



Wissahickon

CHARTER SCHOOL

Student and Family Handbook

August 2026 – June 2027

Awbury Campus

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Fernhill Campus

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Philadelphia, PA 19144

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www.wissahickoncharter.org

It is the policy of the Wissahickon Charter School Board of Trustees to promote diversity and equal access to educational opportunity and all categories of employment without regard to age, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, color, creed, religion, ancestry, national origin, social or economic status, parenthood, marital status, handicap or any other protected class.

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Who We Are

Mission

Wissahickon Charter School was planned around three essential elements:

1. An integrated **environmental focus**, recognizing the importance of service learning
2. **Peace, conflict resolution, and community building** as part of a prioritized social curriculum
3. An emphasis on **family involvement** at all levels of the school organization, with special emphasis on families as partners in the learning experiences of their children.

Our founders wrote that Wissahickon will provide a community of learning with an environmental focus that stimulates the child's intellectual, social, and character development.

Board of Trustees

Erich Holland, Chair, e.holland@wissahickoncharter.org

Shauna Mace, Vice Chair, shauna.mace@wissahickoncharter.org

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Kristi Littell, Ex-Officio, littell@wissahickoncharter.org

Board Meetings

All meetings begin at 6:00pm and will be held via Zoom Video Conference, unless otherwise noted. For a Zoom log-in and password, please contact Ilana Lipowicz at i.lipowicz@wissahickoncharter.org.

July 31, 2026 (9:00am-10:00 AM @ Stradley Ronon)

September 16, 2026

October 21, 2026

November 18, 2026

January 20, 2027 (In-Person, Awbury Campus)

March 17, 2027

April 21, 2027

May 19, 2027

June 19, 2027

Administration

Dustin Vitale: Director of Culture, Fernhill Campus

Ishmell Bradley: Director of Technology

Jane Walsh: Director of Development

Kate O'Shea: Lower School Principal, K-4, Awbury Campus

Kimberly Krasnow: Director of Human Capital

Kristi Littell: CEO

Lauren Bennett: Principal, Fernhill Campus

Lovelee Polite: Middle School Principal, 5-8, Awbury Campus

Matthew Glass: Asst. Principal, Fernhill Campus

Michele Ferrante: Director of Special Education, Fernhill Campus

Paul Vande Stouwe: Assessment and Accountability Manager

Rebecca Chase: Director of Special Education, Awbury Campus

Sarah Wilson: Director of Curriculum and Instruction

Tasanya Gordon: Director of Culture, Awbury Campus

Tiffany Days: Network Director of School Operations

Attendance

Attendance Policy

Consistent attendance assures that our students will not miss valuable instructional time and opportunities that make their success in school possible. Students are required to be at school every day except for illness, approved religious holidays, funerals, medical and dental appointments, and court appearances.

Documentation Required for **Parent Excused Absence up to and limited to 10 Absences:**

- Illness: parent note unless more than 3 consecutive days, then a doctor's note is required
- Approved religious holidays: parent note
- Family Emergency: parent note
 - Absences due to a family emergency may be excused at the discretion of the Principal. A family emergency is defined as an unexpected and significant event affecting the student's immediate family that necessitates the student's absence from school. Documentation may be requested when appropriate. *Family emergencies should NOT be used for family vacation (see trip approval form) and/or social events.*

Documentation Required for **Excused Absences:**

- Funerals: obituary, announcement card or other death related documentation (if traveling, 3 days total will be excused (day of arrival, day of return, and day of funeral))
- Medical and dental appointments*: doctor or dentist appointment slip
- Court appearances: official court documents

- Educational Tour or Family Trip: Approved Educational Tour and Trip Pre-approval Form
Families who wish to *request* an excused absence for an educational tour or family trip must complete and submit an [Educational Tour and Trip Pre-Approval Form](#). The completed form must be submitted to the Principal at least two (2) weeks prior to the planned absence for review and approval.

Approval is not guaranteed and will be based on factors including the student's attendance record (student can not be chronically absent or on track to be chronically absent), academic standing (no failing grades, D's or F's in the current school year), and the educational value of the trip. Families are encouraged to wait for written approval **before** finalizing travel plans. Absences related to educational tours or family trips that have not received prior approval may be recorded as unexcused.

AFTER 10 Parent Excused Absences are used, in order for subsequent absences to be excused you must provide documentation under the excused absences category.

Reporting an absence

If your child is absent from school:

- Do NOT call the Front Office or send in a written note
- Submit the **WCS Absence Form** and upload supporting documentation (if applicable)
- Documentation must be submitted **within 3 school days of the absence**.

Separate links are available for:

[Awbury Campus](#)

[Fernhill Campus](#)

Families will receive an automated phone call for each reported absence.

Additional attendance expectations

- Students absent **3 or more consecutive days due to illness** must provide a doctor's note.
- All notes must be uploaded in the WCS Absence Form unless they are for tardy excused.
- If no reason is submitted, or the school cannot verify the absence as excused, the absence will be marked **unexcused**.
- Students must attend **at least two (2) hours of the school day** to be marked present.
- Students arriving **after 10:00 AM must be signed in by an adult** to be marked present.
- Families should notify the school nurse if a child has a communicable illness (e.g., chickenpox, strep throat, COVID-19, etc.) and follow medical guidance regarding isolation, symptom management, and any recommended precautions (including masking, when applicable).

*** Missing an entire day of school for a single medical or dental appointment is highly discouraged.**

Attendance policy for unexcused absences

When a student is absent the first time, an automated call and/or email will be sent to the family.

- **3 absences** - Warning letter sent home, generated by the Front Office via Powerschool
- **6 absences** - Student attendance improvement conference with the Front Office Manager to establish/create a Student Attendance Improvement Plan (SAIP). Please be advised that while the school will make every effort to hold a student attendance improvement conference at a time convenient for the student and caregiver and will work to reschedule in the event of unforeseen circumstances, we are required to hold an attendance improvement conference even in the event that the student or caregiver is unable to attend. **A student with six unexcused absences in a year must be reported as habitually truant.**
- **9 absences** - Certified letter sent home stating violation of Student Attendance Improvement Plan, SAIP conferences with the site's administration (Fernhill- Principal or Assistant Principal; Awbury- Lower or Middle School Director) to review policy, provide support, and revisit the Student Attendance Improvement Plan (SAIP).
- **10 or more absences** - Attendance Review Committee (ARC) Meeting with the CEO and/or Network Director of Operations.

Potential next steps

Please note that if your child has ten (10) or more unexcused absences, you, as the parent or guardian, will be referred to Project GO at the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office and may be referred to the Department of Human Services (DHS) for truancy. Your child may also be referred by Project GO to Regional Truancy Court if attendance does not improve following a Project GO referral. A DHS or Truancy Court referral can only occur after an attendance improvement conference has occurred. If your child is referred to DHS or to Truancy Court, a DHS agency provider will be assigned to your case and will begin home visits. If the attendance does not improve or you do not participate in the voluntary services offered by the DHS provider, your case may be referred to the District Attorney's office. Please be advised that expulsion, suspension, or transfer will never serve as a consequence for truancy.

Lateness

Being prompt to school is important for a variety of reasons. First and foremost, children who are late miss out on the introduction that sets the tone for the whole day. Tardies can be excused with official documentation. If your child is late for school, they must come to the office, sign in, and receive a pass to enter the classroom. ***If your child arrives after 10am, a parent/guardian must sign them in to be marked present.*** In addition, Middle School students are responsible for checking in with their teachers to get any missed work. A parental conference will be requested if a student is habitually late to school, and Saturday School may be assigned.

Early dismissal

Whenever possible, appointments should be scheduled after school hours as they can interfere with your child's learning program. When children have appointments that require them to leave early, the following procedure must be followed:

- Send in a note stating reason for early dismissal that morning or come to the office to ask that your child be excused early;
- Notify the office if someone other than you is picking up your child (the person must be on the list of approved pick-up persons you submitted, and must have a photo ID for security reasons);
- You or the designated pick-up person must sign your child out with an office staff member.
- Those picking up students, including parents, **may not** go directly to the child's classroom.
- Students must be in school for a minimum of two hours in order to be marked present for the day

There will be no early dismissals permitted after 2:30 p.m on regular school days, or one hour prior to dismissal time on early dismissal days.

No kindergarten through sixth grade student will be released from school during regular hours without being accompanied by an adult on their pick up list.

Calendar

Wissahickon Charter School 2026-2027 Calendar

Keep this posted for your convenience as our schedule can differ from the School District of Philadelphia (rev. 4/24/26)

August 10-14, 2026	Professional Development - New staff only
August 18-21 and 24, 2026	Professional Development - All staff
August 26, 2026	First Day of School- Grades 1-8 Full Day; Kindergarten Conferences Day
August 27, 2026	Kindergarten Group A Half Day
August 28, 2026	Kindergarten Group B Half Day
August 31, 2026	All Kindergarten Students Half Day
September 1, 2026	All Kindergarten Students Half Day
September 2, 2026	First Full Day of Kindergarten
September 7, 2026	Labor Day - Administrative Offices and School Closed
September 18, 2026	12:45 pm Dismissal for Professional Development
September 21, 2026	Yom Kippur - Administrative Offices and School Closed
October 2, 2026	School Closed for Professional Development
October 12, 2026	Indigenous Peoples' Day- Administrative Offices and School Closed
November 6, 2026	School Closed for Professional Development
November 11, 2026	Veterans Day - Administrative Offices and School Closed
November 23, 2026	Last Day of First Trimester - SCHOOL IS OPEN
November 24, 2026	Staff Only for Professional Development - Report Card Writing Day
November 25-27, 2026	Thanksgiving Holiday - Administrative Offices and School Closed
December 10, 2026	Report Card Conferences, 12:45 pm Dismissal
December 11, 2026	School Closed for Report Card Conferences
December 21, 2026 - January 1, 2027	Winter Recess - Administrative Offices and School Closed
January 4, 2027	School Closed for Professional Development
January 5, 2027	Students Return from Winter Recess
January 18, 2027	Martin Luther King Day - Administrative Offices and School Closed
January TBD, 2027	Apply Philly Charter Application Deadline for prospective students (including siblings of current students)
February TBD, 2027	Apply Philly Charter Common Lottery Date
February 5, 2027	School Closed for Professional Development
February 15, 2027	Presidents' Day - Administrative Offices and School Closed
February 16, 2027	Flex Day - School Closed (unless 2 or more snow days before 2/13/26)
March 4, 2027	Last Day of Second Trimester - SCHOOL IS OPEN
March 5, 2027	Staff Only for Professional Development - Report Card Writing Day
March 10, 2027	Eid Al-Fitr - Administrative Offices and School Closed
March 18, 2027	Report Card Conferences, 12:45 pm Dismissal
March 19, 2027	School Closed for Report Card Conferences
March 22-26, 2027	Spring Break - School Closed
March 29, 2027	School Closed for Professional Development
April 16, 2027	12:45 pm Dismissal for Professional Development
April 27-29, 2027	12:45 Dismissal: English/Language Arts PSSA, Grades 3-8
May 4-5, 2027	12:45 Dismissal: Mathematics PSSA, Grades 3-8
May 6-7, 2027	Science PSSA, Grades 5 and 8
May 10-14, 2027	PSSA Makeups (all grades)
May 17, 2027	Eid Al-Adha- Administrative Offices and School Closed
May 31, 2027	Memorial Day - Administrative Offices and School Closed
June 9, 2027	12:45 pm Dismissal for Professional Development
June 10, 2027	Last Day for Students, 12:45 pm Dismissal for Professional Development
June 11, 2027	Last Day for Staff
June 18, 2027	Juneteenth (Observed) - Administrative Offices and School Closed

Any changes to this schedule will be sent home prior to the date listed.

Drop-off & Pick-up of Students

Arrival and dismissal plans are subject to change, and families should always consult their respective campus' arrival and dismissal plan, the most current version of which will always be posted on our website in the [Family Resources](#) section.

Changes in Dismissal Plans

A new Dismissal Plan must be submitted EVERY time there is change made. These changes include, adding/ removing an adult, or changing a mode of transportation. The Dismissal Plan can be obtained from the Front Office. At the Fernhill campus, all dismissal changes must be updated by the parent/guardian in the Schoolpass app before 2:30pm. If no changes are made, the child will be dismissed by the default mode in the Schoolpass app.

Bus Students Drop Off Policy

The School District of Philadelphia provides all bussing for Wissahickon Charter School. Per the district, parents and guardians are responsible for the safety and conduct of their child/ren on the way to and from their bus stop and while waiting at the bus stop. Please note that this means that if the parent/guardian is not present at the stop, the child will still be dropped off.

Student Ridership Responsibility

The school will announce a final call before the buses depart at dismissal. If your student is not on the bus following the final announcement, it will be the parent's responsibility to pick up the student from the school. The late fee policy will be enforced.

Late Student Pick Up Policy

Late pick up for K-6 students begins at 3:30pm on normal school days and 1pm on early dismissal days. Families and Daycares that are picking up students late MUST report to the Front Office. In the beginning of the school year a few warnings will be given to allow families to solidify their after school arrangements. However, no additional warnings will be given after September 8, 2026.

Below are the steps WCS will follow when ANY student is picked up late:

Number of Minutes Late:	Next Steps:
15 Minutes	● Parents are notified ● Fee of \$1 per minute begins
30 Minutes	● Parents are notified again ● Emergency contacts notified

	● Fee of \$1 per minute continues
60 Minutes	● Parents are notified again

]

	● Emergency contacts notified again ● Fee of \$1 per minute continues
90 Minutes	● All steps listed above in addition to notifying Law Enforcement and DHS

Late Pickup Fee

Unpaid balances will carry over to the 2026-27 school year and will affect your child's ability to participate in school sponsored recreational activities and events. Please reach out to the front office staff with any questions about your balance. **Late fees will be assessed for each individual student.**

Enrollment

State law mandates that charter school enrollment be governed by lottery. Children who are not selected can be placed on a waiting list. Children who live outside of Philadelphia can apply if every interested child in Philadelphia already has been accepted. Students must be 5 years old by September 1st of the year they enter kindergarten and 6 years old by the time they enter first grade. **Preference is given to applicants who are siblings of current WCS students enrolled as of February 1, 2027 so long as proof of guardianship and residence is confirmed. Preference is also given to children of staff and board members who are in their positions as of February 1, 2027. Parents of students who fall in the categories above MUST STILL COMPLETE AN ENROLLMENT APPLICATION BY THE DEADLINE. Applications open September 18, 2027. The deadline for applications for grades K – 7 will be on January 15, 2027. The sole way to apply is through Apply Philly Charter (<https://applyphillycharter.org/> or (800-891-3999). The lottery will be held on February 1, 2027. For more information on our lottery and enrollment policies and procedures, see appendix C.**

Emergency School Closing

Most local radio, TV, and cable TV stations broadcast school closing information beginning very early in the morning. In the event of inclement weather, Wissahickon Charter School will be closed any time that the School District of Philadelphia is closed*. Further, there may be times when Wissahickon Charter School chooses to close even though the School District of Philadelphia chooses to remain open. Parents should plan ahead with their children for what to do in the event that school is closed for the day.

If it becomes necessary to close school during the school day, information will be forwarded to local media. We will also post information on our website, social media, and have a message on our school voicemail. We will also send out a message using our alert and family communication systems. Please make sure we have the most up to date contact information for you so that you can be assured of receiving the communications.

*Note that the one exception to this is when the School District of Philadelphia closes because of heat. Both WCS campuses have central air conditioning and will not close in the case of heat.

Bus Transportation

Bus transportation for all eligible students in grades 1-6 only will be provided by the School District of Philadelphia as required by Pennsylvania law. The School District contacts families directly indicating pick-up and drop-off locations and times.

Per the district, parents and guardians are responsible for the safety and conduct of their child/ren on the way to and from their bus stop and while waiting at the bus stop. Please note that this means that if the parent/guardian is not present at the stop, the child will still be dropped off.

Wissahickon Charter School's mission is to support children in their learning experience by providing them with a safe and respectful environment. Many families have chosen WCS even though they live a great distance from the school. Access to the school bus can and will be taken away if behaviors warrant such actions. School buses do not have bus attendants assigned to them; this can make student behavior challenging.

We must work together to foster growth and responsibility among our children for the safety of all students who ride the school buses. Children **must** be on their best behavior so that bus drivers can transport students safely to and from school. **It is imperative that parents support our Code of Conduct and reinforce the School Bus Behavior Policy.**

Students must adhere to the behavior policies or risk losing the privilege of riding the bus for the duration of the school year. Below outlines the expected student conduct on the school bus, the expectations of the School District transportation staff, and disciplinary actions:

Expected Student Conduct:

- Abide by the Wissahickon Charter School Code of Conduct.
- Be respectful of the bus property and the property of others.
- Remain seated for the entire bus ride.
- Follow the bus driver's directions promptly the first time they are given.

Expectations of School District Transportation Staff:

The driver of the bus has the responsibility and authority to maintain order and a safe environment. A bus driver who observes student misconduct or determines an unsafe condition exists has the authority to stop the bus and administer corrective action steps in order to ensure the safety of all passengers.

The bus driver will document the misconduct on the Bus Behavior Referral form and submit the form to the School Administration for review. The School Administration will investigate the incident and determine the corrective or disciplinary action based upon the severity of the action.

Disciplinary Actions:

First Incident: Warning Letter or Phone Call to Parent (If actions are violent or unsafe, a warning will NOT be given and the student will be suspended from the bus for one month. Examples of unsafe actions include but are not limited to: hanging body parts out of the bus, throwing objects out of the bus windows or doors, opening the emergency back door without driver permission. Examples of violence include but are not limited to: fighting, hitting, inappropriate touching/language, or throwing an object at someone.) A meeting with parents/guardians will be required if a suspension occurs.

