



Neighborhood Charter Schools

Middle School Handbook 2020-2021

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Mission

Our mission at Neighborhood Charter Schools is to provide the children of New York City with new educational opportunities through a rigorous, comprehensive K-8 program that cultivates the intellectual, social, and emotional development of each child. Our school is an inclusive community that serves high functioning children on the autism spectrum along with their neighborhood peers. Our students will become independent learners and critical thinkers will acquire the academic skills that they need to succeed in college preparatory high schools and will exhibit the social and emotional skills that will allow them to reach their full potential.

Academic Program

At Neighborhood Charter Schools, we believe in providing a Middle School experience that not only allows our scholars to explore new interests but also helps to establish independence and responsibility. Our academic program is structured to refine our scholar's study habits to prepare them for high school, as well as provide them with exposure to a variety of topics across the liberal arts. Our goal is to help our Middle School scholars to develop their professional skills, including oral and written communication with their peers and teachers, to be prepared to advocate for themselves when they enter High School.

Since middle school is an optimal time for scholars to develop professional responsibilities, we must work together to ensure our school is a productive center of learning combined with opportunities where scholars can develop meaningful friendships and seek out new talents, preparing them for the future. NCS offers comprehensive instruction in English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and History along with a dynamic Specials program, which includes Dance, Physical Education, and Performing Arts.

Middle School Schedule

NCSH believes in providing high-quality instruction across all subjects as part of a holistic education. Our schedule is designed to ensure that all scholars receive ELA and Mathematics every day, as well as science and history on a rotating schedule A/B. Given the realities of COVID-19 and the challenges New Yorkers are facing, NCS is prepared to adapt our schedule to ensure that we are providing high-quality instruction whether we are in person, hybrid or virtual for the 2020-2021 school year. As part of our commitment to the health and safety of our community, we have developed three models for instruction that will allow us to follow the current guidelines around social distancing in schools.

100% In-Person

If infection rates have subsided and it is deemed safe, NCS will open for operation at full capacity. Under this model, all scholars will be expected to attend school every day to receive instruction in their core subject areas and specials. Scholars will receive an A/B schedule in which they will switch off on instruction in History and Science and Specials daily. All instruction in core subjects will be 80 minutes with 40 minutes dedicated to their Special's period for the day.

Sample In-Person Schedule

Time	6-1	6-2	6-3	A Days	B Days
8:00- 8:15	Unpack/ Morning Announcements			Physical Education	Perfroming Arts
8:20 - 9:40	Permorming Arts /PE Technology/ Dance	Science/ History	ELA	History	Science
9:45 - 11:05	ELA	Math	Permorming Arts /PE Technology/ Dance	Dance	Technology
11:10 - 12:30	Math	Permorming Arts /PE Technology/ Dance	Science/ History		
12:35 - 1:15	Lunch/Recess				
1:20 - 2:40	Science/ History	ELA	Math		
2:45 - 3:25	LIGHT Squad				
3:30-3:45	PM Dissmal				

Hybrid Model

If infection rates remain low and it is deemed safe to open schools under social distancing, we will assume a hybrid model that will provide all scholars with the opportunity to receive in-person instruction at least once a week. In compliance with state guidelines regarding social distancing, we will reduce the capacity of our Middle School to ensure that all scholars are given the necessary amount of space for their safety. To ensure that there is consistency in our families' schedules, each grade will follow the following schedule:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
5th	In-Person	Virtual	Virtual	Virtual	Virtual*
6th	Virtual	In-Person	Virtual	Virtual	Virtual*
7th	Virtual	Virtual	In-Person	Virtual	Virtual*
8th	Virtual	Virtual	Virtual	In-Person	Virtual*

All scholars will receive one full day of in-person instruction and 3 full days of virtual instruction per week. For both virtual and in-person, scholars will have a set schedule where they will have to attend their classes for the day. On days where scholars are in-person, they will receive instruction in all core subjects as well as specials. For virtual instruction, scholars will receive ELA and Math instruction each day. The third block of virtual instructional time will rotate between Science, History, and a Tech Literacy Course. On Fridays, all scholars will be virtual for assessments and enrichment activities.

Sample Hybrid Schedule

Tuesday - In-Person			
Time	6-1	6-2	6-3
8:00- 9:20	History	Math	ELA
9:25 - 10:45	Math	ELA	Science
10:50 - 12:10	ELA	Science	Specials
12:15 - 12:55	LIGHT SQUAD & Lunch		
1:00 - 2:20	Science	Specials	History
2:25 - 3:45	Specials	History	Math

Wednesday - Virtual			
Time	6-1	6-2	6-3
8:00 - 9:00	ELA	Math	Science
9:00 - 9:10	Break		
9:10 - 10:10	Math	Science	ELA
10:10 - 10:20	Break		
10:20 - 11:20	Science	ELA	Math
11:20 - 11:30	Break		
11:30 - 12:00	LIGHT SQUAD		
12:00 - 1:00	Lunch		
1:00 - 1:50	Study Time	Math Office Hours	Science Office Hours
1:50 - 2:00	Break		
2:00 - 2:50	Math Office Hours	Science Office Hours	Study Time
2:50 - 3:00	Break		
3:00 - 3:50	Science Office Hours	Study Time	Math Office Hours

In the event that there is a spike in the C-Void 19 infection for the State of NY or there has been a case of COVID-19 among our staff or families, we will immediately shift instruction to completely virtual until it is deemed safe to return to school. In the event of a shutdown, all families will receive an email containing their scholars updated virtual schedule and instruction would continue virtually the next day.

Virtual Instruction

As of the publishing time of this Handbook (08/27/20), NCS is planning to be fully virtual until the end of December 2020. By December 1st, NCS will determine whether our program will be virtual, hybrid, or 100% in-person starting January 2021.

In a fully virtual world, we will continue to provide excellent instruction remotely and give students lots of opportunities to interact with their teachers and classmates. Students receive core instruction in the mornings and then can attend office hours with their teachers for extra support or receive small group instruction in the afternoon. The day begins at 8:00 a.m. and ends no later than 4:00 p.m. Much of the afternoon time is built-in breaks or flexible time for students to receive extra support as needed.

Students receive the following Monday - Thursday:

- Live taught English Language Arts and Math
- Live taught History and Science on alternating days (Monday is Science, Tuesday is History, and so on)
- Live taught Light Squad (a social-emotional support group) three days a week
- Live taught technology class one day a week
- Live taught specials three days a week

On Fridays, students will be assessed in their content area so that teachers can group and provide extra support to students as needed. Scholars will complete virtual assessments on Friday mornings with the afternoon dedicated to enrichment activities led by Specials instructors and Deans. Scholars will have the opportunity to take part in various activities aimed at providing many of the social experiences they would have in school.

Along with providing live instruction, our Middle School is committed to providing both one on one and small group instruction to all scholars. To promote self-advocacy, all subjects will hold office hours periodically throughout the week where their teachers can answer questions and provide support. Data obtained using our weekly assessments will help teachers identify scholars who need additional support and schedule an additional small group for scholars who need assistance over the next week.

Sample Virtual Schedule

Monday			Tuesday				
Time	6-1	6-2	6-3	Time	6-1	6-2	6-3
8:00 - 8:50	ELA	History	Math	8:00 - 8:50	ELA	Science	Math
8:50 - 9:00	Break			8:50 - 9:00	Break		
9:00 - 9:50	Math	ELA	Dance	9:00 - 9:50	Math	ELA	Physical Education
9:50 - 10:00	Break			9:50 - 10:00	Break		
10:00 - 10:50	History	Dance	ELA	10:00 - 10:50	Science	Physical Education	ELA
10:50 - 11:00	Break			10:50 - 11:00	Break		
11:00 - 11:50	Dance	Math	History	11:00 - 11:50	Physical Education	Math	Science
11:50 - 12:30	LIGHT Squad			11:50 - 12:30	LIGHT Squad		
12:30 - 1:00	Lunch			12:30 - 1:00	Lunch		
1:00 - 1:50	Study Break	History Office Hours	ELA Office Hours	1:00 - 1:50	Study Break	Science Office Hours	Math Office Hours
1:50 - 2:00	Break			1:50 - 2:00	Break		
2:00 - 2:50	History Office Hours	ELA Office Hours	Study Break	2:00 - 2:50	Science Office Hours	Math Office Hours	Study Break
2:50 - 3:00	Break			2:50 - 3:00	Break		
3:00- 3:50	ELA Office Hours	Study Break	History Office Hours	3:00- 3:50	Math Office Hours	Study Break	Science Office Hours

Academic Expectations

One goal for all of our middle school scholars is that they graduate from NCS with the academic skills necessary for their success both with us and beyond. NCSH Middle School expects our scholars to learn how to organize themselves, prioritize assignments, and set and adhere to deadlines. Our scholars will also learn the importance of self-advocacy so that they will feel empowered to seek assistance when needed. We expect all scholars will act honestly and ethically in their academic work. During the academic school day, scholars should be present and focused and employ classroom behavior that promotes a supportive learning environment for the entire community. Scholars are expected to use technology responsibly and for academic purposes. As we work to create independent scholars, we must hold our scholars accountable as they develop these skills and adhere to assignment deadlines.

Class Attendance

Attending school, whether remote or physical and being present for classes is a crucial part of succeeding at Neighborhood Charter School. To ensure that our scholars are receiving high quality and individualized instruction, our scholars must be present for every lesson.

For our remote policy, **attendance is taken in each class. For a scholar to be marked Present in school for the day, they must attend all classes that day.** If a student misses one to two classes, they will be marked Tardy. If a student misses more than two classes in a day, they will be marked absent. If a scholar will be missing a class for an appointment, it is expected that both the teacher and the main office are informed, and a doctor's note is provided to the school.

In both virtual and in-person instruction if a scholar has missed an unusually high number of classes over a short time span, the school reserves the right to call a meeting between the family, the AP of Academics, and the child's teachers to create a support plan. This plan will stipulate what the scholar's academic responsibilities are for each class and a timetable for the scholar to return to school and attend regularly. The goal of this plan is to help the scholar continue their education given the absences by getting them back to school and attending classes regularly. The success of this approach relies heavily on the complete

cooperation of families and coordination/communication with the entire set of educators associated with the child. If the absentee rate does not improve, the family will be put on the Promotion in Doubt list.

Scholars who are absent more than 4 times a marking period will automatically be placed on Academic Warning, and a conversation about potential lack of promotion, at the discretion of the middle school administration, will convene. This may also be applied if a scholar misses multiple classes per day on a regular basis.

When students are unable to attend class for an extended period of time due to medical, emotional, or psychological reasons, the AP of Academics will meet with the student and/or family to determine a support plan.

Class Attendance Escalation Protocol		
Scholars misses 4 or more classes	→	AP of Academics and Content Teacher call family and create a support plan.
If absentee rate does not improve and impacting academics	→	AP of Academics puts student on Promotion in Doubt.
Scholars are absent more than 4 times a marking period and/or miss multiple classes per day on a regular basis which results in struggling student performance	→	The scholar will be placed on Academic Warning and a conversation about promotion in doubt occurs. *Please refer to Academic Warning on Page 15
Scholar is unable to attend class for an extended period of time due to medical, emotional or psychological reasons	→	AP of Academics will meet with the student and/or family to determine the support plan.

