



**Durham Charter School (DCS)
Parent/Student Handbook
2023-2024
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WELCOME TO DURHAM CHARTER SCHOOL

Dear Durham Charter School Parents and Families:

We couldn't be more excited to celebrate 25 years of our school! Founded in 1997 as Healthy Start Academy, we have served the Durham community proudly from July of that year until now. We were the first public charter school to open its doors in the state of North Carolina! As we look to the next 25 years, we're excited to charter new paths forward. Our goal will be to prepare your scholar for success in college or career. We will achieve this goal by growing to over 1200 students in grades K-12.

With our eyes to the future, we're excited to announce we've changed our name to Durham Charter School reflecting our connection to our city and county. We've added 10th grade this year, grown to two buildings and added a host of new programs. We've also purchased fifty acres of land and will be building a permanent campus for all of us to grow and achieve. While these changes are exciting, we are 100% committed to staying true to the principles that have made us successful: 1) a strict, structured, safe

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environment where students are expected to conduct themselves with discipline; 2) excellent instruction from committed teachers, 3) strong curriculum implemented with fidelity; 4) a loving school environment that includes plenty of joy, 5) and a growing enrichment program – this year we launch orchestra, chess, and a host of other electives.

As our school has grown in quality, the demand has also increased so that means we've doubled the size of the school in four years and have had more new enrollment applications than ever before in history!

Welcome to our school family to all new parents. Thank you to all returning parents who have stayed with us. Welcome to the 2023-2024 School Year!

Respectfully,
Alex Quigley
Executive Director
Durham Charter School

SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, with direction from the North Carolina State Board of Education, and in accordance with Legislation passed by the North Carolina General Assembly grants authority to the Durham Charter School Board of Directors to operate Durham Charter School.

Insurance

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Students should be covered under an insurance plan of their parents/guardians for accidents/sickness that may occur at school. This includes insurance to cover students participating on our athletic teams.

Durham Charter School Board of Directors

The Board of Directors is the governing body of the Academy. The Board is responsible for all Academy policies and procedures that affect the instructional and operational functions at the Academy. The Board is accessible through the Board Chair. The Durham Charter School Board meets monthly on the campus of the school. A complete listing of Board meeting dates may be found on the Academy's website.

Durham Charter School Board of Directors

Mrs. Elizabeth Gnatek-Morey, Chair

Ms. Gwendolyn Wicker, Vice Chair

Mr. Michael Page

Mr. Gerald McNair

Mr. Richard Ford

Mr. Preston Edwards

Mr. Cary Cain

Mr. John DeBerry

Mr. Ernesto Lembert

Mr. Matt Lesesky

The Roles of the Academy Executive Director and the Principal

The executive director provides administrative leadership for all instructional and operational functions of the Academy. The principal reports to the executive director and provides leadership to all faculty and staff on a local school level.

School Leadership Team

The School Leadership Team includes faculty representatives, instructional coach(es), Exceptional Children's Coordinator, Principal/Executive Director,

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Assistant Principal, and the Director of Operations. The leadership team meets regularly to discuss matters of school instruction and operations.

Asbestos Management in School

Durham Charter School is aware of the federal and state regulations regarding asbestos management in schools. This facility has submitted a management plan to the NC Department of Health and Human Services, as well as updated re-inspection reports. Materials are managed under the Operations and Management Program. A copy of the management plan is available for review at any time. If you have questions, please contact the school's office.

Student Accountability and Academy Expectations

Faculty, staff and administration at Durham Charter School will respond to the academic needs of students by delivering a challenging, responsive instructional program. In order to respond to those needs, students require a positive, safe and orderly school environment in which learning can occur without disruption. There is a direct correlation between positive school/classroom behavior and student achievement. Students who do not observe the rules of good conduct in the classroom, hallways, school assemblies, cafeteria, on the school bus, on the playground, bathrooms or on field trips interrupt the maximum learning and threaten the safety of other persons. Additionally, disruptive students minimize their own opportunities to learn. The faculty, staff and administration will take a proactive role in enforcing the Durham Charter School Student Code of Conduct outlined in this handbook. The Student Code of Conduct provides parents, students and Academy personnel with a common understanding of the academic and behavioral expectations for each student. Student compliance with PRIDE values will ensure a safe and orderly learning environment conducive to high levels of student learning. Furthermore, this policy will be administered in a fair and consistent manner.

DURHAM CHARTER SCHOOL EXPECTATIONS

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POSITIVE ATTITUDE: I will come to school every day knowing that it's a new day to be positive and become a better me.

- *I will come to school with an open mind without whining, complaining, or pouting even when I am asked to do new things that may not interest me.*
- *I will follow directions and jump to it the first time and give my best effort on every task.*
- *I will take PRIDE in my uniform and wear it properly every day with a belt and with my shirt tucked in. My uniform is clean and I am without Jewelry or make-up.*

RESPECT: A way of treating or thinking about something or someone. If you respect your teacher, you admire him/her and treat him/her well.

- *I will treat others better than I want to be treated.*
- *I will speak with a tone and body language that others will see as appropriate.*
- *I will do what I am asked to do the first time I am asked.*

INTEGRITY: The quality of being honest and having strong principles. It is generally a personal choice to uphold oneself to consistent moral and ethical standards.

- *I will take responsibility for ALL of my actions.*
- *I will tell the truth even if and when there is a consequence.*

DETERMINATION: A positive emotional feeling that involves persevering towards a difficult goal in spite of obstacles.

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- *I will come to school every day and arrive on time.*
- *I will work through any problems or difficulties that may come my way.*
- *I will show PRIDE in my school work and never settle.*

EMPATHY: The ability to understand and share the feelings of another scholar.

- *I will learn to identify/relate with the feelings of my peers.*
- *I will exhibit compassion while showing respect for the different life experiences of my peers and adults.*

Students who are identified under the IDEA or under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 have certain unique rights under the statutes. Discipline affecting children with exceptionalities may be treated somewhat differently from students who do not have exceptionalities. If a student continuously disregards the expectations of the Student Code of Conduct, that student will face possible exclusion from Durham Charter School.

Should a parent/guardian appeal a disciplinary action taken by the administration to the Durham Charter Board of Directors, the decision(s) made by the Board with respect to action is/are final.

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

Safe and Orderly Environment

Durham Charter School is unequivocally committed to providing a safe and orderly environment in which scholars can improve their academic achievement. Scholars whose behavior does not meet the school community's clearly defined standards for reasonable and acceptable behavior will not be permitted to disrupt the education of others. This is the basis of our Scholar Code of Conduct.

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Durham Charter School Code of Conduct

1. Scholars will focus on learning and never disrupt the learning of others.
2. Scholars will pay attention and complete all assigned work.
3. Scholars will respect and obey all staff members and other adults, and respect fellow scholars.
4. Scholars will follow all rules, routines, and procedures pertaining to specific areas (cafeteria, hall, etc.)
5. Scholars will respect school property and that of fellow scholars, staff members, and neighbors.
6. Scholars will cooperate in keeping the school building and premises neat and clean.
7. Scholars will use polite, acceptable, professional, and respectful language at all times.
8. Scholars attend school in proper uniform each day.
9. Scholars will not lie, cheat, or steal.
10. Scholars will follow all state laws and the School, Parent, Scholar Compact.

Disciplinary Infractions

The disciplinary infractions listed in this Student Code of Conduct are not to be construed as an all-inclusive list or as a limitation upon the authority of school officials to deal appropriately with other types of conduct which interfere with the good order of the school, the proper functioning of the educational process, or the health and safety of Scholars.

A student violating any aspect of the Code of Conduct will be subject to appropriate consequences. Additionally, a student who engages in an act of misconduct that violates the law may be referred to the appropriate authority. Scholars are expected to follow the Code of Conduct when:

- On school property;
- In a motor vehicle being used for a school related purpose;

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- At a school-related activity, function or event;
- At any time or place when the student's behavior has a direct or immediate effect on maintaining order, safety, health and discipline in the school;

Minor Infractions

If a scholar commits a minor infraction, he/she is subject to appropriate disciplinary consequences. Minor infractions include:

- Failure to cooperate or comply with any aspect of the school's Code of Conduct
- Disrupting the learning environment in any way (horseplay, excessive noise, throwing objects, etc.)
- Disrespecting a scholar or staff member
- Failure to complete required homework assignments
- Failure to cooperate or comply with directions of school personnel
- Improper behavior in class, school, on a school-related transportation, or during a school-sponsored activity
- Failing to have required items signed such as tests, quizzes, disciplinary forms, or report cards
- Dress code violations
- Chewing gum

Major Infractions

If a scholar commits a major infraction, he/she is subject to appropriate disciplinary consequences. Major infractions include:

- Fighting, pushing, shoving or unwanted physical contact
- Repeated dress code violations
- Excessive demerits and/or repeated detentions
- Continual classroom disruptions
- Skipping Class
- Violation of school cell phone policy
- Repeated or extreme disrespect of staff or peers
- Leaving class or school building without permission

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- Theft
- Damage to school property
- Sexual harassment
- Forgery of any sort, including parent signatures
- Bullying
- Possession/use of any form of alcoholic beverages, tobacco, inhalants, illicit drugs, etc.
- Dishonesty
- Academic dishonesty/cheating
- Use of inappropriate language
- Any inappropriate display of affection
- Possession of dangerous weapons, look-a-like weapons, personal protection devices (i.e. pepper spray) as defined by state law and dangerous weapons or instruments not otherwise enumerated herein
- Gangs and gang related activity
- Violation of Technology Use and Internet Safety Policy

Parents or Scholars who are unsure of what conduct is prohibited by each act should consult with the principal.

Bullying (including Cyberbullying) or Harassing Behavior

The school prohibits any type of bullying or harassing behavior by scholars. Bullying or harassing behavior is defined as any pattern of gestures or written, electronic, or verbal communications, or any physical act or any threatening communication, that takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function on a school bus, or that causes a substantial disruption to school operations and/or interferes with the rights of other scholars or staff members and that:

- Places a scholars in actual and reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or
 damage to his or her property; or

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- Creates or is certain to create a hostile environment by substantially interfering with or impairing a scholar’s educational performance, opportunities, or benefits. “Hostile environment” means that the victim subjectively views the conduct as bullying or harassing behavior and the conduct is objectively severe or pervasive enough that a reasonable person would agree that it is bullying or harassing behavior.

Bullying or harassing behavior includes, but is not limited to, acts reasonably perceived as being motivated by any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, socioeconomic status, academic status, gender identity, physical appearance, sexual orientation, or mental, physical, developmental, or sensory disability, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose.

Cyberbullying is prohibited and is an act involving the use of information and communication technologies, pursuant to state law, including but not limited to email, text messages, blogs, instant messages, personal Websites, on-line social directories and communities (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Vine), video-posting sites, and online personal polling Websites, to support deliberate or repeated hostile behavior, by an individual or group, that is intended to defame, harm, threaten, intimidate, or harass students, staff members, or the School during or outside School hours and on or off School premises.

Procedures:

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1. A staff member who has witnessed or has reliable information that a scholar has been subject to any act of bullying or harassing behavior shall report the incident to the principal.
2. A scholar or volunteer who has witnessed or has reliable information that a scholar has been subject to any act of bullying or harassing behavior should report the incident to a teacher, other staff member or the principal.
3. A scholar, staff member or volunteer who reports bullying or harassing behavior may do so orally or in written form, providing as much information as possible. A scholar, staff member or volunteer also may report anonymously if they choose.
4. Any staff member who receives a report of bullying or harassing behavior will forward the report to the principal who will ensure that a prompt investigation is completed.
5. There will be no reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of bullying or harassment. Such reprisal or retaliation by a scholar is a violation of the Scholars Code of Conduct and will result in disciplinary action pursuant to the Scholars Code of Conduct.
6. Bullying or harassing behavior is a violation of the Scholars Code of Conduct and will be action pursuant to the Scholars Code of Conduct.