Second Incident: Two-week suspension from the school bus and assigned seating upon reinstatement

Third Incident: One-month suspension from the school bus and continued assigned seating upon reinstatement

Fourth Incident: Dismissal from the school bus for the remainder of the school year. The child may not ride the school bus.

If your student has their bus privileges revoked, it is important to note that a parent must continue to provide a means of transportation to the school for the student. Suspension from the bus does not mean suspension from school. **School attendance is mandatory. Parents are responsible for finding alternate means of transportation.**

Additionally, conduct resulting in a suspension from the bus may also result in disciplinary action at the school. This may include, but is not limited to, Saturday school and community service or out-of-school suspension. Furthermore, you may be liable for property damage or injury caused by your child. If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Network Director of School Operations, Tiffany Days via email at t.days@wissahickoncharter.org.

HELPFUL HINTS FOR A POSITIVE SCHOOL BUS EXPERIENCE...

1. Remind your child of the school bus rules DAILY.
2. Send your child with a favorite chapter book or “bag of books”. Please write your or your child’s name in the covers.
3. If your child does not have a chance to eat breakfast, please have them save the food and drink until arrival at school.
4. Electronic music devices and other personal electronic devices may be used when traveling on the school bus. We cannot, however, guarantee the security of such items on the bus or in school. If you have questions or concerns about a bus incident for the Awbury Campus please contact **Shonda Robinson, Office Manager** at 267-774-4370 ext. 1527 or via email shonda@wissahickoncharter.org. For the Fernhill Campus, please contact **Justin Mosley, Office Manager** at 267-338-1020, ext. 4113 or via email at j.mosley@wissahickoncharter.org.

Academics, Extracurriculars & Expression

After School Program (ASP)

An after school program will be offered for students for grades Kindergarten through 5th grade on a first come, first served basis pending availability, a completed registration form, and an on-time fee payment. Students in grade K-5 are welcome to enroll either full or part time based on availability. There is a great need for aftercare in our school, and this will allow us to support as many students as possible every day. For the 2026-27 SY, the After School Program is scheduled to open on Tuesday, September 8th. Registration forms are available by request via email. For Awbury, email Melissa Pendleton at m.pendleton@wissahickoncharter.org and for Fernhill email Tanita Carodine at t.carodine@wissahickoncharter.org. A completed registration form, a registration fee of \$25 and the one-time Activities Fee of \$100 for every child you wish to register is due in order to hold a spot for that child. See the After School Program Handbook for any policies regarding ASP.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy

Artificial intelligence (AI) tools are becoming part of everyday life and education. Wissahickon Charter School (WCS) is committed to teaching students how to use AI responsibly while protecting academic integrity, student privacy, and the critical thinking skills that are central to learning at WCS.

1. AI tools may only be used for schoolwork when a teacher gives explicit permission. If a teacher does not specify that AI is allowed for an assignment, students should assume it is not permitted.
2. When AI use is permitted, students must disclose how they used it. This includes identifying what tool was used and which parts of the work were AI-assisted.
3. Students are responsible for understanding and being able to explain any work they submit, including work created with AI assistance. Submitting AI-generated content without understanding it does not demonstrate learning.
4. Students may only use AI tools approved by the Office of Technology and Information Systems (OTIS) on school devices and networks. Using unapproved AI tools on school devices is a violation of the WCS Computer Acceptable Use Policy.
5. Students may not enter personal information about themselves or others into AI tools. This includes names, addresses, photos, or any identifying details. AI tools are not secure environments for personal data.
6. Using AI to complete an assignment without teacher permission or without proper disclosure is a violation of academic integrity. This will be treated the same as other forms of academic dishonesty and will follow the disciplinary procedures outlined in this handbook.
7. The goal of this policy is not to catch students misusing AI. The goal is to teach responsible use of a tool that will be part of students' futures.

Questions

Students or families with questions about AI use should contact their teacher or the Office of Technology and Information Systems (OTIS) at helpis@wissahickoncharter.org.

This policy may be updated as AI technology and best practices evolve.

Cash-Free School

WCS is a cash-free school for transactions over \$5. All payment links for field trips, class dues, and any activity that requires a payment over \$5 will be posted on the Wissahickon website under the Family Payment section and sent to parents via SchoolStatus. Payments will only be accepted through the Square link. Parents do not need to have the Square app downloaded in order to make payment.

Contacting Teachers

Teachers are eager to speak with you to discuss your child's progress or any concerns you may have about class procedures. To request a meeting, please email, send a note with your child, or leave a message for the teacher at their voice mail. Please include your telephone number and the time of day when you can be reached, and the teacher will contact you within 48 hours. Due to the busy school day, staff will not be able to meet with you immediately if you show up at school or call without scheduling a meeting in advance.

Extracurricular Activities

We offer a variety of extracurricular activities and sports. Most of these activities take place after school, either at the Fernhill or Awbury campus. Sometimes, they take place during the school day. In order to participate in our sports teams, students must meet required academic and behavior standards.

Field Trips

Field trips are planned to enrich and enhance the programs presented in the classrooms. Teachers may ask families to contribute towards admission and/or the cost of transportation and will make every effort to let families know of costs well in advance of the time funds are due. No child shall be excluded from a class trip because of a family's inability to pay. If you cannot afford the cost of a trip, please inform your child's teacher. Occasionally there are funds to cover families in need and the school is always happy to coordinate a payment plan. As a reminder, WCS does not accept cash for trips- please refer to the section Cash-Free School above.

The classroom teacher may recruit a specified number of parent/guardian volunteers to ensure that a minimum ratio of one adult for every ten children is maintained. Teachers will inform each volunteer of the specific responsibilities they may have to help facilitate student safety and engagement. Volunteers above the specified need may attend if space is available. **Volunteers must have completed their PA Child Abuse and Criminal Record Checks if they will be the sole adult responsible for a group of students.**

If a student takes the bus with the class, they must return with the class to school on the bus. If a student doesn't come to school, it is considered an unexcused absence even if they meet the class at the trip destination.

Students who do not have their required grade physical and dental exams will not be allowed to participate in non-academic activities including field trips. Students will also be excluded from trips if there is a safety concern for the student or others based on their previous behavior. Teachers will make a plan in advance for the placement of students who cannot attend the trip.

Forms and Paperwork

There may be times when you need paperwork such as medical/diagnostic forms, letters of support, etc. completed by Wissahickon staff. All such requests must be sent to the school's Principal for dissemination to the appropriate employee(s).

Gender Identity and Expression

1. WCS will use the name and pronouns with which a student identifies in all interactions, as well as in written communication.
2. WCS personnel are required to take reasonable steps to prevent and promptly correct any derogatory or offensive terminologies used in communication with or in reference to a transgender or gender-nonconforming individual.
3. WCS faculty and staff are prohibited from disclosing information that may reveal a student's transgender identity or gender nonconformity to others, including staff, peers, parents, and other members of the public unless the student has authorized such disclosure.
4. WCS will reduce or eliminate the practice of segregating youth by gender.
5. When WCS students must be segregated by gender, students will be assigned and permitted to participate in any such activities consistent with their gender identity.
6. Wherever possible, gender-neutral language will be used in written communication.
7. WCS students shall have access to the restroom that corresponds to their gender identity.
8. Any WCS student who has a need or desire for increased privacy, regardless of the underlying reason, should be provided access to a single-stall restroom, but no student shall be required to use such a restroom.
9. Students shall have access to the locker/dressing room that corresponds to their gender identity.
10. Any student with a need or desire for heightened privacy, regardless of the underlying reason, should be provided with a reasonable alternative arrangement that is agreeable to the youth.

Grading

Academic Grades

K-2: Kindergarten- second grade students are scored on a continuum from beginning to progressing to secure in each foundational skill. They receive 3 report cards, the first two include conferences and the final one is mailed home. Students with IEPs receive modifications to their assessments and report cards if noted in their IEP.

Third- Eighth Grade: Students in grades 3-8 receive letter grades (A-F) in each of the main content areas: English Language Arts, Mathematics, Thematic Studies (3-5 only, a combination of Science and Social Studies) and in 6-8 in Science and Social Studies. Letter grades for students in 3rd-8th grades are comprised of a consistent combination of “mastery”, “practice” and “learning habits and skills”. For more information about the grading scales, contact the administration. WCS considers a score of “D” or “F” a failing grade. Students all receive an interim that is mailed home halfway through each trimester. They receive three report cards, the first two are conferences and the final one is mailed home. Students with IEPs receive modifications to their assessments and report cards if noted in their IEP.

No Zero Policy

Research shows that a grade of “zero” does disproportionate damage to a student’s average when using traditional 100 point grading scales. In order to avoid that kind of irreparable damage, the lowest score a WCS student can be given will reflect 50% of the total possible points of the assignment.

Graduation

8th grade graduation is a time to celebrate the accomplishments of our students. Families and staff are encouraged to attend. Wissahickon Charter School reserves the right to exclude any student from participating in the graduation ceremony if the student’s behavior doesn’t meet or has not met school expectations due to high level behavioral infractions. High level behavioral infractions include but are not limited to drug use or the possession of drugs and/or drug paraphernalia, possession of a weapon, making a terroristic threat to the school, causing or intending to cause serious bodily harm to a member of the community, etc. Parents will be notified in advance if such a decision is made. Further, Wissahickon reserves the right to require students with failing yearly averages (D or F) to complete a year-end assignment or make up work in the relevant courses in order to participate in graduation.

Homework

Homework is intended to: allow the student some successful practice at home; give the parents a chance to see what their child is learning; teach organizational habits and responsibility.

Homework Guidelines:

- Homework should be practiced and not feel too hard. Please use **time** as a guideline not amount of work.

K: 10 minutes math or reading

- 1: 10 minutes math or reading
- 2: 20 minutes math or reading
- 3: 10 minutes math, 20 minutes independent reading
- 4: 10 minutes math, 30 minutes independent reading
- 5: 20 minutes math, 30 minutes independent reading
- 6: No more than 60 minutes total (all subjects)
- 7: No more than 70 minutes total (all subjects)
- 8: No more than 80 minutes total (all subjects)

- Students should put forth good effort to complete homework, whether that means completing some or all of the assigned work. Good effort is most important
- Homework will be assigned by your teacher. You can expect a routine practice assignment each night, but not on weekends. If your child needs to finish an assignment at home, this should be communicated via your teacher's common communication method (planners, google classroom, email list). Homework is never used as a punishment.
- Students should be given homework that is at an appropriate difficulty level. Homework is the student's work—not the work of his/her parents. Please notify your child's teacher if your child is having difficulty completing the homework.
- In some classes throughout the school, parents/guardians will be asked to sign the homework of their child. In some grades, homework completion/effort may be counted toward grades.
- Doing homework on your own is an important step in building responsibility.
- Two notes from the research on homework:
 - Too much homework may diminish its effectiveness and turn students off from academic work.
 - Children who are physically active have greater academic achievement. Both parents and teachers must keep in mind the need for a balance between fitness and independent academic work.

Late Work

Students may receive credit for late work submitted up to one week after the date that grades are posted in PowerSchool.

Make-up Work

Upon request, we will make every effort to provide assignments for a child who is absent for **three days**

or more. When an absence is anticipated, please let your child's teacher know ahead of time so that you and the teacher can work together to provide the necessary work assignments during the period of absence. Middle school students are required to check in with their teachers to ensure they complete all missed work assignments.

Parties & Celebrations

- Classroom celebrations that align with our mission or our curriculum are encouraged. These include celebrations of student work (eg. publishing parties), celebrations of family (eg. Grandparents' Day), and celebrations of nature/seasonal change (eg. harvest celebration, winter celebration).
- Secular (non-religious) holidays may be celebrated in classrooms with the approval of Administrators. These include, but are not limited to: Thanksgiving, Martin Luther King Day, Valentine's Day.
- Religious observances are not permitted in deference to the varied religious beliefs of our students. Students may learn *about* religious holidays in an academic context or in the context of learning about the diversity of our student and family community.
- Halloween is also not celebrated. Halloween costumes, parties, or candy at school on this day are not permitted.
- For a child's birthday, parents may send in an approved snack from the [WCS Smart Snack Approved List](#) that complies with the standards of our WCS Wellness Policy. See more information in the Health and Wellness section about that policy. The snack must be provided for the entire class with advance permission from the teacher. Please do not send in any additional food, drinks, or goody bags.
- To avoid hurt feelings, invitations to private parties will not be permitted to be given out in school.
- Families who do not wish to have their children participate in such events should notify the teacher. Family wishes should be respected, and such children should be exempted from participation in a way that does not cause embarrassment or distress to the child.

Promotion & Retention

Prior to the end of the school year, teams of teachers and administrators conduct an administrative review to determine if any child should be recommended for retention to increase the likelihood that a student will thrive academically, socially and emotionally in school, short and long term. For each child, these teams take into account reading skills, standardized test scores (if available), achievement grades, effort grades, other assessments and social emotional development. Concerns regarding the possibility of retention will be shared with parents at report card conferences, in report card comments, or through personal outreach.

The Academic Team will meet to make a final decision and will communicate this with the family. While the perspective of the family is one important part of the decision, the school has the final say in retention

decisions. Retention for students with IEPs will be discussed in an IEP meeting and the decision will be made jointly by the whole team.

Please note that once a child is formally recommended for retention, this recommendation becomes part of the child's permanent Wissahickon Charter School records. In the event that the child transfers to another school, the child will still be retained.

Recess

As an environmental school, WCS believes in allowing all students time outdoors each day if weather permits. Please send your child to school with the appropriate clothing to comfortably spend time outdoors. In winter months, students will have outdoor recess if the Real Feel Temperature is 25 degrees or higher. In warmer weather, students will go outside, unless the Real Feel Temperature is 95 degrees or higher.

Special Education Services & Programs

The Wissahickon Charter School is required by the Individuals with Disabilities Act to provide a free, appropriate public school education to school age children with disabilities who need special education and related services. School age children with disabilities who need special education are identified as eligible for special education if they need specially designed instruction and have one or more of the following disabilities:

- Autism/pervasive developmental disorder
- Serious emotional disturbance
- Neurological impairment
- Deafness/hearing impairment
- Specific learning disability
- Intellectual Disability
- Multiple handicap conditions
- Other health impairment
- Physical disability
- Speech and language impairment
- Blindness/visual impairment

In compliance with federal law, WCS will provide each qualified student the related services or accommodations that are needed to provide equal opportunity to participate in the school program, without discrimination to the student or family. For further information on evaluation procedures and provision of services parents should contact the school CEO or the Director of Special Education.

When considering the exclusion of a student with a disability that constitutes a change of placement, a process to determine if the behavior in question is a manifestation of the student's disability will be

conducted and a decision made accordingly.

Our Annual Public Notice of Special Education Services and Programs and Rights for Students with Disabilities And Notification of Rights under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act is available here:

<https://apos-wissahickon-charter-prod.s3.us-east-1.amazonaws.com/attachments/hw2wndsnlv9on4z2nztutjux-wcs-annualchildfindnotice-updated-6-16-2026.pdf>

Spiritual Expression

At WCS, we respect the right of students to appropriately exercise their spiritual expression, and we also recognize the need to prevent material disruptions to the learning environment. To honor these twin aims, WCS provides a private, peaceful location available to students during non-instructional time for spiritual expression, including prayer. For students to take advantage of this time and space, we require a note from a parent indicating that they wish their child to have access. Students presenting such a note will be able to go to the designated space during the last ten minutes of the lunch break. Staff will provide students a daily pass, which they must have with them at all times. As always, students must demonstrate responsibility, including following all school rules in traveling to and from the space and following the school schedule. If a student does not follow school rules or if he/she otherwise causes disruption to the learning environment, WCS shall give notice to a parent of the student regarding the issues. Upon a second violation, that student will temporarily lose access for a period not to exceed one calendar week. If after access is restored the student further violates school rules or otherwise causes a disruption to the learning environment, additional appropriate sanctions will be imposed, up to, and including, potential loss of use for the remainder of the school year.

Teacher Qualifications

As a parent of a student at Wissahickon Charter School, you have the right to request the professional qualifications of the classroom teachers who instruct your child. Specifically, you have the right to ask for the following information about each of your child's classroom teachers:

1. Whether the Pennsylvania Department of Education has licensed or qualified the teacher for the grades and subjects they teach;
2. Whether the Pennsylvania Department of Education has decided that the teacher can teach in a classroom without being licensed or qualified under state regulations because of special circumstances;
3. The teacher's college major, as well as any advanced degrees that they may have attained;
4. Whether any paraprofessionals provide services to your child, and, if they do, their qualifications.

If you would like to receive any of this information, please deliver a request in writing to the school. In addition to specifying the information which you would like to receive, please be certain to include your name, address and a telephone number at which you can be contacted during the day.

Textbooks & Other Materials

All textbooks, workbooks and other school materials should be protected. Small reading books may be protected by placing them in Ziploc bags when conditions necessitate such care. **Parents are financially responsible for any damage, loss, or theft, including school computers.** Unpaid balances will carry over to the 2026-2027 school year and will affect your child's ability to participate in school sponsored recreational activities and events.

Tutoring

Periodically, Wissahickon Charter School will offer tutoring as an educational institution. In those cases, school leadership will identify and invite students who qualify to participate for free in the program with a predetermined WCS employee.

Parents and guardians are welcome to pursue tutoring for their children (who are WCS students) by WCS employees. To aid in this process, the front office will hold a list of employees who are interested in tutoring. Aside from identifying interested parties through this list, WCS is not responsible for any aspect of tutoring (scheduling, compensation negotiations, etc.).

Tutoring by WCS employees can happen on school grounds outside of regular school hours. Employees are not permitted to tutor students during school hours (including lunch breaks and preps). Employees are not permitted to tutor students enrolled in their own classes for compensation. Outside tutors are not allowed to tutor at WCS unless the tutor is contracted by WCS.