Participation Expectations

Participation Expectations by Content Area		
Content Area	Physically In School	Remote Learning
ELA	Students are expected to attend class every day they are in school. They should also arrive to class on time, as teachers will begin instruction as soon as the class period begins.	Students must be on time and present during remote sessions. This includes having your video on, and actively engaging in the lesson.
Math		
Science		
History	If a scholar arrives late to class, they will be asked to present a note explaining their late arrival from a teacher or school leader. Students will also be responsible for making up all work they miss during class. If a student is absent, they should communicate with their teachers asking what work they need to make up and collect those materials.	It is the students' responsibility to make sure their technology is fully charged and to reach out in advance if there is an issue with their technology that could possibly interfere with their ability to access the remote class.

Performing Arts	Students are expected to attend class every day they are in school. They should also arrive to class on time, as teachers will begin instruction as soon as the class period begins.	Students must be on time and present during remote sessions. This includes having your video on, and actively engaging in the lesson. Students must have their microphones muted unless otherwise instructed by the teacher. It is the students' responsibility to make sure their technology is fully charged and to reach out in advance if there is an issue with their technology that could possibly interfere with their ability to access the remote class.
Physical Education		
Dance	If a scholar arrives late to class, they will be asked to present a note explaining their late arrival from a teacher or school leader. Students will also be responsible for making up all work they miss during class. If a student is absent, they should communicate with their teachers asking what work they need to make up and collect those materials.	

Class Tardiness Escalation Protocol		
Scholar is 5-10 minutes 5 or more times	→	Content Teacher calls family and creates a support plan. Content Teacher notifies grade-band Dean.
If tardiness rate does not improve and impact academics	→	Content Teacher notifies Dean and AP of Academics. AP of Academics, Dean, and Content Teacher schedules a meeting with the family.
Scholar is tardy more than 10 times a marking period which results in struggling student performance	→	The scholar will be placed on Academic Warning and a conversation by the AP of Academics about lack of promotion will convene. *Please refer to Academic Warning on Page 15

Homework

Homework is an important component of our educational program at NCS. It provides scholars with the opportunity to review and practice the material covered in class, gain skills in independent work, and prepare for quizzes and tests. Homework assignments are reviewed in the classroom and are posted by teachers on Google Classroom. Every week, whether we are in person or virtual, parents and scholars should expect an email containing a link to our Virtual Planner which will contain links to all assignments and allied materials. The expectation is that scholars complete all homework assignments by the date that it is due.

In the event of an absence, scholars are responsible for making up all homework. When scholars are absent it is their responsibility to reach out to their teachers with any questions they may have about any missed material or homework assigned. Scholars absent for one or two days should check Google Classroom and contact their teacher for assignments. If a scholar will be absent for more than two days, the Dean will contact the scholar's family to develop a plan. Scholars who are out for a prolonged period of time should meet with the Assistant Principal of Academics to discuss a plan and timeline for making up any missed work. While it is an expectation that students will be responsible for missed work, if a student is out for an extended period, or is

absent due to health or family emergency, a student's teachers and Assistant Principal of Academics will work together with the student and their family to arrange a manageable support plan for their return.

Homework Expectations by Content Area		
Content Area	Physically In School	Remote
ELA	Students are responsible for completing homework assignments as assigned by their teachers. If for any reason a student is having difficulty completing the assignment within the given timeframe it is the student's responsibility to reach out to their teachers.	Students are responsible for completing homework assignments as assigned by their teachers. Students must make sure they aren't just typing their answers into their computer, but they attach a photo of the work they produced on a separate sheet of paper. If a student submits answers without attaching their work, they will not get full credit on the assignment. All due dates are listed online and posted in individual google classrooms; if a student submits as assignment late, they will not receive full credit.
Math		
Science		
History		
Performing Arts	Students are responsible for completing homework assignments as assigned by their teachers. If for any reason a student is having difficulty completing the assignment within the given timeframe it is the student's responsibility to reach out to their teachers.	Students are responsible for completing homework assignments as assigned by their teachers. Students must make sure they aren't just typing their answers into their computer, but they attach a photo of the work they produced on a separate sheet of paper. If a student submits answers without attaching their work, they will not get full credit on the assignment. All due dates are listed online and posted in individual google classrooms; if a student submits as assignment late, they will not receive full credit.
Dance	Students are responsible for completing homework assignments as assigned by their teachers. If for any reason a student is having difficulty completing the assignment within the given timeframe it is the student's responsibility to reach out to their teachers.	Students are responsible for completing homework assignments as assigned by their teachers. Students must make sure they aren't just typing their answers into their computer, but they attach a photo of the work they produced on a separate sheet of paper. If a student submits answers without attaching their work, they will not get full credit on the assignment. All due dates are listed online and posted in individual google classrooms; if a student submits as assignment late, they will not receive full credit.
Physical Education	Students are responsible for completing homework assignments as assigned by their teachers. If for any reason a student is having difficulty completing the assignment within the given timeframe it is the student's responsibility to reach out to their teachers.	Students are responsible for completing homework assignments as assigned by their teachers. Students must make sure they aren't just typing their answers into their computer, but they attach a photo of the work they produced on a separate sheet of paper. If a student submits answers without attaching their work, they will not get full credit on the assignment. All due dates are listed online and posted in individual google classrooms; if a student submits as assignment late, they will not receive full credit.

Tests and Testing

At NCS, teachers give quizzes, tests, and examinations regularly to assess student progress. We believe that by regularly assessing our scholars and assessing their progress we will better be able to tailor our instruction to meet their needs. To prepare scholars for these assessments, scholars learn study skills across all of their classes. Testing encourages scholars to use these skills and ultimately help them develop the study skills necessary to be successful in high school and beyond.

Tests and Testing by Content Area		
Content Area	Physically In School	Remote
ELA	Students are to adhere by the guidelines set forth from their teachers around what tools they can utilize during the assessment (i.e. open-note, novel, closed-note, etc).	Students are to adhere by the guidelines set forth from their teachers around what tools they can utilize during the assessment (i.e. open-note, novel, closed-note, etc). Student microphones are to remain on mute with their videos on to allow for teachers to proctor the assessment.
Math		
Science		
History	If a student has a question during the assessment, they are to raise their hand and wait for their teacher. If a student is acting in a way that may distract other students during the assessment, they will receive a warning. If the disruptive behavior continues, the teacher can choose to end the student's assessment, and their grade will reflect the work they have completed up until that point.	Teachers can split the class into two breakout rooms to more easily manage the remote proctoring. If a student has a question during the assessment they message their teachers privately. If a student is acting in a way that may distract other students during the assessment, they will receive a warning via private message. If the disruptive behavior continues, the teacher can choose to end the student's assessment, and their grade will be reflected from the work they have completed up until that point.

Grading System

Periodic summary of academic progress is essential for guiding the efforts of students. Grades are thus assigned and sent home in each subject at the midpoint and end of each marking period. In the form of progress reports and report cards respectively. Scholars will receive a numerical grade that is a result of their current average. Depending on the range their numerical grade falls in, each grade can be assigned a letter value ranging from A-F. In the event that a scholar's average is below 55%, the grade will automatically appear as 55% on the final report card.

Scholars may also receive three other marks on their transcripts: P, Pass (for courses designated pass/fail); F, Fail (for courses designated pass/fail); I, Incomplete (for scholars who have not completed the requirements of a course). If a student receives an incomplete, they will be asked to complete make-up work before receiving a grade. They will be given a timeframe to complete this make-up work, and the final grade will be based on assignments completed by the end of that allotted time.

Teachers using quantitative measures assign a grade according to the following numerical range:

Letter Grade	Numerical Grade
A	100%-90%
B	89%-80%

C	79%-70%
D	69%-60%
F	59% and below

Grading System by Content Area: The following factors will be factored into students grades																	
Content Area	Physically In School	Remote	Remote Grading Scale														
ELA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework • Classwork • Assessments • Projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classwork • Assessments • Projects/Questions 	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">ELA</th></tr> <tr> <th>Category</th><th>Weight</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Classwork</td><td>50%</td></tr> <tr> <td>Homework</td><td>n/a</td></tr> <tr> <td>Participation</td><td>20%</td></tr> <tr> <td>Quizzes/Tests/Projects</td><td>30%</td></tr> <tr> <td>Total</td><td>100%</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	ELA		Category	Weight	Classwork	50%	Homework	n/a	Participation	20%	Quizzes/Tests/Projects	30%	Total	100%
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Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Classwork (Including Journal) ● Labs (Including Lab Reports) ● Assessments ● Projects ● Homework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Classwork ● Projects/Lab ● Homework ● Assessments 	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr style="background-color: #6699CC; color: white;"> <th colspan="2">Science</th> </tr> <tr> <th style="text-align: center;">Category</th><th style="text-align: center;">Weight</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Classwork</td><td style="text-align: center;">30%</td></tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Homework</td><td style="text-align: center;">10%</td></tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Participation</td><td style="text-align: center;">30%</td></tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Quizzes/Tests/Projects/ Lab</td><td style="text-align: center;">30%</td></tr> <tr style="border-top: 1px solid black;"> <td style="text-align: center;">Total</td><td style="text-align: center;">100%</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Science		Category	Weight	Classwork	30%	Homework	10%	Participation	30%	Quizzes/Tests/Projects/ Lab	30%	Total	100%
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Honor Roll

Students are recognized for their academic achievement periodically throughout the year. This award shows that the student has gone above and beyond for different subjects. In addition, NCS believes that each quarter a student earns Honor Roll, they will be rewarded with positive incentives like field trips, gift cards and a party. Whether Honor Roll is celebrated physically in school or virtually, all families will be invited to celebrate their child's success through a school gathering. At NCS, we believe that numerical grades matter, but so does hard work. Therefore, if at any reason a scholar misses the Honor Roll mark of an overall GPA of %90.0 or higher in ALL classes, the Middle School Leadership Team will take teacher recommendations into consideration.

In order for scholars to be eligible for the Honor Roll they must meet the following criteria:

1. Overall GPA must be 90.0% or higher across ALL classes
2. No grades below an 80% in any single class
3. 3 or fewer absences
4. 3 or fewer latenesses
5. Scholars must show consistent effort in class and on all their work
6. Scholars must embody the NCS LIGHT values of: Learning, Integrity, Good Citizenship, Hard Work, and Teamwork.

Progress Reports & Parent Conferences

We believe in transparency and keeping our families very much involved in the educational process. Therefore, progress reports, report cards and family conferences will take place several times during the year. Progress reports evaluating a scholar's performance in each subject are sent home at mid-marking period and can be accessed electronically via PowerSchool. Progress Reports provide a scholar's current average. Report Cards include grades and comments from your child's teachers. These reports are important for both scholars and families since they detail areas of strength and suggestions for improvement. When a parent conference is scheduled, attendance is mandatory and if the family is unable to attend they should speak with the classroom teacher to arrange a time convenient for both the family and the school. The family conference schedule will be communicated to families at the beginning of every school year. If concerns arise at other times throughout the year, a teacher or the AP of Academics may call the parents or send an additional written report.

	Progress Reports	Report Cards
1st Quarter ends October 23, 2020	October 9, 2020	November 6, 2020
2nd Quarter ends January 15, 2021	December 17, 2021	January 29, 2021
3rd Quarter ends April 1, 2021	March 19, 2021	April 16, 2021
4th Quarter ends June 18, 2021	May 28, 2021	Mailed out June 25, 2021

Academic Warning, Academic Probation and Promotion in Doubt

Students' academic success is our top priority. In any marking period, students whose overall academic performance is below expectations, or whose behavior in class, work habits, or approach to their academic subjects is of significant concern, will be placed on Academic Warning. When a student is placed on Academic Warning, the goal is to put supports in place and develop a plan to help the student improve.

