

Student & Family Handbook

2024-2025



Revised April, 2024

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Appendix 1 – Internet Safety Policy

Appendix 2 – Anti-Harassment, Anti-Intimidation, or Anti-Bullying Policy

Section One: General Information

Address

Stepstone Academy
3328 Carnegie Avenue
Cleveland, Ohio 44115
Phone: 440-260-6400
Fax: 216-202-1013

Website

www.StepstoneAcademy.org

Facebook

Stepstone Academy stays connected with the community through our Facebook page. To hear School updates and tips, like us on www.facebook.com/stepstoneacademy.

Board of Directors

The Board of Directors at Stepstone Academy is a diverse, passionate group of committed citizens who have dedicated their experience and credibility to this project. Board members include community leaders and organizers, business leaders and members of the local education community. Board members are selected based upon clarity of vision, relevant skills and expertise and a deep commitment to educational excellence. They are responsible for the oversight and governance of the School.

Jeff Thompson,
Chair

Natalie Bata

Christopher Arnold

Jimmie Gray

Tiffany Collins

Michael Wear

Jennifer Ollis-Roth

Section Two: Purpose and Mission Statement

Purpose

The purpose of this Handbook (the “Handbook”) is to provide clarity on the daily operations as well as a summary of the policies and procedures of Stepstone Academy (the “School”). This Handbook does not constitute a contract between the School and the student/parent, and the School reserves the right at its discretion to change or amend the Handbook at any time in the future. Please understand that no set of rules or guidelines can cover every conceivable situation that might arise at the School. The rules, policies, and procedures set forth in this Handbook are intended to apply under normal circumstances. However, from time to time, there may be situations that require immediate or nonstandard responses. This Handbook does not limit the authority of the School to deviate from the normal rules and procedures set forth in this Handbook, and to deal with individual circumstances as they arise in the manner deemed most appropriate by the School taking into consideration the best interests of the School, its faculty, employees, students or overall School community. The Board of Directors (the “Board”) may update policies periodically, even during the school year. If at any point a conflict arises between the Handbook and any Board-adopted Policy, the Policy shall supersede and control.

Mission Statement

Stepstone Academy will build a collaborative culture uniting staff, families, and community partners to provide pathways for growth, academic excellence, and lifelong success for those we serve.

Vision Statement

Our Vision is to serve the diverse neighborhoods of the greater Cleveland area by developing scholars who are of strong character to become independent, contributing members of their communities.

Our Philosophy

Stepstone Academy's school culture ensures that all children are safe, cared for, and focused on learning all day, every day. Our School offers a unique integration of an aspirational, "no-excuses" School culture with a wide array of learning support services to bridge the educational achievement gap and provide a solid foundation for future educational and career success. Using proven educational and curricular methodologies, researched based social emotional curriculum, as well as social service resources, Stepstone Academy emphasizes academic and behavioral expectations that promote a sense of worth, ambition, personal responsibility, civic engagement and a "no excuses" attitude. Curricular alignment with state standards for performance and assessments ensures rigor and accountability.

The School's unique and integrated model for educational and emphasizes an active role for parents and the larger community in the teaching and learning process. Supporting our community of learning is a highly qualified and dedicated faculty, staff, the Board, and community partners.

A Community of Learning

Stepstone Academy is more than just a school. We believe it is important to build a supportive learning environment. The School has identified a group of people whose roles are defined by the form of their participation, interactions, and relationships within the School. This group, called "Community of Learning," is composed of the Board and faculty, as well as scholars and parents of the School.

Our "Community of Learning" is held to the following expectations:

Board of Directors: The Board sets the tone for Stepstone Academy's leadership in the community by providing ongoing and proactive advocacy for the School in the broader community as well as ensuring sound fiscal and legal policies and implementation.

Faculty: Our faculty is led by the Head of School. For purposes herein, the Head of School may also be referred to as the Principal and has similar authority and responsibilities as the superintendent of schools for a local district. The faculty is not only committed to the highest quality of instruction, but also to a sense of responsibility for the personal edification of the children they serve. Fundamental to this effort is clear, open and consistent communication with parents as integral partners in the teaching and learning process.

Scholars: It is the expectation that all scholars can excel as learners and be members of the greater community.

Parents: It is a clear and explicit expectation on the part of Stepstone Academy that parents will be actively engaged in the process of their children’s education. This entails knowledge of the curriculum, activities of the School, engagement with teachers and support with homework and assignments. The term “parent” when used in this Handbook means an official caregiver of a minor child, including but not limited to mother, father, stepparent, grandparent, foster parent or court-appointed guardian.

I will be...	Safe	Trustworthy	Accepting	Respectful
Classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use classroom materials appropriately Walk at all times Keep hands, feet and objects to yourself 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete your work Stay organized 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be ready to learn Try your best Stay on task Participate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pay attention to your teacher Follow instructions Use kind words and actions Raise your hand to speak
Hallway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walk facing forward Keep to the right Keep hallways clear and clean 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Go directly to your destination Set a good example Use a hall pass 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow directions Hold doors for others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep hands and feet to self Stay quiet - classes are in progress
Restroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wash hands Report problems to an adult Walk at all times Keep water in sink 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Throw trash in receptacle Use time wisely 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wait your turn Go, flush, wash 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respect privacy Use kind words and actions Use equipment and supplies properly
Cafeteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow directions from adults Walk at all times Eat only your food 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leave a clean table, chair and floor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sit with feet under table Use an indoor voice Raise your hand for help 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respect other's space Use kind words and actions
Playground	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay in designated area Report problems to an adult Walk to and from building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Line up when you are called Set a good example Use equipment appropriately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Play by the rules Invite others to play 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take turns Use kind words and actions
Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow directions from adults Walk at all times 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay on task Put things away in their proper place Return materials on time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be quiet Use time wisely 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take care of books and equipment Respect others trying to read and learn
Bus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay seated facing forward Watch for traffic when entering/exiting Keep hands and feet to yourself 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen to bus driver No eating or drinking Keep track of your belongings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep your backpack closed Report problems to adult 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep noise down Use kind words and actions Listen for your stop Remember your bus number

Section Three: Rights and Responsibilities

Stepstone Academy believes that accomplishing our mission is a family activity. By choosing to send your child/ren to Stepstone Academy you have chosen to actively participate in your child's life at School.

Parents & Guardian Responsibilities

- I commit to supporting Stepstone Academy's demanding academic program, high standards of conduct and extended school day.
- I commit to making sure that my child is at School on time every single day, unless sick or unable to attend because of a family emergency.
- I commit to ensuring that my child complies with the School's dress code.
- I commit to monitoring my child's schoolwork, homework, and grades regularly. I will always encourage them to work hard and produce the best possible work.
- I commit to maintaining an environment at home where my child can do their homework, with a clean desk or table and necessary materials.
- I commit to reaching out to Stepstone Academy if I have questions about my scholars' academic progress, grades, assignments, attendance and behavior.
- I commit to attending required parent events three times a year (Parent Orientation and Parent Conference Days).
- I have read, understand, and agree to uphold and abide by the Conduct and Discipline Policies.

Scholar Responsibilities

- I understand the STAR Values and commit to always doing my best to follow them.
- I commit to attending School every day unless I am sick, and to give my full respect and my full attention to every task.
- I commit to complying with the School's dress code.
- I commit to doing my homework, bringing it neatly to School and turning it in at the appropriate time.
- I commit to obeying at all times the Stepstone Academy Code of Conduct.
- I commit to speaking regularly and honestly with my parents about my progress at School, my grades, my assignments and my behavior.
- I have read, understand and agree to uphold and abide by the Conduct and Discipline Policies.

Teacher & Staff Responsibilities

- I commit to providing high-quality curriculum and instruction.
- I commit to communicate regularly with families about scholar progress through conferences, parent-teacher meetings, progress reports and other available means.
- I commit to providing reasonable opportunities for parents to participate in their child's learning.
- I commit to motivating my scholars to learn.

- I commit to maintaining high expectations and help every child develop a love of learning.
- I commit to providing a warm, safe, and caring learning environment.
- I commit to providing meaningful homework assignments to reinforce and extend learning.
- I commit to participating in professional development activities that improve teaching and learning and that support the formation of partnerships with families and the community.
- I commit to participate actively in collaborative decision making.
- I commit to work consistently with families and my colleagues to make the School an accessible and welcoming place.
- I commit to respect the School, scholars, staff and families.
- I have read, understand and agree to uphold and abide by the Conduct and Discipline Policies.

The School and community of Stepstone Academy believe that it is only through the cooperation of the parents and School that children develop their full potential.

Parent and Scholar Rights

The Right to Due Process of Law: Before a scholar is suspended or expelled, scholars and parents have the right to be informed about alleged misbehavior and are provided with an opportunity to respond to such a charge. Removal, suspension, expulsion and appeal procedures are posted at the School and are available to parents and scholars upon request.

The Right to Privacy-Property of Scholars: A scholar's right concerning searches of personal property will be balanced by the responsibility of the School to protect the safety and welfare of all scholars.

Homework and Independent Reading

Even though our scholars have a longer school day than other public-school scholars, the amount of instructional time available is not sufficient for scholars to master content and skill objectives. It is essential scholars continue their learning at home.

