



## **Family Handbook 2018-2019**

Mr. Jon McCann, CEO  
Mrs. Ashley Bergman, Lower School Principal  
Ms. Jaleah N. Robinson, Upper School Principal

**ECS Lower School K-3**  
309 South Braddock Ave  
Pittsburgh, Pa 15221

**ECS Upper School 4-8**  
829 Milton Street  
Pittsburgh, PA 15218

**Administrative Offices**  
Braddock Avenue  
100 North Braddock  
Suite 301  
Pittsburgh, PA 15221

**All offices and buildings can be reached through 412-247-7970**

Dear ECS Family,

Welcome to the Environmental Charter School!

Whether you are a new or veteran member of our community, we are thrilled that you have made the choice to trust our school with your child's education and to support the charter school movement in the city of Pittsburgh.

Our ECS Faculty has been hard at work preparing for the 2018-2019 school year. We have eagerly been awaiting the return of students and families into our beautiful schools!

As we move into our eleventh year of work in progressive education, we are excited to continue to evolve our model, and to support the focused work happening in our schools. We also look forward to piloting new programs, building new partnerships throughout the city of Pittsburgh, and extending the conversation of what innovation in education can look like in our region. We recognize the changing landscape of education and will continue to challenge ourselves to prepare students for the world of the future – and that means that what “school” looks like may be very different from our own 20th century experiences in schooling. We look forward to continuing to share this journey with you. We offer this Family Handbook to assist you in understanding our guiding principles, instructional framework, policies, and procedures. This information will support robust home and school collaboration. Collaboration is valued at our school. If at any time you have a question, concern, or celebration to share with us, please do not hesitate to contact your student's home base teacher and/or building Principal.

Finally, please take the time to review the material contained in the Handbook, as it can be beneficial to you and your child(ren) during the course of the year. It will also give you a picture of our educational philosophy and delivery of teaching and learning. Please **e-sign, date, and submit the handbook confirmation electronic form** after you have reviewed the handbook (it is included in your Back-to-School E-Packet in our online portal, *Schoolmint*).

Welcome to our community! We look forward to a fantastic year together!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jon McCann', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mr. Jon McCann, CEO

## Our Mission and Vision

Our Mission:

The mission of the Environmental Charter School at Frick Park is to educate each student to high academic learning standards using innovative curriculums that will foster knowledge, love of, and respect for the environment and the will to preserve it for future generations. **We grow citizens.**

Our Academic Vision Statement:

Every ECS graduate will be an actively engaged citizen driving thoughtful change in the world around them.

## Our Guiding Principles

**Catalyst:** As a charter school, we are innovators in public education. We are a passionate and progressive group of educators who work to develop individuals into global thinkers with diverse perspectives.

**Character:** We are dedicated to making the world a better place, socially and environmentally, for future generations. We engage students in character development through educational experiences that evaluate the impact of individual choices and that are born from collective discussion and the investigation of diverse perspectives.

**Collaboration:** We value collaboration with our community and recognize the power of systems thinking. We believe that respectful, transparent, and reflective dialogue among our constituents (students, families, faculty, neighbors, and regional partners) is necessary for elevating educational experiences for all learners.

**Commitment:** We are a dedicated community of passionate leaders who are committed to redefining ecological literacy. Our educational model endorses an interdisciplinary view of complex environmental systems.

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[Students in grades K-5 have one scheduled recess or social time each day. Students in grades 6-8 have one scheduled activity period each day. If the weather does not permit the children to be outside, they will have an indoor activity. Every effort is made to provide students with a daily, outdoor recess experience.](#)

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## **Staff**

The following individuals comprise the administrative staff for the 2018-2019 school year:

### **Home Office Team:**

CEO	Jon McCann
COO – Office of Operations	Kate Dattilo
Outreach and Communications	Nikole Sheaffer
CAO - Academic Officer	Mandy Cribbs
Director of Assessment & Accountability	Dwight Laufman
Director of Technology	Todd Hoffman
Facilities & Sustainability Director	Katie Lockley

### **Building Leadership Team:**

Lower School Principal	Ashley Bergman
Upper School Principal	Jaleah Robinson
Lower School Assistant Principal	Laura Williams
Upper School Assistant Principal	Laura Micco
School Counselor Lower School	Beth Flynn
School Counselor Upper School	Andrea Szolna
Part Time Counselor	Laura Davidson

### **Administrative Team:**

Business Manager	Michelle Resnick
Human Resources Manager	Freida Kinney
Office Manager, Home Office	Laura Williams
Office Manager, Upper School	Michelle Brooks
Office Manager, Lower School	Caitlin Walker
School Nurse	Judy Brand
Health Office Assistant	Lisa Fazio

### **Coaches and Coordinators:**

Instructional Coach – Lower School	Melanie Cowherd
Instructional Coach – Lower School	Vicky Hsieh
Instructional Coach – Upper School	Gayle Abrams
Instructional Coach – Upper School	Danielle Fox
ESL and Gifted Educator	Rachel Lendyak-Peters
Technology Coordinator	Jonathan Alden
Enrollment Coordinator	Christine Adams
Communications Coordinator	Jaclyn Kuyers

### **Food Services:**

Food Service Director	Niki Augustine
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### **Afterschool Programming:**

Director of Afterschool	Kristan Abeshouse
Athletics Director	Aaron Coleman
Program Director	Amy Bianco

## **Staff Email**

All ECS faculty check email on a daily basis. Families can expect an email reply within 24-48 hours. Faculty email addresses are firstname.lastname@ecspgh.org.

## **School Calendar**

The Environmental Charter School at Frick Park has designed a calendar that coincides with the Pittsburgh Public Schools as much as possible.

### **Half days**

Half days are distributed throughout the year to support teacher curriculum development and to allow for parents/guardians to schedule important appointments for physicals, dental appointments, and other important events.



# 2018-2019 School Calendar: Environmental Charter School

## August 2018

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

2: Upper School Orientation for New Students (9-11 AM)  
 9, 10: First Days for New Staff  
 13: First Day for Staff  
 16: Meet and Greet (5:30-7:30 PM)  
 16, 17: Kindergarten screening  
 20: **First Day for Students except Kinder**  
 22: **First Day for Kinder**  
 Student Days: 10

## September 2018

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

3: *No School, Labor Day*  
 10: *No School, Rosh Hashanah*  
 19: *No School, Yom Kippur*  
 28: ½ day - planning  
 Student Days: 17

## October 2018

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

1: Applications go Live on Website  
 2: Progress Reports to families  
 4: Middle School Open House (Time TBD)  
 8-9: *No School, Planning Days for Staff*  
 13: Lower School Open House (9-11 AM )  
 26: ½ day - Clerical, Quarter 1 Ends  
 TBD: 9th Grade Academy Information Session  
 Student Days: 21 Staff Days: 23

## November 2018

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

5: Report Cards Go Home  
 6: *No School, Conferences*  
 10: Lower School Open House (9-11 AM)  
 16: ½ Day, Conferences  
 21: ½ Day *Thanksgiving Holiday*  
 22-23, 26: *No School, Thanksgiving Holiday*  
 Student Days: 18

## December 2018

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

14: ½ Day - planning day  
 18: Progress Reports to families  
 21: ½ Day  
 24-31: *No School, Winter Vacation*  
 Student Days: 15

## January 2019

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

1-2: *No School, Winter Vacation*  
 3: Staff and Students return  
 8: Lower School Open House (5:30-7:30 PM)  
 18: Quarter 2 Ends  
 21: *No School, Martin Luther King Day*  
 28-29: *No School, Planning Days for Staff*  
 30: Report cards go home  
 Student Days: 18

## February 2019

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27			

8: ½ Day - planning

19: Lottery

22: ½ day - planning

27: Progress reports to families

Student Days: 20

## May 2019

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

10: ½ day - planning

13: Progress reports to families

14: No School, Conferences

27: No School, Memorial Day

Student Days: 21

## March 2019

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

7: Growing Into A Middle School Student (Time 6-7 PM)

8: ½ day - planning, Growing Into a 1st and 2nd Grader (1-2, 2:30-3:30 PM)

28: Growing Into a 3-5th Grader (6-7 PM)

29: ½ day - planning/clerical, grades due end of day,

Growing Into a Kindergartner (1-2, 2:30-3:30 PM), Quarter 3 Ends

Student Days: 21

## June 2019

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

12: ½ Day - clerical

13: ½ Day, **Last Day for Students** and report cards go home, Quarter 4 Ends

Student Days: 9

## April 2019

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

5: Report Cards Go Home

12: ½ day - planning

15-16: No School, Spring Break, Planning Days for Staff

17-19: No School, Spring Break

26: Earth Nite

**Total Student Days: 187**

<b>Yellow</b>	Academic Dates
<b>Green</b>	½ days
<b>Red</b>	No School
<b>Blue</b>	School Events

# Instruction, Program, and Practice at ECS

## What makes ECS different?

The mission of ECS is to educate each student to high academic learning standards using innovative curriculums that will foster knowledge, love of, and respect for the environment and the will to preserve it for future generations.

Simply stated, **We grow citizens.**

Our vision is that every ECS graduate will be an actively engaged citizen driving thoughtful change in the world around them. Students master core academic content, while learning how to think critically, collaborate, communicate effectively, problem solve and develop successful habits of mind.

## How We Do It

### With holistic teaching methods *rooted* in real world problems:

- **Multi-disciplinary integration.** The problems classes grapple with are addressed across every discipline to help students develop a holistic perspective and approach to problem solving.
- **“Out-the-door” education.** A classroom is one learning environment but not the only one. Working through problems in environments outside the classroom, such as nature and the community, builds greater understanding and connection to the world. We focus on three systems: natural, social, and built environments.
- **Ecoliteracy.** At its core, ecoliteracy means all systems in the world (natural, social, built) are interconnected, and the decisions we make as people in communities and the world ripple through these systems. This is systems thinking, and systems thinking is the basis of ecoliteracy.
- **Authentic learning.** We educate students by having them grapple with issues rooted in relevant, real-world problems.
- **Whole Child.** ECS serves the whole child - keeping them healthy, safe, engaged, supported and challenged.

### With structures/systems to support connections to students:

- **Looping.** Looping is the practice of one grade level team educating the same group of students through more than one school year.
- **Inclusion.** Inclusion is the practice of educating children with disabilities in classrooms with children without disabilities. ECS has structured general and special education into one unified system by facilitating the full inclusion of all students, adapting a co-teaching model, and eliminating the resource room.
- **Teaching Teams.** Educators work as a grade level team to develop and engage students in a variety of learning experiences. There are 2 teachers in most classrooms. Teacher to student ratios remain small (averaging 1:11), allowing students to get targeted support and enrichment.
- **Specialized Teaching.** Grade level teachers specialize in one content area. These “expert” teachers integrate content across disciplines. Students or teachers move between grade level classrooms for instruction.

### With mission-specific instructional practices that support all students:

- **Project-based learning (PBL).** Teachers use PBL to guide students through inquiry-based learning that often includes an end-of-unit exhibition to a public audience. Teachers develop units with a question, design activities and projects that support inquiry, and work with students to construct knowledge throughout the journey.

- **Workshop Model.** The Workshop Model has four basic parts: opening, mini-lesson, work time and debriefing. It is a framework that can be used in any content area.
- **Multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS).** Teachers use MTSS to create standards-aligned, culturally responsive, high-quality instruction; universal screening; data-based decision-making; tiered services and supports; and family engagement. ECS uses specific scheduled time each day to work on student-centered supports.
- **Differentiation.** Teachers tailor instruction to meet individual needs. Teachers differentiate content, processes, products, and/or the learning environment. The use of ongoing assessment and flexible grouping make differentiation a successful approach to instruction.
- **Technology integration.** Teachers integrate the use of technology within the classroom in authentic and meaningful ways. Technology supports curricular goals.

## **Program Overview: K-5**

### **Building Content: Academic Blocks**

#### **Mathematics**

The ECS Math Program follows the focus and coherence of the PA Core Standards and uses Eureka Math as a curricular resource. Instructional methods drive student understanding beyond process, to deep mastery of mathematical concepts.

K-3

In mathematics, we focus on numbers, geometry, measurement, data and graphing, addition and subtraction, place value, time, and money so that students emerge with good foundational skills. During center time, students work in differentiated groups to learn number sense, shapes, length and weight, addition and subtraction, and how numbers work in a context. This approach builds focus, coherence, and rigor at the early foundations of math skills. Additionally, we practice counting through singing and dancing, we play with numbers to build fun into our lessons, and we engage in many different kinds of games to become fluent mathematicians.

4-5

The progression of math ideas are presented in “A Story of Units,” where modules are sequenced to follow the story of mathematics; the story’s main character is the basic building block of arithmetic, or the unit. The Standards for Mathematical Practice are woven into each lesson. Our program focuses on fluency, application, concept development, student debrief, assessment, and differentiation.

#### **Literacy**

K-3

Our literacy team works to build phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and reading comprehension. During this block of time, students are engaged in Reading and Writing Workshop and Literacy Centers. During workshop time, we focus on different genres through our project-based units. The students collaborate with one another to answer the driving questions in each of our units. We have the opportunity to read and write fiction, non-fiction, poetry, and persuasive texts.

During center time, students work in differentiated groups to learn phonics skills through the Orton Gillingham approach. This multi-sensory approach benefits all students as they are learning how to become good readers. We practice sight words, letter sounds, vowel teams, and many other phonics skills so that we can become fluent readers.

4-5

Our Literacy team works to foster a genuine appreciation of reading and writing. Within our Literacy block, students are engaged in a rigorous Reading and Writing Workshop. During this time, students are immersed into various genres through project-based units. Together, we engage in open discussions about our learning, and build our speaking and listening skills through consistent collaboration. We have the opportunity to read and write various forms of fiction, non-fiction, poetry, and persuasive texts. Students embrace the roles of *author*, *illustrator*, *reader*, and *community member* by following an authentic approach to Literacy in the real world.

Many of our units focus on building specific character traits that align with ECS’ core values. Throughout our instruction, we encourage honest conversation and active citizenship. Our curriculum design allows us to tailor

our units to what is not only challenging, but relevant and interesting to our students. Through these practices, we create a community built on grit and trust where students feel confident growing as learners and human beings, while also sharing their work and ideas with one another.

### **Environmental Literacy**

Environmental literacy is a place to explore the connections between social studies and science, and many authentic learning experiences emerge throughout our time together. Topics of inquiry include communities, the sun and moon, and the connections between humans and animals and their habitats. (see our school wide unit summary to see what “Essential Questions” are covered each year in grades K-5).

### **K-3: “ME Time”**

**My Excellence Time** is a time each day dedicated to intensely practicing Math and Literacy skills students have been learning. The groups are differentiated based on our Multi-Tiered Support System (MTSS) data. Students split into spaces all across our building and the activities are geared to support or enrich students based on their individual need.

### **4-5: “PRIME Time”**

**PRIME (Personalized and Reflective Investment in My Excellence) Time** is a time each day dedicated to intensely practicing Math and Literacy skills students have been learning. Groups of students are created based on our Multi-Tiered Support System (MTSS) data. Students split into spaces all across our building, and the lessons that are taught are geared to support and/or enrich students’ skill set based upon their individual needs.

### **Building the Whole Child: Different Opportunities to Learn**

#### **K-1: Discovery Block**

During Discovery Block, students will participate in research-backed, play-based activities that promote physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development. Connecting the Discovery Block to the rigorous instruction provided in the Math, Literacy, and EL blocks will provide students with a well-rounded, meaningful, and innovative model. Play-based learning is child-centered, engaging, and imaginative, fostering a love of discovery and exploration, encouraging curiosity, and developing a desire for lifelong learning. Opportunities to enhance literacy, math, science, and social and emotional skills are provided in a meaningful context, where students will learn to solve problems, try out new ideas and experiences, and explore the world around them.

#### **K-5: Specials, 3 day rotation**

Specials are classes that all students visit over the course of a 3-day cycle. Students attend music, thinking lab, and physical education for 60 minutes. Teachers remind parents/guardians of the daily cycle in a weekly newsletter.

### **Music**

#### **K-3**

Because knowledge is constructed, the music program offers many hands-on activities such as the natural orchestra, where students perform musical compositions using things found in nature, the Quaver Curriculum, which offers studies in performance, theory and composition as well as activities the students can do at home on the Quaver interactive website, with complete assessments for each section, performances with instruments and singing, making movies complete with original scores, as well as a folk dancing unit combining P.E. with music.

## **4-5**

The general music program offers many engaging activities to our fourth and fifth grade students. Students may work in collaboration with the P.E. program and Dancing Classrooms to learn dances like the merengue and waltz, for example, or use the environment to construct a natural orchestra. They will explore Pittsburgh's great contributions to music history and receive an introduction to music performance and theory as they play the recorder.

Students will also have the opportunity to extend their musical interests through small group lessons and participation in the ECS band and orchestra.

## **Thinking Lab**

### **K-3**

The Lower School Thinking Lab builds a foundation for understanding the intersections and connections between art, science, and design. Students develop the capacity to think like scientists and artists, with a focus on foundational techniques and processes. Students learn to communicate through the language of visual arts, while simultaneously developing creativity, collaboration, and craftsmanship skills.

### **4-5**

As students engage in authentic projects and processes, they further hone their ability to see the interconnectedness of the disciplines of science, art, design, engineering, and the social sciences. Through multiple methods and experiences, students push beyond content to activate critical and creative thinking, in addition to collaboration and communication. In Thinking Lab, students apply various research, design, scientific, and creative processes to find and solve real world issues while paying careful attention to how they as individuals fit into the complex ecology of the human experiment.

## **Physical Education**

The Physical Education department promotes lifelong activities for all students to engage in, with a focus on becoming knowledgeable about the resources within their urban environments. The attributes the physical education department has identified as essential for this work are: Engagement, Knowledge and Personal Commitment.

## Program Overview: 6-8

### Building Content: Academic Blocks

#### Math

In the middle school math classroom, students participate in diverse math communities where a variety of thinking and learning are invaluable. Students collaboratively explore, problem solve, and huddle around key math concepts, strategies, questions, and challenges. The curriculum is built around the PA Common Core math standards and centered around essential questions. With Eureka Math as a curricular resource, students engage in authentic learning experiences that apply math content in meaningful contexts and projects. **All ECS students will complete Algebra I in 8th grade and have the opportunity to take the Algebra I Keystone Exam at the end of the middle school loop.**

Each middle school math classroom is co-taught by a regular education and special education teacher. ECS teachers know their students as learners and provide students with specific and timely feedback. Several instructional models are utilized in order to maximize learning. These include:

- *Small group instruction* → allows teachers to tailor instruction to their students' needs.
- *Collaborative problem solving* → students work together to complete complex tasks and projects and reason through solutions.
- *Station teaching* → provides students with opportunities to practice and apply mathematics.
- *Huddle* → students communicate their strategies, approaches, and challenges and discuss concepts and understandings.

#### 6th Grade Content Focus (Math6)

- Connecting ratio and rate to whole number multiplication and division and using concepts of ratio and rate to solve problems
- Completing understanding of division of fractions and extending the notion of number to the system of rational numbers, which includes negative numbers
- Writing, interpreting, and using expressions and equations
- Developing understanding of statistical thinking and drawing inferences about populations based on samples

#### 7th Grade Content Focus (Math7)

- Developing understanding of and applying proportional relationships
- Developing understanding of operations with rational numbers and working with expressions, linear equations, and radicals and integer exponents
- Solving problems involving scale drawings and informal geometric constructions, and working with two- and three-dimensional shapes to solve problems involving area, surface area, and volume
- Investigating chance processes and develop and use probability models

#### 8th Grade Content Focus (Math8)

- Formulating and reasoning about expressions and equations, including modeling an association in bivariate data with a linear equation, and solving linear equations and systems of linear equations
- Grasping the concept of a function and using functions to describe quantitative relationships
- Analyzing two- and three-dimensional space and figures using distance, angle, similarity, and congruence, and understanding and applying the Pythagorean Theorem.
- Analyzing, solving, and using quadratic functions and performing arithmetic operations on polynomials



## **Cultural Literacy**

The Cultural Literacy curriculum is a fully integrated blend of skills and concepts that cover the disciplines of English and social studies. The integrated nature of Cultural Literacy allows for students to become knowledgeable citizens, prepared to address complex life issues. Students will engage with multifaceted essential questions by investigating literary, historical, cultural and social scientific evidence. Students will demonstrate understanding through text-based discussions, writing, multi-media presentation and direct action. The arc of Cultural Literacy moves students through a study of place and time that ultimately equips them to take action as engaged citizens of the world. Although the content reflects a journey through history, geography, and the global environment, the core questions transcend one time period and the students confront their own belief systems and viewpoints throughout the year. Cultural Literacy uses the Common Core Literacy Standards along with a combination of the Pennsylvania Social Studies Standards and College, Career, and Civic Life (c3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards as a guide for curriculum creation.

### **6th Grade (CL6)**

Cultural Literacy is a blend of literacy/communication and the social sciences. In 6th grade Cultural Literacy (CL6), students focus on the theme of geoliteracy or, in other words, the *ability to use geographic understanding to recognize interactions, interconnections, and implications in our world*. Students will also engage in a nuanced study of literacy - learning to encode and decode ideas through traditional writing and reading, as well as through the texts of geography (maps, infographics, charts, etc.) and other forms (film, digital media, etc.). While students will develop a myriad of skills, at its core, CL6 is an investigation of how the earth, life, and humanity interact.

### **7th Grade (CL7)**

In 7th grade Cultural Literacy (CL7), students focus on the theme of historical awareness. In 6th grade, through the study of geo-literacy, students used geographic understandings to better understand “place,” individually, locally, and globally. Moving forward, 7th grade will use the *Six C’s of Historical Thinking* (context, causality, change over time, citation, complexity, and corroboration) combined with a continued nuanced study of literacy to critically examine student’s embodiment of “time” in the world. While students will develop a myriad of skills, at its core, CL7 is an investigation of how the earth, life, and humanity have interacted through time.

### **8th Grade (CL8)**

In 8th grade Cultural Literacy (CL8), students focus on the themes of citizenship and action. In 6th grade, through the study of geo-literacy, students used geographic understandings to better comprehend “place.” In 7th grade, through an integrated study of the *Six C’s of Historical Thinking* and literacy, students examined “time” and built historical awareness. In 8th grade, a focused study of citizenship's motifs (knowledge of self, development of ethics, concern for others, and taking action in the world) will prepare students to become active citizens beyond the walls of ECS. In contrast to the two previous years, eighth graders will not simply study earth, life, and humanity over time and place, but will become proactive citizens that investigate **“liberty and justice for all.”**

## **Science**

The Middle School Science Program at ECS uses the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) in conjunction with the PA Science Standards to develop curriculum that engages in the three dimensions of the NGSS for successful science instruction: content, practices, and cross-cutting concepts. Content drives the experience whether it is life science, earth science, physical science, engineering, or a combination of several of these topics! Students use scientific practices, such as asking questions and carrying out investigations, to actively engage in the content. Students act like scientists by taking risks, making mistakes, problem-solving through struggles, and persevering to create evidence-based arguments and solutions. Science allows students the chance to explore and fail so that they can develop and use processes to help them construct explanations

about the world we live in. The third dimension connects the dots between different content areas by identifying the crosscutting concepts, showing students the interconnected nature of science as it is practiced and experienced in the real world. The ECS science team values student-led investigations, frequent collaboration and working in teams, and experiencing science instead of memorizing facts. ECS is determined to produce inquisitive, critical, and communicative consumers of scientific information by providing authentic experiences that focus on deeper understanding of content as well as application of content. The program continually strives towards teaching the “how” and “why” rather than simply the “what” so students can walk away with the skills they will need to make critical choices and decisions in life.