Academic Warning

If a scholar receives three academic achievement or progress report grades in the C range (C-, C or C+) or one grade of D or F a scholar will be placed on Academic Warning. Families will be notified in writing and via phone by the AP of Academics and a conversation will be facilitated in order to discuss how the school can support the scholar academically.

Academic Probation

If a scholar meets the criteria for Academic Warning for two consecutive quarters, that scholar will automatically be placed on academic probation. Families will be notified and required to meet with the AP of Academics in order to develop a comprehensive plan for how to help the scholar get back on the right track. Once a student improves and moves off of Probation, if they again meet the criteria for Academic Warning the following quarter, they will bypass Academic Warning and return to Academic Probation.

Students on Academic Warning or Probation will receive one or more (but not limited to) the following supports:

- Parent meeting with the AP of Academics
- Interim reports with strategies that teachers suggest for improvement
- Additional help sessions
- Attend weekly meetings with the dean and teachers
- Weekly Reports sent home, which may include recommendations for different support
- Curtailment of extra-curricular or enrichment activities
- Required supervised study time before or after school

In significant cases when long-standing or significant concerns are present and do not improve, the student will be placed on Promotion In Doubt.

Promotion In Doubt:

Promotion in Doubt is a Neighborhood Charter Schools' formal process for notifying families that their child is at risk of not meeting promotion standards and being retained in the same grade for the next school year. If your child is considered Promotion in Doubt, you will be notified in a formal meeting during Parent Conferences during Quarter's 1, 2 and 3. By Quarter 4, if your child is considered Promotion in Doubt, you will be notified by the Assistant Principal of Academics to discuss next steps for the following school year.

NCSH Commitment to Parent Engagement

Communications during Remote Learning: Scholar and Staff Boundaries

During this time, scholars and Adults are going to have a range of reactions to the developing pandemic, and resulting in economic and social stresses in this time of uncertainty. In this time of heightened anxiety, we need to accommodate and restructure our teaching and learning experience through necessity. In order to continue to serve our community we must be flexible and work our best to continue to foster educational excellence. We need to place important guidelines and policies to foster and maintain a safe environment for both Scholars and Educators.

These boundaries can seem excessive to some, and we want to be clear that we know some of these boundaries will require additional efforts and may inconvenience staff and families. We are clear that these boundaries are not needed in 99% of cases, however, as a network, we want to be proactive in expectations. Therefore we must place these standards for the safety of our scholars and educators while entering a time of major changes and adaptations to daily routines. While these guidelines may be inconvenient for some, we believe they will increase safety without causing harm – whereas the rare situations that can occur can cause devastating harm for students and educators.

The following expectations are designed to ensure a safe environment for students and staff and to maintain appropriate and productive boundaries throughout the remote learning period:

Strong Boundaries

Content of 1:1 Communication between Scholars and Staff: Now more than ever, we need to be there and support our scholars and we will accomplish this by fostering a trusting, consistent, and professional student and staff relationships. These relationships should be defined by: care of well-being and focus on their academics. Communications during this remote learning period should frequently include a form of “check-ins” and a clear focus on academic support.

Communications should always include:

- Scholar friendly and appropriate language
- Professional presentation on Zoom/Hangouts (Appropriate dress, visual space free of any inappropriate imagery, and non-distracting background).
- A focus on student learning.

Communications should never include:

- Gratuitous discussion of personal life (Dating, Gossip etc.)
- Anything that can be construed as sexual innuendo or content.
- Profanity or overly casual language that blurs the Scholar-Educator, non-peer relationship.

Communication to Families

The School will communicate with parents in the following ways:

- Family Portal: Please visit the new Parent Portal on our website, <https://ncschools.org/for-families/>. We will keep this page updated with school happenings and to share academic resources, family training opportunities, and everything else!
- Newsletter: Each week we will send a newsletter to keep you informed about events and the latest news in our school.

Contacting Your Scholar's Teacher

NCS is committed to a strong partnership between our families and our teachers. We believe that the accountability necessary for academic excellence can only be achieved through open lines of communication between the home and school. Along with providing progress reports and live access to scholar progress on PowerSchool, parents can expect frequent contact from their scholars teachers via phone, email, and text. In order to ensure that we are respecting our teachers personal time, we ask that parents and scholars limit all calls and text messages to teachers between the hours of 8 am and 6 pm. In the event that a teacher is contacted outside of the hours, they will respond during the next business day.

PowerSchool

In order for us to be true partners in your child's academic success, we have to be transparent about your child's academic progress. As a result, each family will have access to the Powerschool Family Portal where you will see assignments and scores, attendance, current GPA (middle school only), and final grades/report cards. Each family will receive a customized letter with your login credentials.

Attendance/ Grades

You can view attendance records and grades in Powerschool. Each day your scholar will receive one of the following attendance codes:

- P - Present
- T - Tardy
- A - Absent
- ISS - In School Suspension
- OoSP - Out of School Suspension
- ED - Early Departure
- AE - Absent Excused

Assignments and Realtime Gradebook (Middle School Only)

As teachers issue work to scholars, they will create assignments in Powerschool. That work will be graded once turned in by your scholar. You will be able to view assignments and grades in real time. This will give you an indication of how your child is doing academically. You do not need to wait necessarily for a progress report or

If you have Powerschool related questions or issues with accessing the platform, please contact the Operations team at operations@ncschools.org.

Parent Association

The Parent Association is an opportunity to work with other parents to support your school and your child's education. The Parent Association will hold meetings and work on special projects. Parent Association meetings are also a great opportunity to voice your suggestions or concerns and to help other families solve problems. All parents and guardians are automatically members of the Parent Association and are welcome to attend meetings. Here are ways to get involved with the Parent Association.

- **Run for an elected position:** The school will announce when elections will take place a few weeks in advance. Elected positions include: President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary.
- **Attend a Parent Association meeting:** Meetings are usually held after school and sometimes on Saturdays. A schedule will be distributed at the beginning of the school year.
- **Volunteer to help with an event or project:** Ask one of your elected officers or attend a meeting to find out how you can help.

Class Dojo

Class Dojo is utilized as our in-house Middle School Incentive Program. Scholars earn points based on class participation and behavior. NCS Middle School Scholars are expected to follow teacher directives, complete all virtual assignments and participate in events/virtual gatherings to the best of their abilities. Points are awarded daily, and can not be revoked once awarded. If a scholar has not met expectation, they will be prohibited from cashing out, but will NOT lose any earned points.

Scholars are able to earn points throughout the day to eventually "Cash Out" for prizes which include snacks, lip gloss, gift cards and with enough points, a restaurant trip. Cash Out's happen every two weeks during lunch/recess. At that time, scholars have the opportunity to either select a prize (candy, snacks, juices etc) or save their points to eventually cashout for a more expensive prize (gift cards, lunches etc).

During Remote Learning, scholars will still have the chance to earn dojo daily. Teachers will continue log points in the app. On Cash-Out days, Deans will reach out to scholars to inform them of their Dojo point total and offer them the following prizes:

POINTS	PRIZE
200	HOMEWORK PASS
250	\$5 GIFT CARD OF CHOICE
375	\$10 GIFT CARD OF CHOICE
450	\$15 GIFT CARD OF CHOICE
515	LUNCH/DINNER ON NCS

Technology

Technology Program

Our technology program as NCS is a robust and interactive platform that scholars will receive 1 day a week. Scholars will build foundational technological skills that will enable them to navigate through multiple technology platforms such as Google Suite and Interactive Typing. Embedded within the technology program are two modules, Tech 101 and Tech 201. Tech 101 will focus on the basic understanding and navigation of Google Suite and Tech 201 will take a deep dive into Google Suite to ultimately set scholars up for success when producing work.

Technology Contract

In order to receive a device from the school, we require all families to complete a [Scholar Technology Contract](#). This contract contains information regarding treatment of the device as well as information regarding replacement in the event that the device is lost or damaged. As these devices are vital to our scholar's success in our academic program, we stress the importance of proper maintenance and care. In the event that a scholar is found mistreating the school issued device or violating the terms of the contract, the school reserves the right to reclaim the technology and/or charge a repair fee.

NCS is committed to maintaining the privacy of scholars. To that end, we have installed Go Guardian on all NCS scholar devices. Go Guardian allows NCS to monitor web browser traffic inside and outside of school time. Teachers will be able to use this during and after class. Go Guardian also produces reports on where specific users are going and whether users are off-task. It can also be used for assessments to lock down scholars from using other sources. Finally, not only are we maintaining privacy and safety of scholars, Go Guardian is also monitoring mental health to include suicide prevention for scholars grades 3-8. For example, if a scholar is showing a pattern of visiting violent or self-harm sites, NCS would be notified to work with families and our mental health team to support.

LIGHT Squad

LIGHT Squad at NCS

LIGHT Squad is a safe space for us to nurture all NCSH Scholars as they approach adolescence. LIGHT Squad is a one-period non-academic class for grades 5-8, which will meet five days a week during in person instruction and three times a week during virtual learning.. Each LIGHT Squad will be composed of one leader and a group of 7-10 scholars. During the academic day with LIGHT Squad, leaders will have a unique opportunity to set or reset the tone of a scholar's day. LIGHT Squad will consist of restorative practices such as circle discussions, in conjunction with thematic units, lesson plans, related activities and opportunities for structured re-teach days. LIGHT squad will serve as a time to allow scholars to explore their identity as students, part of the NCS community, and members of society. Leaders will guide scholars through restorative dialogues, conflict resolution, community service projects, assessment of academic progress, and joyous celebrations. Addressing our scholars' need for social-emotional support as they move through adolescence will contribute to their ability to reach their academic potential.

Social & Emotional Support

LIGHT Squad at NCS is a laboratory for exploring, observing, and investigating the LIGHT values (learning, integrity, good citizenship, hard work, and teamwork) that are integral to the NCS community. Light Squad creates a safe environment in which scholars are able to engage in personal exploration, restorative dialogues, positive relationship development, and conflict resolution. Through imparting these values in a welcoming and receptive space, scholars will develop a sense of fellowship with not only peers in their LIGHT Squad, but also in the larger NCS community.

Community Support

Developing a sense of community and fellowship within the walls of NCS is essential to the academic and social-emotional growth of each student. It is equally important to cultivate scholars who are active members of the outside community. LIGHT Squad will allow scholars to hone their skills as empowered activists and volunteers, while further encouraging their ability to be leaders during town hall meetings, school events, and activities. All of these efforts will help scholars to become engaged members of a community.

Town Hall

Middle School Town Halls occur once a month by grade. Each LIGHT Squad group gathers with their grade band for an opportunity to fellowship and share some of the things they have learned and worked on in their individual groups. Town Hall is a chance for scholars to collaborate and demonstrate what their group has produced based on the monthly topic. Each LIGHT Squad group has the opportunity to lead Town Hall on a rotating schedule. That group leader (an NCS Middle School Teacher) creates an agenda that structures the gathering. The session begins with the setting of "norms & expectations" as scholars are encouraged to be a support to any group/person that is sharing and to maintain a safe sharing space during this time. The host group then delivers any announcements and proceeds to present the monthly LIGHT Value awards. These prizes are awarded by teachers to scholars who have demonstrated a particular LIGHT value during that month. The hosting group then leads a grade-wide interactive team building activity of their choice. The goal of

Town hall is to ensure that we create a space where our community can come together and discuss a variety of topics that affect the social and emotional well being of our scholars. By providing our scholars with the opportunity to come together as a grade, we hope to foster a community of sharing and listening that will help our scholars on the path towards global citizenship.