Teachers and staff at Stepstone Academy follow the most current research recommendations regarding homework.

Homework should give students a chance to practice what has already been learned in the classroom. Reading, writing and numeracy are key skills, and these are the skills our students should be practicing. Teacher feedback on homework is important.

Following the National PTA and the National Education Association guidelines, homework should take approximately 10-minutes per grade level, for instance 30 minutes in third grade. Homework may be given every night, including weekends. Practicing skills taught in the classroom is essential to learning. This practice is necessary and must be completed if our scholars are to succeed and to this end, we will do all that is necessary to assist our families with the completion of homework and learning outside of the classroom.

Section Four: School Procedures

School Hours

The School building will open at 8:00am. School hours are 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Breakfast

Breakfast is served between 8:00 a.m. and 8:30 a.m.

Dismissal and Pick-up Times

Staff supervises scholars to their appropriate destinations for dismissal at 3:30 p.m. Scholars must adhere to School-wide rules during dismissal time. Pick-ups later than ten minutes after dismissal will be documented. A pattern of late pick-up will be brought to the attention of the Head of School and may result in an Improvement Plan. Scholars must have a note if they will not be using their normal means of transportation. See the Scholar Transportation and Pick-up Authorization Forms section for more information. If there is a change of transportation circumstance, you must notify the office, in writing or by phone, by 1:00 p.m.

Emergency Response/Crisis Management Plan

Stepstone Academy strives to provide a safe and secure environment for scholars and to protect your child should a crisis/emergency occur. A school wide **Safety/Crisis Plan** has been developed and provided to School personnel for assisting and responding to various crisis/emergency situations.

Your cooperation is also needed should a crisis arise. In the instance that a crisis or emergency situation should arrive, parents will be notified via a text notification system. For more information concerning a School crisis, please contact our safety helpline at 440-260-8355 for updates. **PLEASE DO NOT CALL THE SCHOOL DIRECTLY.** Calling the School may limit the availability of telephone lines needed to access emergency rescue services.

Safer Ohio Tip Line

In order to provide parents, students or members of the public a means to anonymously report instances that might alter the overall safety of the School, the School has partnered with SaferOH. This tip line is available 24-hours a day, and anyone who has reason to believe that the safety of the School is compromised in any way may anonymously call or text to report any pertinent information to 844-SaferOH (844-723-3764).

Things to report to the tip line include (but are not limited to):

- Bullying incidents
- Withdrawn student behaviors
- Verbal or written threats observed toward students, faculty or schools
- Weapon/suspicious devices on or near school grounds
- Gang related activities
- Unusual/suspicious behavior of students or staff
- Self-harm or suicidal sentiments
- Any other school safety related concerns

Emergency School Closing

Stepstone Academy will be closed due to inclement weather whenever Cleveland Metropolitan Schools are closed due to inclement weather or as Stepstone Academy deems necessary. Please make arrangements for your child if you are not home and School must be dismissed early due to an emergency. Announcements will be sent via text messaging and posted on Fox 8 and WKYC.

In the event the School building is closed but students are required to participate in lessons via the School's Online Day Plan, the School will notify parents through an all-call system, the School's website, or through email, text, or another electronic messaging system that the Online Day Plan is in effect.

Stepstone Academy may be required by state law to make up any days in which the School is forced to close due to weather or unforeseen circumstances. If additional days are needed to be made up, the School will contact parents with additional information indicating the date of make-up days. The days may be made up at the end of the year or on any day School is currently not in session (such as spring break).

Health Screenings

All kindergarten, first, third, fifth, and seventh graders, or such grades as may be require by the Ohio Department of Health, will be offered vision and hearing screenings.

All students enrolling for the first time in either kindergarten or first grade must be screened for hearing, vision, speech and communications, and health or medical problems and for any developmental disorders prior to November 1st.

In addition, Ohio law requires certain students to be screened for indicators of dyslexia.

Holiday and Birthday Parties

Holiday and birthday parties are held at each individual teacher's discretion but are not to interfere with breakfast or lunch service or classroom instruction. If students bring in a treat to share with the entire class, the treat must be individually wrapped.

Lost and Found

Unattended items will be turned in to "Lost and Found" located in the building. If you or your child needs to check for a missing item, please ask your child's teacher for assistance. Items will be made available for scholars and parents on the final week of each quarter. Any items remaining unclaimed at the conclusion of that week will be discarded or donated.

Lunch

Scholars will have a 30-minute lunch. A nutritious lunch will be provided at School or scholars may bring a lunch from home. ***Please remember to put the scholar's name on the sack or lunch box if packing lunch.***

Parent Participation/Special Education

Stepstone Academy expects parents of scholars to be actively involved in the scholars' education. Parents are strongly encouraged to participate in a variety of activities and forums that will support our scholars academically and add to the vitality of our School. Parents will sign a contract with the School to support their scholars learning.

Parents have the expressed right to participate in all meetings dealing with the evaluation, identification, and educational placement of their child. Information concerning a child will be requested from their parent during the Individual Education Program (IEP) process, and the parent will be invited to participate in all IEP meetings.

Required Parent Orientation and Parent Conferences

A mandatory Parent Orientation will be held at the beginning of each school year. At least one parent from every family must attend. Parent/Teacher conferences are held twice each year. During these established times, parents are encouraged to schedule a conference. Parents may also request informal conferences with a teacher, which can be held before or after School or during the teacher's classroom special period. Informal conferences are scheduled based upon the teacher's availability and schedule. Please write your child's teacher to schedule an appointment.

Personal Items

The School will not accept responsibility for any lost, stolen, or damaged personal items of scholars. Scholars are encouraged not to bring belongings to School such as basketballs and/or footballs, which are not necessary for education. ***More specifically, electronic games, toys, cell phones, tablets, iPods and other electronic devices are not permitted unless written permission has been granted by the teacher.*** If any unapproved items are brought to School, they will be confiscated and held in the main office until it is properly retrieved by the parent.

Recess

Be sure to check the weather, if possible, before sending your child to School. If it is wet outside, send your child with an umbrella or raincoat. If it is cold or snowy, your child should have a jacket, hat, gloves, and boots. Please note that boots may not be worn in the classroom. You need to provide a change of shoes if boots are worn to School. ***Remember, recess is outdoors if the temperature is not below 20 degrees including the wind chill.***

Emergency Evacuation Drills

Fire and tornado drills are held periodically throughout the school year. Emergency information sheets are posted in each room in the School so they can be easily referred to by teachers, scholars and visitors.

Fire or Storm/Tornado: When the fire or tornado alarm rings, all scholars and teachers leave the classroom quickly and quietly. Each class is to walk in a single line to its designated spot outside of the building (for fire drills) or to assume the "safe" position in a designated area of the building (for storm/tornado drills).

Earthquake: Should an earthquake occur, we will follow a Drop, Cover, and Hold procedure to ensure the scholars' safety. Specific guidelines are posted in each room.

Evacuation: If evacuation for any reason is deemed necessary, and upon determination that the building cannot be reentered, scholars and staff will be evacuated to an alternative site.

Records and Immunizations

The School recognizes its responsibilities to help protect the health of scholars. Parents are required by state law to fill out an Emergency Medical Authorization Form. These are kept in the front office and used in emergencies. The Emergency Medical Authorization Form provides information from the parent(s) on how they wish the School to proceed in event of a health

emergency involving the scholar and authorization for the School in case emergency action must be taken. It is the responsibility of a parent to update this form throughout the year should their choice(s) or circumstance(s) change.

Unless meeting an exception, the minimum immunization requirements for a student, grades K-12, may be found at the following website: www.odh.ohio.gov or by inquiring at the School. All new scholars are required to submit a copy of their Immunization Records within the first fourteen (14) days that they are enrolled. No scholar shall be permitted to remain in School for more than fourteen (14) days if the scholar has not met the minimum immunization requirements. If a scholar's Immunization Records have not been received by the School by the 15th day of enrollment, the scholar will be released from School and will not be able to attend until they can meet School requirements. Written statements of objection to immunizations due to parent's religious reason are filed in the scholar's health folders. A scholar may also be exempt if they present a physician's statement that immunization is medically contraindicated.

Physicals: Medical authorities and educators urge that every child have a complete medical examination before entering School so that the child may be physically ready to accept all the advantages which education has to offer. Parents will be provided with an appropriate form to complete concerning this examination. Also, a tuberculin skin test to determine if your child has been exposed to tuberculosis is highly recommended, but not required.

Communicable Diseases

Observe your children closely each morning before they leave for School. If the following symptoms are present, your child should be kept home:

- Sore throat
- Running nose
- Vomiting (in the morning or during the night)
- Earache
- Skin rash
- Reddened eyes
- Headache
- Cough
- Watering eyes
- Diarrhea
- Nausea
- Fever of 99° F or higher (once the temperature has returned to normal for at least 24 hours without the use of fever reducing agents, the child may return to School)

In order to control an outbreak of illness at School, please report any communicable illness to the School office as soon as possible. You may call the School nurse any time you have any questions about an illness or medication. Questions frequently arise concerning exclusion from School due to communicable diseases. The following are guidelines for the more common communicable diseases:

Chicken Pox: A skin rash often consisting of small blisters which leave scabs. Requires one-week exclusion following the appearance of the blister.

