, and comprehension of their reading.** Although Excellence Girls Charter School students have high-quality reading time during school, they must READ, READ, READ at home every night and weekend and during any vacations from school. Parents/guardians should make sure to supervise their child in reading at least 20 minutes every night and every day on the weekends in Kindergarten through Second Grade, and at least 30 minutes in Third Grade and Fourth Grade. It would be especially helpful if you asked your child to read out loud and stopped occasionally to have them summarize what they have just read and

to answer simple comprehension questions. **Please do not sign your child's independent reading log if you have not actually seen them read.** Students may be tempted to cut corners; skipping this important reading requirement will only hurt your child in the long run. READ, READ, READ. There are no short cuts.

## **School Schedule**

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The academic day at Excellence Girls Charter School consists of (not necessarily in this order):

Breakfast  
Read Aloud  
Reading: Phonics  
Reading: Reading Comprehension  
Reading: Riverdeep Destination Reading Computer Program  
Snack  
Handwriting/Writing  
Core (Science/Social Studies)  
Math Meeting  
Math  
Lunch  
Fitness  
Music/Performing Arts  
Character Education  
Choice Activity Time

Excellence Girls Charter School operates from 7:00 AM until 3:50 PM, Monday through Thursday. School is dismissed at 1:20 PM on Fridays to allow teachers adequate time to collaborate and plan.

Students are required to arrive at school on time (by 7:10 AM at the latest) and to remain in school until dismissal at 3:50 PM (1:20 PM on Fridays). It is very important that you send the strong message to your child that school is extremely important. The school attendance habits that are instilled in our scholars at an early age can lead to a lifetime of educational and professional success.

## **Discipline**

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Our approach to discipline is rooted in a belief that the learning environment is sacred. At Excellence Girls Charter School, we will do whatever it takes to make sure that every child is safe (physically, emotionally, mentally, and intellectually) and to make sure that every child has the chance to learn without needless disruptions. We have very high expectations for student behavior, and we “sweat the small stuff” to create and preserve a focused learning environment.

Our teachers will use a large array of strategies to promote positive behavior and to correct problem behaviors. Our faculty uses positive reinforcement whenever possible, doing their best to “catch students doing the RIGHT thing.” We recognize and celebrate student successes at every opportunity.

We also use consequences and a problem-solving approach to help students fix behavior problems. Students may lose privileges (social time, trips, etc.) when they violate the rules.

Our Dean of Students is the point person on discipline issues. The Dean works closely with teachers, families, and students to help them learn and grow. The Principal and the Dean have the authority to decide on the appropriate consequences for student behavior. The Principal and the Dean may solicit parent/guardian input in certain situations, but they retain all decision-making authority with respect to school consequences.

## **School Uniform**

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All scholars must come to school in the Excellence Girls Charter School uniform every day. If a student arrives to school out of uniform, parents/guardians will be called and asked to bring in a uniform before the student is sent to class. We have a required school uniform for several very important reasons:

- **Uniforms unite us as a community.** When you look at a group of students in the Excellence Girls Charter School uniform, it is a powerful visual statement of our community. Students make a commitment that when they put on the Excellence Girls Charter School uniform, they are agreeing to live up to the school's high expectations.
- **Uniforms reduce distractions and clothing competition.** Often students spend more time discussing and evaluating what others are wearing or not wearing than they spend focusing on learning. Wearing uniforms eliminates this distraction.
- **Uniforms make us all equal.** We all have the same mission. We are all going to college. We all come to school looking the same way.
- **Uniforms look professional.** Students look neat when they arrive to school with shirts tucked into their pants. The students come mentally prepared for school and "dressed for work."

Students may not change out of the Excellence Girls Charter School uniform at any point during the school day. Students must wear the Excellence Girls Charter School uniform on all school field lessons (field trips).

### **Uniform Requirements**

The Excellence Girls Charter School uniform consists of:

- Gray, v-neck, knee-length jumper or gray pants
- 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Only: Gray skirt
- White polo shirt or white button-down shirt (long-sleeved or short-sleeved)
- White, dark green, black, or gray socks or tights
- Dark green button-down sweater or v-neck sweater -vest
- Plain solid black sneakers or rubber-soled shoes (no logos or designs)
- Shorts should be worn under jumper (any color fine, since not seen)
- Belt optional (belt must be plain black, if worn)
- Undershirt optional (must be white)
- No excessive jewelry, no make up, no hats inside

There is no gym uniform and students may not change clothes for Fitness. If you are concerned about wear and tear on your child's uniform, we suggest you purchase multiple sets.

Clothing must fit appropriately. Excessively baggy pants, shirts, etc. are not allowed.

Large earrings, multiple chains or rings, and lots of bracelets distract from the uniform. In addition, such items can get lost or stolen. If a student chooses to wear jewelry, it must be modest. Students may wear only one chain or necklace, and it must be tucked neatly under their uniform shirt. If a student wears jewelry that the Principal or Dean of Students consider excessive, then the student will be asked to remove it. If a student needs to remove their jewelry because it was causing a distraction and it is lost as a result of the removal, the school is not liable for the loss of any jewelry and therefore will not reimburse the cost of jewelry worn.

Students must remove all hats, head-wraps, bandanas, kerchiefs, and other head-coverings upon entering the building, unless worn in accordance with a religious observation. Small clips or bands for the hair are permitted.

Students may not wear jackets inside the school building. If you are worried about your child being cold inside the building, they should wear a uniform sweater.

Make-up is strictly not allowed (including lip gloss).

Whenever **any** element of a scholar's physical appearance or grooming - even if it is allowable under the school's current rules - becomes a distraction to the scholar or to others, it is no longer acceptable and steps will be taken to remove the distraction.

## **Family Involvement Policy**

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Excellence Girls Charter School is a partnership between the school leadership, teachers, scholars, and scholars' families. Although the job of making decisions about school policy belongs to the Board of Trustees and the Principal, family involvement is not only welcome, but absolutely critical to the success of the school.

Excellence Girls Charter School families are asked to:

- Reinforce Excellence Girls Charter School academic and behavioral standards at home
- Establish a daily routine for students
- Provide a quiet space for students to study
- Provide positive reinforcement of student progress and success
- Discuss academics and student work among family members
- Help students with Life's Work
- Ensure that students complete all of their Life's Work every night
- Serve as reading and academic tutors before and after school
- Chaperone field trips and volunteer at the school
- Provide links to summer enrichment opportunities
- Assist with student recruitment
- Support other Excellence Girls Charter School families

Excellence Girls Charter School family-school relationships are maintained through:

- Conferences with students, families, and teachers
- Family Nights
- Family Potluck Dinners
- Families for Achievement (including families and school staff), which develops and coordinates family and community involvement initiatives
- Teacher-Family Calls
- Re-orientations for returning students and families in each grade prior to the start of school
- Volunteer opportunities

All families are encouraged to participate in Families for Achievement (FFA), which:

- Connects families to volunteer opportunities at the school
- Develops and implements special programs for families
- Sponsors events for the entire school community
- Works with Excellence Girls Charter School teachers and school leadership to examine students' academic and social progress and discuss initiatives to improve student outcomes.

In order to be effective partners, we must communicate. There are several ways that we can and will communicate with you throughout the year:

- **Daily Updates:** Your child will bring home updates from the school in their Life's Work folder. These updates will contain important information about the schedule/calendar, events, announcements, field trips, and other important reminders. It is very important that you take the time to thoroughly review these updates. Parents/guardians must sign their children's Life's Work folders to let us know that you have received this important information.
- **Report Card Nights:** At the end of the first, second, and third Quarters, parents/guardians will be required to come to the school for Report Card conferences with their children's teachers.

**Parents/guardians must come to school on the following dates to pick up their children's report cards and meet with their children's teachers: November 19<sup>th</sup>, February 4<sup>th</sup>, and April 21<sup>st</sup>.**

**Please mark your calendars now.** These are very important opportunities for parents/guardians/families to learn about their children's progress and needs. Report Card conferences are mandatory.

- **Behavior Logs:** Every day your child will bring home a behavior log in her Life's Work folder that informs you of any misbehavior she displayed that day. You must sign it and return it to school the next day in her Life's Work folder.
- **Phone Calls:** Throughout the year, you may receive a phone call or note from a teacher or school administrator. If the message requires a response, please contact the school either by phone or in writing within 24 hours. Please note that every staff member has a dedicated voice mail box that

can be reached from the **main phone number at (718) 638-1875**. The **school fax is (718) 228-6670**.