Code of Conduct & Disciplinary Procedures

Mission Statement

Policy Statement

Wissahickon Charter School (“Wissahickon”) is committed to creating a safe, positive learning environment for all of our students, staff, parents, and community partners. Wissahickon will work to assure that all students and staff are well motivated, fully aware of their potential and dedicated to lifelong learning as competent and productive human beings. Wissahickon believes that all children can learn in a safe environment.

With everyone’s commitment to this Code, we can all create a proper learning environment at Wissahickon Charter School.

Purpose

Wissahickon has adopted this Code to support the creation of a safe learning environment for all members of the school community. The purpose of this Code is to clearly state our standards for acceptable conduct of students. This Code also explains the consequences of not meeting these standards. This Code is driven by our philosophy that restorative measures, paired with age-appropriate logical consequences, hold students accountable when necessary, while keeping all students safe. Wissahickon does not permit corporal punishment.

This Code also sets forth the discipline procedures for students who have committed violations of the Code. This Code is not meant to be a contract between Wissahickon and the students, and may be amended at any time. It is a place for Wissahickon to explain certain policies applicable to students.

Scope

This Code of Conduct applies to conduct of Wissahickon Charter School students that occurs:

- During such times as they are under the supervision of the school, including the time they are in attendance at Wissahickon Charter School as well as the time necessarily spent in coming to and returning from school;
- Off school grounds at any school-related activity, function or event;
- Off school grounds (including through social media, email, text messages, video chats, etc.) when the conduct may reasonably be expected to (i) endanger the safety of students, teachers, administrators, or any other member of the school community; or (ii) substantially and materially disrupt the school; and
- While traveling to and from school on school buses or vans, regardless of the Charter School or District of ownership, or on public transportation.

Overview

To foster a positive school culture at Wissahickon Charter School, priority will be placed on modeling and actively teaching positive behaviors such as cooperation, assertion, respect, empathy, challenges, kind and respectful communication, curiosity, self control and commitment to learning, cultivation of a feeling of connection and community, intellectual rigor, and compassionate responses to those who are upset or in need. Although the active teaching of positive behaviors will be of paramount importance at Wissahickon Charter School, the necessity of explicit prohibition of negative behaviors—with prescribed consequences when a prohibition is violated—is also recognized.

Accordingly, we stipulate that no student may engage in conduct, or encourage any other person to engage in conduct that jeopardizes or threatens the health, safety or welfare of any member of the school community, or that disrupts or undermines the educational mission of Wissahickon Charter School.

None of the consequences listed below will be applied in such a manner as to discriminate against any student based on race, sex, gender identity, color, religion, sexual orientation, national origin or disability. The Administration of Wissahickon Charter School will impose consequences for behavior that falls within the range of consequences for a particular violation of this Code. The severity and/or nature of the consequence imposed will be based on factors including, but not limited to, age of the student, number of prior offenses, disability, and/or severity of the violation.

Wissahickon Charter School has the right to impose consequences for acts or behaviors that are not specifically delineated within this Code if those acts or behaviors threaten the health, safety and/or welfare of other members of the school community, or if those acts or behaviors disrupt the learning environment.

Various means may be used by school personnel to discourage or extinguish undesirable behaviors. Some means will be “restorative” in the sense that they involve “making up for” damage that was done: for example, a student who mistreats another might be required to do something that restores the dignity of the victim (e.g., offer an apology in front of peers), or a student who damages property might be required to repair whatever damage was done. Other means might focus on encouraging greater self-awareness and compunction in the transgressor: for example, a transgressor might be required to write about the transgression, its consequences, and perhaps suggest what s/he would consider an appropriate punishment. Various other means will be used as well and may include counseling the student; conferencing with the parent(s); assigning extra responsibilities at school; assigning community service; or imposing make-up time, Saturday school, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension for up to ten (10) consecutive school days, or referral to the Board of Trustees for an expulsion hearing with a recommendation that the student be expelled for a period of more than ten (10) consecutive school days. Please note that students in grades K-2 will not be suspended for minor offenses.

Corporal Punishment

Corporal punishment, defined as the use of physical force as a means of disciplining a student, is prohibited by law and school policy. School employees may use only the amount of reasonable and necessary physical force required under the following circumstances:

- To quell a disturbance or prevent injury.
- To obtain possession of a weapon or other dangerous object.
- To act in self-defense or in defense of another person.
- To protect persons or property from imminent harm.

Dress Code

Wissahickon’s Dress Code is designed to allow students and their families the freedom to make choices about student clothing with the goal of them being comfortable and safe at school. WCS’s Dress Code aims to be equitable to all genders by its design and it will lack all aspects of gender bias in its implementation. This applies to school days as well as all school sponsored events. Wissahickon Charter School will regularly conduct training for all staff members on their responsibilities under the uniform policy of nondiscrimination set forth in applicable laws and this regulation.

Must Wear:

- Students must wear shirts covering their front and back, as well as their shoulders and sides under their arms.
- Students must wear pants or their equivalent (e.g. shorts, sweatpants, skirts, dresses, leggings) that meet the “fingertip rule”. This rule states that a student should be able to stand straight, arms by their side, and not have their fingertips reach past their shorts.
- Closed toed and closed backed shoes are to be worn at all times.
- On PE days, students will wear sneakers along with the proper PE uniform. Gym shorts, t-shirts, or sweats are appropriate for P.E.

Students May Wear:

- Religious headwear
- Fitted pants, including opaque leggings, yoga pants and “skinny jeans”
- Ripped jeans, as long as underwear and buttocks are not exposed
- Athletic attire

Students may NOT wear:

- Undergarments that are visible (underwear/boxers, bras, undershirts).
- Hoodies
- Hats, shiesties, or hooded clothing such as sweatshirts. All non-religious headwear is prohibited.
- Any item with exceedingly large pockets such as kangaroo pockets.
- Piercings that pose a safety risk of any kind are not allowed, including large hoop earrings.
- Backpack tags (Lululemon, Sprayground, etc.)
- Dress, accessories, and jewelry which contain obscene symbols, signs, or slogans, and/or which slur or degrade on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, disability, or sexual orientation, contain language or symbols supporting sex, drugs, alcohol or tobacco, and impose a threat of imminent violence or disruption to the orderly operation of the school shall not be worn.
- Any item that obscures the face or ears (except for PPE)
- Smart Glasses
- Blankets (including pajama day)

Violation of the Dress Code:

When a student is deemed to be in violation of the dress code, the family will be called to bring the student a change of clothes. If this doesn’t happen, the student goes to the Principal/Assistant Principal/Nurse to get appropriate clothing for the day to return by the next day.

- No student should be affected by dress code enforcement because of racial identity, sex assigned at birth, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, ethnicity, cultural or religious identity, household income, body size/type, or body maturity.
- School staff shall not enforce the school’s dress code more strictly against transgender and gender nonconforming students than other students.
- Students should not be shamed or required to display their body in front of others (students, parents, or staff) in school.
 - “Shaming” includes, but is not limited to:

- kneeling or bending over to check attire fit;
- measuring straps or skirt length;
- asking students to account for their attire in the classroom or in hallways in front of others;
- calling out students in spaces, in hallways, or in classrooms about perceived dress code violations in front of others;
- accusing students of “distracting” other students with their clothing

Behavior Intervention

No matter how diligently we work with students to establish goals and commit to agreements about how we need to behave to support those goals; no matter how carefully we set up routines and model and practice them, no trimester will pass without rule-breaking. It’s part of the business of all children to test limits, but adolescents especially, are figuring out how power works, and to what extent they can operate independent of the adults who have so much of it. It’s part of healthy growth toward adulthood to try things out on their own, and it’s part of the job of educators to guide that process so students are safe and respectful to others while they learn to be responsibly independent.

However, from time to time the general program of discipline and management will not work for a student. Research supports that despite consistent efforts, a school-wide behavior model may not always work for 100% of the student population. At those times, other interventions may need to be implemented. These interventions are meant to support the student by providing additional structure and a clear plan for improvement. These structures are also meant to communicate more consistently with the parent, to ensure that home and school are in agreement of the additional supports given to aid in ensuring that said student adheres to policies & procedures set forth by WCS. The Student Accountability Plan (referenced in this document) speaks to the General Program and Behavioral Intervention (BI) as it relates to student discipline and management of student behavior at WCS. The two levels of BI are identified and outlined below:

Prior to placing a child on Behavioral Intervention Level 1, any combination of the following systems and supports may be provided to students:

- Daily 30 minute Morning Meetings to reinforce CARES values of Cooperation, Academic Excellence, Assertion, Responsibility, Empathy, Self-Control & Stewardship
- Explicit teaching of responsive classroom and development designs as embedded in the curriculum and taught daily by all staff
- Middle School Study Skills & Study Hall to support academic & social growth - Creation of social guidelines with student input: Guidelines are created each year whereby students provide input to staff as a means to help hold students accountable and live out our daily agreements - Social guidelines are reviewed consistently with students, posted in classrooms, common spaces and are mailed home to families

- Assemblies to help reinforce CARES values
- Celebration of positive and consistent student behavior through CARES recognition - Communication with families via email, telephone & in person meetings to discuss growth both academically and socially
- If a student is displaying disruptive behavior, a teacher may ask that student to TAB (Take A Break) 2-3 minute break away from the group in the designated spot marked The goal is to provide the student with space and time to reflect and quickly repair behavior.
- A student who has not responded to in-class redirections **might** need some time away from their regular environment and the opportunity to debrief with another adult and/or make a written plan to get back on the right track. At an appropriate later time, the teacher may have a short social conference with the student. This can happen at the door or inside the classroom (off to the side, between teacher and student only).

Behavior Intervention Level 1

- Students who consistently struggle to meet the behavioral expectations of WCS will be placed on Behavior Intervention (BI). This may include frequent breaks within and/or outside of the classroom, being sent to ReSet, calls home, meetings with families via phone & in person, make up time and suspension.
- The student, family and school staff meet at the onset of BI1 to go over the goal(s) for the student. Goals are set up to help students in areas where they struggle consistently. The student may have a managed behavior plan that must be signed by teachers and parent/guardian daily. The plan will have a points goal for the week for the student. Each student's plan will be tailored to fit them. While a specific percentage for every student isn't set in stone, each student is expected to show positive results on the behavior plan.
- Alternatives to the plan include regular texts and/or phone calls between school staff and parents/guardians.
- Family/School contact will occur at least **twice a month**, via an in-person meeting or phone call with the Dean of Culture (DoC) and or a designee. The Dean of Culture or the Apprentice Dean of Culture monitors students on BI, so they are the main contact between the school and family. - Check in meetings with DoC
- Other aspects of BI may include: Make-up Time after school, Saturday Make-up Time, community service, sessions with counselor, peer mediation, mentoring by an adult ally, and other possible interventions that are agreed upon by the school and family. This list is neither exhaustive, nor necessarily relevant for every student on BI, but presents the most common interventions.

Behavior Intervention Level 2

- Students on BI2 have not met their goals on BI1, and continue to struggle with following the rules and expectations of the school. Even with the interventions on BI1 and a more focused

and concentrated support given, the student doesn't progress.

- The formal contact with the parent is still twice a month, but one of these contacts must be in-person.
- Many of the same interventions/supports will be utilized for a student on BI2.
- Checks in with DoC will be more frequent.
- The team will take a look at the supports and interventions and make adjustments where needed; the goals on the behavior plan may be modified, and the points may be adjusted.
- **During BI2 family meetings, it is made clear that failure to show progress may result in a referral for an expulsion hearing, and if suspended while on BI2, the student can be brought up for expulsion.**

Rules & Regulations

Level 1 Rules

Various means may be used by school personnel on a case-by-case basis to discourage violations of Level I Rules (see means described above).

Rule #1: No student may disrupt the school or the learning environment.

- Students shall act in a courteous manner at all times and toward all members of the school community, and shall not engage in conduct, which disrupts any school-sponsored or school-related educational program or activity.
- The following, although not exhaustive, shall be considered violations of this rule:
 - Disobedience
 - Disrespect
 - Dishonesty
 - Failure to follow established school rules
 - Failure to attend class or late arrival to class without a valid excuse
 - Failure to comply with the established dress code
 - Failure to comply with the established attendance policy
 - Loitering and/or failure to provide identification upon request
 - Possession or use of cell phones, walkman, iPod, MP3 players, look-alike or toy weapons (those that are capable of inflicting serious bodily injury will be treated as a Level II offense), laser pointers, poppers, sparklers, mace, pepper spray, lighter, or any telephonic, stereophonic or digital device, not including a calculator or digital watch, during school hours or programs
 - Running or making of excessive noise in the school building
 - Lying to school authority
 - Failure to follow established classroom rules

Rule #2: No student shall use offensive language.

- Students shall refrain from using language that may be classified as obscene, offensive or vulgar, or which would violate school policies regarding discrimination and/or harassment of any kind.
- A student will be considered to have violated this Rule if he/she makes libelous or slanderous remarks directed at another member of the school community.
- A student will be considered to have violated this Rule if he/she sends or forwards any offensive, sexually oriented, obscene, vulgar, and/or threatening messages, pictures, or symbols from any source to any member of the school community.
- A student will be considered to have violated this Rule if he/she wears or displays any colors or symbols with the intent to show or indicate allegiance to or affiliation with any gang.

Rule #3: Students shall maintain good records of attendance. (Note: Please be advised that expulsion, suspension, or transfer will never serve as a consequence for truancy.)

- The following, although not exhaustive, will be considered violations of this Rule: ■ Excessive unexcused absence (i.e. three or more)
- Excessive unexcused lateness or tardiness (i.e. three or more)
- Missing a class without a valid excuse
- Truancy

Rule #4: Students shall maintain the highest standards of honesty and integrity.

- A student will be considered to have violated this rule if they forge any paper, report, test, or notes, or engage in any other type of cheating and/or copying of the work of another student.
- A student will be considered to have violated this Rule if he/she plagiarizes any publication or paraphrases any publication without appropriate citation.

Rule #5: Students shall be kind, respectful, self-controlled, non-disruptive and considerate in their relationships with all members of the school community.

Rule #6: Students shall not engage in gambling, or take or place bets on chance for personal benefit.

Rule #7: Students shall not engage in improper use of technology.

- Students shall respect the computer privileges granted to them and shall comply with Wissahickon Charter School's Acceptable Use Policy whenever they use Wissahickon Charter School's computers, equipment, network system or any other technology owned by or licensed through Wissahickon Charter School.
- The following, although not exhaustive, shall be considered violations of this Rule:
 - Giving his/her password to another individual
 - Using another's password
 - Illegally downloading copyrighted material from the internet
 - Purposely or recklessly visiting sites on the internet that contain sexually explicit or

- otherwise offensive materials
- Harming, damaging or disrupting hardware and/or software
- Harming or destroying the data of another person or student
- Harming or destroying the internet or other school networks
- Purposely or recklessly creating, downloading, or uploading a computer virus
- Breaking into or hacking into other files or systems
- Accessing and/or altering school records, information or files without express permission
- Conducting any business enterprise
- Material that is fraudulent, harassing, sexually explicit, pornographic, violent or advocating of violence, profane, obscene, intimidating, threatening, defamatory, discriminatory, or otherwise unlawful or inappropriate may not be sent by email or other forms of electronic communication (such as bulletin board systems, newsgroups, chat groups) or accessed, reviewed, displayed on or stored in Wissahickon Charter School's Computer Resources.

Rule #8: Students shall not damage, deface, destroy or steal school property or the personal property of another member of the school community.

- A student will be considered to have violated this Rule if he/she creates graffiti, carves, tears, cuts or otherwise marks, regardless of whether the marking is permanent, property owned or leased by, or licensed to Wissahickon Charter School.
- A student will be considered to have violated this Rule if he/she steals or attempts to steal school property or any property leased or licensed to Wissahickon Charter School, or the personal property of another member of the school community while on school property or at any school-sponsored or school-related activity or event.
- A student will be considered to have violated this Rule if he/she attempts to pass or solicit counterfeit money or to make counterfeit money.
- A student will be considered to have violated this Rule if he/she attempts to purchase stolen or illegally obtained property at any school-sponsored or school-related activity or event.

Rule #9: Students shall not cause or attempt to cause physical injury to any member of the school community.

- Students will be held responsible for their purposeful, reckless and negligent actions and the reasonably foreseeable consequences of their actions.
- The following, although not exhaustive, shall be considered violations of this rule:
 - Physical contact by pushing, punching, shoving, slapping or hitting
 - Physical contact by kicking
 - Throwing any object that may cause injury to another at any member of the school community
 - Biting
 - Spitting

- Roughhousing or horseplay

Rule #10: Students shall not recklessly endanger any member of the school community.

- Students shall not act in any manner, which creates a substantial and unjustifiable risk of harm to others and indicates a conscious indifference to the consequences of the act.

Rule #11: Students shall not falsely activate any fire alarm, security system, smoke detector or any other device, which may cause disruption of the school community, fear or panic.

- Any student who falsely activates any such device or renders a false report that results in a response by authorities including, but not limited to, the fire department, the police, emergency medical personnel, and/or results in evacuation of Wissahickon Charter School's building(s) will be considered to have violated this Rule and may be subject to sanctions under federal, state and/or local law.

Rule #12: Students may not possess, use, distribute or solicit the use or distribution of any tobacco product or related paraphernalia while on property owned by, leased or licensed to Wissahickon Charter School, or while at any school-sponsored or school-related activity or event.

Rule #13: Students shall not directly or indirectly communicate any threat to any member of the school community which places that person in fear or apprehension of injury, pain and/or ridicule.