Impetigo: Blister-like lesions developing into crusted puss like sores. Requires exclusion for 24 hours after the initiation of treatment.

Strep Throat: Often may be accompanied by fever, sore and red throat, and tender and swollen glands of the neck. Requires exclusion from School for 24 hours after the initiation of antibiotic treatment.

Conjunctivitis (Pinkeye): Redness and swelling of membranes of one or both eyes with burning or itching, usually accompanied by purulent discharge. Requires exclusion from School 24 hours after the initiation of treatment.

Head Lice: Usually identified by the presence of grayish white "nits" (egg fastened on the hair, usually near the scalp). Requires exclusion from School until the first treatment and must be observed closely for reinfection.

Re-enrollment

If a parent has not completed all re-enrollment requirements of the School by January 30th, it will be assumed that the child will not return to the School, and the scholar will lose their enrollment priority status.

Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect

Teachers, administrators, and other professionals who may come in contact with scholars are required to report cases of suspected child abuse or neglect. Such report will be made immediately to the County Children Services Board or a municipal or county peace officer in the county in which the suspected abuse or neglect is occurring or has occurred. The Head of School will also be made aware of suspected abuse or neglect.

Tobacco Free Environment

To protect the health of scholars and employees, and in accordance with state law, possessing and/or using tobacco, including Vaporizers ("Vapes") and E cigarettes, and look-alike substances, shall be prohibited on all School property and at any activity sponsored or supervised by the School.

Standardized Testing

Our Scholars are assessed by a nationally norm referenced test. Results of this test will measure the academic growth of each individual scholar. Progress reports will be sent home in fall, winter, and spring of each school year.

Statement Concerning State Testing and Compulsory Attendance Law: Stepstone Academy is a community school established under Chapter 3314 of the Ohio Revised Code. The School is a public school, and scholars enrolled in and attending the School are required to take proficiency tests and other examinations that are prescribed by law. In addition, there may be other requirements for scholars at the School that are prescribed by law. Scholars that have been excused from the compulsory attendance laws for the purpose of home education as defined by the Ohio Administrative Code shall no longer be excused for that purpose upon their enrollment in the School. For more information about this matter, please contact the School or the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce.

State achievement tests tell us how well our scholars are growing in the knowledge and skills outlined in Ohio's Learning Standards. These tests help guide and strengthen future teaching so we can be sure that we are preparing our scholars for long-term success in school, college, careers and life. Test results also allow citizens to know how their local schools are performing compared to others around the state.

Stepstone Academy Parent Organization

Stepstone Academy expects parents of scholars to be actively involved in the scholar's education. Parents are strongly encouraged to participate in a variety of activities and forums that will support our scholars academically and add to the vitality of our School. Parents will be expected to participate and sign an agreement with the School.

Providing a better education for our children requires a close working relationship among parents, administrators, teachers, scholars, and the community. Our goals and objectives include, but are not limited to:

- Expand parental and teacher involvement
- Build greater parental trust and support for the School personnel
- Communicate effectively with parents, administrators, teachers, scholars, and community members
- Ensure high academic standards for all scholars
- Participation in parent educational opportunities

Scholar Transportation and Pick-up Authorization Forms

To help ensure the safety and protection of your child, the School requires written authorization for any adult other than the parent to pick up the scholar. You will find this form at the School's front office. Parent will be asked to annually update this form.

Emergency Changes in Transportation: If your child must change their regular mode of transportation, **you are required to send a written notice to your child's teacher who will forward it to the office.**

Visitors

Stepstone Academy encourages parents and other citizens of the community to visit classrooms to observe the work of scholars. Please contact the office to schedule an appointment if you are interested in observing a classroom, so that your visit will not disrupt instruction. To ensure that no unauthorized persons enter the building and to protect our commitment to instructional integrity, all visitors to the School must report to the office. You will be asked to sign in and receive a visitor's badge, which is to be worn at all times, before visiting elsewhere in the building.

Visitors that contribute to the disruption of the educational environment or present a risk to the safety or well-being of the School's scholars and/or staff may be excluded from the School facility at the discretion of the Head of School.

Visitors are asked not to attempt an impromptu parent-teacher conference, particularly while scholars are in the classroom.

The School reserves the right to deny access to anyone, including parents, to the School facility and grounds at any time in the Head of School's sole discretion.

Volunteers

The protection and well-being of scholars enrolled in Stepstone Academy is paramount. To that end a background check may be required for volunteers depending upon their level of contact with scholars. The background check process is electronic and takes minutes to complete. A fee is required. Results are returned immediately to the School, and volunteers who have no disqualifying events will then be added to our list of volunteers. For more information, please

contact the School.

Notification of Pesticide Application

In accordance with Ohio law, parents of minor children who are enrolled or faculty and staff employed at the School may request prior notifications of the applications of pesticides which are scheduled for a time when School is in session. All such requests shall include the requesting party's email address and/or telephone number and shall be submitted to the School Office. This policy shall not apply to disinfectants, sanitizers, germicides, and anti-microbial agents.

Section Five: Academics

Curriculum

The curriculum at Stepstone Academy is based on and aligns with Ohio's Learning Standards for grade level and content area. The curriculum is updated as new state requirements are implemented. Contact the Head of School for additional information about the general curriculum or a specific content area.

Instruction & Assessment

Teachers are presented with their scholar's academic progress daily. As scholars master a level within a concept, they move to the next level until mastery is once again achieved. Teachers review data in real time. This information allows staff to make immediate instructional adjustments based on results.

There may be cases where the data suggests low overall class scores, which informs the teacher that the instruction was not effective, thus the teacher re-teaches the unit. The School utilizes curriculum specialists to collect and analyze scholar data and to train, evaluate and manage teachers, and report to the School administration on scholar progress. Every teacher will receive comprehensive professional development throughout the year, to learn and develop the best practices in instruction.

Assignment grades and scores shall be calculated using ordinary academic standards of substance and relevance, including any legitimate pedagogical concerns, and shall not penalize or reward a student based on the religious content of a student's work.

Parental Notification Regarding Child Sexual Abuse and Sexual Violence Prevention Curriculum

The law requires the School to include in the curriculum for students in grades K-6 developmentally appropriate instruction in child sexual abuse prevention, including information on available counseling and resources for children who are sexually abused. A parent may request a student be excused from such instruction upon a written request submitted to the Principal or their designee.

Additionally, the law requires students receive developmentally appropriate instruction in sexual violence prevention education beginning in the 7th grade. A parent may request the opportunity to examine the materials used for such instruction by submitting a written request to the Principal or their designee. Additionally, a parent may request a student be excused from such instruction upon a written request submitted to the Principal or their designee.

Credit Flex

The School permits scholars enrolled in seventh and eighth grade to meet curriculum requirements based on demonstration of subject area competency, instead of or in combination with completing hours of classroom instruction.

Credit Flexibility is the customizing of educational delivery to the learning styles and interests of individual scholars. Scholars show what they know and move on to higher-order content they are ready to learn and have not yet mastered. They learn subject matter and earn course credit in ways not limited solely to “seat time” or the walls of a school building. They customize aspects of their learning around their interests and needs, which might include flexible schedules and a choice of modalities (e.g., online learning, work-based learning and community-based projects).

Each scholar that intends to participate in the Credit Flexibility program must develop a Credit Flexibility Plan for approval by the Principal or their designee. For more information regarding Credit Flexibility please consult the School and the School’s Credit Flexibility Policy.

Progress Reports

Scholar’s academic progress will be communicated to parents in the form of 4 report cards and 4 interim reports for all scholars. Please refer to the School Calendar for the exact dates that interim reports and report cards will be sent home.

Field Trips

The use of field trips to supplement and support the academic program is a desirable and worthwhile goal. When scholars are traveling away from School, they are subject to the same rules and regulations outlined in the Code of Conduct. Head of School discretion is paramount in deciding scholar eligibility to participate in field trips based on classroom behavior. Signed permission slips must be on file with the teacher for each scholar for each field trip. ALL scholars are required to comply with the dress code unless otherwise indicated on the permission slip. **All scholars MUST ride on the bus with their teacher to and from the destination.**

Section Six: Special Programs

Stepstone 360^o™ Support Services

One of the things that makes Stepstone Academy unique is our Stepstone 360^o™ support services. We have access to OhioGuidestone™ programs that can provide the entire family with support, counseling, and community connections that will empower families to succeed.

Here is a list of services we can offer our scholars and families through OhioGuidestone:

Community-Based Behavioral Health:

Counseling for Adoptive Families, Early Childhood Mental Health Services, Outpatient Counseling Services, Psychiatric Services, School-Based Counseling and Support Services

Home-Based Behavioral Health Treatment:

Community Mentoring Services, Home-Based Family Treatment, Juvenile Justice Programming, Maternal Depression Counseling, Mental Health Assessment

Workforce Development:

Workforce 360

Parenting and Family Skill Building Services:

Family Support and Parenting Assistance, Classroom Consultants, The Family Nurturing Center of Ohio™, Therapeutic and Medically Fragile Foster Care, *Residential Treatment Campus and Group Homes*

OhioGuidestone Affiliate Organizations:

Family Life Childcare Centers, Personal and Family Counseling Services, Invision Counseling Solutions

Support Services for Clients:

Donation Center, Psychological Evaluation, Pastoral Care, Pharmacy Services

Stepstone Academy also partners with many other community programs, agencies and resources. Our goal is to strengthen scholars, families and the community. To learn more, contact the main office at 440-260-6400.