### **6th Grade (Science6)**

6th Grade kicks off with a study in the life science focusing on ecology and biodiversity using Frick Park as a classroom laboratory. Soon after, 6th graders begin an in-depth exploration in the physical sciences. This two-and-half unit study covers physical and chemical properties of matter, Newton’s laws of motion, kinetic and potential energy and electric/magnetic and gravitational energy. The remainder of the 6th grade year in science is spent exploring earth science with a specific focus on weather and water on earth.

### **7th Grade (Science7)**

7th Grade begins by taking a look at the cycles that govern our natural world. Students explore the nitrogen cycle, carbon cycle and ultimately examines how energy cycles through food webs. These explorations lead into an in depth, two unit long biology course that explores matter and energy flow in organisms, cells and cell structure, body systems and organs, inheritance of traits, genes, asexual and sexual reproduction and the growth and reproduction of organisms. Please note that this is the year where students will participate in a few dissection labs. In the middle of the year students will re-visit the physical sciences with an exploration in waves, electromagnetic energy and information technology. The year ends with an earth science unit which examines geosciences processes both rapid and slow with a close look at natural disasters using knowledge they gained about weather and water on earth in sixth grade.

### **8th Grade (Science8)**

8th grade is a culminating year for our middle grade scientists. Much of what they explore in 8th grade builds upon the knowledge and skills they gained in sixth and seventh grade in order to consider more complex scientific concepts and skills. Eighth graders can look forward to exploring the history of the earth through geologic time scale, geoscience processes and tectonic processes. Evolution will be introduced and examined through similarities and differences between organisms that exist today and fossil records. Students will explore our solar system and beyond. The year ends with a unit that examines human impact on our planet, in particular, climate change.

### **“PRIME Time”**

PRIME (Personalized and Reflective Investment in My Excellence) Time is a time each day dedicated to intensely practicing Math and Literacy skills students have been learning. Groups of students are created based on our Multi-Tiered Support System (MTSS) data. Students split into spaces all across our building, and the lessons that are taught are geared to support and/or enrich students’ skill set based upon their individual needs.

### **Building the Whole Child: Different Opportunities to Learn**

#### **Exploratory Courses**

The purpose of Exploratory Courses is to provide middle school students the opportunity to engage in a variety of subjects outside of their everyday class schedule in a way that sparks curiosity and prepares students to make personal learning choices so that students develop passion for learning early on in life. Exploratory classes

are 70 minute, quarter-long courses that occur 3-4 days per week. They provide a deep delve into a topic, and are offered by internal specialist teachers and coaches as well as external partner teachers. **Exploratory classes are graded**, and a culminating project helps students synthesize learning during the quarter.

Sixth and seventh graders rotate through three courses for the first three quarters of school. In fourth quarter, students have the opportunity to choose an advanced version of one of the topics covered in the first three quarters. In eighth grade, students rotate through four courses. This allows for smaller class sizes and provides all students access to elect one (or more) of our partner courses. Offerings for the upcoming year are published in August.

ECS partners with like-minded organizations, like Assemble and Hip Hop on Lock, to create expanded opportunities. On the days students do not have a scheduled exploratory course, students engage in Physical Education and one quarter of Health.

### **Activity Periods**

Activity periods are led by homebase teachers, and offer students time to socialize and engage in interest-based recreational time.

### **Individual and Group Music Lessons**

Students will also have the opportunity to extend their musical interests through small group lessons and participation in the ECS band and orchestra.

## **Afterschool Programming**

### **After School Care, E-Day**

E-Day provides a safe and fun environment for students to play, study, and engage while parents finish up their workdays. With programs at both the upper and lower schools, serving students k- 8th grade, E-Day is dedicated to reflecting the school's mission by following the standards and goals established at ECS. As the lower school dismisses and E-Day begins, students transition to after school where they eat snack and socialize. From there, daily activities include outdoor free time and nature hikes, games and puzzles, arts and crafts, cooking and toy time. The students also enjoy enrichment programming from community organizations such as the Sierra Club, and Carnegie Library. E-Day offers both a 3 and 5 days a week option to meet our families after school care needs. Don't hesitate to enroll in this popular program!

### **Drop in Child Care**

Ready Care Pass is on demand drop in child care within E-Day, serving students K- 8th grade, until 5:45 PM, up to 3 times during the school year. Parents may purchase the pass on the day they need care or prior to the date to secure care at ECS.

### **Additional E-day Questions?**

To learn more about both programs email [kristan.abeshouse@ecspgh.org](mailto:kristan.abeshouse@ecspgh.org)

### **Clubs and Athletics**

**Do Think Learn Laugh.** ECS Clubs provide extracurricular activities throughout the year, to our students in a way that promotes curiosity and captivates their imagination. Clubs provide students an opportunity to explore topics not offered during the school day, so that we can help promote the long-term development and success of the whole child.

**Athletics.** ECS officially launches its first year of a more formal athletics program. For this inaugural year, students will have the opportunity to compete against neighboring schools in several sports, and enjoy an extended access to intramural athletics. In addition, the students will also have the opportunity to train and learn basic fundamentals in whatever sport they desire to participate in. To learn more about opportunities and requirements for participation, email [aaron.coleman@ecspgh.org](mailto:aaron.coleman@ecspgh.org)

# School Logistics, Policies and Procedures

## Admissions and Enrollment

ECS is an independent public school established and operated under a charter.

ECS complies with all applicable federal, state and local laws in providing equal opportunity to all students. **Consistent with the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act (43 P. S. § § 951—963), a student may not be denied access to a free and appropriate public education, nor may a student be subject to disciplinary action on account of race, sex, color, religion, sexual orientation, national origin or disability. Additionally, the charter school will not discriminate in its admission policies or practices on the basis of intellectual or athletic ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, proficiency in the English language or any other illegal basis.**

A student may not be excluded from school programs because the student has a disability, the student is pregnant, or the student is an eligible student identified under Chapter 711 (relating to special education services and programs).

All resident children of the city of Pittsburgh in the grade levels served by ECS qualify for admission. The Charter School Law defines a student's school district of residence as the school district in this Commonwealth in which the parents or guardians of a child reside. 24 P.S. §17-1703-A. If space is available, ECS may enroll nonresident students.

The re-enrollment process for the 2018-2019 school year will begin in January of 2019. The re-enrollment form must be submitted for every student who is currently enrolled in Grades K-8.

A student who is currently enrolled at the Environmental Charter School is **NOT** automatically re-enrolled for the next year. The student's parent/guardian **MUST** notify ECS of the student's intentions to return through the completion of the re-enrollment process (through our online portal, Schoolmint).

The number of available spaces in each grade for the following school year is determined after the close of the re-enrollment period.

An electronic notification will be sent through SchoolMint when re-enrollment is complete. A current ECS family, who has a sibling applying, must apply using their SchoolMint account. This automatically connects the siblings.

New families who wish to apply for the 2019-2020 school year can apply to ECS beginning October 1st through the electronic enrollment software. If there are more students than open spaces, these families will go into a lottery that will be held in February. Students not being given spots for the 2019-2020 year will be put on a waitlist and enrolled if a spot opens up. The waiting list dissolves at the end of each school year and therefore if you do not obtain a space in the lottery, you must reapply each year.

An application is not a guarantee of admission. Students are admitted depending upon the number of vacancies that occur at each grade level. For those students applying under a Sibling Preference, a Sibling Lottery will be held in the event there are more siblings applying than seats available in any particular grade. A sibling shall be defined as one of two or more individuals having at least one common parent/guardian.

If your child is not admitted through the lottery process and you are still interested in having him/her attend the charter school, you must reapply for the next school year.

## **Anti-Bullying Policy**

The Board of Trustees recognizes the importance of a safe school environment to the educational process of Environmental Charter School. The Board has determined that a safe and civil environment in school is necessary for students to learn and to achieve high academic standards. Bullying, like other disruptive or violent behaviors that disrupt both a student's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate its students in a safe environment, is prohibited at Environmental Charter School. Because students learn by example, school administrators, faculty, staff, students and volunteers are directed to: demonstrate appropriate behavior, treat others with civility and respect and refuse to tolerate bullying.

"Bullying" is defined as *an intentional electronic, written, verbal or physical act, or a series of acts:*

1. directed at another student or students;
2. which occurs in a "school setting" or occurs outside of school and the outside of school conduct materially and substantially interferes with the educational process or program in the school, as allowed by law;
3. that is severe, persistent or pervasive; and
4. that has the effect of doing any of the following:
  - substantially interfering with a student's education;
  - creating a threatening environment; or
  - substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school;

A "school setting" shall mean in the school, on school grounds, on school property, at any school testing sites or other sites used by the school, on the school's server or school's electronic, web-based, Internet or online programs, in school vehicles, at designated bus stops or at any activity sponsored, supervised or sanctioned by the school and any time spent necessarily traveling to and from these locations. Additionally, any student who is out of school conduct materially and substantially interferes with the educational process in the school is also subject to this Policy.

Students shall conduct themselves in a manner in keeping with their levels of development, maturity, and demonstrated capabilities with a proper regard for the rights and welfare of other students, school staff, volunteers, and contractors.

The Board believes that standards for student behavior must be set cooperatively through interaction among the students, parents and guardians, staff, and community members of the school, producing an atmosphere that encourages students to grow in self-discipline. The development of this atmosphere requires respect for self and others, as well as for school and community property on the part of students, staff, and community members.

Because bystander support of bullying can bolster these behaviors, the school prohibits both active and passive support for acts of bullying. The staff encourages all students to refuse to engage in these acts and to report them immediately to the Principal of the school.

Consequences and appropriate remedial actions for a student or staff member who commits one or more acts of bullying may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including in-school or out-of-school suspension from the charter school and/or expulsion or other disciplinary removal from the charter school, in the case of a student, and/or suspension or termination in the case of an employee, as set forth in the ECS Code of Conduct or Employee handbook.

Consequences for a student who commits an act of bullying shall be unique to the individual incident and will vary in method and severity according to the nature of the behavior, the developmental age of the student, and the student's history of problem behaviors and performance, and must be consistent with the school's approved code of student conduct. Remedial measures shall be designed to: correct the problem behavior; prevent

another occurrence of the behavior; and protect the victim of the act. Depending upon the incident, expulsion may be recommended to the Board.

The Board requires the Principal at the school to be responsible for receiving complaints alleging violations of this Policy. All school employees are required to report alleged violations of this Policy to the Principal. All other members of the school community, including students, parents, volunteers, and visitors, are encouraged to report any act that may be a violation of this Policy. Reports may be made anonymously, but formal disciplinary action may not be based solely on the basis of an anonymous report without further investigation.

The Board requires the Principal to be responsible for determining whether an alleged act constitutes a violation of this Policy. In so doing, the Principal shall conduct a prompt, thorough, and complete investigation of each alleged incident. An investigation is to be conducted within three school days after a report or complaint is made known to the Principal.

The Board prohibits reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of bullying. The consequences and appropriate remedial action for a person who engages in reprisal or retaliation shall be determined by the administrator after consideration of the nature, severity, and circumstances of the act.

The Board prohibits any person from falsely accusing another of bullying. The consequences and appropriate remedial action for a person found to have falsely accused another of bullying may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension and/or expulsion. Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a school employee found to have falsely accused another of bullying shall be disciplined in accordance with school policies, procedures, and agreements.

The Board requires school officials to annually disseminate the Policy to all school staff, students, and parents, along with a statement explaining that it applies to all applicable acts of bullying that occur on school property, at school-sponsored functions, or in a school vehicle and to develop procedures for investigating and addressing any alleged violations of this Policy.

The Board further requires school officials to ensure that this Policy and procedures for reporting bullying incidents are reviewed with the students within ninety (90) days after the Policy is adopted and at least once each school year thereafter.

The Board directs Administration to develop procedures necessary to implement this Policy and to develop appropriate prevention, intervention and education strategies related to bullying.

The Board directs that this Policy be included in the Student Handbook/Code of Conduct and be made available on the school's website as well as in a prominent location at the school's main office.

Environmental Charter School will comply with applicable federal and state laws relating to bullying, including but not limited to those requirements delineated in the Charter School Law, Chapter 12 of Title 22 of the Pennsylvania Code and the applicable House Bill 1067 Public School Code amendments relating to bullying.

Environmental Charter will comply with applicable federal and state laws, including Chapter 711 of Title 22 of the Pennsylvania Code and applicable provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA 2004) and its applicable implementing regulations regarding the discipline of special education students and thought-to-be eligible students who engage in an act of bullying.

Environmental Charter School will further comply with applicable federal and state laws, regarding protected handicapped students and applicable sections of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and its applicable implementing regulations.

## TO REPORT AN ACT OF BULLYING, CONTACT:

Upper School: Dr. Mandy Cribbs, 829 Milton St, Pittsburgh, PA 15218, 412-247-7970

Lower School: Mrs. Ashley Bergman, 309 S. Braddock Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15221, 412-242-1480

## **Attendance**

Daily attendance at school is expected of every student unless otherwise excused. Students are to attend all classes and are to be in class on time. We encourage you to plan family vacations around the school calendar. Violation of the school's attendance policy is grounds for expulsion from the charter school and/or referral to the school district of residence for truancy prosecution.

### **Absent from School Procedure**

If a child is absent from school, an office manager will call or email home and confirm the absence. The office manager will remind the parent/guardian to submit a written excuse upon the return from school. The excuse must be in writing and submitted to the office or by this [e-form](#) within three days of the child's return to school.

If no excuse note accompanies the student when he/she/they returns to school, the absence will be recorded as unexcused. **If a note is not received after three days, the absence remains unexcused.** The parent/guardian will receive a notice regarding the unexcused absence. The notice shall include a description of the legal penalties established by law for violation of the compulsory attendance requirements.

Upon the third unexcused absence, the school will report such truant behavior to the Department of Education. *It is the responsibility of ECS to enforce the compulsory attendance laws in accordance with the Public School Code.* ECS is also now responsible for filing citations with magisterial district courts or referring truancy to the local Children and Youth Services agency.

Please submit a physician's excuse when medical attention is received. Parents are also required to submit a physician's excuse for every absence after the tenth (10<sup>th</sup>) cumulative day of excused absences that did not include a physician excuse. Failure to supply a physician's excuse for absences beyond ten (10) days will result in an unexcused absence.

### **What is an excused absence/tardy?**

1. Personal illness or injury. Any absence for more than three (3) days requires a note from a physician.
2. A visit to a medical or dental professional. A note from doctor or dentist is required to consider this as excused.
3. Serious illness in the immediate family (those living in the home) including grandparents, parents, brothers and sisters.
4. Death in the immediate family.
5. Observance of a religious holiday. An absence may be considered excused if the tenets of a religion, to which a student or his/her parent adhere, require observance of a religious event.
6. Pending placement in an alternative program.
7. Lack of proper immunizations or waiver (*one day only*).
8. Other absences as approved by the CEO and/or Principal and as allowed by law.
9. Pre-approved family trips.
10. Court or Administrative Proceedings. An absence resulting from the attendance of a student at the proceedings of a court or an administrative tribunal if the student is a party to the action or under subpoena as a witness
11. Out-of-School suspensions. (A student who is suspended is absent but counted as an excused absence for reporting purposes.)
12. Quarantine.
13. Personal illness or injury.



## Unexcused Absences/Unexcused Tardiness

1. No parent contact (through a written/email excuse) with the Charter School giving an explanation for the absence.
2. Lack of proper immunizations or *waiver after the first day*.
3. Absence due to loss of bus privilege.
4. Family trips that were not pre-approved or for which approval was not granted.
5. All absences will be treated as unexcused until Charter School receives a written excuse explaining the reason(s) for an absence. Parents/guardians and students should submit the written explanation **within three calendar days of the absence**. If the Parent/Guardian fails to provide a written excuse within three days of the absence, the absence will be permanently counted as unexcused.
6. Other reasons not noted as excused.

## Consequences

In addition to the consequences listed in this Student Code of Conduct, any parent/guardian of a student who fails to comply with this policy or the compulsory attendance requirement of the Public School Code of Pennsylvania will be reported to the School District of residence. Compulsory attendance prosecution may be pursued and a District Magistrate could impose fines and such other actions as allowed by law.

If a child is absent three (3) consecutive school days, due to illness, a signed doctor's note must be presented to the child's teacher when the child returns to school. The note must explain the reason and the dates of the absence.

**Students that are absent from the charter school for ten (10) or more consecutive days without appropriate documentation will be removed from the charter school's rolls.**

## Early Dismissal

Any student who must leave school early or during regular school hours must submit in a note writing or from his/her parent or guardian stating the time the student needs to be dismissed, the name of any person other than the parent or guardian who will be picking up the student, and the reason early dismissal is necessary. The early dismissal must be in writing and submitted to the office or to [transportationupperschool@ecspgh.org](mailto:transportationupperschool@ecspgh.org) or [transportationlowerschool@ecspgh.org](mailto:transportationlowerschool@ecspgh.org).

A student who is being dismissed from school early must be signed out by the parent or guardian, or the designated person, from the school office.

## Family Trips

ECS students may be excused from attendance to participate in family trips. ECS families wishing to travel during the school year must submit a written request to the Principal for approval of the travel dates. The Principal must receive a parent's written request (hard copy or email) at least two (2) weeks prior to the travel dates. Parents will be informed, in writing, when the dates are approved or the reason(s) for the request being denied. **There will be no trip absences approved during the first two weeks of school; however, extenuating circumstances will be considered (example: student admitted to ECS after the lottery date, out-of-town wedding for immediate family)**. ECS will review the following before approving a trip: the length of the trip – up to 10 days per year will be considered for approval; the number of absences and late arrivals accumulated prior to the scheduled trip; student's academic performance and ECS's standardized testing schedule.

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to contact the student's teacher(s) a minimum of one week in advance of travel to request assignments that will be missed. All work must be submitted to the teacher(s) upon returning to ECS. Requests for approval will not be accepted after the travel dates. Unapproved trips dates will be considered as unexcused absences – no missed work or assessments may be made up.

## Missed Assignments, Assessments or Projects

Students are required to and expected to make up assignments, assessments and projects missed when absent or otherwise not in school. If a student has been absent for an extended period, he/she/they should request the assistance of his/her teacher in creating a schedule to complete the missed work. Students with excessive unexcused absences and/or tardies and/or early dismissals risk not advancing to the next grade and/or academic failure depending on the circumstances and at the discretion of Administration.

## **Tardy**

Students are expected to arrive on time for school. Any student who reports to school after 8:30am (Upper School) or 8:45am (Lower School) will be counted as tardy, and must be signed in at the office. A student is not counted as tardy if the bus is late. A child who misses more than four hours of school will be counted absent for the full day. When arriving late at school, the student must bring a note explaining the lateness. If a student is arriving late due to a doctor/dentist appointment, the student must bring a note from that office. If no note accompanies the child, the lateness will be unexcused. Parents/guardians have three days to submit a note explaining the lateness. Once the three days pass, the lateness remains unexcused. All late students must report to the school office. Please note tardies can be excused or unexcused. The list of excused absences/excused absences and unexcused absences/unexcused tardiness guides school determination of whether a tardy is excused or unexcused. Five unexcused tardies shall be treated by the school as one (1) unexcused absence. Pennsylvania law dictates how the Charter School must report absences to the student's school district of residence. Please see Unexcused Absences/Unexcused Tardiness, "Consequences" below for further information regarding such mandatory reporting as well as possible disciplinary action, up to and including referral to the Board of Trustees for expulsion.

## **Bathroom/Restroom Usage**

The Environmental Charter School aims to support transgender students, while also ensuring the safety and comfort of all students. The use of restrooms by transgender students requires schools to consider numerous factors, including, but not limited to: the transgender student's preference; protecting student privacy; maximizing social integration of the transgender student; minimizing stigmatization of the student; ensuring equal opportunity to participate; the student's age; and protecting the safety of the students involved.

A transgender student who expresses a need or desire for increased privacy should be provided with reasonable alternative arrangements. Reasonable alternative arrangements may include the use of a single stall restroom. Any alternative arrangement should be provided in a way that protects the student's ability to keep his, her, or their transgender status confidential.

No student should be required to use a restroom that conflicts with the student's gender identity. As such, all students will have access to the restroom that coincides with their gender identity. Any student who expresses a need or desire for increased privacy should be provided with reasonable alternative arrangements as outlined in the paragraph above.

## **Birthdays**

Birthdays are an important part of childhood years. Birthday treats can be shared with classmates during lunch, recess, or snack. Your child's homebase teacher will tell you what time is most appropriate within his/her classroom schedule and notify you of any life-threatening food allergies that may exist in your child's classroom. Parents and students are encouraged to provide healthy snacks or non-food items when possible. Any birthday treats to be shared with classmates must be provided to the child's teacher ahead of time along with a list of ingredients. Please refrain from distributing birthday invitations at school.

# Computer Usage Policy/Acceptable Use Policy

Students are encouraged to use their classroom computers to enhance their educational experience. This will include, at times, researching topics using the Internet. All students and their parents are **required to sign and return the acknowledgement of the *ECS Technology/Acceptable Use Agreement*** at the beginning of the school year (this form is included with the acknowledgement of the family handbook). This agreement details the responsibilities of students at the Environmental Charter School and will be kept on file at the school. In the event that a student violates this agreement, disciplinary action will be taken in accordance with the *ECS Discipline Policy* and/or the *ECS Code of Conduct*.

## **Purpose**

ECS relies on its computer network to conduct business and student learning. To ensure appropriate use of the School's Computer Resources, ECS has created this *Computer Usage Policy* (the "Policy").

It is every computer User's (as defined below) duty to use the Computer Resources responsibly, professionally, ethically and lawfully. Access to these resources may be designated a privilege not a right.

## **Definitions**

From time to time in this Policy, we refer to terms that require definitions:

- The term "**Computer Resources**" refers to the Charter School's computer network. Specifically, Computer Resources, whether owned or leased, including, but not limited to: host computers, file servers, application servers, communication servers, mail servers, fax servers, web servers, workstations, stand-alone computers, laptops, software, data files, and all internal and external computer and communications networks (for Example: Internet commercial online services, value-added networks, e-mail systems, instant messaging systems, internet sites) that may be accessed directly or indirectly from our computer network or by students during school hours, events, programs or activities. These terms also encompasses computer resources after school hours when conduct materially and substantially interferes with the school program.
- The term "**Users**" refers to all employees, independent contractors, consultants, temporary workers, students, family members and other persons or entities that use our Computer Resources.

## **Policy**

The Computer Resources are the property of the Charter School. Users are permitted access to the computer system to assist them in the performance of their jobs and academic purposes. Occasional, limited, and appropriate personal use of the computer system is permitted when the use does not: (1) interfere with the User's work performance or academic performance; (2) interfere with any other User's work performance or academic performance; (3) have undue impact on the operation of the computer system; (4) violate any other provision of this policy or any other policy, guideline, or standard of the Charter School. At all times, Users have the responsibility to use Computer Resources in an ethical and lawful manner.

Use of the computer system is a privilege that may be revoked at any time. In using or accessing our Computer Resources, Users must comply with the following provisions.

**NO EXPECTATION OF PRIVACY:** The computers and computer accounts given to Users are to assist them in the performance of their academic purposes. Users do not have an expectation of privacy in anything they create, store, send, or receive on the computer system. The computer system belongs to ECS should be used primarily for ECS's business and academic purposes.

**Monitoring the Online Activities of the Users:** Network monitoring tools are used to "police" Computer Resources of all Users. Teachers are required to monitor their student's activities while using the Computer Resources in all learning environments.

**WAIVER OF PRIVACY RIGHTS:** Users expressly waive any right of privacy in anything they create, store, send, or receive on the computer or through the Internet or any other computer network. Users consent to allowing personnel of ECS to access and review all materials Users create, store, send, or receive on the computer or through the Internet or any other computer network. Users understand that ECS may use human or automated means to monitor use of their Computer Resources.