- Continual threats, harassment, bullying and/or intimidation are considered and treated as Level II offenses.

Level II Rules

Students who engage in activities that violate any federal, state and/or local law may be subject to criminal charges and punishment in addition to any disciplinary measures undertaken by Wissahickon Charter School. Violations of Level II rules can result in suspension from Wissahickon Charter School. Violations may result in a referral to the Board of Trustees for an expulsion hearing with a recommendation that the student be expelled for a period of more than ten (10) consecutive school days (**except Rule 14**).

Rule #14: No student shall engage in repeated violations of this Code.

- A student will not be considered to have engaged in repeated violations of this Code unless the student has previously been warned or disciplined for violations of this Code.

Rule #15: Students may not possess, use, distribute or solicit the use or distribution of any unauthorized prescription or non-prescription medication, drug, narcotic, hallucinogen, steroid, growth hormone, amphetamine, barbiturate, opiates, marijuana, inhalants, alcohol or any other intoxicant or related paraphernalia while on property owned by, leased or licensed to Wissahickon Charter School, or while at any school-sponsored or school-related activity or event. No violation of this rule will occur where the student is specifically allowed to possess such drug or inhaler by the student's physician, upon receipt of documentation from the student's physician and approval by the school nurse

in accordance with Wissahickon Charter School's Medications Policy.

Rule #16: Students shall not expose or attempt to expose their genitalia or any private body part to any member of the school community, nor shall they touch the genitalia or private body parts of another.

Rule #17: Students shall not engage in any activity, which can reasonably be expected to have the effect of harassing, threatening or damaging the safety or reputation of any member of the school community.

- The following, although not exhaustive, shall be considered violations of this Rule:
 - Unwelcome sexual advances
 - Requests for sexual relations and/or favors
 - Sexual comments
 - Offensive sexually-oriented gestures, sounds, remarks or comments
 - Offensive remarks or comments related to a person's race, gender, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or presentation, or national origin
 - Efforts to intimidate or bully
- Any of the above actions, or any other conduct which may reasonably be considered as a violation of this Rule, whether in written, oral, electronic or digital form is subject to disciplinary consequences.

Rule #18: Students shall not engage in any consensual sexual acts.

Rule #19: Students shall not force or attempt to force any other member of the school community to engage in any sexual act.

Rule #20: Students shall not cause or attempt to cause physical injury or pain to any student, teacher, administrator, staff member or any other employee or agent of Wissahickon Charter School, or any member of the school community.

Rule #21: Students shall not cause, attempt to cause or threaten to cause serious bodily injury to any member of the school community with a weapon or without regard to the value of human life.

Rule #22: Students shall not possess on their person, in their clothing or belongings, in their vehicle, or in any storage space or container provided by Wissahickon Charter School any weapon.

- For the purposes of this Rule, "weapon" shall include any knife, cutting instrument, cutting tool, nunchaku, firearm, shotgun, rifle, and any other tool, instrument or implement capable of inflicting serious bodily injury.
- The following steps shall be taken by appropriate personnel at Wissahickon Charter School in the event a student violates this Rule:
 - The student will be detained and, where possible, brought to the office of the CEO or

designee;

- The incident will be immediately be reported to Police or any other appropriate authority if deemed necessary by the school;
- The parent/s or guardian/s of the student will be immediately notified;
- Expulsion may be recommended in accordance with the law of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.
- A Serious Incident Report will be filed and should contain: Circumstances of possession and discovery of the weapon; Action taken by Police or other authority in response to the call for assistance; Action taken by Wissahickon Charter School, including details of contact with parent/s or guardian/s, filing of the report and notice to Police or other authority; An image of the weapon; A report to the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

Rule #23: Students shall not engage in or attempt to engage in any conduct, which endangers the health, safety or welfare of any other member of the school community.

- The following, although not exhaustive, will be considered violations of this Rule:
 - Setting or attempting to set a fire or explosion on or in property owned by, leased or licensed to Wissahickon Charter School
 - Retaliating against any member of the school community who participated in any investigation or proceeding
 - Activating the fire alarm, security system or other such device when there is no threat of fire or breach of security, and fire personnel, police or other authority is dispatched to Wissahickon Charter School
 - Planting, hiding or locating, or threatening to plant, hide or locate, any bomb or explosive device on property owned by, leased or licensed to Wissahickon Charter School

Disciplinary Actions

Make-Up Time: Retaining the student after school hours with the parent and/or student being responsible for transportation of the student at the end of the detention period

Sat. Make-up Time: Student attends make-up time for 3 hours on Saturday morning. Parents/students are responsible for transportation to and from Saturday school.

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

- **Suspension:** Suspension is exclusion from school for a period of from 1 to 10 consecutive school days.
 - Suspensions may be given by the Administration or person in charge of Wissahickon Charter School.

- A student may not be suspended until the student has been informed of the reasons for the suspension and given an opportunity to respond. Prior notice of the intended suspension need not be given when it is clear that the health, safety or welfare of the school community is threatened.
- The parents or guardians shall be notified immediately in writing when the student is suspended.
- When the suspension exceeds 3 school days, the student and parent shall be given the opportunity for an informal hearing consistent with the requirements of the Pennsylvania Code.
- Suspensions may not be made to run consecutively beyond the 10 school day period. f. Students shall have the responsibility to make up exams and work missed while being disciplined by suspension and shall be permitted to complete these assignments within guidelines established by the governing board.
- Students in grades K-2 shall not be suspended for minor offenses.
- **Expulsion:** Expulsion is exclusion from school by the governing board for a period exceeding 10 school days and may be permanent expulsion from Wissahickon Charter School rolls. Expulsions require a prior formal hearing pursuant to the Pennsylvania Code.
 - During the period prior to the hearing and decision of the board in an expulsion case, the student shall be placed in their normal class except as set forth below.
 - If it is determined after an informal hearing that a student's presence in his/her normal class would constitute a threat to the health, safety or welfare of others and it is not possible to hold a formal hearing within the period of a suspension, the student may be excluded from school for more than 10 school days. A student may not be excluded from school for longer than 15 school days without a formal hearing unless mutually agreed upon by both parties. Any student so excluded shall be provided with alternative education, which may include home study.
 - Students who are under 17 years of age are still subject to the compulsory school attendance law even though expelled and shall be provided an education.
 - The initial responsibility for providing the required education rests with the student's parents or guardian, through placement in another school, tutorial or correspondence study, or another educational program approved by the district's superintendent.
 - Within 30 days of action by the board, the parents or guardians shall submit to Wissahickon Charter School written evidence that the required education is being provided as described in paragraph (1) or that they are unable to do so. If the parents or guardians are unable to provide the required education, Wissahickon Charter School entity shall, within 10 days of receipt of the notification, make provision for the student's education. A student with a

disability shall be provided educational services as required by the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act.

- If the approved educational program is not complied with, Wissahickon Charter School may take action in accordance with 42 Pa.C.S. Chapter 63 (relating to the Juvenile Act) to ensure that the child will receive a proper education. See § 12.1(b) (relating to free education and attendance).

- **Exclusion from classes – in-school suspension**

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

Hearings

1. *General.* Education is a statutory right, and students shall be afforded due process if they are to be excluded from school. In a case involving a possible expulsion, the student is entitled to a formal hearing.
2. *Formal hearings.* A formal hearing is required in all expulsion actions. This hearing may be held before the board or an authorized committee of the board, or a qualified hearing examiner appointed by the board. When a committee of the board or a hearing examiner conducts the hearing, a majority vote of the entire board is required to expel a student. The following due process requirements shall be observed with regard to the formal hearing:
 - A. Notification of the charges shall be sent to the student's parents or guardians by certified mail.
 - B. At least 3 days notice of the time and place of the hearing shall be given. A copy of the expulsion policy, notice that legal counsel may represent the student and hearing procedures shall be included with the hearing notice. A student may request the rescheduling of the hearing when the student demonstrates good cause for an extension.
 - C. The hearing shall be held in private unless the student or parent requests a public hearing.
 - D. The student may be represented by counsel, at the expense of the parents or guardians,

and may have a parent or guardian attend the hearing.

- E. The student has the right to be presented with the names of witnesses against the student, and copies of the statements and affidavits of those witnesses.
- F. The student has the right to request that the witnesses appear in person and answer questions or be cross-examined.
- G. The student has the right to testify and present witnesses on their own behalf.
- H. A written or audio record shall be kept of the hearing. The student is entitled, at the student's expense, to a copy. A copy shall be provided at no cost to a student who is indigent.
- I. The proceeding shall be held within 15 school days of the notification of charges, unless mutually agreed to by both parties. A hearing may be delayed for any of the following reasons, in which case the hearing shall be held as soon as reasonably possible:
 - a. Laboratory reports are needed from law enforcement agencies.
 - b. Evaluations or other court or administrative proceedings are pending due to a student invoking their rights under the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act 2004 (20 U.S.C.A. § § 1400—1482).
 - c. In cases in juvenile or criminal court involving sexual assault or serious bodily injury, delay is necessary due to the condition or best interests of the victim.
- J. Notice of a right to appeal the results of the hearing shall be provided to the student with the expulsion decision.

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

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

Discipline of Students with Disabilities

Wissahickon Charter School shall comply with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act and any applicable federal and state statutes or regulations when disciplining students with disabilities. Students with disabilities who engage in inappropriate behavior, disruptive or prohibited activities, and/or conduct injurious to themselves or others shall be disciplined in accordance with their Individualized Education Programs (IEP), behavioral intervention plan, Title 22 Chapter 711 and relevant portions of Chapter 12 of the State Board of Education Regulations, IDEA 2004, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and any other applicable federal or state law.

Manifestation Determination

A manifestation determination must be conducted when a disciplinary change of placement occurs. Disciplinary change of placement occurs when a student with a disability, because of a violation of the school code of conduct, is removed from his/her current educational setting for: more than 10 school days consecutively; more than 15 school days cumulatively in a school year; when school days 11-15 constitute a pattern of exclusion; or an exclusion of even one school day for a student with an intellectual disability.

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

- A. If the conduct in question was caused by, or had a direct and substantial relationship to, the child's disability; or
- B. If the conduct in question was the direct result of Charter School's failure to implement the child's IEP.

If Charter School, the parent, and relevant members of the child's IEP Team determine that either of those conditions were met, the conduct must be determined to be a manifestation of the child's disability. If the IEP team answers "yes" to either question, and therefore determines that the behavior is a manifestation of the student's disability, the proposed disciplinary action is voided.

If Charter School, the parent, and relevant members of the child's IEP Team determine that the conduct in question was the direct result of Charter School's failure to implement the IEP, Charter School must take immediate action to remedy those deficiencies.

Anti-Bullying

Statement of intent

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our pupils so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school. If bullying

does occur, all pupils should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a TELLING school. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell a staff member.

What is bullying?

According to the Centers for Disease Control, the core elements of bullying include: unwanted aggressive behavior; observed or perceived power imbalance; and repetition of behaviors. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.

Examples of Bullying can include but are not limited to:

- Emotional: being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures) - Physical: pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Racist: racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual: unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Gendered: because of, or focusing on an individual's gender identity and/or expression
- Sexuality-based: because of, or focusing on the issue of sexual orientation
- Religious: on the basis of someone's religious beliefs and/or practices
- Body Image-Based: taunting based on someone's body's size and/or stature
- Verbal: name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumors, teasing
- Cyber and Mobile

Why is it important to respond to bullying?

Bullying hurts and no one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Pupils who bully need to learn different ways of behaving and interacting with their peers. Schools have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

Objectives of this policy

- All administrators, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils, and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All administrators, teaching, and non-teaching staff should know what the school policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All pupils and parents should know what the school policy is on bullying, and what they should do if a bullying issue arises.
- As a school we take bullying seriously and our students and parents should be assured that they will be supported and protected when bullying is reported.
- Bullying will not be tolerated.

Signs and symptoms

A child may indicate by signs or behavior that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

- Is frightened of walking to or from school
- Doesn't want to go on the school / public bus
- Begs to be driven to school
- Changes their usual routine
- Is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- Begins to be truant
- Becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- Starts stammering
- Attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- Cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- Feels ill in the morning
- Begins to do poorly in school work
- Comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- Has possessions which are damaged or "go missing"
- Asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- Has lunch or other monies continually "lost"
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises
- Comes home starving (money / lunch has been stolen)
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Is bullying other children or siblings
- Stops eating
- Is frightened to say what's wrong
- Gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- Is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- Is nervous & jumpy when a cyber message is received

These signs and behaviors could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

Prevention

We will use WCS methods for helping children to prevent bullying. As and when appropriate, these may include:

- Signing a behavior contract
- Writing stories or poems or drawing pictures about bullying which shows how bullying can hurt people
- Reading stories about bullying, having group, class, and all school meetings and presentations that talk about and deal with bullying
- Role plays that demonstrate bullying, and how to combat it, if one is the victim, or bystander - Discussions about bullying and how it not only impacts the individual but the whole school community
- Working with students who display bullying tendencies, and helping them understand how they hurt people and why they must stop.

Outcomes

- The bully (bullies) will be asked to genuinely apologize and to fix the situation.

Other interventions may be used and/or consequences may take place.

- In serious cases, suspension or even expulsion will be considered.
- If possible, the pupils will be reconciled.
- After the incident/incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.

Procedures

- Students or staff should report bullying to the correct person: Students to any staff members whom they feel comfortable talking to – staff members to administrators (Directors and CEO). - All verified cases of bullying will be recorded by staff.
- The bullying behavior or threats of bullying must be investigated with appropriate interventions used to deal with bullying behaviors.
- In serious cases or cases where there seems to be a pattern, parents will be informed and will be asked to come in for a meeting to discuss the problem.
- An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behavior through peer mediation, meetings with the counselor, self reflection, parent meetings, and or/outside counseling, and if necessary school discipline, including suspension and as a last measure, expulsion.
- If necessary and appropriate, police will be consulted.

Anti-Harassment Policy

The Administration of Wissahickon Charter School is committed to maintaining an academic and work environment that is free of discrimination. In keeping with this commitment, the WCS will not tolerate harassment of any of its employees and/or students by anyone, including any administrator, supervisor, co-worker, student, teacher, vendor, or visitor of WCS.

Harassment consists of unwelcome conduct, whether verbal, physical, or visual, that is based upon a person's protected status, such as sex, gender identity, color, race, ancestry, religion, national origin, age, physical or mental handicap/disability, medical condition, marital status, veteran status, citizenship status, or other characteristic protected by Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, or other applicable federal and state laws and regulations. WCS will not tolerate harassing conduct that affects tangible job benefits, interferes unreasonably with a person's work performance or academic performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment or academic environment.

Sexual harassment deserves special mention. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other physical, verbal, or visual conduct based on sex constitute sexual harassment when (1) submission to the conduct is an explicit or implicit term or condition of employment or academic performance, (2) submission to or rejection of the conduct is used as the basis for an employment or academic decision, or (3) the conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with a person's work performance or academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment or academic environment. Sexual harassment may include explicit sexual

propositions, sexual innuendo, suggestive comments, sexually oriented “kidding” or “teasing,” “practical jokes,” jokes about gender-specific traits, foul or obscene language or gestures, displays of foul or obscene printed or visual material, and physical contact such as patting, pinching, or brushing against another’s body.

All WCS employees and students are responsible to help assure that harassment is avoided. If you feel that you have experienced, witnessed or have information regarding possible harassment, you should notify the CEO. Wissahickon Charter School prohibits retaliation against anyone who, in good faith, reports possible harassment, makes a harassment complaint, cooperates in a harassment complaint investigation or any related proceeding.

WCS’s policy is to investigate all harassment complaints promptly and thoroughly and in compliance with Title IX. All Code of Conduct rules along with local, state, and federal laws apply. If an investigation confirms that harassment has occurred, the CEO will take corrective action, including, but not limited to appropriate disciplinary action. Disciplinary action may include disciplinary proceedings and/or termination of employment. When the harassment is student to student, the school will use its Code of Conduct as a guide for punitive measures after a Title IX process has been followed. This holds true for student to adult community member harassment as well. To the fullest extent practicable, WCS will keep complaints and the terms of their resolution confidential. Law enforcement will be contacted if there is an allegation of criminal misconduct.

For cases that specifically focus solely on issues of sex, gender, sexual preference, or gender identity, please refer below to our Appendix section of the Handbook.

Rights and Responsibilities: Parent & School Compact

The school and community of Wissahickon Charter School believe that it is only through the cooperation of the parents and school that children develop their full potential. In light of this, the school and parents will work cooperatively to provide for the successful education of their children as follows:

The PARENT/GUARDIAN agrees to:

- Become involved in developing, implementing, evaluating and revising the school/parent-involvement policy.
- Use or ask for assistance that Wissahickon provides on child development and teaching and learning methods as needed.
- Work with our child/children on their school assignments and to:
 - Ask them what they learned about that day
 - Encourage them to share their successes and their frustration
 - Provide assistance if necessary
 - Encourage them to read, write, and practice their work daily
- Monitor our child/children’s:

- Attendance at school
- Homework
- Television watching
- Computer and video game usage
- Share the responsibility for improved student achievement by:
 - Documenting daily reading with their child
 - Providing a quiet place for homework
 - Setting aside a specific time for homework
 - Assisting with homework as necessary
 - Encouraging positive attitudes toward school
 - Requiring regular school attendance
 - Giving the child the necessary supplies to do school work
- Communicate with our child/children's teachers about their educational needs.
- Ask parents and parent groups to provide information from the school on what type of training or assistance they would like and/or need to help them be more effective with their child/children in the educational process.
- Provide a healthy and safe environment.
- Volunteer in school and to attend school meetings.
- Encourage students to find activities that promote citizenship, work ethic and healthy lifestyles.
- Respect cultural, racial and ethnic differences.