Community Activities

Field Trips and Outdoor Education

In Person

At NCS we believe that the best learning will occasionally take place outside of the classroom. At the beginning of the year we will ask that all families sign a “walking field trip” form which will be used as blanket permission for scholars to attend outdoor educational activities such as a neighborhood walk or an afternoon lesson in the park. It will also allow permission for your scholar to participate in celebratory activities such as a lunch out with a teacher. Separate permission slips will not be required for these sort of activities.

Field trips are another important part of a well rounded education and can take many forms. Touring a museum, going out to a show, or participating in a hands on workshop can all give much deeper insight and meaning into what scholars are learning in the classroom. For these types of trips, and any trip that requires transportation, event specific permission slips will be required to be signed by the scholars’ families before they leave the building on the trip. Our teachers will always be happy to answer any questions you might have about the scheduled trip before you give your permission and we promise to only curate the most meaningful experiences for your children.

Evening Events

Throughout the course of the school year there will be various events that take place after the official end of the school day and we want our scholars and families to take full advantage of those opportunities. There are a variety of sports that will be offered during the course of the year which will require players to attend after school practices and games. Scholars who do not join the sports teams may enjoy attending some of their games to cheer on the Huskies with their friends. Other evening and after school activities may include: school dances, scholar/parent workshops, performances, and other celebratory and multicultural events throughout the year.

Middle School Routines and Procedures - In Person

Dismissal & Afterschool

While NCS is virtual, we will not be offering after school. NCS will communicate dismissal procedures if in person instruction happens this school year.

Lockers

Scholars will be issued an individual locker in the beginning of the school year. This will be their locker for the duration of the school year. Scholars will have a scheduled time to go to their lockers throughout the school day. Scholars will also receive guidelines on the accessories they can add to decorate their lockers.

Bathroom Usage

Scholars are allowed to use the bathroom during class time with permission of the teacher. Restroom use is not permitted during the last 5-minutes or first 5-minutes of the classroom, nor during transitions, so all scholars make it to class in a timely manner, are accounted for during attendance, and receive all pertinent end-of-class announcements. Only one scholar per classroom is allowed to use the restroom at a given time, with teacher permission and a hall pass. There should be no social congregation in the bathroom during class time. Scholars are expected to quickly use the restroom, wash their hands, and return to class. Families should be aware that there is always an adult circulating the hallways to ensure scholars are meeting positive behavioral expectations. If it is suspected that scholars are congregating in the restroom, building staff may enter the restroom to clear the space of scholars and ensure their return to their classrooms.

Cell Phones

At NCSH our number one priority is scholar learning and scholar achievement. Cell phones in school can become a big distraction for our scholars and we must continue to put their education **first**.

Scholars are only allowed to use their cell phones before school, during Middle School Early Arrival and after school. Students who use their communication devices during instructional time will be subjected to item confiscation. If a scholar's device is confiscated, it will be labeled, placed in a locked box and only turned over to a parent.

Gaming Devices: Scholars are not allowed to use gaming devices i.e. Nintendo Switch, controllers, cell phone attachment games during instructional hours. Such devices are only allowed during allotted time periods (Gaming Elective, After-School Hours under Teacher supervision).

- I. The use by scholars of personal communication devices such as cell phones, iPads or other similar electronic communication devices is prohibited during the instructional day. During the instructional day, scholars may only use these devices with the approval of the teacher or principal. If a nuisance item is confiscated and turned into the deans' office, a parent or guardian must pick it up; it will not be given back to the student.

A. These devices must remain off, not merely silenced, during instructional time including passing periods and stored in the secure lock box in their homeroom class until dismissal.

Dress Code - In Person Only

In order to improve the school's educational environment, promote a more effective climate for learning, foster school unity and pride, and allow students to focus solely on learning and not on attire, the school has a dress policy for students that applies to in person school days and school-sponsored events.

- For the upcoming school year, we are adding polos as an option for all students.
- Ties will be optional for all scholars
- Navy blue outerwear will be accepted as long as it includes the school's logo. This includes sweaters, windbreakers and crewneck sweatshirts. Hoods are not permitted.
- Scholars can wear any type of sneaker/shoes as long as they're close toed.

All shirts must contain the school's imprinted logo. The school uniform can be purchased directly through Flynn & O'Hara by phone 1-800-441-4122, online www.flynnohara.com or the store 136 Westchester Square, Bronx, NY 10461.

NCS Dress Code (In-Person)				
Bottoms				
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Navy Pants with button or zip fly✓ Navy knee length shorts with button or zip fly✓ Navy knee length skirt				
Tops				
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ NCSH logo baby blue Oxford shirt (long or short sleeved)✓ NCSH logo baby blue polo shirt (long or short sleeved)				
Footwear/Accessories				
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Any type of sneakers/shoes as long as they're close toed (no sandals)✓ Black or navy blue socks or tights✓ Black/Brown/Navy belt (required if pants/shorts have belt loops)✓ Navy tie (clip-on or traditional, including bowtie) - optional				
Changes from Previous (The following are now permitted)				
				
Shorts allowed	Tie optional (including bowtie) for any student	Long and short-sleeve polo option for all	Navy outerwear acceptable with logo (no hoods)	Expanded footwear options for students

Student Conduct In Other Nearby Locations or Social Media

Off-campus behavior has the strong potential to impact in school interaction and involvement. As such, we strongly encourage our scholars to think of themselves as an extension of our school community when conducting themselves in the community. We as a school community believe in non-violence, respect for the emotional and physical well-being of oneself and others, as well as respect for the physical environment and private property. We reserve the right to investigate off campus incidents that happen between NCS students (in person and/or virtual) and administer consequences if deemed appropriate for the school setting to do so. These include bullying, harassment, or general inappropriate behavior toward peers.

Lunch Policy

Students will be provided with a healthy, catered lunch each day.

NCS will provide free breakfast and lunch to all students, regardless of a family's eligibility to participate in the National School Lunch Program. However, for NCS to seek at least partial reimbursement, each family will be asked to complete an eligibility application. We urge families—regardless of whether they think will officially qualify—to return the form, as crucial school funding decisions are made by the state depending on the totality of responses.

Fire Safety and Evacuation Procedures

Please note that some procedures may change once the school year has officially begun. Students will be notified of and trained if there are any significant changes.

In case of an emergency, if a student or staff member sees a fire or smells smoke, they should close the door. Upon hearing an alarm, the 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 stairwells' safety 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 fire drills to ensure that the entire school community is familiar with the appropriate response in an emergency.

In case of a more serious emergency, should it be necessary to evacuate the 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 students will return promptly to the school.

Intruder Drills

An intruder drill is an opportunity for the schools to practice how it would respond if an intruder were to unsafely enter the building. NCS will conduct the mandated two intruder alert drills as follows, one in December and one in February. These drills will be conducted in coordination with local emergency response and preparedness officials.

In the event of an intruder drill, a message will be shared over the school's intercom system to alert staff and scholars. At this point, the schools will go into lockdown mode and school leaders will sweep the building. Once school leaders give an all clear, a follow up message will be made over the intercom to end the drill.

Culture at NCS

NCS believes in all scholars - their potential for success - and operates on the premise that all scholars will succeed. NCS celebrates our scholars achievements both in and out of the classroom. We believe in building long lasting, caring relationships with kids, while always thinking the best of children. We use a strengths-based approach, coupled with a growth mindset, as a model for scholar success/achievement. NCS understands the roles of leading children as a serious responsibility and privilege. We pledge to hold true to our mission of providing a rigorous, inclusive, and structured educational program to our community of children, including children of color and/or with disabilities. We believe that everything we do will impact the future of our scholars. Our commitment is to educate the whole child in an effort to develop citizens who become contributing members of society, and the surrounding communities.

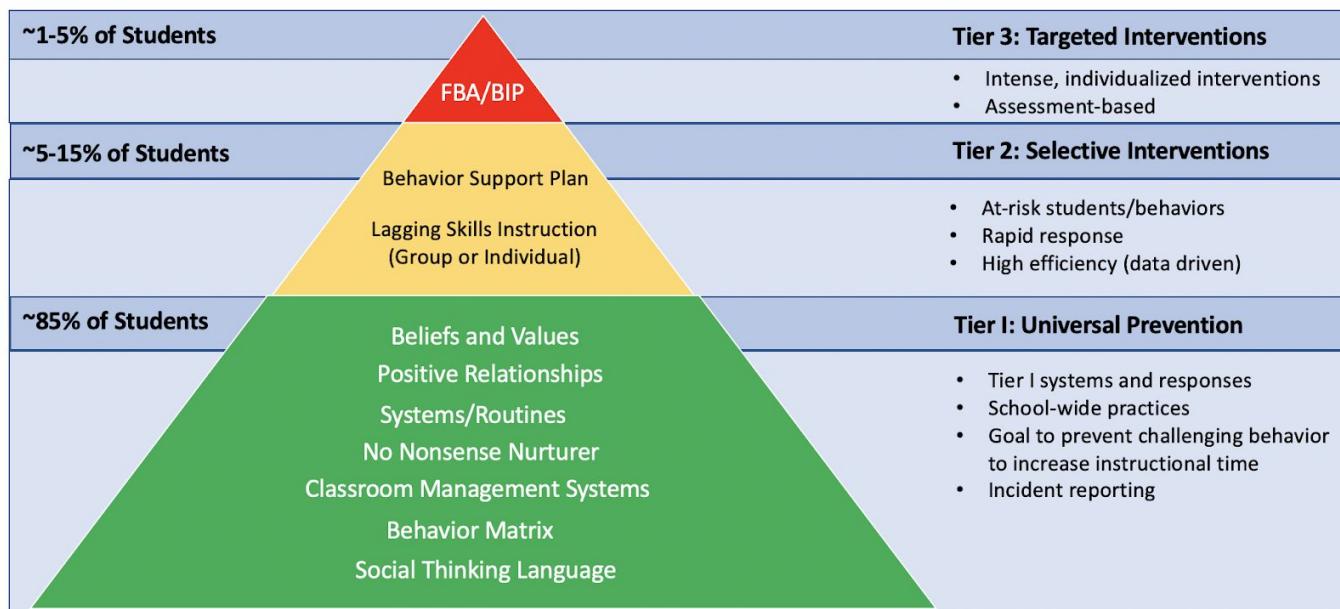
Per our school's 2020-2021 [DEI action plan](#), we at NCS commit to creating a school in which students feel safe to grow socially and emotionally, where individual learning needs are embraced, and where behavior management practices are fair and equitable regardless of gender, race, disability, orientation, and age.

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports

NCS implements Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) in order to define and teach towards positive school behaviors. Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is an [evidence-based three-tiered framework](#) to improve and integrate all of the data, systems, and practices affecting student outcomes every day. PBIS creates schools where all students succeed. Tier 1 (or universal) practices and systems establish a foundation of regular, proactive support while preventing unwanted behaviors. At NCS, we provide such universal supports to all students, school-wide. Tier 2 practices and systems support students who are at risk for developing more serious problem behaviors before those behaviors start. These supports help students develop the skills they need to benefit from core programs at the school. At Tier 3, students receive more intensive, individualized support to improve their behavioral and academic outcomes. At this level, schools rely on formal assessments to determine a student's need. See Behavioral RtI section of this document for further explanation of tiered levels of support.



