



Neighborhood

CHARTER SCHOOLS

Elementary and Middle School Handbook

2023-2024

P: 646-701-7117 | F: 914-462-3435 | www.NCSchools.org

Table of Contents

Mission	4
Academic Program	5
Elementary School Schedules and Programming	6
Sample Schedule	6
Class Attendance	6
Homework	7
Progress Reports, Report Cards, & Parent Conferences	8
Report Card Grades	8
Middle School Schedules and Programming	10
Sample Middle School Schedule	10
Middle School Grading Policies and Rubrics	10
Middle School Programs	17
Promotion Criteria	18
Promotion In Doubt	18
NCS Commitment to Parent Engagement	18
Communications: Scholar and Staff Boundaries	18
Strong Boundaries	19
Communication to Families	19
Contacting Your Scholar’s Teacher	19
Parent/Guardian Responsibility	20
Neighborhood Charter Schools Communication Guide	20
Educate (Student Information System)	23
Attendance/ Grades	24
Parent Association	24
Technology Contract	24
Classroom Behavior and Expectations	25
Bathroom Procedures	26
Cell Phones	26
Student Dress Code	26
Elementary School Routines and Procedures	28
Essential School/Student Procedures	28
Arrival	28
Snack	28
Lunch and Recess	28
Dismissal	28
After-School Program	28

Community Activities	29
Visitors to the School	29
Field Trips/End-Of-Year Events	29
Emergencies	30
School Closings	30
Fire Safety and Evacuation Procedures	30
Intruder Drills	30
Transportation	31
Criteria for Busing Eligibility	31
Conduct Aboard Busing	32
Busing FAQs	32
Criteria for MetroCard Eligibility	32
Metro Cards FAQs	33
Student Behavior and Culture at NCS	33
Culture at NCS	33
Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports	34
Positive Behavior Expectations (Student Code of Conduct)	34
Behavioral Policies & Consequences	36
NCS Behavior Matrix	36
Behavior Matrix Level of Behavior (Intensity Levels)	37
Referral of Students to School Administrators	39
Documenting Behavior Incidents	39
Behavior Incidents and Manifestation of Disability	40
Behavioral Response-to-Intervention	40
Restorative Circle/Logical Consequences	40
In-School Suspension	40
Out of School Suspension	41
Limiting Privileges	41
Crisis Response and Postvention	41
Mental Health Crisis	42
Expulsion	42
Procedures and Due Process for Short Term Suspension	43
Procedures and Due Process for Long Term Suspension	43
Firearm Violations	44
Provision of Instruction During Removal	44
Freedom of Expression	45
Off-Campus Events	45
Student Records	46

Discipline of Students with Special Needs	46
Provision of Services During Removal	48
CSE Meetings	48
Due Process	49
Appeals Process for Disciplinary Consequence	49
Student Searches	50
Bullying	50
Health and Security	51
Medical Records and Health Services	51
COVID-19	52
School Safety	52
General School Information	52
School Website	52
Nondiscrimination Policy	53
The Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA)	53
Complaints Policy	54

Mission

Our mission at Neighborhood Charter Schools (NCS) is to collaborate as professionals to create a safe, inclusive, and nurturing learning environment for all our students. We will provide a student-centered education through a rigorous and complete K-8 program that cultivates the intellectual, social, and emotional development of each scholar in our care. We know that families are partners in their child’s education, and we will maintain strong relationships through consistent communication and engagement.

Through exploration, problem-solving, and joyful school experiences, we will teach the whole child and create lifelong learners. Our students, who include children with Autism Spectrum Disorders and other special needs, will become independent learners and critical thinkers. They will acquire the academic skills they need to succeed in high school, college, and beyond. They will exhibit strong social/emotional skills, including respect and empathy for others, which will allow them to reach their full potential.

With high expectations and a belief in all students, NCS staff members commit themselves daily to preparing the leaders of tomorrow.

Academic Program

Neighborhood Charter School is designed to meet a wide range of students and provide them with a well-rounded, rigorous, and holistic education. Our key design elements include:

- A rigorous academic program
- A specialized program for students with ASD
- A strong co-teaching model
- Daily science instruction
- A longer school day and year
- A focus on student culture resulting in high levels of student focus
- Data-driven instruction
- Strong professional development
- An emphasis on family partnership

We have a rigorous academic program for all content areas that combines direct instruction with a focus on developing independence and critical thinking. Lessons generally include a mini-lesson or launch where students grapple with new material and then move to independent work time. Students work to apply the new knowledge on their own with teacher feedback and support. Instruction is regularly observed by the school leaders and our curriculum team to ensure our program is implemented with fidelity.

All academic classes have a co-teaching model to allow the school to respond to various student needs. The two teachers are trained to work together and execute their lessons using the appropriate co-teaching model that best supports students. The school puts a strong emphasis on co-teaching, and our special education team regularly observes and assesses co-teaching practices to help inform the next steps.

We have an intense focus on reading and math. There are multiple blocks and opportunities for students to learn how to read. For example, students attend guided reading, phonics, and reading workshop, which includes a read-aloud and a writing workshop three times a week. Reading is focused on students reading for meaning, ensuring comprehension levels are strong and providing kids a robust phonics program. For math, students attend a math workshop and a separate, rigorous word problem block called Cognitive Guided Instruction (CGI). Both math blocks are specifically designed for kids to learn math conceptually, allowing students to think critically and develop a deep understanding of numbers and number sense.

Students attend science daily in all grades. These classes are designed to build kids' content knowledge in science and ensure kids are developing critical thinking skills. Our classes are designed to be hands-on

and experiential, allowing students to independently hypothesize about our world and come to their conclusions.

Our schools also put a particular emphasis on a joyous culture that allows for high levels of student focus and investment. Our schools do this in several ways. First, students and teachers are clear on expectations of how the community will learn together. The schools also place a heavy emphasis on students being invested in their learning and school in general.

Data-driven instruction is core to our schools’ success. The schools regularly assess students formally and informally. For lower-grade reading, we rely on the Fountas and Pinnell assessment to track how students are phonetically reading words and assess comprehension levels. These assessments happen formally and/or informally every six weeks. For math, we rely on counting assessments. This assessment helps us understand and assess our students’ number sense. We also integrate quizzes and unit assessments as necessary to help inform a holistic picture of student progress.

One of our points of pride at Neighborhood Charter School is our specialized program and supports for our scholars with ASD. We create environments that support our scholars with ASD in the following ways:

- Students with ASD are placed in classrooms with smaller class sizes and cap of 3-5 other students with ASD in the classroom.
- Students with ASD attend “Social Club” with a Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP) to help them build necessary social skills for school and life.
- We create development opportunities for all adults in the school to learn best practices to teach students with ASD.