The STUDENT agrees to:

- Encourage parents to become a part of the student's educational experience.
- Question, in the appropriate way and at the appropriate time, those parts of learning that are not understood.
- Take home materials and information needed to complete all assignments.
- Complete homework in a thorough, legible and timely manner.
- Return homework on time.
- Respect the personal rights and property of others.
- Respect cultural, racial and ethnic differences.
- Be aware of all rules and regulations for student behavior and conduct themselves in accordance with them. Students should assume that, until a rule is waived, altered or repealed in writing, it is in effect.
- Volunteer information in matters relating to the health, safety and welfare of the school community and the protection of school property.

- Dress and groom to meet standards of safety and health, and not to cause substantial disruption to the educational processes.
- Assist Wissahickon Charter School staff in operating a safe school for the students enrolled therein.
- Comply with federal, state and local laws.
- Exercise proper care when using public facilities and equipment.
- Attend school daily and be on time at all classes and other school functions.
- Make up work when absent from school.
- Report accurately in student media.
- Not use obscene language in student media or on school premises.

Parent Rights & Responsibilities

1. Enrollment

- Right*** - Parents have the right to enroll their children in Wissahickon Charter School, regardless of their district of residence, within the enrollment guidelines established by the Board of Trustees. Enrollment may not be denied on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, national origin, ancestry, physical handicap or marital status.
- Responsibility*** - Parents have the responsibility to ensure that their children who are enrolled at Wissahickon Charter School attend school regularly, on time, and for the entire school day in accordance with state law and the policies set forth by the Board of Trustees.

2. Progress

- Right*** - Parents have the right to receive regular official reports of their children's academic progress, through both written and oral communication.
- Responsibility*** - Parents have the responsibility to assist Wissahickon Charter School and their children in achieving their academic potential, including planning a time and place for completing homework, ensuring the completion of assignments that are missed, and providing the necessary supervision while their children complete assignments. In addition, parents have the responsibility to attend and participate in all parent-teacher conferences.

3. Language Preference

- Right*** - Parents have the right to receive any oral and written communication Wissahickon Charter School in the language used by the family in the home. This right includes the right to have a translator present at any disciplinary proceedings commenced against their child.
- Responsibility*** - Parents have the responsibility to inform Wissahickon Charter School when they need to receive oral and written communication in a language other than English. This responsibility includes the responsibility to notify Wissahickon Charter School if a translator will be necessary at any disciplinary proceedings commenced against their child.

4. Enforcement

- a. **Right** - Parents have the right to ensure that the provisions of this Code of Conduct are applied reasonably and fairly with respect to their children.
- b. **Responsibility** - Parents have a responsibility to understand the rules set forth in this Code of Conduct and to discuss expected behavior with their children, as well as to inform the Administration and/or Board of Trustees of their concerns regarding the application of this Code of Conduct to their children in a calm and reasoned manner.

5. Education

- a. **Right** - Students have the right to a public education, unimpaired on account of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, national origin, ancestry, physical handicap or marital status.
- b. **Responsibility** - Students have the responsibility to avoid actions or activities that interfere with other students' rights to an unimpaired public education.

6. Learning Environment

- a. **Right** - Students have the right to an orderly school and classroom environment that will promote learning for all students.
- b. **Responsibility** - Students have the responsibility to ensure that their actions do not disrupt the school or classroom environment or school activities.

7. Expression

- a. **Right** - Students have the right to express themselves in speech, writing and/or expression within the boundaries defined by federal and state law, and the policies established by Wissahickon Charter School. The right of public school students to freedom of speech is guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Students have the right to express themselves unless the expression materially and substantially interferes with the educational process, threatens serious harm to the school or community, encourages unlawful activity or interferes with another individual's rights.
- b. **Responsibility** - Students have the responsibility to ensure that their expression does not disrupt the educational process, present health or safety hazards, damage public property, infringe on the rights of others, or violate federal or state law, or the policies established by Wissahickon Charter School.

8. Possession and Distribution of Literature

- a. **Right** - Students may use publications, handbills, announcements, assemblies, group meetings, buttons, armbands, and any other means of common communication, provided that the use of public school communications facilities shall be in accordance with the regulations of the Wissahickon Charter School.
- b. **Responsibility** - Students have the responsibility to be aware of the feelings and opinions of others and to give others a fair opportunity to express their views. Students have the

responsibility to obey laws governing libel and obscenity and to be aware of the full meaning of their expression. Students have the responsibility to ensure that the literature they possess or distribute does not infringe upon the rights of others, and does not contain offensive language of a religious, racial or ethnic nature, or language that may be construed as harassing or obscene. Identification of the individual student or at least one responsible person in a student group is required on posted or distributed materials. Students must submit to the Administration for prior approval a copy of materials to be displayed, posted or distributed on school property. School officials may require students to submit for prior approval a copy of materials to be displayed, posted or distributed on school property.

i. Bulletin boards must conform to the following:

1. The Administration may restrict the use of certain bulletin boards.
2. Designated bulletin board space will be provided for the use of students or student organizations.
3. The Administration requires that notices or other communications be officially dated before posting, and that the materials be removed after a prescribed reasonable time to assure full access to the bulletin boards.

ii. School newspapers and publications must conform to the following:

1. Students have a right and are as free as editors of other newspapers to report the news and to editorialize within the provisions in paragraphs (4) and (5).
2. School officials shall supervise student newspapers published with school equipment, remove obscene or libelous material and edit other material that would cause a substantial disruption or interference with school activities.
3. School officials may not censor or restrict material simply because it is critical of the school or its administration.
4. Prior approval procedures regarding copy for school newspapers must identify the individual to whom the material is to be submitted and establish a limitation on the time required to make a decision. If the prescribed time for approval lapses without a decision, the material shall be considered authorized for distribution.
5. Students who are not members of the newspaper staff shall have access to its pages. Written criteria for submission of material by non-staff members shall be developed and distributed to all students.

iii. The wearing of buttons, badges or armbands shall be permitted as another form of expression within the restrictions of federal and state laws.

iv. School officials may set forth the time and place of distribution of materials so that distribution would not materially or substantially interfere with the requirements of appropriate discipline in the operation of the school.

v. A proper time and place set for distribution is one that would give the students the opportunity to reach fellow students. The place of the activity may be restricted to permit the normal flow of traffic within the school and exterior doors.

9. Religion

- a. **Right** – Students have the right to their own beliefs and the exercise of those beliefs to the extent that the exercise of those beliefs is consistent with state and federal laws.
- b. **Responsibility** – Students have the responsibility to ensure that the exercise of religious

freedom does not infringe upon the Constitutional rights and freedom of religious expression of others.

10. Search and Seizure

- a. *Right*** – Students have the right to be free from unlawful searches and seizures of their personal property and possessions.
 - i.** The Administration will adopt reasonable procedures regarding student searches. The School shall notify students and their parents/guardians of the procedures regarding student searches.
 - ii.** Illegal or prohibited materials seized during a student search may be used as evidence against the student in a school disciplinary proceeding.
 - iii.** Prior to a locker search, students shall be notified and given an opportunity to be present. When school authorities have a reasonable suspicion that the locker contains material that pose a threat to the health, welfare or safety of the students in the school, student lockers may be searched without prior warning.
 - iv.** When school authorities have reasonable suspicion that materials that pose a threat to the health, welfare or safety of students or the school community are in the possession of a student or contained within a student's belongings, school authorities may search the student's person and/or belongings to the extent that such a search is permitted by applicable state and federal laws.
- b. *Responsibility*** – Students have the responsibility to not possess materials, objects, implements and/or instruments that are prohibited by federal, state and/or local law or that may be disruptive or otherwise in violation of Wissahickon Charter School's Rules.

11. Peaceful Assembly

- a. *Right*** – Students have the right to peaceful assembly.
- b. *Responsibility*** – Students have the responsibility to secure approval for use of school facilities for assembly; to discuss with an administrator the appropriateness of the facility for the function; and to ensure that assembly does not disrupt the educational process. Lack of adequate supervision shall be grounds for disapproval of the assembly.

12. Transportation

- a. *Right*** – Students who live outside of 1.5 miles of each campus and are in first through sixth grades have a right to safe and orderly transportation to and from school on a school bus. Seventh and eighth graders have the right to receive passes for public transportation to travel to and from school.
- b. *Responsibility*** – Students have the responsibility to ensure that their conduct contributes to a safe and orderly atmosphere; to refrain from conduct which may cause a hazard to themselves, their fellow students, or to the public; and to refrain from violating federal, state and/or local laws, or school policy regarding transportation. Students who fail to fulfill their responsibility may relinquish their right to transportation.

Grievance Policy

At WCS we are proud of the positive relationships that we have with families and caregivers. Throughout

the year there may be times where parents feel like they have concerns that need to be addressed. The school also has an obligation to protect its personnel from unnecessary harassment. It is the intent of this policy to provide an impartial means of seeking appropriate remedies.

When the issue is academic in nature, the parent **must** speak with the teacher first (school leadership will always direct families back to the teacher), if there is no success between the teacher and parent, the parent should request, **in writing**, a meeting with the Principal. They will have one week's time to address the concerns presented by the parent. The parent has the right to ask to meet with the **CEO** if the parent still feels like the concerns weren't addressed. The CEO must **receive** the concern in writing, and will respond within **10 school days** to the parent, and determine next steps.

Parents also have the right to address the Board of Trustees. Concerns **must** be submitted in writing and addressed to the Board Chair in order to receive a response. The Board Chair will respond to the concerns in writing after having time to review the issue. The person may email the concern to e.holland@wissahickoncharter.org or drop off a paper copy to the front desk. Please allow at least **one week** for the Chair to respond.

All Board Meetings of the Wissahickon Charter School are open to the public and all are welcome. Please note that Board Meeting dates are highlighted at the front of this document. Anyone wishing to address the Board must show up at the start of the meeting and make their intention known to the Board Chair or the person presiding over the meeting. That person will be given three minutes to address the board at some point in the meeting as decided by the chair, however, there is no expectation that the Board will respond directly. To ensure a response, the person must follow the appropriate Board procedure described above. If the person wants to make their statement a part of the board minutes, they must also submit that statement electronically to the Board Chair or the person presiding.

While we encourage parents of students to communicate with school administration if they have concerns, they, like any other members of the public, may address and request a response from the Board using the methods noted above.

Health & Wellness

Crisis Intervention

Any suggestion, demonstration or communication of an intention to commit suicide or to kill someone must be taken seriously. The school recognizes that self-destructive behavior and suicide occur among children and adolescents. Students that experience depression, and other mental health issues associated with depression, pose a serious threat to themselves and others. If a student threatens to harm, kill, maim themselves or to inflict similar harm on others, we will suggest that the child be taken to a crisis center. When a student makes comments that they are considering or planning to harm themselves, another community member, or the school in general, WCS will contact outside agencies such as a crisis team or local police. If there is immediate danger, Wissahickon reserves the right to call a crisis center to come to the school to intervene or to call local law enforcement for support.

Food & Beverages

WCS believes that a healthy diet can help students in all aspects of life (physical, mental, social,

emotional, academic, behavioral, and more). We serve a free healthy breakfast and lunch daily. Students are also welcome to bring lunch to school. Candy and soda are not allowed at school. The Front Office does not accept lunches dropped off by parents. If your child does not come into the cafeteria with their lunch already, then a nutritional free lunch will be provided to them.

Breakfast and lunch are provided daily by Whitsons Culinary Group. The program fits with the school's environmental mission, offering whole fruits, whole grains, less processed foods, and less wasteful packaging. Breakfast and lunch are offered to all students free of charge. We encourage families to take advantage of the breakfast and lunch menu. If you need any assistance, contact the Food Services Coordinator/Operations Assistant.

If your child has food allergies, please send the medical letter to the school nurse. Due to such allergies, WCS has a no sharing food policy. Students are not allowed to share their food or snacks with anyone.

Nutrition Guidelines for Sold Smart Snacks (Fundraising)

Competitive foods (Smart Snacks) available for sale during the school day will meet or exceed the established federal nutrition standards (USDA Smart Snacks in School). These standards will apply in all locations and through all services where foods and beverages are sold to students.

Competitive foods are defined as foods and beverages offered or sold to students on school campus during the school day, which are not part of the reimbursable school breakfast or lunch. Sold refers to the exchange of money/voucher to purchase food/beverage items from the school store or during fundraisers. For the purpose of this definition, school campus will include all areas of the property under jurisdiction of the school that are accessible to students during the school day. School day means the period from midnight before school begins until thirty (30) minutes after the end of the official school day.

Foods and beverages sold at school-sponsored events outside the school day, such as athletic events and dances, shall offer healthy alternatives in addition to more traditional fare.

Fundraising activities held during the school day involving the sale of competitive foods shall be limited to foods that meet the Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards, unless an exemption is approved by the Director of Operations or Food Service Coordinator. Wissahickon Charter School may allow a limited number of exempt fundraisers as permitted by the Pennsylvania Department of Education each school year, up to five (5) exempt fundraisers in elementary and middle school buildings. Exempt fundraisers are fundraisers in which foods are available for sale to students that do not meet the Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards. Exempt fundraisers are not allowed to be held in areas whilst meals are being served, fundraisers cannot exceed 5 consecutive school days, and can raise money for only one fund per fundraiser. All exempt fundraising records must be kept on file for four (4) years and be available upon request.

Fundraisers selling foods that are intended to be consumed outside the school day are not limited under the Federal policy. Such as the sale of frozen pizza, cookie dough and other items pre-ordered and distributed in a precooked state or in bulk quantities (multiple servings in a package) for consumption at home.

Nutrition Guidelines for Non-Sold Smart Snacks (Classroom Parties & Celebrations)

Non-sold competitive foods available to students, which may include but are not limited to foods and beverages offered at classroom parties and celebrations, or as shared classroom snacks, shall meet or exceed the standards established by Wissahickon Charter School.

Foods and beverages will not be used as a reward for classroom academic performance or good behavior unless the reward is an activity that promotes a positive nutrition message (e.g., guest chef, field trip to a farm or farmers market, etc.).

Classroom parties/celebrations with food/beverages will be limited to no more than one (1) per month per classroom. Parties/celebrations shall include foods or beverages that meet established nutrition standards. Parents/Guardians will be informed through newsletters or other efficient classroom communication methods what foods/beverages should be brought in when requested for scheduled parties.

Wissahickon Charter School will provide a [WCS Smart Snack approved list](#) of suggested ideas for healthy food and beverage alternatives to parents/guardians and staff, which will be available via classroom newsletters, posted notices and/or other efficient communication methods.

Illness

It is the responsibility of the parent and/or guardian to ensure that a child attends school in good health and prepared to learn. Lingering illnesses should be treated by a doctor.

If a child becomes ill during the school day, they will report to the nurse's office and be given attention. ***Please advise your children that they should not personally call home if they feel ill but should go to the main office or the nurse's office.***

If the child must be sent home, the parent or guardian will be called and is expected to come to school to pick up the sick child. ***It is imperative that emergency contacts are kept up-to-date so that a responsible adult can be reached at all times.***

Please contact the school nurse at 267-338-1020 (Fernhill) or 267-774-4370 (Awbury) if there are any changes in your child's health that must be addressed.

Immunizations

All pupils must be completely immunized or exempted before admission to any public, parochial, or private school in Pennsylvania. This is required by the Pennsylvania Department of Health, the Philadelphia County Board of Health, and the Wissahickon Charter School.

The purpose of requiring immunization is to protect pupils from preventable communicable diseases and their medical and educational complications.

Disposition of Immunization Records

When transferring from one school to another, parents should request the Certificate of Immunization from the current school and take it to the new school. No pupil will be admitted to a new school without the certificate. The Certificate of Immunization shall follow the pupil when they transfers, graduates, withdraws, or otherwise leaves WCS.

Required Physical & Dental Exams

Students in Kindergarten, 1st, 3rd, 6th, and 7th grades must undergo Physical and Dental Exams as mandated by PA State Health Laws. If your child's exams are not on record, the School Nurse contacted you via letter. Prompt submission of these exams is crucial. If required grade physical and dental exams are not submitted to the school immediately students will not be allowed to participate in any non academic activities. This includes, but not limited to, recess, school dances, assemblies and field trips.

CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH DIVISION OF DISEASE CONTROL

SUMMARY: PHILADELPHIA IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS FOR *SCHOOL ENTRY*

Grade	Vaccines	Requirements
All	Diphtheria, Tetanus, and Acellular Pertussis (DTap)	4 Doses: at least one on/after 4th birthday*
	Polio (IPV)	4 Doses: 4th dose on or after 4th birthday and at least 6 months after previous dose given
	Meales, Mumps & Rubella (MMR)	2 Doses

	Hepatitis B (HepB)	3 Doses
	Chickenpox (Varicella)	2 Doses: on after 1st birthday or documentation of chickenpox immunity proven by laboratory testing or a written statement of prior chickenpox disease from a healthcare provider**
7***	Tetanus, Diphtheria and Acellular Pertussis (Tdap)	1 Dose: on the first day of 7th grade
	Meningococcal conjugate	1 Dose: on the first day of 7th grade***

References

Requirements from The Pennsylvania Code- Subchapter C. IMMUNIZATION 23.81, amended May 28, 2010, effective August 1, 2011, and from the Philadelphia Board of Health Regulations Governing the Health of Newborns, Children and Adolescents, published 2009.

*Only 3 doses of Td-containing vaccine are necessary if series is started on/after 7th birthday, if at least one dose is given as Tdap.

*On the first day of school, unless the child has a medical or religious/philosophical exemption, a child must have had at least one dose of the above vaccinations or risk exclusion. If a child does not have all of the doses listed above, needs additional doses, and the next dose is medically appropriate, the child must receive the dose within the first five days of school or risk exclusion. If the next dose is not the final dose of the series, the child must provide a medical plan (red and white card) within the first five days of school for obtaining the required immunizations or risk exclusion.