PBIS Tiers of Support



Positive Behavior Expectations (Student Code of Conduct)

Neighborhood Charter Schools seek to instill in our children a love of LEARNING, INTEGRITY (honesty, keeping your promise, doing things that promote health, not harm to our body and mind), GOOD CITIZENSHIP (being a responsible member of a community, concern for others, respect for the world, seeing what needs to be done and doing it, peace-making, fairness, sharing, compassion, understanding, forgiveness and loyalty), HARD WORK (perseverance, initiative, optimism, willingness to try something new) and TEAMWORK (working together, cooperation, flexibility). We use the acronym LIGHT as a short-hand for these values and expect our students to exhibit them at all times.

As positive behavior is subjective it would be impossible to define each exact positive behavior we want our students to exhibit. Because of this, the below chart attempts to outline the types of positive behaviors that are encouraged at NCS.

Positive Behavior Expectations		
Context	Physically In School	Remote
Classroom	Scholars will think about the needs of the group and ensure one's personal behavior allows the group plan and learning to occur without interruption through self-management (e.g., quiet body, demonstrating emotional self-regulation, self-directing their attention). Scholars will be attentive to the instruction and directions delivered by teachers and will strive to meet the behavior expectations set by	Scholars will think about the needs of the group and ensure one's personal behavior allows the group plan and learning to occur without interruption through self-management (e.g., quiet body/mic off, demonstrating emotional self-regulation, self-directing their attention).

	<p>teachers at the beginning of each class and/or activity at the pace and in the manner of their classmates to allow high quality instruction to remain. We expect scholars in middle school to begin to understand their own learning needs, and to take personal accountability for ensuring they are meeting classroom expectations.</p>	<p>Scholars will be attentive to the instruction and directions delivered by teachers and will strive to meet the behavior expectations set by teachers at the beginning of each class and/or activity at the pace and in the manner of their classmates to allow high quality instruction to remain. We expect scholars in middle school to begin to understand their own learning needs, and to take personal accountability for ensuring they are meeting classroom expectations.</p>
Cafeteria/Lunch Room	<p>We expect a level of socialization and activity during lunch time. That said, when attention is called for by school building leaders, it is expected that students pause their conversations and think about the messages being delivered quietly and without interruption. Scholars will form lines in order to receive their food, and will maintain calm walking or seated bodies at all times. The voice level expectation is a level 3.</p>	N/A
Hallway Transitions	<p>When transitioning between classes, scholars will transition directly from one class to another without congregating in the hallways, stairwells, or other building locations. Locker access and bathroom use are not available during transitions, unless in the case of emergency, in which case permission and/or adult escort is necessary. Scholars will maintain walking bodies and will move unidirectionally as indicated by arrow direction posted in the hallways. They will keep their hands and bodies to themselves. Voice level expectation is a 2/3. Any scholar in the hallway during class time must have a hall pass and teacher permission, and the above expectations apply.</p>	N/A
Bathrooms	<p>Scholars are allowed to use the bathroom during class time with permission of the teacher. Restroom use is not permitted during the last 5-minutes or first 5-minutes of the classroom, nor during transitions, so all scholars make it to class in a timely manner, are accounted for during attendance, and</p>	N/A

	<p>receive all pertinent end-of-class announcements. Only one scholar per classroom is allowed to use the restroom at a given time, with teacher permission and a hall pass. There should be no social congregation in the bathroom during class time. Scholars are expected to quickly use the restroom, wash their hands, and return to class. Families should be aware that there is always an adult circulating the hallways to ensure scholars are meeting positive behavioral expectations. If it is suspected that scholars are congregating in the restroom, building staff may enter the restroom to clear the space of scholars and ensure their return to class.</p>	
Other School Locations	<p>At times, scholars will need to access other areas of the school building, such as the school nurse's office, related service therapy rooms, etc. When transitioning throughout the school, scholars are expected to maintain a safe, walking body and to stay alert for younger students. It is expected scholars remain at a level 1-2, especially when passing classrooms engaged in instruction. Scholars are expected to have a hall pass to transition to school locations without an adult escort, and are expected to go directly to their intended location without delay.</p>	
School Events/Trips	<p>We believe that scholars represent NCS at all times and expect them to model LIGHT behavior during school events and school trips. We expect scholars to show respect for their fellow classmates and members of the community, as well as towards the physical property of NCS's campus as well as the places they visit as part of our school endeavors.</p>	N/A
Off-Campus	<p>Off-campus behavior has the strong potential to impact in school interaction and involvement. As such, we strongly encourage our scholars to think of themselves as an extension of our school community when conducting themselves in the community. We as a school community believe in non-violence, respect for the emotional and physical well-being of oneself and others, as</p>	<p>Off-campus behavior has the strong potential to impact in school interaction and involvement. As such, we strongly encourage our scholars to think of themselves as an extension of our school community when conducting themselves in the community. We as a school community believe in non-violence, respect for the</p>

	well as respect for the physical environment and private property.	emotional and physical well-being of oneself and others, as well as respect for the physical environment and private property.
Online/Social Media	Social media/internet access from personal devices is not permitted during school hours. It is expected that students either do not bring a phone to school, or else plan to store their phones in their lockers or in the supervision of school building leaders. When computers or other technologies are incorporated into classroom instruction, scholars should navigate only to websites related to the task at hand. It is expected that when scholars engage online with students in the NCS community especially, they recognize that their comments and online behavior has real-life ramifications. Exhibiting LIGHT values online and through social media includes using respectful language and using the internet as a tool for positive knowledge acquisition and connection.	Given the digital nature of classroom instruction during remote learning, scholars are expected to treat digital platforms as extensions of school. Chat features within tech platforms used for instruction (e.g., Google Hangouts, Zoom Chat, Google Classroom walls) should be considered public education record, and any comments should be directly related to academic instruction. Respectful language and dialogue is expected. Outside of classwork, it is expected that when scholars engage online with students in the NCS community especially, they recognize that their comments and online behavior has real-life ramifications. Exhibiting LIGHT values online and through social media includes using respectful language and using the internet as a tool for positive knowledge acquisition and connection.

Behavioral Policies & Consequences

Behavior dramatically reduces when students feel empowered, engaged, and respected in the classroom. Preventing problem behavior therefore begins with incorporating strong Tier I (i.e., preventative, universal) supports and building strong relationships with children. When incidents do occur, we take a restorative approach, believing that when used effectively alternative discipline that incorporates restoration, reflection, and instruction will be more effective than a traditional discipline model.

NCS Behavior Matrix

The NCS Behavior Matrix is a tool we use at NCS to define our behavior practices and responses. The first section of the Matrix lists explicit examples of positive behaviors we expect to see from scholars and defines the teaching methods we use as educators to encourage and reinforce such acceptable conduct. The second section of the Behavior Matrix classifies student behaviors into four intensity categories and lists the range of school responses that accompany each behavior category. Categories of behavior are classified by intensity

levels based on whether or not a behavior/incident is classroom managed (i.e., no violation, minor violation) or referred to administration (i.e., major violation). For each behavior category, the range of possible school responses is defined. Of note, the example behaviors listed on the Matrix for each behavior category are meant to be illustrative of the type of behavior that should be classified at this level and are thus non-exhaustive. School building leaders and NCS teachers are meant to use the Matrix as a guide for classifying behavior into categories in order to implement an appropriate, matched response, no matter what behavior they encounter.

We at NCS DO NOT believe in a one-size fits all approach to discipline. Just as we differentiate instruction for each child, we believe it necessary to differentiate preventative and responsive interventions. As such, the NCS Behavior Matrix does not list one-for-one or “blanket” consequences, but rather, a RANGE of possible school responses listed below. Each incident will be looked at in detail, taking individual and context factors into account, in order to apply what the school deems to be a fair consequence based on individual factors. Fair does not always mean equal. NCS is bound by The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) not to disclose the private educational information of students. This means that the school is under no obligation to, nor are we allowed to, inform families of the consequences provided to other scholars who have displayed similar behavior incidents.

Behavior Matrix Level of Behavior (Intensity Levels)

NCS Behavior Matrix		
Intensity I	Example Behaviors (In-person)	Example Behaviors (Remote)
Intensity I behaviors include annoying or unexpected behaviors. These are considered “low level” offenses that are not true violations of our student code of conduct. Low level behaviors may detract from classroom learning, however, often fall in the range of developmentally expected behaviors.	<p>Examples of Intensity I behaviors include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blurtng/interrupting • Leaving one's seat without permission • Day-dreaming • Talking out of turn • Failing to immediately comply with teacher directions • Or similar 	<p>Examples of Intensity I behaviors include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joins call late • Turns off camera • Ending call early • Fidgety or walking away from computer • Playing with toys, phone, gaming system, or similar • Changing name on Zoom • Chat not related to academics • Annotating on screen • Tech off-task • Blurtng/interrupting • Or similar
Example Responses (In-person)		Example Responses (Remote)
Teachers are expected to partner with students to promote self-management in order to see lessened rates of such low level offenses through the use of corrective responses, such as:		Teachers are expected to partner with students to promote self-management in order to see lessened rates of such low level offenses through the use of corrective responses, such as:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving prompts and cues • Emotional check-ins • Teaching/explanations • Individual reflections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving prompts and cues • Positive narrations • Emotional check-ins • Teaching/explanations • Private chat in breakout room
Intensity II	Example Behaviors (In-person)	Example Behaviors (Remote)
Intensity II behaviors include disruptive or defiant behaviors that are considered minor violations of our student code of conduct and are recorded as such within our school's behavior incident reporting system - Educators Handbook. Teachers are expected to manage Intensity II behaviors in the classroom unless the behavior is significantly persistent and disruptive following multiple teacher attempts, at which point the behavior is escalated to an Intensity III.	<p>Examples of intensity II behaviors include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defying instructions • Cheating • Cursing/use of profanity • Making inappropriate or sexual jokes, gestures, or innuendos • Horseplay/roughhousing • Or similar 	<p>Examples of intensity II behaviors include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persistent Level I Behaviors (i.e., behaviors continue after 2-3 Intensity I corrective responses) • Inappropriate annotations • Inappropriate use of public chat or comments (e.g., name calling, teasing, cursing) • Inappropriate private chats (e.g., name calling, teasing, cursing) • Changing name on Zoom to inappropriate • Lying • Cursing / profanity • Inappropriate gestures or emojis
	Example Responses (In-person)	Example Responses (Remote)
	Intensity II responses should include, at minimum, a restorative component (e.g., desk chat, real-time coaching, restorative conversation or similar) and a consequence (e.g., removed from current activity, teacher note/call home, loss of privilege, or similar).	Intensity II responses should include, at minimum, a restorative component (e.g., breakout chat, real-time coaching, restorative conversation or similar) and a consequence (e.g., removed from current activity, teacher note/call home, additional session to make up lost instruction time, loss of chat/comment privileges, or similar).
Intensity III	Example Behaviors (In-person)	Example Behaviors (Remote)
Intensity III behaviors are those significantly persistent or severe that they threaten the safety and security of the learning environment and the physical and emotional well being of the student, other	Examples of intensity III behaviors (non-exhaustive) include persistent Intensity II behaviors, crisis behaviors, insubordination, physical threats or intimidation and/or physical aggression, harassing or derogatory language, bullying, theft, or similar.	Examples of intensity III behaviors (non-exhaustive) include persistent Intensity II behaviors, crisis behaviors observed in the home, insubordination, physical threats or intimidation and/or physical aggression, harassing or derogatory language, bullying, theft, or similar, including bullying, harassing,