Section Seven: School Wide Culture and Discipline

Culture and Discipline Philosophy

At Stepstone Academy, we believe creativity and excellence can flourish only within a structured academic setting. Efficient learning and superior teaching cannot take place if a great deal of instructional time is taken up with misbehaviors and distractions. Discipline is a platform for learning. School should be a safe, secure, structured, and predictable place where scholars know how everything works, what is allowed and what is not, and what will happen if there is a transgression of the rules.

Stepstone Academy is dedicated to providing an empowering and emancipating education which prepares our scholars to succeed in college and live their dreams. We recognize in order to produce dramatically different results we must be a dramatically different School.

Rules and Choices

Having thoughtful rules, consequences, and motivators, and taking time to teach them and invest in scholars and their families is vital to the success of every class and the School at large. These procedures promote appropriate behavior, create order and predictability in the classroom, and reduce scholar misbehavior. Rules are positive expectations of how scholars should behave and help the teacher to create the desired learning environment. Consequences outline what will happen if a scholar breaks a rule. Systems reinforcing good behavior reward scholars who are doing it right. This combined approach paves the way for academic excellence.

School-Wide Rules

Stepstone Academy has five School-wide rules all scholars are expected to follow. The classroom rules are posted in the hallways and in each classroom. During the first few weeks of School the rules should be explicitly taught to ensure scholars understand and are able to abide by them.

The five school-wide rules are:

1. Make smart choices.
2. Follow directions quickly.
3. Raise your hand for permission.
4. Keep your eyes on the speaker.

5. Keep your learning community happy.

Consequences

Scholars who break the rules will receive consequences. It is important that we communicate to our scholars the lack of academic progress is the most severe consequence.

Stepstone Academy Dress Code Requirements

At Stepstone Academy, we have dress code regulations in place to ensure that all of our scholars are dressed in a uniformed way that reflects the focus on academic achievement and participation in a strong School culture. We believe that appropriate clothing supports a positive learning environment.

Tops: White, Light Blue, Navy, or Black Polo Shirt; White Collared Button Down with a Tie

Violation: Halter, Midriff, or T-Shirts; Shirts that are not tucked into bottoms

Sweaters: Solid White, Light Blue, Gray, or Navy Sweaters, Cardigans, or Crew Neck Sweatshirts

Violation: Hoodie or Sweatshirts with designs or writing

Bottoms: Black, Khaki, or Navy-Blue Dress Pants, Shorts, Skirts, Skorts, or Jumpers

Violation: Short Skirts (Two Inches above the Knee); Short Shorts (Knee Length Only); Jeans, Cargo Pants, Pants with Logos, Leggings, or Sweatpants

Shoes: Dress Shoes or Tennis Shoes (Must have on PE days)

Violation: High-Heels, Flip-Flops, Open-Toed Shoes, Platform Shoes, Heelys

Jewelry: No Dangling or overly large Earrings, No Costume Jewelry

Violation: Any item deemed inappropriate by Head of School or, in the sole discretion of the Head of School or their designee, is or may be a safety concern or distracting to the educational environment

Section Eight: Conduct and Discipline Policies

Code of Conduct

The *Code of Conduct* contains regulations governing the conduct of scholars. It has as its central purpose the prevention of actions interfering with the School program. Scholars, parents, and staff are expected to acquaint themselves with this Handbook, building procedures, and the *Code of Conduct*. Every staff member of Stepstone Academy is required to enforce this *Code of Conduct*.

Effective learning cannot occur without an approach to scholar behavior that stresses self-discipline consistent with the maturity level of the scholars. Discipline, which reflects the School's policy of non-violence, exists to promote an atmosphere favorable to concentration, attention and creativity. In addition, discipline is a positive attempt to help all scholars realize that they are important, worthwhile and capable of learning. In classroom management, teachers shall be fair, firm, consistent and impartial, displaying sensitivity to the needs of the individual scholar.

Parents and scholars must be aware of School procedures concerning acceptable and unacceptable behavior in our School, on buses to School, etc. Our behavior program is based upon the belief that an individual does not have the right to infringe upon the rights of others.

Also, all people concerned with the School have the responsibility of creating a positive environment within the building, on School property, or at any School event.

Any violation of the *Code of Conduct* may subject the scholar to discipline up to and including suspension and/or expulsion from the School. The following is a list of actions (but not limited to) that would be considered violations to the code of conduct. Each offense or series of offenses will be evaluated individually based on the particular circumstances of the offense(s).

The rules of the scholar Code of Conduct apply to any conduct:

- On School grounds, including but not limited to, during the school day, immediately before or after school hours, or any other time when the School is being utilized by a School group
- On or off School grounds at any School activity, function, or event
- Traveling to and from School, including actions on any school bus, van, or public conveyance
- Occurring off of School grounds which, in the sole discretion of the Head of School may affect the learning environment
- Regardless of where it occurs, if the conduct is directed at a School official or employee, or the property of such School official or employee.

Acts of Misconduct – Infractions of the Code of Conduct include, but are not limited to:

- Academic Misconduct
- Altering Official Documents
- Assault
- Bomb Threat
- Cheating
- Criminal Act
- Damage/Destruction of Property
- Disruptive Behavior
- Electronic Access
- Electronic and Other Communication Devices
- Extortion/Robbery
- Failure to Comply with School-Wide Discipline and Classroom Policies
- Fighting
- False Fire, Tornado or Bomb Threat
- Firearm or look alike
- Gambling
- Gang Activity
- Gang involvement
- Hazing
- Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying
- Illegal or Dangerous Substances
- Illegal Organization
- Improper Public Display of Affection
- Inappropriate Gestures Between or Toward Scholars or Staff

- Inappropriate language Obscenities/ Verbal Abuse/ Vulgarities
- Inappropriate Physical Contact
- Inappropriate Social Behavior
- Insubordination
- Intimidation/Interference/Hazing of Scholar or Staff
- Knife, including counterfeit or look-alikes
- Littering
- Loitering
- Lunch Time Behaviors
- Lying
- Misuse of Electronic Online Hardware or Software
- Offensive Material
- Overt Disruptive Behavior
- Possession of a Weapon, including counterfeit or look-alike weapons
- Reckless Endangerment
- Refusal to Do Classroom Work
- Safety
- Sale, Use, Possession, or Distribution of Alcohol, Drugs, Tobacco (including vaporizers and E-cigarettes), other Chemical Controlled Substances, or look alike substances
- Sexual Misconduct, Sexual Advances, Intentional Inappropriate Touching, Verbal Remarks, Requests or Demands for Sexual Favors
- Sexual or Other Harassment
- Tardiness
- Technology Misuse
- Theft/Vandalism
- Transportation
- Trespassing
- Use/Possession/Concealment of any dangerous or illegal instruments, counterfeits, or look alike including, but not limited to weapons, fireworks, etc.
- Use/Possession/Sale/Transmission and/or Concealment of any Drug or look alike drug or other illegal or Controlled Substance
- Vandalism of School Facilities
- Verbal altercation
- Violating Classroom Rules
- Wrongful Conduct
- Health and Safety- Actions that in the sole discretion of the Head of School endanger the health and/or safety of fellow students, staff, or guests in the School
- Any other action that the Head of School deems, in their sole discretion, may impede, obstruct, interfere or violate the mission, philosophy of the School or the School environment

Discipline Infractions

All scholars are expected to follow the *Code of Conduct*. Disciplinary actions for infractions will

be strictly enforced. Scholars do not have the right to intrude upon another scholar's opportunity to learn. There will be no tolerance of behavior that violates the rights of anyone else to learn and participate in School activities.

Safety

The safety and wellbeing of all scholars, staff and premises is a primary concern of Stepstone Academy. The staff works diligently to ensure that the campus is as safe as possible by conducting searches where warranted and maintaining heightened levels of security and supervision. Scholars are supervised at all times, including breaks. Parents with concerns about safety should contact the Head of School immediately.

Respect

For Teachers: Scholars are expected to be respectful to all teachers and School personnel at all times. A scholar can be removed from a class for rude or disruptive behavior and placed in an alternative educational environment within the School building.

For Peers: Scholars are expected to be polite to one another and to treat peers with kindness and respect. This includes attentive listening to the opinions of classmates and the display of respect for the rights, beliefs, and personalities of all members of the scholar body. Physical FIGHTING is not an acceptable means of conflict resolution and WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.

For Property: Scholars are expected to treat all property, personal and otherwise, with respect. Defacement or destruction of property is not acceptable and will result in severe consequences, including restitution for all damaged property. Scholars and/or parents will be held accountable for any destruction of property belonging to the School or an individual.

For Scholars: Staff and teachers are expected to treat scholars with the same respect they ask for. It is the belief of the School that one way scholars acquire their behaviors is by modeling the adults around them. To that end, it is hoped that scholars will learn to respect themselves and others by receiving respect.