If a child does not have all of the doses listed above, needs additional doses, and the next dose is not medically appropriate, the parent/guardian must provide a medical plan (red and white card) within the first five days of school for obtaining the required immunizations or risk exclusion.

**Or documentation of a history of chickenpox immunity proven by laboratory testing or a written statement of history of chickenpox disease from a parent, guardian or physician.

***On the first day of 7th grade, unless the child has a medical or religious/philosophical exemption, a child must have had the above vaccines or risk exclusion.

There are two exemptions:

1. Religious Exemption – Pupils need not be immunized if the parent or guardian objects in writing to the immunization on religious/ethical grounds.
2. Medical Exemption – Pupils need not be immunized if a physician or their designee provides a written statement that immunization may be detrimental to the health of the child. When the physician determines that immunization is no longer detrimental to the health of the child, the medical exemption ceases to be valid and the child must be immunized.

In the event of an outbreak of a disease for which the child is exempt from the requirement to be immunized, that child will be excluded from school until a competent medical authority determines that the child may return, or until the child is appropriately immunized.

Medications

Children are not permitted to bring any medication to school or to self-administer any kind of medication. Should the occasion arise that a student must take medication during the school day, the medication must be prescribed by a physician and arrangements must be made through the nurse's office. The physician must send written orders that include the diagnosis, dosage, and the time to administer the medication during the school day. All medications and prescriptions are to be brought to the nurse in their original bottles and kept in the health office. Over-the-counter drugs – including cough medicine, aspirin, etc.—must also be accompanied by a physician's note.

Nurse's Office

The school nurse handles a variety of student concerns each day and maintains medical records on each student. Please inform the nurse of any special health problems. When the nurse is not in school, the Director of School Operations (or their designee), who has received proper training by the Student Health Services provider (MACCS), may administer emergency medication under the guidelines established by the Pennsylvania Health Services Commission.

Safety

Building Security & Visitors Policy

Our school building is equipped with security cameras to ensure the safety of all.

In order to maintain a safe and secure environment for all children and to protect valuable instructional time, all visitors must report directly to the office. **Parents can only come into the building if they have an appointment or if they have business in the building. All parents must be escorted at all times by a WCS staff member.** All parents, guardians, visitors and volunteers are required to sign in and out at the office. All visitors or non-school personnel must wear a badge or name tag visible to others.

WCS will ban parents, guardians, visitors and volunteers from campus for limited periods of time for violence, aggression, inappropriate language, etc.

No one is permitted in the halls, in the lunchroom, in classrooms, or in the playground without prior

authorization from the office or a staff member. **The school does not offer a public bathroom.**

Parents will no longer be allowed to drop off lunch for their students. If a student does not come to school with their lunch, a free nutritious lunch will be provided by the school.

As of January of 2016, all parent volunteers who volunteer repeatedly and are solely responsible for a group of students must have PA Child Abuse and Criminal Record Checks on file at the school. These clearances will be held in the school's main office and as otherwise required by law.

Emergency Drills

Students will participate in one fire drill per month. By law, fire drills are required, and are important to ensure the safety of students and staff.

- It is essential that when the signal is given, everyone responds promptly and clears the building as quickly as possible by the prescribed route which is posted in each classroom and office.
- Silence is always observed during the fire drill.
- Classes assemble at the predetermined location.
- Students who are not in the classroom when the alarm is sounded will leave by the nearest exit and be checked in by the staff member they're with.
- Noncompliance with these regulations is a serious infraction and will result in disciplinary action.

Unannounced drills are to prepare students and staff for any emergency that may arise that would require the building to be evacuated.

There will also be two Violent Critical Incident drills per year. WCS uses [ALICE](#) to prepare for Violent Critical Incidents such as active shooters. The mission of ALICE is to prepare individuals for violent critical incidents such that they are empowered to make decisions that will improve the chance of survival.

Lockers

Each middle school student may be assigned a locker and if so, will be responsible for that locker only. Such lockers, shelves or cabinets remain the property of Wissahickon Charter School at all times. Any student tampering with a locker other than his/her own is subject to serious disciplinary action. A student is never permitted to trade lockers with another student, nor are they permitted to occupy an unused locker. Lockers may be used before class in the morning, at the teachers' discretion and after the students' last class. Unfortunately, lockers are not absolutely safe and the following suggestions should be heeded:

- Valuable items should not be stored in them.
- Make sure the locker doors are completely shut.
- Jackets and coats should be marked discreetly so they can be identified.

Mandated Reporting

It is the policy of the Wissahickon Charter School that all of its employees are to be aware of, and comply with, the Child Protective Services Law of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. This law makes it mandatory for WCS school employees to report suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect and must file a report with the Department of Human Services. Compliance with the laws of Pennsylvania and the policies of WCS will serve to protect everyone concerned.

Personal Property

Parents are requested to place the name of their child clearly on all personal items such as coats, jackets, book bags, lunch boxes, etc. Please encourage your child to be responsible for looking for and finding lost items. The Lost and Found Box is located across from the main office. If a student's property is damaged by another student, it is left to the families to resolve the issue. WCS assumes no responsibility for damage to personal property.

Care should be taken when you approve of your child bringing valuable or irreplaceable items to school. The school cannot be responsible for items that are lost, damaged, or otherwise missing. Also, please review the dress code located in this handbook.

Items not permitted:

- Electronic games, pagers, walkman, radios, CD players, I-pods, and MP3 players are not permitted in the school. Headphones, Air Pods, and other ear buds or listening devices are not permitted in the school. We recognize that many of these items are used by students as they ride the school bus to and from school. **Please make sure your child understands that the device must be put away as soon as they walk through the school doors and the device can't be seen or heard.** *If the device is seen or heard, it will be confiscated by the adult present and locked in a secure place. Once confiscated, it may only be retrieved by a parent or adult designated representative, and make-up time will be required by the student.*
- Dangerous items/weapons are not permitted in school such as: razors, pen knives, hunting knives, matches, pointed objects, guns, mace, pepper spray, etc. (Knives should not be sent in school lunch containers.)
- Students may not bring toy guns or other toy weapons to school.
- Students may not bring items to school for the purpose of selling to students or teachers. Trading of pogs, baseball cards, slime, candy or similar materials on school property is not permitted. No fundraising or product sales are permitted in school unless authorized by the CEO.
- Any item not permitted in school will be confiscated and only returned to a parent. If the item is deemed dangerous, and the authorities are called, the item will be turned over to the authorities. Items that are not permitted in school, and are confiscated on more than one occasion, will not be returned until the end of the trimester.

Search & Seizure

The Board of Trustees acknowledges the need for safe in-school storage of books, clothing, school materials and other personal property. Lockers, shelves or cabinets may be provided. The Board of Trustees reserves the right to authorize the Administration or designee to inspect a student's storage space when such has a reasonable suspicion to believe that the storage space is improperly used for the storage of contraband, a substance or object the possession of which is illegal or any material which poses a hazard to the safety, sanitation and good order of the school.

A student's person and possessions may be searched by the Administration provided that the individual has reasonable grounds to suspect that the search will turn up evidence that the student had violated or is violating either the law or the rules of the school.

Any illegal or prohibited materials seized during a student search may be used as evidence against the student in a school disciplinary hearing or proceeding and may be turned over to law enforcement authorities.

12.14. Searches

- A. The governing board of every school entity shall adopt reasonable policies and procedures regarding student searches. The local education agency shall notify students and their parents or guardians of the policies and procedures regarding student searches.
- B. Illegal or prohibited materials seized during a student search may be used as evidence against the student in a school disciplinary proceeding.
- C. Prior to a locker search, students shall be notified and given an opportunity to be present. When school authorities have a reasonable suspicion that the locker contains materials that pose a threat to the health, welfare or safety of students in the school, student lockers may be searched without prior warning.

Weapon Incident Notification

In accordance with state law, WCS will notify parents/guardians and staff of any incident involving possession of a weapon on school property, at a school-sponsored activity, or on school-provided transportation. Notifications will be made within 24 hours, when possible, using SchoolStatus, to reach families and staff, even if no threat is determined. Notifications may be limited to the specific WCS campus or both campuses, as applicable.

Staff Safety Policy

At WCS, safety is one of our top priorities, including the safety of our visitors, students, and staff. Staff members have the right to remove themselves from any hostile or unsafe situation. If a concern arises, staff will clearly communicate this verbally. Should the situation continue, staff may end the conversation or walk away to ensure safety. Prior to taking this action, staff will inform parents of the next steps. For example, a member of the Administrative team may follow up with a phone call or schedule a meeting at a

later time to address the concern appropriately. WCS will ban parents, guardians, visitors and volunteers from campus for limited periods of time for violence, aggression, inappropriate language, etc.

Student Information

Contact & Custody Information

Parent information forms were collected at registration before the beginning of the school year. These forms are our primary source of emergency information. For the well being of the students, it is important that the forms have been completed and returned to the school. Please notify the school office if you have changed your address, home or work telephone numbers, emergency contact persons, or any other pertinent information. It is important to have current information should an emergency arise. Please be sure to inform the person(s) you have selected as your emergency contact(s).

In addition, a copy of any Court order or agreement affecting the custodial rights of a parent should be filed with the school.

Failure to keep your child's school informed about your current address and telephone number may result in your not receiving notices of important academic, disciplinary and/or health information, and can result in the loss of your right to participate in important decisions.

Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

Access To and Release of Pupil Records

The WCS will provide parent access to the educational records of their child. The access rights of parents consist of:

- The right to inspect and review the contents of education records.
- The right to obtain one copy of the education records at no charge and additional copies, if requested, at a charge.
- The right to receive from school personnel an explanation and interpretation of the education records.
- The right to a hearing to challenge the contents of the education records.
- The right to bring an attorney or parent advocate to the review of education records. A parent seeking access to education records may make a request by telephone, in writing or in person to the CEO or designee. However, prior to reviewing and inspecting education records, a parent must sign an official request form. Every attempt will be made to expedite delivery of records to parents as soon as possible, but in every case access to education records will be granted within forty-five days of the receipt of the written request as required by law.

After examining their child's educational record, parents may request a hearing to challenge the contents of the record. The purpose of the hearing is to establish the accuracy of the record. At an informal meeting between the parents and the CEO or designee, an attempt will be made to answer any questions raised by the parents. If the questions are not resolved, a formal meeting is conducted in the

office of the CEO.

No education record may be released to a third party without the consent of the parents. However, education records may be released, without the consent of the parent, to other school personnel in the school, or to another school system to which a student transfers. Also, in compliance with a judicial order or subpoena, education records may be released without the consent of parents, provided the parents are notified in advance.

Pupil directory information, which includes: the pupil's name; address; telephone number; date; and place of birth; grade level; photographic likeness; major field of study; dates of attendance; degrees and awards received; participation in officially recognized activities and sports; the most recent school attended by the student; and the weight and height of members of the athletic teams, may be released without the consent of parents unless the school is notified annually by the parents not to release the information without their prior consent.

State law provides that the following additional conditions will apply regarding the educational records of special needs students:

- If you ask to see your child's records you must be allowed to do so prior to a conference regarding an individualized education program and prior to a hearing regarding the identification, evaluation, or placement of your child.
- You may name another person to look at your child's records if you wish to have their advice.
- You may ask for a list of the types and locations of the records kept about your child.
- The school will keep Special Education records for five years. You will be sent a notice by mail shortly before the records would be destroyed and advised of your right to obtain them for your own or the student's use. It is your responsibility to provide the school with your current address so that you will receive this notification.

McKinney-Vento Homelessness Education Assistance Act Information

A. Homeless Liaison

A designated member of the counseling team from either campus will serve as the designated homeless liaison for Wissahickon Charter School as an LEA. In addition, a counselor at the campus not served by the designated homeless liaison for the LEA will serve as the homeless liaison for that specific campus. The duties of the Homeless Liaison are as follows:

- Coordinates and collaborates with ECYEH regional and site coordinators.
- Collaborates with appropriate staff to determine eligibility for McKinney-Vento mandated services.
- Identifies students experiencing homelessness including children under age 5 and school-age children.
- Collaborates with school staff to develop interventions for students identified as homeless and develops individualized service plans as appropriate.

- Maintains necessary records and prepares related reports while ensuring confidentiality for the purpose of documenting students experiencing homelessness.
- Ensures the complete and accurate collection and submission of LEA homeless data to PIMS and ECYEH.
- Acts as a resource to school-based administrators, guidance counselors, teachers, and health services personnel regarding students experiencing homelessness, interpretation of homeless/school attendance policies and laws, and record-keeping requirements.
- Models nondiscriminatory practices in all activities.
- Obtains resources necessary to promote students' educational readiness, regular attendance and academic success.
- Attends state and regional meetings and conferences to ensure full knowledge of McKinney-Vento requirements.
- Collaborates with all levels of school and district administration and staff (e.g. building liaisons, human resources, special education, transportation, principals, psychologists, registrars, nurses, secretaries, etc.) for the purpose of ensuring the development and implementation of students' individualized service plans.
- Conducts orientation/training for school staff regarding school policy/procedure as it relates to students experiencing homelessness and/or facilitates related orientation/training provided by the ECYEH regional/site coordinator/s.
- Interprets laws relating to homeless students for the purpose of advising administration, staff and parents regarding the rights of homeless students.
- Provides support and information (e.g. to parents, guardians, etc.) for the purpose of communicating the availability of services and activities.
- Serves as a liaison (e.g. with schools, homeless shelters/ facilities, social service agencies, court related services, police departments, etc.) to coordinate appropriate assistance for students experiencing homelessness.
- Meets with families and students experiencing homelessness to assess and prioritize needs and make linkages with district and community resources as appropriate.
- Coordinates with a variety of outside service providers and community agencies to meet students' needs and avoid duplication of services.
- Connects students experiencing homelessness with available tutoring, afterschool and summer programming to support academic success.
- Ensures that families, and children and youths experiencing homelessness receive early childhood educational services for which they are eligible, including Head Start, Early Intervention, and preschool.
- Ensures that families, and children and youths experiencing homelessness are referred to health care services, dental services, and other appropriate medical services. • Ensures that public notice of the educational rights of students experiencing homelessness is displayed in every school building, and in community locations as appropriate.

Homeless Liaison Contact Information

LEA (and Fernhill Campus): Aitiya Hobson (a.hobson@wissahickoncharter.org;
267-338-1020 ext. 3905)

Awbury Campus: Ally Rasp (a.rasp@wissahickoncharter.org; 267-774-4370) a. **The**

McKinney-Vento Definition of Homeless

Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (per Title IX, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act) defines *homeless* as follows:

- A. The term “homeless children and youths”–
- a. means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence (within the meaning of section 103(a)(1)); and
 - b. includes–
 - i. children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; or are abandoned in hospitals;*
 - ii. children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings (within the meaning of section 103(a)(2)(C));
 - iii. children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings;and
 - iv. migratory children (as such term is defined in section 1309 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965) who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (i) through (iii).
- B. Unaccompanied Youth
- a. An *unaccompanied youth* is defined in the McKinney-Vento Act as “a homeless child or youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.” (42 U.S.C. § 11434a(6)). This definition can be used to describe youth who are residing with a caregiver who is not a parent or guardian as well as youth who are living without the care of an adult. • An unaccompanied youth must fit the definitions of both homeless and unaccompanied in the McKinney-Vento Act to receive assistance under the provisions in the law. That is, an unaccompanied youth is a child or youth who is not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian *and* lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.
- a. Rights of Students Experiencing Homelessness

The McKinney-Vento Act requires schools to ensure students receive a free and suitable public education by removing barriers to school enrollment and full, basic, daily participation in school activities. This includes:

- Immediate enrollment
- Free school meals
- Help from school with any necessary enrollment documents

- Help from school setting up transportation service (if the student qualifies) • Help from school with getting basic uniform clothing
- Help from school with basic school supplies
- Help from school with any basic clothing needs
- Help from school with basic school graduation needs and expenses

Dispute Resolution Process

In the event of a dispute regarding the educational placement of homeless children and youths, Wissahickon Charter School follows procedures developed by the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

- Level 1- Dispute may be raised with the school, preferably by contacting the homeless liaison directly. While the dispute is pending, the student shall be admitted and allowed to attend school without delay.
- Level 2- If the student or family is dissatisfied with the school's handling of the dispute, they may file a complaint with regional McKinney-Vento coordinators at Intermediate Unit 26 (School District of Philadelphia). In the event a dispute cannot be resolved at the regional level, the dispute will be forwarded to the state coordinator for resolution.

Those procedures can be found in detail here:

<https://www.pa.gov/en/agencies/education/programs-and-services/instruction/elementary-and-secondary-education/homeless-education/dispute-resolution-process.html>

Links for Further Information

- Basic Education Circular- Education for Homeless Youth:
<https://www.pa.gov/en/agencies/education/resources/policies-acts-and-laws/basic-education-circulars-becs/us-code/education-for-homeless-youth.html>
- Board Policy 251:
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1sEmt2hND0XH21IaUptWOgDi8QwcLFvN-/view?usp=sharing>

Use of Student Images

Throughout the school year, students will be involved in activities or projects that may be newsworthy. We enjoy publicizing the good things that happen at our school. In these cases, the children's work and/or pictures and names may be published in one of the local papers. In addition, children's work and/or pictures may also appear on the Internet along with their first names. If you would not like your child seen in WCS publications or on WCS social media, please make your child's teacher and the main office aware.

Technology

Student Equipment Policy

Subject to the terms of this Agreement, Wissahickon Charter School (hereinafter referred to as WCS)

will allow its students to use a WCS-owned iPad (grades K-8), (which, together with installed software, peripherals and attachments make up the “Equipment”) at the student’s home for purposes of participating in learning at school and at home through the WCS’s learning management system as required by the WCS Education Plan.