Durham Charter School operates the anonymous state reporting system called *Say Something – Anonymous Reporting System (SS-ARS)* for grades 6-12 as mandated by state law. The SS-ARS is a life-saving school safety program that teaches students, educators, and administrators how to recognize the warning signs for individuals who may be at risk of hurting themselves or others and to report this information by going to a trusted adult, calling 911 or using the anonymous reporting system.

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Disciplinary Procedures

Depending on the severity, frequency, and circumstances associated with the infraction any of the following disciplinary actions may be taken by the Executive Director or their designee:

- Loss of privilege
- Parent contact
- Loss of Scholar Dollars
- Work Assignment
- Conference with Administrator
- Referral to Counselor
- Assignment to PRIDE Academy
- Suspension
- Expulsion

*Scholars who are served under IDEA (Special Education) or under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are entitled to certain additional rights in the area of discipline based upon their qualification for services under these federal laws.

**State law requires that a student who brings a firearm onto school property be suspended for 365 days which may, in extraordinary circumstances, be shortened on a case by case basis.”

STUDENT DRESS CODE

Since opening as one of the first charter schools in North Carolina in 1997, Durham Charter School has **required** all students to wear a school uniform. Therefore, each student is **required** to wear the **approved** school uniform each school day according to the Academy’s Dress Code.

The Dress Code is:

Grades K-8th

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Both male and female students:

- Top: Navy Blue Uniform Shirt with Durham Charter School logo
- Bottoms: Gray uniform pants or knee length Grey shorts, Includes plaid skirts and jumpers for girls.
- Shoes: Tennis shoes/Sneakers only – No shoes that have lights, make noise or have wheels.
- Belt: Required for all bottoms that have belt loops

French Toast is the sole provider of school uniforms. Uniforms may be ordered online at www.frenchtoast.com

Grades 9th-12th

Both male and female students:

- Top: Durham Charter logo shirts, sweatshirts or any Durham Charter swag
- Bottoms: Blue jeans (no rips); black or gray joggers
- Shoes: Tennis shoes/Sneakers only – No shoes that have lights, make noise or have wheels.
- Belt: Required for all bottoms that have belt loops

High school girls may also wear gray uniform pants, knee length shorts or knee length skirts.

The following items violate Durham Charter’s Dress Code:

White t-shirts worn as the school shirt, sweat pants, dangling earrings, oversized and excessive jewelry including large hoop earrings, headbands, scarves, “du-rags,” or other head covering (unless it is due to medical/religious beliefs*), excessive hair bows, clips, pins or hats.

All students will be expected to comply with the following dress code:

Girls: All hair ornaments should be minimal so that they do not disturb the classroom environment. Hats and coats are not to be worn inside the school during the school day, except when students enter and exit the building. Students who choose to wear

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outerwear during the school day may wear the school approved navy blue jackets or sweatshirts which must be purchased from the school's provider. Middle school students will store backpacks, purses and other types of carrying bags and other personal items in their assigned lockers. Students do not carry cell phones, backpacks, purses or bags inside the school during the school day.

Socks, tights and hose are to be SOLID navy blue, white or neutral in color. Neon/bright colors are not permitted. No designs of any kind. Cut-off pants, leggings, jeggings, short skirts (thigh high or higher), tight or revealing pants or skirts are not permitted.

A navy blue, dark brown or black belt must be worn for all pants, shorts, and skirts having belt loops. All students must tuck in their uniform shirt at all times.

For their safety, students must wear tennis shoes or sneakers at all times. No exceptions. Shoes must not have lights, wheels or make noise.

Reminder: Students must report to school each day in a clean approved uniform. Uniform checks are conducted each school day at several checkpoints in the school. Should a student not report to school in a clean, approved school uniform, the student will remain out of class until the parent/guardian brings the student the required school uniform. Should the student report to school out of uniform on a consistent basis, further disciplinary actions will be taken.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Regular daily attendance at school enables each student to gain the skills, knowledge and concepts to be successful in the classroom, explore new academic challenges and perform successfully in challenging academic settings. Durham Charter School monitors student attendance very closely and abides by the Compulsory Attendance public school law governing student attendance (*N.C.G.S. 115C-378*).

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Parents or guardians must explain in writing or verbally to a school official the reason for their child's absence. Absences should be reported to the Academy's main office prior to 7:45 a.m. on the day of a student absence to report the absence. All parents are required to report their child's absence to the email: (absences@durhamcharter.org). This procedure is required for all absences, including medical and dental appointments. Students dismissed early in the day, for any reason, must be signed out in the office by a responsible adult. Durham Charter School does not permit early releases after 2:30 p.m. The answering service is available before and after school hours for anyone who would like to leave a message. Parents and guardians are strongly encouraged to schedule all appointments/activities for your child after school hours whenever possible so that the student does not miss instructional time.

Absences are excused for the following reasons:

- Illness or Injury
- Death in Family
- Doctor/dental appointments
- Educational Opportunities (prior approval required)
- Court/Administrative Procedures
- Quarantine
- Local Board/Policy

UNEXCUSED ABSENCES/TARDINESS POLICY

North Carolina compulsory education laws are found in NC. General Statutes section 115C-378 requiring that children between the ages of seven (7) and (16) attend school. Failure to send a child to school can result in criminal prosecution of the parent or student (if the student is declared undisciplined).

To ensure students are attending school regularly, Durham Charter will incorporate a School-Based Truancy Court Program to address unexcused absences. If a student

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misses more than three (3) days from school without excuse or has more than one (1) tardy within five school days (or an accumulation of more than 5 tardies), the parent will be contacted.

Excessive absences and tardiness may result in appearance before the School-Based Truancy Court. This program is a problem-solving model where the parent and school officials sit down to talk, listen, and prepare an action plan. Durham Charter's intention is to resolve attendance violations through our School-Based Truancy Court, rather than the criminal court process under N.C. Statute. However, if the child's absences do not improve or the parent refuses to attend Truancy Court, the Academy will enforce the law to its fullest extent which may include a referral to the Durham County District Attorney.

Extended Family Vacations

Parents planning to take their children on an extended vacation should notify the school administration at least two weeks before departure. The administration and faculty discourage lengthy trips that cause students to miss class time. However, it becomes the student's responsibility, with the help of the parents, to make arrangements with the teacher(s) for any missed assignments and complete all assigned work upon his/her return to school. The student is to complete all assignments within the same number of days as the length of the vacation. Assignments that are not completed receive no credit. Students who miss an announced test during their absence will take the test when all missed work is completed within the same number of days missed due to the vacation.

Family Death or Terminal Illness

If there is a death, terminal illness or similar traumatic situation in your family that may affect the student's attendance, emotional/social well-being and/or level of concentration, please notify the school's main office.

Medication in School

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All medications prescribed by a licensed physician require written permission from the custodial parent. Parents must complete the Medication Administration Permission form (one form per medication). The form must be renewed each school year or upon any change in medication or dosage. Durham Charter School does not administer over the counter medication to any student. The medication supplied to the school must be in the exact dosage prescribed, so the individual administering medications is not responsible for dividing or splitting pills. All medication must be picked up by the parent at the end of the school year or upon a scholar's withdrawal. Any medication not picked up will be discarded. If a parent is accompanying his/her child on a field trip, the parent will be required to administer the child's medication.

Illness at School

To maintain the health of our school community, scholars with a fever, cough, or communicable disease should be symptom-free for at least 24 hours before returning to school. If a child becomes ill while at school, he/she should be picked up immediately. If a child is suspected to have one of the following diseases, please have a family physician or local health department verify the scholar has been treated and is permitted to return to school: chicken pox, measles, ringworm, scabies, bed bugs, pink eye, impetigo, streptococcal, staphylococcal, meningococcal, and any other disease or infection that jeopardizes the health and safety of students, faculty and staff. Should any symptoms related to these diseases be observed in a student, the student must be picked up immediately and cannot return to school without a release from the doctor.

Make-Up Work Due to Absence

Students are expected to complete all assignments missed during absence(s) from school. Students and/or parents may contact your child's teacher(s) to secure missed assignments. Students will have one school day to make up their work for each day absent from school.

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In cases of a prolonged absence due to illness, the student's teacher should be contacted. Arrangements can be made to pick up class assignments for a student who is absent two or more days. Parents must call before 7:45 a.m. on the day the homework is needed in order to allow the teacher adequate time to assemble the assignments. Parents may pick up the assignments after 4:00 p.m. on that day.

Parents/guardians of suspended students may pick up homework in the main office after 4:00 p.m. on the day of suspension. Suspended students are required to turn in their late work in the allotted time given.

Parent Engagement Coordinator and Community Resources

Research has shown that children learn best when home and school work together. Here at Durham Charter School, we feel that teachers should be able to focus on the daily task of effectively educating their students and preparing them to be responsible, contributing members of our society. We also feel that it is important for parents to interact in the school community and feel assured that their child is learning successfully in a safe and structured academic environment.

However, there are times when teachers have concerns about circumstances that may stifle a student's academic performance. This could range from excessive tardiness to a student's complaint about home life. In these cases, teachers will have access to work with the school's Parent Engagement Coordinator (PEC) to help redirect the student's path back to educational success. The PEC will act as an extended "arm" of the teacher to reach out to parents whose child may be experiencing difficulties. It is the purpose of the PEC to reach out to the parent through phone calls, home visits and other means necessary to establish effective communication between the school and the parent; all for the best interest and academic success of the student.

For more information about our PEC and Community Resources program, please contact the school office at (919) 956-5599.

HOMework PHILOSOPHY AND GUIDELINES

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Philosophy

The Durham Charter School staff believes homework is an important component of the educational process. It is expected the following objectives will be accomplished through regular and well-planned homework.

- Students will develop more self-direction and individual responsibility.
- Students will develop independent study skills.
- Students will become better organized.
- Students will learn to budget their time.
- The learning process will be expanded.

Guidelines

Students and parents should expect homework each weekday evening.

- It is a requirement to complete homework as it is a part of the student's evaluation, affecting quarterly grades on the report card.
- Homework is assigned for specific instructional purposes.
- Teachers will provide clear directions for each assignment.
- Homework will include a variety of activities that support academic growth.
- Teachers will provide a time sequence for long range projects, with formal, prepared directions for the projects.
- The amount of homework will be reasonable.

DAILY SCHOOL PROCEDURES

Arrival

Students should arrive to school between 7:20 a.m. and 7:45 a.m. After exiting their vehicle/bus, students should enter the building through the lower level arrival/dismissal doors in an orderly manner.

Snacks

Students in grades K-2 have a daily snack period. The snack period is approximately ten (10) minutes. Children must bring nutritious snacks from home as the school does

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not provide them. Snacks should be healthy options (e.g. fruit, vegetables, cheese and crackers, 100% juice boxes, etc.). Candy, sodas and sweets are not acceptable. During snack time, students may talk quietly with those sitting near them. Snacks are not allowed for any student (K-8) at any time other than allowable by faculty and staff. Abuse by students may result in disciplinary action. It is not permissible to chew gum at any time during the school day. Large (“group”) bags of snacks, soda, gum and other distracting edible items are not allowed at the Academy. Sharing of snacks is prohibited. A snack period in any other grade level is at the discretion of the teacher.

Breakfast and Lunch Periods

All expectations of the Academy’s PRIDE Values will be observed during breakfast and lunch periods. Students who do not meet these expectations during breakfast or lunch will face disciplinary action. A nutritious breakfast and lunch, including milk, are served daily. Breakfast service begins at 7:20 a.m. and ends at 7:45 a.m. Durham Charter is a sponsor of the National School Breakfast and Lunch Programs. All enrolled students at Durham Charter School receive school meals at no cost through the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) made possible by the USDA. Students may also bring their lunch from home. Parents and guardians are encouraged to eat lunch with their student, however, school meals are not provided to adults.