- **Meetings:** If the school requests a meeting with you and your child, we need to discuss something important with you. If you would like to schedule a meeting with teachers or administrators, please contact them directly.
- **Visits:** To arrange a visit to the school, please see the section on *School Visitor Policy*.
- **Cell Phones:** Students are not allowed to use cell phones in school or on school field trips. If a cell phone is used during school, rings during school, or is seen by a staff member, it will be confiscated from the student and only returned to parent/guardian. A student found in possession of a cell phone will be found to have violated this provision of the Code of Conduct and will be subject to the following consequences: 1) for the first violation, the student's parent(s) and/or guardian(s) will be contacted and the cell phone will be confiscated until the student's parent(s) and/or guardian(s) may pick up the cell phone; 2) for a second violation, the cell phone will be confiscated for a period of one week at which time the student's parent(s) and/or guardian(s) may pick up the cell phone; 3) for a third violation, the cell phone will be confiscated for a period of no more than thirty days, at which time the student's parent(s) and/or guardian(s) may pick up the inappropriate cell phone; and 4) for a fourth and any additional violations, the cell phone will be confiscated for a period of no more than thirty days and the student will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including suspension and/or expulsion from the school.
- **Messages/Phone Use/Voicemail:** It would take an incredible amount of staffing and resources to provide message services, and we cannot guarantee that messages will actually reach students or teachers during the day. Students and teachers may not receive incoming phone calls or messages during the school day unless it is an emergency that requires immediate attention. Such calls should be very rare. Students are allowed to use the telephone only in the case of emergencies or unexpected events.

**Our teachers check their messages once a day after school. They will return your call within 24 hours. If they do not, please call the Dean of Students or Principal to ensure that your issue is addressed.**

## **Promotion to the Next Grade**

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Excellence Girls Charter School has high standards for promotion. It is not automatically assumed that students will pass from one grade to the next: the student must earn promotion by demonstrating mastery of the essential knowledge and skills. Students may not be promoted if they are performing significantly below grade-level standards. **Promotion decisions will be based on a student's grades, standardized test scores, attendance, Life's Work completion record, and other assessments. We will look thoughtfully at student test scores, examples of student work, teacher observations, and other measures to make these decisions.**

A student may be retained if she misses **more than 9 days** in a school year, has significant behavior problems that result in a lot of missed instruction time, or if the student has persistent trouble completing Life's Work assignments.

Students who have IEPs will be promoted to the next grade based on successful completion of the goals of the IEP. However, students with IEPs who have significant attendance or behavioral problems unrelated to their IEPs may be retained for these reasons.

## **School Calendar and Closings**

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Please see the Excellence Girls Charter School calendar for the scheduled school days for the school year. **Please note that we do not follow the NYC Department of Education calendar.**

Excellence Girls Charter School will only close school in cases of extreme weather conditions. In such situations, we will follow the NYC Department of Education closings. Please listen to local radio and television stations. If New York City announces a delayed opening or a closing, Excellence Girls Charter School will also be delayed or closed. At the discretion of the Principal, any classroom days lost to closure due to inclement weather or other reasons may be made up by adding an equal number of days during or at the end of the school year.

## **School Bus Transportation**

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Busing to and from Excellence Girls Charter School is provided by the NYC Department of Education. The right to free transportation is dependent on the student's good behavior while waiting for and riding on the school bus AND on the parent's/guardian's fulfillment of picking his/her student up from the bus in a consistent, timely manner each time his/her student rides the bus.

- **Poor Bus Behavior:** Bus drivers must focus on the road to make sure all students arrive to school and home safely. On the bus, students must remain in their seats, talk quietly, and follow all directions given by the bus driver. Students who behave poorly on the bus compromise the safety of themselves and others. We treat the bus as an extension of the school. As such, we expect our scholar's to behave on the bus the same way they behave at school.
- **Suspension from Transportation**  
Students who do not conduct themselves properly on a bus may have their riding privileges suspended. Students may also have their riding privileges suspended if any adult dropping off or picking up a student from a bus stop behaves in a manner which impedes the safety or well-being of any student. Such actions include, but are not limited to, boarding the bus for any reason, except at the direct request of the bus driver or a school employee. In such cases, the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) will become responsible for seeing that his or her child gets to and from school safely.
- **Parent/Guardian Late to Pick Up:** Parents/guardians have the responsibility to pick up their child when the bus is at their designated school bus stop. Parents/guardians who are late to pick their children up make the bus run late, inconvenience other families, and inconvenience the bus driver. As such, late pick ups will not be tolerated. Parents/guardians who miss the bus will be contacted by the Dean of Students. Repeated failure to pick up children from the bus stop at the scheduled time may result in suspension or termination of transportation services.

- ***Arrange Transportation Before Your Child Leaves Home:*** Students will not be allowed to call home to check and see if they are being picked up. If you need to pick up your child (and your child usually rides the bus) or otherwise change your child's transportation for that day, you must **call the Office Manager by 12:00 PM Monday-Thursday or 11:00 AM on Fridays.** Unfortunately, to ensure safe dismissal procedures, we will not be able to deliver last minute notes/messages or changes after noon.

## **School Lunch Program**

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Breakfast, lunch, and snack will be available at Excellence Girls Charter School. All families will need to complete a form that enables the school to participate in the free or reduced-price meal program. Families may send lunch to school; however, students will not have access to a refrigerator or microwave. If you are sending lunch to school with your child, we ask that you send in nutritious foods. **Please do not let your child bring unhealthy drinks (e.g., colas or juices heavy in sugar) or unhealthy foods to school. Candy, gum, and soda are not allowed to be eaten at school. If you choose to send lunch, the entire lunch must be in one bag or container that has the student's name on it.**

## **Assessments**

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Excellence Girls Charter School employs multiple assessments to monitor student progress, inform instruction, and ensure that all students succeed. Staff work to ensure that assessments are not stressful times for students; rather they are presented as opportunities to show off all that students have learned. The assessments, which include the TerraNova (a nationally normed standardize test), the STEP, internally developed assessments, and the New York State assessments (beginning in 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade), are administered throughout the year. Teachers analyze the results to inform their instruction, identify students in need of extra help, and assess the overall effectiveness of the school's curriculum. Results are shared with families through the report cards that are distributed four times each year.

## **Nurse Service and Medication**

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Being healthy physically helps children learn more effectively. For this reason, it is important to have your doctor or health center look into any problem that your child may have.

If your child requires medication during school hours, we will assist by administering medication. However, medication may not be given without the completion of the "Administration of Medication" form which must be completed by a healthcare provider. Families can get a copy of this form by calling or stopping by the school. This policy and the requirement to have a form on file applies to all medicine, including aspirin, Tylenol, and other over-the-counter medicines.

All student medicines will be kept in a locked cabinet. The school will keep a detailed log of all medicines that are administered.

## **Fire Safety and Evacuation Procedures**

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*Please note, some procedures may change once the school year has officially begun. Students will be notified of and trained in any significant changes.*

The school follows the General Response Protocol for all building-related safety drills and emergency events, as required by the New York City Department of Education. In case of an emergency, if a student or staff member sees fire or smells smoke, he or she should close the door. Upon hearing an alarm, school staff will assemble students in their rooms and proceed out of the building according to the fire evacuation plan posted in each room. Students should follow the direction of staff members who will verify the safety of the stairwells and lead students outside the building to the designated locations, where school staff will line up students by class and take attendance.

Frequently throughout the school year, students and staff will participate in a minimum of 12 fire drills and at least 1 lockdown and 1 shelter-in drill to ensure that the entire school community is familiar with the appropriate response in the event of each type of emergency. This handbook shall serve as notice that these drills will take place. The school will notify families by letter or auto-dialer in the event of an actual evacuation.

In case of a more serious emergency, should it be necessary to evacuate our school before, during, or after the school day—and it appears that we will be unable to return to the school for an extended period of time or for the rest of the day—school staff and students will evacuate according to the school’s evacuation plan. Staff will line up students in a safe and orderly fashion on the sidewalks outside of the evacuation site. After staff takes attendance, should conditions permit, all staff and students will return promptly to school.

## **School Visitor Policy**

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Visitors, especially parents/guardians/families, are a vital part of the Excellence Girls Charter School community. We welcome them as partners in the education of our students. Unfortunately, unannounced visits can be disruptive to our educational program. **Parents/guardians who would like to visit should simply call one day in advance to schedule a class-visit appointment that must be approved by the Principal or Director of Operations. Upon arriving, all visitors must sign in with the Office Manager.** Approved visitors will enter classes during a regular-scheduled transition period between classes, although they may leave at any time. Approved visitors may not talk to a child or a teacher during class, although they may call the teacher after school to discuss what they observed.

If a visitor is coming to school to drop something off for a student or to leave a message, we still require that the visitor leave the item or message with the Office Manager. For the sake of student safety, we cannot have anyone unannounced in the building.

