

CHATHAM CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD POLICY SERIES 300 STUDENTS

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Lex-is School Law Services

David R. Hostetler
1289 Fordham Blvd., #251
Chapel Hill, NC 27514

Phone: (919) 442-8593
Email: Services@Lex-is.com
www.Lex-is.com

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POLICY SERIES 300

300. STUDENTS – POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

301. INTRODUCTION

301.1. To Students and Parents

These policies provide direction and information for members of Chatham Charter School (“the School”). A healthy and effective School depends on established policies and procedures. More importantly, it requires members of the community to understand and implement the policies and procedures for the success and wellbeing of everyone. All such policies are designed to support the mission of the School.

With everyone’s cooperation, the School will be a thriving community where students succeed in a safe, supportive, and stimulating educational environment.

301.2. Parent-Student Commitment and Expectations

The School cannot succeed in its mission without commitment and effort from the parents/legal guardians ("Parents" or "Parent") who enroll their children. A strong partnership between Parents and the School is essential.

Parents and families support the School’s mission and fulfill their primary role as teachers of their children when they respect and support the efforts and staff of the School, promote the desire for and pursuit of learning, and model ethical and relational integrity.

Respect for and support of the School’s mission includes the following commitments on the part of every Parent:

- a) To monitor and support School policies and procedures;
- b) To insure prompt arrival to School and to promote their students' daily attendance to the maximum extent feasible;
- c) To nourish their students' physical and emotional health to promote learning;
- d) To help their students complete assignments and other academic demands and to communicate with staff as necessary to address particular needs;
- e) To be willing to volunteer and financially support the School’s work as feasible;
- f) To cooperate with School staff in providing needed information or other support when reasonably requested;
- g) To participate responsibly in classroom and School meetings and functions; and
- h) To advocate for the school and celebrate the students and the school’s milestones

301.3. School Calendar

Every year the School will publish a School calendar. The School calendar shall include the beginning and ending dates of the School year, dates for staff workdays, and holidays. The calendar shall include at least the minimum make-up time required by law.

301.4. Legal Compliance, School Charter, and Changes in Policy

The School, by law, is a North Carolina public school, operated by a private, tax-exempt non-profit corporation. As a charter school it is exempt from most state education laws that apply to traditional public schools. The School shall comply with all remaining state laws and applicable federal laws and regulations, including, but not limited to, such laws and regulations governing employment, the environment, disabilities, civil rights, children with special needs, transportation, and student records. The School shall also comply with all applicable health and safety laws and regulations, whether federal, state, or local, which apply to traditional public school systems. The School shall be nonsectarian in its programs, admission policies, employment practices, and all other operations and shall not charge tuition or fees, except that it may charge fees that are charged by the local school district.

The School's state-approved charter is like a contract. Therefore, the School shall also operate consistent with all provisions in its charter.

302. ADMISSION, ENROLLMENT, AND PLACEMENT

302.1. Admission

As required by state law (G.S. 115C-218.45(g)), any child who is qualified for admission to a North Carolina public school is qualified for admission to the School. Admission shall not be determined according to the school attendance area in which a student resides.

The School shall not discriminate against any student on the basis of ethnicity, national origin, gender, or disability. Except as otherwise provided by law or the mission of the School as set out in the charter, the School shall not limit admission to students on the basis of intellectual ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, athletic ability, disability, race, creed, gender, national origin, religion, or ancestry.

302.2. Admission Priority

By law, the School may give enrollment priority to the following individuals:

- a. Siblings of currently enrolled students who were admitted to the School in a previous year. "Siblings" includes any of the following who reside in the same household: half siblings, stepsiblings, and children residing in a family foster home.
- b. Siblings of students who have completed the highest grade level offered by the School.
- c. Limited to no more than fifteen percent (15%) of the School's total enrollment, the following:
 1. Children of the school's full-time employees.
 2. A student who was enrolled in the School within the two previous school years but left the School (i) to participate in an academic study abroad program or a competitive admission residential program or (ii) because of the vocational opportunities of the student's parent.

302.3. Open Enrollment

The School will hold an annual open enrollment period. An “open enrollment period” is defined as the time the school will accept applications for enrollment from students in grades K-12. The open enrollment timeline and application can be found online at www.chathamcharter.org.

At the conclusion of the enrollment period, if the number of applicants for a particular grade does not exceed the number of available spaces for that grade level, all eligible students who have properly applied by the deadline will be accepted. At the close of the enrollment period, if the number of applicants for a particular grade level exceeds available spaces for that grade level, a lottery system will determine admission eligibility. Siblings of current Chatham Charter students will receive priority status.

Students who are not offered enrollment will be placed on a wait list. After all spaces for a grade level are filled, the lottery will continue until all applying students have been assigned a priority number on the wait list. Again, siblings of current Chatham Charter students will receive priority status for the wait list. The wait list will not carry into the next School year, but will remain and be used for admission should a space become available during the current School year for which it was conducted.

In the event a space becomes available at an instructionally appropriate point during the current School year, the Parent of a student who is first on the wait list for that grade shall be notified and offered enrollment. The School will establish annual, timely deadline for enrollment acceptance. If the position is declined or not accepted within the established deadline of the School, the next person on the wait list shall be contacted. This process will continue until the space is filled or the wait list is exhausted.

After admission and during the School year, serious and/or repeated deviations from the policies and procedures defined by the School will result in an evaluation of the student’s placement in the School, as allowed by law.