## **PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES**

- **PROHIBITED USES:** Without prior written permission from ECS, Computer Resources may not be used for dissemination or storage of commercial or personal advertisements, mass mailings, solicitations, promotions, destructive programs (that is, viruses or self-replicating code), downloading non academic related media, plagiarism, hacking or any other unauthorized or illegal or inappropriate use.
- **INAPPROPRIATE OR UNLAWFUL MATERIAL:** Material that is fraudulent, harassing, sexually explicit, pornographic, violent or advocating of violence, profane, obscene, intimidating, threatening, defamatory, discriminatory, or otherwise unlawful or inappropriate may not be sent by e-mail, instant message or other forms of electronic communication (such as bulletin board systems, postings, blogs, newsgroups, chat groups) or accessed, reviewed, displayed on or stored in the Charter School's Computer Resources. Users encountering or receiving this kind of material have the responsibility to immediately report the incident to their teacher or Administrator.
- **SPOOFING AND SPAMMING:** Users may not, under any circumstances, use "spoofing" or other means to disguise their identities in sending e-mail or other electronic communication via bulletin boards, blogs, instant messages, newsgroups, chat groups or any other electronic means. Without expressed permission from the Charter School, Users may not send unsolicited ("spamming") e-mails to persons with whom they do not have a prior relationship or bona fide Charter School business purpose.
- **MISUSE OF SOFTWARE:** Without prior written authorization from ECS, Users may not do any of the following: (1) copy files or software for use on their home computers; (2) provide copies of software to any independent contractors or clients of ECS or to any third person; (3) modify, revise, transform, recast or adapt any software or (4) reverse-engineer, disassemble, or decompile any software. Users who become aware of any misuse of software or violation of copyright law have the responsibility to immediately report the incident to their teacher or direct supervisor.
- **COMMUNICATION OF TRADE SECRETS:** Unless expressly authorized by ECS, sending, transmitting, or otherwise ECS Charter School is strictly prohibited. Unauthorized dissemination of this information may result in substantial civil liability as well as severe criminal penalties.
- **OTHER:** Unless expressly authorized by ECS, the following are also unacceptable uses of Computer Resources, as defined herein:
  1. Users may not use Computer Resources to access material that is profane or obscene (pornography of any kind), that advocates illegal acts, or that advocates violence or discrimination towards other people (hate literature).
  2. Users may not post personal information on the Internet about themselves or other people. Personal contact information includes address, telephone, school address, work address, pictures or video bites, clips, etc.
  3. Students may not agree to meet with someone they have met on the Internet without their parent's approval and participation.
  4. Users may not attempt to gain unauthorized access to any other computer system. This includes attempting to log in through another person's account or access another person's files. These actions are illegal, even if only for the purposes of "browsing", "snooping" or "electronic discovery".

5. Users may not deliberately disrupt or harm hardware or systems, interfere with computer performance, interfere with another's ability to use equipment and systems, or destroy data.
6. Users may not use Computer Resources to engage in illegal acts, such as arranging for a drug sale, distribution, drug purchase, or the purchase or sale or distribution of alcohol or tobacco products, or to engage or attempt to engage in criminal activity. Users may not engage in acts of cyber-bullying as explained more fully in the school's anti-bullying policy.
7. Users may not use the Computer Resources to solicit information with the intent of using such information to cause personal harm or bodily injury to another or others.
8. Users may not post information that could endanger an individual, cause personal damage or a danger of service disruption.
9. Users may not knowingly or recklessly post false or defamatory information about a person or organization.
10. Users may not intentionally seek information on, obtain copies of, or modify files, other data, or passwords belonging to other Users.
11. Users may not indirectly or directly make connections that create "backdoors" to ECS, other organizations, community groups, etc. that allow unauthorized access to the Computer Resources or ECS.
12. Users may not use obscene, profane, lewd, vulgar, rude, inflammatory, hateful, threatening, or disrespectful language.
13. Users may not engage in personal attacks, including prejudicial or discriminatory attacks.
14. Users may not harass another person or persistently act in a manner that distresses or annoys another person.
15. Users may not re-post a message that was sent to them privately without permission of the person who sent them the message.
16. Users may not forward or post chain letters or engage in "spamming." Spamming is sending an annoying or unnecessary message to a large number of people.
17. Users will not install or reproduce unauthorized or unlicensed software on Computer Resources.
18. Users may not plagiarize works that they find on the Internet or other resources.
19. Users may not use Computer Resources for private business activities or unreasonable personal use.
20. Users may not use Computer Resources for unauthorized political lobbying or solicitation.
21. Students will not download files unless approved by their teacher.
22. Students will follow the directions of their teachers and administrators when using Computer Resources and will obey all school rules regarding Computer Resource usage.

23. Students will not create, access, post or share blogs, e-mails, instant messages, web pages, files, or other electronic media or communications that promote bullying, illegal activities, harassing activities, or otherwise violate established school or classroom rules.

**STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT:** Student behavior on Computer Resources is also governed by the behavioral expectations, which appear in the ECS Student Code of Conduct.

Teachers and other staff members will make every attempt to monitor and guide students toward appropriate materials and the use of the system. It is understood that access to the Computer Resources is a privilege, not a right. Failure to abide by the rules in this document could result in the revocation of access privileges, disciplinary action (including suspension and/or expulsion from the ECS), or legal action, as deemed appropriate. Parents/guardians or perpetrators may be billed for damages to equipment. Illegal activities will be referred to the appropriate law enforcement agency. Actions warranting suspension and/or expulsion will be subject to the due process procedures outlined in the ECS Student Code of Conduct.

## **PASSWORDS**

- **RESPONSIBILITY FOR PASSWORDS:** Users are responsible for safeguarding their passwords for access to the computer system. Individual passwords should not be printed, stored online, or given to others without express consent of the Principal. Users are responsible for all transactions made using their passwords. No User may access the computer system with another User's password or account.
- **PASSWORDS DO NOT IMPLY PRIVACY:** Use of passwords to gain access to the computer system or to encode particular files or messages does not imply that Users have an expectation of privacy in the material they create or receive on the computer system. The Charter School has global passwords that permit access to all material stored on their computer system regardless of whether that material has been encoded with a particular User's password.

## **SECURITY**

- **ACCESSING OTHER USERS' FILES:** Users may not alter or copy a file belonging to another User without first obtaining permission from the owner of the file. Ability to read, alter, or copy a file belonging to another User does not imply permission to read, alter, or copy that file. Users may not use the computer system to "snoop" or pry into the affairs of other Users by unnecessarily reviewing the files and e-mail.
- **ACCESSING OTHER COMPUTERS AND NETWORKS:** A User's ability to connect to other computer systems through the network or by a modem does not imply a right to connect to those systems or to make use of those systems unless specifically authorized by the administrators of those systems.
- **COMPUTER SECURITY:** Users may not attempt to circumvent ECS data protection measures or uncover security loopholes or bugs. Users may not gain or attempt to gain unauthorized access to restricted areas or files on the computer system. Users should not tamper with any software protections or restrictions placed on computer applications, files, or directories. Users who engage in this type of activity may be subject to loss of computer privileges, disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from ECS or termination of employment as well as civil and criminal liability.
- **INTERNET FILTERING TECHNOLOGY:** ECS employs firewall solutions. At a minimum it is meant to block visual depictions that are obscene, child pornography, and harmful to minors. If a user finds a website deemed inappropriate it must be reported to the User's teacher, Principal or immediate supervisor. After review of the site appropriate steps will be taken to shield the site from Users. For purposes of bona fide research or other lawful purposes certain blocked sites may be made available for those purposes only after approval of the request by the Principal. ECS does not warrant the effectiveness of Internet filtering.

## VIRUSES

- **VIRUS DETECTION:** Viruses can cause substantial damage to computer systems. Each User is responsible for taking reasonable precautions to ensure he/she/they does not introduce viruses to the Charter School's network. To that end, all material received on floppy disk or other magnetic or optical medium and all materials downloaded from the Internet or from computers or networks that do not belong to the Charter School MUST be scanned for viruses and other destructive programs before being placed onto the computer system. Users should understand that their home computers and laptops might contain viruses. All disks transferred from home computers and laptops to the Charter School's network MUST be scanned for viruses. Any User receiving email from a questionable source MUST contact the Principal before opening the email or any attachment included in the email.
- **ACCESSING THE INTERNET:** To ensure security and avoid the spread of viruses, Users accessing the Internet through a computer attached to the Charter School's network must do so through an approved Internet firewall.

## ENCRYPTION SOFTWARE

- **USE OF ENCRYPTION SOFTWARE:** Users may not install or use encryption software on any of the Charter School computers without first obtaining written permission from the Principal. Users may not use passwords or encryption keys that are unknown to the Principal.
- **EXPORT RESTRICTIONS:** The federal government has imposed restrictions on export of programs or files containing encryption technology (such as e-mail programs that permit encryption of messages and electronic commerce software that encodes transactions). Software containing encryption technology is not to be placed on the Internet or transmitted in any way outside the United States.

## E-MAIL

- **E-MAIL DISPOSAL:** Unless directed to the contrary by the Principal, Users should discard inactive e-mail after sixty days. Information subject to federal and/or state laws and regulations governing mandatory retention of records and electronic communication may require you to maintain files or documents for a specified period of time. It is the User's responsibility to know which records are subject to these conditions and to comply with these laws and regulations.
- **DRAFTING E-MAILS:** Because they may appear informal, e-mail messages are sometimes off-hand, like a conversation, and not as carefully thought out as a letter or memorandum. Like any other document, an e-mail message or other computer information can later be used to indicate what a User knew or felt. You should keep this in mind when creating e-mail messages and other documents. Even after you delete an e-mail message or close a computer session, it may still be recoverable and may remain on the system.

## MISCELLANEOUS

- **UNAUTHORIZED DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION OF MINORS:** It is a violation of state laws, including, but not limited to, Title 22 of the Pennsylvania Code and federal laws, including but not limited, to the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA"), to access data of a student you do not directly instruct or to disclose information about a student without parental permission or absent an exception to the disclosure requirements. All access and distribution of student data is recorded. Questions regarding the disclosure of student information must be directed to the Executive Director prior to disclosure and must conform to the Charter School's student records/confidentiality policies.
- **PRIVILEGED ATTORNEY-CLIENT COMMUNICATIONS:** Confidential e-mail sent from or to in-house counsel or an attorney representing the Company should include this warning header on each page "ATTORNEY-CLIENT PRIVILEGED: DO NOT FORWARD WITHOUT PERMISSION."
- **COMPLIANCE WITH APPLICABLE LAWS AND LICENSES:** In their use of Computer Resources, Users must comply with all software licenses/copyrights and all other state, federal, and international laws governing intellectual property and online activities. You should not copy and distribute copyrighted material (e.g., software, database files, documentation, articles, graphics files, and downloaded

information) through the e-mail system or by any other means unless you have confirmed in advance from appropriate sources that the Charter School has the right to copy or distribute the material. Failure to observe a copyright may result in disciplinary action by the Charter School, as well as legal action by the copyright owner. Any questions concerning these rights should be directed to your teacher, the Executive Director, or direct supervisor or the Office of the General Counsel.

- **CESSATION OF ACCESS:** Upon termination or ending of employment, expulsion from ECS, withdrawal from ECS etc., no further access to or use of Computer Resources is permitted without express authorization from the Principal.

**NO ADDITIONAL RIGHTS:** This Policy is not intended for and does not grant Users any contractual rights.

Parents/Guardians and students are required to sign the *Acknowledgement of Agreement* form relating to this Policy at the beginning of the school year.

## **Conferences**

The Environmental Charter School at Frick Park hosts fall and spring parent/guardian/caregiver-teacher conferences. This is an important time to meet with your child's teacher and discuss student progress. There is no school for students on conference days. Teachers will schedule individual conferences with parent(s) or caregivers directly.

If you need to meet with your child's teacher at any other time, we encourage you to set up an appointment over the phone or by e-mail. This will allow the teacher time to prepare any work samples or other information for your conversation. Teacher emails follow the format: [firstname.lastname@ecspgh.org](mailto:firstname.lastname@ecspgh.org). To reach staff by phone, please call the main office 412-247-7970 and the office manager can direct your call.

## **Custody Arrangements**

If there is a legal arrangement of custody concerning your child, there must be a current copy of that court document on file at the school. A note saying that an individual is not able to have contact with your child is not sufficient. Law requires the school to have a *copy of court orders and custody arrangements for reference*. The same rules apply to all Protection From Abuse (PFA) orders. For questions pertaining to custody records, please contact building principals.

## **Daily Schedule**

### **Lower School Schedule**

Doors Open: 8:15 a.m.

School Day Begins: 8:45 a.m.

Dismissal Begins: 3:40 p.m.

Dismissal Concludes: 4:15 p.m.

Lower School Office Hours: 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

### **Upper School Schedule**

Doors Open: 8:00 a.m.

School Day Begins: 8:30 a.m.

Dismissal Begins: 3:30 p.m.

Dismissal Concludes: 4:00 p.m.

Upper School Office Hours: 7:45 a.m.-4:15 p.m.

**1/2 Days for Students:** Dismissal time at Upper School is 11:30. Dismissal time for Lower School is 11:40. Students eat lunches in classrooms on 1/2 days, and **all ECS classrooms** remain peanut/tree nut free. All packed lunches



must be free of these items. We ask parents to respect the daily learning hours and try to schedule doctor and dentist appointments without interrupting the day.

## **ECS Student Code of Conduct and ECS Discipline Policy**

All ECS students are guaranteed important rights and privileges. Among these are the rights to live and learn in a safe, orderly, and clean environment. Students have the right to be respected and to have their property respected and protected. In order to safeguard these rights, students are expected to assume and fulfill equally important responsibilities. The ECS staff believes that well-informed students will make good decisions, thereby avoiding the need for restorative or punitive action. Productive decision-making is encouraged through a system of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS).

The discipline policy at ECS is a collaborative effort on the part of the school, parents, and students. Discipline does not necessarily mean punishment. Discipline does mean the development of attitudes that lead the student to respect the need for rules and the willingness to follow them. Our expectations for student behavior are based on common sense, respect for the rights of other and self-respect. Good self-discipline reflects good character. It sends a message about one's commitment to do what is right. This commitment comes from within. It cannot be forced upon an individual. The rules that are outlined here enable the school to function within a safe environment. Each person must provide the self-discipline that shapes the decisions that he/she/they makes about specific behaviors.

To support our discipline policy/philosophy, we have developed the following core expectations:

### **Lower School**

Be Safe  
Be Responsible  
Be Kind

### **Upper School**

Be Safe  
Be Respectful  
Be Accountable

**Policy Statement:** The Board of Trustees of The Environmental Charter School has the authority to make reasonable and necessary rules governing the conduct of students in school. The Board of Trustees is committed to creating a safe and positive learning environment wherein students recognize their rights and responsibilities, as well as those of other students, teachers, parents, administrators, and members of the school community. The following ECS Code of Conduct has been approved by the Board of Trustees and directs student behavior in school.

The ECS Code of Student Conduct must be implemented with attention to creating an environment where expected behaviors are taught and positively reinforced, and where student interventions match the actions. ECS employs a system of positive behavior support and interventions.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the ECS Student Code of Conduct is to define the rights and responsibilities of student and parent/guardian members of the school community, the standards for acceptable conduct of students, and the consequences for failure to meet those standards. In doing so, the Board of Trustees seeks to provide a safe environment in which students can learn.

### **Equal Opportunity**

The Environmental Charter School complies with all applicable federal, state and local laws in providing equal opportunity to all students. The Charter School prohibits discrimination in admission, grading, discipline or any other activity based on race, sex, color, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, genetic information or any other classification protected by law.

## **Scope of the ECS Student Code of Conduct**

This Code of Conduct (the “Code”) applies to conduct Environmental Charter School students that occur:

- On school grounds at any time;
- Off school grounds at any school-related activity, function or event;
- Off school grounds when the conduct may reasonably be expected to (i) undermine school authority; (ii) endanger the safety of students, teachers, administrators, or any other member of the school community; or (iii) interferes with the educational process or program in the school;
- And while traveling to and from school on school buses, vans, or other transportation regardless of the School or District of ownership, or on public transportation and the time spent traveling to and from bus stops.

## **Rights and Responsibilities of Students**

### **General**

Student responsibilities include regular school attendance, conscientious effort in classroom work and homework, and conformance to school rules and regulations. Most of all, students are responsible to share with the administration and faculty a responsibility to develop a climate within the school that is conducive to wholesome learning and living.

No student has the right to interfere with the education of fellow students. It is the responsibility of each student to respect the rights of teachers, students, administrators and all others who are involved in the educational process.

Students should express their ideas and opinions in a respectful manner.

### **It is the responsibility of the students to conform to the following:**

1. Be aware of all rules and regulations for student behavior and conduct themselves in accordance with them. Students should assume that, until a rule is waived, altered or repealed in writing, it is in effect.
2. Volunteer information in matters relating to the health, safety and welfare of the school community and the protection of school property.
3. Dress and groom to meet standards of safety and health, and not to cause substantial disruption to the educational processes.
4. Assist the school staff in operating a safe school for the students enrolled therein.
5. Comply with Commonwealth and local laws.
6. Exercise proper care when using public facilities and equipment.
7. Attend school daily and be on time at all classes and other school functions.
8. Make up work when absent from school.
9. Pursue and attempt to complete satisfactorily the courses of study prescribed by local school authorities.
10. Report accurately in student media.
11. Not use obscene language in student media or on school premises.

ECS also has the right to impose consequences for acts or behaviors that are not specifically delineated within this Code including acts or behaviors that threaten the health, safety and/or welfare of members of the school community, disrupt the learning environment or undermine the educational mission of ECS.

## **Behaviors Warranting Disciplinary Action**

Students who commit any of the listed offenses shall be subject to disciplinary action deemed appropriate by Administration. Disciplinary action for an offense may include, but is not limited to: disciplinary referrals and/or write-ups; detention; letters of apology; meetings with Administration, Disciplinary, teacher or the guidance

counselor; call to parent; suspension from school privileges or transportation; reflection assignments; make-up assignments; removal from class; referral to law enforcement authorities; referral to substance abuse treatment program or class; attendance at sensitivity class or training; alternative education; in-school or out-of-school suspension and/or referral to the Board for an expulsion hearing, as set forth in Chapter 12 of Title 22 of the Pennsylvania Code.

Any offense may receive a lesser, or a more severe consequence (up to and including out-of-school suspension and/or expulsion) at the discretion of Administration, depending on the severity of the offense, repetition of the offense, or the effect of the offense on the student or others.

*\*Disciplinary decisions are made on a case-by-case basis. However, some violations, including but not limited to: weapons violations, bullying, harassment, drug violations, violations involving serious bodily injury, and violations involving conduct that is illegal under the laws of Pennsylvania are considered extremely serious and will likely result in out-of-school suspension and/or referral to the Board of Trustees for expulsion from ECS.*

This list is not exhaustive of behaviors that may result in disciplinary action as deemed appropriate by ECS:

1. Disruption of school;
2. Disobedience or failure to obey directions from principals, teachers and other staff members;
3. Defiance or failure to follow established school or classroom rules;
4. Possession or use of prohibited equipment or materials, including but not limited to chewing gum, beepers, laser pointers, cell phones, iPods, mp3 players, Walkmans, or other items, telephonic, electronic or recording devices prohibited during school hours or programs;
5. Running and/or making excessive noise in the hall or building;
6. Trespassing, loitering and/or failing to provide school identification when reasonably requested;
7. Failing to attend class without a valid excuse;
8. Activating a fire alarm or shouting fire when there is no threat of fire or otherwise setting off a false alarm; or
9. Tardiness to school, class or other required educational program or leaving school, class or other required educational program without permission from teacher or other staff member in charge;
10. Failure to comply with School Dress Code;
11. Wearing colors of a gang with the intent to show allegiance to the gang; wearing sports paraphernalia with the intent to show allegiance to the gang; or wearing any article of clothing which contains a symbol of a gang;
12. Cursing or using vulgar, obscene or offensive language; or
13. Sending or forwarding any offensive, sexually-oriented, or threatening messages, pictures or symbols from any source (electronic, telephonic, written or verbal) to any other Member of the School Community;
14. Lying to school official or teacher, copying the work of another, cheating, plagiarizing the work of another, or forging a signature or note from another;
15. Abuse of Computer or Internet Privileges, including but not limited to: giving password to another individual, uses or attempting to use or access another individual's account; illegally downloading copyrighted materials from the internet; visits, sends, emails, creates or posts sites on the internet which contain sexually vulgar, illegal, disruptive, profane or obscene or explicit material; harming or destroying data of another student or person, the internet or other networks; creating, download or upload of computer viruses; or violates any rule contained in the Acceptable Use Policy;
16. Students shall respect property and shall not damage, destroy, or steal any property, including, but not limited to: painting or drawing graffiti on property; causing or attempting to cause damage to property; stealing or attempting to steal property on School Grounds or at any school-sponsored event;
17. Gambling, placing bets, attempting to place or take bets, taking bets, or other such acts;
18. Reckless Endangerment or ignoring the health, safety or welfare of any Member of the School Community by placing that person in danger of injury, or pain;

19. Threats: A student shall not communicate, directly or indirectly, any threat to another Member of the School Community that places him/her in fear of injury, pain, or ridicule;
20. Fighting, physical confrontations with any member or members of the school community
21. Assault or attempting to or causing bodily injury to another student or member of the school community;
22. Indecent Exposure or Inappropriate Touching, exposing or attempting to expose genitals to another member of the school community or touching or attempting to touch the genitals of another;
23. Possession, use, distribution, sale or attempt to possess, distribute or use or sell any tobacco product, cigarette lighters, matches, rolling papers, pipes, or other such paraphernalia;
24. Possession, Use, distribution, sale or attempt to possess, use distribute or sell alcohol, drugs, controlled substances, simulated drugs, non-prescribed medication, unauthorized medication or to be under the influence of any alcohol, drugs or unauthorized prescription or non-prescription medication. (Violations of the school's Medications Policy are also included. However, a student does not violate this rule if he/she/they is in possession of a drug prescribed to that student by a licensed physician and carried in the container supplied by a pharmacist showing the name of the student or a non-prescription medication where the student possesses a note from a parent or doctor and has otherwise complied with the school's Medications Policy.);
25. Destruction & theft of property. Students shall respect all property and shall not damage, destroy, or steal or attempt to damage or destroy or steal any property;
26. Vandalism or painting or drawing graffiti on property or attempting to paint or draw graffiti on property or attempt to commit vandalism;
27. Stealing or attempting to steal standardized tests or other classroom or school-wide assessments;
28. Bullying (including cyber-bullying) and violations of the school's Anti-bullying Policy, hitting, kicking, pushing, shoving, getting or attempting to get another person to hurt someone;
29. Using racial slurs, name-calling, teasing, taunting, verbal sexual harassment, and gossiping, spreading rumor;
30. Using threatening, obscene gestures, isolation, exclusion, stalking;
31. Harassment, including demands of sexual favors or acts that have the effect of harassing, threatening, intimidating or otherwise creating a hostile school environment because of someone's gender, age, race, color, sexual orientation (known or perceived), gender identity expression (known or perceived), national origin, religion, citizenship, disability, socioeconomic status and/or political beliefs or any other classification protected by law;
32. Engaging in any consensual sexual acts (i.e. oral or intercourse) on School Grounds or at any school sponsored event.
33. Forcing or attempting to force another Member of the School Community to engage in any sexual act. For the purposes of this rule, sexual acts shall include but are not limited to: intercourse; oral sex; groping sexual parts; or simulated sex;
34. Intentionally causing or attempting to cause physical injury or pain to any member of the school community (which includes students, volunteers, employees, contractors, visitors);
35. Causing or attempting to cause or threaten to cause serious bodily injury to another member of the school community, student, employees, contractor, administrator or visitor without regard to the value of human life or with a Weapon;
36. Using or attempting to use force to steal or attempt to steal property of another member of the school community;
37. Possession, use, distribution, transfer, concealment, sale or intent to possess, use, distribute, conceal, transfer or sell any weapon. Pursuant to the Safe Schools Act of the Pennsylvania Public School Code (Act 26 of 1995, Act 30 of 1997, and Act 36 of 1999), the term "weapon" shall include but not be limited to: any knife, cutting instrument, cutting tool, nun-chuck, firearm, shotgun, rifle, and any other tool, instrument or implement capable of inflicting serious bodily injury. Articles designed for other purposes may be treated as weapons depending upon the circumstances of a case (examples: laser pointer, lighters, belts, pencils, files, compasses, pepper spray, mace, razors, blades, ropes, look-alike weapons and tools.).