Durham Charter’s meal service is automated. Students are issued a 4-digit confidential PIN number and are expected to memorize this number for entry at the point of sale. PIN numbers are considered confidential and should never be shared.

NO Fast Food Policy

As participants in the USDA National School Breakfast and Lunch Programs, Durham Charter School has a NO Fast Food Policy throughout our school, during school hours. This means, students, teachers, school administrators, personnel, staff and volunteers are prohibited from bringing any fast food (*defined as food obtained from a restaurant/eatery with a drive-thru window*) on the campus of the Academy during the hours of 12:00 a.m. until 3:15 p.m.

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Acts of cafeteria misconduct include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Talking loudly in line
- Cutting ahead of other students in line
- Sitting improperly at table or seat
- Using impolite manners
- Leaving the cafeteria without permission
- Taking food from other students
- Refusing to clean up eating area
- Throwing food or other items

Dismissal

Instructional periods continue until 3:15 p.m. at which time the dismissal process begins. School dismisses each day at 3:15 p.m. and is conducted by a systematic process in order to keep all students, faculty and staff, and visitors safe. All students are expected to walk through the halls in an orderly manner with voice levels on zero.

Students who are disruptive during dismissal are subject to disciplinary action. School administrators strongly discourage early pick-ups (prior to 2:30 p.m.) as it interrupts the instructional day. To this end, no student will be released after 2:30 p.m. as there are other activities occurring at that time. Parents picking up students at dismissal will be expected to pick up their child through the carpool lane prior to the arrival of school buses. Parents who arrive after 3:30 pm must park their car and enter into the building to pick up their child.

Examples of student misbehaviors during dismissal include, but are not limited, to the following:

- Running and/or making excessive noise in the hall or stairway
- Participating in unacceptable physical contact (rough play, etc.)
- Disrespect for authority; Failure to comply with instructions given by school personnel
- Harassing other students (physical or verbal abuse)

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Pick-Up Times

All car riders should be picked-up from school no later than 3:45 p.m. daily. In the event you are unable to pick-up your child by 3:45 p.m., you are expected to call the school. Students who are not picked up by 3:45 p.m. will be placed in the after school program and assessed a late pick up fee. Parents/guardians who permit another responsible adult, not listed on the emergency contact form, to pick-up their child must first call the school's main office to alert personnel with the name of the individual responsible for picking up their child. **This individual must confirm their identity with a pictured ID before the student will be released to them. No student will be released to an adult not identified by their pictured ID or who are not listed on the student's emergency contact form. Durham Charter School strongly discourages parents/guardians from picking up their child before the school day ends (2:30 p.m.) Early pick-ups distract the classroom learning environment and students miss valuable learning opportunities.**

Walkers

Students who walk to and from school are to go directly home following dismissal. Students who linger at the school or stop to visit friends on the way home cause undue worry for parents and staff. Students who walk home must have a signed Student Walk Release form from their parent/guardian on file in the main office stating that they are permitted to walk home. Faculty/staff do supervise walkers who must cross a street adjacent to the Academy.

Restrooms

Students will demonstrate proper etiquette using the restroom. Expectations for bathroom etiquette include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Flushing the toilet
- Washing and drying hands
- Placing all trash in trash can

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- Keeping bathroom clean

Students determined as misbehaving in the restrooms or vandalizing the restrooms will be subject to disciplinary action.

School Security and Protection

At Durham Charter School, we take the security and protection of our students, faculty and staff very seriously. With that in mind, Durham Charter School uses front office electronic security doors and a computerized sign in/out system which processes criminal background checks.

When visiting the school, **all visitors, including parents and guardians, must be checked in at the front office. A valid photo ID is required at check in for all visitors to the school.**

Parents/guardians must report inside the school to sign their child in and out. When signing your student in/out, the student's 4-digit confidential PIN is used. Please ensure that your child memorizes their 4-digit PIN because it is used both for school meal service and signing in/out.

In addition, because we protect your child's educational environment and every minute spent on instruction, we do not dismiss any child after 2:00 p.m. unless the parent/guardian has notified the school office by 1:00 p.m. of that school day.

EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSING

Adverse Weather

The Durham Charter School Administration determines whether to close, delay school or release students early when inclement weather occurs or road conditions are unsafe for school bus travel. The decision to close or delay school, including length of delay, will be announced by the following television and radio stations by 5:30 a.m.

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WTVD 11 – Channel 6 (cable)
WRAL 5 – Channel 3 (cable)
News 14 – Channel 14 (cable)

Therefore, no announcement in the media means that the Academy will operate on a normal schedule.

If inclement weather is predicted after the school day begins, a decision regarding early release will be made as quickly as possible. In the event school is dismissed for the day, notifications will be announced to the media (***Tune into the above stations***). When school is dismissed early and closes for the day and road conditions are not likely to improve, a communication regarding the next day of school may be announced to the media if possible prior to the 6:00 p.m. evening news.

Other weather conditions, such as a hurricane watch, may require a decision based upon the best predictions of weather forecasters. If school will be closed the next day due to approaching weather, a notification may be announced to media prior to the 6:00 p.m. evening news.

Please make plans in advance for child care arrangements in case snow, ice, or other inclement weather closes the Academy during the school day.

If the Academy is in session when a severe weather watch or warning is issued, the Academy will stay open. Academy personnel will take necessary safety precautions.

Students will remain in school if school is already in session when a tornado watch is issued. The staff will take safety precautions. Students will be released to parents/guardians or other designated adults upon request.

If the Academy is in session when a tornado warning is issued, all students and staff will remain in the building and take shelter in designated areas. Students may be

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detained beyond the usual dismissal time for safety purposes. Students will be released to parents/guardians or other designated adults upon request.

Remote instruction during campus closings

Durham Charter has the capability to deliver instruction to students during campus closings. Administration will determine whether doing so is feasible on a case-by-case basis and communicate as far in advance as possible with staff, students and families. If this option is used, instructional hours would count toward the overall instructional hours for the school year.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Cell Phones and Electronic Devices

Personal electronic devices (i.e. iPods, gaming devices, etc.) are not allowed on the grounds at the Academy. Cell phones are allowable, but are for emergency use prior to or after the school day. Cell phones are kept in lockers/bookbags and are to be turned off during the school day. Cell phone texting or any other unauthorized uses of the cell phone are not allowable during the school day. Cell phones will be confiscated by school personnel if a student is determined to be using their phone in any way or should their phone sound during the school day. Cell phones/electronic devices that are confiscated are not returned to the student. The parent must report to the school to pick-up their child's cell phone/electronic device. All devices/cell phones not retrieved by the last day of school will be donated to charity. Students abusing this requirement will be subject to disciplinary action.

Durham Charter School (Locker Searches)

Student lockers are school property. Therefore, students have no right to privacy enforceable against the school's right to open and view the contents of those lockers. Students may not use their lockers to hold any illegal or unauthorized materials. School officials may inspect any student's locker without a search warrant, for any reason

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deemed reasonable to maintain safe and orderly operations. A student's personal items found in a locker, such as clothing, backpacks, gym bags or purses, may be searched based on reasonable suspicion.

School Telephones

Should emergencies arise, parents and guardians should contact the Academy's main office at (919) 956-5599. Urgent messages will be given to students or staff members upon request via email. All incoming calls for teachers during instructional hours will be transferred to their voicemail. **We do not interrupt teachers for phone calls during instructional time.**

Communication

Effective communication between school and home is vital to the successful academic, social and emotional well-being of all students. The major communication tools are the school website, social media pages, parent newsletters, texts and emails, Talking Points text messages, LiveSchool, Mid-Quarterly Academic Progress, Quarterly Academic Report Cards and classroom newsletters and other school applications. These documents/platforms include timely information from the administration or teachers. In addition, telephone communication, text messages, group meetings, open houses and events, e-mail and other communications will be common. Parents are encouraged to contact the school when they have questions.

Student agendas are distributed to all students at the beginning of the year at no cost. Agendas facilitate communication between the parents and teacher regarding homework assignments, future tests and quizzes, serve as the student's hall pass, and provide other relevant academic information. Replacement planners (in the event that the student loses or misplaces their original planner) costs \$5.00.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

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Mandatory Parent/Teacher Conferences are held twice per school year. Please refer to the school calendar for the Parent/Teacher conference schedule. Informal conferences can be scheduled before or after school at other times during the year. Parents/Guardians should contact their child's teacher to schedule a conference. The Academy does not allow impromptu conferences and requires parents/guardians to schedule a parent/teacher conference. In this way, time will be dedicated to address all parent questions and concerns. The middle school faculty holds parent conferences as a team. Therefore, the parent/guardian meets with all teachers at one time.

Personal Items

The school will not accept responsibility for the personal items of students. All personal items should be locked away in the student locker (4-6 grades) and kept in their bookbag (K-3, 7-10 grades). Any personal item(s) that staff members judge to be unsafe or improper for school will be confiscated and held in the office to be picked up by the parent/guardian. All personal items not retrieved by the last day of school will be donated to charity.

Student Outstanding Balances

During the school year, fees are assessed for numerous reasons such as, field trips, etc. Parents/guardians are expected to pay the balance due in full once they are notified. Any student owing an outstanding balance cannot participate or attend any field trip or school-sponsored activity. Once the balance has been satisfied, the student may resume participation in these areas.

PROMOTION AND RETENTION

Durham Charter School students in 3rd, 5th and 8th grade must meet local promotion and attendance standards for promotion to the next grade. The reading and math promotion standard is Level III, Level IV or Level V on the North Carolina End-of-Grade Tests.

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Students who earn below a Level III on the N.C. Reading and/or Math End-of-Grade tests may be administered an alternate form of the End-of-Grade test before the last day of school.

Students who earn a Level III, IV or V on the re-administration of the test and meet the attendance standard will be promoted to the next grade.

The administration and faculty members will review the student academic records, student portfolio (work samples), and other relevant information to determine if the student has made adequate progress for promotion. Following this review, the administration will make one of the following decisions:

- Promotion to Next Grade
- Retention in Current Grade

Should a parent or guardian disagree with a decision to retain a child, the parent/guardian should appeal that decision to the principal. The principal's decision may be appealed in accordance with the School's Grievance policy if there is an alleged specific violation of Board policy or state or federal law.

Reviewing all available assessment data, the principal, in collaboration with the student's teacher(s), parents/guardians and other professional staff, will determine if the student should be promoted. The final decision resides with the school principal.

- **Grades K, 1, 2 and 4** – In order to be promoted a student should have reached a standard of achievement necessary for satisfactory progress in the next grade. If retention of a student appears likely because of classroom performance, at least two (2) notices will be given to the parent/guardian of the student. The first notice may be a conference; the second notice must be in writing and must be provided by the end of the third quarter.
- **Grades 6-8** – In order to be considered for promotion to the next grade, students normally must pass five of six units, which must include language arts

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and mathematics. Other data considered in the promotion decision include: EOG test scores, attendance, effort and improvement in course work as judged by grades and student portfolio of work.

SCHOOL BUS TRANSPORTATION

Charter schools are not required by state law to provide bus transportation for their students. Durham Charter School offers limited bus transportation; however, it is a privilege for students to ride the school buses not a right. As our student population grows, so do requests for bus service. Students will be provided bus service on a first come, first serve basis until buses have reached capacity. All students who ride the bus are expected to adhere to all bus rules and regulations. Failure to do so will result in a bus disciplinary referral written. Once a student receives three (3) disciplinary referrals they will be removed from the bus and their seat given to another student from our waitlist.