Please bring photo identification when you visit the school. The security desk at the front entrance checks all visitors’ IDs to keep our building safe for our students.

## **Other Information and Policies**

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### **Student Belongings**

Students who disrupt class for any reason are violating school rules. This rule applies to students' personal possessions as well. Items including, but not limited to, game cards (Yu-Gi-Oh! Cards, Pokemon Cards, etc.), trading cards (baseball cards, football cards, etc.), portable electronic games, toys, and cell phones are not allowed in school. Students who violate this rule will have her item(s) confiscated until the item(s) is picked up by a parent/guardian and will be subject to consequences. Repeated violations of this policy may result in indefinite confiscation irrespective of any costs or fees students and/or their families may incur as a result.

### **Lost and Found**

The school will keep a lost and found box near the main office. Parents/guardians may come in any day between 7:30 AM and 4:00 PM to search the Lost and Found. At the end of every year, items left in the box may be donated to a local charity.

### **School Supplies**

Excellence Girls Charter School will provide all of the school supplies needed for every classroom in the school. **The only supplies families will need to purchase for students are those supplies that will be used at home to do Life's Work and to transport Life's Work back and forth to school.** This includes:

- Pencils
- Glue
- Scissors
- Crayons
- A book bag/backpack big enough to fit a full-sized folder and books. (Do not purchase a rolling back pack since these can be very dangerous when used on staircases. Also, these book bags are often too heavy for small children.)

If a family would like to purchase school supplies for their child's classrooms, the following supplies are always appreciated:

- Crayons
- Pencils
- Tissues
- Paper towels
- Wet hand wipes

### **Classroom Parties, Birthdays, and Other Events**

To maintain the structure and consistency of the school day, Excellence Girls Charter School does not allow long classroom parties. However, families may bring in healthy snacks to share with their scholar's class during Choice Time or Snack, and may celebrate their scholar's birthday with her during those times of day. **These visits must be pre-arranged with the Dean of Students.** The school also has its own ways of celebrating special days in the lives of students. To avoid hurt feelings, private student invitations to parties and other events should be mailed rather than passed out in class, unless the whole class is invited.

### **Voluntary Withdrawal**

Excellence Girls Charter School is a school of choice. As such, circumstances may arise in which a parent or guardian wishes to transfer their child to a different school. Families may withdraw students verbally or in writing.

Students who miss five or more consecutive days of school without notifying the school are subject to being un-enrolled. A student who attends another school is subject to being un-enrolled from Excellence Girls Charter School.

The school ensures the timely transfer of any necessary school records to the student's new school. If a parent or guardian wishes to re-enroll in Excellence Girls Charter School after un-enrolling, they must submit a new application, and will be placed at the end of the school's waitlist.

## **Human Services**

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Here are several emergency telephone numbers that may be useful to parents/guardians and students:

Child Abuse Care Line	1-800-872-2288
Domestic Violence Hotline	1-800-621-HOPE
Drug Dependence Hotline	311 or 1-800-LIFENET
Mental Health Hotline	311 or 1-800-LIFENET
Police/Fire Emergency	911
NYC Poison Control	1-800-222-1222
Rape Crisis Hotline	1-800-621-HOPE
Runaway Hotline	1-888-83-ROOTS
Suicide Prevention	1-800-273-TALK

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## **Teacher-Family-Scholar-School Commitment to Excellence**

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*TEACHER – FAMILY – SCHOLAR COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE*

At Excellence Girls, we are committed to our preparing each and every one of our scholars to enter, succeed in, and graduate from college and to be successful in life beyond. It is our belief that our scholars' academic success will be the result of the hard work of, and cooperation among, the school, our scholars, and our scholars' families. We ask that our entire community take part in this mutual Commitment to Excellence as a symbol of our partnership in support of our scholars' academic success.

Teacher's Commitment to Excellence

1. **Timeliness** – I will arrive every day by 7:00 A.M. and remain at school until 5:00 P.M. at least.
2. **Constant Learning** – I commit to providing a high-quality education and always going the extra mile for my students. I will commit to working longer school hours, including after school tutoring, and I will always offer our students the best I have.
3. **Support** – I will appreciate and support every student and her family.
4. **Communication** – I will communicate regularly, openly, and respectfully with parents about their child's academic progress, behavior concern, and incidents that affect their child's well being. I will make myself available in person and by phone. I will return parent phone calls within 24 hours.
5. **Life's Work** – I will assign productive, worthwhile Life's Work every night to reinforce and support skills and concepts learned in class and to develop a strong sense of scholarship within my students.
6. **High Expectations** – I will enforce Excellence Girls' high expectations consistently and fairly. When students deserve recognition for their accomplishments, and when students are disciplined, I will inform parents/guardians promptly.
7. **Hope & Positive Attitude** – I will teach and model for students that tomorrow is a new day. I will be our students' loudest advocate to get them through the day and the long road to college.
8. **Safety** – I will protect the safety, interests, and rights of all of my students.

We understand that this pledge goes above and beyond the call of duty. We sign it voluntarily because we believe that our students' education is of vital importance and that their success will be the result of close partnership between our school, our scholars' families, and our scholars. We are committed to working closely with scholars and their families to ensure the best possible education for all of our scholars.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Scholar's Commitment to Excellence

1. **Courage and My Best Effort** – I will courageously always try my hardest. I will think before I act so that my teammates and my school are safe. I will try my best even when a question that I am asked is difficult or when I don't know the answer.
2. **Respect and Justice** – I will treat others the way I want to be treated. I will follow directions and do everything my teachers ask me to do the *first time* that they ask me so that I do not miss learning time.
3. **Love, Loyalty, and Sisterhood** – I will help others at all time. I will be nice and show teamwork to my teammates when they need a lending hand.
4. **Honesty and Hope** – I will always tell the truth, even when the truth is hard. If I make a mistake, I will tell the truth and accept responsibility for my actions. I will also see that tomorrow is a new day and bring an A+ attitude to everything that I do at school and at home, even when it's tough.
5. **Scholarship and Life's Work** – I will not miss learning time at school. At home, I will complete all of my Life's Work and Reading/Math Log every night. I will not offer excuses for missing learning time or not completing my Life's Work. I will seek the help I need to complete all of my Life's Work in a top-quality manner.
6. **Attendance and Timeliness** – I will come to school every day on time (by 7:10 A.M.) and stay until 3:50 P.M. (or later if I attend tutoring). If I need to miss class, I will make up all missed assignments.
7. **Respect and My Uniform** – I will respect the school and show that school is my job by wearing the [School Name] uniform properly every day and following the school dress code. I understand that I will not be allowed to attend class unless my uniform is perfect.
8. **Communication and Honesty** – I will raise my hand to ask for help if I do not understand something. I will answer questions that I am asked honestly and fully. I will make myself available to my teachers and parents about any concerns they might have.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Parent's / Guardian's Commitment to Excellence

1. **Timeliness/Attendance** – I understand that every school day is important and that it is my responsibility to get my child to school every day on time (7:10 A.M.). If my child takes the bus, I will make sure she is at the bus stop on time. I will also never schedule family vacations or non-urgent doctor's appointments during school time. I will have my child cared for on Friday afternoons when they will be dismissed at 1:20 P.M. so that their teachers can meet and plan for their education.
2. **Loyalty and Courage** – I will always help my child in the best way I know how, and I will do whatever it takes for my child to learn and to succeed in school. If there is ever a time that I need support to support my child I will reach out to the school community. If my child needs extra help to reach mastery and is required to attend tutoring I will arrange for transportation home at 5:00 P.M. so that she gets the support that she deserves. If my child is required to attend Summer Academy, I will make any arrangements necessary so that she will be able to attend.
3. **Scholarship and Life's Work** – I will provide a quiet space for my child to study and I will check my child's Life's Work every night. I will insist that my child reads for at least 20 minutes a night (including weekends, holidays, and school vacations), and I will never sign the Reading/Math Log unless I have personally seen my child read and count.
4. **Respect and Communication** – I will make myself available to my child and all of her teachers. I will return phone calls from school staff within 24 hours. If I am asked to attend a meeting regarding my child's education or behavior, I will be there. I will read all updates and memos sent home by the

school, and I will return all necessary information immediately. I will attend all required parent meetings, including pre-year Orientations and Report Card Nights during the school year. I will interact with members of the Excellence Girls community in a respectful manner understanding.