302.4. Placement

The School reserves the right to place students in grade levels determined by competency tests, regardless of the grade level a student was in at a previous School. For example, if a student applying to enter the fourth grade tests more than one year below the fourth grade competency level, the School may offer admission to the lower and more appropriate grade. (Legal reference: G.S. §115C-288)

302.5. Withdrawal

Parents choosing to withdraw a student from the School should contact the School office and follow the procedures established by the School.

303. TRANSPORTATION AND ATTENDANCE

303.1. Transportation and Arrival

By state law, the School may, if it chooses, provide transportation for its students. Regardless, the School shall develop and maintain a transportation plan so that transportation is not a barrier to any student who resides in the local school administrative unit in which the School is located.

Students are required to arrive at the School on time unless they have a legitimate excuse for being tardy or absent. Students and parents should allow adequate time for travel to the School, possible traffic problems or weather conditions, other transition time, and other factors that may affect promptness.

303.2. Tardiness

Students who are not in their classrooms at the time the School bell rings are considered tardy. Students who arrive late due to an excused reason must obtain an approval slip from the office. For an excused tardy, students are required to produce a note from their parent indicating the reason for late arrival, or their parent must accompany the student to the School office. The reason for the late arrival must be listed on the notice. After receiving their approval slip, students shall proceed immediately to class, delivering the slip to the homeroom or other appropriate classroom teacher.

303.3. Attendance

Failure to attend School undermines a student's education and the School's academic success. As such, absence may subject a student to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion, as well as investigation of parents by social services or juvenile justice officials, based on mandatory attendance and child neglect statutes.

Excused reasons for tardiness or absences may include the following:

- a) Illness or injury;
- b) Medical, dental, or other appointment with a health care provider;
- c) Necessary religious observances;
- d) Involvement in a traffic or other accident;
- e) Participation in a valid school related function, such as travel, with prior approval of the Head of School;
- f) Other unavoidable and excusable reasons as determined by the Head of School or designee.

303.3.1. Compulsory Attendance

The Head of School shall oversee adherence to attendance rules and regulations and notify parents of their responsibility when repeated violations occur. Teachers will monitor and report student absences daily and follow all rules and regulations concerning attendance. To be counted present, a student must be in attendance at least one-half of the School day. This includes required attendance at School activities at any place other than the School.

303.3.2. Absences

To be excused for an absence a student shall submit, within three School days of the absence, when reasonably feasible, a note signed by the parent explaining the reason(s) for the absence. The note must be submitted to the School office and directed to the Head of School or his or her designee. Failure to comply with these procedures may result in the absence being unexcused.

Period attendance is used in grades 9-12 and daily attendance is used in grades K-8.

The following procedures shall apply in notifying parents after the respective number of unexcused absences:

- a) Three Days: notify parents of concerns;
- b) Six Days: notify parents by certified mail of a potential violation of compulsory attendance requirements and of the duty to report them to government officials if the absences cannot be reasonably explained or if they continue;
- c) Ten Days: notify the parents by certified mail pursuant to letter “b” above, **plus** require a conference with the parents to discuss the reasons for the absences, the corrective efforts being made, possible disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion, and reporting to legal authorities.

304. ACADEMICS AND INSTRUCTION

The School’s academic program is designed to foster an excellent learning environment that meets and exceeds student performance standards adopted by the State Board of Education and the student performance standards contained in its charter. By law, the School shall conduct, at a minimum, student assessments required by the State Board of Education.

304.1. Academic Expression

Controversial issues arising from classroom situations and subject matter may be discussed and explored in classrooms if handled with appropriate discretion and respect and without discriminating based on viewpoints. The age, intelligence, and experience of students are important considerations regarding the appropriateness of materials, ideas, and information presented. Teachers will take into account the relative maturity of their students and the need for guidance in studying and discussing such issues.

304.2. Curriculum

304.2.1. Instructional Material Selection

Teachers are not permitted to advocate their or any other particular viewpoint. Teachers will be careful to not inhibit or undermine the dignity, personality, or intellectual expression of students. Statements made or materials used in the classroom must serve a valid educational purpose, and be consistent with the School’s curriculum and curricular goals.

304.2.2. Request for Review of Curriculum Selection

If a parent objects to the use of specific instructional materials, the parent may file a written request with the Head of School briefly stating the nature of the objection(s) and/or requesting that the material not be made available to the parent’s child. The School may establish a Review Committee to address all such requests. The following steps apply to a parent request for review:

- a) The Parent must file all objections in writing. The Review Committee will review the challenged material. This review will involve the following:
 - i. examining the request and pertinent material;
 - ii. checking the general acceptance of the material by reading reviews and consulting recommended lists;
 - iii. considering any explanation contained in the request form;
 - iv. determining the extent to which the material supports the curriculum; and
 - v. considering all other relevant information and attributes of the material, including its overall quality, uniqueness, creativity, authorship, publisher, publication date, and its appropriateness for the age group concerned.

- b) The Review Committee will make a decision regarding the material and prepare a written recommendation to the Head of School.
 - i. The Head of School may approve, modify, or overrule the recommendation of the Review Committee.
 - ii. The Review Committee or the Parent may request a full Board review of the Head of School's decision.
 - iii. Pending the outcome of the review process, a Parent may request of the Head of School that the material not be used by the Parent's child pending a final determination. Such a request may be granted at the Head of School's discretion.

304.3. Children with Special Needs

The School admits and serves special needs children under the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)* (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.), state legislation (G.S. 115C-106 et seq.), and pursuant to the State Board of Education's rules and policies.

Students with special needs shall receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive and appropriate environment. The School will provide every student suspected of having special needs with a multidisciplinary diagnosis and evaluation.

