



# New York City Charter School of the Arts

## 2017-18 Handbook





## **City School of the Arts Handbook 2017-18**

The mission of New York City Charter School of the Arts is to inspire a diverse community of young people to engage with the arts as a pathway to rich and rigorous academic learning, and a creative, purposeful life. We aim to educate a new generation of leaders who can use the arts and creativity to access complex areas of study, connect across difference, and cultivate critical 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills such as creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking. Our mission and influences all aspects of our school culture, including our approach to student discipline, attendance policy, dress code, and family calendar.

What follows are our policies, procedures, and expectations for all CSA students. We depend on cooperation between families and The School to adhere to what is outlined below so that the entire community can work in concert to develop well-rounded, creative, and thoughtful future leaders.

## Attendance Policy

City School of the Arts students are expected to be in school every day between 8:15 and 4PM Monday - Thursday, and 8:15 - 1:38 on Fridays. If your child is going to be late or absent from school, please call or e-mail Yolanda Griffin at the front desk as early as possible. CSA's policies, and actions taken to ensure that students are maximizing their time at school, are outlined below:

### Absences:

- The school will begin making calls to students' homes if they are not present by 9AM
- All absences, whether excused or unexcused, are marked as an "absence" in the records
- An absence can be documented as **excused** with a doctor's note, required court appearance, death in the family, religious holiday, or other major events that are out of the family's control, at the discretion of the Head of School
- **Unexcused absences** include illness without a doctor's note, family vacation, bad weather, trouble with public transportation<sup>1</sup>, or other personal barriers
- All absences are recorded on Alma and shared three times annually on report cards
- The following chart outlines action steps the school will take in cases of excessive absences:

Cumulative Number of Absences	Action Step
3 unexcused absences in one trimester	Phone call home to review attendance policy with family; action-plan made with student
5 unexcused absences in one trimester	Family meeting required to review attendance policy with family; action-plan made with family and follow-up calls and check-ins will follow, if prescribed in action plan.
7 unexcused absences in one trimester	Family meeting required to review attendance policy and outline the educational impact of lateness. Dean will create action-plan with family and report resolution to the SST. Weekly check-ins will follow for three consecutive weeks after meeting.
10 cumulative lateness (excused + unexcused)	Family meeting required to review attendance policy and outline the educational impact of lateness. Dean will create action-plan with family and report resolution to the SST. Weekly check-ins will

<sup>1</sup> Emergencies accounted for by MTA and/or covered in local media will be excused, at the discretion of the Head of School.

	follow for four consecutive weeks after meeting.
20 cumulative lateness (excused + unexcused)	Family meeting required to review attendance policy and outline the educational impact of lateness. Dean will create action-plan with family and report resolution to the SST. Student will be eligible for retention.

**Lateness:**

- If student arrives at 8:16 or later, he/she is considered late
- The only categories of latenesses that are eligible for being an **excused late** are school bus delays and severe weather, at the discretion of the Head of School
- The following chart outlines action steps the school will take in cases of excessive tardiness or unexcused early dismissals:

Cumulative Number of Latenesses	Action Step
3 unexcused latenesses in one trimester	Phone call home to review attendance policy with family; action-plan made with student
5 unexcused latenesses in one trimester	Phone call home to review attendance policy with family; action-plan made with student; official letter sent home for signature outlining necessary action steps
7 unexcused latenesses in one trimester	Family meeting required to review attendance policy and outline the educational impact of lateness. Dean or delegated member of the SST will create action-plan with family and report resolution to the SST
10 cumulative lateness (excused + unexcused)	Family meeting required to review attendance policy and outline the educational impact of lateness. Dean or delegated member of the SST will create action-plan with family and report resolution to the SST
20 cumulative lateness (excused + unexcused)	Family meeting required to review attendance policy and outline the educational impact of lateness. Dean or delegated member of the SST will create action-plan with family and report resolution to the SST. Students will be eligible for retention.

**Early Dismissal:**

- Early dismissal is defined as any pick up prior to 4PM
- Parents should notify Yolanda Griffin if an early departure will be taking place
- The student may only be dismissed early to a parent or a properly authorized and identified adult. If the adult was not previously authorized, a letter from the parent authorizing the pick up of their child is required
- Unexcused early dismissals (early dismissal without official notice) will be recorded, and treated as a tardy if occurring excessively

**Home Visits** If a student is absent for three (3) consecutive days and no contact has been made with the family, the Dean of Students or an SST member may make a home visit to ensure the safety of the child.