5. **Uniform** – I will send my child to school every day in the Excellence Girls uniform. I understand that if my child is not in uniform, she may not be allowed in class and someone from my family will have to come to the school with the required items
6. **School Rules** – I understand that Excellence Girls has high behavioral expectations, and I will make sure that my child learns to live up to them. I understand that my child must follow these rules to protect the safety, interests, and rights of all individuals. I fully understand that Excellence Girls is a “sweat the small stuff” environment, and I also understand that my child may lose privileges or have other disciplinary consequences if my child violates the rules. I will support the school in its efforts to enforce high standards for behavior and citizenship. If my child violates the rules as outlined in the Code of Conduct (in the Family Handbook), my child will have disciplinary consequences. If my child’s behavior is severely disruptive, I will pick my child up from school immediately if asked to do so by an administrator.

I/we understand that I/we am/are not required to sign this pledge as a term of my/our child’s admission to Excellence Girls, but do so voluntarily because we believe that Excellence Girls is a partnership between parents/guardians/families and educators in creating the best possible education for our child.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**School Leaders' Commitment to Excellence**

On behalf of the Board of Trustees of Excellence Girls Charter School, I agree to support the efforts of students, parents/guardians, and teachers to fulfill the Teacher-Family-Scholar Commitment to Excellence. I also agree to be held accountable for my actions and for the success of the school.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Principal/Dean of Students

## Board of Trustees (As of August 2016)

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David Saltzman, Chair
Linton Mann III, Vice Chair
Tony Pasquariello, Vice Chair
Laura Blankfein
Caroline Curry
St. Claire Gerald
John Greenstein
Michael Hall
Shakima Jones
John Kim
Arvind Krishnamurthy
Alison Mass
Ekwutozia Nwabuzor
Brett Peiser ( <i>ex-officio</i> )
Ian Sacks
Joe Wayland
Jeff Wetzler
Chrystal Stokes Williams

Please contact the school at (718) 638-1875 for the Board of Trustees meeting schedule. Meetings are open to family members and other members of the public.

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**Code of Conduct**

**Introduction**

Excellence Girls Charter School (the “School”) is unequivocally committed to providing a safe and orderly environment in which students can improve their academic achievement. Students whose behavior does not meet the School community’s clearly defined standards for reasonable and acceptable behavior will not be permitted to disrupt the education of others.

Without a firm and consistent discipline policy, none of what we envision for the School can happen. We cannot overemphasize the importance of providing a strong discipline policy that every student and family knows and understands. Students and families have a right to attend a safe and orderly school. Therefore, for every infraction, there will be a consequence. This is the basis of our student Code of Conduct. The School reserves the right to amend, supplement, or rescind provisions of this Code of Conduct at any time as it deems appropriate, in its sole and absolute discretion, consistent with applicable laws and regulations.

**Definitions**

For purposes of the code, the following definitions apply:

- 1) “School” is Excellence Girls Charter School that is charged with the responsibility of insuring a safe environment and an atmosphere of learning.
- 2) “Parent” means the parent, guardian, or person in parental relation to a student.
- 3) “School property” means on or within any building, structure, athletic playing field, playground, parking lot or land contained within the real property boundary line of a public school, or in or on a school bus, as defined in Vehicle and Traffic Law §142.
- 4) “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 (Education Law §11[1] and Vehicle and Traffic Law §142).
- 5) “School function” means any school-sponsored or sanctioned extra-curricular event or activity.
- 6) “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 must 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 (Education Law §11[4] and Executive Law §292[21]).
- 7) “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.

- 8) “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 unreasonably and substantially interfere with a student’s education.
- 9) “Employee” means any person receiving compensation from a school or employee of a contracted service provider or worker placed within the school under a public assistance employment program, pursuant to title 9-B of article 5 of the Social Services Law, and consistent with the provisions of such title for the provision of services to such district, its students or employees, directly or through contract, whereby such services performed by such person involve direct student contact (Education Law §§11[4] and 1125[3]).
- 10) “Gender” means a person’s actual or perceived sex and includes a person’s gender identity or expression (Education Law §11[6]).
- 11) “Sexual Orientation” means actual or perceived heterosexuality, homosexuality, or bisexuality (Education Law §11[5]).
- 12) “Harassment/bullying” means the creation of a hostile environment by conduct or by threats, intimidation or abuse, including cyberbullying as defined in Education Law §11(8), 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.

For purposes of this definition, the term “threats, intimidation or abuse” shall include verbal and non-verbal actions. (Education Law §11[7])

Acts of harassment and bullying that are prohibited include those acts based on a person’s actual or perceived membership in the following groups including, but not limited to:

- (a) race
  - (b) color
  - (c) weight
  - (d) national origin
  - (e) ethnic group
  - (f) religion
  - (g) religious practice
  - (h) disability
- 13) “Cyberbullying” means harassment/bullying, as defined above, through any form of electronic communication.
  - 14) “Dignity for All Students Act (DASA) Coordinator” means a staff member or staff members designated by the School to handle human relations in the areas of race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender and sex.
  - 15) “Violent student” means a student under the age of 21 who:
    - a. Commits an act of violence or uncontrolled behavior upon a school employee, or attempts or threatens to do so.

- b. Commits, while on school property or at a school function, an act of violence or uncontrolled behavior upon another student or any other person lawfully on school property or at the school function, or attempts or threatens to do so.
- c. Possesses a weapon while on school property or at a school function.
- d. Displays what appears to be a weapon while on school property or at a school function.
- e. Threatens to use a weapon, facsimile or replica of any type weapon, while on school property or at a school function. In determining whether a threat exists, the victim's perception shall govern.
- f. Knowingly and intentionally damages or destroys the personal property of any school employee or any person lawfully on school property or at a school function.
- g. Knowingly and intentionally damages or destroys school property.
- h. Physically intimidates, threatens, or bullies others while on school property or at a school function.

16) "Weapons" include, but are not limited to,

- a. a firearm as defined in 18 USC §921 for purposes of the Gun-Free Schools Act, any other gun, a rifle, shotgun, pistol, handgun, silencer, electronic dart gun, stun gun, machine gun, air gun, mock gun, spring gun, BB gun, or paint ball gun;
- b. a switchblade knife, gravity knife, pilum ballistic knife, cane sword, dagger, stiletto, dirk, razor, box cutter, metal knuckle knife, utility knife, or any other dangerous knife;
- c. a billy club, blackjack, bludgeon, chukka stick, or metal knuckles;
- d. a sandbag or sandclub;
- e. a sling shot or slungshot;
- f. a martial arts instrument, including, but not limited to, a kung fu star, ninja star, nin-chuck, or shuriken;
- g. an explosive, including but not limited to, a firecracker or other fireworks;
- h. a deadly or dangerous chemical, including, but not limited to, a strong acid or base, mace, or pepper spray;
- i. an imitation gun;
- j. loaded or blank cartridges or other ammunition; or
- k. any other deadly or dangerous instrument.

However, pursuant to the intent of this School policy, administrators will have considerable discretion in identifying any of these potentially dangerous implements as a weapon.

### **Prohibited Student Conduct**

Students may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including suspension and/or expulsion from school, for:

1. **Engaging in Insubordinate and/or Disorderly Conduct.** Examples of insubordinate and/or disorderly conduct include, but are not limited to:
  - 1.1. **Violating the Dress Code:** Parent(s)/guardian(s) may be required to pick up children who are not properly dressed for school, bring the missing Dress Code items to the school, or authorize the student to return home to retrieve the necessary items as students