For each student entitled to special education services, the School will:

- a) provide testing and evaluation in a nondiscriminatory manner, administered in the child's native language as necessary;
- b) provide to the Parent, in writing, the results, findings, and proposals based upon an evaluation;
- c) develop an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for qualified students;
- d) provide special education and related services in the least restrictive appropriate environment to each qualified student based upon the IEP; and
- e) provide written notice to the Parent reasonably in advance of when the School proposes to initiate or change the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of a student with special needs. The written notice will give a full explanation of all of the procedural safeguards available to Parents.

A confidential folder shall be maintained for each child evaluated for and/or receiving exceptional student services. Access to such files shall be limited to appropriate personnel and parents in compliance with state and federal law. A handbook on special needs procedures and rights is available to parents of children with special needs.

304.4. Extra-Curricular Activities and Athletics

The School offers and encourages participation in extra-curricular activities as part of a complete education. Such participation, however, is a privilege, not a right. A student's behavior, attendance, and academic standing will determine eligibility to participate in extra-curricular activities. Please refer to the Chatham Charter Athletic Handbook for more information.

The advisor of any activity may set conduct or other academic or performance standards as a condition of initial or continued participation, provided such standards are clearly established and consistent with the School's mission.

If a student is disciplined for a violation of the student conduct code, his or her participation in an extra-curricular activity may be affected, subject to the discretion of the Head of School. The advisor, head coach, and/or athletic director, in consultation with the School administration as necessary, is normally responsible for decisions relating to disciplinary action associated with the activity.

304.5. Evaluation

All parents will be informed at regular intervals of their students' academic progress, based on procedures approved by the Head of School. The Board also encourages the administration and staff to work together to improve methods for evaluating students' progress and to develop meaningful ways to report their achievement to parents.

304.6. Field Trips

Field trips are part of the educational program to support and enhance the educational and community experience.

School-sponsored field trips will be well planned and evaluated in terms of their educational and social appropriateness. Field trips will be reasonable in length, activity, and difficulty, considering the age and maturity of students and available resources. Overnight trips require special precautions to assure student well-being and to avoid or minimize, to the extent possible, interference with other class studies and attendance.

Prior to each field trip, parents must sign a waiver of liability and permission for their children to attend all field trips sponsored by the School.

304.6.1. Chaperones and Drivers

Chaperones and drivers who volunteer to transport students for field trips and extracurricular events must sign and submit to the School any information required by the Head of School in advance of a trip. The school will conduct a background check on any individual who will potentially supervise students.

Every student being transported must have and use an appropriate seat belt. Students may not ride in the front seat of a vehicle equipped with air bags unless such students are of proper size, weight, and age. Drivers should arrive early, with their vehicles adequately fueled and with the vehicle in good and proper condition. Teachers will provide to each driver any necessary maps, directions and instructions, a roster of students being transported by the driver, and those students' emergency contact information.

304.6.2. Guidelines

Appropriate instructional activities will precede and follow each field trip. Before each field trip, the teacher will submit to the Head of School a written outline of the instructional objectives of the trip. Procedures for requesting approval for field trips and other related activities may also be established by the Head of School and shall be followed.

The teacher will send permission requests to parents before the date of the trip, indicating the date, time, and purpose of the trip.

Parents may be required to provide special additional written permission for their children to participate in a particular field trip. Parental approval forms must be filed by the teacher and/or staff member the field trip. Copies of these forms are to be retained for at least the remainder of the School year and longer as circumstances require.

All field trips will normally begin and end at the School. When a field trip is made to a place of business or industry, the teacher must be assured prior to beginning such a tour that an employee of the host company will serve as the guide. A reasonable number of adult personnel and volunteers shall accompany and supervise students on all field trips. The School, if feasible, will provide an appropriate educational experience and proper supervision for any students whose parents do not wish their children to participate in a field trip.

304.7. Moment of Silence and Pledge of Allegiance

As required by state law, the School shall (i) display the United States and North Carolina flags in each classroom when available, (ii) call for the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance on a daily basis, and (iii) provide age-appropriate instruction on the meaning and historical origins of the flag and the Pledge of Allegiance. The School shall not compel any individual student to stand, salute the flag, or recite the Pledge of Allegiance or participate in the moment of silence. If flags are donated or are otherwise available, flags shall be displayed in each classroom.

304.8. Promotion, Retention, and Graduation

304.8.1. Promotion and Retention Standards

The Board recognizes that some students may benefit by remaining in the same grade for an additional year. The Board supports students being placed at the grade level to which they are best suited and providing additional years of education at the same level as necessary.

The Head of School shall be responsible for the final decision regarding the promotion or retention of any student. The Head of School's decision will be based on the best interest of the student.

Factors to be considered in promotion and retention decisions include, but are not limited to, achievement based on test results and informal assessments; physical, social, and emotional maturity, effort, ability, and parental attitude and responsibility.

If a student appears to be a candidate for retention, the student's teacher or team should, if feasible, notify the Head of School and the student's parents by the end of the first semester of the academic year at the latest. Teachers are to provide additional attention to and remediation for the student to offer reasonable opportunities for the student to achieve promotion.

304.8.2. Graduation Requirements

Minimum graduation requirements are established by the North Carolina Board of Education. The Chatham Charter Board of Directors requires all students to successfully complete a combination of 28 course units (22 state-mandated, plus six (6) additional locally-mandated) in order to graduate from the high school at Chatham Charter. The School will provide students and parents with specific information regarding the standards and credits applicable to graduation eligibility.