**Attendance Review Plans** Attendance Review Plans (ARPs) may be created by an SST member to support students and families to get to school and get to school on time. ARPs are initiated when students are absent or late 10 consecutive times, and may be rolled out in conjunction with other academic or discipline interventions.

**Promotion in Doubt (PID)** Promotion in Doubt conversations are initiated with a PID letter when student has been absent or late 20 or more times in one year. A PID letter may be sent to families in danger of retention due to poor attendance and its resulting impact on academic and artistic performance.

### **Discipline Policy**

All families and staff must be familiar with the rules and expectations of The School, and are expected to uphold them. Our policy is transparent while respecting the confidentiality of students and families where appropriate. The understanding and investment in these policies on the part of all members of the school community will be critical to maintaining a healthy, safe, and thriving school community.

Student disciplinary offenses at City School of the Arts are those that violate the code outlined below. Given this, it is important to note that these behaviors may occur at any point in the school day, or in any place where a student may be during the school day, such as in transportation to and from school, or at a school-sponsored event or field trip. In addition, certain school-related behaviors that result in major disciplinary action offenses may occur outside of what is generally considered the school day or school grounds, and would include cases of cyber-bullying or any other type of on-line harassment.

Any act that could be construed as detrimental to the welfare of City School of the Arts or any member of its community may warrant disciplinary measures. Each student has the power to safeguard or damage his or her own and the School's reputation by his or her conduct. Moreover, interactions

between students off-campus can influence a student’s experience on campus. Consequently, the school reserves the right to deal in a disciplinary fashion with serious misconduct incidents occurring off campus. Any act that could be construed as detrimental to the welfare of City School of the Arts or any member of its community may warrant disciplinary measures. Described below are behaviors that will result in major disciplinary action.

**Tiered Infractions**

**Responses for Tier 1 Infractions** Tier 1 Infractions are typically handled by a classroom teacher. The table that follows summarizes these minor infractions and outlines the range of possible responses.

Examples of Tier 1 Infractions (Disorderly Behavior)	Range of Possible Responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Tardiness</li> <li>● Gum/Candy</li> <li>● Minor class disruption (calling out, distracting students)</li> <li>● Unprepared for class (ie. no binder)</li> <li>● Off-task, not following directions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Teacher Warning (non-verbal, verbal)</li> <li>● Behavior re-set meeting</li> <li>● Seat change</li> </ul>

**Responses for Tier 2 Infractions** Tier 2 Infractions are more disruptive to learning than Tier 1, and can include single behaviors and the accumulation of three tier one infractions in one period.

Examples of Tier 2 Infractions (Disruptive Behavior)	Range of Possible Responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Three Tier 1 Infractions in one period</li> <li>● Pushing or shoving another student</li> <li>● Using profane or vulgar language, gestures or behavior</li> <li>● Intentional disrespect to staff (inappropriate language, yelling, lying, refusal to follow directions)</li> <li>● Lying or giving misleading information to school personnel</li> <li>● Use of cell phone in school</li> <li>● Engaging in inappropriate behavior on the school bus</li> <li>● Inappropriate use of school technology</li> <li>● Leaving class or school premises without permission</li> <li>● Posting or distributing inappropriate material at or on school premises</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Classroom Lunch</li> <li>● Removal from class</li> <li>● Student/Teacher Meeting</li> <li>● Principal Meeting</li> <li>● Parent Meeting</li> <li>● Behavior and conduct tracking sheet or journal</li> <li>● Advisor meeting</li> </ul>

**Responses for Tier 3 Infractions** Tier 3 Infractions are extremely disruptive behaviors, including repeated Tier 2 infractions.

Examples of Tier 3 Infractions (Extremely Disruptive Behavior)	Range of Possible Responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Repeated Tier 2 Infractions</li> <li>● Defying or disobeying the lawful authority or directive of school personnel in a way that substantially disrupts the educational process and/or poses a threat to the school community</li> <li>● Engaging in scholastic dishonesty which includes but is not limited to:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Cheating (ie. copying from another’s paper; using unauthorized material during a test; unauthorized collaboration with another student)</li> <li>○ Plagiarizing</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Inappropriate use of the Internet</li> <li>● Tampering with or altering a school record or document</li> <li>● Cursing at a staff member</li> <li>● Bullying</li> <li>● Using slurs based upon actual or perceived race, ethnicity, color, national origin, citizenship/immigration status, weight, religion, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, or disability</li> <li>● Cutting class</li> <li>● Bringing unauthorized persons to school premises</li> <li>● Theft</li> <li>● Fighting</li> <li>● Gambling</li> <li>● Engaging in vandalism, graffiti or other intentional damage to school property or property belong to staff or students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Removal from classroom</li> <li>● Student/teacher Meeting</li> <li>● Principal Meeting</li> <li>● Parent Meeting</li> <li>● Short-term out-of-school suspension</li> </ul>

**Responses for Tier 4 Infractions** Egregious acts of disruption or violence are categorized as Tier 4 Infractions. Possible responses to Tier 4 infractions may include short-term out-of-school suspension, long-term out-of-school suspension or expulsion.