Student Expectations

- Arrive at bus stop 10-15 minutes prior to pick up time.
- Follow the directions of the bus driver and bus rules at all times
- Stay seated in their assigned seat and face forward
- Respect fellow bus riders
- Talk quietly and use appropriate language
- Keep their hands and feet out of the aisles
- Keep all body parts and belongings inside the windows
- No eating or drinking on the bus
- Keep bus clean

It is NC State Law! Any Kindergarten student who rides the school bus to/from school must be escorted to the pick-up stop and met at the drop-off stop by a responsible adult. Kindergarten students cannot be released off the bus unless a responsible adult is present to meet them. All kindergarten – 2nd grade students, having no adult to meet them at the stop, will be brought back to the school and their parent/guardian contacted to pick them up from the school. After the 20th

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school day, any student brought back to the school three (3) times will be dismissed from riding the bus. Durham Charter School reserves the right to extend this requirement to any student which requires adult supervision at the afternoon drop off point.

Any student who fails to meet behavior expectations or demonstrates behavior which puts the safety of other bus riders in jeopardy will be disciplined accordingly, up to and including removal from bus.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Field Trips

Whenever students are traveling away from school, they are subject to the same expectations, regulations and appropriate politeness and civility observed at Durham Charter School. As in the classroom, the teacher will judge acceptable or unacceptable behavior. Every facet of the discipline policy will be enforced on field trips just as it is in the classroom. Signed permission slips must be on file for each field trip. If a student demonstrates repeated forms of misbehaviors, that student may require a parent/adult chaperone to accompany the student. In the event a chaperone is required, the student is not allowed to attend the field trip unless a chaperone is on site the day of departure to accompany them.

Celebrations

In order to ensure our students' safety and focus on learning, parties are not celebrated at Durham Charter School unless special permission has been granted. Parents requesting a classroom celebration must first seek approval from the classroom teacher who in turn will seek approval from the Principal/Director of Operations. Arrangements should not be made until the parent's request has been approved and the parent is notified by the teacher. All approved classroom celebrations are held after 2:30 p.m.

GENERAL CLASSROOM GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS

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Parents/guardians/advocates are the key to making our volunteer efforts truly beneficial for our teachers and students at Durham Charter School. Durham Charter School offers an array of activities for parental involvement. These activities include, but are not limited to, student-teacher conferences, classroom activities and parent seminars and trainings.

Durham Charter School is very grateful for volunteer support and adherence to the following guidelines during classroom visits. Durham Charter School

1. Volunteers must complete a volunteer form and successfully pass the background check before volunteering in the school. Volunteer forms must be completed every year and the approval is good through the current school year.
2. Please sign in at the office when entering the building and wear a name badge while volunteering.
3. Please remember that the teacher is ultimately responsible for the children and activities in his/her classroom.
4. When you arrive to begin your volunteer shift, please be sensitive to the learning that is going on in the classroom. Enter the room quietly and wait until there is a break in the activity to communicate with the teacher and students in the room.
5. Please respect issues of confidentiality relating to the children you work with from your child's class. Children who need extra help are often sensitive to how they are doing in school. As a volunteer, you may not talk with other parents about the specific learning needs of any child other than your own. The scores from any papers you might be asked to grade should also be kept in strict confidence.
6. Children thrive on praise and encouragement. While working with children in the classroom, please keep all comments positive. In that way you are modeling respect for the students.
7. Please dress appropriately when supervising students at school or on field trips.

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Tardiness

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8. Please remember Durham Charter School is a non-smoking facility. Smoking is prohibited in the building, on the school grounds and all other places where Durham Charter School students are under your supervision.
9. The distribution of non-school-generated literature is not permitted.
10. Volunteers will sign out as they leave the building.
11. Durham Charter School reserves the right to decline any volunteer from serving.

Visitors

The following are guidelines for visitors and volunteers while they are in the building:

- All persons must sign in at the office upon entering the building.
- All persons must wear a self-adhesive name badge. These may be picked up in the office when signing in. For security purposes, all persons visiting in the building without a name badge will be asked to return to the office to obtain one.
- The distribution of literature of any kind is not permitted.
- When leaving the building, please sign out and return the name badge.

INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETICS

Durham Charter School is proud to offer an array of interscholastic sports for both boys and girls in grades 6-10. These students may participate in co-ed soccer, boys or girls basketball, volleyball, cheerleading and co-ed track. The co-ed soccer team will compete in the fall. Boys and girls basketball teams will compete in the winter. The co-ed track team will have competition in the spring. These athletic teams will host athletic events and travel to other area middle schools to compete. Athletic coaches will give more specific information related to the requirements and details of their sport prior to their particular athletic season.

Students who participate in athletics must remember they are a scholar first, athlete second. Therefore, all student athletes must maintain a C average in all core subject areas. All student-athletes are required to have a current sports physical that has been completed and signed by a physician before participating in any type of sports practice

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or interscholastic event. Student-athletes must also meet the middle school athletic eligibility requirements as stated in the North Carolina Public Schools Middle School Athletics Handbook. If you have any questions about the Durham Charter School Interscholastic Athletics Program, feel free to contact the Athletic Director at Durham Charter School.

ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

Durham Charter School (DCS) offers a school-wide area computer network with Internet access for students, teachers, and staff. Teachers and staff also have access to email through the school's network. The network and other school technological resources provide opportunities to enhance instruction, appeal to different learning styles and meet the educational goals of the Board. Through the school's technological resources, users can observe events as they occur around the world, interact with others on a variety of subjects, and acquire access to current and in-depth information. Access includes local, national and international connections to (1) libraries, companies, agencies and businesses; (2) discussion groups on a variety of subjects; (3) information news services; and (4) electronic mail communication.

Acceptable uses of technological resources are limited to activities that support learning and teaching, except when otherwise specifically authorized by the Principal in the best interest of the school. Use of technological resources should be integrated into the educational program. Technological resources should be used in teaching the Common Core and Essential Standards curricula and in meeting the educational goals of the Board. Teachers are encouraged to further incorporate the use of technological resources into their lesson plans.

This policy applies to all students and employees (including teachers, administrators, and staff), as well as any other users who are expressly authorized by Durham Charter School to use school technological resources, including, but not limited to, Board of Director members, contractors, consultants, and part-time/temporary workers.

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The Executive Director shall ensure that school computers with Internet access comply with federal requirements regarding filtering software, Internet monitoring and Internet safety policies. The Principal shall develop any regulations and submit any certifications necessary to meet such requirements. In addition, the Principal or Designee shall develop any other rules, procedures, forms or other guidance needed to implement this policy.

Requirements for use of Technological Resources

Durham Charter's Board of Directors realizes that today's 21st Century classrooms must use technology in order to achieve the school's academic goals for its students.

School technological resources include, but are not limited to computers, interactive smartboards, mobile devices, websites, networks, servers, the Internet, phones, copiers, facsimile machines, televisions and video-recorders, email accounts, and licensed software.

Students are given the privilege to use the Internet along with the responsibility of using it properly. Students are responsible for exhibiting high standards of behavior in using the school's technological resources. Students will be taught safe, ethical, and responsible uses of technological resources.

Staff members will instruct students in the correct use of these resources, and ensure that students read and understand the guidelines established by the Academy; however, the ultimate responsibility for a student's actions in using the technological resources rests with the student.

Failure to adhere to the requirements of this policy may result in disciplinary action, which may include immediate revocation of user privileges, suspension of access to school computers, other disciplinary action, dismissal and/or appropriate legal action. Misuse or damage of any school technological resource may result in disciplinary action and/or criminal prosecution under applicable state and federal law.

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Employees should maintain the highest ethical behavior in using the Internet and should promote that behavior among students. When using technological resources in the classroom, instructional personnel shall:

1. Make every attempt to maintain the curricular focus of Internet use by locating and directing students toward sites on the Internet that support that focus;
2. Make reasonable efforts to supervise a student's use of the Internet during instructional time and ensure that it is in a manner that is appropriate to the student's age and circumstances of use;
3. Model and provide instruction in the ethical and appropriate use of the Internet in a proper school setting as provided in this policy; and
4. Follow the same criteria of Internet resources that are applicable to all instructional materials.

Guidelines for Acceptable Use: All Users

1. School technological resources are provided for school-related authorized purposes only. Acceptable uses of such technological resources are limited to responsible, efficient and legal activities that support teaching and learning. Use of school system technological resources for commerce or profit or for amusement or entertainment is prohibited. School technological resources shall not be used for charitable endeavors without prior approval of the Principal or Designee. School technological resources shall not be used for political purposes.
2. Under no circumstance may software purchased by the school system be copied for personal use. Users must obtain permission from the Principal prior to copying or loading school software onto any computer, whether the computer is privately owned or is a Durham Charter School computer;
3. Students and employees must comply with all administrative regulations, and school standards and rules in using technological resources. All applicable laws, including those relating to copyrights and trademarks, confidential information, and public records, apply to technological resource use. Any use

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that violates state or federal law is strictly prohibited. All rules of the Code of Conduct apply to students' use of the Internet and other technological resources.

4. No user of technological resources, including a person sending or receiving electronic communications, may engage in creating, intentionally accessing, downloading, storing, printing or transmitting images, graphics (including still or moving pictures), sound files, text files, documents, messages or other material that is obscene, defamatory, profane, pornographic, harassing, abusive or considered to be harmful to minors.
5. Users of technological resources may not send electronic communications fraudulently (i.e., by misrepresenting the identity of the sender).
6. Users must respect the privacy of others. When using e-mail, blogs or other forms of electronic communication, students must not reveal personally identifiable, private or confidential information, such as the home address, telephone number, credit or checking account information or social security number of themselves or fellow students. In addition, school employees will follow the guidelines of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), when publishing student information. Users also may not forward or post personal communications without the author's prior consent.
7. Users may not intentionally or negligently damage computers, computer systems, electronic devices, software, computer networks and/or data of anyone connected to the server or the Internet. Users may not knowingly or negligently transmit computer viruses or self-replicating messages or deliberately try to degrade or disrupt system performance. The technology department provides antivirus software for all DCS-owned computers. Users must not disable any antivirus programs from running on those computers.
8. Users may not create, download, or introduce entertainment software, games, network communications programs or any foreign program or software onto any school system computer, electronic device or network without the express permission of the Principal or Designee. This prohibition pertains to freeware, shareware, copyrighted commercial and non-commercial software, and all other

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forms of software and files not directly related to the instructional and administrative purposes of Durham Charter School.

9. Users are prohibited from engaging in unauthorized or unlawful activities, such as “hacking” or using the computer network to gain or attempt to gain unauthorized or unlawful access to other computers, computer systems or accounts.
10. Users are prohibited from using another individual’s computer account. Users may not read, alter, change, block, execute or delete files or communications belonging to another user without appropriate authorization or the owner’s express prior permission. In addition, employees shall not share or reveal their passwords or user IDs for any data system. All employees with access to PowerSchool or other sensitive data are responsible for safeguarding their user IDs and passwords.
11. If a user identifies a security problem on a technological resource, he or she must immediately notify a supervisor without demonstrating the problem to other users. Unauthorized attempts to log onto any school computer or Durham Charter School network as a system administrator may result in cancellation of user privileges and/or additional disciplinary action. Any user identified as a security risk or having a history of problems with other computer systems may be denied access.
12. Views may be expressed as representing the view of the school or part of the school only with prior approval by the Principal or Designee.
13. School technological resources may not be used to interfere with or disrupt other users, services, or equipment. Disruptions include, but are not limited to, distribution of unsolicited advertising; propagation of computer viruses; distribution of large quantities of information that may overwhelm the system; posting personal or private information about the user or other people on the Internet; arranging or agreeing to meet with someone the user has met on-line for purposes other than official school business; posting information that could be disrupting, cause damage, or endanger students or staff; and accessing chat-rooms or instant messaging software, unless for a valid educational purpose or official school business.