<p>scholars, and staff.</p> <p>Intensity III behaviors are considered major violations of our student code of conduct, and are referred to school administration for an out-of-group consequence.</p>		and derogatory language used online and on social media.
	Example Responses (In-person)	Example Responses (Remote)
	<p>School action in cases of Intensity III incidents must include a restorative component (e.g., at-risk counseling, restorative conversation, amends making, student action plan, etc.), and a consequence (e.g., notifying home, loss of social privileges, Restorative/Reflection Workshop, in-school suspension [ISS], out-of-school suspension [OSS]), etc.). Teachers should be involved in restorative exercises with the student to the maximum extent possible.</p>	<p>School action in cases of Intensity III incidents must include a restorative component (e.g., at-risk counseling, restorative conversation, amends making, student action plan, etc.), and a consequence (e.g., School/home conference, loss of features (e.g., chat, comments) or privileges (e.g., optional events), removed from class sessions and instead asked to attend an alternative instruction block 1:1 with teacher to receive content out of group, etc.). Teachers should be involved in restorative exercises with the student to the maximum extent possible.</p>
Intensity IV	Example Behaviors (In-person)	Example Behaviors (Remote)
Intensity IV behaviors are considered dangerous and/or illegal offenses.	<p>Intensity IV behaviors can include fighting, possessing or threatening use of weapons or dangerous objects, engaging in sexual activity or inappropriate touching, possessing or distributing drugs or alcohol, arson, or threatening physical injury, among others.</p>	<p>Intensity IV behaviors can include fighting, possessing or threatening use of weapons or dangerous objects, engaging in sexual activity or inappropriate touching, possessing or distributing drugs or alcohol, arson, or threatening physical injury, among others. This includes activity known to have happened due to student posting on social media, online activity, etc.</p>
	Example Responses (In-person)	Example Responses (Remote)
	<p>Intensity IV behaviors should be referred to administration for restorative practice and consequences paralleling Intensity III responses, with the added component of possible referral to outside agencies for potential evaluation, treatment, or further consequence. Teachers should be involved in restorative practices to the maximum extent possible</p>	<p>Intensity IV behaviors should be referred to administration for restorative practice and consequences paralleling Intensity III responses, with the added component of possible referral to outside agencies for potential evaluation, treatment, or further consequence. Teachers should be involved in restorative practices to the maximum extent possible.</p>

Referral of Students to School Administrators

If, given implementation of Tier I strategies for preventing behavior, a student's Intensity III/IV behavior (including crisis behavior) significantly impacts classroom learning and safety, teachers should refer the student to school administrators through use of the school's 201 sendout system. By calling 201 (the school's security desk line), request calls are routed to school building leaders via walkie talkie and are responded to immediately. In cases when Intensity III and IV incidents occur but administrator support is not immediately required, staff members should refer the student to administration via Educators Handbook (see below) in order to notify pertinent school building leaders of need for follow up. This includes Intensity III/IV behaviors occurring in a remote capacity.

Documenting Behavior Incidents

Behavior incidents at Intensity Levels II-IV must be documented by NCS staff within Educators Handbook. Educators Handbook is the school's internal reporting system. Incidents logged into EH do NOT automatically enter into a student's permanent educational file, except in instances when necessary for obtaining and documenting special educational supports relating to behavior. Logging incidents into Educators Handbook allows the school to track behavior patterns at the individual student and broader student community levels, which supports the school in intervening proactively and preventively into the future.

Behavior Incidents and Manifestation of Disability

Looking at behavior incidents on a case-by-case basis inherently protects the needs and rights of students with disabilities. We at NCS understand the ways in which student lagging skills (including those related to a student's disability) may contribute to behavior incidents. These lagging skills are taken into account within restorative consequence discussions. Importantly, the presence of a disability does NOT preclude a child from potentially receiving a consequence, including but not limited to in-school or out-of-school suspensions in cases deemed necessary by school officials.

Behavioral Response-to-Intervention

Part of the school's tiered model of behavior intervention is a robust Behavioral Response-to-Intervention (RtI) program that runs parallel to our academic RtI program. There are three pathways for referral into Behavioral RtI. Firstly, students recording in the top 10% of behavioral incidents per Educators Handbook data will be automatically flagged into Tier II programming. Alternatively, students may be referred by teacher nomination via the school's Behavior RtI Nomination Form. Teacher referrals are vetted by the school's Behavioral Specialist and need is confirmed through behavior data analysis. Lastly, students may be referred for Behavior RtI based on the severity of individual incidents they are involved in and the potential impact of such incidents on their physical or emotional well-being. Tier II programming includes short term behavioral plans and interventions aimed at building student skills in order to reduce overall rates of behavior incidents. Students who are unresponsive to Tier II (i.e., short-term, at risk interventions) or whose behavior is considered significantly dangerous or disruptive to classroom learning may be referred for Tier III Interventions. Tier III interventions are data informed and require the completion of Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) in order to develop a formal Behavior Intervention Plan. Family consent is required to conduct FBAs except for students with pre-existing IEPs. A student's access to Tier III behavior support is NOT in of itself considered special education support, though FBAs and BIPs may be attached to a child's pre-existing condition.

Restorative Circle/Logical Consequences

NCS is investing in training staff on logical consequences. Your child may be asked to join a teacher or group of students to discuss an incident, its impact on individuals and their community, and create a plan to ensure that it does not happen again. We seek to teach students about their behavior rather than take a purely punitive approach.

In School Suspension

In-school suspension (ISS) is a disciplinary action the school can implement in cases of severe or persistent Intensity III or IV behaviors. The purpose of ISS is to provide a structured opportunity for scholars to reflect on the incident, restore relationships with fellow scholars/teachers, and contemplate how such incidents can be prevented in the future. It also provides time and space for the student and others affected to heal from the harm done through short-term physical separation. ISS at NCS involves an automatic restorative component, full-day supervision by NCS staff, and work/instructional load comparable to their in-class counterparts. ISS is administered at the discretion of school-based leaders with input from Deans and AP Culture and/or principals as needed. In instances where a scholar with an IEP is being considered for ISS, advisement from the Behavior Specialist and/or Director of Special Education must be obtained before the ISS can be administered. Families of students receiving ISS consequences will be provided with documentation of the incident resulting in ISS, as well as an In-School-Suspension and Re-Entry Plan outlining the specific use of scholar time and plan for restorative actions needing to occur.

Out of School Suspension

Out-of-School Suspension (OSS) is a disciplinary action in which a scholar is not allowed to receive physical instruction at school based on the severity of the Intensity III or IV incident that took place. OSS decisions are not taken lightly by school based officials, but may be necessary in specific extreme circumstances where the physical and emotional well-being of other students and staff would be impacted by the presence of the offending scholar within the school building. OSS decisions are made in accordance with the NCS Suspension Approval Process. Students receiving OSS consequences require an in-person family conference prior to a student's return to school. Families of students receiving OSS should expect documentation of the incident from the school and a Student Re-Entry Plan outlining the restorative actions that will occur when the student returns to the school building. Restorative actions could include, but are not limited to, restorative circles with impacted staff and students, referral to NCS or outside mental health or behavioral services, and or repairing any harm done.

Expulsion

Expulsion is reserved for extraordinary circumstances, including not limited to circumstances where a student's conduct poses 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.

Procedures and Due Process for Short Term Suspension

The Principal may impose a short-term suspension and shall follow due process procedures consistent with federal case law pursuant to *Goss v. Lopez* (419 U.S. 565). Before imposing a short-term suspension, or other, less serious discipline, the Principal shall provide notice to inform the student of the charges against him or her, and if the student denies the charges, an explanation of the evidence against the student. A chance to present the student's version of events shall also be provided.

Before imposing a short-term suspension, the Principal shall immediately notify the parents or guardian in writing that the student may be suspended from school. Written notice of the decision to impose suspension shall be provided by personal delivery or express mail delivery within 24 hours at the last known address(es) of the parents or guardian. Where possible, notification also shall be provided by telephone. Such notice shall provide a description of the incident(s) for which suspension is proposed and shall inform the parents or guardian of their right to request an immediate informal conference with the Principal. Such notice and informal conference shall be in the dominant language or mode of communication used by the parents or guardian. The parents or guardian of the student and the student shall have the opportunity to present the student's version of the incident and to ask questions of the complaining witnesses. Such notice and opportunity for an informal conference shall take place prior to the suspension of the student unless the student's presence in the school poses a continuing danger to persons or property or an ongoing threat of disruption to the academic process, in which case the notice and opportunity for an informal conference shall take place as soon as possible after the suspension as is reasonably practicable.

The Principal's decision to impose a short-term suspension may be challenged by the parent(s) or guardian in accordance with the School's grievance policy.

Procedures and Due Process for Long Term Suspension

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

If the Principal initiates the suspension proceeding, they shall personally hear and determine the proceeding or may, in his or her discretion, designate a hearing officer to conduct the hearing. The hearing officer's report

shall be advisory only and the Principal may accept or reject all or part of it. The Principal's decision to impose a long-term suspension or expulsion may be challenged by the parent or guardian through an appeal process to the Executive Director, the details of which shall be determined. NOTE: In any instance where the Principal is directly involved in the instance(s) at issue for a suspension or expulsion, the Executive Director shall handle any investigation, hearing and determination.

Social Probation

NCS scholars are not automatically entitled to participate in all school events, including school trips, sporting games, dances, or after school activities. NCS reserves the right to set minimum student behavioral expectations (e.g., no more than a specific number of recorded minor or major infractions and/or no recent ISS/OSS) in order for scholars to participate in such activities. The school reserves the right to place scholars on social probation, meaning they either are not permitted to attend or may only conditionally attend certain school events for a specified period of time, based on their in- or out-of-school behavior.

Crisis Response and Postvention

At NCS, we take seriously the physical and emotional well-being of all scholars and are committed to using verbal de-escalation techniques wherever possible. That said, in cases where students exhibit physical behaviors that put themselves and others at risk, physical management may be required to maximize the safety and security of members of our school community. Members of our school's Culture Team as well as many school building leaders and teachers (10% of our total staff) are certified in Non-Violent Crisis Intervention through the Crisis Prevention Institute. Crisis Response Team members have undergone rigorous safety training emphasizing decision-making skills to match the level of the response to the risk of the crisis, focusing on the least-restrictive response to ensure the Care, Welfare, Safety, and SecuritySM of those in their care. This includes recognizing the stages of an escalating crisis and learning evidence-based techniques to appropriately de-escalate. All instances of crisis intervention involve a rigorous postvention process in which all members involved in the crisis situation meet to review incident lead up and safety protocols, culminating in documentation of the incident in our school's internal data server (Educators Handbook) and completion of a Crisis Postvention Report.

Families of students involved in crisis situations will be contacted as soon as possible following the crisis incident, and will be provided with a copy of the crisis postvention report on the same day. In instances where a child can successfully reintegrate into the classroom and safely remain at school following a crisis incident, they may do so with specialist support and following completion of a restorative conversation or other activity. In instances where the child continues to remain escalated and exhibit behaviors that threaten the safety and security of families following an initial crisis behavior, the school reserves the right to separate the child from the learning community temporarily and may ask the family/caregiver of the child to come retrieve them from the building same day. If a child is sent home in this manner it is NOT coded as a suspension in the majority of incidents.

Social Distance Mandate Crisis Response

Please note that physical management is always considered a last resort, and the vast majority of potentially harmful behaviors exhibited by NCS students are successfully managed entirely through verbal de-escalation.