Discipline

Teachers and staff will use discretion with rules infractions, but in general, the following steps will be taken when scholar(s) fail to follow directives and infringe on the rights and well-being of others:

1. Classroom intervention system
2. Contact parent(s) for involvement
3. Complete disciplinary report (scholar, teacher, and parent)
4. File original report with recommendations with the Head of School

The School is not required to follow this general step-by-step process and may move immediately to disciplinary action based on the severity of the infraction.

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports

The Board has adopted a policy to guide the use of Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and the limited use of restraint and seclusion at the School. It is the Board's belief that every effort should be made to prevent the need for the use of restraint and for the use of seclusion. The use of a non-aversive effective behavioral system such as PBIS shall be used to create a learning environment that promotes the use of evidence-based behavioral interventions, thus enhancing academic and social behavioral outcomes for all students.

Restraint or seclusion shall not occur, except when there is an immediate risk of physical harm to the student or others and shall occur only in a manner that protects the safety of all children and adults at school. Every use of restraint or seclusion shall be documented and reported in accordance with the Board adopted policy.

The PBIS prevention-oriented framework or approach applies to all students, all staff, and all settings. Research supports the conclusion that PBIS, when integrated with effective academic instruction, provides the support students need to become actively engaged in their own learning and academic success.

The complete PBIS Policy is available on the School's website, including information on LiveSchool, a program implemented to track, reward, and improve student behavior. For more information regarding the PBIS policy, including your rights to file a complaint with the School and/or state, contact the Head of School.

Rewards

The rules and regulations are designed to promote responsible behavior while giving each scholar the opportunity to express themselves in their own unique manner. Teachers will work with the Head of School to design programs to reward scholars for exemplary performance and behavior.

Suspension & Expulsion

The rules of suspension and expulsion must follow due process mandates as required by law.

Out-of-School Suspension

Out-of-school suspension is removal of a scholar from school for a period of one to ten days. While students are serving an out-of-school suspension, they shall be afforded the opportunity to complete any classroom assignment missed because of the suspension for at least partial credit. A student serving an out-of-school suspension shall not receive a failing grade on a completed assignment solely on account of the suspension. During an out-of-school suspension, scholars are not permitted to participate in classes, extracurricular activities, or be on any School property.

Only the Head of School, assistant Head of School, or the Head of School's designee may suspend a scholar. Prior to suspending a scholar, the Head of School, assistant Head of School, or the Head of School's designee, must do both of the following:

1. Give written notice of the intention to suspend and the reasons for the intended suspension to the scholar. If the proposed suspension is based on a violation listed in Ohio Revised Code Section 3313.662(A) and the scholar is sixteen years of age or older, the notice must contain a statement that the School may seek to permanently exclude the scholar if the scholar is convicted of or adjudicated a delinquent child for that violation; and
2. Provide the scholar an opportunity to appear at an informal hearing before the Head of School, assistant Head of School, or the Head of School's designee, and challenge the reasons for the intended suspension or otherwise explain. The hearing can happen immediately and can happen anywhere - the hall, office, classroom, etc.

Within one school day after the time of the scholar's suspension, the Head of School, assistant Head of School, or the Head of School's designee, shall also provide written notice of suspension to the parent/guardian of the scholar and the Board's treasurer. The notice shall contain:

- The reasons for the suspension
- Notice of the right of the scholar or scholar's parent/guardian/custodian to appeal to the Board or the Board's designee
- Notice that the scholar/parent/guardian/custodian has the right to be represented in all appeal proceedings
- Notice of the right to be granted an appeal hearing before the Board or the Board's designee to be heard against the suspension
- Notice of the right to request that the hearing be held in executive session
- Notice that the School may seek the scholar's permanent exclusion if the suspension was based on a violation listed in Ohio Revised Code Section 3313.662(A) that was committed when the scholar was sixteen years of age or older and if the scholar is convicted of or adjudicated a delinquent child for that violation
- The date and manner by a scholar or parent/guardian/custodian may notify the Board of their intent to appeal the suspension. If the scholar or parent/guardian wishes to appeal the suspension, the request must be submitted, in writing, to the Head of School within seven (7) calendar days of the written notice of suspension. The Head of School shall immediately forward this written appeal to the Board and Board's appeal hearing designee.

If there are fewer than ten school days remaining, the out-of-school suspension may not be applied to the following school year, but the Head of School may require the scholar to participate in a community service program or other alternative consequences for a number of hours equal to the remaining period of the suspension.

In-School Suspension

If a scholar is issued an in-school suspension, the scholar shall be permitted to complete any classroom assignments missed because of the suspension and will receive at least partial credit for such completed assignments as determined by the Head of School and teaching staff. In no event shall a student receive a failing grade on a completed assignment solely on the basis of the student's suspension. Furthermore, the Head of School shall ensure the scholar is serving the suspension in a supervised learning environment.

Expulsion

Except as specifically provided for by statute, the Head of School may expel a scholar for a period not to exceed the greater of 80 school days or the number of days remaining in the semester or term in which the offense leading to expulsion took place. Scholars expelled from the School are not permitted to participate in classes, extracurricular activities, or be on any School property. Expulsions may extend into the following school year.

Only the Head of School may expel a scholar. No scholar shall be expelled unless prior to the expulsion, the Head of School does both of the following:

1. Gives the scholar and parent written notice of the intention to expel the scholar and the reasons for the intended expulsion. The notice shall include the reasons for the intended expulsion, notification of the right of the scholar, parent or their representative to appear before the Head of School or their designee to hear and to challenge the reasons for the intended expulsion or otherwise to explain the scholar's actions, and the notification of the time and place to appear. The time to appear shall not be sooner than three (3) nor later than five (5) school days after the notice has been given unless the Head of School grants an extension of time at the request of the scholar, their parent or representative. If

an extension of time is granted, the Head of School shall notify the scholar and their parent or representative of the new time and place to appear. If the proposed expulsion is based on a violation listed in Ohio Revised Code Section 3313.662(A) and the scholar is sixteen years of age or older, the notice must contain a statement that the Head of School may seek to permanently exclude the scholar if the scholar is convicted of or adjudicated a delinquent child for that violation.

2. Provides the scholar and parent an opportunity to appear in person before the Head of School or their designee to challenge the reason for the intended expulsion or otherwise to explain the scholar's actions.

Within one school day after the time of the scholar's expulsion, the Head of School shall also provide written notice of expulsion to the parent of the scholar and the Board's treasurer. The notice shall contain:

- The reasons for the expulsion
- Notice of the right of the scholar, or scholar's parent to appeal to the Board or the Board's designee
- Notice that the scholar/parent has the right to be represented in all appeal proceedings
- Notice of the right to be granted an appeal hearing before the Board or the Board's designee to be heard against the expulsion
- Notice of the right to request that the hearing be held in executive session
- Notice that the School may seek the scholar's permanent exclusion if the suspension was based on a violation listed in Ohio Revised Code Section 3313.662(A) that was committed when the scholar was sixteen years of age or older and if the scholar is convicted of or adjudicated a delinquent child for that violation and that the expulsion may be extended if a juvenile court or criminal proceeding regarding such violation is pending at the time the expulsion terminates
- The date and manner by a scholar or parent may notify the Board of their intent to appeal the expulsion. If the scholar or parent wishes to appeal the expulsion, the request must be submitted, in writing, to the Head of School within fourteen (14) calendar days of the written notice of expulsion. The Head of School shall immediately forward this written appeal to the Board and Board's appeal hearing designee.

If the Head of School expels a scholar for more than twenty school days or for any period of time if the expulsion will extend into the following semester or school year, the notice shall provide the scholar and the scholar's parent with information about services or programs offered by public and private agencies that work toward improving those aspects of the scholar's attitudes and behavior that contributed to the incident that gave rise to the scholar's expulsion. The information shall include the names, addresses, and phone numbers of the appropriate public and private agencies.

An expelled scholar will be provided with a date for re-entry and the date for the re-entry conference. The expelled scholar and parent must be present in the re-entry conference. The scholar and parent will be notified in the event that the scholar fails to attend the re-entry conference.

Expulsion proceedings will be pursued against a scholar who has committed an act warranting expulsion even if the scholar has withdrawn from School for any reason after the incident giving rise to the hearing, but before the hearing or decision to expel. If after the hearing, the scholar would have been expelled for a period of time had the scholar remained in School, the expulsion will be for the same length of time as on a scholar who has not withdrawn from School.

Weapons Expulsion

A scholar **must** be expelled for one year for bringing a firearm to the School or onto School Property (any Property owned, used, or leased by the School for school, School extra-curricular activities or School related events).

A scholar **may** be expelled for a period of time not to exceed one year for:

- Bringing a firearm to an interscholastic competition, an extracurricular event, or any other School program or activity that is not located at the School or on School Property.
- Possessing a firearm at School, on School Property, or at an interscholastic competition, an extracurricular event or any other School program or activity which firearm was initially brought onto the property by another person.
- Bringing a knife capable of causing serious bodily injury to School, onto School Property, an interscholastic competition, an extracurricular event, or any other program or activity sponsored by the School or which the School is a participant.
- Possession of a knife capable of causing serious bodily injury at School, on School Property, or at an interscholastic competition, an extracurricular event, or any other program or activity sponsored by the School or which the School is a participant which knife was initially brought onto the property by another person.
- Committing an act while at School, on School Property, at an interscholastic competition, an extracurricular event, or any other School program or activity that is a criminal offense when committed by an adult that results in serious physical harm to persons or serious physical harm to property.
- Making a bomb threat to a School building or to any premises at which a School activity is occurring at the time of the threat.