- may not be permitted to attend class. Violations of the dress code also may result in additional disciplinary consequences.
- 1.2. **Arriving to Class Unprepared:** When class begins, students must be prepared and have all necessary materials (books, organized binder, paper, pen, pencil, etc.).
  - 1.3. **Failing to Complete Life's Work:** Completing homework is essential to the success of individual students and the classroom community. Students are expected to complete all assignments on time.
  - 1.4. **Arriving Late to School or Class:** Student tardiness disrupts class, inconveniences others, and often results in academic difficulties. Students may not be late to school, class or required instruction.
  - 1.5. **Cutting School, Class, Detention, Life's Work Center, Saturday School, Summer School, or Mandatory School Events:** Students are required to attend all academic and enrichment classes, assigned detention, assigned Life's Work Center, assigned Saturday School, assigned Summer School, and mandatory school events. Students are not permitted to have unexcused absences or to leave the school building without permission.
  - 1.6. **Misbehaving on School-Provided Transportation:** Students may not misbehave while walking to or from, waiting for, or riding on school-provided transportation, including the school bus. Please note that students are subject to temporary or permanent denial of school-provided transportation (in which case students and parent(s)/guardian(s) are responsible for travel to and from school) in addition to other consequences. Misbehavior includes, but is not limited to, using inappropriate language, making excessive noise, touching other students inappropriately, being disrespectful of others, or failing to follow the bus driver's instructions.
  - 1.7. **Misbehaving inside or outside of Class:** Misbehavior inside or outside of class (at school and/or on school grounds; participating in a school-sponsored activity; walking to or from school or a school-sponsored event; walking to or from, waiting for, or riding on school-provided transportation; or walking to or from, waiting for, or riding on public transportation to and from school or a school-sponsored activity) is not permitted. Students may not engage in any willful act that disrupts the normal operation of the school community.
  - 1.8. **Disrupting Class and Preventing Teaching:** The School can fulfill its mission only if classrooms are safe and teaching is uninterrupted. Students may not interfere with or disrupt class or the educational process.
  - 1.9. **Being Disrespectful toward a Staff Member or His/Her Designee(s):** The School cannot function properly if students are permitted to be disrespectful toward adults. For that reason, students may not be disrespectful toward a staff member or any other adult associated with the School.
  - 1.10. **Lying to a Staff Member or His/Her Designee(s):** Honesty is an essential element of personal character and is needed to build a community based on trust and respect. Students are not permitted to lie or attempt to conceal the truth.
  - 1.11. **Failing to Comply with the Lawful Directive(s) of a Staff Member or His/Her Designee(s):** Failing to comply with the lawful directives of teachers, school administrators, other school employees, or their designee(s) is unacceptable.
  - 1.12. **Being Disrespectful toward a Student:** If students do not feel physically and emotionally safe in school, teaching and learning are made more difficult. Therefore, students may not be disrespectful toward other students.

- 1.13. **Abusive or Profane Language or Treatment:** Students may not use abusive, threatening, lewd, vulgar, coarse, or degrading language or gestures (including racial epithets or sexist or homophobic remarks).
- 1.14. **Selling, Using or Possessing Obscene Material:** Students may not sell, use, or possess obscene material.
- 1.15. **Failing to Submit a Required Signature:** Students are required to secure the signature of a parent/guardian on Life's Work assignments or school forms when requested.
- 1.16. **Forgery:** Students may not forge a signature.
- 1.17. **False Identification:** Students may not use or possess false identification.
- 1.18. **Running outside the Gymnasium:** Running in the School's hallways, stairwells, classrooms, cafeteria and other non-gymnasium spaces is dangerous and is prohibited.
- 1.19. **Making Unreasonable Noise:** Students are not permitted to make unreasonable noise at school.
- 1.20. **Gum, Food, and Beverages:** Students may not chew gum at school. Students may not eat or drink at unauthorized times or places at school.
- 1.21. **Spitting or Littering:** Students may not spit or litter on school grounds or a school-sponsored or sanctioned events.
- 1.22. **Obstructing Vehicular or Pedestrian Traffic:** Students are not permitted to obstruct vehicular or pedestrian traffic on or adjacent to school property.
- 1.23. **Blocking Access to any Part of the School Building:** Students are not permitted to block access to any room or part of the school building.
- 1.24. **Creating a Hazardous or Offensive Condition:** Students may not create a hazardous or offensive condition.
- 1.25. **Trespassing:** Students may not trespass or enter into a private or restricted area without permission.
- 1.26. **Possession of Inappropriate Property:** Students cannot possess beepers, Walkmen, CD players, iPods, MP3 players, cell-phones, cameras, laser pointers, electronic equipment, games, printed text or lyrics that are vulgar, profane, or sexually explicit, or any other items inappropriate for school. A student found in possession of an inappropriate item will be found to have violated this provision of the Code of Conduct and will be subject to the following consequences: 1) for the first violation, the student's parent(s) and/or guardian(s) will be contacted and the inappropriate item will be confiscated until the student's parent(s) and/or guardian(s) may pick up the item; 2) for a second violation, the inappropriate item will be confiscated for a period of one week at which time the student's parent(s) and/or guardian(s) may pick up the inappropriate item; 3) for a third violation, the inappropriate item will be confiscated for a period of no more than thirty days, at which time the student's parent(s) and/or guardian(s) may pick up the inappropriate item; and 4) for a fourth and any additional violations, the inappropriate item will be confiscated for a period of no more than thirty days and the student will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including suspension and/or expulsion from the school.

A parent and/or guardian may retrieve an inappropriate item which has been confiscated from their child at a mutually convenient time agreed to by the Dean of Students and/or the Instructional Leader.

- 1.27. **Defamation:** Students may not defame others by making false or unprivileged statements or representations about an individual or identifiable group of individuals that

harm the reputation of the person or the identifiable group by demeaning them through any medium, whether on or off school grounds.

1.28. **Cheating, Plagiarism, or Copying Other's Work, or Allowing Others to Copy Work:**

Cheating is unacceptable. Cheating, includes but is not limited to:

- copying the work of another person,
- plagiarizing materials,
- using unauthorized help sheets or materials,
- illegally obtaining tests in advance,
- substituting for a test-taker or having someone substitute for you in a test,
- altering records,
- other forms of unauthorized collusion, or
- assisting another student in any of the above actions.

1.29. **Gambling:** Gambling or betting is not tolerated.

1.30. **Failing to Comply with School-Imposed Consequences:** Students must comply with school-imposed consequences, including but not limited to detention, Life's Work Center, Saturday School, Summer School, school service, suspension from school and/or temporary or permanent denial of school-provided transportation.

1.31. **Unauthorized Materials/Sales:** Students may not distribute or post any written material, pamphlets or posters at the School or at a school function without the prior written approval of the Instructional Leader or the Instructional Leader's Designee, or as specifically approved by the Board of Trustees. Students may also not sell any items or services at the School or at a school function unless they are participating in a school-approved fundraiser for a school-approved event, club, or student council.

2. **Engaging in Conduct that Endangers the Safety, Morals, Health, or Welfare of Self or Others.** Examples of such conduct include, but are not limited to:

2.1. **Presence in School Space without Supervision:** Students may not be in any school space that is not being supervised by a staff member.

2.2. **Theft, Loss, or Destruction of Personal or School Property:** Students may not steal, lose, vandalize, or damage the property of the School, other students, school personnel, or any other person lawfully on school property or attending a school function. In addition to facing other consequences for violation of this rule, students are expected to return property to its rightful owner in its original condition or to reimburse the owner and/or the School for lost, damaged, or stolen property.

2.3. **Mistreatment or Inappropriate Use of Technology or School Property:** Students must treat computers, printers, and other technology with care. The School does not tolerate attempts to access the School's files or other inappropriate uses of technology or the internet. Students do not have the right to use school computers to access chat rooms or email or to access web sites or files that contain profanity, sexually explicit language or pictures, excessively violent themes, and/or other material inappropriate for minors. Students are prohibited from using school telephones. In the event of an emergency, students may be allowed to use school telephones, but only at the discretion of school staff members. Students must not mistreat other school property.

2.4. **Violating the Civil Rights of Others:** Students may not violate the civil rights of others.

- 2.5. **Harassment and/or Discrimination:** Harassment or intimidation of or discrimination toward any members of the School community on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability is not permitted. Students may not commit harassment, which includes a sufficiently severe action or persistent pervasive pattern of actions or statements directed at an identifiable individual or group which are intended to be, or which a reasonable person would perceive as ridiculing or demeaning.
- 2.6. **Bullying:** The school is committed to providing its students and staff with an educational and working environment that is safe, secure, promotes respect, dignity, equality and is free from bullying. The school prohibits bullying on school grounds, school buses, and at all school sponsored activities, programs and events including those taking place off school property. Bullying for the purpose of this policy is defined as harassment, aggressive behavior or other overt action, whether verbal or physical, which is intended, or could reasonably be expected, to cause distress, harm, ridicule, humiliation and/or intimidation. Bullying can be face-to-face, or carried out by phone, over the internet and other ways directed at another person through the "posting" of sensitive and/or private information.
- 2.7. **Sexual Harassment:** Students may not engage in sexual harassment as defined by the School's Sexual Harassment Policy. Sexual harassment consists of unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when: submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of a student's right to a fair and equal educational opportunity; submission to or rejection of such conduct by a student is used as the basis for educational decisions affecting such student; or such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with a student's performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive learning environment. Conduct is deemed to be sexual harassment when it consists of unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment is not dependent upon the alleged harasser's intention. A copy of the School's Sexual Harassment Policy can be requested from the Main Office.
- 2.8. **Engaging in Sexual Activity or Inappropriate Touching:** A student may not engage in sexual activity of any kind or touch himself/herself or others inappropriately.
- 2.9. **Lewd Behavior:** Students may not engage in lewd behavior..
- 2.10. **Hazing:** Students may not commit hazing, which includes any intentional or reckless act directed against another for the purpose of initiation into, affiliating with, or maintaining membership in any school sponsored activity, organization, club, or team.
- 2.11. **Gang Membership:** Students may not engage in gang-related behavior (e.g. wearing or displaying gang apparel, writing graffiti, making gestures or signs) . In determining whether the behavior is gang-related, school officials may consult with the Office of School and Youth Development's Gang Unit.
- 2.12. **Using or Possessing Drugs or Alcohol:** Students may not use or possess any non-prescribed controlled substance, unauthorized or illegal drug, controlled substances, alcohol, or drug paraphernalia counterfeit or look-alike drugs.
- 2.13. **Selling or Transferring Drugs or Alcohol:** Students may not sell, exchange, distribute, or possess with intent to sell or distribute a prescribed or non-prescribed controlled substance.
- 2.14. **Using or Possessing Tobacco Products:** The use of tobacco is banned. Students may not use or possess cigarettes, cigars, chewing-tobacco, or other tobacco products or lighters or matches.