304.9. Religion and Free Speech

As a public School, the School will remain neutral on matters of religion, politics, and other personal values and beliefs protected by the United States Constitution, while also protecting the rights of individual students and staff members to exercise their religious and free speech rights. Consistent with the School's academic mission, the School shall promote respect for and civility regarding individuals' personal beliefs, and will also strive to neutrally instruct students about the important role of religion and free expression as part of our heritage.

304.10. Testing

The School will conduct standardized testing as required by state and federal law and provide remediation and intervention for students not scoring at required levels. A testing coordinator will monitor compliance with this policy. All licensed testing personnel, teachers, and School administrators are subject to the state Testing Code of Ethics regarding the statewide testing program.

305. CONDUCT, DISCIPLINE, AND PROCEDURES

305.1. Code of Student Conduct

The Student Conduct Code ("Student Code" or "Code") governs student behavior occurring on School property, at School-sponsored activities, plus all off-campus activity that threatens School safety or property, or that substantially disrupts or is likely to disrupt School operations.

305.2. Generally Prohibited Behavior

305.2.1. Disrespect/Noncompliance

Students shall comply with all School- and safety-related directions of School administrators, teachers, substitute teachers, student teachers, teacher aides, bus drivers, and all other School personnel who are authorized to give such directions. Inappropriate conduct includes, but is not limited to verbal, non-verbal, or physical conduct showing disrespect, repetitive tardiness, skipping class/school, leaving campus without permission, or being in an unauthorized area. Failure to comply may result in disciplinary action.

305.2.2. Class/Activity Disturbance

Any physical or verbal disturbance which occurs within the School environment and which interrupts or interferes with teaching or orderly conduct of class/School activities/School transportation is prohibited.

305.2.3. Inappropriate Language

Cursing or use of vulgar, profane, or obscene language is prohibited.

305.2.4. Improper Dress

Students shall dress in a way that is compatible with the School's mission and an effective learning environment. Students shall not wear clothing or other attire which is disruptive, provocative, inappropriately revealing of the body, profane, vulgar, offensive or obscene, or which endangers the health or safety of the student or others. Prohibited attire includes, but is not limited to, that which involves:

- a) Exposed undergarments, buttocks, cleavage, or pubic areas (includes see-through clothing)
- b) Excessively sagging or tight pants or other apparel
- c) Midriffs or strapless shirts or dresses
- d) Messages or illustrations that are lewd, indecent or vulgar or that advertise any product or service not permitted by law to minors
- e) Chains, spikes or other apparel reasonably perceived or used as a weapon
- f) Gang or reasonably perceivable gang symbols or apparel
- g) Other attire of which a student is reasonably notified as being improper under this policy by authorized School personnel (refer to the Chatham Charter Student Handbook)

The School will strive to reasonably accommodate dress that is necessary to satisfy a student's fundamental religious beliefs or a medical or physical need.

305.2.5. Inappropriate Literature and Illustrations

The creation, possession or distribution of literature or illustrations which significantly disrupt the educational process is prohibited.

305.2.6. Tobacco

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

- a) Tobacco Product: cigarettes, cigars, pipes, chewing tobacco, snuff, e-cigarettes and any other items containing or reasonably resembling tobacco or tobacco products.
- b) Tobacco Use: smoking, chewing, dipping, or any other use of tobacco products.
- c) Display: having any tobacco product in a location or position that is visible to students or School personnel.

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

305.2.7. Controlled Substances and Alcohol

The School is committed to being a community free of unhealthy substances including illegal controlled substances, tobacco, and alcohol. The use of illegal controlled substances and use of alcohol while on School property, at any School-related activity, or in any other venue where the conduct in question is likely to substantially impact or undermine the operation or well-being of the School or its members, is prohibited.

305.2.8. Indecent Exposure/Sexual Behavior

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

305.2.9. Theft

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

305.2.10. Unacceptable Use of Electronic Technology

Students shall comply with the School's Acceptable Use Policies. Refer to Board Policy Series 500 (Technology) and the Student Handbook for details.

305.3. Weapons

The School strives to maintain an environment free of all weapons not legally possessed by law enforcement officials or otherwise authorized by the Head of School or the Board. No student, employee or other agent of the School shall carry or encourage another person to carry, whether openly or concealed, a weapon as defined below, onto School property at any time.

A "Weapon" includes a gun, rifle, pistol, or other firearm of any kind, or any dynamite cartridge, bomb, grenade, mine, powerful explosive, knife, BB gun, air rifle, air pistol, sling shot, blackjack, metal knuckles, bludgeon, bowie knife, switchblade, dirk, dagger, leaded cane, stun gun or other electronic shock weapon, any sharp-pointed or edged instrument except for the following: instructional supplies, unaltered nail files and clips and tools used solely for preparing food, instruction, and maintenance of School property or otherwise authorized or necessary to support the operations of the School.

Any person who is aware that an unauthorized weapon has been carried onto School property or possessed at a School function shall immediately notify a teacher or the Head of School.

305.4. Harassment and Bullying

The School is committed to providing an environment that is conducive to learning, free from harassment and bullying based on race, religion, gender, ethnicity, national origin, disability, or any other illegal conduct. Other forms of harassment and bullying are also prohibited, including those based on other distinguishing characteristics such as, but not limited to, physical, social, academic or emotional and socio-economic status, or simply based on personal differences or conflicts. All conduct prohibited by this policy includes behavior that occurs directly or indirectly, by personal or electronic communication or action.