38. Engaging in, or attempting to engage in, any conduct which endangers the health, safety or welfare of any Member of the School Community;
39. Arson or setting fire or attempting to set fire on school grounds or school or district property or conveyances or at a school-sponsored activity or event;
40. Retaliation against a Member of the School Community for participation in any investigation, academic or disciplinary proceeding;
41. Activates the fire alarm when there is no threat of fire and the fire department is deployed or school is evacuated;
42. Bombing, threatening to bomb, using or threatening to use explosives or incendiary devices;
43. Committing or attempting to commit any activity that is illegal in Pennsylvania.

### **In-School Suspension**

1. A student may not receive an in-school suspension unless the student has been informed of the reasons for the suspension and has been given an opportunity to respond before the suspension becomes effective.
2. Communication to the parents or guardian shall follow the suspension action taken by the school.
3. When the in-school suspension exceeds 10 consecutive school days, an informal hearing with the principal shall be offered to the student and the student's parent or guardian prior to the 11th school day in accordance with the procedures in the Pennsylvania Code.
4. ECS has the responsibility to make provision for the student's education during the period of the in-school suspension

### **Out of School Suspension and Expulsion**

Exclusion from school may take the form of suspension or expulsion.

1. Suspension is exclusion from school for a period of 1 to 10 consecutive school days.
  - a. Suspensions may be given by the principal or administrator in charge at ECS.
  - b. A student may not be suspended until the student has been informed of the reasons for the suspension and given an opportunity to respond. Prior notice of the intended suspension need not be given when it is clear that the health, safety or welfare of the school community is threatened.
  - c. The parents or guardians shall be notified immediately when the student is suspended.
  - d. When the suspension exceeds 3 school days, the student and parent shall be given the opportunity for an informal hearing consistent with the requirements of the Pennsylvania Code.
  - e. Suspensions may not be made to run consecutively beyond the 10 school day period.
  - f. Students shall have the responsibility to make up exams and work missed while being disciplined by suspension and shall be permitted to complete these assignments within guidelines established by the Board of Trustees.
2. Expulsion is exclusion from school by the Board of Trustees for a period exceeding 10 school days and may be permanent expulsion from the school rolls. Expulsions require a prior formal hearing pursuant to the Pennsylvania Code.
3. During the period prior to the hearing and decision of the Board in an expulsion case, the student shall be placed in his normal class except as set forth in subsection (4).
4. If it is determined after an informal hearing that a student's presence in his normal class would constitute a threat to the health, safety or welfare of others and it is not possible to hold a formal hearing within the period of a suspension, the student may be excluded from school for more than 10 school days. A student may not be excluded from school for longer than 15 school days without a formal hearing unless mutually agreed upon by both parties. Any student so excluded shall be provided with alternative education, which may include home study.
5. Students who are under 17 years of age are still subject to the compulsory school attendance law even though expelled and shall be provided an education.
  - a. The initial responsibility for providing the required education rests with the student's parents or guardian, through placement in another school, tutorial or correspondence study, or another educational program approved by the charter school.

- b. Within 30 days of action by the Board, the parents or guardians shall submit to the school written evidence that the required education is being provided as described in paragraph (1) or that they are unable to do so. If the parents or guardians are unable to provide the required education, the charter school shall, within 10 days of receipt of the notification, make provision for the student's education. A student with a disability shall be provided educational services as required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act 2004.
- c. If the approved educational program is not complied with, the school may take action in accordance with 42 Pa.C.S. Chapter 63 (relating to the Juvenile Act) to ensure that the child will receive a proper education. See § 12.1(b) (relating to free education and attendance).

## **Hearings**

**General Hearings:** Education is a statutory right, and students shall be afforded due process if they are to be excluded from school. In a case involving a possible expulsion, the student is entitled to a formal hearing.

**Formal Hearings:** A formal hearing is required in all expulsion actions. This hearing may be held before the Board or an authorized committee of the Board, or a qualified hearing examiner appointed by the Board. When a committee of the Board or a hearing examiner conducts the hearing, a majority vote of the entire Board is required to expel a student. The following due process requirements shall be observed with regard to the formal hearing:

1. Notification of the charges shall be sent to the student's parents or guardians by certified mail.
2. At least 3 days' notice of the time and place of the hearing shall be given. A copy of the expulsion policy, notice that legal counsel may represent the student and hearing procedures shall be included with the hearing notice. A student may request the rescheduling of the hearing when the student demonstrates good cause for an extension.
3. The hearing shall be held in private unless the student or parent requests a public hearing.
4. The student may be represented by counsel, at the expense of the parents or guardians, and may have a parent or guardian attend the hearing.
5. The student has the right to be presented with the names of witnesses against the student, and copies of the statements and affidavits of those witnesses.
6. The student has the right to request that the witnesses appear in person and answer questions or be cross-examined.
7. The student has the right to testify and present witnesses on his own behalf.
8. A written or audio record shall be kept of the hearing. The student is entitled, at the student's expense, to a copy. A copy shall be provided at no cost to a student who is indigent.
9. The proceeding shall be held within 15 school days of the notification of charges, unless mutually agreed to by both parties. A hearing may be delayed for any of the following reasons, in which case the hearing shall be held as soon as reasonably possible:
  - i. Laboratory reports are needed from law enforcement agencies.
  - ii. Evaluations or other court or administrative proceedings are pending due to a student invoking his rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act 2004 (20 U.S.C.A. § § 1400—1482).
  - iii. In cases in juvenile or criminal court involving sexual assault or serious bodily injury, delay is necessary due to the condition or best interests of the victim.
10. Notice of a right to appeal the results of the hearing shall be provided to the student with the expulsion decision.

**Informal Hearings:** The purpose of the informal hearing is to enable the student to meet with the appropriate school official to explain the circumstances surrounding the event for which the student is being suspended or to show why the student should not be suspended.

1. The informal hearing is held to bring forth all relevant information regarding the event for which the student may be suspended and for students, their parents or guardians and school officials to discuss ways by which future offenses might be avoided.
2. The following due process requirements shall be observed in regard to the informal hearing:
  - i. Notification of the reasons for the suspension shall be given in writing to the parents or guardians and to the student.
  - ii. Sufficient notice of the time and place of the informal hearing shall be given.
  - iii. A student has the right to question any witnesses present at the hearing.
  - iv. A student has the right to speak and produce witnesses on his own behalf.
  - v. The school entity shall offer to hold the informal hearing within the first 5 days of the suspension

All hearings will take place before a qualified hearing examiner or authorized committee of the Board who will consider the evidence presented by Administration and the student in connection with a formal hearing and will make a recommendation to the Board of Trustees.

## **Discipline of Students with Disabilities**

The Environmental Charter School at Frick Park complies with Chapter 711 of Title 22 of the Pennsylvania Code pertaining to the discipline of students with disabilities and thought-to-be eligible students. Please refer to the School's Annual Notice of Special Education Services and Programs contained in this Handbook for applicable accommodations and procedures regarding the discipline of special education students. Any questions regarding the discipline of special education or Section 504 students should be directed to the school's special education director or the Principal.

## **Disciplinary Records**

All official disciplinary records for incidents involving the possession of a weapon or acts of violence shall remain in the student's permanent record and be transferred with the student to any public school within Pennsylvania. All incident reports shall be maintained in the student's permanent record. All incidents involving violence (to a person or to property) or possession of a weapon shall be maintained in the student's permanent record and transmitted to any K-12 school in Pennsylvania in which the student is enrolled.

Prior to admission to any school entity, the parent, guardian or other person having control or charge of a student shall, upon registration, provide a sworn statement or affirmation stating whether the pupil was previously or is presently suspended or expelled from any public or private school for an act or offense involving weapons, alcohol or drugs or for the willful infliction of injury to another person or for any act of violence committed on school property. The registration shall include the name of the school from which the student was expelled or suspended for the above-listed reasons with the dates of expulsion or suspension and shall be maintained as part of the student's disciplinary record. Any willful false statement made under this section shall be misdemeanor of the third degree.

## Dress Code/Uniform Policy

The ECS uniform policy and dress code guide support the work that we engage in each day at school. Your support of this guide helps to ensure that our students are comfortable and safe. Thank you for your support of our school uniform policy and dress code guidelines.

Pants, Shorts, Skorts or Jumpers	Khaki or navy blue pants, shorts, skorts, and jumpers (including cargo style, excluding sweatpants and yoga pants). <i>The proper length of skirts, dresses, and shorts is determined by the fingertips being able to touch material, not skin, when a student's arms are extended at his, her, or their side.</i>
Tights, Leggings or Knee Socks	Tights, leggings, or knee socks may be worn <b>under</b> uniform skirts or dresses and should be white, khaki, light blue, navy blue, or gray. Leggings cannot be worn as pants.
Shirts (warmer weather)	White, light blue, or navy blue shirts-polo or oxford style, long or short sleeved (No sleeveless tops or t-shirts).
Shirts (colder weather)	Navy blue, light blue, gray, or white sweaters, sweatshirts or turtlenecks. Hooded sweatshirts may be worn but hoods must be kept down when in the school building. ECS sweatshirts are acceptable.

Notes:

- All tops, tights and leggings must be solid in color and plain (without non-ECS logos larger than 1 inch)
- All ECS sweatshirts and polo shirts are acceptable at all times
- If additional clothing items are worn or brought for gym class, they must follow our uniform guidelines

### **General Guidelines:**

- Students are expected to wear school uniforms each day. The building Principal may designate an *ECS Spirit Day* or *Dress Down Day* at his/her discretion. Families will be provided with one week's notice before any *ECS Spirit Day* or *Dress Down Day*.
- On *ECS Spirit Day* students will be permitted to wear a green t-shirt or an ECS t-shirt with uniform bottoms.
- On a *Dress Down Day* students will be permitted to wear an outfit of their choice that is school appropriate (no ripped clothing, appropriate length dresses/skirts/shorts/skorts, no tank tops) and appropriate footwear (see below).
- Students are to wear flat shoes; no light-ups, Heely's, crocs, flip-flops, open-toed or heeled shoes. Shoes may be any color.
- No hats, hoods, bandanas, or bonnets can be worn inside of the school. Head scarves and religious or cultural head coverings *are* permitted.
- Backpacks and other large bags should remain in lockers during the school day; students *are* permitted to carry a small purse or bag for personal items
- Students are subject to applicable discipline for violations of the uniform policy. Please note that the health office has a limited supply of donated clothing to be used for students in need, not uniform violations.

### **Come to School Prepared to Engage in Outdoor Learning**

ECS students log over 1,000 hours of outdoor learning experiences each year. Due to the nature of our curriculum and the amount of time spent outdoors, we suggest that each student keep one extra uniform outfit and one pair of old shoes/rain boots at school at all times. This ensures that students are prepared, even when



an impromptu lesson develops. Families may also choose to send students to school in footwear that is appropriate for daily outdoor experiences.

*\*We know that fashions change throughout the year so administration reserves the right to determine if a student's attire meets ECS dress code standards.*

## **Emergency Cards**

Your child's emergency card is an important part of keeping open communication between the school and home. If there is a change to your home address, email addresses, or telephone numbers, please notify the school immediately. In the event of a health or school emergency, we must have a way to contact the family. Thank you for keeping us notified of any changes.

## **Emergency Management Procedures**

### **Fire and emergency drills:**

Periodic fire drills and emergency drills are held as required by law and as part of the school safety routine. They are very serious exercises designed to prepare students and staff for an emergency. The objective of these drills is to clear the building as quickly as possible in an orderly fashion.

Fire drills and emergency drills are extremely important because they help students become accustomed to what to do in case of an emergency. For this reason, running, shoving, pushing or any other kind of thoughtless behavior cannot be tolerated. During a fire drill there is to be absolutely no talking either going from or returning to the classroom. Also there is no time to stop at lockers, for drinks of water or for any personal belongings. Illegally setting off the fire alarm is a criminal offense. Violators will be prosecuted by law and are subject to disciplinary consequences up to and including expulsion.

### **Lockdown and Shelter-in-Place drills:**

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this Lockdown and Shelter-in-Place Policy is to act as a guide for ECS, school employees, students, Board members, and community members to address a wide range of potential crisis situations in the building or surrounding area. This Policy will provide guidance prior to, during, and after any emergency or potential crisis situation.

#### **Decision Making**

1. When a volatile incident exists at ECS or surrounding area, prior to police arrival, any decision to evacuate, lockdown, or shelter-in-place will be made by the principal or his/her designee.
2. When the Police arrive at the scene, they will be the lead agency. The Police will coordinate and direct all actions. ECS will comply with all Police Department instructions.

#### **Lockdown**

At the order of the Principal or his/her designee or the Police Department, Lockdown Procedures may be issued in situations involving dangerous intruders, severe weather, other incidents in or around the School, or other crisis situations that may result in harm to persons inside school building. Our lockdown procedures are practiced on a monthly basis with students. If visitors approach the building during a lockdown drill or actual lockdown, access to the building may be restricted. The ECS Crisis Management Team recognizes the importance of safety for all students, staff and visitors. Please be mindful that at any time, visitors may encounter restricted access to ensure the safety of our students and faculty. In the event of a true emergency, parents will be notified of any changes in dismissal plans or locations via email or phone.

## **Emergency School Closing**

In case of emergencies that make it unsafe for the Environmental Charter School to open, information regarding school operations is announced publicly as soon as possible and posted on our Facebook page, webpage ([www.ecspgh.org](http://www.ecspgh.org)), and Twitter (@ECSInnovator). All enrolled families will also receive an email or text alert from our emergency communications platform. **As a rule of thumb, ECS follows the delay or closure schedule of the Pittsburgh Public Schools.** ECS also broadcasts delays and closures on KDKA, WTAE, and WPXI. If schools are closed or delayed, the announcement will be made by 6:30 a.m. If schools are closing early and children will be sent home, the announcement is made by 11:00 a.m.

In the event of a two-hour delay, students will be picked up at their bus stops 2 hours after their normal time. Parents can begin dropping students off at 10:00 a.m. at the Upper School and 10:15 a.m. at the Lower School if they are car riders.

In the rare event that a bus has delivered students to school on a day that it is closed, arrangements will be made with the bus company to return the children home. Parents/guardians will be contacted before the students are sent home to make sure that the children are returning to a caregiver. For all students transported by car, we ask parents to make sure that a staff member is in the building before leaving.

## **Field Trips**

Field trips at ECS are designed to supplement the instructional program and provide a unique learning experience for children. Though additional costs are often associated with these trips, students on free or reduced lunch are eligible for reduced or waived field trip fees.

When a fee is associated with a trip, please remember it is the ECS's policy to accept payments from parents in the form of an online credit card payment or by check. Families will receive annual payment instructions each August. These instructions will explain how to process an online payment on the ECS's website. Families will be asked to pay for field trip fees in advance of the field trip and throughout the school year.

The ECS strongly encourages families to participate in our online payment system. This safeguards the contribution and helps the ECS keep a clear record should the parents ever have a question about their payment.

A parent's signed permission is required prior to the field trip in order for the student to be allowed to attend the field trip.

If a student is late on a field trip day and misses the transportation, he/she/they forfeits his/her place on that trip. If there are other classes in the building, the child will remain at school and be assigned to a class for the day. No refunds will be given for students missing a field trip due to tardiness, absence, or behavior. There may be exceptions to this policy in the case of extended overnight field trips.

Field trips are a privilege and students who have not exhibited acceptable behavior as a student at the Environmental Charter School may not be granted school permission to attend a field trip. These situations will be handled on a case-by-case basis and will be communicated to the parent.

*Please be advised that the ECS Discipline Policy and the ECS Code of Conduct applies to all student actions while on a field trip whether on Charter School property, on transportation, or away from the Charter School property.*

## **Food Service Program**

The Environmental Charter School's lunch and breakfast program is an extension of the school's environmentally themed curriculum. The goal of the food service program is to provide a healthy, delicious, and sustainable (both agricultural and economic) meal within the guidelines of the National School Lunch Program. The ECS food services program follows all federal regulations and guidelines. We also welcome parents to drop in to eat lunch with your student! (You may charge a meal to their account)

### **Free and Reduced Lunch**

*Families are STRONGLY encouraged to complete a Federal Free and Reduced lunch form at the start of each school year.* This federal program provides many students with free or reduced priced breakfasts and lunches at school. This program also helps support the school's academic program with supplementary federal funding. Families can apply through an [online portal](#) beginning in August (ECS sends this to all families through Schoolmint, ECS's online portal for enrollment) or through the paper copy provided during the first week of school.

Students in grades K-3 are provided with a snack daily. There is no cost for snack.

The school lunch menu is posted on the ECS food website at <https://ecspgh.org/lunch-calendar/>

### **Lunch Payment Procedures**

A breakfast and lunch account is created for each student upon enrollment. This account allows your student to purchase breakfast and lunch. School lunch is \$2.45 and breakfast is \$1.60. Juice and/or milk can be purchased for \$.25. Parents/guardians are encouraged to join us for lunch! Adult lunches can be purchased for \$3.50, and breakfast for \$2.00.

### **Payment for Lunch and Breakfast**

Lunch money is collected online or through check. Checks should be made payable to ECS and include your student's ID and name on the memo line. No cash is accepted at school as lunch money. [Schoolcafe.com](http://Schoolcafe.com) is our online payment portal. You will need your student's ID number to add funds to the account. You may also obtain your student's lunch ID by contacting Niki Augustine directly at [niki.augustine@ecspgh.org](mailto:niki.augustine@ecspgh.org). To assist in our record keeping and accounts, ECS strongly encourages families to add funds to your child's account (suggested \$10.00) to help cover last minute purchases. Small negative balances can add up, and we appreciate your help in keeping our accounts up to date.

### **Forgotten Lunches**

If a child forgets a lunch at home, he/she/they will be provided with an ECS school lunch. Families can then add money to the child's account. Students will not be denied a meal or given an alternate meal due to lack of funds on the account.

### **Food for all**

ECS will not deny any student a breakfast or lunch, for any reason. Healthy food and good nutrition are core tenants of the ECS program, and we recognize access to healthy food as a foundational part of supporting the whole child. No child will be shamed or isolated at any time.

### **Nut policy**

Nuts and nut products ARE permitted in our cafeteria spaces, however, they are **not permitted in classrooms**. On half days students and staff eat in classrooms. If you choose to pack a lunch on a half day, they MUST be nut and nut product free.

### **Additional Lunch Questions?**

ECS takes pride in serving fresh and healthy meals for our students and staff. Menus are updated monthly on our website. Please contact Niki Augustine, Food Service Director. [niki.augustine@ecspgh.org](mailto:niki.augustine@ecspgh.org)

## **Homework**

Students participate in relevant and meaningful homework assignments that reinforce content learned in class. This means that students should repeatedly practice familiar concepts in new and different ways. Homework may be counted toward students' grades for that subject area. The purpose of homework assignments is to practice learned skills.

### **Lower School Guidelines**

Students develop content knowledge and thinking skills through authentic routines and habits, most of which are conducted during the school day. ECS believes in the power of play, and encourages afternoons and evenings to be devoted to discovery, fun, and unstructured imaginative play when possible. Therefore, we provide the following guidelines as you support your child at home:

- Encourage your child to read or be read to each day.
- Refer to grade-level newsletters for developmentally appropriate literacy and math routines that will provide examples and strategies for current lessons.
- Play! Observe! Imagine! Enjoy the outdoors!

### **Upper School Guidelines**

Students develop content knowledge and thinking skills through authentic routines, habits and practice as well as by engaging in larger group and individual projects. Therefore, we provide the following guidelines as you support your child at home:

- Encourage your child to read each day
- Refer to grade-level newsletters/Schoology accounts for specific assignments and project timelines.

Your child should spend approximately 10 minutes per grade level on homework each night.

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Time Spent on Homework</b>
4	40 minutes per day + nightly reading
5	50 minutes per day + nightly reading
6	60 minutes per day*
7	60 minutes per day*
8	60 minutes per day*
*nightly minutes exclude project work	

## **Health Services**

Please see [ECS Health Services \(https://ecshealthservices.shutterfly.com/\)](https://ecshealthservices.shutterfly.com/) for more health information and to download forms as needed.

## Guidelines for Student Health

It is our goal to keep the school environment as healthy as possible for all children/staff and to protect your child as well as others. Please keep the following guidelines in mind:

A parent/guardian will be notified if their child has:

- a temperature of 100 degrees or higher
- active vomiting or diarrhea
- suspected contagious illness (pink eye, flu)
- a serious injury or appears obviously ill
- a live louse/lice found on head

Please be aware that we encourage students to stay in class when possible. If you, as a parent or guardian, are called by the school nurse and your child needs to go home, please pick up your child in a timely manner.

## Guidelines for Communicable Diseases/Health Concerns

ECS follows guidelines from the Allegheny County Health Department for communicable diseases/issues:

- **Pink Eye:** Child is excluded from school until all discharge is gone and eyes are dry, **regardless of whether antibiotic drops have been started.**
- **Strep Throat:** Child is excluded from school for 24 hours after the initiation of treatment.
- **Head Lice:** Child may return to school after completion of first treatment. All cases of head lice should be reported to the school nurse.

To prevent possible exposure of contagious illnesses to other children:

- Children with a temperature above 100 degrees must be fever-free for 24 hours **without the use of fever reducing medication (Tylenol, ibuprofen) before returning to school**
- Injuries that happen at home or over the weekend should be addressed prior to returning to school.
- If a child vomits or has diarrhea during the night or in the morning before school, that child should be kept at home for 24 hours from the last episode.
- If they have red, swollen, itchy eyes, have purulent drainage, or have a crusty appearance upon awakening, they should be kept home and see a doctor.
- If they have a productive cough that cannot be controlled with medication they should stay home.

## School Health Services/Requirements

- **Physical Examinations:** Physical examinations are required on original entry into school, in grade 6 and 11. Any exam dated after August of the previous year is acceptable. The state physical form is located [here](#).
- **Dental Examinations:** Dental examinations are required on original entry into school and in grades 3 and 7. Any exam dated after August of the previous year is acceptable. The state dental form is located [here](#).
- **Vision Screening and Height/Weight Measurements:** Vision screening, and height and weight measurements will be conducted annually.
- **Hearing Screening:** Each year, students in kindergarten, special ungraded classes and grades one, two, three, seven and 11 will be given a hearing screening test.
- **Scoliosis Screening:** Each year, students in grades 6 and 7 will be screened for scoliosis (curvature of the spine).

## Immunizations

**Any new/transfer student to ECS must have a copy of their immunizations into the health office before the first day of school or they will be excluded until proof of immunizations is obtained.**

All students are required to be fully immunized in accordance with the requirements of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in order to be admitted to ECS. Such immunizations include, but may not be limited to:

- 4 doses of tetanus (1 dose on or after 4th birthday)
- 4 doses of diphtheria (1 dose on or after 4th birthday)
- 4 doses of polio
- 2 doses of measles
- 2 doses of mumps
- 2 dose of rubella (German measles)
- 3 doses of hepatitis B
- 2 doses of varicella (chickenpox)

7<sup>th</sup> grade students require MCV (meningococcal vaccine) and Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis booster) before the start of the school year.

12<sup>th</sup> grade student require a second MCV (meningococcal vaccine) before the start of the school year.