- 2.15. **Selling or Transferring Tobacco Products:** Students may not sell, distribute, or possess with intent to sell or distribute cigarettes, cigars, chewing-tobacco, or other tobacco products or lighters or matches.
  - 2.16. **Selling, Using, Possessing, or Exchanging a Weapon:** Students may not sell, use, possess or exchange a weapon.
  - 2.17. **Possession or Release of Dangerous or Noxious Substances:** Students may not possess or release any dangerous or noxious substance(s).
3. **Engaging in Violent, Disruptive, and/or Threatening Conduct.** Examples of violent, disruptive, and/or threatening conduct include, but are not limited to:
- 3.1. **Committing a Physical or Emotional Act of Violence on Self or Others:** Students may not cause physical injury of other students, school personnel or their designee(s), or any other person on school property. Students cannot engage in conduct that has the potential of resulting in violence on school property. Students can be disciplined for actions that threaten harm to themselves or others.
  - 3.2. **Fighting or Unwanted Physical Contact:** The School's students may not fight with other students—from the School or any other school. Harassing, pushing, touching, or any form of unwanted physical contact is not tolerated.
  - 3.3. **Playfighting, Threatening, Bullying, and/or Intimidating:** Playfighting and/or the use of threats or intimidation threaten the safety of the community. Students may not playfight, threaten, bully, or intimidate others either through language or behavior.
  - 3.4. **Possessing, Displaying, Using, or Threatening to Use a Weapon or Dangerous Object:** Students may not possess, display, use or threaten to use a weapon. No student shall bring a firearm on any portion of any school premises owned or controlled by the School in a Violation of the Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994. In accordance with Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994, as amended, any student who, after discipline procedures are followed, is found guilty of bringing a firearm onto any school premises owned or controlled by School will be subject to a penalty of at least a one year suspension from school. However, in determining an appropriate penalty, the Instructional Leader may modify the suspension requirement on a case-by-case basis, considering among other things, the totality of circumstances surrounding the offense and the student's previous record.
  - 3.5. **Committing Arson:** Students may not commit arson or create an unauthorized open flame on school property or at a school-sponsored or sanctioned event.
  - 3.6. **Setting off a False Alarm or Making a Threat:** Students may not intentionally set off a false alarm, call 911, or discharge a fire extinguisher without valid cause or make a destructive threat.

### **Disciplinary Penalties and Procedures**

Students who are found to have violated the School's Code of Conduct may be subject to the following penalties, either alone or in combination with one another:

- 1) Oral warning
- 2) Written warning
- 3) Written notification to parent(s)/guardian(s)
- 4) Conference with parent(s)/guardian(s)
- 5) Confiscation
- 6) Detention

- 7) Saturday detention
- 8) Exclusion and/or removal from a particular class or event
- 9) Suspension from transportation
- 10) Suspension from cafeteria, commons, library, social, athletic, after-school, field trip, extracurricular, or other activities or privileges
- 11) In-school suspension
- 12) Short-term suspension (ten days or less) from school
- 13) Long-term suspension (more than ten days) from school
- 14) Expulsion from school

In determining the appropriate disciplinary action, school personnel authorized to impose disciplinary penalties may consider, among other things, the student's prior disciplinary record.

Students are expected to always respond respectfully to the authority and direction of school staff and consequences will be issued when disrespect is evident. Behaviors that are considered disrespectful include but are not limited to: rolling of the eyes, smacking lips or sucking teeth, making inappropriate remarks or sounds in response to a request, walking away from a staff member before a conversation is over, talking back to a staff member, or questioning a staff person's action or authority. These sorts of disrespectful responses will almost always increase the severity of a consequence.

### **Dignity Act Coordinators**

The following are the Dignity Act Coordinators for this school year:

1. Nikki Bowen, Principal

### **Reporting and Investigation Complaints of Harassment/Bullying and Discrimination**

School employees who witness harassment/bullying or discrimination, or receive an oral or written report of such acts, must promptly orally notify the principal, superintendent, or the DASA Coordinator not later than one school day after the employee witnesses or receives a report of such acts, and shall also file a written report with the principal, superintendent, or the DASA Coordinator no later than two school days after making an oral report. The principal, superintendent or the DASA Coordinator will lead or supervise the thorough investigation of all reports of harassment/ bullying and discrimination, and ensure that the investigation is completed promptly after receipt of any written reports.

When an investigation verifies a material incident of harassment/bullying or discrimination, the superintendent, principal, or DASA Coordinator will take prompt action, reasonably calculated to end the harassment/bullying or discrimination, eliminate any hostile environment, create a more positive school culture and climate, prevent recurrence of the behavior, and ensure the safety of the student or students against whom such behavior was directed.

The principal, superintendent, or DASA Coordinator will notify promptly the appropriate local law enforcement agency when it is believed that any harassment/ bullying or discrimination constitutes criminal conduct.

Retaliation by any school employee or student is prohibited against any individual who, in good faith, reports or assists in the investigation of harassment/bullying or discrimination.

### ***Physical Restraints***

In an emergency, a school administrator, teacher, school employee, or volunteer may use a physical restraint or time-out room as necessary to maintain order or to prevent a student from harming him/herself, other students, and school staff or property. Parents will receive notification if your child is physically restrained or accesses the time out room.

### ***Suspension from Transportation***

Students who do not conduct themselves properly on school transportation may have their riding privileges suspended by the Principal or the Principal's designee(s). In such cases, the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) will become responsible for seeing that his or her child gets to and from school safely.

### ***Short Term In-School Suspension or Short Term Suspension from School (ten days or less)***

When the Principal or Principal's designee (referred to as the "suspending authority"), such as a Dean of Students, proposes to impose in-school suspension or suspend a student charged with misconduct for ten days or less, the suspending authority must provide notice and the opportunity for an informal conference. However, the student may be removed from class and/or school immediately if the student's presence in school poses a continuing danger to persons or property or is an ongoing threat of disruption to the academic process. In the event that your child is suspended from school, you or a trusted designee, are expected to pick up your child within the timeframe stated by the Principal or Dean of Students.

After the conference, the Principal or his/her designee shall advise the parent(s)/guardian(s) in writing of his or her decision. If the parent(s) /guardian(s) are not satisfied with the decision of the Principal or his/her designee, they may file a written appeal to the Board of Trustees via the Principal within five business days of the date of the Principal's decision. The appeal to the Board will be handled by the Board's designee, currently the School's Managing Director from Uncommon Schools. Only final decisions of the School may be appealed to the Commissioner of Education within 30 days of the decision.

### ***Long Term In-School Suspension or Long Term Suspension from School (more than ten days)***

When the Principal determines that a suspension for more than ten days may be warranted, the student may be removed from class and/or school immediately if the student's presence in school poses a continuing danger to persons or property or is an ongoing threat of disruption to the academic process. The Principal or his/her designee shall give reasonable notice to the student and the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) of their right to a fair hearing.

At the hearing, the student shall have the right to be represented by counsel or advocate (at the student's/parent's expense), the right to question witnesses against him/her, and the right to present witnesses and other evidence on his/her behalf. The Board's designee, currently the School's Managing Director from Uncommon Schools, shall personally hear and determine the proceeding or may, in his/her discretion, designate a hearing officer to conduct the hearing. The hearing officer shall be authorized to administer oaths and to issue subpoenas in conjunction with the proceeding.

before him/her. A record of the hearing shall be maintained, but no stenographic transcript shall be required. A tape recording shall be deemed a satisfactory record. The hearing officer shall make findings of fact and recommendations as to the appropriate measure of discipline to the Board's designee. The report of the hearing officer shall be advisory only, and the Board's designee may accept all or any part thereof.