Elementary School Schedules and Programming

Sample Schedule

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
7:45-8:05	Breakfast & Arrival				
8:05-8:20	Morning Meeting				
8:20-9:20	Centers				
9:20-10:10	MWS	MWS	MWS	MWS	MWS
10:10-11:00	Science	Science	Science	Science	Science
11:00-11:50	Lunch				
11:50-12:40	ELA	ELA	ELA	ELA	ELA
12:40-1:30	SS	SS	WWS	WWS	WWS
1:30-2:20	CGI	CGI	CGI	CGI	CGI
2:20-3:10	Specials Rotation	Dance	Art	PE	Intervention
3:10-3:30	Pack-Up & Closing Circle				
3:35-3:45	Dismissal (Doors Open 3:45PM)				

Class Attendance

Attending school 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 each and every lesson.

If a scholar has missed an unusually high number of classes over a short period of time, the school reserves the right to call a meeting between the family, an administrator, and the child’s teachers to create a support plan. This plan will stipulate the scholar’s academic responsibilities 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 student will be in jeopardy of being promoted to the next grade. Additional resources from outside organizations may also be utilized to support the scholar and family.

Scholars who miss ten or more days of school may be considered Promotion in Doubt. Students who miss several days or classes in a short window can also expect follow up from administration to create a support plan for the student. The school will reach out to families to communicate this status regularly.

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

Homework

For the first several weeks, scholars will receive homework/independent work that reinforces the structures and skills they are learning. Additional layers may be added once our students are reacclimated to the school year.

For ELA, scholars are to read daily and complete a reading log. Scholars may also receive math homework nightly. Also, scholars may be assigned work at home using the iReady program.

Assessments, Exams, and Quizzes

We aim to assess students on their progress regularly. We believe the purpose of assessments is to understand what students know and then for teachers to use that information to best instruct students and ensure that they progress.

Subject Area	Means of Assessment
ELA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Phonics Assessments ● Fountas and Pinnell Reading Assessment (4x per year) (K-4) ● Literably (5-8) ● Unit Assessments (K-8) ● Writing (K-8) ● iReady (K-8)
Math	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Counting Jar (K-1) ● Money Jar (2) ● Unit Assessments (K-5)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Interim Assessments (K-5) ● iReady (K-8)
Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Interim Assessments (Grades 5 & 8) ● Quizzes (K-8) ● Unit Assessments (K-8)
Social Studies/History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Interim Assessments (Grades 7 & 8) ● Quizzes (5-8) ● Unit Assessments (5-8)

Please note that teachers are collecting data daily through class assignments, work completion, and student discussion. We use a range of data points to assess how to best support and teach our students.

Progress Reports, Report Cards, & Parent Conferences

We believe in transparency and keeping our families very much involved in the educational process. Therefore, progress reports for middle school, report cards, and family conferences will take place several times during the year. When a parent conference is scheduled, attendance is required. Our partnership is essential for the success of every child. 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 in advance. If concerns arise at other times throughout the year, a teacher or school leader may call the parents or send an additional written report. Conferences will be conducted either in person or virtually.

Report Card Grades

Students will receive a marking of 1, 2, 3, or 4 per core content class, including specials.

The Grading scale is as follows:

- 4** - Exceeding grade level standards
- 3** - Meeting grade level standards
- 2** - Approaching grade level standards
- 1** - Not meeting grade level standards

Please see below for the grading scales for each subject:

Elementary Grading Guidelines K-5

Your child's report card will reflect their performance in all subjects using a scale of 4, 3, 2, or 1. Here is our grading system:

- A grade of 4 indicates that your child is exceeding grade-level standards in the subject.

- A grade of 3 signifies that your child is meeting grade-level standards, which is the expected level of achievement.
- A grade of 2 suggests that your child is approaching grade-level standards, showing progress but not quite at the expected level yet.
- A grade of 1 indicates that your child is not meeting grade-level standards in the subject.

These grades are determined based on various assessments and student work from all math content areas, including CGI and Math Workshop, and from all literacy components, such as centers/reading rooms, writing, and shared text, for literacy. Science and 5th Grade Social Studies grades include assessments and classwork. This comprehensive assessment approach helps us gauge your child's performance accurately.

Reading Benchmarks (determining GL fluency, accuracy, and comprehension):

	Beginning of Year (Aug-Sept)	1st Interval of Year (Nov.-Jan.)	2nd Interval of Year (Feb-Apr)	End of Year (May-June)
Grade K		1=AA 2=A 3=B 4=C	1=A 2=B 3=C 4=D	1=B 2=C 3=D 4=E
Grade 1	1=B 2=C 3=D 4=E	1=D 2=E 3=F 4=G	1=F 2=G 3=H 4=I	1=H 2=I 3=J 4=K
Grade 2	1=H 2=I 3=J 4=K	1=I 2=J 3=K 4=L	1=J 2=K 3=L 4=M	1=K 2=L 3=M 4=N
Grade 3	1=K 2=L 3=M 4=N	1=L 2=M 3=N 4=O	1=M 2=N 3=O 4=P	1=N 2=O 3=P 4=Q
Grade 4	1=N 2=O 3=P 4=Q	1=O 2=P 3=Q 4=R	1=P 2=Q 3=R 4=S	1=Q 2=R 3=S 4=T
Grade 5	1=Q 2=R 3=S 4=T	1=R 2=S 3=T 4=U	1=S 2=T 3=U 4=V	1=T 2=U 3=V 4=W

For **Specials**, we will determine if a scholar receives a 1, 2, 3, or 4 by looking at the student's progress in the following areas:

- Harlem ES:
 - PE
 - Art
 - Dance

- Bronx ES:
 - PE
 - Art
 - Music

Middle School Schedules and Programming

Our middle school is grades 6th through 8th. Students at NCS middle school are given a specific schedule and programming designed to meet the needs of this age group.

Sample Middle School Schedule

TIME	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
7:45 AM - 8:00 AM	Arrival + Breakfast				
8:00 AM - 8:15 AM	Homeroom + Community Room 506				
8:15 AM - 8:20 AM	Transition				
8:20 AM - 9:15 AM	Science Room 508	Science Room 508	Science Room 508	Science Room 508	Science Room 508
9:15 AM - 9:20 AM	Transition				
9:20 AM - 10:15 AM	Electives Room 506	ELA Room 507	Health Room 507	Science Room 508	Wellness Room 506
10:15 AM - 10:20 AM	Transition				
10:20 AM - 11:15 AM	Math Room 508	Math Room 508	Math Room 508	Math Room 508	Math Room 508
11:15 AM - 11:20 AM	Transition				
11:20 AM - 12:15 PM	ELA Room 507	ELA Room 507	ELA Room 507	ELA Room 507	ELA Room 507
12:15 PM - 12:20 PM	Transition				
12:20 PM - 12:40 PM	LIGHT Squad Room 507				
12:40 PM - 12:45 PM	Transition				
12:50 PM - 1:15 PM	LUNCH				
1:15 PM - 1:20 PM	Transition				
1:20 PM - 2:15 PM	Dance Room 510	PE Room 510	Spanish Room 615	Dance Room 510	Spanish Room 615
2:15 PM - 2:20 PM	Transition				
2:20 PM - 3:25 PM	History Room 609	History Room 609	History Room 609	History Room 609	History Room 609
3:25 PM - 3:30 PM	Dismissal				

Middle School Grading Policies and Rubrics

Purpose: A scholar's grade communicates academic performance: what the scholar knows and is able to do as measured against the learning standards of the course. Scholars will not receive anything lower than a 55% on their transcripts in High School, so it's important we continue this system. This information will be shared with families.