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14. Using school computers for illegal, harassing, or inappropriate purposes, or in support of such activities, is prohibited. Illegal activities are any violations of federal, state, or local laws and include, but are not limited to, copyright infringement and/or illegal file sharing; committing fraud; threatening another person; or intentionally engaging in communications for the purpose of abusing, annoying, threatening, terrifying, harassing, or embarrassing another person. Harassment includes, but is not limited to, slurs, comments, jokes, innuendoes, unwelcome compliments, cartoons, visual depictions, pranks, or verbal conduct relating to an individual that (1) have the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment; (2) have the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or school performance, or (3) interfere with school operations. Inappropriate use is any violation of other provisions of this policy and includes, but is not limited to, using another person's ID or password; plagiarizing; accessing, producing, storing, posting, sending, displaying, or viewing inappropriate or offensive material, including pornographic, obscene, discriminatory, profane, lewd, vulgar, rude, inflammatory, threatening, disrespectful, or sexually suggestive language or images, or images of exposed private body parts; and accessing material advocating illegal acts or violence, including hate literature.

Internet safety

The Board of Directors is aware that there is information on the Internet that is not related to the educational program. The Board also is aware that the Internet may provide information and opportunities to communicate on subjects that are not suitable for school-age children and that many parents would find objectionable. Durham Charter School personnel shall take reasonable precautions to prevent students from having access to inappropriate materials, such as violence, nudity, obscenity or graphic language that does not serve a legitimate pedagogical purpose. The Principal shall ensure that the Internet service provider or technology personnel have installed a technology protection measure that blocks or filters Internet access to audio or visual

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depictions that are obscene, that are considered pornography or that are harmful to minors. Employees may have a different level of blocks or filters.

Privacy

Durham Charter School's electronic information resources, the Internet, and use of e-mail are not inherently secure or private. No right of privacy exists in the use of technological resources. Users shall have no expectation of privacy while using school technological resources. Users should not assume that files or communications created or transmitted using school technological resources or stored on servers or hard drives of individual computers will be private. School administrators or individuals designated by the Principal may review files, monitor all communication, and intercept email messages to maintain system integrity and to ensure compliance with Board policy and applicable laws and regulations. School personnel shall monitor online activities of individuals who access the Internet via a school-owned computer. The Board reserves the right to take appropriate disciplinary action based on the user's inappropriate or illegal use or use that is in violation of this policy. Communications relating to or in support of illegal activities will be reported to the appropriate authorities. Information in electronic messages is not anonymous and is subject to disclosure to third parties under state and/or federal law in certain circumstances.

Personal Websites

The Executive Director may use any means available to request the removal of personal websites that substantially disrupt the school environment or that utilize school system or individual school names, logos or trademarks without permission.

1. Students

Though school personnel generally do not monitor students' Internet activity conducted on non-school system computers during non-school hours, when the student's online behavior has a direct and immediate effect on school safety or

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maintaining order and discipline in the school, the student may be disciplined in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

2. Employees

Employees are to maintain an appropriate relationship with students at all times. Employees are encouraged to block students from viewing personal information on employee personal websites or online networking profiles in order to prevent the possibility that students could view materials that are not age-appropriate. Employees may not use personal web sites or online networking profiles to post information in an attempt to communicate with students in their roles as school system employees. If an employee creates and/or posts inappropriate content on a website or profile or engages in any direct communication with students, parents, supervisors or co-workers (whether by email, instant messaging, or other digital media) and it has a negative impact on the employee's ability to perform his or her job as it relates to working with students, the employee will be subject to discipline up to and including dismissal. This section applies to all employees, volunteers and student teachers working in the school system.

Employee Personal Use

The Board expects that employee use of technological resources will be related to the school system's goals of educating students and/or conducting school business. The Board recognizes, however, that some personal use is inevitable, and that incidental and occasional personal use that is infrequent or brief in duration is permitted so long as it occurs on personal time, does not interfere with the employee's work or school business, and is not otherwise prohibited by Board policy or regulations, Durham Charter School procedures, or applicable law.

Care of Property

Users of Durham Charter School computers are expected to respect school property and be responsible in using the equipment. Users are to follow all instructions

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regarding maintenance or care of the equipment. Users may be held responsible for any loss or damage caused by intentional or negligent acts in caring for computers while under their control. The school is responsible for any routine maintenance or standard repairs to school computers. Users are expected to timely notify the technology personnel of any need for service.

No Warranties

Durham Charter School makes no warranties of any kind, whether express or implied, for the electronic information resources it is providing. The board will not be responsible for any damages suffered by users, including loss of data resulting from delays, non-delivery, service interruptions, or any other cause. The board will not be responsible for any claims, losses, damages, costs, or other obligations arising from the unauthorized use of school electronic information resources. Use of any information obtained via the Internet is at the user's risk. The board specifically denies any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through its service. Users are responsible for any losses sustained by the Durham Charter School resulting from the user's intentional misuse of the school system's electronic information resources.

Application of Public Records Law

All information created or received for work purposes and stored on or contained in the school's computer resources or electronic data files is subject to public disclosure unless an exception to the Public Records Law applies. This information may be purged or destroyed only in accordance with the applicable records retention schedule and the State Division of Archives regulations.

Legal References: U.S. Const. amend I; Children's Internet Protection Act, 47 U.S.C. 254(h)(5); Electronic Communications Privacy Act, 18 U.S.C. 2510-2522; Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. 1232g; 17 U.S.C. 101 et seq.; 20 U.S.C. 6777; G.S. 115C-325(e), -39.

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DURHAM CHARTER SCHOOL INTERNET AND COMPUTER USE POLICY

Ongoing strategic planning at Durham Charter School places emphasis on student use of technology. Our vision is to bring our students into the 21st century through innovation and modern technology. Our 1-to-1 laptop program for grades 5-8 is an extension of this vision.

As used herein, the term “Computer” refers to any desktop, laptop, Chromebook, or other mobile computing device owned or issued by Durham Charter School to any student for school and/or home use. The term “Privately-Owned” refers to any privately-owned mobile computing device. The term “Computer Services” refers to the School’s network or Internet connections to access school or Internet-based information.

All students are responsible for their actions and activities involving computers and/or computer services, and for their computer files, passwords and accounts. These rules provide general guidance concerning the use of the computers and/or computer services and examples of prohibited uses. The rules do not attempt to describe every possible prohibited activity. Students, parents and school staff who have questions about whether a particular activity is prohibited are encouraged to contact the IT department. These rules apply to all computers and/or computer services regardless of how they are accessed.

By enrolling and attending Durham Charter School you agree and acknowledge the following:

As a DCS Student, I understand that my Chromebook and email account are owned by the school and are not private. Durham Charter School has the right to access my information at any time. I understand that my right to have a cell phone or other electronic device at the school is a privilege and not a right.

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A. Acceptable Use

1. Durham Charter School's computers and/or computer services are provided for educational purposes and research consistent with our educational mission, curriculum and instructional goals.
2. Students must comply with Board policies, school rules and expectations concerning student conduct and communications when using computers and/or computer services, whether on or off school property.
3. Students must comply with all specific instructions from school staff when using the computers and/or computer services.

B. Prohibited Uses

Unacceptable uses of the computers and/or computer services include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. **Accessing or Communicating Inappropriate Materials** – Students may not access, submit, post, publish, forward, download, scan or display defamatory, abusive, obscene, vulgar, sexually explicit, sexually suggestive, threatening, discriminatory, harassing, bullying and/or illegal materials, images (still or video) or messages.
2. **Violating Copyrights or Software Licenses** - Students may not copy, download or share copyrighted materials without the owner's permission. Unauthorized copying of software is illegal and may subject the copier to substantial civil and criminal penalties. Durham Charter School assumes no responsibility for copyright or licensing violations by students.
3. **Downloading "Apps" and Personalizing Computer** –Only the IT Department in the school can download programs to the student computers. Stickers and other markings on the outside of the computer will not be allowed. Each Chromebook is easily identified by a specific numbering system ("Asset Tag") that is placed on the computer by the IT Department.

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4. **Plagiarism** – Students may not represent as their own work any materials obtained on the Internet (papers, articles, music, etc.).
5. **Misuse of Passwords/Unauthorized Access** – Students may not share passwords, use other users’ passwords, access or use other users’ accounts.
6. **Malicious Use/Vandalism** – Students may not engage in any malicious use, disruption or harm to computers and/or computer services, included but not limited to hacking, “jailbreaking”, and creation/uploading of computer viruses.

B. Students Access & Monitoring - Ultimately the computer is the property of the school, and the school has the right to determine what is appropriate and to search the computer if necessary at any time. The district’s filter allows the district to block websites which are inappropriate for students whether they are accessing the web via the district wireless network or if they are connected to the Internet at other locations. This software also allows for screen monitoring, which makes it possible for appointed district personnel to monitor student Chromebook screens. Students who access inappropriate sites during the school day or are accessing sites that are not related to the class they are in will face disciplinary action from the teacher and/or the administration. If sites are accessed by accident (which does occur at times) it is recommended that the student immediately move to another site, and report the incident to an adult immediately.

C. Student Privacy and Safety

- **Students will:**
 - Access the system for educational purposes during school hours, (this includes the use of networked printers in the building).
 - Use appropriate language and be respectful of others. This includes no cyberbullying.
 - Observe and respect license and copyright agreements.

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- Keep passwords and personal information confidential (Student names, telephone numbers, and addresses should not be revealed over the system).
- **In addition, students may not:**
 - Give out their home address or phone number to anyone on the Internet (this protects users from becoming potential victims of those with criminal intent). Students should never agree to meet people they have contacted through the Internet without parental permission.
 - Students should inform their teacher and/or parent if they access information or messages that are dangerous, inappropriate or make them uncomfortable in any way.
 - Ever use any option that "remembers" your password. The easiest way to breach security is to allow someone else to use your login account. Anyone who has access to your account, even for a few minutes, has access to your email, your local data, your server account, and any website to which you saved your password.
 - Give password(s) to anyone.
 - Video tape staff or students without their consent or knowledge, this includes:
 - Webcams
 - Chromebooks/Laptops
 - Cameras
 - Cell phones
 - Any other digital devices.
 - Post anonymous messages.
 - Use school issued email accounts for personal use.
 - Forward email commonly known as "SPAM," Unsolicited Commercial Email (UCE), or "junk email."
 - I.M.(instant message) or chat during class unless relative to academic related expectations.

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D. Compensation for Losses, Costs and/or Damages

- A student who does not have a computer due to a computer being damaged accidentally will be allowed to use a computer from school. These computers are called “Hot Swaps” and will be available for students to use during the time of repair.
- The student and his/her parents are responsible for compensating Durham Charter School for any damages incurred by the student for violations of Board policies/procedures and school rules while the student is using computers and/or computer services. The students and his/her parents are similarly responsible if the student takes any action that would void the warranty covering the computer or willfully/negligently damages the computer in any way.

F. Additional Rules for Use of Privately-Owned Mobile Devices by Students

- Students are not permitted to use privately owned mobile devices during school hours.
- Durham Charter School is not responsible for damage, loss or theft of any privately-owned mobile device.

G. Discipline and Liability

- Any student who violates the rules and expectations relative to this policy and technology use will be subject to disciplinary action. Consequences may vary from a letter (or a phone call) home to detentions or suspensions depending on the violation or degree of computer misuse. Serious violations will result in the students’ use of technology restricted and/or revoked.
- Specially, misuse of the computer equipment or network may result in one or more of the following consequences depending on the severity of the infraction:
 - An informal warning from a staff member or administrator
 - A formal verbal or written warning for misconduct
 - Loss of technology privileges

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- o Parent conference
- o Detention
- o Major infractions may result in out-of-school suspension and further sanctions as determined by the administration.