If the parent(s) /guardian(s) are not satisfied with the decision of the Board's designee, they may file a written appeal to the Board of Trustees via the Principal within five business days of the date of the decision of the Board's designee. The Board may adopt in whole or in part the decision of its designee and will make its decision based solely upon the record before it. Only final decisions of the Board may be appealed to the Commissioner of Education within 30 days of the decision.

### ***Expulsion***

Expulsion is reserved for extraordinary circumstances, including but not limited to circumstances where a student's conduct posed or continues to pose a danger to the safety and well being of other students, school personnel, or any other person lawfully on school property, attending a school function, or on school-provided transportation. The procedure for expulsion shall be the same procedure set forth for long-term suspension.

### **Discipline of Students with Special Needs**

The School recognizes that it may be necessary to suspend, remove, or otherwise discipline students with disabilities to address disruptive or problem behavior. The School also recognizes that students with disabilities enjoy certain procedural protections whenever school authorities intend to impose discipline upon them. The School is committed to ensuring that the procedures followed for suspending, removing or otherwise disciplining students with disabilities are consistent with the procedural safeguards required by applicable laws and regulations. In the event that your student with a disability is suspended for more than 10 school days, you are entitled to a Manifestation Determination Review at the Committee on Special Education. You may contact the Special Education Coordinator for further details.

### **Student Searches**

The School authorizes the Principal and the Principal's designee(s) to conduct searches of students and their belongings if the authorized school official has reasonable suspicion to believe that the search will result in evidence that the student violated the law or the School's Code of Conduct or otherwise constituted a threat to the health, safety, welfare, or morals of the School, other students, school personnel, or any other person lawfully on school property or attending a school function. An authorized school official may conduct a search of a student's belongings that is minimally intrusive, such as touching the outside of a book bag, without reasonable suspicion, so long as the school official has a legitimate reason for the very limited search.

An authorized school official may search a student or the student's belongings based upon information received from a reliable informant. Individuals, other than the School's employees, will be considered reliable informants if they have previously supplied information that was accurate and verified, they make an admission against their own interest, they provide the same information that is received independently from other sources, or they appear to be credible and the information they are communicating relates to an immediate threat to safety. School employees will be considered

reliable informants unless they are known to have previously supplied information that they knew was not accurate.

Before searching a student or the student's belongings, the authorized school official should attempt to get the student to admit that he or she possesses physical evidence that they violated the law or the school code, or get the student to voluntarily consent to the search. Searches will be limited to the extent necessary to locate the evidence sought.

Whenever practicable, searches will be conducted in the privacy of administrative offices and students will be present when their possessions are being searched.

Students have no reasonable expectation of privacy rights in school lockers, cubbies, desks, or other school storage places. The School exercises overriding control over such school property, which may be opened and subjected to inspection at any time by school officials.

### **Health Policies**

The School provides the health services required by law. Students with serious injuries are taken to the hospital for emergency medical care and the parent(s) or guardian(s) are notified immediately.

#### *Administration of Medication*

Non-self-directed student: The School nurse may administer medication to a non-self-directed student when a parent or guardian submits a written request from a physician indicating the frequency and dosage of prescribed medication.

Self-directed student: Any self-directed student may take medication during school hours if she keeps the medication in the nurse's office and whose parent or guardian submits a written verification from a physician indicating the frequency and dosage of the prescribed medication.

The parent or guardian must assume responsibility to have the medication delivered directly to the nurse's office in a properly labeled original container.

Procedures will be developed for students taking medications off School grounds or after School hours while participating in a school-sponsored activity in accordance with State Education Department Guidelines.

Before any medication may be administered to or by any student during school hours, the Board requires:

1. The written request of the parent(s) or guardian(s), which will give permission for such administration and relieve the Board and its employees of liability for administration of medication
2. The written order of the prescribing physician, which will include the purpose of the medication, the dosage, the time at which or the special circumstances under which medication will be administered, the period for which medication is prescribed, and the possible side effects of the medication

Both documents will be kept on file in the office of the School nurse. Standardized request forms will be available from the School nurse.

The School abides by all New York State immunization requirements. Each new student must have a certificate of immunization at the time of registration or not later than the 14<sup>th</sup> day of school. Parents/guardians must present documentation that their children have received all required doses of vaccines or are waiting to receive the subsequent doses at the appropriate time intervals. Parents seeking to waive the immunization requirement should submit their request to the school nurse or Office Manager. The nurse will review the request and will advise the Instructional Leader, who will make the final decision on whether to grant the waiver request.

## **Internet Security Policy and Use of Technology**

**Undesirable Materials:** The School will take all possible precautions to restrict access to undesirable materials including, but not limited to, installing content filtering software/hardware solutions on its network or using an Internet provider which uses content filtering software on its equipment to screen all Internet web sites by URL and/or by keyword search. However, students must also accept responsibility for restricting access to these materials. Students who gain access to undesirable Internet materials must report this material to their teacher.

**Security:** Students must not allow others to use their network accounts (both Internet and School accounts). Network storage areas may be treated like school lockers. Designated school personnel may review files and communications to maintain system integrity and insure that users are using the system responsibly. Users should not expect that files stored on school file servers will always be private.

**E-Mail:** Student use of email is not allowed.

**Social Networking, Blogging, Chat and Other User Groups:** Student use of social networking, blogging, chat and other user groups is not allowed without approval from the supervising teacher.

**Copyright and Citations:** Any copyrighted materials are subject to the Fair Use provision of copyrighted materials as it relates to education. Internet materials used in reports or other documents must be cited. If there is no direct citation, the Uniform Resource Location (URL) must be cited. The use of internet sources without proper citation constitutes plagiarism.

**Downloading:** Downloading from the Internet without approval from the supervising teacher is not allowed.

**Private Internet Providers:** Students may not use school computers to access private Internet providers.

**Acceptable Internet Usage:** The School will ensure age-appropriate internet usage among students who use its internet facilities. This will enforce the School's commitment to student safety with regard to:

- i. safety on the Internet; and
- ii. appropriate behavior while on online, on social networking Web sites, and in chat rooms, including but not limited to:
  - Unauthorized access including "hacking" and other unlawful activities undertaken online by minors;
  - Unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal information regarding minors;
  - Cyberbullying awareness and response ; and
  - Other behavior determined to be threatening, intimidating or otherwise inappropriate in any way.

**Telephones:** Students are prohibited from using school telephones. In the event of an emergency, students may be allowed to use school telephones, but only at the discretion of school staff members

### **Addressing Concerns**

**Informal Complaint Procedures:** An informal complaint is a complaint that does not concern the alleged violation of law or charter (e.g., a concern about an academic grade, the school's uniform policy, the school's cell phone policy, or the bus schedule). An individual who (or group that) has an informal complaint against a school policy or member of the school community is encouraged to contact the appropriate staff member at the School by telephone. All staff members are committed to responding promptly to informal complaints, either in person, by telephone, or in writing. If an informal complaint is not responded to and resolved promptly or satisfactorily, the group or individual should contact the Instructional Leader or Operational Leader to discuss the matter; the Instructional Leader or Operational Leader shall respond in person, by telephone, or in writing.

**Formal Complaint Procedures:** A formal complaint is a complaint that concerns an alleged violation of law and/or charter. An individual who (or group that) has a formal complaint against a school policy or a member of the school community may follow the informal complaint procedures set forth above. Alternatively, the individual or group may file a complaint in writing to the Chair of the School's Board of Trustees, who shall then appoint the School's Managing Director from Uncommon Schools or another designee(s) to review the complaint. If the substance of the complaint directly involves the School's Managing Director, the Managing Director shall not be appointed as the designee. After reviewing the complaint, the designee(s) will respond in writing to the complainant within a reasonable amount of time. At this time, the Chair of the Board of Trustees or the Chair's designee(s) shall provide the complainant with written notice of the opportunity to appeal the Board's decision to the Charter Schools Institute, and a copy of the Charter Schools Institute's grievance guidelines.

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

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

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

## **Title I Parent Involvement Policy**

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### **Excellence Girls Charter School Title I Parent Involvement Policy**

As a Title I Schoolwide LEA and school, Excellence Girls implements a Parent Involvement Policy in adherence to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, offering programs, activities and procedures for the involvement of parents in all of its schools with Title I, Part A programs, consistent with section 1118 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). These programs, activities and procedures are planned and operated annually with the consultation of the Parent Committee. This Parental Involvement Policy amends the Student and Family Handbook, distributed to all parents at the beginning of each school year.

Parents are actively involved in the school community. Excellence Girls parents are eligible to participate in Parent Committee and attend its activities, events, and workshops. Parent Committee meets regularly to organize events and coordinate school fundraisers, and annually develops, reviews, and the Parent Involvement Policy at the Title I Annual Meeting.