Letter Grade	Numerical Grade
A	100% - 90%
B	89% - 80%
C	79% - 70%
D	69% - 60%

F	55% - 59%
Pass (P)/ Fail (F)	LIGHT Squad
BRIDGE	
Pass (P)/ Fail (F) (75% or higher = Pass; 74% or lower = Fail)	BRIDGE
Comments for Report Cards & Progress Reports	
55% - 59% → F	Below Expectations
60% - 69% → F	Approaching Expectations
70% - 89% → P	Meeting Expectations
90% - 100% → P	Exceeding Expectations

Middle School Report Card/Progress Report	
Category	Weight
Participation <i>Active contribution to class (as per rubric)</i>	20%
Classwork <i>Do-Nows, Exit tickets, Graphic Organizers, Socratic Seminars</i>	40%
Homework	10%
Assignments/Assessments/Projects <i>Presentations, Debates, Extended Responses, Essays, Projects, Quizzes, Tests, Labs</i>	30%
Total	100%

LIGHT Squad	
LIGHT Squad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● PASS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Approaching, meeting, or exceeding grade-level standards and assignments ● FAIL <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Significantly below and/or not

	participating
--	---------------

Grading Policy: Late Assignments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Late work submitted one week after the assignment's due date = max 70% <p>At mid-quarter progress reports, any grade 70% or below will constitute Academic Alert and require the scholar to complete the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bi-weekly meeting with MS Director and content teacher(s) whose class they are failing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content teachers will provide all scholars on AA with a folder to house any missing assignments Complete any and all work during Study Hall <p>At the end of the Quarter, it is the teacher's discretion on late assignments to bump a kid from 69% to 70% to get off Academic Alert</p>

Grades will be updated weekly on Educate for parents to have real-time access to their scholar's information. (Educate is set to be up and parents can reach out to an Operations Associate for assistance with logging in and navigating the dashboard.)

Middle School		
Category	Weight	Grading Frequency
Participation <i>Active contribution to class (as per rubric)</i>	20%	2 x per quarter: Progress Reports End of Quarter
Classwork <i>Do-Nows, Exit tickets, Graphic Organizers, Socratic Seminars</i>	40%	ELA, Science, History, Math → 2 x per week Specials → Bi-Weekly
Homework	10%	ELA - 1 x per week Science - 1 x per week History - 1 x per week Math - 1 x per week

		Specials - 3x per quarter
Assignments/Projects/Assessments <i>Presentations, Debates, Extended Responses, Essays, Projects, Quizzes, Tests, Labs</i>	30%	ELA, Science, History, Math → 2 x per unit 1 x mid-unit 1 x summative Specials → 2 x per quarter
Total	100%	

Participation Rubric

	20	15	10	5
ENGAGEMENT & COMMUNICATION	<p>Consistently stays focused on in-class work and what needs to be done. Very self-directed.</p> <p>Routinely contributes to the classroom, group, or partner discussions. A definite leader who contributes a lot of effort.</p>	<p>Focuses on in-class work and what needs to be done most of the time.</p> <p>Usually contributes when participating in the classroom, group, or partner discussions. A strong student who always tries their best.</p>	<p>Focuses on the task and what needs to be done some of the time. Often must be reminded by the teacher about staying on task.</p> <p>Sometimes contributes ideas when participating in the classroom, group, or partner discussions. A satisfactory student who does what is required.</p>	<p>Rarely focuses on classwork and does not complete in-class assignments in a timely manner.</p> <p>Rarely contributes or participates in the classroom, group, or partner discussions. May refuse to participate.</p>

	20	15	10	5
--	-----------	-----------	-----------	----------

<p style="text-align: center;">Peer Listening & Feedback</p>	<p>Consistently, actively, listens and responds to peers. Takes a leading role. Comments often advance the level and depth of classroom dialogue</p>	<p>Makes an effort to interact with peers daily but does not take a leading role. Some active participation in-class discussions. Relevant comments are based on assigned material</p>	<p>Student rarely contributes to class by offering ideas and asking questions. Comments are sometimes constructive, with occasional signs of insight.</p>	<p>Student rarely contributes to class by offering ideas and asking questions. Class contributions lack relevance or almost never comments.</p>
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Using academic language
 Did the student contribute new ideas?
 What was the quality of evidence of critical thinking in the student's contributions?
 How well did the student listen to the contributions of others?
 Use of question stem when participating

	20	15	10	5
--	-----------	-----------	-----------	----------

Contribution	Student's contribution consistently contributes to a positive learning environment for all through self-management (e.g., adhering to classroom community standards).	Student's contribution usually contributes to a positive learning environment for all through self-management (e.g., adhering to community standards). The student shows a willingness to adjust behavior and atone for harm done as needed after disrupting the learning environment.	Student's contribution often disrupts the learning environment. Student shows ability and/or willingness to acknowledge or adjust behavior and take actionable steps to rectify the harm done as needed after disrupting the learning environment.*	Student's contribution often disrupts the learning environment AND there is sufficient evidence that the child appreciates the impact of their behavior on the classroom community, yet a demonstrated unwillingness to take ownership for harm done or change the behavior moving forward.*
---------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

In addition to the above, consideration of a students' level of awareness and insight into their own behavior should be taken into consideration, especially in cases where the presenting "mis"-behavior may be related to a manifestation of a child's disability. Behavior support should always be documented for students receiving a 10 or 15 in the "Contribution" portion of this rubric.

	20	15	10	5
Quality of Work	<p>ELA All class assignments have been completed in the allotted time and in scholar's own words</p> <p>Ideas are detailed and explanations clearly support the claim</p> <p>Few, if any, grammatical or spelling errors</p>	<p>ELA Most class assignments have been completed and in scholar's own words</p> <p>Most ideas are detailed but explanations could be clearer</p> <p>Some grammatical or spelling errors</p>	<p>ELA Some class assignments have been completed and/or in scholar's own words</p> <p>Ideas and details are unclear or unsupportive of the claim</p> <p>Many grammatical or spelling errors</p>	<p>ELA: Few parts of the assignment have been completed nor are in scholar's own words</p> <p>The response lacks ideas and details</p> <p>Grammatical and spelling errors have made the response incomprehensible</p>