1. WCS owns the Equipment and through this Agreement shall permit its use by all of the students listed below.
2. Students agree to read, comply, and accept the terms and conditions of the WCS’s Acceptable Use of Internet, Computers and Network Resources (AUP), and the AUP’s Administrative Regulations.
3. Students’ parents agree to read, comply and accept the terms and conditions of WCS’s Standards for Proper iPad Care & 1:1 Device Program Policy & Guidelines.
4. The Student agrees to participate in all assigned learning activities both in school and at home via the WCS Learning Management System as directed by the WCS Educational Plan, and agrees that this is the sole purpose for which the WCS gives Student the use of this Equipment.
5. Students and Student’s parents/guardians (collectively “Student’s family”) agree that they shall each and together be responsible for the security, care, custody, and control of the Equipment at all times. Lost/stolen or damaged Equipment must be reported to directly to the Technology Department immediately via email at helpis@wissahickoncharter.org.
 - a. Where Student claims theft of Equipment, Student shall also report the theft to the police or if the theft took place on school property, to the appropriate Principal who will report to the police. Students shall cooperate with the police in any subsequent investigation.
 - b. The cost of Equipment stolen, damaged or lost through Student’s misuse, neglect or negligence may be paid by Student and Student’s family, up to replacement cost for the stolen, damaged or lost Equipment. Where appropriate, Student or Student’s family may choose to file a claim with the family’s homeowner’s/renter’s insurance and pay only the applicable deductibles.
6. Any Student who violates this Agreement or utilizes the Equipment for a purpose that violates the AUP or any other WCS policy will be subject to discipline, where applicable.
7. Users shall have no expectation of privacy when using WCS’s resources and devices such as the Equipment, and the Equipment is subject to search upon a reasonable belief that evidence of a crime or violation of any WCS policy may be found there. Further, the Technology Department will monitor and enforce the AUP regarding the following:

- a. Applications and other software (“Apps”) installed on WCS owned devices are subject to review, and the Technology Department will remove any unauthorized Apps.
 - b. Internet access on the Equipment will utilize WCS’s filtering software. Any attempt by Student to circumvent the WCS’s internet filters will be a violation of this Agreement and the WCS AUP.
 - c. Authorized Apps on the Equipment are the property of or licensed to WCS and shall not be transferred to personally owned devices under any circumstances.
 - d. The WCS’s Technology Department shall be solely responsible for the installation of permitted Apps and the repair of damaged or malfunctioning Equipment. Students shall not install or permit the installation of unauthorized Apps on WCS owned devices or attempt to repair any damaged or malfunctioning Equipment.
 - e. The WCS assumes no liability for the preservation of unauthorized Apps installed or data stored on the Equipment. If a device is lost or stolen, or if the WCS’s Technology Department finds unauthorized or modified Apps on the Equipment, WCS may wipe/erase all data, Apps, and settings on the Equipment without regard for the loss of data.
8. Upon WCS’s demand for the return of the Equipment or at the point that Student is no longer enrolled in WCS, whichever is earlier, Student shall surrender the Equipment together with all peripherals and attachments to WCS technology department. If the Student fails to return all the Equipment, peripherals and attachments as required, the Student’s family agrees to pay the fair market value of the unreturned items. Upon surrender of the Equipment for re-issue to another user, the Technology Department will fully erase the Equipment and restore it to all factory settings which will destroy all data on the Equipment.
9. Disclaimer: WCS makes no warranties of any kind, either expressed or implied, that the functions of the Equipment, Apps, or other programs provided will be error-free or without defect; WCS will not be responsible for any damage users may suffer, including, but not limited to, loss of data or interruptions of service; WCS is not responsible for the accuracy or quality of the information or data stored on the Equipment; and WCS will not be responsible for any financial obligations arising through the unauthorized use of the device or resource.

Cell Phone & Smart Watch Policy

Cell phones have become a way of life, a technological convenience that has impacted all of our lives in one way or another. However, in the school environment, cell phones have become a distraction, interruption, and a method of illegal exchange of information. The ringing of cell phones during class and

constant text-messaging takes away from the valuable time needed for instruction and most importantly, student learning.

No student will be allowed to use a cell phone during school hours, on school grounds or school-sponsored activities. This includes lunch, recess, transitions, entry, and field trips. Students in grades K-4 must keep their phones off and secured in their backpack stored safely in the classroom. Students in grades 5-8 will turn them in to the designated staff member to be secured and locked upon arrival to homeroom. Wissahickon Charter School does not assume responsibility or financial liability for cell phones while they are in our possession. If a student is using a cell phone during the school day or if a 5th-8th grade student did not turn it in, WCS will take the following actions:

- **Collect phone and lock it up**

If a student refuses to give her/his cell phone, the cell phone will be held in the Dean of Culture's office until a parent picks up the phone.

Our goal is to help students develop more responsibility for gathering the necessary materials required daily prior to coming to school. Emergencies do not include a forgotten lunch, or torn or wet clothing. **Students will not be interrupted in their classrooms to receive telephone calls. In the event of a family emergency or urgent issue to communicate with your child, please call the school office.**

WCS Computer Acceptable Use Policy

Purpose

The Wissahickon Charter School (WCS) is providing its employees and students with access to computing equipment, systems and local network functions such as WCS e-mail and the Internet. This access has a limited educational purpose for students and is to facilitate employees' work productivity.

Access Right and Privileges

Wissahickon Charter has the right to place reasonable restrictions on the use of equipment, resources and material students and employees access or post through the system. Students and employees are also expected to follow the rules set forth in the WCS rules and regulations governing conduct, disciplinary code, and the law in their use of WCS's equipment and network. This access has not been established as a public access service or a public forum. All access and rights are privileges granted by WCS, and users should expect no privacy rights.

All WCS employees and students will have access to the Internet through the WCS private network. Parents may specifically request that their children not be provided such access by notifying WCS in writing.

Students in Kindergarten through second grade may be given a WCS email address, and third grade or higher will be given a WCS email address. WCS reserves the right to read the contents of the email account if there is cause for concern around the contents of an email communication. WCS reserves the right to revoke the email account if a student is not using this tool responsibly.

Unacceptable Uses

Users may not use WCS's private network to access material that is profane or obscene (pornography of

any kind), that advocates illegal acts, or that advocates violence or discrimination towards other people (hate literature).

Users may not post personal information on the Internet about themselves or other people. Personal contact information includes address, telephone, school address, work address, pictures or video bites, clips, etc. Students may not agree to meet with someone they have met on the Internet without their parent's approval and participation.

Users may not attempt to gain unauthorized access to any other computer system. This includes attempting to log in through another person's account or access another person's files. These actions are illegal, even if only for the purposes of "browsing", "snooping", or "electronic discovery".

Users may not deliberately disrupt or harm hardware or systems, interfere with computer or network performance, interfere with another's ability to use equipment and systems, or destroy data.

Users may not use the WCS private network to engage in illegal acts, such as arranging for a drug sale or the purchase of alcohol, engaging in criminal gang activity, threatening the safety of person, accessing or sharing unauthorized copyrighted music, movies, and other intellectual property, etc.

Users may not utilize peer-to-peer file-sharing applications or execute programs to facilitate the downloading or exchange of copyrighted or unauthorized music, movies, and other materials.

Users may not use the WCS private network to solicit information with the intent of using such information to cause personal harm or bodily injury to another or others.

Users may not post information that could endanger an individual, cause personal damage or a danger of service disruption.

Users may not knowingly or recklessly post false or defamatory information about a person or organization.

Users may not intentionally seek information on, obtain copies of, or modify files, other data, or passwords belonging to other users.

Users may not indirectly or directly make connections that create "backdoors" to WCS, other organizations, community groups, etc. that allow unauthorized access to the WCS network.

Users may not use obscene, profane, lewd, vulgar, rude, inflammatory, hateful, threatening, or disrespectful language.

Users may not engage in personal attacks, including prejudicial or discriminatory attacks.

Users may not harass another person. Harassment is persistently acting in a manner that distresses or annoys another person.

Users may not re-post a message that was sent to them privately without permission of the person who sent them the message.

Users may not forward or post chain letters or engage in "spamming". Spamming is sending an annoying

or unnecessary message to a large number of people.

Users will not install or reproduce unauthorized or unlicensed software on WCS resources. Users may not plagiarize works that they find on the Internet or other resources.

Users may not use technology resources and Internet for private business activities or unreasonable personal use.

Users may not use the WCS private network for political lobbying. Students will not download files unless approved by their teacher.

System Security Obligations

Users are responsible for the use of their individual access account(s) and should take all reasonable precautions to prevent others from being able to use their account(s), including coworkers, friends, or family. Under no conditions should a user provide his/her password to another person.

Attempts to log on to the WCS private network or any other network as a system administrator is prohibited. Any user identified as a security risk or having a history of violating this or any other Acceptable Use Policy may be denied access to the WCS private network.

Users will avoid the inadvertent spread of computer viruses by following the WCS virus protection procedures if they download software or share common file directory.

Users should immediately notify a teacher or system administrator of any possible security problem.

Students will promptly disclose to their teacher or other appropriate school employee any message received that is inappropriate.

Filtering

As required by law and in recognition of the need to establish a safe and appropriate computing environment, WCS will use filtering technology to prohibit access, to the degree possible, to objectionable or unsuitable content that might otherwise be accessible via the Internet.

Due Process

Wissahickon Charter School will cooperate fully with local, state, or federal officials in any investigation concerning or relating to any illegal activities conducted through WCS's private network.

In the event there is an allegation that a student has violated WCS's Acceptable Use Policy, the student will be provided with a written notice of the alleged violation and will be provided with notice and opportunity to be heard in the manner set forth in the Student Hearing Process Policy. Disciplinary actions may be taken.

Administration

The Director of Technology has the responsibility and authority for the development, publication, implementation and ongoing administration and enforcement of the processes and techniques required to protect Wissahickon Charter Schools technology systems and services from unauthorized access, loss or

misuse.

The Information Technology Manager and school administrators have the responsibility to establish a plan to ensure adequate supervision of students. They are also responsible for interpreting and enforcing this policy at the local level.

Local management has the responsibility to interpret and enforce this policy.

Appendix

Appendix A: Title IX Policy

Introduction

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, 20 U.S.C. §1681 et seq., protects students from discrimination based on sex in educational programs or activities that receive Federal financial assistance. Title IX states that:

No person shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any academic, extracurricular, research, occupational training, or other education program or activity operated by a recipient, which receives Federal financial assistance.

The Charter School is committed to the maintenance of a safe, positive learning environment for all students that is free from discrimination by providing all students course offerings, counseling, assistance, services, employment, athletics, and extracurricular activities without any form of discrimination, including Title IX sexual harassment. Discrimination is inconsistent with the rights of students and the educational and programmatic goals of the Charter School and is prohibited at or, in the course of, Charter School-sponsored programs or activities, including transportation to or from school or school-sponsored activities.

This policy reaffirms the commitment of the Wissahickon Charter School (“Charter School”) to comply with Title IX. This policy covers student on student as well as employee on student sexual harassment.

Violations of this policy, including acts of retaliation as described in this policy, or knowingly providing false information, may result in disciplinary consequences under applicable Board policy and procedures.

When Does Title IX Apply?

Title IX covers sexual harassment that happens in a school’s “education program or activity.” This includes locations, events, and circumstances where a school exercises substantial control over the context of the alleged harassment and the person accused of committing the sexual harassment.

Sexual Harassment

Title IX protects students from sexual harassment that happens in a school's education program or activity. This includes school buildings, school-sponsored events, and other situations where the Charter School has significant control over the setting and the person accused of the misconduct. Title IX applies to both on-campus and off-campus school programs or activities under the Charter School's authority, as long as the conduct occurs in the United States.

The Charter School is committed to providing a safe, respectful, and nondiscriminatory learning environment. Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination and is prohibited.

Title IX applies to sexual harassment that occurs in the school's education programs or activities. This includes conduct that happens on school property, during school-sponsored events, or in other situations where the Charter School has authority over the activity and the individuals involved. Title IX also applies to certain off-campus school-sponsored programs and activities that are under the school's control and take place in the United States.

Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other unwanted verbal, written, electronic, visual, or physical conduct of a sexual nature when it:

1. Is made a condition of participating in or receiving benefits from a school program or activity;
2. Is used to make decisions about a student's education, opportunities, or benefits;
3. Limits or denies a student's ability to participate in or benefit from school programs or activities; and/or
4. It is so serious, repeated, and objectively offensive that it creates a hostile educational environment or interferes with a student's ability to learn or participate in school.

Title IX sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to:

1. Quid pro quo harassment: A school employee offers or denies an educational benefit, opportunity, or service based on a student's willingness to participate in unwelcome sexual conduct.
2. Hostile environment harassment: Unwelcome sexual conduct that is so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively prevents a student from having equal access to the school's educational programs or activities.
3. Sexual violence, including:
 - a. Sexual assault
 - b. Dating violence
 - c. Domestic violence
 - d. Stalking

The Charter School encourages students to report sexual harassment or sexual misconduct as soon as possible. Reports will be taken seriously, investigated promptly, and addressed in accordance with Title IX and school policy. Retaliation against anyone who reports sexual harassment or participates in an investigation is strictly prohibited.

Reporting and Responding to Sexual Harassment

The Charter School will respond promptly to all reports of sexual harassment that occur in its education

programs or activities. This includes conduct that takes place on school property, at school-sponsored events, or in other situations where the school has authority over the activity and the individuals involved.

The school is considered aware of possible sexual harassment when a report is made to any school employee or when a staff member personally observes conduct that may be sexual harassment. A report may be made by the student, a parent or guardian, a friend, a witness, or anyone else with information about the incident.

When the school receives a report, it will take the matter seriously and respond in a way that is reasonable and appropriate based on the information available.

The Title IX Coordinator will promptly contact the person who may have experienced the harassment to:

1. Explain the supportive measures available to help ensure continued access to education;
2. Explain the right to file a formal Title IX complaint; and
3. Provide information about how to file a formal complaint if the individual chooses to do so.

Title IX Coordinator

The Charter School has a designated Title IX Coordinator who oversees the school's compliance with Title IX and helps ensure that reports of sex discrimination and sexual harassment are managed fairly and promptly.

The Title IX Coordinator is responsible for:

1. Receiving reports of sex discrimination or sexual harassment from students, parents/guardians, employees, or others;
2. Explaining the options available to individuals who report sexual harassment, including supportive measures and the process for filing a formal complaint;
3. Coordinating the school's response and any Title IX investigation;
4. Helping ensure that investigations and complaint processes are fair, impartial, and free from conflicts of interest or bias; and
5. Maintaining records as required by law and ensuring the school complies with Title IX requirements.

The Title IX Coordinator does *not* decide whether a policy violation occurred or determine disciplinary consequences. Those decisions are made by trained individuals who are separate from the Title IX Coordinator to ensure a fair and impartial process.

Students, parents/guardians, employees, or other community members may report concerns to the Title IX Coordinator in person, by phone, by email, or in writing at any time.

Supportive Measures

When a report of sexual harassment is made, the Charter School may provide supportive measures to help students continue to participate safely in school. These services are available at no cost and may be offered whether or not a formal Title IX complaint is filed.

Supportive measures are designed to protect the well-being of everyone involved, maintain a safe learning environment, and help students continue to access their education. These measures are not disciplinary or

punitive and are intended to be fair to all parties.

Depending on the situation, supportive measures may include:

1. School counseling or other support services;
2. Academic accommodations, such as deadline extensions or schedule adjustments;
3. Changes to class schedules or other school activities;
4. Changes to transportation or other school arrangements;
5. No-contact directives between the individuals involved;
6. Increased adult supervision or other safety measures; and/or
7. Other reasonable supports based on the student's needs.

When appropriate, the school may also consider whether a student needs additional educational supports or services, including a review of an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 Plan, consistent with applicable laws.

The Title IX Coordinator is responsible for coordinating supportive measures and will consider the wishes of the student who reported the concern whenever possible. The Charter School will make every reasonable effort to keep information about supportive measures confidential while still being able to provide the necessary support.

Title IX Complaint Process

The Charter School follows a fair and impartial Title IX grievance process to respond to formal complaints of sexual harassment.

When a formal complaint is filed, the school will promptly investigate the allegations and follow all applicable Title IX requirements before making any decisions about responsibility or disciplinary action.

A formal Title IX complaint may be filed by the person who experienced the alleged harassment or, in certain circumstances, by the Title IX Coordinator.

Throughout the process, the Charter School will respect the rights of all individuals involved and provide both parties with a fair opportunity to be heard.

Requirements of a Fair and Impartial Complaint Process

The Charter School is committed to handling all Title IX complaints fairly, promptly, and respectfully.

When a formal complaint is received, the Charter School will:

1. Treat everyone involved fairly and with respect;
2. Conduct an impartial investigation and consider all relevant information before making a decision;
3. Use trained, unbiased staff to oversee the investigation and decision-making process;
4. Presume that a respondent is not responsible unless the investigation determines otherwise;
5. Resolve complaints as promptly as possible. If additional time is needed, both parties will be informed of the reason for the delay;
6. Provide appropriate remedies and disciplinary action, when warranted, to address policy violations and help restore equal access to education;
7. Use the same standard of evidence for all Title IX complaints;

8. Give both the complainant and the respondent the opportunity to appeal the outcome, as permitted by Title IX;
9. Offer supportive measures to help students continue to participate in school, whether or not a formal complaint is filed; and
10. Respect the privacy of those involved and protect confidential information as required by law.

Additional Information About the Title IX Process

The Charter School is committed to providing a fair, respectful, and impartial process for everyone involved in a Title IX complaint.