We will assume this will also be the case in a scenario in which the school moves to a hybrid learning model with social distancing guidelines in place. That said, NCS has a mandate to comply with state social distancing mandates, which impacts our school's crisis response and postvention process. Specifically, if a student requires physical management by our Crisis Response Team when there is a social distancing mandate in effect, the responding members may elect to physically manage the behavior regardless, favoring maneuvers in which the responding adults face away from the child (e.g., Standing/Seated High or Child's High hold) where possible. In this instance, filtered masks (i.e., N95 or similar) are required to be worn by Crisis Team members at all times. Of note, as face coverings could potentially obstruct the airflow of students in crisis situations, masks may be removed off of students presenting in behavioral distress. For any students exhibiting one or more crisis incidents while physically in the building, the school reserves the right to transition the child to a fully remote schooling option for a time period to be determined by the school principal in combination with the Director of Special Education. In this case, the student can be expected to receive comparable educational opportunities to their peers, but reducing risk to staff health. Such determinations are not coded as suspensions as the student will still be expected to participate in the school's academic program to the extent of their classmates.

Mental Health Crisis

Neighborhood Charter Schools works with a range of mental health professionals in order to ensure the wellbeing of scholars in our care, including two NCS-staffed mental health counselors. Students can access mental health (i.e., counseling) services as mandated by their Individual Education Plan (IEP), or may be approved to receive at-risk counseling services or other behavior support services by the Director of Special Education based on the nature and severity of presenting concerns. Instances where NCS students present in mental health crisis - including instances of observed or reported suicide ideation - are treated with the utmost care and urgency. Our mental health counselors are trained and competent in the recognition of and provision of suicide care. Mental health crisis referrals can be made at any time by the student directly, NCS staff members, family members, or student members of the school community. Referrals can be made by contacting NCS mental health counselors directly, or by notifying the Director of Special Education, Principals, or school Behavior Specialist. Once receiving a referral, counselors will conduct a basic triage or screening to know whether or not a full assessment is needed using The Columbia-Suicide Severity Rating Scale (C-SSRS) or similar structured assessment. This screening may include directly speaking to the child and/or family members of the student. Families will be notified in all instances of a student's referral for a mental health crisis. The mental health counselor will make a determination of the student's overall risk and may refer for further assessment as needed. Referrals may be made to New York City's 24-hour mental health referral network (NYC Well), to outside mental health service agencies, or for psychiatric hospital care. In cases where the child's health or wellbeing appears to be in imminent danger or if the school and family are misaligned on the level of risk being exhibited by a child, the school reserves the right to request welfare checks to be conducted by either ACS or community law enforcement to ensure the wellbeing of the child.

Remote (Including Online/Social Media) Mental Health Crisis

NCS cares deeply about the wellbeing of students even when they are not physically in the building. If a child's well being is in question during an extended period of remote learning, or if the presenting incident occurred in a digital context (e.g., via posting on social media), our school's Mental Health referral policy and process

remains in effect. In this case, screening by our mental health counselor(s) will take place remotely via phone or secure video line in order to determine if a full assessment is warranted.

Drug and Alcohol Policy

NCS is committed to providing a safe, healthy environment for its community. Student involvement with alcohol, tobacco, or other illegal substances poses serious safety and health risks to the student involved, as well as others in the school community, and adversely affects educational and extracurricular programs. NCS also has the obligation to abide by society's laws and requires its students to do the same.

Students are expected to comply with school rules at all times. Infractions of school rules include, but are not limited to:

1. Use of alcohol, tobacco or any other illegal drugs
 2. Use of any prescription drug without proper medical prescription
 3. Possession of alcohol, any illegal drug, or any legal drug without proper medical prescription
 4. Possession of alcohol/drug paraphernalia
 5. Selling alcohol, any illegal drug, or any prescription drug
 6. Misuse of any over-the-counter medication
- Students found in violation of the rules prohibiting involvement with alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs may be suspended or dismissed from the school.
 - Suspension from all school activities for 3 to 5 days. The student is responsible for all academic work. If a student has a second violation within 24 months of the initial violation, the student will be dismissed from the school.
 - Completion of a Substance Abuse Assessment. The results of the assessment must be shared with the school. The student and family must agree to follow the recommendations of the assessment.
 - Distribution or attempt to distribute illegal drugs or any paraphernalia will automatically render the student liable for expulsion.
 - have a professional evaluation related to substance abuse issues and dependency by an agency or a person acceptable to the school

Firearm Violations

Federal and New York law require the expulsion from school for a period of not less than one year of a student who is determined to have brought a firearm to the school, or to have possessed a firearm at school, except that the Principal may modify such expulsion requirement for a student on a case-by-case basis, if such modification is in writing, in accordance with the Federal Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994 (as amended).

"Weapon," as used in this law means a "firearm," as defined by 18 USC § 921, and includes firearms and explosives. (New York Education Law §3214 effectuates this federal law.) The following are included within this definition: (a) Any device, instrument, material, or substance that is used for or is readily capable of causing death or serious bodily injury. Knives with a blade of two and half inches or more in length fall within this definition; (b) Any weapon (including a starter gun) which will or is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive; (c) the frame or receiver of any weapon described above; (d) Any firearm muffler or firearm silencer; (e) Any destructive device, which is defined as any explosive, incendiary, or poison gas, such as a bomb, grenade, rocket having a propellant charge of more than four ounces, a missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than one-quarter ounce, a mine, or other similar device.

The Principal shall refer a student under the age of sixteen who has been determined to have brought a weapon or firearm to school to a presentment agency for a juvenile delinquency proceeding consistent with Article 3 of the Family Court Act except a student fourteen or fifteen years of age who qualifies for juvenile offender status under Criminal Procedure Law § 1.20(42). The Principal shall refer any pupil sixteen years of age or older or a student fourteen or fifteen years of age who qualifies for juvenile offender status under Criminal Procedure Law § 1.20(42), who has been determined to have brought a weapon or firearm to school to the appropriate law enforcement officials.

Provision of Instruction During Removal

HLA will ensure that alternative educational services are provided to a child who has been suspended or removed to help that child progress in the school's general curriculum. For a student who has been suspended, alternative instruction will be provided to the extent required by applicable law. For a student who has been expelled, alternative instruction will be provided in like manner as a suspended student until the student enrolls in another school for a reasonable period thereafter or until the end of the school year.

Alternative instruction will be provided to students suspended or expelled in a way that best suits the needs of the student. Instruction for such students shall be sufficient to enable the student to make adequate academic progress, and shall provide them the opportunity to complete the assignments, learn the curriculum and participate in assessments. Instruction will take place in one of the following locations: the child's home, a contracted facility (e.g., in the school district of location), or a suspension room or other room at the school. During any removal for drug or weapon offenses, additional services shall include strategies designed to prevent such behavior from recurring. Instruction will be provided by one or more of the following individuals who shall be certified or qualified in accordance with § 2854(3)(a-1) of the Education Law and the federal No Child Left Behind.

Freedom of Expression

Students are entitled to express their personal opinions verbally, in writing, or by symbolic speech. The expression of such opinions, however, shall not interfere with the freedom of others to express themselves, and written expression of opinion must be signed by the author. Any form of expression that involves libel, slander, the use of obscenity, or personal attacks, or that otherwise disrupts the educational process, is prohibited. All forms of expression also must be in compliance with the student disciplinary policy and the school dress code, violations of which are punishable as stated in the disciplinary policy.

Student participation in the publication of school-sponsored student newsletters, yearbooks, literary magazines and similar publications is encouraged as a learning and educational experience. These publications, if any, shall be supervised by qualified faculty advisors and shall strive to meet high standards of journalism. In order to maintain consistency with the school's basic educational mission, the content of such publications is controlled by school authorities.

No person shall distribute any printed or written materials on school property without the prior permission of the Principal. The Principal may regulate the content of materials to be distributed on school property to the extent necessary to avoid material and substantial interference with the requirements of appropriate discipline in the

operation of the school. The Principal may also regulate the time, place, manner and duration of such distribution.

Off-Campus Events

Students at school-sponsored off-campus events shall be governed by all the guidelines of the school and are subject to the authority of school officials. Failure to obey the lawful instructions of school officials shall result in a loss of eligibility to attend school-sponsored off-campus events and may result in additional disciplinary measures in accordance with the student disciplinary policy.

Student Records

The School will maintain written records of all suspensions and expulsions including the name of the student, a description of the behavior engaged in, the disciplinary action taken, and a record of the number of days a student has been suspended or removed for disciplinary reasons. HLA will comply with NYSED's VADIR data collection requirements and disciplinary data and submit that information to NYSED by required deadlines. Charter schools are subject to the federal Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) that requires a school to protect a student's privacy. HLA will not disclose any information from the student's permanent records except as authorized pursuant to FERPA, or in response to a subpoena, as required by law. The parent(s) or guardian(s) of a student under 18 years of age, or a student 18 year of age or older, is entitled to access to the student's school records by submitting a written request to the Principal. Further information concerning the disclosure of student information and limitations on such disclosure may be found in FERPA and the school's FERPA policy.

Discipline of Students with Special Needs

In addition to the discipline procedures applicable to all students, the School shall implement the following disciplinary policy procedures with respect to students with disabilities. A student not specifically identified as having a disability but whose school district of residence or charter school, prior to the behavior which is the subject of the disciplinary action, has a basis of knowledge—in accordance with 34 CFR 300.527(b)—that a disability exists may request to be disciplined in accordance with these provisions. HLA shall comply with sections 300.519- 300.529 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) and the following procedures, except that in the event that the following procedures are inconsistent with federal law and regulations, such federal law and regulations shall govern.

If a student violates the School's discipline code and is being considered for a suspension or removal, the School must ensure the following due process protections are provided to the student and to the student's parent(s) in addition to those set forth in the regular education discipline code. For suspensions of five school days or less, the student's parent(s) or guardian must be provided with a written notice, and a follow up telephone call if possible, within 24 hours of the incident leading up to the suspension which describes the basis for the suspension and explains that the parent or guardian has the right to request an informal conference with the Principal and appropriate staff to discuss the incident and question any complaining witness against the student. For suspensions in excess of five consecutive school days, the student's parent(s) or guardian must be provided with a written notice which indicates that the district proposes to suspend the student from school in excess of five consecutive school days, describes the basis for the

proposed suspension, explains that the student has an opportunity for a fair hearing conducted by the Principal or his or her designee at which the student will have a right to question any witnesses accusing him/her of committing the misconduct charge and to present witnesses on his/her behalf. Where possible, notification must also be provided by telephone. In addition, the School must provide alternative education to the student during the suspension as set forth below, including any special services required by the Individualized Education Program (IEP) prepared by the Committee on Special Education (CSE) where the school is located. Final determination on a suspension or removal of a student, following due process, shall be made by the Principal.

The School shall maintain written records of all suspensions and expulsions of students with a disability including the name of the student, a description of the behavior engaged in, the disciplinary action taken, and a record of the number of days a student has been suspended or removed for disciplinary reasons.

Students for whom the IEP includes a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) will be disciplined in accordance with the BIP. If the BIP appears not to be effective or if there is a concern for the health and safety of the student or others if the BIP is followed with respect to the infraction, the matter will be immediately referred to the CSE where the school is located for consideration of a change in the guidelines.