Firearm has the same meaning as provided pursuant to the "Gun Free Schools Act of 1994." At the time this policy was adopted, the above-referenced statute defined a firearm as any weapon (including a starter's gun) which will or is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive; including the frame or receiver of any such weapon; and any firearm muffler or silencer; or any destructive device. If the definition of a firearm as provided by the "Gun Free Schools Act of 1994" changes, then the definition set forth in this policy shall automatically change to conform to it.

A "knife capable of causing serious bodily injury" is defined as any weapon or cutting instrument consisting of a blade or edge that is not otherwise determined by the Head of School to be necessary in the particular school setting and used for its intended school purpose.

The specific circumstances under which the Head of School may, in their sole discretion, reduce a one-year expulsion may include:

- The scholar was unaware that they brought or was in possession of a firearm or knife.
- The scholar legitimately did not understand that the item they brought or possessed was a firearm or knife.
- The scholar brought the item to School as part of an educational activity and did not realize it would be considered a firearm or knife.
- A recommendation from qualified individuals concerning circumstances that justifiably mitigate the scholar's culpability.
- The scholar may be eligible for participation in an alternative program.

Emergency Removal

If a scholar's presence poses a continuing danger to persons or property, or an ongoing threat of disrupting the academic process, the scholar can be removed from School without first satisfying the prior notice and hearing requirements set forth above. Written notice of the hearing and the reason for the removal shall be given to the scholar as soon as practicable prior to the hearing. The hearing shall be held on the next school day following the day of the scholar's initial removal. Scholars are to remain home during school hours and not attend/participate in School sponsored function(s) pending the hearing. Should an out-of-school suspension be warranted, days of removal may be applied to the days of out-of-school suspension.

If a scholar in grades pre-kindergarten to three poses a continuing danger to persons or property, or an ongoing threat of disrupting the academic process, the scholar can be removed from School without prior notice of hearing. The scholar may only be removed for the remainder of the school day and will be permitted to return to School and participate in extracurricular activities the following day. In this case, the School may forego the written notice and one-day post-removal hearing requirements.

The School may not initiate suspension or expulsion proceedings against a scholar in grades pre-kindergarten to grade three who was removed as an emergency removal unless the scholar has committed an act that could result in a one-year expulsion under the Weapons Expulsion rules, described above, or as necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of the scholar, the scholar's fellow classmates, the classroom staff and teachers, or other school employees.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004

The *Code of Conduct* applies to all scholars enrolled in the School; however, scholars with disabilities will be treated in accordance with the provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004, and any subsequent regulations affecting the provisions. This does not necessarily preclude exclusion from School or school bus/vehicles as a result of a crisis or any emergency or as provided by law.

For more information on the rights of scholars with disabilities, please contact the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce, or refer to the publication, *A Guide to Parent Rights in Special Education*, available at www.education.ohio.gov.

Searches

Desks, computers, and other items provided to scholars for their use remain the property of the School. Scholars by law have no expectation of privacy in any School property assigned to them, including desks, storage areas, computers, software, etc. School property may be searched at any time, for any reason, without notice. No scholar shall lock or otherwise impede access to any storage area. Unapproved locks will be removed and destroyed with no compensation owed to the scholar.

The Head of School and their designees are permitted to search the person and personal property (purse, backpack, gym bag, etc.) of a scholar where there is reasonable suspicion to believe that evidence will be obtained indicating the scholar's violation of either the law or School rules. The search of a scholar's person or intimate personal belongings shall be conducted by the Head of School or their designee. This person should be of the scholar's gender and the search shall be conducted in the presence of another staff member of the same gender. However, no strip searches may be conducted by School personnel. The Head of

School may call upon the assistance of local law enforcement to aid in the search of a scholar's person or intimate personal belongings.

School Bus Safety and Regulation

School bus drivers carry a heavy burden of responsibility for the lives of their passengers. They must give full attention to driving while scholars are in transit. In order to do this, the following rules must be followed by the scholars:

Railroad crossings: Scholars should not talk when the bus is approaching a railroad crossing or highway intersection.

Seats: Drivers may assign seats and have a seating chart with them. Scholars must remain in their assigned seats.

Windows: Scholars must keep head, books, and miscellaneous objects inside the bus, never outside the windows. Windows are to be opened only with approval of the driver.

Eating: Scholars may not eat on the bus. Exceptions may be made only with approval of the driver.

Conversation: Scholars may talk quietly. No yelling is permitted inside the bus or out windows.

Bus stops: Scholars should wait until the bus stops and the driver gives the signal for crossing when boarding or leaving the bus.

Crossing: Scholars should cross only in front of the bus, and about ten feet in front of the bus.

Time: Scholars should be on time at designated pickup locations in the mornings and when School is dismissed.

Littering: Littering is not permitted on or from the bus.

Unauthorized Passengers: Non-school children and/or adults not approved by the Head of School shall not be transported on a school bus.

Unauthorized Entering or Leaving: Scholars may not enter or leave a bus at other than their regular stop unless written permission is given by parents and approved by the Head of School. Scholars must remain on the bus from the time of boarding until arriving at the approved place of departure.

Animals: Animals are not permitted on the school bus.

State law prohibits parents or any unauthorized individual from boarding or impeding the orderly boarding or departing of scholars on school buses. Should there be a situation or problem relating to the school bus, the parents must contact the Head of School to resolve the concern.

Scholar Use/Misuse of Technology

Technology can greatly enhance the instructional program. Computers and use of the network or on-line services support learning and enhance instruction. Computer networks allow people to interact with many computers; the Internet allows people to interact with hundreds of thousands of networks. As more fully set forth in the Internet Safety Policy, attached to the Handbook as Appendix 1, all use of the School's network, computers, hardware or software are to be used in a responsible, efficient, ethical, and legal manner. Failure to adhere to this policy may result in the revocation of the user's access privilege, including to parents who misuse the School's computers, networks, or other School owned technology. The parent and scholar

understand that the use of technology may be monitored and/or recorded and there is no expectation of privacy whatsoever.

The School makes no warranties of any kind, either express or implied, that the functions or the services provided by or through School's network will be error-free or without defect. The School will not be responsible for any damage users may suffer, including but not limited to, loss of data, interruptions of service, or exposure to inappropriate material or people. The School is not responsible for the accuracy or quality of the information obtained through the system. The School will not be responsible for financial obligations arising through the unauthorized use of the system. Users or parents of users will indemnify and hold the School harmless from any losses sustained as the result of misuse of the system by the user.

Parents that utilize computers and technology accessible through the School are expected to abide by this policy. Parents that fail to follow this policy will be denied further access to the technology accessible through the School and may be subject to additional consequences as appropriate.

Anti-Harassment, Anti-Intimidation or Anti-Bullying Policy

As more fully set forth in the School's Anti-Harassment, Anti-Intimidation, or Anti-Bullying Policy, (attached to the Handbook as Appendix 2) behavior meeting the definition of Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying is strictly prohibited. Students who are determined to have engaged in such behavior are subject to disciplinary action. The School's commitment to address such behavior involves a multi-faceted approach which includes the promotion of a School atmosphere in which these prohibited acts will not be tolerated by students, staff, or the School community.

It is imperative that Harassing, Intimidating, or Bullying behavior(s) are identified only when the specific elements of the definition are met because the designation of such conduct carries with it special statutory obligations. However, any misconduct, whether or not it meets the required definition, will be reviewed and the perpetrator will be subjected to appropriate disciplinary consequences.

Section Nine: Attendance and Early Dismissal Procedures

Attendance Procedures

Achievement and attendance are highly related. Each scholar should attend School daily. Rules and regulations regarding excessive absenteeism and tardiness shall be enforced.

Scholars are expected to be in school on time, every day. Occasionally, absence or tardiness cannot be avoided. Absences and tardies may be "excused" or "unexcused." An absence or tardy may be excused if the scholar or parent provide the Head of School with verification, if any, in the manner and timeframe determined to be satisfactory in the sole discretion of the Head of School. Where appropriate, the School may require written documentation. The following reasons may be excused:

- Personal Illness of the scholar
- Illness in the family necessitating the presence of the scholar
- Quarantine of the home (The absence of a scholar from School under this condition is limited to the length of quarantine as fixed by the proper health officials.)
- Death of a relative
- Medical, Behavioral, or Dental appointment

- Observance of religious holidays consistent with the truly held religious beliefs of the scholar or the scholar's family
- Absences due to a scholar's placement in foster care or change in foster care placement or any court proceedings related to their foster care status
- Absences due to a scholar being homeless
- Absences due to military deployment activities of a parent
- Emergency or other set of circumstances as deemed by the Head of School to constitute good and sufficient cause for absence from School

Parents must notify the School on the day a scholar is absent unless the Head of School, or designee, has been notified in advance of the absence. This notification requirement shall not apply to scholars who are in home-based, online, or internet or computer-based instruction or in instances where a scholar was not expected to be in attendance at the School building due to their participation in off-campus activities.