H. Disclaimer

Durham Charter School does not have control of the information on the internet or information contained in emails. The school uses a network filter to help maintain a safe environment. Additionally, the School may choose to block sites that it believes distract from the academic environment or unnecessarily consume Network Resources. However, it is impossible to filter or restrict access to all sites that may contain questionable information. Some sites may contain material that is defamatory, inaccurate, abusive, obscene, profane, threatening, racially offensive, or illegal or that is otherwise inconsistent with the mission of Durham Charter School. While Durham Charter School's intent is to make Internet access available for educational goals and objectives and to maintain a safe environment, account holders may encounter less desirable content. At Durham Charter School, we expect students to obey the Internet and Computer Use Policy when using the Internet and school-wide resources. Any student found in deliberate violation of the policy will be disciplined.

PARENT/STUDENT GRIEVANCE POLICY

It is the policy of the Board that its administration maintains practices and procedures surrounding the registration of a grievance from students enrolled at the Academy and/or parents/guardians of students enrolled at the Academy which comply with all applicable federal and state laws. Failure of an individual to comply with timelines listed below will result in denial of the grievance or appeal. The Board prohibits retaliation against a student, parent or guardian who files a grievance under this policy. Failure of the school administration to comply with these timelines will result in automatic right of appeal to the next level.

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If a student, parent or guardian has a concern, they should discuss the matter with the classroom teacher. Should they be dissatisfied with the teacher's meeting, they should, within 5 working days of the meeting, contact the assistant principal or the principal and request a meeting. The administration will arrange a meeting within 5 days of receiving the request. If the student, parent or guardian is dissatisfied with the resolution proposed by the administration, they must, within 5 working days of the meeting, make a written request for a hearing before the Board of Directors as outlined below.

In addition to the procedure above, individuals may bring concerns directly to the board, in writing, if the concern directly relates to the performance of the administration, a Board policy or decision, or an alleged violation of a North Carolina statute, the school's charter, or other applicable laws and regulations.

The written request should include a brief description of the concern and the action proposed to resolve the concern. The request must be hand-delivered or mailed to the principal, who will, in turn, notify the Board Chairman of the request. If the next Board meeting occurs within 10 days of the receipt of the request, the Chairman will place the matter on the agenda. If the next meeting occurs more than 10 calendar days from the receipt of the request, the Chairman may call a special meeting of the Board to hear the concern. The Chairman will ensure the individual is notified of the time, place and location of the meeting. The Board will deal with the concern in an open session, unless the concern involves the performance or behavior of an employee or the actions of a student. The individual may make a personal presentation or stand on the information contained in the request. The Board may address the concern at that meeting, or following the meeting, but in no case later than the end of the next regularly scheduled meeting. If the individual student, parent or guardian determines that the Board did not adequately address the concern, they may bring the concern to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.

TITLE I PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT POLICY

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The faculty, staff and administration at Durham Charter School is committed to working to support the education of each child. Each of the Academy's educators commits to reaching out to parents with the understanding that they share the responsibility of teaching the students with their parents and families. At Durham Charter School we commit to building strong relationships with the families of our students to increase academic achievement of all students. The goal of this parent and family engagement policy is to support in a more consistent and effective manner the building of relationships to support every child.

At Durham Charter School, we provide opportunities that will improve the quality of life for the students, their families, and the community. We intend to build an environment of academic productivity through meaningful communication, strong academic expectations and delivery of learning activities that promote the thirst for learning, respect for all people and instill student pride in, and ownership of a positive learning community.

At Durham Charter School, the partnership between school and home will be supported by:

- ☐ Convening an annual meeting in the school to provide information to parents, family members, and community members about the school and available programs and maintaining on file at the school, at a minimum, a copy of the agenda from the meeting highlighting that Title I programming was discussed; documentation of parent feedback and/or evaluation in the form of sign-in sheets and minutes from the presentation/meetings; if relevant, a copy of any presentation; and flyers, website announcements, message recordings and/or other advertisements for the meeting;
- ☐ Notifying parents of and clearly posting on the school's website the NC School Report Card Data;
- ☐ Providing public engagement, awareness and encouragement through parent meetings, written communications and newsletters along with website postings

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will set the stage for parents and the community to have opportunities to help the academy make decisions about school wide operations;

- ❑ Conducting its annual Title I Open House in September to discuss school programs, academic requirements and parent involvement with parents and families as well as interested community members;
- ❑ Scheduling parent engagement meetings periodically during the school year to communicate with parents and obtain parent feedback through Family Empowerment Surveys as a way to measure and track family engagement and empowerment efforts. During those meetings, teacher and administrators will distribute information regarding instructional and schoollwide programming;
- ❑ Providing learning and enrichment opportunities that help parents acquire knowledge of the NC School Report Card Data; offering a flexible number of meetings, workshops and parent conferences that assist parents, family members, and community members in improving the achievement of all children;
- ❑ Providing opportunities for all parents, family members, and community members to participate in school activities, including persons with disabilities and limited English proficiency.
- ❑ Involving parents, family members, and community members to participate in an organized, ongoing, and timely way in consultation for the improvement of the Academy and its' programs, specifically including these critical stakeholders in the planning, review, and evaluation of programs and improve programs based on the results;
- ❑ Communicating clearly and frequently with parents, family members and community members about school policies, programs and their own children in a language they can understand;

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- ☐ Assisting parents, family members and community members in understanding state academic content, the North Carolina Accountability Program, state and local assessments, and student performance standards;
- ☐ Providing parents with the opportunities to help the school make decisions about the education and professional development for teachers and staff directed at increasing student achievement.
- ☐ Informing the School’s Board of Directors of events and activities planned to increase parent and family engagement. The board will invite a parent to participate as a member of the Board of Directors;
- ☐ Increasing community engagement and awareness by participating in local events such as the Families and Communities Rising Jamboree, community table events held in various locations across Durham County, and holding school events that are open to the public. By participating in these events, we will inform the community of our presence, invite tutors and volunteers to work with our students, and seek opportunities to develop partnerships with agencies and institutions that can support our instructional programs.
- ☐ The School will work with the Department of Social Services, Department of Health and Human Resources, counseling services, Durham Public Schools, and other agencies to support our students as they progress through school.
- ☐ Having all parties involved sign a Principal/Teacher/Parent/Student Compact stating how each will contribute to ensuring the student’s achievement.

By increasing the engagement of our parents and families and community entities, the students at Durham Charter School, known as “Scholars,” will grow to be productive, responsible citizens in our community and be prepared to attend college-prep public and private high schools.

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Durham Charter School advocates parent support and engagement. Parents and guardians are encouraged to volunteer, participate in their student's classes, serve as a classroom parent, attend and participate in parent seminars/workshops and participate/attend extracurricular activities. Additionally, parents/guardians are encouraged to become a part of our Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) which meets monthly during the school year. Membership dues are \$5.00 per parent/guardian.

RIGHTS UNDER THE PUPIL RIGHTS PROTECTION

The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) affords parents certain rights concerning scholar privacy, parental access to information, and administration of physical examinations to minors. These include the right to:

Consent before scholars are required to submit to a survey, which is funded in part or in whole by a program of the U.S. Department of Education, that concerns one or more of the following protected areas ("protected information survey"):

1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the scholars or scholar's parent
 2. Mental or psychological condition of the scholars or her family
 3. Sexual behavior or attitudes
 4. Anti-social, demeaning, illegal, or self-incriminating behavior
 5. Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close familial relationships
 6. Legally-recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers
 7. Religious affiliations, beliefs, or practices of the scholars or parent
 8. Income, other than as required by law, to determine program eligibility
- Receive notice and an opportunity to opt a scholars out of the following:
 1. Any other protected information survey, regardless of funding

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2. Any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of the scholars (except for hearing, vision, scoliosis, or any other physical exam or screening permitted or required under state law)
 3. Any activity involving the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information or the marketing, selling, or distributing of such information to others
- Inspect the following, upon request and before administration or use:
 1. Surveys created by a third party before their distribution by a school to its scholars
 2. Instruments used to collect personal information from scholars for marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes
 3. Instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum

The school has developed and adopted policies regarding these rights, as well as arrangements to protect scholars privacy in the administration of protected surveys and the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes. The school will directly notify parents of these policies at the beginning of each school year and after any substantive changes. The school will also both directly notify parents through U.S. Mail, e-mail, parent meetings, or the Parent and Scholars Handbook at the start of each school year of the specific or approximate dates (if such events are planned and/or scheduled) of the above activities and provide an opportunity to opt a scholar out of participating in them. *Parents who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with:*

Family Policy Compliance Office
 U.S. Department of Education
 400 Maryland Avenue SW Washington, D.C. 20202-5920

Gender Equity Policy (Title IX)

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The school certifies compliance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended, 20 U.S.C 1681 et seq. (Title IX), and its implementing regulation, at 34 C.F.R. Part 106, which prohibits discrimination based on sex. The school, as a recipient of federal financial assistance from the United States Department of Education, is subject to Title IX and does not discriminate based on gender in employment or any educational program or activity it operates.

Complaints or grievances regarding discrimination based on gender should be delivered in writing to the principal of the school and should provide specific details regarding the event, the date of the event, and the parties involved. The complaint will be considered confidential and will be expeditiously investigated by the principal with the assistance of MJCS legal counsel as necessary and appropriate.

Unsafe School Choice Option

Title IX, Section 9532 of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 provides that a scholars attending a “persistently dangerous school” or a scholars who is a “victim of a violent criminal offense” on school property, as defined by law, has the right to transfer to another safe school in the district, if his/her parent requests a transfer. If there is not another safe school in the district providing instruction at the scholar’s grade level, the school shall contact neighboring districts to request that the scholars be permitted to transfer to a school in one of those districts.

Asbestos Management Plan

The Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA) requires us to annually notify parents, scholars, staff members, and others who regularly occupy the school building of compliance with AHERA. An Asbestos Management Plan (AMP) has been developed for the school and is on file in the school office. Parents may schedule an appointment with the principal if they wish to review the AMP.

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Pesticide Notification

The school aims to control pest populations and to reduce the use of active pesticides throughout the school by implementing an integrated pest management program. The health and safety of all persons within the school's facilities are of primary concern. All pesticide applications are conducted before or after the school day in the absence of students. Please contact the school office if you wish to be notified by letter or wish to review the school's integrated pest management program or records.

Rights under FERPA

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents certain rights with respect to their child's education records. These rights are:

- The right to inspect and review the scholar's education records within 45 days of the day the school receives a request for access. Parents should submit to the school principal a written request identifying the record(s) they wish to inspect. The school official will make arrangements for access and notify the parents of the time and place the records may be inspected.
- The right to request the amendment of the scholar's education records that the parent believes are inaccurate. Parents may ask the school to amend a record they believe is inaccurate. They should write to the school principal, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify its inaccuracy. If the school decides not to amend the record as requested by the parents, it will notify the parents 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 parents when notified of the right to a hearing.
- The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the scholar's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. The school does not need

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written consent to disclose a scholar's education records to those with a legitimate educational interest in those records, including the following (see 20 U.S.C. §1232g; 34 CFR Part 99):

1. School administrators, teachers, support staff, and other school officials with a legitimate educational interest in scholars' education records
 2. Persons or organizations with whom the district has contracted to perform a special task or study (e.g., attorneys, auditors, medical consultants, supplemental educational services and therapists)
 3. A school district to which the scholars is transferring if a proper records release request is received
 4. Appropriate parties in a health or safety emergency
 5. Accrediting organizations
 6. Certain federal and state officials (for audit and evaluation purposes)
 7. Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a scholars
 8. To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena; however, the school must first make a reasonable attempt to notify the parent of the order or subpoena
 9. State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific state law
- 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:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue SW Washington, D.C. 20202-5920

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Addendum - High School Specific Expectations

Absences & Tardies

North Carolina General Statute 115C-378, the Compulsory Attendance Law, details the requirements for student attendance. Please note that attendance is taken in every class throughout the day and if your student accumulates 10 unexcused absences within one semester, they will fail that class. Parents will be notified upon the 3rd and 6th unexcused absence. Parents and students should be aware that 3 unexcused tardies is the equivalent of 1 unexcused absence. Excessive tardies in high school grades may result in loss of special privileges the school generally affords high school students.