Examples of Tier 4 Infractions	Range of Possible Responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Repeated Tier 3 infractions</li> <li>● Theft (If severe, student will be referred to police)</li> <li>● Fighting (If severe, student will be referred to police)</li> <li>● Engaging in behavior on the school bus which creates a substantial risk of or results in injury</li> <li>● Planning, instigating, or participating with others in an incident of group violence</li> <li>● Using force against, or inflicting or attempting to inflict serious injury against school personnel</li> <li>● Sexual harassment</li> <li>● Falsely activating the fire alarm or calling in a false alarm or bomb threat</li> <li>● Possession of pornography</li> <li>● Posting or distributing literature or material containing a threat of violence or depicting violent actions against or obscene, vulgar or lewd pictures of staff or students, including posting such material on the Internet</li> <li>● Engaging in harassing, intimidating and/or bullying behavior, including using electronic communication to engage in such behavior (cyber-bullying) ; such behavior includes but is not limited to: physical violence; stalking; verbal, written, or physical conduct that threatens another individual with harm; hazing; taunting; exclusion from peer groups designed to humiliate or isolate</li> <li>● Engaging in harassing, intimidating and/or bullying behavior, including using electronic communication to engage in such behavior (cyber-bullying) based on an individual’s actual or perceived race, weight, religion, religious practices, gender, gender identity, gender</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Short-term out-of-school suspension</li> <li>● Long-term out-of-school suspension</li> <li>● Expulsion</li> </ul>

<p>expression, sexual orientation, or disability; such behavior includes but is not limited to: physical violence; stalking; verbal, written, or physical conduct that threatens another individual with harm; hazing; taunting; exclusion from peer groups designed to humiliate or isolate; using derogatory language or making derogatory jokes or name calling to humiliate or harass</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Possession, sale, or use of tobacco, alcohol, drugs or paraphernalia</li> <li>● Possession or sale of a weapon or unsafe object</li> <li>● Starting a fire</li> </ul>	
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The school shall follow due process procedures consistent with *Goss vs. Lopez*, 419 U.S. 565 (1975). The complaint policy at NYCCSA allows that a parent or guardian may challenge the decision to impose a short-term suspension, pursuant to Education Law §2855(4).

**Short-term Suspensions** If the student breaches the code of conduct in a manner that requires a short-term suspension (10 days or less), then the following procedures will be in place:

- The student is removed from class, or brought in for a meeting;
- The student is made aware of his or her infraction, and the resulting consequence;
- The student may respond to the allegations against them;
- The parent is informed of the situation, and given a written statement of understanding to sign in a meeting with the Principal;
- If the parent or guardian is unable to meet at the school, then the written notice will be sent by express/registered mail to their last known address. In addition, they will be contacted by phone and email to be made aware of the situation. Any non-English speaking parent will be informed, both verbally and in print, in their native language.
- If warranted, the parent or guardian may request a meeting, to present evidence that may possibly result in a reduction of suspended days.

**Long-term Suspension or Expulsions** The Head of School may choose to impose a long-term suspension or expulsion when such action is warranted by circumstance. If a student commits an infraction that requires a long-term suspension (more than 10 days) or expulsion, then the following procedures will be followed:

- The student is removed from class and school;
- The student is made aware of his or her infraction, and the resulting consequence;
- On determination that the student's behavior indeed requires a possible long-term suspension, the Principal will state to the student that he or she is being considered for a long-term suspension or expulsion, and the reason for this action;

- The parent is informed of the situation, and given a written statement of understanding to sign in a meeting with the Principal;
- If the parent or guardian is unable to meet at the school, then the written notice will be sent by express/registered mail to their last known address. In addition, they will be contacted by phone and email to be made aware of the situation. Any non-English speaking parent will be informed, both verbally and in print, in their native language. They will be informed that a hearing is to take place to weigh the evidence and consider either long-term suspension or expulsion as a result. In addition, the notice will state that at this hearing, the student has the right to representation by legal counsel, to present and question witnesses, and confront and provide evidence.
- The school sets a formal hearing date. The student and parents receive a written notice that states the charges, the date, time and place where the hearing will be held, and the notice of their right to obtain legal counsel, present and question witnesses, and confront and provide evidence.
- After the Principal, the Board, and/or a hearing officer hears the case, the Principal and the Board issue a written statement to the student and parent stating the decision. This statement will also be placed in the student's permanent record.