Harassment is an unwelcomed offensive verbal, nonverbal or physical conduct that is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive as to significantly affect the conditions of one's employment or a student's learning. Harassment includes, but is not limited to, abusive jokes, insults, slurs, name-calling, threats, bullying or intimidation (including cyberbullying), unwelcome sexual advances, or the exchange of benefits for performance of sexual or other favors.

Harassment is prohibited at all levels: between students, between employees and students, between coworkers, between supervisors and subordinates, between nonemployees and employees and/or students, and between any other School representatives or members of the School community while at the School or involved in School activities.

In addition, no student or staff member shall retaliate against anyone who reports or seeks remedies against harassment or bullying or otherwise aids or supports someone who aids in the enforcement of this policy.

All staff members are required to report instances or reasonable suspicions of harassment and bullying to a supervisor and to aid in investigations under, and the enforcement of, this policy. Any report of alleged harassment or bullying shall be taken seriously and responded to fully and promptly by appropriate School staff. Students are urged to also report and assist in carrying out this policy.

305.5. Sexual Harassment

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

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

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

Examples of sexual harassment include, but are not limited to, deliberate, unwelcome touching; suggestions or demands for sexual involvement accompanied by implied or overt promises or threats; pressure for sexual activity; continued or repeated offensive sexual flirtations, advances, or propositions; continued or repeated verbal remarks about an individual's body; sexually degrading words used toward, or in the presence of, an individual or to describe an individual; or the display of sexually suggestive objects, signals, or pictures.

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

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

305.6. Student Searches

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

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

305.6.1. Locker Searches

Student lockers are School property. Therefore, students have no right to privacy enforceable against the School's right to open and view the contents of those lockers. Students may not use their lockers to hold any illegal or unauthorized materials. School officials may inspect any student's locker without a search warrant, for any reason deemed reasonable to maintain safe and orderly operations. A student's personal items found in a locker, such as clothing, backpacks, gym bags or purses, may be searched based on reasonable suspicion.

305.6.2. Student Automobiles

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

305.6.3. Use of Dogs to Aid in Searches

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

305.7. Disciplinary Policies and Procedures for Serious Offenses

North Carolina state law requires the School to follow specific rules and due process relating serious disciplinary matters and the use of reasonable force, short- and long-term suspensions, and expulsions under Article 27 of Chapter 115C of the General Statutes. The School will follow these rules in such instances.

Article 27 is available at

http://www.ncleg.net/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/HTML/ByArticle/Chapter_115C/Article_27.html

306. EMERGENCY AND SAFETY PROCEDURES

306.1. Building and Grounds

Maintaining safe and attractive School grounds and facilities requires everyone's support. All students, staff and parents should make every reasonable effort to preserve and protect School property.

306.2. Delayed Openings

The Head of School may delay the opening of or close the School when there is a threat or potential safety threat due to inclement weather, mechanical failure, or other circumstance. In such instances, the School will notify members of the School community as promptly as possible via local news media, electronic mail, School rapid communication system, the School website, or other reasonable means.

306.3. Fire Drills

The Head of School will conduct a fire drill during the first week after the opening of School and at least one fire drill each month thereafter. The route of egress and alternate routes will be posted in each classroom in each building. Evacuation, tornado, and lock-down drills will also be conducted routinely. Students and staff will be instructed on the procedures to follow.

307. HEALTH AND WELLNESS

307.1. Communicable Diseases

The School aims to provide a safe and secure environment free of infection from communicable disease for all students and employees. To balance the need to protect the privacy rights of students and employees and to control the spread of communicable diseases and conditions, decisions concerning necessary action shall be made on a case-by-case basis in accordance with this policy, sound judgment, and applicable legal requirements.

A communicable disease or condition is defined as an illness due to an infectious agent, or its toxic products, which is transmitted directly or indirectly to a person from an infected person or animal.

This policy applies to all legally reportable communicable diseases, including HIV and AIDS, as set forth in state regulations.

- a) In order to prevent the spread of communicable diseases, universal health and safety precautions, which include regulations regarding the cleanup of all bodily fluids (including blood), shall be distributed by the Head of School or his or her designee and shall be followed by all School employees.
- b) In accordance with state law, the Head of School or designee shall report suspected cases of reportable communicable diseases or conditions to the county health director for investigation and shall provide available factual information to substantiate the report. Such reports shall remain strictly confidential and may be shared only with other staff members as necessary to prepare and file a report. All staff members who are made aware of any such report shall keep such information confidential. Without releasing any information that would identify the affected student when not required, the Head of School or supervisor shall report suspected cases of reportable communicable diseases or conditions to the Board Chairperson.
- c) Any student suffering from a communicable disease or condition shall follow all control measures issued by the county health director and shall take all necessary precautions to prevent the transmission of the disease or condition. Any School employee who has reason to believe that a student is suffering from a reportable communicable disease and failing to follow safe practices shall report this to the Head of School, supervisor, or health director. Failure to follow control measures may result in disciplinary action. The parent(s) of a student suffering from a communicable disease should inform the Head of School so that appropriate accommodations and precautions may be put in place.

- d) If the county health director notifies the Head of School that a student with a communicable disease or condition may pose a threat to public health, the student and his or her parents shall cooperate with the health director to eliminate the threat. It is the responsibility of the health director to determine when the School community must be notified of the outbreak of a contagious disease. School officials shall cooperate with the health director in issuing such notification.
- e) It is the responsibility of the county health director to notify the School if a student infected with the HIV virus is enrolled or scheduled for admission to the School, and if there is a serious risk of transmission of the virus by the student.