If a student identified as having a disability is suspended during the course of the school year for a total of eight days, such student will immediately be referred to the CSE where the school is located for reconsideration of the student's educational placement. Such a student shall not be suspended for a total of more than ten days during the school year without the specific involvement of the CSE where the school is located prior to the eleventh day of suspension, because such suspensions may be considered to be a change in placement. In considering the placement of students referred because of disciplinary problems, the CSE where the school is located is expected to follow its ordinary policies with respect to parental notification and involvement.

The School shall work with the district to ensure that the CSE where the school is located meets within 7 days of notification of any of the following: (1) The commission of an infraction by a student with a disability who has previously been suspended for the maximum allowable number of days; (2) The commission of any infraction resulting from the student's disability; (3) The commission of any infraction by a disabled student, regardless of whether the student has previously been suspended during the school year if, had such infraction been committed by a non-disabled student, the Principal would seek to impose a suspension in excess of 5 days.

Also, the School will ensure that when the suspension or removal of a student with a disability will constitute a disciplinary change of placement, the CSE will be immediately notified so that the CSE can meet its required obligations to:

1. Convene a CSE meeting within 10 school days to make a manifestation determination
2. Convene a CSE meeting within 10 business days to develop a plan to conduct a functional behavioral assessment or review an existing functional behavioral assessment or behavioral intervention plan.
3. Provide the student's parent with a copy of their procedural due process rights
4. Work closely with the CSE where the school is located in determining education services or the interim alternative educational setting consistent with the FAPE requirements.

Provision of Services During Removal

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

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

During any removal for weapon, drug or infliction of serious bodily injury-related offenses pursuant to 34 CFR §300.530(g)(1), (2) and (3), respectively, services will be provided to the extent necessary to enable the child to appropriately progress in the general curriculum and in achieving the goals of his or her IEP. These service determinations will be made by the CSE where the school is located. The school will place students in interim alternative educational settings as appropriate and mandated by the IDEA.

During any subsequent removal that does constitute a change in placement, but where the behavior is not a manifestation of the disability, the services must be provided to the extent necessary to enable the student to appropriately progress in the general curriculum and in achieving the goals of his or her IEP. The CSE where the school is located will make the service determination.

CSE Meetings

Meetings of the CSE where the school is located to either develop a behavioral assessment plan or, if the child has one, to review such plan are required when: (1) the child is first removed from his or her current placement for more than ten school days in a school year; and (2) when commencing a removal which constitutes a change in placement. The student's special education teacher (or coordinator) and the general classroom teacher will attend all meetings regarding the student initiated by the CSE where the school is located.

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

Due Process

If discipline which would constitute a change in placement is contemplated for any student, the following steps shall be taken: (1) not later than the date on which the decision to take such action is made, the parents of the student with a disability shall be notified of that decision and provided the procedural safeguards notice

described in 34 CFR §300.504; and (2) immediately, if possible, but in no case later than ten school days after the date on which such decision is made, the CSE where the school is located and other qualified personnel shall meet and review the relationship between the child's disability and the behavior subject to the disciplinary action.

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

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

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

Appeals Process for Disciplinary Consequence

The following protocol has been established should a parent/guardian wish to appeal a disciplinary consequence:

- Level 1: Appeal the decision with the staff member that assigned the disciplinary action
- Level 2: Appeal the decision with the Principal
- Level 3: Appeal the decision with the Chief of Schools
- Level 4: Appeal the decision with the Executive Director
- Level 5: Appeal the decision with the Board of Trustees in accordance with Complaints Policy below.
- Level 6: Appeal the decision to the School's Authorizer, the New York State Education Department in accordance with the Complaints Policy below.

Additionally, before a child is returned to class, a family member will be required to attend a post-suspension conference with the Principal or his designee.

Student Searches

The School authorizes the Principal, Assistant Principals, Director of Operations, and Dean, or their designee 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 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 practical, 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.

Bullying

NSC promotes a nurturing school culture that has respect for diversity among students and between students and staff. We provide all students with a supportive and safe environment in which to grow and thrive academically and socially. The ability of students to learn and meet our high academic standards and our ability to educate our students are compromised when students engage in discrimination or harassment, bullying, or intimidating behavior toward other students.

Bullying and harassment can take many forms and includes behavior that targets students because of their actual or perceived race, color, national origin, ethnicity, citizenship/immigration status, religion, creed, disability, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, or weight.

School employees who witness harassment/bullying or discrimination, or receive oral or written reports of such acts, must promptly orally notify the Principal no later than one school day after the employee witness or receives such acts. The Principal or their designee will lead or supervise a thorough investigation of all reports of harassment/bullying and discrimination, and ensure the investigation is completed in a timely manner.

When an investigation verifies a material incident of harassment/bullying or discrimination, the Principal or designee will take prompt action, reasonably calculated to end the harassment/bullying or discrimination, eliminate any of the 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 or designee will promptly notify 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.

Health and Security

There are a number of basic requirements that the School has in order to ensure the safety and security of its students and staff. Cooperation on everyone's part will go a long way in guaranteeing that the business of the School—teaching and learning—can take place.

Medical Records and Health Services

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.

If a student requires medication of any kind (including Tylenol, or asthma inhalers), the student's parent/guardian must submit an Authorization to Dispense Medication form and must give the medication in the original container to the nurse or Main Office.

The parent/guardian of any student who is required to carry an asthma inhaler must provide an Authorization to Dispense Medication form specifying that the student needs to carry the inhaler with him/her and a second inhaler that is kept in the nurse's office.

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 14th day of school. Parent(s) or guardian(s) must present documentation showing 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 requirements should submit their request in writing to the school nurse or Main Office.

School Safety Agent

Neighborhood Charter School: Harlem

There will be a school safety agent stationed on the first floor of the building. They will serve as the first point of contact for scholars, families and visitors. Furthermore, for the protection of our students and staff, we have installed a comprehensive security system that includes a video door entry system.

General School Information

School Website

Families should regularly check the school's website at www.NCSchools.org for recent news, updates, and upcoming events. We encourage you to regularly view the school calendar on the website for an up to date list of events and school closings.

In addition, we urge families to regularly check with their children (and in their book bags) to see if any notices have recently been distributed to bring home (including school newsletters). At the start of the school year, every student is given a specific folder to use to bring home letters and updates from the school.

Nondiscrimination Policy

Neighborhood Charter Schools does not discriminate in admission to, access to, treatment in, or employment in its services, programs and activities, on the basis of race, color, or national origin, in accordance with the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI); on the basis of sex, in accordance with the Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; on the basis of disability, in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA); or on the basis of age, in accordance with the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1974 (ADEA). In addition, no person shall be discriminated against in admission to NCS on the basis of race, sex, color, creed, sex, ethnicity, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, age, ancestry, athletic performance, special need, proficiency in the English language or a foreign language, or prior academic achievement.

The Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA) is a Federal law designed to protect the privacy of a students' education records. FERPA gives parents rights with respect to their children's education records.

Those rights include:

- Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review all of the student's education records maintained by the School. For records including information on more than one student, parents will be limited only to information pertaining to his/her child. Schools are not required to provide copies of materials in education records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible students to inspect the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies.
- Student records or other identifiable information are maintained in a secure location to ensure confidentiality. Records that are no longer required or need to be disposed will be done so in a manner that ensures confidentiality and security.
- Parents and eligible students have the right to request that a school correct records believed to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record commenting on the contested information in the record.
- Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student before releasing any information from a student's record. However, the law allows schools to disclose records, without consent, to the following parties:

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

Schools may also disclose, without consent, "directory" type information such as a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However, schools must tell parents and eligible students about directory information and allow parents and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them. Schools must notify parents and eligible students annually of their rights under FERPA. The actual means of notification (special letter, inclusion in a PTA bulletin, student handbook, or newspaper article) is left to the discretion of each school.

Complaints Policy

Complaints should be addressed initially to the Principal. If the complaint involves the Principal or if the Principal does not provide a satisfactory response, a complaint may be escalated to the Executive Director. If the Executive Director does not provide a satisfactory response, a complaint may be addressed by the Board of Trustees.

Any such complaint must be in writing, addressed to the Chair of the Board of Trustees. On receipt of any complaint, the Chair will take such action as he or she thinks fit to resolve the complaint, including appointing a committee of the Board to investigate the complaint. The Chair will promptly communicate his or her findings and the results of any investigation to the person making the complaint.

If the person making the complaint is not satisfied with the resolution of the complaint, he or she may address a complaint to the School's Authorizer, the New York State Education Department. The complaint should be addressed to the Charter School Office.

School/Family Contract - Remote Learning

COMMITMENT TO OUR STUDENTS AND FAMILIES

Welcome to Neighborhood Charter Schools! We are committed to providing our students with a safe, orderly and nurturing environment in which they enjoy studying, learning and making friends and where they will grow into responsible and caring young people who are prepared to succeed in college and beyond. We view families as critical partners in our students' educational success and ask that you support our efforts by agreeing to the following.

ATTENDANCE

- I will ensure that my child comes to school every day at the designated start time.
- I understand that attendance will impact academics and promotion decisions.
- I understand that my child must attend all classes to be marked Present.
- I will make sure that my child promptly makes up missed work following absences.
- I understand that an absence is excused only if I have contacted the school and written a detailed note regarding student illnesses, family emergency, or religious observance.

HOMEWORK

- I understand that my child will have homework every night and I will ensure that it is complete.

CODE OF CONDUCT

- I agree to promote and support the rules of behavior as outlined in the Family Handbook, and accept responsibility as a partner in my child's learning.
- I agree to partner with my student's school when an infraction occurs and work with the school to improve behavior
- I acknowledge that consequences for other students can not be shared due to FERPA
- I acknowledge that if serious infraction occur, my child may be suspended from school

PROMOTION POLICIES

- I understand that the school makes promotional decisions based on a variety of data points throughout the year.
- I understand that it is mandatory to attend all family conferences to discuss the academic progress of my child.

SCHOOL DRESS CODE

- I will ensure that my child is dressed appropriately for virtual class as described in this handbook.

FAMILY SUPPORT

- I agree to support my child's academic work by communicating regularly with my child's teacher.
- I agree to attend family meetings and other school-sponsored events on a regular basis.
- I agree to respond to phone calls from school staff members promptly.

DISTANCE LEARNING – ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND CONSENT FORM

I understand and acknowledge:

- ✓ My child has the right to confidentiality as it pertains to distance learning.
- ✓ I understand, by law, there are exceptions to confidentiality, including mandated reporting of child, elder, and dependent adult abuse as well as safety concerns related to danger to self and danger to others. I understand my provider may have to break confidentiality under these circumstances.
- ✓ My teacher and/or service provider will conduct educationally-related instruction by way of distance learning in a confidential setting.
- ✓ My child will remain in a confidential setting during receipt of distance learning to the extent possible, and within the District's control.
- ✓ I further understand it is illegal to record any instruction or educational session without the prior written consent of the principal and teacher/service provider.
- ✓ I understand that it is my responsibility to communicate in a timely manner in the rare occasion that my child is unable to make it to class
- ✓ I have the right to discuss any of this information with the teacher/service provider and/or principal and to ask questions I may have.
- ✓ I acknowledge and reaffirm my agreement to monitor, regulate bullying, and set expectations for good behavior while using this platform.

I have read and understand the information provided in this correspondence. My signature below indicates I have read this consent form, understand, and agree to the District's distance learning guidelines, use of technology, including online, virtual and communications platforms to provide high quality educational opportunities to my child.

Parent Signature _____

Date _____

scholars Name(s) and Date(s) of Birth:

Please return as soon as possible by:

- 1) Submitting the Google Form
- 2) Scanning and emailing to your teacher using their school email address