	<p>MATH All class assignments have been completed in the allotted time</p> <p>Scholar shows work for every question.</p> <p>Scholars put ~100% of their effort into every problem.</p>	<p>MATH Most class assignments have been completed in the allotted time</p> <p>Scholar shows work for most questions.</p> <p>Scholars put ~75% of their effort into every problem.</p>	<p>MATH Some class assignments have been completed and or in students own words</p> <p>Scholar shows work for some classwork problems.</p>	<p>MATH: Few parts of the assignment have been completed or are in students own words</p> <p>The scholar does not show work for any of the classwork questions.</p> <p>Scholars do not put any effort into their work.</p>
<p>After investigating and accounting for individual student learning needs and differences and being presented with learning tasks appropriate for their academic level, the student falls within one of the listed sections.</p>				

	20	15	10	5
<p>Quality of Work</p>	<p>HISTORY: All class assignments have been completed in the allotted time</p> <p>Responses are all in scholars own words and scholars have checked for spelling and grammar</p> <p>Ideas are detailed and explanations are clear</p> <p>Scholars show all of their work (ex: jotting on documents, notes to form an argument,</p>	<p>HISTORY: Most class assignments have been completed in the allotted time</p> <p>Responses are mostly in scholars own words and scholars have somewhat checked for spelling and grammar</p> <p>Most ideas are detailed and there is an explanation</p> <p>Scholars show some of their work</p>	<p>HISTORY: Some class assignments have been completed or are in the scholar's own words</p> <p>There are some ideas. More details, evidence, and explanation are needed.</p> <p>Scholars put ~55% of their effort into every problem.</p>	<p>HISTORY: Few parts of the assignments have been completed or are in the scholar's own words</p> <p>Work is missing ideas, details, and evidence.</p>

	note-taking)			
	<p>SCIENCE: All class assignments have been completed in the allotted time</p> <p>Scientific information is all in scholars' own words.</p> <p>All student responses include accurate and relevant scientific vocabulary</p> <p>Scholars show all of their work (ex: jotting on documents, notes to form an argument, note-taking)</p>	<p>SCIENCE: Most class assignments have been completed in the allotted time</p> <p>Scientific responses are mostly in scholars own words</p> <p>Most student responses include accurate and relevant scientific vocabulary</p> <p>Scholars show some of their work (ex: jotting on documents, notes to form an argument, note-taking)</p>	<p>SCIENCE: Some class assignments have been completed or are in the scholar's own words</p> <p>Some student responses include accurate and relevant scientific vocabulary</p> <p>Scholars show little of their work (ex: jotting on documents, notes to form an argument, note-taking)</p>	<p>SCIENCE: Few parts of the assignments have been completed or are in the scholar's own words</p> <p>Work is missing ideas, details, and evidence.</p>
<p>After investigating and accounting for individual student learning needs and differences and being presented with learning tasks appropriate for their academic level, the student falls within one of the listed sections.</p>				

Middle School Programs

NCS is proud to have a variety of programming designed specifically to meet the needs of our middle school scholars as they develop into young adults and get ready for high school and beyond. In addition to our core subjects of ELA, math, science, history, dance and PE, NCS also provides students with additional educational opportunities to attend to the whole child - particularly during this time in their development.

We provide learning opportunities in the following areas:

- *Spanish:* NCS will ensure every child in grades 6-8 receives two periods of the world language of Spanish per week.
- *Electives:* As a means of sparking passion and finding talents in our middle school scholars, our program will offer the students the chance to choose which elective they want to take for each

of two semesters. Therefore, all MS students are required to participate in two elective classes for the year.

- *Health/Sex Education*: All middle school students will attend one marking period during their PE block of Health/Sex Education. Families are asked permission before sex education is taught.
- *Wellness*: Once a week, scholars will have a space where they will learn the practices of mindfulness, connect with their breathing, and take time to intentionally practice self-care.
- *High School Placement Support*: From sixth through eighth grade, with increasing support over time, families and students will receive specific education and support in the high school placement process.

Promotion Criteria

NCS takes promotion seriously and takes in a variety of data points to determine if a student can be promoted to the next grade level or not. We generally look for students receiving 3s and 4s/70s and above in all subject areas as an indicator of readiness for the next grade level. Promotion decisions are always made with the mindset of what will set up the student academically for the long-term. NCS commits to partnering with families of students who are significantly below grade level.

NCS makes the final determination for readiness for the next grade and will communicate with families the decision by early June.

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 2 and 3. By Quarter 4, if your child is considered Promotion in Doubt, you will be notified by the Principal or the Middle School Director to discuss the next steps for the following school year.

NCS Commitment to Parent Engagement

Communications: Scholar and Staff Boundaries

Neighborhood Charter Schools is committed to partnering with our families and the surrounding community to ensure scholars who attend NCS receive a well rounded education that promotes strong academics, social-emotional learning, diversity, equity, and inclusion of all scholars and families.

To serve our community we must work together and collaborate 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, with some of these boundaries requiring additional efforts and perhaps being inconvenient to staff and families. While these boundaries are not needed in 99% of cases, as a network, we want to ensure we proactively set up clear norms and expectations. Therefore, we must place these standards for the safety of our scholars 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 support our scholars. We will accomplish this by fostering a trusting, consistent, and professional student and staff relationships. These relationships will be defined by care of well-being and focus on academics.

Communications should always include:

- Scholar friendly and appropriate language
- Professional presentation In-Person 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:

- Newsletter: Each week we will send a newsletter to keep you informed about events and the latest news in our school.
- Texts and Calls: From time to time, you may receive text or phone call updates from the school keeping you informed of important information.

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. Parents can expect frequent contact from their scholars' teachers via multiple communication types including but not limited to phone, email, text, Educate (NCS's student information system (SIS)). 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. We make the following commitments to our scholars, parents, and schools:

- All email, voicemail, and text message communication will be responded to within 24 hours during the workweek.
- Teachers will be expected to keep in contact with families and scholars throughout the week.
- Teachers will provide targeted and timely feedback to scholars on submitted assignments and completed assessments.

Parent/Guardian Responsibility

As a parent/guardian of a NCS scholar, it is imperative to understand the responsibilities associated with your role. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to ensure their child arrives at school promptly each day at 7:45 AM. If you're aware your scholar will be tardy/absent, it is the responsibility of the parent to communicate this to your child's teachers.

You may contact your scholar's teacher directly via email and/or text message to answer questions that you may have. When a parent/guardian is concerned about the child's performance or behavior, the parent/guardian should set up a conference with the child's teacher. Parents/guardians should also be aware of their scholar's progress; together, the teachers and families will create a plan for the child's academic and educational future.

Please note that we expect families to respond to any school communication within 24 hours and maintain respectful communication with any staff members. We expect our entire community to refrain from yelling, swearing, or threatening in any manner via virtual, phone, or in-person communication. NCS reserves the right to direct any family member to the administration for clear follow-up and give clear parameters for communication if any member of the community does not comply with respectful standards. Please see the next section for where to direct any concerns after you have addressed them with your student's teacher.

Neighborhood Charter Schools Communication Guide

At NCS, there is an entire team of leaders, educators, and staff members dedicated to the support, growth, and achievement of your child. Please use the below information as a guide for communication at our school.