If a scholar is dismissed early for a valid reason, the Head of School may require verification from the scholar or their parent. The parent must meet the scholar in the School office before the scholar will be excused.

All other absences are "unexcused" and include but are not limited to truancy, transportation issues, oversleeping, personal appointments (hairstylist, etc.), unapproved vacations, missing the bus, and instances where the Head of School has deemed verification is necessary and the parent or scholar fails to provide such verification in the timeframe and manner deemed appropriate by the Head of School.

Attendance Problem Procedures

Ohio law provides that scholars are considered a "habitual truant" if they have been absent without a legitimate excuse for thirty (30) or more consecutive hours of instruction, forty-two (42) or more hours of instruction within a school month, or for more than seventy-two (72) hours of instruction within a school year. Scholars who have been designated a "habitual truant" will be referred to the Stepstone Academy's Absence Intervention Team to receive appropriate supports consistent with Ohio law and the School's Scholar Attendance policy. Such supports may include, but are not limited to, parental notification, a truancy intervention plan, an absence intervention plan, counseling, referrals to parental programs, notification to the registrar of motor vehicles, and/or referral to the juvenile court. Stepstone Academy will notify the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce of habitual truant designations, related parental notifications, related court adjudications, and absence intervention plans as required by Board Policy and Ohio Law.

Ohio law provides that scholars are considered to demonstrate "excessive absence" if the student has missed 38 or more hours of instruction in one school month or 65 or more hours of instruction in the school year with a nonmedical excuse or without a legitimate excuse. When a student meets either of these thresholds, the School will notify the student's parent in writing within seven days of the triggering absence and may implement appropriate interventions and/or refer the student and their family to community resources as deemed appropriate by the School.

Stepstone Academy will not suspend, expel, or remove a scholar from School solely on the basis that the scholar was absent from School, tardy, or cut class without legitimate excuse. Stepstone Academy believes regular attendance helps ensure scholars maximize their opportunities to receive instruction and progress academically. Although absenteeism will not directly result in a scholar's retention from progressing to the next academic grade level, the

results of regular absenteeism may impact a scholar's ability to otherwise meet promotion requirements.

Early Dismissal

Scholars who leave School anytime during of the day are marked absent for all instructional time missed.

Tardiness

Scholars who arrive on time will have a better chance to achieve. Scholars who arrive after 8:30 a.m. will be marked tardy. Tardy scholars must be signed in at the front desk upon arrival. A tardy will only be excused if a legitimate reason is provided and deemed acceptable by the Head of School. See Attendance Problem Procedures for reasons a tardy/absence will be excused.

Truancy

Ohio law requires a school to prohibit the promotion of a scholar to the next grade level if the scholar has been absent without excuse for more than 10% of the required school attendance days of the current school year and/or has failed two or more of the required curriculum subject areas in the current grade unless the Head of School and the scholar's teacher of any failed subject areas agree that the student is academically prepared to be promoted to the next grade level.

Mandatory Withdrawal

Ohio law requires the withdrawal of any scholar who, without legitimate excuse, fails to participate in 72 consecutive hours of learning opportunities during any academic year.

Section Ten: Illness and Medication

Illness

When a scholar becomes seriously ill at School, the parent will be notified to take the child home. Any scholar suspected of having a communicable disease will be referred to a physician for examination and recommendation for exclusion from School. Readmission will be allowed by a physician's statement.

A child who is ill will not perform well at School and may be exposing the other scholars in the classroom. Please keep your child home if any of these symptoms are present:

- A fever of 99° F or higher (once the temperature has returned to normal for at least 24 hours without the use of fever reducing agents, the child may return to school)
- An undiagnosed rash
- An earache or draining ear
- Diarrhea or vomiting
- Severe sore throat
- Persistent or severe cough
- Persistent or severe headache
- A known communicable disease

If your child is sent home with a fever of 99 degrees or greater, they must be fever-free without medication for 24 hours before returning to school.

Please call 440-260-6400 by 8:00 a.m. on days your child is ill. You may call before the office opens and leave a message. When reporting scholar absences, please report any of the following communicable diseases: chicken pox, conjunctivitis (pink eye), fifth disease, hepatitis, influenza (fever, upper respiratory infection, headache, and body aches), measles, mumps, meningitis, strep throat, lice, ringworm, and scabies. This information is helpful in the control of illness among scholars.

Please note that while bed bugs are not considered a communicable disease, Stepstone Academy has a bed bug management plan which is available through the School's office.

Medication

The following information is a guide for the administration of medication. **It is the scholar's responsibility to come to the office to receive medication. New authorization forms must be submitted at the beginning of each school year and updated should any information change during the course of a school year.**

Scholars needing medication are encouraged to receive the medication at home, if possible. If necessary for the School to administer any prescription or non-prescription medication, the parent must present to the School a statement signed by both the parent and physician which includes all of the following information:

- Name and address of the scholar
- Scholar's teacher
- The name and doses of the medication contained in the inhaler or auto injector, if applicable
- Drug name and dosage to be administered
- Times or intervals at which each dosage of drug is to be administered
- Date on which drug administration begins
- Date on which administration of drug ends
- Any severe adverse reactions that should be reported to the physician and one or more telephone numbers at which the person who prescribed medication can be reached in emergencies
- Special instructions for administering drug, including sterile conditions and storage
- Instructions outlining procedures to follow if the medication does not provide adequate relief
- A list of adverse reactions that may occur to a child for whom the medication was not intended who uses the medication
- Any other special instructions

The parent agrees to submit a revised statement signed by the parent and physician if any of the information originally provided to the School changes.

Medication will be received at School in the container in which the prescribing physician or other licensed professional dispensed it. Medication and dosage listed on the label must be identical to the authorization form. Parents are responsible for keeping a record of the amount of medication at School and for sending more when needed.

Scholars who intend on possessing and using a metered dose or dry powder asthma inhaler to prevent asthmatic symptoms or an epinephrine injector to treat anaphylaxis must first present a statement from the parent and physician including the information set forth above as well as an acknowledgement that the prescriber has determined that the scholar is capable of possessing

and using the injector or inhaler appropriately and has provided the scholar with training in the proper use of the injector or inhaler.

A person designated by the School will establish a location in the School to store medications to be administered. All such medications shall be stored in that location in a locked storage place but those that require refrigeration may be kept in a refrigerator in a place not commonly used by scholars.

No person who has been authorized by the School to administer any medication and has a copy of the most recent statement which was given prior to administering the medication will be liable for administering or failing to administer the medication, unless such person acts in a manner constituting gross negligence or reckless misconduct.

All medication remaining in the building after the last day of School will be discarded.

Responsibilities of the Scholar with Life-threatening Allergies

The long-term goal is for the scholar with life-threatening allergies to be independent in the prevention, care, and management of their allergies and reactions based on their developmental level. With this in mind, scholars with life-threatening allergies are asked to follow these guidelines:

- Avoid trading or sharing foods.
- Wash hands with soap and water before and after eating or have parents provide Wet Ones disposable wipes. (Wet Ones is the only recommended brand.)
- Learn to recognize symptoms of an allergic reaction and notify an adult immediately if a reaction is suspected.
- Promptly inform an adult as soon as accidental exposure occurs or symptoms appear.
- Develop a relationship with the School nurse and at least one other trusted adult in the School to assist in identifying issues related to the management of the allergy in School.
- Do not eat anything with unknown ingredients or ingredients known to contain an allergen.
- Develop a habit of always reading ingredients before eating food.
- If medically necessary, the scholar is responsible for carrying medication(s). If a Medic Alert bracelet is provided by the parent, the child is responsible for wearing the ID at all times.
- Empower the scholar to self-advocate in situations that they might perceive as compromising their health.

Responsibilities of the Parents of Scholars with Life-threatening Allergies

Parents are asked to assist the School in the prevention, care, and management of their child's allergies and reactions. Additionally, parents are encouraged to foster independence on the part of their child, based on their developmental level. To achieve this goal, parents are asked to follow these guidelines:

- Inform the School in writing of your child's allergies prior to the opening of the School (or immediately after a diagnosis) and request a meeting with the School nurse to develop an Individual Health Care Plan and Emergency Action Plan. Be sure to provide:
 - Medication orders specific to the allergy from the licensed provider

- Up-to-date epinephrine injector and other necessary medications(s)
- Annual medical update on your child’s allergy status including a description of the scholar’s past allergic reactions, including triggers and warning signs
- A current picture of your child
- If the child carries medication, periodically check for expiration dates, and replace medication as needed
- Consider providing a Medical Alert bracelet for your child
- Notify supervisors of before and after School activities regarding your child’s allergy and provide necessary medication.
- Introduce your child to the School staff to explain your child’s allergy. While the School will not exclude an allergic scholar from a field trip, a parent may choose to do so. Be willing to go on your child’s field trips if requested. Provide safe classroom snacks for your own child.
- If needed, help decide upon an “allergy-free” eating area in the cafeteria. It is important that children take increased responsibility for their allergies as they grow older and as they become developmentally ready.
- Consider teaching your child to:
 - Understand the seriousness and recognize the first symptoms of an allergic/anaphylactic reaction and notify an adult immediately.
 - Carry their own epinephrine injector when appropriate (or know where the epinephrine injector is kept) and be trained in how to administer their own epinephrine injector, when this is an age-appropriate task.
 - Recognize safe and unsafe foods and do not share snacks, lunches, or drinks.
 - Encourage the habit of reading ingredient labels before eating food.
 - Report teasing, bullying, and threats to an adult authority.
 - Inform others of their allergy and specific needs.
- It is suggested your child is seen by an allergist.