To help ensure fairness:

1. The Title IX Coordinator or another trained impartial investigator will conduct a thorough investigation;
2. If the Title IX Coordinator has a conflict of interest or is involved in the complaint, the Charter School will appoint a qualified, impartial investigator to handle the matter;
3. A trained, impartial decision-maker who was not involved in the investigation will determine the outcome of the complaint;
4. In situations involving an immediate threat to the health or safety of students or staff, the Charter School may take temporary action, such as removing a student from school activities or placing an employee on administrative leave while the matter is investigated, as permitted by law;
5. No one will be pressured, threatened, intimidated, or retaliated against for reporting concerns, participating in an investigation, or choosing not to participate; and
6. Both the complainant and the respondent will have an equal opportunity to share information, present evidence, identify witnesses, and receive appropriate accommodations, if needed, during the process.

Retaliation is Prohibited

The Charter School prohibits retaliation against any person who reports sexual harassment, participates in a Title IX process, supports another person's report, or exercises rights protected under Title IX.

Retaliation includes actions intended to punish, intimidate, threaten, or interfere with a person's ability to participate in the Title IX process. This may include taking negative actions against someone because they made a report, filed a complaint, provided information, or participated in an investigation.

The Charter School will maintain the privacy of complainants, respondents, and witnesses to the extent possible and as permitted by law. Information will only be shared when necessary to respond to a report, conduct a Title IX process, comply with legal requirements, or protect the rights of those involved.

Individuals who believe they have experienced retaliation may report their concerns through the Charter School's Title IX complaint process.

The Charter School recognizes that making a report or participating in a Title IX process is a protected right. However, intentionally making a materially false statement in bad faith during a Title IX process is not protected as retaliation.

Notice of Nondiscrimination and Title IX Information

The Charter School is required by federal law to provide students, families, employees, and the school community with information about its Title IX nondiscrimination policy and complaint procedures. To meet this requirement, the Charter School publishes its Title IX policy, nondiscrimination notice, and grievance procedures in the Student and Family Handbook, on the Charter School's website, and makes printed copies available upon request.

The Charter School does not discriminate on the basis of sex and prohibits sexual harassment, sexual violence, and other forms of sex discrimination in its educational programs and activities.

Students, parents/guardians, employees, and others may report concerns about sex discrimination or sexual harassment using the school's Title IX complaint process. Individuals may also choose to report the matter to law enforcement, but they are not required to do so before seeking assistance from the Charter School.

The Charter School is committed to responding to complaints promptly, fairly, and equitably. The school may also provide education and awareness programs to help prevent sexual harassment and promote a safe, respectful learning environment.

The Charter School has designated a Title IX Coordinator to oversee compliance with Title IX. The Coordinator's name and contact information are published on the Charter School's website and are available from the school office upon request.

Title IX Training

The Charter School is required to provide Title IX training to employees who may receive, respond to, or investigate reports of sexual harassment or sexual violence.

The Charter School provides training to appropriate staff members, including administrators, teachers, counselors, coaches, nurses, and other employees who may receive reports or concerns. Training helps staff understand how to recognize, respond to, and report sexual harassment and sexual violence.

Training may include information about:

1. The definition of sexual harassment and sexual violence;
2. The Charter School's responsibilities under Title IX;
3. How to respond appropriately to reports and complaints;
4. The rights and protections available to students;
5. How to handle reports fairly, objectively, and without bias;
6. The school's complaint and investigation procedures; and/or
7. The importance of maintaining appropriate confidentiality and providing support to students.

The Charter School also trains employees on how to inform students about:

1. How and where to report sexual harassment or sexual violence;
2. Available supportive services and resources;
3. The option to file a Title IX complaint with the Charter School; and
4. The option to report conduct to law enforcement.

The Charter School provides age-appropriate education to students about Title IX, sexual harassment, sexual violence, and respectful behavior. This information may be provided through student orientations,

assemblies, classroom programs, athletic programs, student activities, or other school-sponsored events.

Training materials and educational resources are provided in accessible formats for students and employees with disabilities, as required by law.

The Charter School is committed to ensuring that all staff members involved in responding to Title IX concerns are properly trained and prepared to support students in a fair, respectful, and inclusive manner.

Additional Reporting Requirements

The Charter School follows all applicable federal, state, and local laws when responding to reports of sexual harassment, sexual assault, or other potentially criminal conduct.

When a report involves conduct that may be criminal, including sexual assault or rape, the Charter School will make reports to law enforcement as required by law. School employees who are required by law to report suspected child abuse or neglect must also make reports to the appropriate child protection authorities.

The Charter School may seek guidance from legal counsel when questions arise about reporting requirements. A law enforcement investigation does not replace the Charter School's responsibility to address and investigate concerns under Title IX and school policy.

The Charter School maintains records related to Title IX complaints in accordance with applicable laws and recordkeeping requirements. Student records and complaint records will be handled confidentially and maintained as required by law.

Title IX Complaint Procedures

A student or other individual who believes they have experienced sexual harassment may report the concern through the Charter School's Title IX complaint process.

A formal Title IX complaint is an official written report of alleged sexual harassment. A formal complaint may be submitted to the Title IX Coordinator in person, by mail, or by email using the contact information provided by the Charter School.

Individuals may have the option to resolve a complaint through a formal process or, when appropriate and permitted, an informal resolution process. Participation in any informal resolution process is voluntary.

In certain circumstances, the Title IX Coordinator may file a formal complaint and begin the Title IX process when appropriate, even if the person who experienced the alleged harassment does not file a complaint.

Informal Complaints

In some cases, the Charter School may offer an informal resolution process to address a formal Title IX complaint. Informal resolution is a voluntary option and may only be used when all parties agree to participate. No student or other individual will be forced, pressured, or required to participate in an

informal resolution process.

An informal resolution process may be used when the respondent is a student. It is not available for complaints alleging that a Charter School employee or contractor sexually harassed a student.

Before an informal resolution process begins, the Charter School will provide both parties with information about:

1. The allegations being addressed;
2. Their rights and options under the Title IX process;
3. How the informal resolution process works;
4. Whether the process will remain confidential; and
5. Their right to stop participating and request a formal grievance process instead.

The Charter School will ensure that any person facilitating an informal resolution process is trained, impartial, and free from conflicts of interest or bias.

Either party may choose to end the informal resolution process at any time before an agreement is reached and continue through the formal Title IX grievance process.

Participation in an informal resolution process does not waive a person's right to a formal investigation and decision-making process. The Charter School will obtain written, voluntary consent from all parties before beginning an informal resolution process.

Formal Complaint Process

When a formal Title IX complaint is filed, the Charter School will provide written notice to the individuals involved. The notice will include information about the allegations, including the names of the parties involved (when appropriate), the date and location of the reported incident, and a description of the conduct being reviewed.

The written notice will also explain:

1. The allegations and how they may relate to sexual harassment under Title IX;
2. That the respondent is presumed not responsible unless a determination is made through the Title IX process;
3. The right of each party to have an advisor of their choice;
4. The right to review certain information collected during the investigation; and
5. Applicable school policies regarding conduct and knowingly providing false information.

If additional allegations are identified during the process, the Charter School will provide updated notice to the parties.

The Charter School will conduct a fair and thorough investigation to determine:

1. Whether the reported conduct occurred;
2. Whether the conduct violates the Charter School's Title IX policy; and
3. What steps, if any, are appropriate to address the situation.

The Charter School will treat all parties with respect and fairness throughout the process and will maintain

confidentiality as required and permitted by law.

The Charter School will not access a person's private medical or treatment records from a doctor, counselor, psychologist, or other healthcare provider unless the individual provides voluntary written consent.

Dismissal of a Title IX Complaint

In some situations, the Charter School may be required or permitted to dismiss a formal Title IX complaint. A dismissal does not necessarily mean that the concern will not be addressed. The Charter School may review and respond to the matter under another school policy or the Student Code of Conduct, when appropriate.

The Charter School must dismiss a Title IX complaint if:

1. The reported conduct does not meet the definition of sexual harassment under Title IX.
2. The alleged conduct did not occur in a Charter School education program or activity.
3. The alleged conduct did not occur in the United States.

The Charter School may dismiss a Title IX complaint if:

1. The complainant requests in writing to withdraw the complaint or certain allegations.
2. The respondent is no longer a student or employee of the Charter School.
3. Circumstances prevent the Charter School from collecting enough information to make a determination.

If a complaint is dismissed, the Charter School will provide written notice to the parties explaining the dismissal and the reason for the decision.

The Charter School will continue to address concerns involving misconduct, discrimination, harassment, or violations of school rules through applicable policies and procedures, even if the conduct does not meet the requirements for a Title IX complaint.

Title IX Investigation Process

When a formal Title IX complaint is filed, the Charter School will conduct a fair, thorough, and impartial investigation.

During the investigation process:

1. The Title IX Coordinator will document the complaint and work with the individuals involved to understand the concerns being reported.
2. The Charter School is responsible for gathering information and determining whether a violation of the Title IX policy occurred.
3. The respondent will be presumed not responsible unless and until a determination is made through the Title IX process.
4. Both the complainant and respondent will have an equal opportunity to provide information, identify witnesses, and share evidence that supports or does not support the allegations.
5. The Charter School will provide notice of interviews, meetings, and other important steps in the process so that all parties have an opportunity to participate.

6. Both parties may have an advisor of their choice to participate in the process, as permitted by Title IX requirements.
7. The Charter School will conduct interviews, review available evidence, and consider relevant information from all parties and witnesses.
8. The Charter School will provide both parties with an opportunity to review and respond to relevant evidence collected during the investigation.
9. The Charter School will prepare a written investigation report summarizing the relevant information and provide it to the parties before a final determination is made.
10. The Charter School will protect confidential information and will not access or use private treatment records or legally protected information unless required permissions are provided.

The Charter School will make reasonable efforts to complete investigations promptly while ensuring that all individuals involved are treated fairly and have an equal opportunity to participate in the process.

Hearing and Final Determination Process

After the investigation is completed, the Charter School will review the information gathered and make a decision about whether the respondent is responsible for violating the Title IX policy.

The Charter School may conduct a hearing or use another approved process for reviewing information before making a final determination. Regardless of the process used:

1. Both parties will have an opportunity to review relevant information and submit written questions to the other party or witnesses.
2. Both parties will have an equal opportunity to respond to information provided during the investigation.
3. Questions about a complainant's prior sexual behavior or sexual history generally will not be considered unless they meet specific exceptions allowed by law.
4. A trained, neutral decision-maker who was not responsible for conducting the investigation will make the final determination.

If a live hearing is held, the Charter School will provide information about the date, time, location, and participants in advance. Reasonable accommodations may be provided, including allowing parties to participate from separate locations when appropriate. Advisors may assist participants as permitted by Title IX requirements.

The decision-maker will consider the available evidence and determine whether it is more likely than not that a violation occurred. The Charter School will make reasonable efforts to complete the process promptly while allowing additional time when necessary for good cause, such as the availability of witnesses, law enforcement activity, language assistance, or disability-related accommodations.

Written Decision

The Charter School will provide both parties with a written decision at the same time. The decision will include:

1. The allegations reviewed.
2. The procedures followed during the investigation and decision-making process.
3. The standard of evidence used.
4. The findings and reasoning supporting the decision.

5. Whether the respondent was found responsible.
6. Any disciplinary actions imposed.
7. Any remedies or supports provided to restore or maintain access to education.
8. Information about the right to appeal and how to request an appeal.

The Title IX Coordinator will help ensure that any required remedies or supportive measures are implemented.

Both parties have the right to appeal the decision according to the Charter School's Title IX procedures.

If a respondent is found responsible for sexual harassment, consequences may include disciplinary action consistent with the Charter School's policies and Code of Conduct. Possible consequences may include suspension, expulsion, or other appropriate disciplinary measures.

The Charter School will protect student privacy as required by law. However, when appropriate and permitted, the Charter School may inform the complainant about disciplinary actions or remedies that directly affect the complainant's access to education or safety.

Appeals

Both the complainant and the respondent have the right to appeal certain decisions made during the Title IX process. An appeal provides an opportunity to request a review of the outcome based on specific reasons allowed under Title IX.

An appeal may be requested for reasons such as:

1. A significant procedural error that affected the outcome.
2. New information that was not reasonably available during the original investigation and could affect the outcome.
3. A conflict of interest or bias by the Title IX Coordinator, investigator, or decision-maker that may have affected the outcome.
4. Other reasons that the Charter School allows equally for both parties.

Either party may appeal:

1. The dismissal of a formal Title IX complaint; or
2. The final determination made at the end of the Title IX process.

Appeals will be reviewed by the Charter School Board of Trustees or, when required, by a neutral hearing officer who was not involved in the original investigation or decision.

During the appeal process:

1. Both parties will be notified if an appeal is filed.
2. Both parties will have an equal opportunity to provide a written statement supporting or challenging the outcome.
3. The person reviewing the appeal will be impartial and free from conflicts of interest or bias.
4. A written decision explaining the outcome of the appeal and the reasons for the decision will be provided to both parties at the same time.

The appeal decision is final.

Appendix B: USDA Nondiscrimination Statement

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. Mail:

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or

2. Fax:

(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or

3. Email:

Program.Intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Appendix C: Lottery and Enrollment Policies and Procedures

Lottery and Enrollment Policies and Procedures

State law mandates that charter school enrollment be governed by lottery. Children who are not selected can be placed on a waiting list. Children who live outside of Philadelphia can apply if every interested child in Philadelphia already has been accepted. **Preference is given to applicants who are siblings of current WCS students enrolled as of February 1, 2027 so long as proof of guardianship and residence is confirmed. Preference is also given to children of staff and board members who are in their positions as of February 1, 2027. Parents of students who fall in the categories above SHOULD STILL**

COMPLETE AN ENROLLMENT APPLICATION BY THE DEADLINE. See the preference section below for additional details about our preference policies. The deadline for applications for grades K – 7 will be January 15, 2027. The sole way to apply is through Apply Philly Charter (<https://applyphillycharter.org/> or (800-891-3999). The lottery will be held on February 1, 2027.

Wissahickon Charter School uses Apply Philly Charter (APC) to manage its lottery and waitlist. Beginning with enrollment into the 2026-27 school year, APC will utilize a “ranked choice” or “Single Best Offer” (SBO) process. When families apply through APC, they submit a ranked list of their preferred charter schools that participate in the lottery, listed in order of preference (e.g., 1st choice, 2nd choice, etc.). The APC system makes offers to students for their highest-ranked school where there is an available seat and/or their desired Renaissance school, based on each school's individual lottery structure and the student's random lottery number, if applicable. Students are placed on waitlists only for schools ranked higher on their application than the school where they got an offer. For additional information and support, please visit applyphillycharter.org or call 1 (800) 891-3999.

Applicants must meet the minimum age requirements for admission to Kindergarten (beginner admission) and 1st Grade (compulsory admission):

- Kindergarten: Applicant must be 5 years old by September 1st of the year in which they are entering Kindergarten
- 1st Grade: Applicant must be 6 years old by September 1st of the year in which they are entering 1st grade

Applying for Admission

- Families can obtain and submit an application for admission online at ApplyPhillyCharter.org or apply via the Apply Philly Charter toll-free number, 1-800-891-3999. Families are welcome to visit the School for assistance, and families will be provided with information on how to apply and, subject to availability, a computer or tablet to access ApplyPhillyCharter.org. The online application is available for translation into nine different languages. The toll-free number has customer service representatives who can assist families in multiple languages and includes after-hours support. Wissahickon Charter School will provide reasonable accommodations in the event that an individual requests to submit an application in person. Paper applications are not available and Wissahickon Charter School will not accept or enroll any applicant whose application is not recorded through the Apply Philly Charter system.
- The application process only involves submitting the application form by the deadline. No interview, school tour, information session, or fee is required.
- Once the application is submitted, the applicant will receive an email or text message confirmation from Apply Philly Charter. Applicants who are unable to provide an email address will receive a confirmation of their application submission via postal mail to the address recorded on the application.

How is Application Data Stored?

In accordance with applicable laws (FERPA, PPRA, COPPA), applicant data is maintained through the Apply Philly Charter system. Applicant data will not be shared with any schools to which the applicant did not apply.

Application intake:

- As applications are received via the Apply Philly Charter application, they will be monitored in the system's interface throughout the open application period. The Assessment and Accountability Manager or designee will monitor the system to review claims of preference and audit for duplicate and ineligible applications. Applications must be submitted via the Apply Philly Charter application. Applicants must indicate if they are applying to our Awbury or Fernhill campus. Individuals wishing to apply to both campuses will need to indicate both campuses on their Apply Philly Charter Application.
- Parents will receive an email confirmation that their application was received along with notification of the date that the lottery will occur.
- Advertisement- On our website we will advertise the deadline for applications and the date for the actual lottery.
- If parents have questions about the lottery, they will be directed to the Network Director of School Operations or CEO to have all of their questions/concerns answered.

When the deadline has passed, we will post on our website that all applications from that point forward for the following school year will only be considered after all pre-lottery applications have been offered seats. Any applications that come in after the deadline are stored in the Apply Philly Charter system with a "post-deadline application" designation. If parents call, we will let them know that it was received after the deadline and was not placed in the lottery. We will maintain records of all pre- and post-deadline applications in the Apply Philly Charter system.

Preference

Preference will apply equally for each of the preferences listed below. In the event that there are more students earning preference than available slots for a given grade, a lottery will be held to determine the order slots available slots are offered to students in the preference group. This lottery will only be needed if there are not enough available slots and will follow all procedures outlined in this document. Please note that the Charter Schools Basic Education Circular states that, "First preference shall be given to students who reside in the district or districts." As a result, the preferences described below are only available to applicants who are Philadelphia residents.