### **Medications Policy**

1. All medication (prescription, over-the-counter, herbs and supplements) must be brought to the school Health Office by the parent/guardian. Students, at no time, should be in possession of any types of medication. Students may not keep any medications with them or in their school bags during the school day. All medications are kept in the Health Office.

As to the possession and use of asthma inhalers/epinephrine auto injectors, however, a student must demonstrate the capability for self-administration and responsible behavior. The student must verify with the school nurse his/her ability to administer the medication and that he/she/they has permission to do so. The student is restricted from making the inhaler/epinephrine auto injector available to other students. The school requires a written statement by a doctor or other prescribing medical professional indicating the drug, the dose, the timing of the dose and the diagnosis/reason the medication is required; a requirement for a written request from the student's parent/guardian that the school comply with the orders of the doctor; and the ability of the school to reserve the right to require the doctor to provide a statement justifying the continued use of the medication beyond a certain time period. Parents must provide the inhaler/epinephrine auto injector to be kept in the nurse's office/classroom for use by their child.

Required yearly forms for asthma, food allergies and sting allergies:

- [Asthma Action Plan](#)
- [Allergy Action Plan](#)
- [Sting Action Plan](#)
- [Contract to Self Carry Inhaler/Auto Injector](#)

2. The school nurse has standing orders for several over-the-counter medications. Parental permission and a list of these medications are located on the Student Emergency Card, which is valid for one school year and must be updated every August. **All other medications (prescription, over the counter, herbs and supplements) must be accompanied by an [ECS Medication Form](#) or Physician's order.**
3. ECS Medication Policy requires a parent/guardian to bring medication to school in the original container or prescription bottle. No medications are permitted to be transported on the school bus. A second

labeled prescription bottle can be obtained from your pharmacist. Only the exact amount of prescription medication for the treatment period should be kept in the nurse's office. Medication in baggies or foil wrappings will not be accepted.

4. Parents who wish to give medication to their children during the school day must administer it in the office of the school nurse.
5. The School Nurse is charged with the final determination of what over-the-counter items fall under the category of medication and for developing procedures to carry out this policy.

Violations of this Policy are subject to discipline under the ECS Code of Conduct.

## **Parent Community Organization**

The mission of the Parent Community Organization (PCO) is *to represent the views and concerns of parents to the school administration and staff; to serve the greater Pittsburgh community and to maintain a positive presence therein by being a model and advocate of sound environmental practice; to engage in innovative and effective fundraising and development activities; and to enhance the educational experience and personal growth of students, teachers, and families.* The PCO website can be found at [www.ecspco.org](http://www.ecspco.org).

## **Payments for School Activities**

A number of school activities may request a contribution or require a participation fee. These include field trips, clubs, yearbooks, t-shirts, fundraisers, donations, etc. Please use only the following forms of payment:

- online credit card payments. Payments can be processed through the ECS's website. We accept Mastercard, Visa, and Discover. This is the preferred payment method.
- check made payable to Environmental Charter School/ECS
- money order made payable to Environmental Charter School/ECS

The ECS **does not** accept cash. The above methods safeguard the contribution and help the ECS keep a clear record should a family ever have a question about their payment.

Please see Food Service Program for payments related to school meals.

## **Personal Items**

The Environmental Charter School at Frick Park does not accept responsibility for the personal belongings of students. We also value the community of learners in which we serve, and ensure our buildings reflect our values. **We do not have or allow locks on our lockers.** We encourage students to leave at home those belongings that are not necessary for their education. More specifically, electronic games, toys, cell phones, CD players, iPods, etc. are not allowed in school unless special permission by the Principal has been granted. Any other personal items that staff members judge to be unsafe or inappropriate for school will be confiscated and held in the office until parents or authorities retrieve them. Violations are subject to discipline in accordance with the *ECS Code of Conduct*.

Student cell phones are collected in the main office at the start of each school day and returned to students at dismissal. Students may not have cell phones in their possession during the academic day.

## Physical Education Policies

All students at ECS have a formal physical education class at least once a week with a PE teacher. Children are expected to participate in these classes unless a medical reason, disability or other valid excuse prohibits them from doing so.

### *Excuses*

1. A note from the parent or guardian will excuse a child from participating in physical activity for a period of 3 days (not 3 classes). Thereafter, a doctor's excuse is required for the child to be exempt from physical activity. Verbal requests from a student or a parent cannot be accepted without a note from the doctor.
2. After two parental excuses in a semester, the child must have a doctor's excuse to be exempt from physical activity.
3. Limitations in physical activity will not prohibit a child from having recess, but his/her level of participation will be monitored.

## Recess

Students in grades K-5 have one scheduled recess or social time each day. Students in grades 6-8 have one scheduled activity period each day. If the weather does not permit the children to be outside, they will have an indoor activity. Every effort is made to provide students with a daily, outdoor recess experience.

## Report Cards

Report cards are issued four times a year. The final report card will be sent home with students on the last day of school. If your child is absent on the last day, the report card will be mailed to the student's home address.

### **Standards Based Grading**

The following grading scale will be used for students in grades K, 1, 2 and 3. This developmentally appropriate grading system measures progress against a uniform standard for individual skills by providing specific information about how a student is performing on individual skills and concepts within a subject area.

The student performance levels of 1 to 3 indicate whether students have met the expectations set by the state and indicate whether the student has the necessary skills to be to be successful in the next quarter or next grade.

Standards Based Grading Scale
<b>3 Established:</b> Student demonstrates proficiency in targeted standard. Student consistently applies learned skill.
<b>2 Developing:</b> Student requires some additional support to meet proficiency in targeted standard. Student inconsistently applies learned skill.
<b>1 Emerging:</b> Student does not meet proficiency in targeted standard. Student does not apply learned skill.

### **Percentage Grading Scale**

The following grading scale will be implemented in grades 4-8:

- A: 90%--100%
- B: 80%--89%
- C: 70%--79%
- D: 60%--69%
- I: 59% and below\*

*\*Students will be given two weeks to bring up any "I" grades*



## **Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)**

The Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) is an improvement framework that seeks to meet the academic and behavioral health needs of all students. The MTSS team, consisting of building leadership, grade level team educators and instructional coaches, work together to design and implement effective programming using problem-solving, ongoing data collection and analysis, early intervention, and evidence-based practices. The MTSS team works with families, as needed, to help ensure student success. The MTSS program takes the place of the former RTI and CST programs. For more information, please contact building principals.

## **Searches**

Any individual and his, her, or their locker, person and belongings, is subject to search by school staff upon reasonable suspicion to the extent allowed by law, and where warranted, by the police. Prohibited items will be confiscated as evidence and the violator will be subject to school discipline and, when appropriate, to criminal prosecution.

## **Smoking Policy**

The Environmental Charter School at Frick Park is a No Smoking and nicotine free facility. We ask that all families and guests respect our No Smoking policy and thank you for your cooperation.

The *Student Code of Conduct* applies to violations of this policy.

## **Students with Disabilities**

Students with disabilities receive specially designed instruction in accordance with their Individualized Education Plans (IEP) and/or with regard to their special needs. For further information, please review the *Annual Notice of Special Education Services and Programs* contained within this Handbook.

## **Annual Notice of Special Education Services**

*Annual Public Notice of Special Education Services and Programs and Rights for Students with Disabilities and Notification of Rights under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act*

All children with disabilities residing in the Commonwealth, regardless of the severity of their disabilities, and who are in need of special education and related services, are to be located, identified and evaluated. This responsibility is required by a federal law called the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004, 20 U.S.C. 1200 et. seq. ("IDEA 2004").

Chapter 711 of Title 22 of the Pennsylvania Code requires the publication of a notice to parents regarding public awareness activities sufficient to inform parents of children applying to or enrolled in the charter school of available special education services and programs and how to request those services and programs and of systematic screening activities that lead to the identification, location and evaluation of children with disabilities enrolled in the charter school.

In addition, the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), which protects confidentiality, requires educational agencies to notify parents annually of their confidentiality rights.

The Charter School fulfills its duties with this annual notice and has incorporated several sections of the PATTAN Procedural Safeguards Notice into the Board-approved Child Find Notice, Policies and Procedures described below. **The Charter School also directs parents to the procedural safeguards notice from PATTAN available at the school's main office for additional information regarding rights and services.** Parents may contact the **Principal, Environmental Charter School at Frick Park, (412) 247-7970, 829 Milton Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15218** at any time to request a copy of the procedural safeguards notice or with any other questions about

special education, services, screenings, policies or procedures. The Procedural Safeguards Notice is made available to parents by the school: (1) upon initial referral or parent request for evaluation; (2) upon filing by parents of their first State complaint under 34 CFR §§300.151 through 300.153 and upon filing by parents of their first due process complaint under §300.507 in a school year; (3) when a decision is made to take a disciplinary action that constitutes a change of placement; and (4) upon parent request.

The purpose of this annual notice is to comply with the school's obligations under Chapter 711 of Title 22 of the Pennsylvania Code and to describe: (1) the types of disabilities that might qualify the child for special education, (2) the special education programs and related services that are available, (3) the process by which the Charter School screens and evaluates such students to determine eligibility, (4) the special rights that pertain to such children and their parents or legal guardians and (5) the confidentiality rights that pertain to student information.

A copy of this Annual Notice is also available on the school's website at: [environmentalcharterschool.org](http://environmentalcharterschool.org)

### **Qualifying for special education and related services**

Under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004, or "IDEA 2004," children qualify for special education and related services if they have one or more of the following disabilities and, as a result, need special education and related services: mental retardation; hearing impairment, including deafness; speech or language impairment; visual impairment, including blindness; serious emotional disturbance; orthopedic impairment; autism; traumatic brain injury; other health impairment; specific learning disability; deaf-blindness; or multiple disabilities.

IDEA 2004 provides legal definitions of the above-listed disabilities, which may differ from those terms used in medical or clinical practice or daily language.

### **Services for Protected Handicapped Students**

Under Section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, some school age children with disabilities who do not meet the eligibility criteria outlined above might nevertheless be eligible for special protections and for adaptations and accommodations in instruction, facilities, and activities. Children are entitled to such protections, adaptations, and accommodations if they have a mental or physical disability that substantially limits or prohibits participation in or access to an aspect of the school program and otherwise qualify under the applicable laws.

The Charter School must ensure that qualified handicapped students have equal opportunity to participate in the school program and activities to the maximum extent appropriate for each individual student. In compliance with applicable state and federal laws, the Charter School provides to each qualifying protected handicapped student without discrimination or cost to the student or family, those related aids, services or accommodations which are needed to provide equal opportunity to participate in and obtain the benefits of the school program and extracurricular activities to the maximum extent appropriate to the student's abilities and to the extent required by the laws.

These services and protections for "protected handicapped students" may be distinct from those applicable to eligible or thought-to-be eligible students. The Charter School or the parent may initiate an evaluation if they believe a student is a protected handicapped student. For further information on the evaluation procedures and provision of services to protected handicapped students, parents should contact the school **Principal, Environmental Charter School at Frick Park (412) 247-7970, 829 Milton Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15218.**

### **Children Below Mandatory School Age**

Most Charter Schools do not enroll students under school age. If a Charter School admits children below school age, the Commonwealth provides early intervention services to eligible children with special needs. Any

questions about services available to children under school age should be directed to the **Principal, Environmental Charter School at Frick Park (412) 247-7970, 829 Milton Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15218.**

### **Programs and Services for Children with Disabilities**

Charter Schools ensure that children with disabilities are educated to the maximum extent possible in the regular education environment or “least restrictive environment”. To the maximum extent appropriate, students with disabilities are educated with students who are not disabled. Special classes, separate schooling or other removal of students with disabilities from the general educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in general education classes, even with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. Programs and services available to students with disabilities, might include: (1) regular class placement with supplementary aides and services provided as needed in that environment; (2) regular class placement for most of the school day with itinerant service by a special education teacher either in or out of the regular classroom; (3) regular class placement for most of the school day with instruction provided by a special education teacher in a resource classroom; (4) part time special education class placement in a regular public school or alternative setting; and (5) special education class placement or special education services provided outside the regular class for most or all of the school day, either in a regular public school or alternative setting.

Depending on the nature and severity of the disability, a Charter School can provide special education programs and services in locations such as: (1) the charter school the child would attend if not disabled, (2) an alternative regular public school either in or outside the school, (3) a special education center operated by a public school entity or IU, (4) an approved private school or other private facility licensed to serve children with disabilities, (5) a residential school, (6) approved out-of-state program, or (7) the home.

Special education services are provided according to the educational needs of the child, not the category of disability. Types of service that may be available, depending upon the child’s disability and needs include, but are not limited to: (1) learning support; (2) life skills support; (3) emotional support; (4) deaf or hearing impaired support; (5) blind or visually impaired support; (6) physical support; (7) autistic support; and (8) multiple disabilities support.

Related services are designed to enable the child to participate in or access his, her, or their program of special education. Examples of related services that a child may require include but are not limited to: speech and language therapy, transportation, occupational therapy, physical therapy, school nursing services, audiologist services, counseling, or training.

Some students may also be eligible for extended school year services if determined needed by their IEP teams in accordance with Chapter 711 regulations.

The Charter School, in conjunction with the parents, determines the type and intensity of special education and related services that a particular child needs based exclusively on the unique program of special education and related services that the school develops for that child. The child’s program is described in writing in an individualized education program, or “IEP,” which is developed by an IEP team consisting of educators, parents, and other persons with special expertise or familiarity with the child. The participants in the IEP team are dictated by IDEA 2004. The parents of the child have the right to be notified of and to be offered participation in all meetings of their child’s IEP team. The IEP is revised as often as circumstances warrant but reviewed at least annually. The law requires that the program and placement of the child, as described in the IEP, be reasonably calculated to ensure meaningful educational benefit to the student. In accordance with IDEA 2004, there may be situations in which a Charter School may hold an IEP team meeting if the parents refuse or fail to attend the IEP team meeting.

IEPs generally contain: (1) a statement of present levels of academic achievement and functional performance; (2) a statement of measurable annual goals established for the child; (3) a statement of how the child’s progress

toward meeting the annual goals will be measured and when periodic reports will be provided; (4) a statement of the special education and related services and supplementary aids and services and a statement of the program modifications or supports for school personnel that will be provided, if any; (5) an explanation of the extent, if any, to which the child will not participate with nondisabled children in the regular class and in activities; (6) a statement of any individual appropriate accommodations that are necessary to measure the academic achievement and functional performance of the child on State and school assessments; and (7) the projected date for the beginning of the services and modifications and the anticipated frequency, location and duration of those services or modifications.

Beginning not later than the first IEP to be in effect when the child turns 14, or younger if determined appropriate by the IEP Team, and updated annually, thereafter, the IEP must include appropriate measurable postsecondary goals and transition services needed to assist in reaching those goals. The Charter School must invite the child to the IEP team meeting at which the transition plan is developed.

Beginning not later than one year before the child reaches the age of majority under State law, the IEP must include a statement that the child has been informed of the child's rights, if any, that will transfer to the child on reaching the age of majority.

### **Screening and Evaluation Procedures for Children to Determine Eligibility**

#### **Screening**

The Charter School has established a system of screening which may include intervention services to accomplish the following:

1. Identification and provision of initial screening for students prior to referral for a special education evaluation.
2. Provision of peer support for teachers and other staff members to assist them in working effectively with students in the general education curriculum.
3. Identification of students who may need special education services and programs.

The screening process includes:

Hearing and vision screening in accordance with Section 1402 of the Public School Code of 1949 (24 P. S. § 14-1402) for the purpose of identifying students with hearing or vision difficulty so that they can be referred for assistance or recommended for evaluation for special education.

Screening at reasonable intervals to determine whether all students are performing based on grade-appropriate standards in core academic subjects.

The Charter School has established and implements procedures to locate identify and evaluate children suspected of being eligible for special education. These procedures involve screening activities which may also include but are not limited to: review of data and student records; motor screening; and speech and language screening. The school assesses the current achievement and performance of the child, designs school-based interventions, and assesses the effectiveness of interventions. If the concern can be addressed without special education services, or is the result of limited English proficiency or appropriate instruction, a recommendation may be made for interventions other than a multidisciplinary team evaluation. Parents nevertheless have the right to request a multidisciplinary team evaluation at any time, regardless of the outcome of the screening process.

In accordance with Chapter 711, in the event that the charter school would meet the criteria in 34 CFR 300.646(b)(2) (relating to disproportionality), as established by the State Department of Education, the services that would be required include:

1. A verification that the student was provided with appropriate instruction in reading, including the essential components of reading instruction (as defined in section 1208(3) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) (20 U.S.C.A. § 6368(3), and appropriate instruction in math.
2. For students with academic concerns, an assessment of the student's performance in relation to State-approved grade level standards.
3. For students with behavioral concerns, a systematic observation of the student's behavior in the school environment where the student is displaying difficulty.
4. A research-based intervention to increase the student's rate of learning or behavior change based on the results of the assessments under paragraph (2) or (3), or both.
5. Repeated assessments of achievement or behavior, or both, conducted at reasonable intervals, reflecting formal monitoring of student progress during the interventions.
6. A determination as to whether the student's assessed difficulties are the result of a lack of instruction or limited English proficiency.
7. A determination as to whether the student's needs exceed the functional ability of the regular education program to maintain the student at an appropriate instructional level.
8. Documentation that information about the student's progress as identified in paragraph (5) was periodically provided to the student's parents.

Except as indicated above or otherwise announced publicly, screening activities take place in an on-going fashion throughout the school year. Screening is conducted at the Charter School, unless other arrangements are necessary or arranged.

The screening of a student by a teacher or specialist to determine appropriate instructional strategies for curriculum implementation is not to be considered an evaluation for eligibility for special education and related services.

**If parents need additional information regarding the purpose, time, and location of screening activities, they should call or write the Principal of Charter School at:**

**ENVIRONMENTAL CHARTER SCHOOL AT FRICK PARK  
829 MILTON STREET  
PITTSBURGH, PA 15218  
(412) 247-7970**

**Screening or pre-referral intervention activities may not serve as a bar to the right of a parent to request an evaluation, at any time, including prior to or during the conduct of screening or pre-referral intervention activities.**

### **Evaluation**

An evaluation under IDEA 2004 involves the use of a variety of assessment tools and strategies to gather relevant functional, developmental, and academic information about the child, including information provided by the parent that may assist in determining whether the child is a child with a disability and the content of the child's IEP. The Charter School does not use any single measure or assessment as a sole criterion for determining whether a child is a child with a disability and for determining an appropriate educational program for the child. Technically sound instruments are used to assess the relative contribution of cognitive and behavioral factors in addition to physical or developmental factors.

Parental consent must be obtained by the Charter School prior to conducting an initial evaluation to determine if the child qualifies as a child with a disability, and before providing special education and related services to the child. Parental consent for an evaluation shall not be construed as consent for their child to receive special education and related services. The screening of a child by a teacher or specialist to determine appropriate instructional strategies for curriculum implementation is not considered to be an evaluation for eligibility for special education and related services; therefore, parental consent is not required in this instance.

The law contains additional provisions and due process protections regarding situations in which parental consent for an initial evaluation is absent or refused discussed more fully below and in the PATTAN Procedural Safeguards Notice. If you have any questions about where to obtain a copy of the PATTAN Procedural Safeguards Notice, kindly contact Principal, at Environmental Charter School at Frick Park (412) 247-7970, 829 Milton Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15218.

The evaluation process is conducted by a Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) which includes a teacher, other qualified professionals who work with the child, the parents and other members as required by law. The MDE process must be conducted in accordance with specific timelines and must include protection-in-evaluation procedures. For example, tests and procedures used as part of the Multi-Disciplinary Evaluation may not be racially or culturally biased.

The MDE process results in a written report called an Evaluation Report (ER). This report makes recommendations about a student's eligibility for special education based on the presence of a disability and the need for specially designed instruction.

Parents who think their child is eligible for special education may request, at any time, that the Charter School conduct a Multi-Disciplinary Evaluation. **Requests for a Multi-Disciplinary Evaluation must be made in writing to the Principal, Environmental Charter School at Frick Park, (412) 247-7970, 829 Milton Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15218.**

If a parent makes an oral request for a Multi-Disciplinary Evaluation, the Charter School shall provide the parent with a form(s) for that purpose within 10 days. If the public school denies the parents' request for an evaluation, the parents have the right to challenge the denial through an impartial hearing or through voluntary alternative dispute resolution such as mediation.

Reevaluations are conducted if the Charter School determines that the educational or related services needs, including improved academic achievement and functional performance, of the child warrant a reevaluation; or if the child's parent or teacher requests a reevaluation. A reevaluation may occur not more than once a year, unless the parent and the Charter School agree; and must occur once every 3 years, unless the parent and the Charter School agree that a reevaluation is unnecessary. Students with mental retardation must be reevaluated every two years under State law.

### **Educational Placement**

The determination of whether a student is eligible for special education is made by an Individualized Education Program (IEP) team. The IEP team includes: the parents of a child with a disability; not less than one regular education teacher, if the child is, or may be, participating in the regular education environment; not less than one special education teacher, or when appropriate, not less than one special education provider; a representative of the school who is qualified to provide or supervise the provision of specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of children with disabilities, is knowledgeable about the general education curriculum, and is knowledgeable about the availability of resources of the School; an individual who can interpret the instructional implications of evaluation results, who may be a member of the team described above; other individuals, at the discretion of the parent or the agency, who have knowledge or special expertise regarding the child, including related services personnel as appropriate; and whenever appropriate, a child with a disability. IEP team participation is directly addressed by the regulations. If the student is determined to be eligible for special

education, the IEP team develops a written education plan called an IEP. The IEP shall be based in part on the results of the Multidisciplinary Evaluation. The IEP team may decide that a student is not eligible for special education. In that instance, recommendations for educational programming in regular education may be developed from the ER.

Placement must be made in the “least restrictive environment” in which the student’s needs can be met with special education and related services. All students with disabilities must be educated to the maximum extent appropriate with children who are not disabled.

### **Parents and Surrogate Parents**

For purposes of this Notice, the charter school considers parents to be biological or adoptive parents of a child; a foster parent; a guardian generally authorized to act as the child’s parent, or authorized to make educational decision for the child; an individual acting in the place of a biological or adoptive parent (including a grandparent, stepparent, or other relative) with whom the child lives, or an individual who is legally responsible for the child’s welfare; or a surrogate parent.

A surrogate parent must be appointed when no parent can be identified; a public agency, after reasonable efforts, cannot locate a parent; the child is a ward of the State under the laws of Pennsylvania, or the child in an unaccompanied homeless youth as defined by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. Sec. 11434a(6). A person selected as a surrogate parent must not be an employee of the SEA, the charter school or any other agency that is involved in the education or care of the child; has no personal or professional interest that conflicts with the interest of the child the surrogate parent represents; and has knowledge and skills that ensure adequate representation of the child. The surrogate parent may represent the child in all matters relating to the identification, evaluation, and educational placement of the child and the provision of FAPE to the child. Reasonable efforts must be made to ensure the assignment of surrogate parent not more than 30 days after it is determined that the child needs a surrogate parent.

### **Prior Written Notice**

The charter school will notify the parent whenever the charter school:

- a. Proposes to initiate or to change the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of your child, or the provision of a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to your child; or
- b. Refuses to initiate or to change the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of your child or the provision of FAPE to your child.
- c. Change of placement for disciplinary reasons.
- d. Due process hearing, or an expedited due process hearing, initiated by the charter school.
- e. Refusal of the charter school to agree to an independent educational evaluation (IEE) at public expense.

In Pennsylvania, prior written notice is provided by means of a Prior Written Notice Form/Notice of Recommended Educational Placement. You should be given reasonable notice of this proposal or refusal so that if you do not agree with the charter school you may take appropriate action. Reasonable Notice means ten days.