If you have a concern, we ask that you talk to the scholar's teacher first, then a Dean or an Assistant Director, and then the Principal.

Our goal is to ensure that families and staff are communicating effectively and operating as a team to support your child.

Your scholar's teachers are your first point of contact should you have any questions or concerns.

More often than not, your child's teachers will be able to answer most questions or address any concerns from the school day. At the beginning of the school year, you should have received the contact

information of your scholar’s teachers. If you do not have this information, you may contact a member of our operations team in the main office.

If you need more information after speaking to your scholar’s teacher or more specific information, here is a guide on who to contact.

I need assistance with...	I can contact...	Contact Information
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bussing ● School records ● Enrollment verification ● Field Trips ● NCS After School ● NCS High School Placement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● NCSH Director of Operations: Derrica Newman ● NCSH Assistant Director of Operations: Juana Calderon ● NCSH Operations Manager: Abigail Colon ● NCSH Operations Associate: Nadia Brown ● NCSH Operations Associate: Jazmin Veras ● NCSB Director of Operations: Massiel Rodriguez ● NCSB Operations Manager: Johanna Rodriguez ● NCSB Operations Associate: Tarique Fenty ● NCSB Operations Associate: Tyquan Rohan 	<p><u>NCSH/NCSB Operations Team</u> (646) 701-7117 operations@ncschools.org</p> <p><u>After School</u> sbowman@ncschools.org (Harlem - until November) jkeitt@ncschools.org (Harlem) eedouard@ncschools.org (Bronx)</p> <p><u>High School Placement</u> jredavid@ncschools.org</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bus Behavior ● School Behavior ● Outside School Behavior ● Uniform ● Attendance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● NCSH K-5 Assistant Director of Culture/K-2 Dean: Mrs. Jasmine Keitt ● NCSH 3-5 Dean: Ms. Shevonne Bowman 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● jkeitt@ncschools.org ● sbowman@ncschools.org ● aetienne@ncschools.org

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● NCSH 6-8 Dean: Ms. Alicia Etienne ● NCSH 6-8 Dean: Ms. Yolanda Dekine ● NCSB K-2 Dean: Mr. Edwin Edouard ● NCSB 3-5 Dean: Zuleyma DeLaRosa 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ydekine@ncschools.org ● eedouard@ncschools.org ● zdelarosa@ncschools.org
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Scholar Schedules ● Report card info ● Questions regarding classroom teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● NCSH K-2 Assistant Principal: Kalima Gilkes ● NCSH 3-5 Assistant Principal: Keshia Redhead ● NCSH 6-8 Director: Ms. Romina Cepeda ● NCSB K-2 Assistant Principal: Ms. Elizabeth Larkin ● NCSB 3-5 Assistant Principal: Ms. Amy Young 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● kgilkes@ncschools.org ● kredhead@ncschools.org ● rcepeda@ncschools.org ● elarkin@ncschools.org ● ayoung@ncschools.org
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ELA Curriculum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● NCS K-2 ELA Coordinator: Ms. Cherelle Gadsden ● NCS 3-5 ELA Coordinator: Ms. Azsa Parker ● NCS 6-8 ELA Coordinator: Ms. Abigail Cadle ● NCS ELA Director: Ms. Kat Aschinger 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● cgadsden@ncschools.org ● aparker@ncschools.org ● acadle@ncschools.org ● kaschinger@ncschools.org
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Math Curriculum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● NCS K-2 Math Coordinator: Ms. Haylee May ● NCS 3-5 Math Coordinator: Ms. Emily Horkan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● hmay@ncschools.org ● ehorkan@ncschools.org ● kdavila@ncschools.org

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCS 6-8 Math Coordinator: Ms. Karen Davila • NCS Math Director: Gitta Carton 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gcarton@ncschools.org
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Science/History 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCS History Coordinator: Ms. Melissa Cleveland • NCS Science Coordinator: Ms. Sade Johnson • NCS Science and History Director: Rachel Stotsky 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mcleveland@ncschools.org • sjohnson@ncschools.org • rstotsky@ncschools.org
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special Education • IEP's • Related Services (OT/PT/Counseling) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCSH K-2 Special Education Coordinator: Ms. Krystal Mircovich • NCSH 3-5 Special Education Coordinator: Ms. Rachel Viegas • NCSH 6-8 Special Education Coordinator: Ms. Nicole Negrón • NCSB K-2 Special Education Coordinator: Ms. Megan Astor • NCSB 3-5 Special Education Coordinator: Nora Faiwizewski • NCS Director of Special Populations: Jennifer Manning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • kmircovich@ncschools.org • rviegas@ncschools.org • nnegrón@ncschools.org • mastor@ncschools.org • nfaiwizewski@ncschools.org • jmanning@ncschools.org

Educate (Student Information System)

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 EducateFamily Portal where you will see assignments and scores (applicable to middle school only), current GPA (applicable to middle school

only), attendance, and final grades/report cards. Each family will receive more information with directions explaining how to access the family portal.

Attendance/ Grades

You can view attendance records and grades in Educate. 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

Parent Association

The NCS 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 a President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary.
- **Attend a Parent Association meeting:** Meetings are usually held after school. 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.

Technology Contract

To receive a device from the school, we require all families to complete a [Scholar Technology Contract](#). This contract contains information regarding the 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. If 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 chromebook 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 the

privacy and safety of scholars, but 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.

Classroom Behavior and Expectations

Neighborhood Charter Schools seeks to instill in our students 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 shorthand for these values, and we expect our students to exhibit them at all times.

Learning

Integrity

Good Citizenship

Hard Work

Teamwork

All students have a right to learn and socialize in a safe environment. Bullying, name-calling, and other intimidating behaviors will, under no circumstances, be tolerated.

We expect our teachers to come with well-planned, engaging activities for the students. Thus, student behavior should be a positive result of the learning experience. During class, certain necessary behaviors must be in place for effective learning to take place. These include:

1. **Whole Body Listening:** Students are expected to listen to their teacher and other classmates at all times. Learning cannot take place when students are not actively participating. Therefore, everyone is encouraged to contribute; we value the input of all of our students. Students should always look at the person speaking.
2. **Participation:** Students should know that if they want to participate in class discussions, they should follow the procedure outlined by classroom teachers at the beginning of the year. Examples include but are not limited to hand raising, thumbs up, etc.. Students are not permitted to call out of turn.
3. **Eating:** Eating is only permitted during snack time and/or lunch. To promote nutritional awareness, soda and candy are not allowed in school.

4. **Gum Chewing:** Gum chewing is not allowed in school, unless given specific permission by a designated leader of the school. (There are some exceptions regarding scholars as a result of sensory needs)

Bathroom Procedures

There are times when students are permitted to use the restroom, such as breakfast, lunch, and breaks. If students have an emergency, they will always be allowed to leave the classroom to use the restroom.

Cell Phones

At NCS, 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**.