During a suspension or expulsion, a CSA staff member will provide educational services to the extent required by law. When providing educational services to suspended students, CSA will provide materials in a timely manner and offer two hours/day of voluntary one-on-one direct instruction. In addition, expelled students will be provided alternative instruction until the student enrolls at a new school or the end of the school year. For a student who has been expelled by the school, the means and manner of alternative instruction will be the same as for a student who has been suspended. Alternative instruction will be provided until the student is enrolled at another accredited school, or otherwise participating in an accredited program, including any alternative education program operated by the student's school district of residence, to the extent the provision of such services is required by law.

The decision to impose a long-term suspension or expulsion upon a student may be challenged by the parent(s) or guardian in accordance with the charter school's complaint process, pursuant to Education Law §2855(4), which is explained in detail on Page 16.

### ***Additional City School of the Arts Discipline Policies***

**Gum and Candy** CSA students are not permitted to eat, drink any beverage outside of sparkling or still water, or chew gum at any time, other than those specified by the school, or with the permission of a staff member.

**Electronic Equipment** The use of electronic devices that relate and/or contribute to student learning is permitted at City School of the Arts. Use of Smart Phones during the day, however, is strictly prohibited. All students will be expected to leave their phone with their Home Teacher to be placed in a locked box during the school day, and returned after Closing Circle.

**Computer Use** Students may use their school and personal computers for word processing, internet research, and music composition. Social/personal use is not permitted during the school day without explicit permission from a teacher or school leader.

**Gun-Free Schools Act** Federal law requires the suspension from NYCCSA for a period of not less than one year of a student who has been determined to have brought a firearm to the school, or to have possessed a firearm at school, although 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 (as amended) (20 U.S. C. § 7961). “Firearm,” as used in this law means a firearm, as defined by 18 USC§921(a), and includes “firearms” and “destructive devices.” The Principal shall refer a student under the age of 16 who has been determined to have brought a firearm to school to a presentment agency for a juvenile delinquency proceeding consistent with Article 3 of the Family Court Act except a student 14 or 15 years of age who qualifies for juvenile offender status under Criminal Procedure Law §1.20(42). The Principal shall refer any pupil 16 years of age or older or a student 14 or 15 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.

The provisions of the Gun-Free Schools Act shall be construed in a manner consistent with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Therefore, the CSE will be consulted, even after a manifestation determination that the student’s behavior was not a manifestation of the student’s disability, regarding placement and services for such student.

**Dress Code** Students are expected to be in full uniform at every point of the school day. In special cases, CSA will work with families to ensure that their child has the proper uniform components. In cases of school uniform violation, parents may be asked to bring in appropriate attire and students may face consequences, such as detention. They will not, however, be prevented from attending instruction. The dress code can be found on

**Academic Honesty** Cheating, whether using forbidden books or devices, or copying another student’s work is strictly prohibited and will always result in a Tier 2 or Tier 3 infraction. Frequent violations may result in more disciplinary measures, such as suspension or expulsion.

**Inappropriate Items** Students may not bring expressly forbidden items to school, which may include electronic devices, inappropriate books or magazines, any content of a profane or sexual nature, or games/gaming devices. Extreme cases may result in suspension.

**Infractions outside of school grounds and/or school hours** Any inappropriate behavior that may take prior to or after the school day, such as in transportation to and from school, or at a school-sponsored event or field trip, is subject to our discipline policy. In addition school- related behaviors that result in major disciplinary action offenses may occur outside of what is generally considered the school day or school grounds, and would include cases of cyber-bullying or any other type of on-line harassment.

**Arson** Students may not possess matches or lighters, or start any type of fire on the CSA campus.

### **Special Education Discipline Policy**

New York City Charter School of the Arts will work with the Committee on Special Education (CSE) in CSD 2, so that clear guidelines for designing and administering disciplinary procedures for special education students are established. If a student’s Individual Educational Program (IEP) includes a Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP), then that student may only be disciplined in accordance with the BIP. If the BIP appears to potentially be ineffective, or could cause potential harm to the student body, then the

matter will be put to the CSE immediately, so that alternate arrangements may be established that are effective.

If a student with a disability warrants a long term suspension (more than 10 days) during the school year, then that student will be referred to the CSE for immediate consideration, as such a suspension may ultimately be considered a change in placement. The CSE is expected to follow all its normal guidelines, policies and procedures with respect to CSA students, including the notification of parents and their involvement in the process.