### **The prior written notice must:**

Describe the action that the charter school proposes or refuses to take;

1. Explain why the charter school is proposing or refusing to take the action;
2. Describe each evaluation procedure, assessment, record, or report the charter school used in deciding to propose or refuse the action;

3. Include a statement that you have protections under the procedural safeguards provisions in Part B of IDEA;
4. Tell how you can obtain a description of the procedural safeguards if the action that the charter school is proposing or refusing is not an initial referral for evaluation;
5. Include resources for you to contact for help in understanding Part B of the IDEA;
6. Describe any other choices that your child's IEP Team considered and the reasons why those choices were rejected; and
7. Provide a description of other reasons why the charter school proposed or refused the action.

The notice must be:

- 1) Written in language understandable to the general public; **and**
- 2) Provided in your native language or other mode of communication you use, unless it is clearly not feasible to do so.
- 3) If your native language or other mode of communication is not a written language, the charter school will ensure that:
  - a) The notice is translated for you orally or by other means in your native language or other mode of communication;
  - b) You understand the content of the notice; **and**
  - c) There is written evidence that 1 and 2 have been met.

*Native language*, when used with an individual who has limited English proficiency, means the following:

- a. The language normally used by that person, or, in the case of a child, the language normally used by the child's parents;
- b. In all direct contact with a child (including evaluation of a child), the language normally used by the child in the home or learning environment.

For a person with deafness or blindness, or for a person with no written language, the mode of communication is what the person normally uses (such as sign language, Braille, or oral communication).

## **Parental Consent**

*Consent* means:

- a. You have been fully informed in your native language or other mode of communication (such as sign language, Braille, or oral communication) of all information about the action for which consent is sought;
- b. You understand and agree in writing to that action, and the consent describes that action and lists the records (if any) that will be released and to whom; **and**
- c. You understand that the consent does not negate (undo) an action that has occurred after you gave your consent and before you withdrew it.

## **Need for Parental Consent**

### **1. Initial Evaluations (34 CFR §300.300)**

- a. General Rule: Consent for initial evaluation  
The charter school cannot conduct an initial evaluation of your child to determine whether your child is eligible under Part B of the IDEA to receive special education and related services without first providing you with prior written notice of the proposed action and without obtaining your consent. The charter school must make reasonable efforts to obtain your informed consent for an initial evaluation to decide whether your child is a child with a disability. Your consent for initial



evaluation does not mean that you have also given your consent for the charter school to start providing special education and related services to your child. If your child is enrolled in public school or you are seeking to enroll your child in a public school and you have refused to provide consent or failed to respond to a request to provide consent for an initial evaluation, the charter school may, but is not required to, seek to conduct an initial evaluation of your child by utilizing the Act's mediation or due process complaint, resolution meeting, and impartial due process hearing procedures. The charter school will not violate its obligations to locate, identify and evaluate your child if it does not pursue an evaluation of your child in these circumstances.

b. **Special rules for initial evaluation of wards of the State**

Under Pennsylvania law, if a child is designated a ward of the state, the whereabouts of the parent are not known or the rights of the parent have been terminated in accordance with State law. Therefore, someone other than the parent has been designated to make educational decisions for the child. Consent for an initial evaluation should, therefore, be obtained from the individual so designated.

*Ward of the State*, as used in the IDEA, encompasses two other categories, so as to include a child who is:

1. A foster child who does not have a foster parent;
2. Considered a ward of the State under State law; **or**
3. In the custody of a public child welfare agency.

## **2. Consent for Initial Placement in Special Education (34 CFR §300.300)**

### *Parental consent for services*

The charter school must obtain your informed consent before providing special education and related services to your child for the first time. The charter school must make reasonable efforts to obtain your informed consent before providing special education and related services to your child for the first time.

If you do not respond to a request to provide your consent for your child to receive special education and related services for the first time, or if you refuse to give such consent, the charter school may not use the procedural safeguards (i.e. mediation, due process complaint, resolution meeting, or an impartial due process hearing) in order to obtain agreement or a ruling that the special education and related services as recommended by your child's IEP Team may be provided to your child without your consent.

If you refuse to give your consent for your child to start receiving special education and related services, or if you do not respond to a request to provide such consent and the charter school does not provide your child with the special education and related services for which it sought your consent, the charter school:

1. Is not in violation of the requirement to make FAPE available to your child for its failure to provide those services to your child; **and**
2. Is not required to have an IEP meeting or develop an IEP for your child for the special education and related services for which your consent was request.

## **3. Consent for Reevaluations (34 CFR §300.300)**

*The charter school must obtain your informed consent before it reevaluates your child, unless the charter school can demonstrate that:*

1. It took reasonable steps to obtain your consent for your child's reevaluation; **and**
2. You did not respond.

## **4. Documentation Reasonable Efforts to Obtain Parental Consent (34 CFR §300.300)**

The charter school must maintain documentation of reasonable efforts to obtain parental consent for initial evaluations, to provide special education and related services for the first time, to reevaluation and

to locate parents of wards of the State for initial evaluations. The documentation must include a record of the charter school's attempts in these areas, such as:

1. Detailed records of telephone calls made or attempted and the results of those calls;
2. Copies of correspondence sent to the parents and any responses received; **and**
3. Detailed records of visits made to the parent's home or place of employment and the results of those visits.

## **5. Consent Not Required Related to Evaluation**

**Your consent is not required before the charter school may:**

1. Review existing data as part of your child's evaluation or a reevaluation; **or**
2. Give your child a test or other evaluation that is given to all children unless, before that test or evaluation, consent is required from all parents of all children.

## **6. Refused Consent to a Reevaluation**

If you refuse to consent to your child's reevaluation, the CHARTER SCHOOL may, but is not required to, pursue your child's reevaluation by using the mediation, due process complaint, resolution meeting, and impartial due process hearing procedures to seek to override your refusal to consent to your child's reevaluation. As with initial evaluations, the charter school does not violate its obligations under Part B of the IDEA if it declines to pursue the reevaluation in this manner.

The charter school may not use your refusal to consent to one service or activity to deny you or your child any other service, benefit, or activity.

## **7. Disagreements with an Evaluation**

### **a. Independent Educational Evaluations (34 CFR §300.502)**

#### **1) General**

As described below, you have the right to obtain an independent educational evaluation (IEE) of your child if you disagree with the evaluation of your child that was obtained by the charter school. If you request an IEE, the charter school must provide you with information about where you may obtain an IEE and about the charter school's criteria that apply to IEEs.

#### **2) Definitions**

- a) *Independent educational evaluation* means an evaluation conducted by a qualified examiner who is not employed by the charter school responsible for the education of your child.
- b) *Public expense* means that the charter school either pays for the full cost of the evaluation or ensures that the evaluation is otherwise provided at no cost to you, consistent with the provisions of Part B of the IDEA, which allow each State to use whatever State, local, Federal and private sources of support are available in the State to meet the requirements of Part B of the Act.

#### **3) Parent right to evaluation at public expense**

You have the right to an IEE of your child at public expense if you disagree with an evaluation of your child obtained by the charter school, subject to the following conditions:

- a) If you request an IEE of your child at public expense, the charter school must, without unnecessary delay, either: (a) File a due process complaint to request a hearing to show that its evaluation of your child is appropriate; or (b) Provide an IEE at public expense, unless the charter school demonstrates in a hearing that the evaluation of your child that you obtained did not meet the charter school's criteria.
- b) If the charter school requests a hearing and the final decision is that the charter school's evaluation of your child is appropriate, you still have the right to an IEE, but not at public expense.

- c) If you request an IEE of your child, the charter school may ask why you object to the evaluation of your child obtained by the charter school. However, the charter school may not require an explanation and may not unreasonably delay either providing the IEE of your child at public expense or filing a due process complaint to request a due process hearing to defend the charter school's evaluation of your child.
- d) You are entitled to only one IEE of your child at public expense each time the charter school conducts an evaluation of your child with which you disagree.
- e) Charter School criteria  
If an IEE is at public expense, the criteria under which the evaluation is obtained, including the location of the evaluation and the qualifications of the examiner, must be the same as the criteria that the charter school uses when it initiates an evaluation (to the extent those criteria are consistent with your right to an IEE). Except for the criteria described above, a charter school may not impose conditions or timelines related to obtaining an IEE at public expense.

**b. Parent-initiated evaluations**

If you obtain an IEE of your child at public expense or you share with the charter school an evaluation of your child that you obtained at private expense:

- 1) The charter school must consider the results of the evaluation of your child, if it meets the charter school's criteria for IEEs, in any decision made with respect to the provision of FAPE to your child; **and**
- 2) You or the charter school may present the evaluation as evidence at a due process hearing regarding your child.

**c. Requests for evaluations by hearing officers**

If a hearing officer requests an IEE of your child as part of a due process hearing, the cost of the evaluation must be at public expense.

**ANNUAL NOTICE OF RIGHTS REGARDING STUDENT RECORDS:**

**CONSENT FOR DISCLOSURE OF PERSONALLY IDENTIFIABLE INFORMATION (34 CFR §300.622)**

Unless the information is contained in education records, and the disclosure is authorized without parental consent under FERPA, your consent must be obtained before personally identifiable information is disclosed to parties other than officials of participating agencies. Except under the circumstances specified below, your consent is not required before personally identifiable information is released to officials of participating agencies for purposes of meeting a requirement of Part B of the IDEA.

Your consent, or consent of an eligible child who has reached the age of majority under State law, must be obtained before personally identifiable information is released to officials of participating agencies providing or paying for transition services.

**ACCESS TO CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION RELATED TO STUDENT (34 CFR §300.611)**

**1. Related to the confidentiality of information, the following definitions apply:**

- a. *Destruction* means physical destruction or removal of personal identifiers from information so that the information is no longer personally identifiable.
- b. *Education records* means the type of records covered under the definition of "education records" in 34 CFR Part 99 (the regulations implementing the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, 20 U.S.C. 1232g (FERPA)).

- c. *Participating agency* means any charter school, agency or institution that collects, maintains, or uses personally identifiable information, or from which information is obtained, under Part B of the IDEA.
- d. **Personally identifiable (34 CFR §300.32)** means information that has:
  - 1) Your child's name, your name as the parent, or the name of another family member;
  - 2) Your child's address;
  - 3) A personal identifier, such as your child's social security number or student number; **or**
  - 4) A list of personal characteristics or other information that would make it possible to identify your child with reasonable certainty.

## 2. Access Rights (34 CFR §300.613)

### a. Parent Access

The charter school must permit you to inspect and review any education records relating to your child that are collected, maintained, or used by the charter school under Part B of the IDEA. The charter school must comply with your request to inspect and review any education records on your child without unnecessary delay or before any meeting regarding an IEP, or any impartial due process hearing (including a resolution meeting or a hearing regarding discipline), and in no case more than 45 calendar days after you have made a request.

- 4) Your right to inspect and review education records includes:
- 5) Your right to a response from the charter school to your reasonable requests for explanations and interpretations of the records;
- 6) Your right to request that the charter school provide copies of the records if you cannot effectively inspect and review the records unless you receive those copies; **and**
- 7) Your right to have your representative inspect and review the records.
  - a) The charter school may presume that you have authority to inspect and review records relating to your child unless advised that you do not have the authority under applicable State law governing such matters as guardianship, or separation and divorce.
  - b) If any education **record includes information on more than one child**, the parents of those children have the right to inspect and review only the information relating to their child or to be informed of that specific information.
  - c) On request, each charter school must provide you with a **list of the types and locations of education records** collected, maintained, or used by the charter school.

### b. Other Authorized Access (34 CFR §300.614)

The charter school must keep a record of parties obtaining access to education records collected, maintained, or used under Part B of the IDEA (except access by parents and authorized employees of the participating agency), including the name of the party, the date access was given, and the purpose for which the party is authorized to use the records.

## 3. Fees

The charter school may charge a fee or copies of records (34 CFR §300.617) that are made for you under Part B of the IDEA, if the fee does not effectively prevent you from exercising your right to inspect and review those records.

The charter school may not charge a fee to search for or to retrieve information under Part B of the IDEA.

## 4. Amendment of Records at Parent's Request (34 CFR §300.618)

If you believe that information in the education records regarding your child collected, maintained, or used under Part B of the IDEA is inaccurate, misleading, or violates the privacy or other rights of your child, you may request the charter school that maintains the information to change the information. The charter school must decide whether to change the information in accordance with your request within a reasonable period of time of receipt of your request.

The charter school must decide whether to change the information in accordance with your request within a reasonable period of time of receipt of your request.

If the charter school refuses to change the information in accordance with your request, it must inform you of the refusal and advise you of the right to a hearing for this purpose.

## 5. Opportunity for a Records Hearing (34 CFR §300.619)

The charter school must, on request, provide you an opportunity for a hearing to challenge information in education records regarding your child to ensure that it is not inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the privacy or other rights of your child.

**a. Hearing Procedures (34 CFR §300.621)**

A hearing to challenge information in education records must be conducted according to the following procedures for such hearings under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, 20 U.S.C. Section 1233g (FERPA):

- 1) The educational agency or institution shall hold the hearing within a reasonable time after it has received the request for the hearing from the parent or eligible student.
- 2) The educational agency or institution shall give the parent or eligible student notice of the date, time, and place, reasonable in advance of the hearing.
- 3) The hearing may be conducted by any individual, including an official of the educational agency or institution who does not have a direct interest in the outcome of the hearing.
- 4) The educational agency or institution shall give the parent or eligible student a full and fair opportunity to present evidence to challenge the content of the student's education records on the grounds that the information contained in the education records is inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of the privacy rights of the student. The parent or eligible student may, at their own expense, be assisted or represented by one or more individuals of his, her, or their own choice, including an attorney.
- 5) The educational agency or institution shall make its decision in writing within a reasonable period of time after the hearing.
- 6) The decision must be based solely on the evidence presented at the hearing, and must include a summary of the evidence and the reasons for the decision.

**b. Result of Hearing (34 CFR §300.620)**

If, as a result of the hearing, the charter school decides that the information is inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the privacy or other rights of the child, it must change the information accordingly and inform you in writing. If, as a result of the hearing, the charter school decides that the information is not inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the privacy or other rights of your child, you may place in the records that it maintains on your child a statement commenting on the information or providing any reasons you disagree with the decision of the participating agency.

Such an explanation placed in the records of your child must:

1. Be maintained by the charter school as part of the records of your child as long as the record or contested portion is maintained by the participating agency; **and**
2. If the charter school discloses the records of your child or the challenged portion to any party, the explanation must also be disclosed to that party.

**c. Safeguards (34 CFR §300.623)**

**Each charter school must protect the confidentiality of personally identifiable information at collection, storage, disclosure, and destruction stages.**

One official at each charter school must assume responsibility for ensuring the confidentiality of any personally identifiable information.

All persons collecting or using personally identifiable information must receive training or instruction regarding your State's policies and procedures regarding confidentiality under Part B of the IDEA and FERPA.

Each charter school must maintain, for public inspection, a current listing of the names and positions of those employees within the agency who have access to personally identifiable information.

**6. Destruction of Information (34 CFR §300.624)**

**The charter school must inform you when personally identifiable information collected, maintained, or used is no longer needed to provide educational services to your child, and the information must be destroyed at your request.**

However, a permanent record of your child's name, address, and phone number, his, her, or their grades, attendance record, classes attended, grade level completed, and year completed may be maintained without time limitation.

## **PROCEDURES FOR DISCIPLINARY EXCLUSION OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES.**

There are special rules in Pennsylvania for excluding children with disabilities for disciplinary reasons:

### **AUTHORITY OF SCHOOL PERSONNEL (34 CFR §300.530)**

#### **1. Case-by-case determination**

School personnel may consider any unique circumstances on a case-by-case basis, when determining whether a change of placement, made in accordance with the following requirements related to discipline, is appropriate for a child with a disability who violates a school code of student conduct.

#### **2. General**

To the extent that they also take such action for children without disabilities, school personnel may, for not more than **10 consecutive school days**, remove a child with a disability (other than a child with mental retardation) who violates a code of student conduct from his, her, or their current placement to an appropriate interim alternative educational setting, another setting, or suspension. School personnel may also impose additional removals of the child for not more than **10 consecutive school days** in that same school year for separate incidents of misconduct, as long as those removals do not constitute a change of placement (see ***Change of Placement Because of Disciplinary Removals*** for the definition, below) or exceed 15 cumulative school days in a school year. Once a child with a disability has been removed from his, her, or their current placement for a total of 15 school days in the same school year, the charter school must, during any subsequent days of removal in that school year, provide services to the extent required below under the sub-heading ***Services***.

#### **3. Additional authority**

If the behavior that violated the student code of conduct was not a manifestation of the child's disability (see ***Manifestation determination***, below) and the disciplinary change of placement would exceed **10 consecutive school days**, school personnel may apply the disciplinary procedures to that child with a disability in the same manner and for the same duration as it would to children without disabilities, except that the school must provide services to that child as described below under ***Services***. The child's IEP Team determines the interim alternative educational setting for such services. Under PA special education regulations, a disciplinary exclusion of a student with a disability for more than 15 cumulative school days in a school year will be considered a pattern so as to be deemed a change in educational placement (explained under Change of Placement Because of Disciplinary Removals). The charter school is required to issue a NOREP/Prior Written Notice to parents prior to a removal that constitutes a change in placement (removal for more than 10 consecutive days or 15 cumulative days).

#### **4. Services**

The services that must be provided to a child with a disability who has been removed from the child's current placement may be provided to an interim alternative educational setting. A charter school is only required to provide services to a child with a disability who has been removed from his, her, or their current placement for **10 school days or less** in that school year, if it provides services to a child without disabilities who has been similarly removed. Students may have the responsibility to make up exams and work missed while being disciplined by suspension and may be permitted to complete these assignments within guidelines established by their charter school.

A child with a disability who is removed from the child's current placement for **more than 10 consecutive school days** must:

- a. Continue to receive educational services, so as to enable the child to continue to participate in the general education curriculum, although in another setting, and to progress toward meeting the goals set out in the child's IEP; **and**

- b. Receive, as appropriate, a functional behavioral assessment, and behavioral intervention services and modifications that are designed to address the behavior violation so that it does not happen again.

After a child with a disability has been removed from his, her, or their current placement for **10 school days** during one school year, or **if** current removal is for **10 consecutive school days** or less, **and** if the removal is not a change of placement (see definition below), **then** school personnel, in consultation with at least one of the child's teachers, determine the extent to which services are needed to enable the child to continue to participate in the general education curriculum, although in another setting, and to progress toward meeting the goals set out in the child's IEP.

If the removal is a change of placement (see definition below), the child's IEP Team determines the appropriate services to enable the child to continue to participate in the general education curriculum, although in another setting, and to progress toward meeting the goals set out in the child's IEP.

#### **5. Manifestation determination**

**Within 10 school days of any decision to change the placement of a child with a disability because of a violation of a code of student conduct (except for a removal that does not constitute a change in educational placement i.e., is for 10 consecutive school days or less and not a change of placement), the charter school, the parent, and relevant members of the IEP Team (as determined by the parent and the charter school) must review all relevant information in the student's file, including the child's IEP, any teacher observations, and any relevant information provided by the parents to determine:**

- a. If the conduct in question was caused by, or had a direct and substantial relationship to, the child's disability; **or**
- b. If the conduct in question was the direct result of the charter school's failure to implement the child's IEP.

If the charter school, the parent, and relevant members of the child's IEP Team determine that either of those conditions was met, the conduct must be determined to be a manifestation of the child's disability. If the charter school, the parent, and relevant members of the child's IEP Team determine that the conduct in question was the direct result of the charter school's failure to implement the IEP, the charter school must take immediate action to remedy those deficiencies.

#### **6. Determination that behavior was a manifestation of the child's disability**

If the charter school, the parent, and relevant members of the IEP Team determine that the conduct was a manifestation of the child's disability, the IEP Team must either:

- a. Conduct a functional behavioral assessment, unless the charter school had conducted a functional behavioral assessment before the behavior that resulted in the change of placement occurred, and implement a behavioral intervention plan for the child; **or**
- b. If a behavioral intervention plan already has been developed, review the behavioral intervention plan, and modify it, as necessary, to address the behavior.

Except as described below under the sub-heading **Special circumstances**, the charter school must return the child to the placement from which the child was removed, unless the parent and the school agree to a change of placement as part of the modification of the behavioral intervention plan.

#### **7. Special circumstances**

Whether or not the behavior was a manifestation of the child's disability, school personnel may remove a student to an interim alternative educational setting (determined by the child's IEP Team) for up to 45 school days, if the child:

- a. Carries a weapon (see the **Definitions** below) to school or has a weapon at school, on school premises, or at a school function under the jurisdiction of the charter school;
- b. Knowingly has or uses illegal drugs (see the **Definitions** below), or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance, (see the **Definitions** below), while at school, on school premises, or at a school function under the jurisdiction of the charter school; **or**
- c. Has inflicted serious bodily injury (see the **Definitions** below) upon another person while at school, on school premises, or at a school function under the jurisdiction of the State Educational Agency or a charter school.

## 8. **Definitions**

- a. *Controlled substance* means a drug or other substance identified under schedules I, II, III, IV, or V in section 202 (c) of the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. 812(c)).
- b. *Illegal drug* means a controlled substance; but does not include a controlled substance that is legally possessed or used under the supervision of a licensed health-care professional or that is legally possessed or used under any other authority under that Act or under any other provision of Federal law.
- c. *Serious bodily injury* has the meaning given the term “serious bodily injury” under paragraph (3) of subsection (h) of section 1365 of title 18, United States Code.
- d. *Weapon* has the meaning given the term “dangerous weapon” under paragraph (2) of the first subsection (g) of section 930 of title 18, United States Code.

## 9. **Notification**

On the date it makes the decision to make a removal that is a change of placement of the child because of a violation of a code of student conduct, the charter school must notify the parents of that decision, and provide the parents with a procedural safeguards notice.

### **Change of Placement because of Disciplinary Removals (34 CFR §300.536)**

A removal of a child with a disability from the child’s current educational placement is a **change of placement** requiring a NOREP/prior written notice if:

1. The removal is for more than 10 consecutive school days; **or**
2. The removal is for 15 cumulative school days total in any one school year;
3. The child has been subjected to a series of removals that constitute a pattern because:
  - a. The series of removals total more than 10 school days in a school year;
  - b. The child’s behavior is substantially similar to the child’s behavior in previous incidents that resulted in a series of removals;
  - c. Of such additional factors as the length of each removal, the total amount of time the child has been removed, and the proximity of the removals to one another; **and**

Whether a pattern of removals constitutes a change of placement is determined on a case-by-case basis by the charter school and, if challenged, is subject to review through due process and judicial proceedings.

### **Determination of Setting (34 CFR §300.531)**

The IEP must determine the interim alternative educational setting for removals that are **changes of placement**, and removals under the headings **Additional authority** and **Special circumstances**, above.

#### 1. **General**

The parent of a child with a disability may file a due process complaint (see above) to request a due process hearing if he/she/they disagrees with:

- a. Any decision regarding placement made under these discipline provisions; **or**
- b. The manifestation determination described above.

The charter school may file a due process complaint (see above) to request a due process hearing if it believes that maintaining the current placement of the child is substantially likely to result in injury to the child or to others.

#### 2. **Authority of hearing officer**

A hearing officer that meets the requirements described under the sub-heading **Impartial Hearing Officer** must conduct the due process hearing and make a decision.

The hearing officer may:

- a. Return the child with a disability to the placement from which the child was removed if the hearing officer determines that the removal was a violation of the requirements described under the heading Authority of School Personnel, or that the child’s behavior was a manifestation of the child’s disability; or



- b. Order a change of placement of the child with a disability to an appropriate interim alternative educational setting for not more than 45 school days if the hearing officer determines that maintaining the current placement of the child is substantially likely to result in injury to the child or to others.

These hearing procedures may be repeated, if the charter school believes that returning the child to the original placement is substantially likely to result in injury to the child or to others.