Students who use their communication devices during instructional time will be subjected to having their device taken from them for the day. If a device is taken, it will be labeled, placed in a locked box, and only turned over to a parent.

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 an 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.

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

Student Dress Code

NCS is proud to expand our uniform options for the 2023-2024 school year. Our uniform seeks 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 code for students that applies to in-person school days and school-sponsored events.

All shirts must have the School's imprinted logo. The school uniform can be purchased directly through [Cookies](#) (school code: NCSX).

Daily Dress Code	
Male Identifying Scholars	Female Identifying Scholars

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Navy pants with button or zip fly ✓ Navy knee-length shorts with button or zip fly ✓ Navy athletic shorts, navy joggers (for days in which scholars have PE) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Navy Pants with button or zip fly ✓ Navy knee length skirt ✓ Navy knee length shorts with button or zip fly ✓ Navy athletic shorts, navy joggers (for days in which scholars have PE)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ NCS logo baby blue Oxford shirt (long or short sleeved) ✓ NCS logo baby blue polo shirt (long or short sleeved) ✓ Navy crewneck sweatshirt, baby blue crewneck t-shirt (for days in which scholars have PE) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ NCS logo baby blue polo shirt (long or short sleeved) ✓ Navy crewneck sweatshirt, baby blue crewneck t-shirt (for days in which scholars have PE)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Navy tie (clip-on or traditional) (optional) ✓ Navy bowtie (optional) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Black or navy blue socks ✓ Black or navy blue tights
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Black/Brown/Navy belt (required if pants/shorts have belt loops) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Black/Brown/Navy belt (optional)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Any type of sneakers/shoes as long as they're close toed (no sandals) ✓ Slip on sneaker/shoes recommended for kindergarten and 1st grade scholars 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Any type of sneakers/shoes as long as they're close toed (no sandals)

<u>Physical Education Dress Code</u>	
Tops	Bottoms
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Navy crewneck sweatshirt ✓ Baby blue crewneck t-shirt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Navy athletic shorts ✓ Navy joggers
<u>Unapproved Dress Code Items</u>	
Tops	Bottoms
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Hooded sweatshirts ✗ Crop tops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Jeans ✗ Ripped pants ✗ Biker shorts

Elementary School Routines and Procedures

Essential School/Student Procedures

Arrival

- Students are to enter the school building through the main entrance and will be greeted by a staff member.
- For students who want to eat breakfast, plan to arrive by 7:45 AM, when doors open.
- Students who are not eating breakfast may arrive anytime between 7:45-8:00 AM.

Snack

Students will have a snack each day. Healthy snacks will be provided for students. NCS believes in teaching our students to live a healthy life, including making healthy eating decisions. Families may choose to send a snack with their child, but it is not necessary. Please do not send unhealthy snacks such as candy, soda, or other sugary items.

Lunch and Recess

Students will be provided with a healthy, catered lunch each day. The NCS team oversees recess.

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 they will officially qualify—to return the form, as crucial school funding decisions are made by the state depending on the totality of responses.

Dismissal

- Students will be dismissed from the classroom, gym, or cafeteria each day.
- An NCS staff member will open the school doors at the appropriate time and parents may walk to their child's classroom.
- The parent/guardian or an adult on the pick-up list must sign out all students.
- Under no circumstances are students in lower grades permitted to walk home on their own or be released to someone who is not listed in the child's records.
- All students are to be picked up promptly by 3:30 PM.

After-School Program

NCS is proud to offer a robust and free after school program to our families. Our own NCS teachers lead after school, which gives our students the opportunity to extend relationships with our staff members beyond the typical school day. After School programming runs K-8, and allows for students to stay at our schools until 5:30 PM. Parents are expected to pick up their children promptly at that time.

We may have a limited number of seats for our after-school program. Admission is by first come first serve. However, we will always work to ensure that every family who wants to opt into our program gets a seat. Attendance is required for the participation in afterschool programs.

Attendance in after school is required once signed up. Students should be picked up on time every day. If there are concerns with late pick ups of your child from after school, this may result in losing a seat in the program.

Community Activities

Visitors to the School

If the school opens physically, NCS encourages parent(s)/guardian(s) and other members of the school community to call the main office at 646-701-7117 to schedule a visit. The Principals are responsible for all persons in the building and on the grounds. For these reasons, the following rules apply to visitors to the school.

1. Anyone who is not a regular staff member or student of the School will be considered a “visitor.”
2. All visitors to the School must sign in and report to the Main Office. Visitors will be given a name tag to wear and keep with them at all times.
3. Teachers are not permitted to take class time to discuss individual matters with visitors.
4. Any unauthorized person on school property will be reported to the Principal. Unauthorized persons will be asked to leave the building. NYPD will be called if the situation warrants.
5. All visitors are required to abide by the rules for public conduct on school property.

NCS is committed to providing an orderly, respectful environment; therefore, it is necessary to regulate public conduct on school property and school functions.

Field Trips/End-Of-Year Events

The school’s curriculum includes outside learning experiences and special school events. During these activities - a privilege and not a right - it is essential for all students to be responsible for their behavior since the site of the activity or event is a temporary extension of the School. A permission slip that allows students to leave the building on field trips will be sent at the beginning of each school year. This slip must be signed and returned, or students will not be permitted to leave the building. Families will always be notified before a field trip.

If parents or other volunteers assist with such trips or events, students must afford these chaperones the same respect they would provide to the teachers. Appropriate behavior must be maintained when attending school-sponsored events and riding on school-provided transportation. The use of portable electronic devices is prohibited on field trips unless the staff chaperones indicate otherwise.

Emergencies

In case of an emergency, parents or guardians should contact the Main Office either by phone or in person.

School Closings

Having experienced remote schooling due to the impact of Covid19, NCS is proud to be able to shift to remote learning in the event that we cannot come into the school building. In some cases, instead of closing school, we may announce that school will be remote for the day. NCS will make this decision if we believe our students all have access to devices and therefore the day's instructional time.

In the event of a school closing due to emergency or poor weather conditions such as heavy snow, we may decide that school must be closed. NCS will notify all families with as much notice as possible if this is the case. Communication will come by email and/or text messages. Families are also encouraged to reach out to their children's teacher if they are still uncertain.

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 take attendance, should conditions permit, all students will return promptly to the school.

Intruder Drills

NCS has a strong security system and staff members who remain at the front entrance to ensure the safety of our entire community. However, we take very seriously the responsibility to prepare for an

intruder in our building, particularly given the times. 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. These drills will be conducted in coordination with local emergency response and preparedness officials.

Our teachers take the time to explain to our students why we do these drills. However, we do not want to scare our children - we only want to see them prepared for anything to happen. That is why we take care in our framing and discussing these drills with students prior to practicing.

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.

Transportation

Student transportation will be provided by the Office of Pupil Transportation (OPT).

The table below shows how the Office of Pupil Transportation (OPT) determines student eligibility for busing and MetroCards. It is based on grade level and the distance between the student’s residence and the school. Please note NCS does not determine eligibility.