Absences (per the Compulsory Attendance Law):

Step 1- After three (3) unexcused absences, a warning letter will be mailed to the parent/guardian noting the absences.

Step 2- After six (6) unexcused absences, a letter will be mailed to the parent/guardian noting the absences and an administrator will attempt to contact parent/guardian by telephone.

Step 3- After ten (10) accumulated unexcused absences in a school year, a letter will be mailed to the parent/guardian and a mandatory meeting will be scheduled with the parent/guardian and school administration to discuss possible violation of the attendance policy. The head of school or the designee shall review any report or investigation prepared under G.S. 115C-381 and shall confer with the student and the student's parent, guardian, or custodian, if possible, to determine whether the parent, guardian, or custodian has received notification pursuant to this section and made a good faith effort to comply with the law. If the head of school or the designee determines that the parent, guardian, or custodian has not made a good faith effort to comply with the law, the head of school or the designee shall notify the Durham County District Attorney.

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Due to prior attendance concerns or high numbers of absences, the head of school or designee may notify the parent/guardian in writing that the student's absences will only be excused with a medical note for the remainder of the school year and/or the following school year.

Medical notes must be on the physician's letterhead or prescription pad including:

1. The date the student was seen by the doctor
2. The specific dates that he/she will be out of school due to his/her illness
3. The date that the student may return to school

In-School Suspensions and Out-of-School Suspensions

While a student is suspended from school (OSS), he/she may not take part in any school-sponsored events and may not be allowed to be on Durham Charter School property during the period of suspension.

Each student's official record also shall include notice of any long-term suspension or expulsion imposed pursuant to G.S. 115C-390.7 through G.S. 115C-390.11 and the conduct for which the student was suspended or expelled. The superintendent or the superintendent's designee shall expunge from the record the notice of suspension or expulsion if the following criteria are met:

- (1) One of the following persons makes a request for expungement:
 - a. The student's parent, legal guardian, or custodian.
 - b. The student, if the student is at least 16 years old or is emancipated.
 - (2) The student either graduates from high school or is not expelled or suspended again during the two-year period commencing on the date of the student's return to school after the expulsion or suspension.
 - (3) The Executive Director or the Executive Director's designee determines that the maintenance of the record is no longer needed to maintain safe and orderly schools.
 - (4) The Executive Director or the Executive Director's designee determines that the maintenance of the record is no longer needed to adequately serve the child.
- (c) Notwithstanding subdivision (b)(1) of this section, the Executive Director or the Executive Director's designee may expunge from a student's official record any notice of suspension or expulsion provided all other criteria under subsection (b) are met.

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A student who is in ISS or serving OSS cannot participate in any school-sponsored events on those days. Rules apply to student conduct on school property, school buses and bus stops, school-sponsored field trips, athletic practices and events, club events, and all other school activities.

Health and Immunization Forms

As required by N.C. state law, Durham Charter School must have a copy of each student's immunization records on file and signed by a physician (or carrying a physician's stamp). Kindergarten and students in any grade enrolling in a North Carolina public school for the first time must submit a completed North Carolina Transmittal Health Form. Students who do not meet this requirement within the first thirty days of the school year will not be allowed to return to school until the forms are submitted or a plan for their completion is accepted.

Kindergarten, seventh and twelfth grade students, and students in any grade enrolling in a North Carolina public school for the first time must have certain timely immunizations. Records confirming these immunizations must be returned to the school. Students who do not meet this requirement within the first thirty days of the school year will not be allowed to return to school until the immunizations are completed or a plan for their completion is accepted. Contact the school or your physician for a listing of the required immunizations.

ACADEMIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Durham Charter School offers a variety of courses in the areas of language arts, literature, mathematics, social studies, science, the arts, career and technical education, and world languages. The school is fortunate to have dedicated and knowledgeable teachers to assist students in their quest for knowledge. While instructing the students in the subject areas, the faculty also promotes the development of skills that can be useful in all educational and social settings. Students are encouraged to question and make decisions while realizing they are responsible to themselves and others with whom they share the world and its surroundings.

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Eleventh and twelfth graders participate in the NC Career and College Promise (CCP) by taking courses through a community college partner. The majority of courses earn dual credit (both high school and college level). The school will not honor college credits on high school transcripts that are taken without permission of the high school administrator or designee. Staff carefully works to enroll students in appropriate courses that are challenging, yet achievable. The high school administration only allows a student to be removed from a course in extreme extenuating circumstances. Community college courses that are dropped due to a student's poor academic standing or attendance will receive a zero for the course in PowerSchool and also have a WF denoted on the high school transcript.

Failure to comply with the above rules can result in disciplinary action ranging from after school detention to the loss of computer privileges. Administration will determine appropriate action based on the nature and severity of the situation.

Grading Procedures

Academic performance will be evaluated during two semesters. The school uses benchmark testing as a tool in many core subjects to assist in guiding instruction. Progress will be reviewed with the parent in designated parent/teacher conferences, or conferences may be scheduled by contacting the appropriate teacher or administration. The student's social and physical development will also be evaluated.

Any student in danger of failing will have a scheduled parent conference after the first semester.

Grading scale:

A= 90-100 B= 80-89 C=70-79 D=60-69 F=59 and below

Standardized Testing

High school sophomores throughout the state take the Pre-ACT. Upperclassmen are strongly encouraged to take the SAT and ACT tests.

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Driver Education Program and Driver Eligibility

Driver Education Program: The Driver Education program at Durham Charter operates under the umbrella of the Durham Public Schools Driver Education program. The North Carolina Driving School is contracted to provide sessions of classroom instruction (30 contact hours) and in-car practice (6 hours). As this information is subject to change, please visit the Durham Charter Driver Education webpage for the most current information.

Driver Eligibility: A person under the age of 18 seeking a drivers learner's permit or provisional driver's license needs a Driving Eligibility Certificate. Upon successful completion of a Driver Education program, the student may obtain a Driving Eligibility Certificate from the school if the student is making adequate academic progress. Adequate academic progress means a student must pass at least 70% of the maximum possible courses each semester. In a block schedule, this means students must pass three of the four scheduled courses.

In order to motivate and encourage students to complete high school, the State of North Carolina requires schools to enforce the following legislation that will result in notification to the North Carolina Department of Motor Vehicles (NC DMV) and the revocation of the student's driving permit or license:

- **Dropout Prevention/Driver's License Legislation:** This legislation is directed to all North Carolina students under the age of 18 who are eligible for a driving permit or license. DMV revokes the permit or license if a student drops out of school or is not making adequate academic progress. Adequate academic progress means a student must pass at least 70% of the maximum possible courses each semester. In a block schedule, this means students must pass three of the four scheduled courses.

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- **Lose Control/Lose Your License Legislation:** This legislation requires that a student's permit or license be suspended for one year whenever a student is expelled or suspended for more than 10 consecutive days or is assigned to an alternative educational setting for more than 10 consecutive days for one of the following reasons:
 - The possession or sale of an alcoholic beverage or an illegal controlled substance on school property.
 - The possession or use on school property of a weapon or firearm that resulted in disciplinary action under NCGS 115C-391(d1) or that could have resulted in disciplinary action if the conduct had occurred in a public school.
 - The physical assault on a teacher or other school personnel on school property.

Promotion Policy

High school grade level is determined as follows:

Freshman: promoted from Grade 8 with courses in Language Arts, Math, Social Studies, and Science

Sophomore: total of 6 course credits

Junior: total of 13 course credits

Senior: total of 20 course credits

(Note: Three-credit or higher college level courses can be used as dual credit for a single high school course credit.)

High School Graduation Requirements

The Durham Charter Board of Directors requires all students to successfully complete a combination of 28 course units (22 state-mandated, plus 6 additional locally-mandated) in order to graduate from high school at Durham Charter.

Early High School Graduation

In the event a student graduates early from high school, he or she is welcome to return and graduate in the Commencement ceremony in May of that school year. A modified ceremony may be offered to a graduate entering the military who will not be able to attend the May Commencement due to military obligations.

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Anonymous Tip Line for Grades 6-12

Durham Charter students in grades 7-12 can use the Say Something app as an anonymous tip line to allow designated staff, in accordance with G.S. 115C-105.51, “to receive anonymous information on internal or external risks to the school population, school buildings, and school-related activities.”

Durham Charter School Search Policy

To promote safe and orderly operations, School officials may conduct reasonable searches of persons and materials as necessary, in accordance with students’ constitutional rights. A student may be subject to a search either based on reasonable suspicion that the student has violated law or policy, or as a result of reasonable, random searches not requiring individualized suspicion. Reasonable suspicion to search an individual student is not required when a student voluntarily and knowingly consents to such search.

If an authorized school official reasonably suspects that the student has on his or her person or in his possession, any item or material that poses a risk of serious harm to persons or property, an authorized school official may perform a more intrusive search of a student’s person, including a strip search, as necessary to avoid a threat of imminent and serious harm or damage. In such instances, any bodily invasive search shall, to the extent feasible, be conducted in private by an authorized school official of the same sex, with an adult witness of the same sex present.

Durham Charter School (Student Automobiles)

Any opportunity for students to drive and park on school grounds is a privilege, not a right. The school may patrol school parking lots at any time and may search a student’s motor vehicle based on reasonable suspicion that such vehicle contains materials in violation of law or policy.

Durham Charter School (Use of Dogs to Aid in Searches)

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School officials may use trained dogs to aid in inspections for materials that may be in violation of law or policy. Thus, without notice, the school may use trained dogs to sniff lockers, student motor vehicles, and other objects. Dogs will not be used, however, in random searches of individual students.

Dress Code

9th Grade

Both male and female students:

- Top: Durham Charter logo shirts, sweatshirts or any Durham Charter swag
Bottoms: Blue jeans, denim skirts or shorts, black, gray, or navy joggers or shorts
Shoes: Tennis shoes/Sneakers only – No shoes that have lights, make noise or have wheels.
Belt: Required for all bottoms that have belt loops

Girls may also wear black, gray, navy or tan khaki uniform pants, knee length shorts or knee length skirts.

10th-12th Grade

- Students should dress appropriately for academic activities (Administration reserves the right to determine appropriateness)
- The following items should be avoided:
 - Clothing bearing images or slogans referring to drug or alcohol use, or which are generally considered offensive to another person or group, including the swastika and Confederate flag, for example. Students will be asked to remove or cover.

Buying or Selling from Another Student

Students may not sell or purchase items from another student without written permission from an administrator.

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Smoking and Tobacco Products

No student shall possess, display, buy, sell or use any tobacco product. This restriction applies even when the student is on School property or at any School-sponsored activity as a visitor or spectator. For the purpose of this policy, the following definitions shall apply:

- A. Tobacco Product: cigarettes, e-cigarettes, personal vaporizers, cigars, pipes, chewing tobacco, snuff, and any other items containing or reasonably resembling tobacco or tobacco products, and/or nicotine.
- A. Tobacco Use: smoking, chewing, dipping, or any other use of tobacco products.
- B. Display: having any tobacco product, or vaping paraphernalia in a location or position that is visible to students or School personnel, or found on school property.

The display of tobacco products does not extend to displays that have a legitimate instructional or pedagogical purpose and is approved by a teacher or the Executive Director. The Executive Director may permit tobacco products to be included in instructional or research activities in the School building if the activity is conducted or supervised by the faculty member overseeing the instruction or research and the activity does not involve smoking, chewing, or otherwise ingesting the tobacco product.