307.2. Head Lice Policy

The School will take prompt action to eliminate the threat of head lice. Head lice do not represent a disease or infection, and can therefore be readily treated. Since lice are transmittable, any student School officials suspect of having head lice will be sent home promptly for treatment.

The student may not return to the School until treatment has been received and the School nurse or other designated School official has determined that no head lice are present. The School provides assistive information to parents about head lice that can be in the student handbook. Any member of the School community who knows of a manifestation of head lice should report this to a responsible staff member.

307.3. Illness and Injury

Sick children should not attend School to protect their own health and the health of other members of the School community. A student with the following symptoms should remain home and not return to School until he or she is symptom-free for 24 hours; symptoms include vomiting, diarrhea, or a temperature of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or above.

Any student with any contagious symptoms – such as frequent coughing or sneezing, eye discharge, or cloudy nasal discharge, all of which may involve the spread of illness – should not attend School. If a student with a contagious illness has attended classes, parents should notify the teacher immediately.

When a student is injured or becomes ill at School, the student will normally be sent to the main office to be assessed by the proper School employee. The student will be treated in the office and sent back to class if appropriate and if the student does not pose a threat to others or to classroom order. Any student seen by a School nurse or other caregiver may be given documentation explaining the nature of the problem and measures taken. The School office will notify the parent(s) if the child needs further assistance or must leave the School.

No underage student may leave the School unsupervised. Any significant injury or accident occurring during the School day or during a School activity will be reported to a parent. The School will treat minor injuries or contact a parent to take the student for medical attention.

307.4. Immunizations

No child may attend School unless a certificate of immunization is provided to the School indicating that the child has received the immunizations required by state law. If on the first day of attendance the child does not present such a certificate, the child's parent shall be notified. The parent shall normally have thirty calendar days from the date of first attendance to obtain the required immunizations for the child. If a vaccine reasonably requires more than thirty calendar days to complete, and a suitable physician reliably verifies this fact, a reasonable extension of time may be granted. At the end of the thirty calendar days or extended period, if the student has not received the required immunizations, the School shall release the student from the school.

The School shall maintain, in a separate medical file for each student, the student's immunization records. These records may be inspected by officials of the county or state health departments upon request and without notification to parents. When a child transfers from or to another school, arrangements will be made to transfer the immunization records. The School will file an immunization report with the Department of Environment, Health and Natural Resources within sixty calendar days after the commencement of a new school year.

307.5 Medications

If a child must be medicated (including over-the-counter and prescribed medication) during School hours and the parent cannot be at School to administer the medication, only the Head of School's designee may administer the medication in compliance with the parent's written, signed, and dated instructions. The Head of School or his or her designee reserves the right to require medical certification by a suitable doctor or to seek advice from a doctor retained by the School to determine the appropriateness of administering any medicine. No teacher may be required to administer medication against his or her wishes.

Minimally, the parent's medication instructions must include the following:

- a) Child's name
- b) Name of medication
- c) Purpose of medication
- d) Time and dosage to be administered
- e) Possible side effects and related treatment
- f) Termination date for administering the medication
- g) Special information about the medications (i.e., storage requirements)

Authorization forms to give medication on campus and medication records must be retained in the student's confidential medical file.

Exceptions to Medication Administration. Middle and Upper School students may, upon proper written authorization and approval by the Head of School or his/her designee, self-medicate with medications that are labeled and packaged in the original container and are required for a medical condition. Any student with diabetes or asthma, or a student subject to anaphylactic (life threatening) reactions will be allowed to carry and self-administer their medication if the parent, physician, and student sign a completed medication request form and the student demonstrates appropriate proficiency in delivering the medication. Self-administering privileges will be withdrawn if the student exhibits a lack of responsibility towards self or others in regards to his or her medication. Any student who abuses the privileges described in this section may be subject to discipline.

307.5. Diabetes Plans and Compliance Reports

The School shall implement rules and procedures for students with diabetes in accordance with State Board of Education requirements and G.S. 115C-375.3. This includes making available necessary information and staff development to teachers and school personnel in order to appropriately support and assist students with diabetes in accordance with their individual diabetes care plans. The designee of the Board shall report to the State Board of Education annually, on or before August 15, on the number of students at the School on such plans and the Board's compliance with state law.

307.6. Annual Information for Students and Parents

The School shall provide health information at the beginning of each school year regarding the following:

- a) **To parents regarding meningococcal meningitis and influenza (and their vaccines).** Such information shall include the causes, symptoms, and how meningococcal meningitis and influenza are spread and the places where Parents may obtain additional information and vaccinations for their children.
- b) **To parents regarding cervical cancer, cervical dysplasia, human papillomavirus (and the vaccines available to prevent these diseases).** This information shall be provided to Parents of children entering grades five through twelve. It shall include the causes and symptoms of these diseases, how they are transmitted, how they may be prevented by vaccination, including the benefits and possible side effects of vaccination, and the places where Parents may obtain additional information and vaccinations for their children.
- c) **To students (in grades five through 12) regarding lawful abandonment of a child.** This information shall include manner in which a Parent may lawfully abandon a newborn baby with a responsible person, in accordance with G.S. 7B-500.

307.7. Compliance With Other Health Requirements

The School shall regularly determine and comply with any federal, state and local requirements pertaining to other safety threats such as dangerous chemicals and blood-borne pathogens. It shall also comply with all requirements as to food inspections and safety.