Grade	Distance Code A Less than 0.5 mile	Distance Code B 0.5 mile or more, but less than 1 mile	Distance Code C 1 mile or more, but less than 1.5 miles	Distance Code D 1.5 miles or more
Kindergarten-2nd Grade	Half-fare MetroCard	School Bus or Full-Fare MetroCard	School Bus or Full-Fare MetroCard	School Bus or Full-Fare MetroCard
Grades 3-6	Not Eligible	Half-fare MetroCard	School Bus or Full-Fare MetroCard	School Bus or Full-Fare MetroCard
Grades 7-8	Not Eligible	Half-fare MetroCard	Half-fare MetroCard	School Bus or Full-Fare MetroCard

Criteria for Busing Eligibility

- The student must be eligible for full fare transportation, as shown in the chart above.

- The student’s residence must be in the same borough as the school. For example, if a child attends Neighborhood Charter School: Harlem, they must reside in Manhattan. If your child attends Neighborhood Charter School: Bronx they must reside in Bronx county.
 - If your child has door-to-door services, this does not apply.
- Students MUST use the same stop in the morning and in the afternoon.

Conduct Aboard Busing

For the safety of all children on the bus, parents must advise their scholars to obey the following rules. Misconduct on the bus can and will lead to disciplinary action.

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

There are consequences for breaking the rules aboard the bus depending on the severity of the scholar’s actions. Consequences may include:

- Parent one-on-one meeting
- Suspension from the school bus for a set number of days
- Termination of busing rights
- Expulsion from school

Busing FAQs

1. Which bus route has my child been assigned to?

You may get this information from the school, by calling OPT or online. To access your child’s bus stop assignment online ([click here](#)).

2. The school bus is late. Whom do I call?

Please contact OPT directly at 718-392-8855. Status reports on buses behind schedule can also be accessed online ([click here](#)).

3. How can I change my child’s method of transportation (e.g., switch from busing to a MetroCard)?

Please contact the main office at 646-701-7117 if you would like to change your child’s type of transportation service. It will take approximately two weeks for the change to be honored. Please plan accordingly for that transition.

Criteria for MetroCard Eligibility

- Full-fare MetroCard

- o Any student eligible for full fare transportation may be issued a full-fare student MetroCard if that student requests a card or if yellow bus transportation is not available for that student.
- o Full fare MetroCards are valid on MTA subways and buses; students do not pay any fare.
- o Full fare MetroCards are only active on school days from 5:30 am - 8:30 pm.
- Half-fare MetroCard
 - o Students not eligible for full fare transportation may be issued a half-fare student MetroCard.
 - o A half fare student MetroCard allows an eligible student to travel to and from school and school-related activities on buses only and is only valid for three trips per day. After dipping the card in the farebox, students pay half the current fare.

Metro Cards FAQs

1. What if my scholar loses or misplaces their MetroCard?

A new card will be issued once the lost or stolen card is deactivated. Please contact the main office at 646-701-7117 if you need a replacement card or stop by during office hours. Replacement cards are ordered from OPT and will be available after three weeks.

2. Can parents use the student MetroCard?

The card is only for use by the student to whom it was issued.

If you have additional questions about transportation services, please contact the Director of Operations at your school.

Student Behavior and Culture at NCS

High Standards for Academics, High Standards for Behavior

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 to our mission of providing a rigorous, inclusive, and structured educational program to our community of *all* children. We believe that everything we do will impact the future of our scholars. Our commitment is to educate the whole child to develop citizens who become contributing members of society and the surrounding communities.

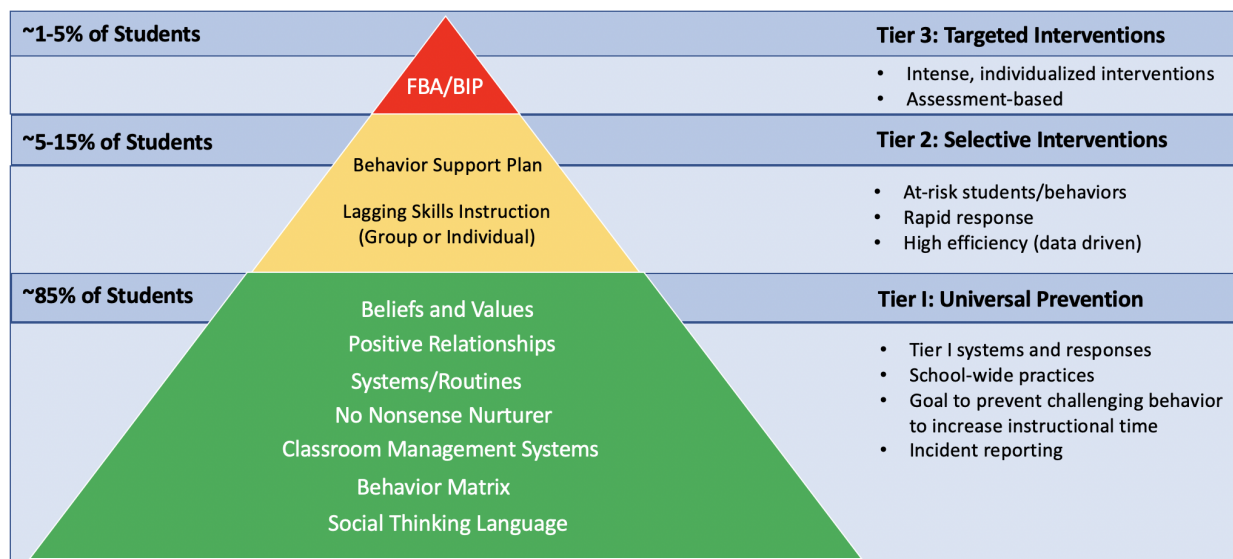
We value diversity, equity and inclusion at NCS. To that end, we are committed to creating a school in which students feel safe to grow socially and emotionally, where individual learning needs are embraced, and where we respond to our students in a fair and equitable manner regardless of gender, race, disability, orientation, age, etc.

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports

NCS implements Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) 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 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 inside our classrooms. 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 the Behavioral Rtl 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
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 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.
Cafeteria/Lunch Room	We expect a level of socialization and activity during lunchtime. 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 to receive their food and will maintain calm walking or seated bodies at all times. The voice level expectation is conversation level. No screaming/yelling across the cafeteria/lunch room is permitted.
Hallway Transitions	When transitioning between classes, scholars will transition directly from one class to another with their teacher. Most hallway transitions are silent in elementary school.
Bathrooms	Scholars are allowed to use the bathroom during class time with the permission of the teacher.
Other School Locations	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. 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.