Controlled Substances and Alcohol

The school is committed to being a community free of unhealthy substances including illegal controlled substances, tobacco, and alcohol. The possession, use, buying and/or selling of illegal controlled substances and alcohol while on School property, at any School-related activity, or in any other venue where the conduct in question is likely to substantially impact or undermine the operation or well-being of the School or its members, is prohibited. Prohibited items may include fake drugs or alcohol intended to appear or are described as actual illegal drugs or alcohol.

Gambling

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Gambling is not permitted on school premises or during any school-related activity. Students will not be allowed to take part in games of chance where money or other things of value can be lost or gained from others.

Indecent Exposure/Sexual Behavior

No student shall engage in behavior which is indecent, involves excessive or inappropriate touching, or is otherwise of a sexual or sexually-suggestive nature.

Theft

No student shall steal, attempt to steal, aid in or conceal stealing, or knowingly possess stolen property if not attempting to return or turn in such property.

The student is responsible for restitution for any property that is stolen, damaged, or consumed.

The degree of this offense may call for stronger consequences, including law enforcement based on the value of the stolen item(s).

Cellular Devices

Cell phones are allowed at Durham Charter School. However, students are only allowed to use them when they receive permission from staff members or at approved after school activities. Use of cellphones during the school day is prohibited, and they should be turned completely off and kept out of sight. As part of the high school focus on technology integration in instruction, students in grades 9-12 may be invited to use devices such as cell phones under teacher supervision to enhance a lesson. Otherwise, students will turn in cell phones at the beginning of each high school class. Students working on college level classes may be allowed to utilize cell phones under staff supervision.

Cell phone usage by students while riding to and from school on the bus is prohibited. Usage during school-sponsored activities is at the discretion of the teacher or supervisor. Distracting behavior that creates an unsafe environment will not be tolerated.

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It is the responsibility of students to ensure their cell phones are turned off and out of sight during unauthorized times. Students who violate the above restrictions shall be deemed to have created a disruption to the instructional environment and are subject to disciplinary action as well as confiscation and return of the phone to the student's parents or guardians.

Students shall be personally and solely responsible for the security of their cell phones. Durham Charter School shall not assume responsibility for theft, loss, or damage of a cell phone, or unauthorized calls made on a cell phone.

Communicating Threats

The communication of threats is prohibited. Students who engage in communicating threats that are intended to cause physical, social, mental or emotional harm will be subject to disciplinary action that may include, but not be limited to suspension, expulsion, and/or the inclusion of law enforcement.

Act of Violence to Staff

Fighting, blows passed, physical assault, injury, shoving, hitting, holding and/or creating a physical barrier to one's personal space.

Weapon Possession

Possession of a weapon is illegal (*G.S. 115C-390.10 - 365-Day suspension for gun possession*). Any student who is determined to have brought or been in possession of a destructive device on educational property, or to a school-sponsored event off of educational property shall be suspended for 365 calendar days. The administrator must report all instances to law enforcement as required by G.S. 115C-288(g) and State Board policy. The administration shall not impose a 365-day suspension if the administration determines that the student took or received the firearm or destructive device from another person at school or found the firearm or destructive device at school, provided that the student reported the firearm or destructive device as soon as practicable to a law enforcement officer or a school employee and had no intent to use

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such firearm or destructive device in a harmful or threatening way. Furthermore, any sharp object that is intended for use as a weapon will result in disciplinary action.

Possession of exploding firecrackers, explosives, smoke bombs/stink bombs, etc. will result in disciplinary action. Discretion will be used for possession of these items.

Bomb Threats/False Fire Alarms

Bomb threats and false fire alarms are serious matters and addressed in state law. Any students involved with such threats will be dealt with severely.

Sexual Harassment

Of the various types of harassment, sexual harassment is worthy of special considerations in addition to those applicable under the School's General Harassment Policy. No employee shall engage in sexual harassment against any student, other employee, or another person in the School community.

Sexual harassment includes any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favors, or sexually suggestive comments when:

- A. Submission to the conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or education.
- A. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for student or employment decisions affecting such individual.
- B. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with an individual's academic or work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or educational environment.

Examples of sexual harassment include, but are not limited to:

- 1. Unwelcome leering, sexual flirtations or propositions;
- 2. Unwelcome sexual slurs, epithets, verbal abuse, derogatory comments or sexually degrading descriptions;

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3. Graphic verbal comments about an individual's body, or overly personal conversation;
4. Sexual jokes, stories, drawings, pictures or gestures;
5. Spreading sexual rumors;
6. Teasing or sexual remarks;
7. Touching an individual's body or clothes in a sexual way;
8. Purposefully limiting a student's access to educational tools; and
9. Cornering or blocking of normal movements.
10. Displaying sexually suggestive objects in the educational environment.
11. Any act of retaliation against an individual who reports a violation of the district's sexual harassment policy or who participates in the investigation of a sexual harassment complaint.
12. Sexting – Sending phone text with explicit words or pictures will be dealt with severely and law enforcement may be called. Thanks

A hostile environment exists if the conduct of a sexual nature is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive to limit a person's ability to participate in or benefit from the educational program or creates a hostile or abusive educational or work environment.

Romantic or sexual advances toward students by employees or romantic or sexual relationships between School system employees and students are always prohibited in all circumstances. School employees are prohibited from engaging in inappropriate relationships with students and are required to report such relationships or reasonable suspicions thereof to the Executive Director or other appropriate supervisory official. Procedures for reporting suspected harassment.

Athletic Guidelines

Refer to the Durham Charter School Athletic Handbook.

ANNUAL REQUIRED NOTIFICATIONS

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

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Federal law gives parents and students over eighteen years of age certain rights with respect to the student's education records.

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

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days after the day Durham Charter receives a request for access.
2. Parents or eligible students should submit to the school principal a written request that identifies the records 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
3. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA.
4. Parents or eligible students who wish to ask Durham Charter to amend a record should write to the school principal, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it should be changed. 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 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.
5. The right to provide written consent before the school discloses personally identifiable information (PII) from the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.
6. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the school as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel) or a person serving on the school board. A school official also may include a volunteer or contractor outside of the school who performs an

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institutional service of function for which the school would otherwise use its own employees and who is under the direct control of the school with respect to the use and maintenance of PII from education records, such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist; a parent or student volunteering to serve on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee; or a parent, student, or other volunteer assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

7. Upon request, the school discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll, or is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes of the student's enrollment or transfer. [NOTE: FERPA requires a school district to make a reasonable attempt to notify the parent or student of the records request unless it states in its annual notification that it intends to forward records on request.]
8. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by Durham Charter to comply with the requirements of FERPA.

The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

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

Military and College/University "Opt Out"

Federal law requires schools to provide military recruiters and institutions of higher education, upon their request, with the names, addresses and telephone numbers of high school students, unless a student or parent has advised the school that they do not want such information disclosed without their prior written consent. Durham Charter will make an "opt out" form available to high school students and families.

Non-discrimination

Durham Charter School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or age in its programs or activities.

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Students with Disabilities: Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) – Federal law requires the school to provide special education services to all students diagnosed with or who are suspected to have mental, physical or emotional disabilities and who are unable to benefit from a regular school program without special assistance. If your child or a child you know may qualify for such special assistance, please contact the school administration and/or Julie Franklin, Exceptional Children Director.

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act – Congress passed this legislation in 1987 and re-authorized it in 2002 to help people experiencing homelessness. It includes the Education of Homeless Children and Youth Program that strives to reduce barriers for homeless children and youth for access and achievement.

Safe Surrender of a Newborn: NC General Statute § 115C-375.4(52)

High school students are required to be annually given information on the manner in which a parent may lawfully abandon a newborn baby with a responsible person in accordance with G.S. 7B-500.

A parent may legally abandon a newborn baby up to seven days old by surrendering the baby to a responsible person. According to General Statute §7B-500, the “following individuals shall, without a court order, take into temporary custody an infant under seven days of age that is voluntarily delivered to the individual by the infant's parent who does not express an intent to return for the infant:

- (1) A health care provider, as defined under G.S. 90-21.11, who is on duty or at a hospital or at a local or district health department or at a nonprofit community health center.
- (2) A law enforcement officer who is on duty or at a police station or sheriff's department.
- (3) A social services worker who is on duty or at a local department of social services.
- (4) A certified emergency medical service worker who is on duty or at a fire or emergency medical services station.

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When a parent abandons an infant less than seven days of age by voluntarily delivering the infant as provided in G.S. 7B-500(b) or G.S. 7B-500(d) and does not express an intent to return for the infant, that parent shall not be prosecuted under G.S. 14-322 or G.S. 14-322.1.

Garrett's Law

G.S. § 115C-375.4. Meningococcal Meningitis and Influenza and their Vaccines

Durham Charter School will provide parents/guardians of students in all grade levels with information at the beginning of each school year.

G.S. § 115C-375.4(51)

At the beginning of each school year, Durham Charter School will provide parents/guardians of fifth through twelfth graders with information about cervical cancer, cervical dysplasia, human papillomavirus, and the vaccines available to prevent these diseases.

Healthy Youth Act of 2009

This North Carolina legislation redefines what is to be included in the human sexuality education component of health education instruction in seventh, eighth, and high school health education classrooms. The high school Health course syllabus contains information for parents/guardians related to their opportunity to review instructional materials and/or withhold consent for their students to participate in related health education instruction prior to the instruction. Parents/guardians of seventh and eighth graders will be notified in advance should human sexuality study be planned in an upcoming lesson and given the opportunities described above.

G.S. § 115C-391.1.(j)(1) Permissible use of seclusion and restraint

The Deborah Greenblatt Law (House Bill 1032) was passed by the NC Legislature in July, 2006. This law applies to situations which may require school personnel to use physical or mechanical restraint, seclusion, or isolation in order to manage disruptive and dangerous student behaviors. All permissible and prohibited incidents involving

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restraint, seclusion, and isolation must be reported and documented by school personnel.

Physical Restraint shall be considered to be a reasonable force when used in the following circumstances:

1. As reasonably needed to obtain possession of weapons or other dangerous objects on the person, or within the control of the student;
2. as reasonably needed to maintain order or to prevent or break up a fight;
3. as reasonably needed for self-defense;
4. as reasonably needed to ensure the safety of any student, employee, volunteer, or other person present.
5. as reasonably needed to teach a skill, to calm or comfort a student, or to prevent self-injurious behavior;
6. as reasonably needed to escort a student safely from one area to another;
7. if used as provided for in an IEP, Section 504. or behavior intervention plan; or
8. as reasonably needed to prevent imminent destruction to school or another person's property.

G.S. § 115C-47(47) To Address the Use of Pesticides in Schools

Durham Charter School will notify families and staff regarding the schedule of pesticide use on school property and their right to request notification.

Annual Announcement - Asbestos Free School

This notification is to inform you that no asbestos materials were used in any construction projects at Durham Charter School. This includes the original building of Chatham Academy, all additions to the K-5 building, mobile unit, gymnasium, middle school hall, and high school building. Disclaimer statements supporting asbestos free materials from the mobile manufacturer and Vance Construction are on file in the main office.

CONCLUSION

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The Board of Directors at Durham Charter School strives to provide an educational environment in which students can perform at the highest academic levels. In order for students to be academically successful, classroom teachers must have opportunities to teach and students must have opportunities to learn. The administration will always take into consideration the grade level and age of the student when dealing with discipline problems and consequences.

Educational research demonstrates that less teaching and learning occur when teachers spend time managing discipline problems. Durham Charter School, with its Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Actions and Consequences strives to establish a quality, positive and responsive educational environment in which each child has the opportunity to succeed academically.

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