308. PARENTS AND THE COMMUNITY

308.1. Open Communications

The School recognizes the need for clear and open communication between the Board, staff, and parents concerning issues of mutual interest. Parental suggestions, concerns, and questions regarding School policy and practice are encouraged and are most effectively and efficiently channeled directly through a teacher, the Head of School or his or her designee, or any other person or group assigned to receive such information. Parents are urged not to communicate directly with Board members on such matters to preserve the integrity of their policy-making role, the proper channels of administrative response, and Board neutrality.

308.2. Parent Organizations

The Parent-Teacher Organization, booster clubs, and other parent organizations perform a valuable service to the School. The Board supports these organizations and expects and encourages cooperation from the whole School community, including students and employees.

The Board shall approve all organizations affiliated with the School. The Board, or by delegation, the Head of School, may establish additional rules governing such organizations. The Head of School or his or her designee shall be an *ex officio* member of any such organization.

Each parent organization affiliated with the School must establish bylaws setting forth the purpose of the organization and the rules and procedures by which it shall operate. A copy of the bylaws, and any subsequent revisions, shall be given to the Head of School and a copy shall be kept on file in the School office.

Parent organizations shall secure the advice and approval of the Head of School prior to planning any function or activity in which students are to participate while under supervision of the School.

Unless otherwise determined by the Board, any item purchased by a parent organization for the School or a School activity becomes the property of the School.

308.3. Visitors

The Head of School or designee will post instructions to parents and visitors, directing them to the School office to sign-in upon their arrival on campus.

All parents and visitors shall report to the School office upon arrival and are required to sign a visitation form, including the time of their arrival and their destination. Visitors, including parents, are required to wear a visitor badge identifying them. At their departure, visitors and parents are required to return their badge to the office and sign out on the visitation form.

The Head of School or his or her designee is authorized to:

- a) Limit campus access to persons, including students and Parents, who threaten the safety or well-being of the School community, or whose presence disrupts or is likely to disrupt the School environment;
- b) Determine if sales personnel may make sales visits to School administrators; and
- c) Call law enforcement personnel to protect against any threat posed by any person or to remove from the School property any person who refuses to leave after being directed to do so by authorized personnel.

308.4. Volunteers

The School's viability depends, in large part, on an effective volunteer program. Parents of students attending the School are encouraged to commit time to such volunteer work for the School. Parent volunteer help is especially needed to support field trips, special classroom events, and special School activities. The Head of School or his or her designee is responsible for volunteer oversight, including selection, recruitment, screening, and assignment. Volunteer services may be controlled or terminated at the Head of School's discretion. Volunteers are subject to applicable visitor policies and must report to the School office upon their arrival on campus. Volunteers are bound by the standards of conduct set forth by the School for School employees.

309. STUDENT RECORDS

309.1. Regulations

The federal Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents of students, legal guardians, and emancipated students the right to inspect their own or their child's records. Furthermore FERPA prohibits, with limited exception, other persons from accessing such records without the prior consent by a parent or emancipated student.

A parent or eligible student must normally submit a written notification at least five days in advance to the School records office to inspect the student's file.

The School may disclose appropriately designated "directory information" without written consent, unless the parent or emancipated student has directed the School not to disclose such information. Such information allows the School to publish certain useful information such as an athletic roster or a program bulletin, a yearbook, honor rolls or other recognition lists or graduation programs. The School considers the following information as directory information: a student's name, address, phone number, activity or athletic photograph, dates of attendance, grade level, participation in activities and sports, and weight and height of sports team members. Each year the School will notify parents of the School's "directory information" and parents' right to opt out of such disclosures.

In addition, the School is required to provide military recruiters, upon request, with three directory information categories: names, addresses, and telephone listings of students, unless parents request that the School not provide any such information without their prior written consent. The School will also make parents aware of their rights to withhold this information from military recruiters upon written request.

The Head of School or designee shall compile and maintain an official record for each student that contains information including a birth certificate, dates of admission and departure, attendance data, standardized test results, and grading and promotion data. Each student's official record shall also include notice of any suspensions for a period of more than 10 days or of any expulsion. The notice of suspension or expulsion shall be expunged from the record if the student graduates from high school or is not expelled or suspended again during the two-year period commencing on the date of the student's return to School after the expulsion or suspension.

Official student records shall be permanently maintained. The Head of School is authorized to order the storage of official student records at a central location.

Student records do not include individual notes and records made by teachers and administrators that are in the sole possession of their maker and that are not accessible or revealed to any other person except a substitute teacher or supervisor.

309.2. Student Record Confidentiality

Student educational records are confidential. Access to the official student record and any other student record shall be strictly limited in conformance with state and federal law and Board policy.

A confidential folder shall be maintained for each child evaluated for or receiving exceptional children's services.

Apart from directory information, personally identifiable information about a student shall not be released from a student's record without the prior written consent of the parent, legal guardian, or emancipated student, except to the following persons:

- a) School employees when a legitimate educational purpose exists for accessing the information, including professionals contracted to provide services for a student;
- b) Authorized government or educational officials, or others with legitimate reasons for reviewing a student's records;
- c) Appropriate persons in connection with an emergency, if the release of the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other persons;
- d) Authorized state and local officials with authority to review student information if the disclosure relates to the juvenile justice system's ability to serve, before adjudication, the student whose records are released. The official must certify in writing that the information will not be disclosed to any other party, except as provided by state law or with prior written consent of the student's Parent or an emancipated student;
- e) Officials of other Schools where the student has enrolled or plans to enroll, unless the Parent or an emancipated student has specifically requested in writing that the information not be released to the requesting institution;
- f) Persons acting under court order or subpoena, as long as the Parent or an emancipated student shall be notified of the request prior to its execution;
- g) Accrediting organizations, to the extent necessary to enable them to carry out their functions; and
- h) Financial aid organizations if related to a student's application for receipt of financial aid.