School Events/Trips	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 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.
Off-Campus	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.
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 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 have 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

Misbehavior dramatically reduces when students feel empowered, engaged, and respected in the classroom. Preventing problem behavior therefore begins with our teachers being responsible for 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

In service of clarity, transparency and equity, 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 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 contextual factors into account, to apply what the school deems to be a fair consequence based on individual factors. Fair does not always mean equal. The schools are 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 (Minor)	Example Behaviors (In-person)
Intensity I behaviors include annoying or unexpected behaviors. These are considered “low level” occurrences 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.	Examples of Intensity I behaviors include but are not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Blurting/interrupting ● Leaving one’s seat without permission ● Day-dreaming ● Talking out of turn ● Failing to immediately comply with teacher directions
	Example Responses (In-person)
	Teachers are expected to partner with students to promote self-management to see lessened rates of such low-level occurrences 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
Intensity II (Minor)	Example Behaviors (In-person)
Intensity II behaviors include disruptive or defiant behaviors that are considered minor violations of our student code of	Examples of intensity II behaviors include but are not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Defying instructions ● Cheating ● Cursing/use of profanity ● Making inappropriate or sexual jokes, gestures, or innuendos

<p>conduct and are recorded as such within our school's behavior incident reporting system - Educate. 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>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Horseplay/rough-housing
	<p>Example Responses (In-person)</p>
	<p>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).</p>
<p>Intensity III (Major)</p>	<p>Example Behaviors (In-person)</p>
<p>Intensity III behaviors are those so 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 scholars, and/or staff. 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>	<p>Examples of intensity III behaviors (non-exhaustive) include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● persistent Intensity II behaviors ● crisis behaviors ● insubordination ● physical threats or intimidation and/or physical aggression ● harassing or derogatory language ● bullying ● theft
	<p>Example Responses (In-person)</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., 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>Intensity IV (Major)</p>	<p>Example Behaviors (In-person)</p>

<p>Intensity IV behaviors are considered dangerous and/or illegal offenses.</p>	<p>Intensity IV behaviors can include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● fighting, possessing or threatening the use of weapons or dangerous objects ● engaging in sexual activity or inappropriate touching ● possessing or distributing drugs or alcohol ● arson, ● threatening physical injury.
	<p>Example Responses (In-person)</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 the use of the PBIS Application. By sending communication of the behavior through the PBIS Application, a member of school administration will respond accordingly. 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 the PBIS Application as well.

Documenting Behavior Incidents

Behavior incidents at Intensity Levels II-IV must be documented by NCS staff within the PBIS Application. The PBIS Application is the school’s internal reporting system. Incidents logged into PBIS 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 PBIS 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. Students may be referred by teacher nomination via the school's Behavior RtI Nomination Form. Teacher referrals are vetted by the school's culture team (Assistant Director of Culture or Dean) and need is confirmed through behavior data analysis, classroom observation, and the results of a strengths and difficulties questionnaire. Tier II programming includes short term behavioral plans and interventions aimed at building student skills 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 to the Behavior Specialist for Tier III Interventions. Tier III interventions are data-informed and require the completion of a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) 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 NCS 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 advisement 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 (See NCS Suspension Approval Process - Appendix <Insert>). Further, any scholar who receives outside services from an IEP will still get those services on any ISS day. Families of students receiving ISS consequence 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 for 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 before 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. Students will still be expected to complete work on an OSS day.

Limiting Privileges

At NCS, we want every scholar to enjoy every opportunity we offer. However, 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) for scholars to participate in such activities. The school reserves the right to revoke scholar privileges, 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 Security*SM 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 the documentation of the incident in our school's internal data server (PBIS/Educate) and completion of a Crisis Post-Vention 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 or coordinator 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 to retrieve them from the building the same day. If a child is sent home in this manner it is NOT coded as a suspension in the majority of incidents.

Mental Health Crisis

Neighborhood Charter Schools works with a range of mental health professionals 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 Populations 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 and social workers 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 or social workers directly, or by notifying the Director of Special Populations, 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 similarly 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 decide 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 be conducted by either ACS or community law enforcement to ensure the wellbeing of the child.

Expulsion

Expulsion is reserved for extraordinary circumstances, including but 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 reports against him or her, and if the student denies the reports, 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 suspend 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 guardians. 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 before 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 Head of School/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 describe 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.

Firearm Violations

Federal and New York law requires 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 destructible 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

NCS 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 comply with the student disciplinary policy and the school dress code, violations of which have consequences 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. 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. NCS 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. NCS will not disclose any information from the student's permanent records except as authorized pursuant to FERPA, or in response to a subpoena, as required by law. The parent(s) or guardian(s) of a student under 18 years of age, or a student 18 years of age or older, is entitled to access to the student's school records by submitting a written request to the 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, NCS 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. NCS 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, NCS 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, NCS 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 receive a consequence 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 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.

NCS 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, NCS 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 a 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 NCS 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 Executive Director
- Level 4: Appeal the decision with the Board of Trustees in accordance with the Complaints Policy below.
- Level 5: 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/her/their designee.

Student Searches

The School authorizes the Head of School, School Directors/Principal, Assistant Directors, 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 they possess 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 NCS 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 purpose of elementary schools—teaching and learning—can take place.

Medical Records and Health Services

NCS 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.

NCS 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.

COVID-19

The health and safety of our students and staff are our top priority.

If a scholar/staff member does test positive in our community, we encourage all staff and scholars to continue:

- Enforcing hand-washing and using hand sanitizer whenever soap and water are not available
- Thoroughly disinfecting the school multiple times a day with major focus on high traffic and high touch areas
- Staying home if they're feeling sick and/or experiencing COVID symptoms

NCS will continue to modify our policies as needed following the CDC and department of health guidance. If you or your scholar are sick, please report this to the main office and your child's attendance will be entered as excused.

School Safety

Neighborhood Charter School: Harlem

There will be a trained NCS staff member 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.

Neighborhood Charter School: Bronx

There will be a trained NCS staff member stationed in the main office and available to meet visitors when they arrive in the vestibule of the building. 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

The NCS website is www.ncschools.org. This website gives a general overview of our programming, as well as houses important board and policy materials. The schools will provide all internal school information directly to families.

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 NCS. For records including information on more than one student, parents will be limited only to information about 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;

- o Accrediting organizations;
- o To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
- o Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
- o 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

At NCS, there is an entire team of leaders, educators, and staff members dedicated to the support, growth, and achievement of your child. Please use the below information and escalation table as a guide for complaints at NCS.

If you have a concern, we ask that you talk to the scholar’s teacher first, then a Dean or an Assistant Director/Principal, and then the Principal/Head of School.

If the complaint involves the Principal/Head of School or if the Principal/Head of School 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 to 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 they think 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, they 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.

Complaint Escalation Policy			
<i>When making a complaint, please go from top to bottom to address.</i>			
Academic	Behavioral	Operational	Other
Teacher	Teacher	Main Office	Main Office

Assistant Principal/Director	Assistant Director of Culture/Dean	Director of Operations	Director of Operations
Principal	Principal	Managing Director of Operations	Managing Director of Operations
Executive Director	Executive Director	Executive Director	Executive Director
Board of Trustees	Board of Trustees	Board of Trustees	Board of Trustees