Whenever a parent or a charter school files a due process complaint to request such a hearing, a hearing must be held that meets the requirements described under the headings ***Due Process Complaint Procedures, Hearings on Due Process Complaints***, except as follows:

1. The SEA must arrange for an expedited due process hearing, which must occur within **20** school days of the date the hearing is filed and must result in a determination within **10** school days after the hearing.
2. Unless the parents and the charter school agree in writing to waive the meeting, or agree to use mediation, a resolution meeting must occur within **7** calendar days of receiving notice of the due process complaint. The hearing may proceed unless the matter has been resolved to the satisfaction of both parties within **15** calendar days of receipt of the due process complaint.

A party may appeal the decision in an expedited due process hearing in the same way as they may for decisions in other due process hearings. When, as described above, the parent or charter school has filed a due process complaint related to disciplinary matters, the child must (unless the parent and the State Educational Agency or charter school agree otherwise) remain in the interim alternative educational setting pending the decision of the hearing officer, or until the expiration of the time period of removal as provided for and described under the heading ***Authority of School Personnel***, whichever occurs first.

#### **Special Rules for Students with Mental Retardation**

The disciplinary removal of a child with mental retardation attending either a charter school for any amount of time is considered a change in placement and requires NOREP/prior written notice (if the disciplinary event does not involve drugs, weapons and/or serious bodily injury). A removal from school is not a change in placement for a child who is identified with mental retardation when the disciplinary event involves weapons, drugs, and/or serious bodily injury.

According to certain assurances the Commonwealth entered into related to the PARC consent decree, a charter school may suspend on a limited basis a student with mental retardation who presents a danger to himself or others upon application and approval by the Bureau of Special Education and only to the extent that a student with a disability other than mental retardation could be suspended.

#### **Protections for Children Not Yet Eligible for Special Education and Related Services (34 CFR §300.534)**

##### **1. General**

If a child has not been determined eligible for special education and related services and violates a code of student conduct, but the charter school had knowledge (as determined below) before the behavior that brought about the disciplinary action occurred, that the child was a child with a disability, then the child may assert any of the protections described in this notice.

##### **2. Basis of knowledge for disciplinary matters**

**A charter school must be deemed to have knowledge that a child is a child with a disability if, before the behavior that brought about the disciplinary action occurred:**

- a. The parent of the child expressed concern in writing that the child is in need of special education and related services to supervisory or administrative personnel of appropriate educational agency, or a teacher of the child;
- b. The parent request an evaluation related to eligibility for special education and related services under Part B of the IDEA; **or**
- c. The child's teacher or other charter school personnel expressed specific concerns about a pattern of behavior demonstrated by the child directly to the charter school's director of special education or to other supervisory personnel of the charter school.

### 3. Exception

#### **A charter school would not be deemed to have such knowledge if:**

- a. The child's parent has not allowed an evaluation of the child or refused special education services; **or**
- b. The child has been evaluated and determined to not be a child with a disability under Part B of the IDEA.

### 4. Conditions that apply if there is no basis of knowledge

If prior to taking disciplinary measures against the child, a charter school does not have knowledge that a child is a child with a disability, as described above under the sub-headings ***Basis of knowledge for disciplinary matters*** and ***Exception***, the child may be subjected to the disciplinary measures that are applied to children without disabilities who engaged in comparable behaviors.

However, if a request is made for an evaluation of a child during the time period in which the child is subjected to disciplinary measures, the evaluation must be conducted in an expedited manner.

Until the evaluation is completed, the child remains in the educational placement determined by school authorities, which can include suspension or expulsion without educational services. If the child is determined to be a child with a disability, taking into consideration information from the evaluation conducted by the charter school, and information provided by the parents, the charter school must provide special education and related services in accordance with Part B of the IDEA, including the disciplinary requirements described above.

## **REFERRAL TO AND ACTION BY LAW ENFORCEMENT AND JUDICIAL AUTHORITIES (34 CFR §300.535)**

### 1. The state and federal regulations do not:

- a. Prohibit an agency from reporting a crime committed by a child with a disability to appropriate authorities; **or**
- b. Prevent State law enforcement and judicial authorities from exercising their responsibilities with regard to the application of Federal and State law to crimes committed by a child with a disability.

Subsequent to a referral to law enforcement, an updated functional behavior assessment and positive behavior support plan are required.

### 2. Transmittal of records

If a charter school reports a crime committed by a child with a disability, the charter school: must ensure that copies of the child's special education and disciplinary records are transmitted for consideration by the authorities to whom the agency reports the crime; **and** May transmit copies of the child's special education and disciplinary records only to the extent permitted by FERPA.

## **THIS ANNUAL NOTICE AND STATEMENT OF POLICY AND PROCEDURES HAS BEEN WRITTEN IN ACCORDANCE WITH CHAPTER 711 OF TITLE 22 OF THE PA CODE.**

**THE CONTENT OF THIS NOTICE HAS BEEN WRITTEN IN STRAIGHTFORWARD, SIMPLE LANGUAGE. IF A PERSON DOES NOT UNDERSTAND ANY OF THIS NOTICE, HE, SHE, OR THEY SHOULD ASK THE CAO OF THE CHARTER SCHOOL FOR AN EXPLANATION. THE CHARTER SCHOOL WILL ARRANGE FOR AN INTERPRETER FOR PARENTS WITH LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY. IF A PARENT IS DEAF OR BLIND OR HAS NO WRITTEN LANGUAGE, THE SCHOOL WILL ARRANGE FOR COMMUNICATION OF THIS NOTICE IN THE MODE NORMALLY USED BY THE PARENT (E.G., SIGN LANGUAGE, BRAILLE, OR ORAL COMMUNICATION).**

**THIS NOTICE IS ONLY A SUMMARY OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES, EVALUATION AND SCREENING ACTIVITIES, AND RIGHTS AND PROTECTIONS PERTAINING TO CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES,**

**CHILDREN THOUGHT TO BE DISABLED AND THEIR PARENTS AND ARE ONLY A SUMMARY OF THE CONFIDENTIALITY RIGHTS REGARDING STUDENT INFORMATION.**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO REQUEST EVALUATION OR SCREENING OF A CHARTER SCHOOL STUDENT CONTACT THE PRINCIPAL OF THE CHARTER SCHOOL AT ENVIRONMENTAL CHARTER SCHOOL AT FRICK PARK, (412) 247-7970, 829 MILTON STREET, PITTSBURGH, PA 15218.**

**NOTHING IN THIS NOTICE IS INTENDED TO CONFLICT WITH OR SUPPLANT THE INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THE PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION'S CURRENT "PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS NOTICE" WHICH IS AVAILABLE THROUGH THE SCHOOL FOR YOUR REVIEW OR WITH APPLICABLE STATE AND/OR FEDERAL LAWS.**

## **Student Records Policy**

The Charter School recognizes the need to protect the privacy rights of students and their parents. The Charter School will adhere to the provisions of state and federal law pertaining to those privacy rights, including but not limited to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 ("FERPA"), as amended, and its accompanying regulations; the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act ("IDEA"), as amended, and its implementing regulations; the Pennsylvania Public School Code of 1949, and Chapter 12 of the Pennsylvania Administrative Code containing the regulations of the Pennsylvania State Board of Education. The Principal is designated as the Administrator responsible for the maintenance, access and release of student records and the maintenance, access and release of academic records.

The Principal shall be responsible for the implementation of this policy.

### **I. DEFINITION OF TERMS**

- A. The term "disclosure" means permitting access to or the release, transfer or other communication of personally identifiable information contained in education records to any party, by any means, including oral, written or electronic means. 34 C.F.R. § 99.3.
- B. The term "educational institution" or "educational agency or institution" means any public or private agency or institution which is the recipient of funds under any federal program referenced in applicable law. The term refers to the agency or institution recipient as a whole, including all of its component parts. 20 U.S.C. § 1232g (a)(3).
- C. The term "education records" means those records that are directly related to a student and maintained by an educational agency or institution or by a party acting for the agency or institution. The record can be recorded in any form, including but not limited to, handwriting, print computer media, electronic files, electronic mail, video or audio tape, film, microfilm and microfiche. The term does not include:
  - 1. Records that are kept in the sole possession of the maker of the record, are used only as a personal memory aid, and are not accessible or revealed to any other person except a temporary

substitute for the maker of the record.

2. Records of the law enforcement unit of an educational agency or institution, subject to the provisions of 34 C.F.R. § 99.8;
3. Records relating to an individual who is employed by an educational agency or institution that:
  - a. Are made and maintained in the normal course of business;
  - b. Relate exclusively to the individual in that the individual's capacity as an employee; and
  - c. Are not available for use for any other purpose;

However records relating to an individual in attendance at the agency or institution who is employed as a result of his, her, or their status as a student are education records and are not excluded under this provision.

4. Records on a student who is eighteen years of age or older, or is attending an institution of post-secondary education that is:
    - a. Made or maintained by a physician, psychiatrist, psychologist or other recognized professional or paraprofessional acting in her professional capacity or assisting in a professional capacity;
    - b. Made, maintained or used in connection with the treatment of the student; and
    - c. Disclosed only to individuals providing the treatment. For the purpose of this definition, "treatment" does not include remedial educational activities or activities that are part of the program of instruction at the agency or institution; and
  5. Records that only contain information pertaining to time periods after the individual is no longer a student at the Charter School. 20 U.S.C. § 1232g(a)(4).
- D. The term "Charter School" means the Charter School and its officers, employees and agents, individually or collectively. The term does not include any other public or private school or other educational agency, or any officer, employee or agency thereof, at which the Charter School students are enrolled or from which the Charter School students receive services. 24 P.S. § 17-1715A.
- E. The term "student" except as otherwise means any school-age person who is attending the Charter School and with respect to whom the Charter School maintains education records. 20 U.S.C. § 1232g (a)(6).
- F. The term "eligible student" means a student who has attained eighteen (18) years of age, or is attending an institution of post-secondary education. Whenever a student has attained eighteen (18) years of age or is attending an institution of post-secondary education, the permission or consent shall be required of, and the right accorded to the student, except that the parent of an exceptional child or a disabled child as defined by state and federal law

or a parent who claims the student as a dependent under Section 152 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 shall have the right of access to the student's records and information contained therein (as provided in Section IV.A.).

- G. The term "parent" means a natural or lawfully-adoptive parent or legal guardian of a student, or a surrogate parent appointed in accordance with 34 C.F.R. § 300.515 of the regulations implementing Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Act, or a person acting as a parent who is supporting a student gratis and has signed an affidavit assuming educational responsibility for the student in accordance with Section 1302 of the Public School Code, 24 P.S. § 13-1302. The Charter School shall afford to any person who qualifies as a "parent" under this section all of the rights afforded to parents by this policy or by any state or federal law, unless the responsible administrator receives and has reasonable opportunity to review a lawful custody order, divorce decree, separation agreement or similar document expressly terminating the right of that person to receive or have access to the student's records. 34 C.F.R. § 99.4. The Charter School does not assume responsibility for the discovery or location of such documentation.
- H. The term "directory information" means any of the following personally-identifiable information when, in the judgment of the responsible administrator, the release of such information would not be harmful to or constitute an invasion of privacy for the student or his, her, or their family; the student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, dates of attendance or participation in the Charter School program, date of graduation, and similar information. 20 U.S.C. § 1232g(a)(5)(A).
- I. The term "school official with a legitimate educational interest" means
1. Any person in one or more of the following positions:
    - a. the Principal and his specifically authorized designees;
    - b. the responsible administrator and his, her, or their specifically-authorized designees;
    - c. the Principal of any building to which the student is assigned and any other administrators employed by the Charter School who are responsible for the administration of programs in which the student is enrolled or participating;
    - d. instructional staff, counselors, psychologists, social workers, educational diagnosticians, psychiatrists, program specialist, therapists, physicians, and nurses who are employed or used by the Charter School and are involved in the provision of education other services to the student;
    - e. attorneys or similar legal representatives of the Charter School, when the attorneys or legal representative is providing advice to the Charter School concerning the education or discipline of the student or where the records are relevant or thought to be relevant to the legal matter for which the attorney or legal representative is being consulted;

- f. members of any Charter School student assistance program team to which the student is referred, including members who are not employed by the Charter School;
  - g. special education due process hearing officers and administrative review officers designated by the Secretary of Education for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.
2. A school official has a legitimate educational interest in personally identifiable information when access to that information is required for the effective, efficient or proper provision of education or other services to the student to whom the information pertains or with respect to required investigations, administrative or legal proceeding. The Charter School shall maintain for public inspection and for access under Section IV.A.4 of this policy a list of the names and positions of school officials who are entitled to disclosure under this paragraph. 20 U.S.C. § 1232g(b)(1)(A).
- J. The term “destruction” or “destroy” means the physical destruction, obliteration or permanent removal of all or any portion of the information in a student record. Permanent removal of a record from the custody, care and control of the Charter School shall constitute destruction of that record even if the information contained therein is maintained by another agency or entity.
- K. The term “record” means any information recorded in any way, including, but not limited to, handwriting, print, computer media, video or audio tape, film, microfilm, microfiche. 34 C.F.R. § 99.3.
- L. The term “applicable law” shall mean all statutes and regulations applicable to the student records that are in effect when any action is taken or is to be taken and shall include, but not necessarily be limited to, the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act, the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 34 Part 99, the United States Code § 1232 and the regulations of the Pennsylvania State Board of Education at 22 Pa. Code §§ 12.31 *et. seq.*
- M. The term “Review Panel” shall mean a panel created by the Board of Trustees composed of qualified professional personnel to determine the validity of Category “C” data and to provide for parental challenges of such data on occasion where their transfer to Category “B” is held to be desirable. Panel members should not be limited to school employees.

## **II. MANAGEMENT OF STUDENT RECORDS**

- A. Collection of Information** – No information shall be collected from students without either prior representational consent of the School Board or informed individual consent from the parent and/or students.

### **1. Prior Consent**

Prior to the collection of anecdotal materials for the purpose of preparing reports, informed consent of the parent or eligible student must be requested, except as indicated in subparagraph a. below.

**a. Representational Consent** - Representational consent is hereby granted to the appropriately elected school representatives and may satisfy the principle of consent for gathering of information which does not require individual consent by the parent or eligible student under state and federal law. 22 Pa. Code § 12.33 (Guideline 1.1).

1. The Board of Trustees shall have the authority to grant consent for the collection of all Category “A” and Category “B” information as stated below.

2. In situations in which representational consent is sufficient, students and their parents shall be informed in advance, by school officials, annually of the purposes and character of the information collection and shall be given reasonable opportunity by the Board of Trustees to contest the necessity or desirability of the collection process or the proposed use of the information.

**b. Individual Consent** - If individual consent by the parent of eligible student is required by state and federal law, prior to gathering such information, such consent shall be obtained in writing. 22 Pa. Code § 12.33 (Guideline 1.2).

1. Individual consent from parents and/or “eligible” students shall be required for all Category “C” information as stated below:

a. Prior to the requesting of individual consent, parents shall be fully informed, in writing, as to the methods by which the information will be collected.

b. The uses to which it will be put;

c. The methods by which it will be retained; and the persons to whom it will be retained;

d. The persons to whom it will be available, and under what conditions.

e. If the above explanations are impossible or undesirable, the reasons shall be presented.

f. In all situations where individual consent is obtained, it shall be in writing.

2. **Special situations** where the principle of informed consent cannot be met, as for example in the course of interviews by school personnel, the following procedures will be followed:

a. The school will inform the student as fully as possible about the data that is likely to be obtained;

b. The school will stress the voluntary nature of the student’s participation;

c. Where reasonable doubts exist as to the capacity of the student to understand the implications of the situation, either because of the student’s age or other circumstances, parental permission will be sought before proceeding. In

addition, where a student clearly in need of intervention declines to participate, the professional involved will seek parental consent.

- d. In either case, if parental consent cannot be obliged or is not given, further steps to provide assistance will be initiated only if:
  1. The guidance counselor or designated school official is entirely convinced, giving full attention to the privacy interests involved, that intervention is imperative;
  2. both the student and parents have been fully informed to the extent that is possible;
  3. and appropriate school authorities such as the school's review panel has consented.

#### **D. Information Collected for Non-School Purposes**

1. Where the information and/or data to be collected are for non-school purposes, either by school personnel or outsiders then the above recommendations shall be fully applied with the further provision that prior informed consent must be obtained from the responsible school authorities.
2. In cases where the information is to be collected under conditions of anonymity, the collecting agency must still obtain the appropriate form of consent. The school authorities shall establish procedures for regulating the collection of such information, including the following:
  - a. Notification to the students and parents that their participation is voluntary.
  - b. Careful review of the instruments and procedures to be used for any such information collection to determine whether the methods and/or inquiries constitute a significant potential invasion of privacy, even though the information is to be collected under conditions of anonymity.

#### **2. Notification of Rights**

- a. Parents and eligible students shall be notified annually of their rights under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 ("FERPA"). The notice must inform parents of students currently in attendance, or eligible students currently in attendance, of their rights under the Act and this part.

The notice must inform parents or eligible student that they have the right to:

1. Inspect and review the student's education records;
2. Seek amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes to be inaccurate, misleading or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights;



3. Consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that the Act and § 99.31 authorize disclosure without consent; and
  4. The procedure to file complaints for non-compliance concerns.
  5. The parent or eligible student who wishes to file a complaint with regard to compliance of this policy may do so contacting the Chief Administrative Officer.
  6. If further appeal is necessary, the parent or eligible student may contact the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act Officer, Department of Education, Washington, D.C. 20202-4605. 34 C.F.R. § 99.7.
- b. A listing of the types, content and location of education records maintained by the Charter School shall be made available annually to include the names, titles, and addresses of the school officials responsible for such records.
  - c. The annual notification shall be accomplished by publication in the local newspaper and distributed to parents of currently attending students.

### **III. CLASSIFICATION OF INFORMATION COLLECTED**

All information collected in the pupil record shall be classified as follows:

#### **A. Category "A" Information**

This category includes official administrative records that constitute the minimum personal information necessary for the operation of the educational system. If collected, it shall include the following items:

1. The student's name, address, telephone number, birth date, sex, date of entry, and date of withdrawal;
2. Standardized Achievement Test results;
3. The student's grades and class rank;
4. The student's record of participation in school activities, awards, etc.
5. The names and addresses of parents or guardians and other family background of non-confidential nature.

These records should be maintained for at least 100 years.

#### **B. Category "B" Information**

This category includes verifiable information of clear importance, but not absolutely necessary to the school, over time, in helping the child or protecting others. If collected, it shall include the following items:

1. Scores on standardized intelligence and aptitude test;
2. Students Health data;
3. Interests inventories;
4. Family background information;
5. Systematically gathered teacher or counselor ratings and observations;
6. Verified reports of serious or recurrent behavior patterns.

### C. **Category “C” Information**

This category will includes potentially useful information but not yet verified or clearly needed beyond the immediate present. This information is highly confidential information and should be reviewed at least once a year and destroyed as soon as their usefulness is ended or transferred to Category “B”. Transfer to Category “B” may be made if two conditions are met, namely,

1. The continuing usefulness of the information is clearly demonstrated, and
2. Its validity has been verified, in which case parents must be notified and the nature of information explained.

If collected, may include the following:

1. Legal or clinical findings including certain personality test results;
2. Unevaluated reports of teachers, counselors and others which may be needed in ongoing investigations and disciplinary or counseling actions.

### D. **Category “D” Information:** Confidential, Personal Files of Professionals in the School (School Psychologist, Social Workers, Counselors)

We recognize that, in some instances, professional working in the school may maintain personal and confidential files containing notes, transcripts of interviews, clinical diagnoses and other memory aids for their own use in counseling pupils. Any and all data that are considered to be the personal property of the professional should be guarded by the rules given above in addition to those dictated by professional ethics, subject to the terms of the employment contract between the school and the professional and any special agreements made between the professional and individual parent and/or students. Such records kept in the sole possession or the maker of the record and not accessible or revealed to any other person except a temporary substitute for the maker of record are not considered education records, and therefore, are not subject to access requirements enumerated in this policy. Upon termination of professional employment with the Charter School, all personal data, and files are to be destroyed or reclassified. 20 U.S.C. § 1232g(a)(4)(B)(i).

## IV. MAINTENANCE OF RECORDS

All student information shall be retained and maintained in the school in accordance with procedures identified with the classification of the material.

**A. Category “A” Information as outlined above:**

Information in this category shall be retained by the school for at least 100 years.

**B. Category “B” Information as outlined above:**

1. Great care must be exercised by the school to ensure the accuracy of the information in this category. In particular, reported behavior patterns and specific incidents must be unambiguously described and clearly verified before they become part of any continuing record.
2. The school shall give serious consideration to the elimination of unnecessary information in this category at periodic intervals such as at points of transition from elementary school to middle school and from middle school to senior high school.
3. All information in this category shall be destroyed, or else retained under conditions of anonymity for research purposes, when the student leaves the school. Exceptions may be made where, under rigorous standards and impartial judgment, good cause for retention can be shown or according to statute.
  - a. Parents shall be periodically informed of the content of Category “B” records, and of their right of access to this data.
  - b. The health record and Category “B” information shall be maintained for a period of two years after the pupils’ class graduation date. Therefore, these records shall be destroyed.

**C. Category “C” information as outlined above:**

1. Information in this category shall be reviewed at least once a year and destroyed as soon as its usefulness is ended. It may be transferred to Category “B” under certain conditions.
2. Transfer to Category “B” may be made only if the following two conditions are met:
  - a. The continuing usefulness of the information is clearly demonstrated.
  - b. The validity of the information has been verified in which case the parents must be notified and the nature of the information explained.
3. If for any reason temporary unevaluated information is held for more than one year, the existence of this information must be discussed with the parent and the reason for its maintenance explained fully. Parents then should have an opportunity to challenge the decision to maintain such information.

4. The previously defined review panel composed of qualified professional personnel should determine the validity of Category "C" data.

## **V. ADMINISTRATION OF SECURITY**

- A. The CEO or designee shall be responsible for record maintenance and access and release of records. Staff training programs will be conducted for the professional staff on the record policy, with emphasis placed on security and confidentiality.
- B. Student records will be kept in locked filing cabinets at all times under the supervision of designated personnel, e.g., the CEO of the Charter School or his/her designee.
- C. The Charter School shall protect the confidentiality of personally identifiable information including at the collection, storage, disclosure, and destruction stages of that information. The Charter School will insure that any records kept or transmitted electronically are subject to high standards of electronic security. The Charter School uses electronic firewalls and encryption systems, and monitors and tests the system regularly to ensure its stability and integrity. All the Charter School electronic mail correspondence shall include the following:

### **CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE**

The information in this transmission is intended only for the individual or entity named above. It may be legally privileged and confidential. If you have received this information in error, notify us immediately by calling the Charter School at Environmental Charter School, 412-247-7970. Send the original transmission to us by mail. Return postage is guaranteed. If the reader of this message is not the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that any disclosure, dissemination, distribution or copying of this communication or its contents is strictly prohibited.