Prior written consent for any other release of personally identifiable information must be signed and dated by the parent, legal guardian, or an emancipated student and must specify the records that may be disclosed, the purpose of the disclosure, and the party or class of parties to whom the disclosure may be made.

309.3. Transcripts

Parents, a student who is eighteen years of age or older, and other K-12 schools where a former student has enrolled may request the student's record. The School may charge for copies of records, including certified copies of transcripts. No fees will be charged for copies of records to be mailed directly to a K-12 school that a student is subsequently applying to or attending.

310. GRIEVANCE RIGHTS AND PROCEDURES

Students, Parents and staff members are entitled to pursue their grievances according to the *Grievance Process and Appeals of Administrative Decisions Policy* attached as **Addendum I**. The official Grievance Policy is included in Board Policy 400 series.

Addendum I: Grievance Process and Appeals of Administrative Decisions

A. Introduction and Objectives. The School seeks to provide a process by which students, Parents, and staff can resolve concerns in a timely and effective manner while balancing this with the need for efficient and effective School operations. Toward this end, this policy establishes mechanisms by which grievances should be addressed through informal and, if appropriate, formal means. All references herein to the Head of School include any person assigned as the Head of School's designee.

B. Informal Grievance Procedure. All concerns should first be addressed directly and informally with the persons involved. This includes reasonably notifying those causing and involved in the grievance, allowing them to reasonably respond, and an opportunity to make good faith efforts toward resolution. If necessary, individuals involved are encouraged to seek the assistance of an objective party to assist with informal resolution.

C. Formal Grievance Procedure. Persons must seek informal, timely resolution before filing a formal grievance, unless doing so is not reasonably feasible, would be futile, or if formal grievance procedures are legally required. The grievant may then file a formal grievance with the Head of School within ten school days after the last informal attempt at resolution; if informal resolution is not required, the employee shall file the grievance within ten school days of the last instance causing the grievance.

The formal procedure shall be initiated by submitting to the Head of School a written request for redress that succinctly states the specific grievance(s), the supporting facts, the basis in Board policy or law (citing specific policies or laws), the requested relief, and the efforts made to resolve the matter informally. The Head of School may require submission of an approved form for such grievance filing.

The Head of School shall determine whether informal resolution requirements have been satisfied or are not required. If the Head of School determines that the grievant is entitled to a formal grievance process, he shall provide a copy of the formal grievance to all other persons implicated by the grievance. The Head of School shall reasonably investigate and consider the matter (which may include meeting with the parties involved and holding an informal hearing) and issue a decision within ten school days from the date of the grievance is filed; additional time for the Head of School's decision shall be allowed when reasonably required by circumstances. All deliberations shall be held in confidence where feasible and involve only persons in a need-to-know position. A decision by the Head of School under these grievance procedures shall be considered a "final administrative decision."

D. Appeals of Right to the School Board. A person has the right to appeal any final administrative decision affecting a constitutional or other legal interest, and/or an interest of the type listed below:

- a. Suspension or expulsion of a student for more than 10 days (per School suspension and expulsion procedures required by Chapter 115C, Article 27 of the North Carolina General Statutes);
- b. An alleged violation of a specified federal or state law, State Board of Education rule, or local Board policy;
- c. The loss or reduction of salary of a school employee under a specific-term contract who is not employed at will; or
- d. Any other decision that, by law, provides for a right of appeal to the school Board and for which there is no other statutory appeal procedure.

Any person seeking a hearing under this section, within 10 school days after the final administrative decision by the Head of School, may request a Board hearing, by submitting to the Board Chairperson a request in writing

by certified mail or personal delivery. The person making such request shall also promptly deliver a copy of the hearing request to the Head of School.

E. Discretionary Appeals to the Board. Any person aggrieved by a decision not involving a matter addressed in Section D above may, within 10 school days after the final administrative decision by the Head of School, request a Board hearing, by submitting to the Board Chairperson a request in writing by certified mail or personal delivery. The person making such request shall also promptly deliver a copy of the hearing request to the Head of School. In such cases, the Board has the discretion to deny or grant a hearing. The Board shall notify the person making the request and the Head of School of its decision, and if a hearing is granted, the time, place, and manner of such hearing.

F. Board Hearing Procedures. In all appeals to the Board, the Board shall provide adequate notice of hearing rights and procedures to all parties concerned and keep a record of any hearing conducted. In the case of hearings required by right under Section D, all parties have the right to appear before the entire Board, to be represented by counsel or other representatives, to submit documentation, and to reasonably examine and cross-examine witnesses. In the case of an employee grievance concerning a loss or reduction of salary, the employee may request and shall be entitled to receive written notice as to the reasons for the final administrative decision; the notice shall be provided to the employee at a time reasonably in advance of any Board hearing. For all discretionary hearings allowed under Section E above, the hearing may be based on the written record or, instead, by personal appearance of the parties. The Board may designate a hearing officer or panel comprised of one or more Board members to act upon such hearing requests on behalf of the Board. The Board reserves the discretion to determine the manner by which it shall conduct such hearing. Board hearings (by right and by discretion under sections D and E, respectively) shall be conducted within ten school days from the date the hearing is requested, unless circumstances reasonably require additional time. A final Board decision shall be rendered and delivered in writing to the respective parties within five school days of concluding the hearing. The decision of the Board shall be final.