CSA shall work with the district CSE to ensure that the committee convenes within 10 days of either of the following:

- An infraction has been committed by a student with a disability who has been suspended the maximum number of allowable days;
- A student with a disability, and, regardless of any prior suspensions has committed an infraction, the infraction would warrant a suspension in excess of 5 days for a non-disabled student.
- When the removal or suspension of a student with a disability will constitute a disciplinary change in placement, then NYCCSA will immediately notify the CSE so that the CSE may fulfill its obligations, including:

## Dress code

The dress code at City School of the Arts unifies our school community and provides students with a clear structure in which self-expression can flourish. Families will be expected to buy a supply of shirts and/or sweatshirts, each of which costs less than \$25 and is available in a wide variety of styles and colors. If students are not able to purchase uniforms, a supply will be provided to all students who need them.

### Guidelines

**Tops:** Students may wear shirts purchased from our designated vendor in whatever color(s) they desire. Students may layer short-sleeved T-shirts or polos over long-sleeved T-shirts and wear anything they'd like under the hoodie. The CSA uniform top must be the outer-most layer.

**Bottoms:** Students may wear any pants, skirts, or shorts that are of a solid color. Jeans (unembellished and not ripped) are permitted on Fridays. Athletic pants that are a solid color and unembellished/ not ripped are permitted five days a week.

**Shoes:** Students may wear any style of closed-toe shoe, excluding heels. For safety and sanitary reasons, flip flops, slippers, and high-heels are not permitted.

## Grievance Policy

### Informal Complaint Procedures

An informal complaint is a complaint that does not concern an alleged violation of law or the charter of New York City Charter School of the Arts (NYCCSA) (examples include, but are not limited to, concerns about an academic grade, NYCCSA's computer usage policy or the class schedule). If you have an informal complaint, you are encouraged to contact the appropriate staff member at NYCCSA by telephone or email or by scheduling a meeting to discuss the complaint in person. All staff members are committed to responding promptly to informal complaints, either in person, by telephone or in writing (electronic or otherwise).

If an informal complaint is not responded to and resolved promptly or satisfactorily, you may contact the Principal or Dean of Students to discuss the matter. The Principal or Dean of Students shall review the complaint and promptly respond to the complaint either in person, by telephone or in writing (electronic or otherwise). If you are not satisfied with the outcome or decision pertaining to the complaint *and* your complaint alleges a violation of NYCCSA's charter or law, you may file a formal complaint in writing to NYCCSA's Board of Trustees in accordance with the procedures set forth below.

### Formal Complaint Procedures

If your complaint alleges a violation of NYCCSA's charter or law, you may file a formal complaint in writing to NYCCSA's Board of Trustees. The contact information for NYCCSA's Board of Trustees can be obtained in person at NYCCSA's main office or by emailing [info@cityschoolofthearts.org](mailto:info@cityschoolofthearts.org). Please include with the complaint the nature of the violation, the facts on which the complaint is based and appropriate contact information so that the Board of Trustees may contact you regarding the complaint.

Upon receipt of a formal complaint, the Board of Trustees shall review the complaint or appoint either a committee comprised of Board members or another designee to review the complaint. The Board of Trustees will respond in writing to the complainant within a reasonable amount of time (within forty-five (45) days from the date of receipt of the complaint by the Board of Trustees).

If you are not satisfied with the response from NYCCSA's Board of Trustees, you may submit a formal complaint to NYCCSA's authorizer, the SUNY Charter Schools Institute. Instructions on how to submit a complaint to the SUNY Charter Schools Institute can be found in the Institute's grievance guidelines available at [www.newyorkcharters.org/contact/](http://www.newyorkcharters.org/contact/). The Charter Schools Institute, acting on behalf of the Board of Trustees of the State University of New York, will investigate and respond.

If, after presentation of the complaint to the Charter Schools Institute, you determine that the Charter Schools Institute has not adequately addressed the complaint, you may present the complaint to the State Education Department, acting on behalf of the Board of Regents, which shall investigate and respond. The contact information for the State Education Department is as follows:

Charter Schools Office  
Room #5N EB  
Mezzanine  
89 Washington Avenue  
Albany, NY 12234

The complaint must be clearly marked as a charter school complaint.

The Charter Schools Institute and the State Education Department each has the power and the duty to take remedial action to resolve the complaint, as appropriate.

If you elect to follow the informal complaint procedures to resolve a formal complaint, you shall be permitted at any time to stop the informal complaint procedures and initiate formal complaint procedures.

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