## **VI. CHALLENGING THE VALIDITY OF INFORMATION**

If the parent or student wishes to challenge any of the information in the student record as a result of the initial conference, and if the conflict cannot be resolved informally, the following formal procedures will be followed:

- A. The parent or student must submit a written request for amendment of the record of the student. The request will contain a brief statement which specifies the records to be amended and the reason that the amendment is requested. This request will be submitted to the CEO.
- B. The challenge will be reviewed by the school's review panel within a period not to exceed forty-five (45) days from the receipt of the written request.
  1. If the school does decides to refuse to amend the information in accordance with the request of the parent, the school shall inform the parent in writing of both the refusal and the specific reasons for the refusal and shall notify the parent in writing of the right to request and receive a hearing.
  2. The hearing shall be conducted according to the following provisions:

3. The hearing shall be held at mutually agreed upon time and place within thirty (30) days after the school received the request for a hearing from the parent.
  - a. The parent shall be notified in writing of the date, place and time of the hearing, no later than five (5) days in advance of the hearing.
  - b. The hearing shall be conducted by the review panel which does not have direct interest in the outcome of the hearing. The duties of the review panel shall be the following:
    1. to review challenges made by parents and/or students and render decisions as to the correction or deletion of inaccurate or misleading information.
    2. to determine the validity of category "C" data and the transfer of category "C" data to category "B".
    3. to grant representative consent in situations where the intervention is judged to be imperative, parental consent cannot be obtained, and there is reasonable doubt as to the capacity of the student to understand the implications of the situation.
    4. to grant representative consent to persons or agencies to conduct studies involving the school population under the conditions of anonymity.
4. The party conducting the hearing may be an official of the school.
5. The parent shall be afforded a full and fair opportunity to present evidence relevant to information in the educational records that the parent believes is inaccurate, misleading, or violates the privacy or rights of the child.
6. The parent may, at the hearing, be assisted or represented by persons of his/her choice at his/her expense, and such persons may include legal counsel.
7. The school shall render a written decisions on the issues presented at the hearing and shall render such decision within thirty (30) days after the conclusion of the hearing. The decision shall be based solely upon evidence presented at the hearing and shall include a summary of the evidence and the reasons for the decision.
8. If as a result of the hearing the review panel that the information is inaccurate, misleading or otherwise in violation of the privacy or rights of students, the school shall amend the education records accordingly and so inform the parent in writing.
9. If as a result of the hearing the review panel decides that the information if not inaccurate, misleading or otherwise in violation of the privacy or other rights of students, the review panel shall inform parent of his/her right to place in the educational records of the student a statement which sets forth the written comments of the parent in the educational records of reasons for disagreeing with the decision of the review panel or both written comments and reasons.

10. The statement of the parent shall be appended by the school to the educational records so long as the record or the contested portion thereof is maintained by the school.
11. If the education records of the student or the contested portion thereof is released by the school to any party, the statement of the parent shall also be released to the party.

Nothing in this section on parent requests for amendment of records shall be interpreted to mean that the parent and the school may not, by mutual agreement, meet prior to either a parent request for a hearing or the hearing itself in order to discuss the concerns of the parent regarding the accuracy or inaccuracy of the records of the student.

## **VII. DISSEMINATION OF STUDENT INFORMATION**

In situations in which the school is asked by other agencies, institutions or individuals to transmit student information to those parties, stringent precautions are required to protect the rights of the student against infringement of privacy, misinterpretation of data and inappropriate use.

### **A. Release of information to Educational Officials**

The school may, without the consent of parents or student, release appropriate information in a student's permanent record file, including previously defined Categories "A" and "B" to:

1. All school personnel, other than those directly involved with the child (the child's teacher, the counselor, CEO, etc.) desiring access to pupil records shall be required to sign a written form which will be kept permanently on file, indicating specifically the "legitimate educational interest" that they have in seeking this information.
2. Such a file will be available to parents and to the school officials responsible for record maintenance.
3. The Pennsylvania Secretary of Education and officers or subordinates as long as the intended use of the data is consistent with the Secretary's statutory powers and responsibilities.
4. Officials of other school systems in which the student intends to enroll.
  - a. The student's parents shall be notified of the transfer and shall receive a copy of the records, if desired.
  - b. The student's parents shall have an opportunity to challenge the record's content via a review panel as previously defined.

### **B. Release of Information to Other Than Educational Officials**

The school or any school personnel may not divulge, in any form to any persons other than the education officials listed above, any information contained in the school records except:

1. **With written consent from the student's parents specifying records to be released and to whom**
  - a. A copy of the records to be released shall be given to the student's parent and/or the student if desired by the parents.

- b. Or in compliance with the judicial order, pursuant to any lawfully issued subpoena.
  - 1. Parents and/or students shall be notified of all such orders in advance of the school's compliance.

## **2. Parental or Student Consent and Requests**

- a. Where parental and/or student permission is required for the release of school records, procedures for obtaining this permission shall take into account the differences in the kinds of information contained in the student's record file.
- b. Routine, nonspecific consent applies only to Category "A" information.
- c. Additional, separate and specific consent shall be required for the release of any information in Category "B."
- d. Under no conditions, except by judicial order or subpoena, or by parental consent, shall the school release information in Category "C."
- e. Under no conditions, except by judicial order or subpoena, shall the school release information gathered by any non-school agency which is included in the school record with the exception of birth date.
- f. Each matter of request for consent must be handled separately and no blanket permissions for release of information within an extended period of time may be solicited.
- g. The school may comply with parental requests for the release of information to other persons or agencies with the following exceptions based on the student's age;
  - 1. When a student reaches the age of eighteen, or is an emancipated minor, or is married (whether eighteen or not), his, her, or their consent alone must be obtained.
  - 2. This includes the right to deny parental access to his records.
- h. Either a child or the child's parents or guardians, or their legal representative, may have access to Category "A" information. Students may have access to Category "B" information with parental permission, unless they qualify without parental permission due to age or marital status.
- i. This right of access includes the right to challenge the validity of information contained in the record through procedures to be developed by the school and involving a formal review process incorporating previously outlined due process principles.

## **3. Anonymous Information for Outside Research**

The school may provide anonymous information from the records for outside research purposes without consent under conditions where the likelihood of identifying any individual because of his unique characteristics is negligible.

#### 4. **Government Mandating of Information Release**

- a. In cases in which local, state, and federal governmental agencies mandate the release of information on individuals, the principle of informed consent should apply except in those cases involving school responsibilities under existing child abuse or neglect statutes.
- b. Governmental agencies, in mandating the provision of information, should abide by the recommendations herein contained to assure the rights of privacy.
- c. Where identification of individuals is nevertheless legally required, with or without consent, written protest shall be made by the school to the requesting agency, parents shall be informed of the specific information which has been provided and legislative redress should be sought.

#### 5. **Waiver**

Rights of access may be waived for school's confidential statement submitted as part of the student's process of applying for admission to another educational institution.

Such waivers shall be required before confidential statements are made on behalf of the school but shall not be required before other aspects of the application are completed by the Charter School.

### **IV. ACCESS TO STUDENT EDUCATION RECORDS**

#### **A. Access to Records**

1. The Charter School shall provide the parent or eligible student access to the educational records of the student. 34 C.F.R. § 99.10(a).
2. Access rights of the parent or eligible student shall consist of the right to:
  - a. Inspect and review the content of the education records
  - b. Obtain copies of the education records at the expense of the parent or eligible student, at a cost not to exceed the actual cost of the Charter School reproducing such records. No parent or eligible student shall be refused copies if the financial obligation would prevent them from exercising their right to inspect and review the education records. 34 C.F.R. § 99.11.
  - c. A response from the Charter School to reasonable requests for explanation and interpretation of the education records. 34 C.F.R. § 99.10(c).
  - d. An opportunity for a hearing to challenge the content of those records, as provided in Section V of this policy.



- e. Inspect and review only material or documents that relate to the student in question. 34 C.F.R. § 99.12(a).
3. Procedure for gaining access to records:
    - a. The parent or eligible student seeking access to education records shall make a written request of the CEO or his/her designee.
    - b. Access to the education records requested shall be granted as soon as possible, but no later than 45 days after the receipt of a written request. 34 C.F.R. § 99.10(b).
  4. The Charter School shall maintain a current list of the names and positions of the professional employees who are authorized to have access to personally identifiable information. This list shall be available in the school office.

#### **B. Record of Access**

1. the Charter School shall maintain a record, kept with the education records of each student which will indicate all parties (other than those listed in Section IV.B.I.a.) who have requested or obtained access to a student's education record and which will indicate specifically the legitimate interest that each such party had in obtaining this information. 20 U.S.C. § 1232g(b)(4)(A).
2. Such record of access shall be available only to the parent or eligible student, to the school officials and their assistants who are responsible for the custody of such records, and to persons and organizations authorized to see such records. 20 U.S.C. § 1232g(b)(4)(A).

#### **C. Transfer of Information by Those Gaining Access to Education Records.**

The Charter School shall release personal information on a student only on the condition that the party to whom the information is being transferred will not permit any other party to have access to such information without the written consent of the parent or the eligible student.

#### **D. Destruction of Records:**

1. An education record shall not be destroyed by the Charter School if there is an outstanding request to inspect and review it by the parent or eligible student. 34 C.F.R. § 99.10(e).
2. The Charter School maintains the right to destroy some records that are considered to be invalid because of age and content matter. Student education records shall be maintained in accordance with Sections III.A.6., III.C. and IV.E. of this policy, and shall be destroyed in such time as provided therein.
3. Before any such destruction of student records (except as provided in III.C. of this policy) the parent or eligible student shall be given advance notice of the date

after which the records will be destroyed and the opportunity to obtain copies of records prior to the specified date.

TO THE EXTENT THAT ANYTHING IN THIS POLICY COULD BE CONSTRUED TO CONFLICT WITH APPLICABLE STATE AND/OR FEDERAL LAWS, THE APPLICABLE STATE AND/OR FEDERAL LAWS CONTROL.

***Annual Notification of Rights under Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) for the 2016-2017 School Year /Notice to Parents and Guardians Regarding the Disclosure of Student “Directory Information”***

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), a federal law, affords parents and students over 18 years of age (“eligible students”) certain rights with respect to the student’s education records.

These rights are briefly summarized below and are explained more fully in the Board’s Student Records Policy which is on file at the school and is available upon request:

1. The right to inspect and review the student’s education records within 45 days of the day the School receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the School Principal a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The School official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
2. The right to request the amendment of the student’s education records that the parent or eligible student believes is inaccurate or misleading. Parents or eligible students may ask the School to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write the School Principal, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. If the School decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the School will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.
3. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student’s education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official may include a person employed by the school as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law unit personnel); a person serving on the Board; a person or company with whom the School has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his/her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his, her, or their professional responsibility. Upon request, the School discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.

4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the School to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the office that administers FERPA is:

**Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue SW  
Washington, D.C. 20202-4605**

### **Directory Information**

Directory information means information contained in the educational record of a student, which is not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed, so that it may be disclosed without prior parental consent, unless you have advised the Environmental Charter School at Frick Park the contrary in accordance with the Environmental Charter School at Frick Park procedures. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow the Charter School to include this type of information from your child's education records in certain school-related publications or notices.

As part of the Environmental Charter School at Frick Park's annual notification under FERPA, we designate for the school year 2017-2018 the following types or categories of information as "directory information":

- Student Name
- Participation in officially recognized activities, clubs and sports
- Naming of Student to the Honor Roll, National Honor Society or as Valedictorian
- Address
- Telephone listing
- Weight and height of members of athletic teams
- Electronic Mail Address
- Photograph
- Degrees, honors, awards received
- Date and place of birth
- Major field of study
- Dates of attendance
- Grade level
- The most recent educational agency or institution attended

Examples of how and where the Environmental Charter School at Frick Park may disclose directory information include disclosing the directory information in the following, by way of example:

- Newsletters
- A playbill, showing student's role in a drama production
- The annual yearbook
- Honor Roll or other recognition lists
- Graduation programs
- Sports activity sheets, such as for wrestling, showing weight and height of team members
- Companies or outside organizations that manufacture class rings or yearbooks

- Newspapers or other news sources
- Class Lists
- Staff and/or Student Directories and/or listings
- School Website
- School Bulletin Boards

These examples are for illustration only and are not an exclusive list of the manner in which directory information may be disclosed. This notice provides you as a parent or eligible student with an opportunity to object in writing to any or all of those types of information that the School has designated as directory information. You have the right to refuse to permit the release by notifying the School in writing that you do not want any or all of those types of information to be designated as directory information for your child or yourself.

Please submit any refusal with the types of information you wish removed from the list of directory information and mail your written objections on or before **September 20, 2017** to the Principal(s) of the Environmental Charter School.

If you have any questions regarding this notice, please call or write the Principal(s) of the Environmental Charter School. **If you do not submit a written refusal on or before September 20, 2017 then the school may disclose directory information without your prior consent.**

**THE CONTENT OF THIS NOTICE HAS BEEN WRITTEN IN STRAIGHTFORWARD, SIMPLE LANGUAGE. IF A PERSON DOES NOT UNDERSTAND ANY OF THIS NOTICE, HE, SHE, OR THEY SHOULD ASK THE CEO OF THE CHARTER SCHOOL FOR AN EXPLANATION. THE CHARTER SCHOOL WILL ARRANGE FOR AN INTERPRETER FOR PARENTS WITH LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY. IF A PARENT IS DEAF OR BLIND OR HAS NO WRITTEN LANGUAGE, THE SCHOOL WILL ARRANGE FOR COMMUNICATION OF THIS NOTICE IN THE MODE NORMALLY USED BY THE PARENT (E.G., SIGN LANGUAGE, BRAILLE, OR ORAL COMMUNICATION). IF A STUDENT HAS A DISABILITY, ADDITIONAL INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE IN THE SCHOOL'S ANNUAL PUBLIC NOTICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES AND PROGRAMS AND RIGHTS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES.**

## **Telephone Procedures**

Each classroom has a telephone to help promote consistent communication between school and home. Teachers have a personal voice mailbox where parents/guardians can leave messages. In an effort to minimize the interruptions during learning time, teachers may have their telephones set to go directly to voicemail during the school day. If you have an urgent message, please call the main office and the message will be delivered to the teacher. Otherwise, leave a message and the teacher will get back to you at his/her earliest convenience. Thank you for respecting this policy.

## **Transportation**

Students in districts that provide transportation will be eligible for that service to and from the Environmental Charter School to the extent allowed by law. Bus transportation is arranged through a student's home school district. *The home district coordinates bus stops, pick-up and drop-off times, and drivers.* If you currently have an Alternate PM drop-off, custody bussing arrangement, door to door medial arrangement or Stop Change Request, those forms will need to be re-submitted to the district at the beginning of each school year. These forms can be found on your district's transportation website, or in your school's main office.

Students are expected to behave on the school bus and all ECS rules and policies, including the *ECS Code of Conduct*, are in effect while the children are being transported at all transfer stations, bus stops, and routes. Poor behavior on the bus will result in disciplinary action at school and could result in a loss of transportation privileges.

Students that are picked up by caretakers at the end of the day will be released only to the designated caregiver. To prevent unsafe and discourteous traffic dilemmas, please park and walk to the school grounds and pick up your child. No child will be permitted to go to an idling or unparked car.

### ***Upper School Arrival and Dismissal Procedures***

**Arrival:** Students being brought to school by car, bike, or on foot will be accepted at the Henrietta Street entrance between **8:00 and 8:30 AM**.

- The front door will close at 8:30, if you arrive after 8:30, please bring your student to the front door and office to sign in.
- Please use the visitor parking spaces on Milton Street, adjacent to Turtle Park, if you must park your car during student arrival. Please do not park in front of the school or on Milton Street.
- Please avoid obstructing neighbors' driveways.
- Please be aware of cyclists in and around Regent Square.

**Dismissal:** Student dismissal begins at 3:30 and concludes at 4:00, pick-up students will be outside at 3:40 p.m.

- **Do not stop or park in front of the school or on Milton Street.** Please park on the east side of South Braddock Avenue.
- All pick-up students will be dismissed from the side exit of the school building, next to Turtle Park.
- Dismissals from the office are for pre-arranged early dismissals only. Please pick your child up from the designated dismissal location outside of the school.
- Please avoid obstructing neighbors' driveways.
- Please be aware of cyclists in and around Regent Square.
- During severe weather incidents (such as thunderstorms) parents may pick up students from the school gym.

### ***Lower School Arrival and Dismissal Procedures***

**Arrival:** Students being brought to school will be accepted between **8:15 and 8:45 AM**.

- Students will be accepted at the back and front doors only.
- Do not stop or park on South Braddock Avenue; South Braddock Avenue is for buses only.
- If you are driving by to drop off, please turn onto Brashear Street and drop your student off at the back gate.
- If you are walking your student to the front door, please park either on East End Avenue or Waverly Street
- The back doors will close at 8:45; if you arrive after 8:45, please bring your student to the front door and office to sign in, and receive a tardy slip.
- When coming to ECS Lower School, please take South Braddock Avenue, turn onto Waverly Street or Brashear Street and park on East End Avenue or Waverly Street. *Do not park on Brashear Street.*
- Please avoid obstructing neighbors' driveways.
- Please be aware of cyclists in and around Park Place.

**Dismissal:** Students will be dismissed between 3:40 and 4:15. Pick-up students will be outside by 4:00pm. If a student is not picked up behind the school by 4:00pm, they will be waiting for pick-up in the office until 4:15, at which point, they will be dropped into the after school program. The first visit is free, and parents are responsible for the cost of subsequent visits.

- Do not stop or park on South Braddock Avenue; South Braddock Avenue is for buses only.
- All pick-up students will be dismissed from the playground space behind the school.
- Dismissals from the office are for pre-arranged early dismissals only. Please pick your child up from the designated dismissal location outside of the school.

- If you pick up your students from the playground space, please park on either East End Avenue or Waverly Street.
- When coming to ECS Lower School, please take South Braddock Avenue, turn onto Waverly Street or Brashear Street and park on East End Avenue or Waverly Street. *Do not park on Brashear Street.*
- Please avoid obstructing neighbors' driveways.
- Please be aware of cyclists in and around Park Place
- During severe weather incidents (such as thunderstorms) parents should still report to the rear of the building. Students will be dismissed from the two classrooms inside the two back doors.
- No child will be permitted to go to an idling or un-parked car.

### **Dismissal Transportation Changes**

Families are encouraged to maintain a consistent transportation schedule. We understand that occasionally all families experience the need to change a student's afternoon transportation schedule. Please follow these procedures for such changes: (*\*Note: We are unable to allow students to ride an alternative afternoon bus*).

Afternoon transportation changes must be made in writing either by note or to the appropriate transportation email address **by 12:00 noon or by 9am on a half day of school**. Phone calls should be used only if your family experiences an **emergency**.

[transportationlowerschool@ecspgh.org](mailto:transportationlowerschool@ecspgh.org) (for Lower School changes)

[transportationupperschool@ecspgh.org](mailto:transportationupperschool@ecspgh.org) (for Upper School changes)

One of the administrators in the office will reply to you and alert your child's homebase teacher of this change. *Your child's transportation change will not be applied until you receive email confirmation from ECS.* If an email was sent after 12pm (or after 9am on a half day of school), please call the main office at 412-247-7970 to confirm.

### **Volunteers and Visitors**

Parents are encouraged to be an active part of the school community and are welcome visitors.

All volunteers must sign in at the main office upon entry to the school building. All visitors must wear a visitor's badge while volunteering at the school. *Volunteers must obtain the following clearances before being permitted to volunteer in the school:*

PA State Police Criminal Record Check

PA Child Abuse Clearance

Federal Criminal Background Check

### **Wellness Policy on Nutrition and Physical Education**

The Board of Trustees of the Charter School, in combination with students, parents, administrators, faculty and staff, is committed to providing a school environment that promotes and protects children's health, well-being, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating habits and physical activity. As a means to fostering such a school environment, the Board of Trustees of Charter School sets forth the following goals and adopts the following Wellness Policy on Physical Activity and Nutrition.

The Food Service Director and building Principals shall work together to be responsible for monitoring the school, programs, and curriculum to ensure compliance with this policy, related policies and established guidelines or administrative regulations.

Staff members responsible for programs related to student wellness shall report to the building Principals regarding the status of such programs.

## School Meals

- All meals served to students at ECS through the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) will meet the new guidelines under the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act which became effective 7/1/12.
- ECS will not offer vending machines or any competitive foods for sale during school hours.
- ECS will not offer vending machines or any competitive foods for sale, except for limited fundraisers that have been approved by the principal and as permitted by the PA Department of Education.
- There will be access, at a reasonable cost, to foods and beverages that meet established nutritional guidelines.
- ECS will make efforts to eliminate the social stigma attached to, and to prevent the identification of, students who are eligible for free or reduced price school meals.
- The Charter School will schedule meal periods at reasonable appropriate times, and will provide students with a minimum of twenty minutes to enjoy their meals. In addition, the Charter School will discourage the scheduling of meetings or activities and/or organization meetings, unless the students will be permitted to eat during those meetings or activities.
- The board will ensure that teachers, principals, and nutrition services employees acknowledge the importance of the lunch period and its role as an integral part of the educational programming at ECS.
- It shall be the responsibility of the school staff to foster good manners and respect for fellow students.
- Food and beverages will **not** be used for the purpose of rewarding students for academic achievement or good behavior; unless such a reward system is specifically identified in a student's Individualized Education Program. Likewise, the Charter School will not restrict or withhold food or beverages for the purpose of disciplining or punishing students.

## Food Culture and Safety

- Students will be discouraged from sharing food and or beverages with others.
- Students with special health needs and food requirements, such as potentially life-threatening food allergies or diabetes etc. will be accommodated by the food service department and nursing staff in order to meet their specific needs.
- Foods with nuts will not be served for snack or in any component of the school lunch meal.
- There will be no bake sales or fundraising held during the school hours.

## Nutrition Education

- Nutrition Education and Health Education will be provided specifically for middle school students and be developmentally appropriate.
- For students K-5 students will receive nutrition education once a month in their physical education course. The course will tie into the school's monthly nutrition theme and be age appropriate.
- Informational materials will be provided to students and families to encourage sharing of health and nutrition information and to encourage healthy eating in the home.
- Staff will be encouraged to incorporate the Food Service Director and Physical Educators in their classroom to extend nutrition education into other academic disciplines.

## Physical Education

- Physical activity will be integrated across curricula with activities that are safe, enjoyable and developmentally appropriate for all students in all grades.
- All students will be given opportunities before, after and throughout the school day for physical activity through physical education, recess periods and integration of physical activity into the curriculum.
- Faculty and staff will be appropriately trained in integrating physical activity into the various curricular areas.
- Students will be encouraged to participate in physical activity outside of the school environment, in both competitive and noncompetitive environments.

- Organized physical activity will be offered and encouraged at school-sponsored or school related events.
- To the extent practicable, Charter School facilities will be made available to students, faculty, staff and the community for the purpose of offering physical activity and/or nutrition programs.
- Physical activity will not be used or withheld as punishment.



# **Addendum**

## **Acknowledgement of the Acceptable Use Agreement**

*Please read the following statements and then sign the Handbook Confirmation form (included in Schoolmint)*

As a User of the Charter School Computer Resources, I accept the following basic rules:

1. I will treat all Computer Resources with care and will leave them in good working condition when I am finished.
2. I will use appropriate language on all Computer Resources. If the language is obscene, defamatory, harassing, sexually explicit, threatening, violent, insulting, demeaning or otherwise inappropriate as deemed by a teacher, the Principal or the Executive Director, I will not access it, use it, or disseminate it.
3. I will always treat people on-line with respect. I will not use any the Charter School Computer Resource to insult or threaten other Users. I assume responsibility for the content of messages I send to others.
4. I will respect the privacy of other Users and will not make any attempts to gain access into the private mailboxes of those Users. I will not allow other Users access to my mailbox and will keep my password private.
5. I understand that Computer Resources are to be used for educational use. I understand that the system administrator or Principal can access and read my messages.
6. I understand that all Computer Resources belong to the School and I will treat them with respect.
7. I will not install or download any applications (games), programs or materials at school from the Internet or from any Computer Resources unless the Principal gives me permission in writing.
8. I will not add any software to the school's Computer Resources unless the Principal gives me permission in writing.
9. I understand that the software provided to me for use is protected under copyright law. I agree not to copy this software unlawfully and/or distribute any materials provided for our use. I will model and encourage ethical use of the software among my friends, family members, and the community.

By signing the Handbook Confirmation page, you agree to abide by the Acceptable Use Policy and understand that failure to follow all rules as explained in this document may result in the loss of your privileges to Computer Resources; disciplinary action, including suspension or expulsion from the Charter School; termination of employment; charges for damages; and civil or criminal penalties. You are subject to the punishment determined by the Charter School.