Excellence Girls staff works with the Parent Committee to implement effective parent involvement activities, with the goal of improving student academic achievement and school performance. Uncommon Schools also offers ongoing technical assistance and support to Excellence Girls to ensure ongoing compliance with Title I.

Excellence Girls will conduct an annual evaluation of its Parent Involvement Policy. At the annual Title I Annual meeting (August Orientation), Parent Committee representatives participate actively in this evaluation of parent involvement events, communication, and policies. Parents are encouraged to becoming involved in the Parent Committee, which meets regularly to implement ongoing, meaningful parent involvement at Excellence Girls.

Excellence Girls will build the community's capacity for strong parental involvement, in order to ensure effective involvement of parents and to support a partnership among the school, parents, and the community to improve student academic achievement, through the following activities specifically described below:

- A. Excellence Girls will provide assistance to parents of children, in understanding topics such as the State's academic content and achievement standards, and the State and local academic assessments including alternate assessments. A brief overview of these assessments can be found in the accompanying Student-Family Handbook, and these topics are also reviewed at the Annual Title I Meeting. In addition, Excellence Girls will work with parents to help them monitor their child's progress and collaborate with educators to further their child's progress.
- B. Excellence Girls will provide materials and training to help parents work with their children to improve their children's academic achievement, such as literacy training, and using technology, as appropriate, to foster parental involvement. This includes the periodic offering of family meetings and other school-sponsored events, which are open to all parents.
- C. Excellence Girls will educate its teachers, principals and other staff, in how to reach out to, communicate with, and work with parents as equal partners, in the value and utility of contributions of parents, and in how to implement and coordinate parent programs and

build ties between parents and schools. These trainings will focus on the school's ongoing parental involvement events, including Family Teacher Conferences, and will take place during August Professional Development each year.

- E. Excellence Girls will ensure that information related at school and parent programs, meetings, and other activities, is shared in an understandable and uniform format, including alternative formats upon request, and, to the extent practicable, in a language the parents can understand.

This Title I Parent Involvement Policy supplements the Excellence Girls Student and Family Handbook, which outlines in detail the expectations of Excellence Girls parents, and the opportunities for involvement that are offered as part of the Title I Schoolwide Plan.

## **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION POLICY**

Excellence Girls Charter School (the "School") complies with the following in order to abide by the New York State Freedom of Information Law (Article 6 of the New York Public Officers Law):

Any requests for school records or information from Excellence Girls must be in writing or via e-mail and submitted to the Records Access Officer, who will be the Director of Operations. Within five business days of receipt of a written request, the school, depending on the requested information, responds by:

- Making the information available at the school itself during normal business hours to the person requesting it or, if requested, sending existing electronic documents via e-mail;
- Denying the request in writing; or
- Providing a written acknowledgment of receipt of the request that supplies an approximate date for when the request will be granted or denied, which date will be reasonable under the circumstances of the request.
- If a request will be granted in whole or in part, but cannot be granted within 20 days of the date of the school's acknowledgement of the request, the school shall state in writing the reason why it cannot be so granted and give a date certain when it will be granted in whole or in part, which date will be reasonable under the circumstances of the request.

If the person requesting information is denied access to a record, s/he may, within 30 days, appeal such denial to the Principal. (The records access officer and the appeals entity shall not be the same person.) Upon timely receipt of such an appeal, the school, within 10 business days of the receipt of the appeal, fully explains the reasons for further denial or provides access to the record(s) sought. The school also forwards a copy of the appeal, as well as its ultimate determination, to the Committee on Open Government immediately after receipt or determination, respectively. If further denied, the person requesting information may further appeal through an Article 78 proceeding. Likewise, if the School does not follow the FOIL appeal procedures, it will constitute a denial of the FOIL appeal for purposes of allowing the requester to bring as Article 78 proceeding.

The School may deny access to requested records if:

- Such records are specifically exempted from disclosure by state or federal statute;
- Such access would constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy;

- Such records, if disclosed, would impair present or imminent contract awards or collective bargaining negotiations;
- Such records are trade secrets and which, if disclosed, would cause substantial injury to the competitive position of a commercial enterprise;
- Such records are compiled for law enforcement purposes and which, if disclosed, would meet the conditions set forth in Public Officers Law §87(2)(e);
- Such records, if disclosed, would endanger the life or safety of any person;
- Such records are computer access codes; and/or
- Such records are internal materials which are not statistical or factual tabulations of data, instructions to staff that affect the public, a final policy, nor external audits.

The school maintains:

- A record of the final vote of each trustee in every proceeding in which the trustees vote;
- A record setting forth the name, public office address, title and salary of every officer or employee of the education corporation; and
- A reasonably detailed current list, by subject matter, of all records in the school's custody or possession.

There is no fee to inspect or search for records. Photocopies of records can be made on-site for 10 cents per page. By law, the fee for copying records shall not exceed 25 cents per page for photocopies not exceeding 9 by 14 inches. The fee for photocopies of records which are not an appropriate size for the School's photocopy equipment shall not exceed the actual reproduction cost, which is the average unit cost for copying a record, excluding fixed costs of the agency such as operator salaries.

The school will publicly post a notice setting forth the name and address of its records access officer, its records appeals officer, and the location where records will be made available. In addition to providing this policy in the family handbook, the school will make these regulations available in the office upon request.

## **OPEN MEETINGS POLICY**

1. All meetings of the Board of Trustees and all committees of the Board ("Board meetings") will be open to the general public.
2. A calendar of all scheduled Board meetings will be posted at the school as soon as it becomes available.
3. The school will provide notice of the time and place of any Board meeting that is scheduled more than one week in advance to the news media and shall conspicuously post such notice in one or more public locations at least 72 hours in advance of the scheduled meeting.
4. The school will provide the time and place of any Board meeting that is scheduled less than one week in advance to the news media (to the extent practicable) and will conspicuously post such notice in one or more public locations at a reasonable time in advance of the scheduled meeting. Public notices will be placed on the bulletin board in the reception area. Public notices will reflect the location of Board meetings or any location changes.
5. To the extent possible, the school will publicly post notices of Board meetings immediately after each meeting date is determined.

6. For the purposes of determining a quorum, Trustees must be physically present at the meeting; members not physically present may join discussions via electronic means but may not vote.
7. Written minutes will be recorded of all Board meetings. Minutes will include:
  - The date and time of the meeting
  - A summary of all motions, proposals, resolutions, and any other matters formally voted upon
  - A record of how each Trustee voted on each matter
  - In the case of an executive session, the minutes will include a record of the final determination of any action that was taken.
8. Minutes of open sessions will be available to the public upon request from the Director of Operations within two weeks of the date of the meeting; minutes of executive sessions will be available within one week of the meeting.
9. All executive sessions shall be conducted as part of an open meeting; they are not considered separate meetings per se. An executive session may be called via motion and majority vote by the Board; the motion must specifically identify the general area or areas to be considered
10. All Board members may participate in the executive session, and the Board may authorize others to be present as well.
11. No public funds may be appropriated during an executive session.
12. An executive session can only be conducted by the Board for consideration of one or more of the following matters:
  - Matters which imperil the public safety if disclosed;
  - Any matter which may disclose the identity of a law enforcement agent or informer;
  - Information relating to current or future investigation or prosecution of a criminal offense which would imperil effective law enforcement if disclosed;
  - Discussions regarding proposed or pending litigation;
  - Matters which apply to school employees or collective negotiations which are within the scope of Article 14 of the Civil Service Law;
  - The medical, financial, credit, or employment history of a particular person or corporation, or matters leading to the appointment, employment, promotion, demotion, discipline, suspension, dismissal, or removal of a particular person or corporation;
  - The preparation, grading, or administration of examinations; and
  - The proposed acquisition, sale, or lease of real property or the proposed acquisition of securities, or sale or exchange of securities held by such public body, but only when publicity would substantially affect the value.

Open meetings law policy is available in the School's Main Office.

## **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**

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

These rights are:

- The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the School receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the School Principal [or appropriate school official] a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The School official will

make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

- The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate or misleading. Parents or eligible students may ask the School to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write the School Principal [or appropriate official], clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. If the School decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the School will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.
- The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the School as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the School Board; a person or company with whom the School has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility. [Optional] Upon request, the School discloses education records without consent to officials of another school in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.
- The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the School to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20202-5901

The policy applicable to the release of student directory information, which includes the student's name, address, telephone listing, date and place of birth, major field of study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of degrees and awards received, and the most recent educational agency or institution attended by the student, applies equally to military recruiters, the media, colleges and universities, and prospective employers.

The School shall arrange to provide translations of this notice to non-English speaking parents in their native language.

## **Acknowledgements**

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