Section Eleven: Admission Process

Open Enrollment

The Board shall permit the enrollment of scholars from adjacent or from other districts in the State, provided that each enrollment is in accordance with the laws of this State, the provisions outlined below, and the administrative guidelines established to implement School’s Open Enrollment, Admissions and Residency Policy.

Admissions Procedures

Admission to the School is open to any scholar who resides in any district in the State of Ohio. The School will not charge tuition. The School will not discriminate in its pupil admission policies or practices on the basis of race, creed, color, religion, religious expression, national origin, ancestry, sexual orientation, disability, sex, gender identity, intellectual or athletic ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, or any other basis. All scholars of the School must be residents of the State of Ohio. Upon admission of a scholar with a disability, the School will comply with all federal and state laws regarding the education of scholars with disabilities.

Applications are accepted for scholar admission year-round. The School will admit the number of scholars that does not exceed the capacity of the School’s programs, classes, grade levels, or facilities.

If the number of applicants exceeds the capacity restrictions set for the School's programs, classes, grade levels or facilities, a lottery drawing will be held. The lottery drawing places children in order for possible enrollment into the School. Priority for enrollment shall be given to scholars that reside in the district in which the School is located and returning scholars. Preference may also be given to siblings of scholars attending the School the previous year and scholars who are children of full-time staff members employed by the School. All parents of children selected in the lottery will be notified of the selection. Parents will have up to seven (7) days to contact the School regarding their decision. If a parent does not respond within seven (7) days, the School will select another child from the wait list. As the School operates and accepts scholars year-round, if other places become available (after the lottery), scholars are accepted from a prioritized wait list based on the results of the lottery or, if there is no wait list, then on a first come first serve basis. Notwithstanding the above, in the event the racial composition of the enrollment of the School is violation of a federal desegregation order, the School shall take any and all corrective measures to comply with the desegregation order.

Process and Criteria

In order for a scholar to be admitted, the following must be completed/submitted: the registration form and such other enrollment materials that the School deems necessary; copies of the child's original birth certificate, or such alternative set forth below in the Records Upon Enrollment section; current immunization record as mandated by law; and proof of residence. In addition, all custody or court orders pertaining to or allocating parental rights and responsibilities for the care of the scholar and designating a residential parent and legal custodian of the child shall be provided. Scholars may also need to complete an academic assessment before being placed in a classroom.

Records Transfer

The School will verify eligibility according to residency and will report names and addresses to the local school district of those scholars who are enrolled in the School. In addition, once a scholar is enrolled, records are requested, signed by a parent or guardian, from the appropriate schools of last attendance. Follow-up calls are made to buildings that have not forwarded records as requested. This notice also serves as notice to the scholar's district of residence as required by law.

Kindergarten Admission

The School can admit to kindergarten any scholar whose fifth birthday falls on or before September 30. The School can also admit to kindergarten any scholar whose fifth birthday falls between October 1st and December 31st, provided that said scholar is determined to be kindergarten ready by the Head of School or designee based upon the School's early entrance policies and procedures.

Residency and Enrollment Requirements

Although the School has a statewide open enrollment policy permitting enrollment from any school or district in the State of Ohio, it is still necessary to establish a scholar's school district of residence before they can be enrolled in the School. The school district in which a parent or child resides is the location the parent or scholar has established as the primary residence and where substantial family activity takes place.

No single factor is determinative; residency will be established by the totality of the circumstances.

Parents, guardians, or independent scholars aged 18 and over must promptly notify the School when a change in the location of the parent's or scholar's primary residence occurs. Please contact the School for a list of documents which have been approved to establish a scholar's residence.

If a scholar loses permanent housing and becomes a homeless child or youth, as defined in 42 U.S.C. 11434a, or if a child who is such a homeless child or youth changes temporary living arrangements, the district in which the scholar is entitled to attend school shall be determined in accordance with division (F)(13) of section 3313.64 of the Revised Code and the "McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act," 42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq.

Records Upon Enrollment / Missing Child Policy

Upon receipt of completed enrollment forms, a request for records will be made within twenty-four hours from the public or non-public elementary or secondary school the pupil most recently attended.

If the records are not received within 14 days of the date of request or if the pupil does not present a birth certificate or comparable certificate or document, or if the school the student claims to have most recently attended states that it has no records of the student's attendance, the Principal or their designee will notify the law enforcement agency having jurisdiction in the area where the pupil resides of this fact and of the possibility that the pupil may be a missing child.

Informational programs for students, parents, and community members relative to missing children issues and matters are available from the Principal or their designee, including information regarding a fingerprinting program.

Equal Opportunity/Anti-Discrimination Policy

The School does not discriminate in its pupil admission policies or practices on the basis of intellectual or athletic ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, status as a person with a handicap or disability, basis of race, color, religion, religious expression, sex or any other basis.

Section Twelve: General State Mandated Policies

Child Find Policy

School districts across the state of Ohio are participating in an effort to identify, locate, and evaluate all children from birth through 21 years of age who may have disabilities. If you have or know of a child who may have a disability, contact Stepstone Academy for more information and help.

Disability, in this instance, means such conditions as hearing impairments, visual impairments, speech or language impairments, specific learning disabilities, emotionally disturbed, multiple disabilities, other health impairments, physical impairments, autism and traumatic brain injury. Public schools have responded vigorously to federal and state mandates requiring the provision of a free appropriate public education regardless of a child's disability.

What will happen when you contact your local school? The school will ask for information about the child, asking such questions as: What is the problem? What has already been done about the problem? What background information is available? This information may be collected in several ways including interviews, observation, screening, and testing. This information may be obtained from parents and the scholar, or from other agencies that have information about the scholar. This information will be used to decide whether the child has a disability and needs

special services.

All information collected will be held in strict confidence and released to others only with parent permission or as allowed by law.

For more information, please consult *A Guide to Parent Rights in Special Education* available on the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce Website.

Stepstone Academy policies and procedures for special education are available. Contact the Head of School if you wish to review these policies and procedures.

Teacher Qualifications - ESSA Notification

As a parent of Stepstone Academy, you have the right to know the professional qualifications of the classroom teacher(s) who instruct your child. Specifically, you have the right to know:

- Whether the teacher has met State qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction;
- Whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which State qualifications or licensing criteria has been waived;
- Whether the teacher is teaching in the field of discipline of the certification of the teacher; and
- Whether your child is provided services by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications.

Promotion and Retention

Decisions on the promotion and retention of scholars in a grade are based on documented instructional objectives, performance standards and promotion criteria. The Head of School shall develop and maintain instructional objectives, performance standards, and promotion criteria for each grade level. Parent(s) and scholars shall be made aware of the instructional objectives, performance standards and promotion criteria. Periodically during the year teachers shall provide written progress and grade reports. Teachers will also provide evaluation reports to parents and scholars during teacher-parent conferences. The grading system used to measure scholar progress toward achieving the predetermined instructional objectives and performance standards is applied consistently throughout Stepstone Academy. The Head of School, after consultation with staff and parents, has the authority to make the final decision relative to the promotion or retention of a scholar. The definition of promotion and retention are as follows:

Promotion: Promotion of a scholar from one grade to the next shall be based solely on that individual scholar's having met applicable promotion criteria. The decision to promote a scholar shall rest solely with the Head of School, with appropriate input from the scholar's teacher(s), the professional staff, and parent(s).

Retention: A scholar is required to be retained if they are truant for 10% or more of the required school days and/or has failed at least two (2) of the required curriculum subject areas in the current grade, unless the Head of School and the teachers of the failed subjects determine that the scholar is academically prepared to be promoted.

Additionally, a scholar shall not be promoted or allowed to pass to a higher grade or course level if the scholar fails to meet established standards for a particular grade or course level.

Retention and/or placement decisions will be made only after the Head of School notifies and confers with the parent(s) as to the scholar's progress or lack thereof. These notifications and conferences will take place as soon as the Head of School and teachers identify that a scholar's

promotion could be in jeopardy.

Factors to Promotion and Retention

The Head of School and teachers will consider at least the following factors in arriving at decisions on promotion or retention. Factors are applicable in all grade levels.

- The scholar's level of academic aptitude and achievement
- The scholar's level of social and emotional development and the scholar's ability to effectively interact with other scholars in the scholar's current grade level
- The scholar's attendance patterns (absences, tardiness, early checkout, excused, or unexcused) and its effect on the scholar's progress
- Any other factors thought to be appropriate, i.e. behavior, by the Head of School, teacher(s), and professional staff

Stepstone Academy may choose not to promote a scholar to the next grade level, who does not take a required statewide achievement test or make-up test, and who is not exempt from the requirement to take such test.

Third Grade Reading Guarantee

Ohio's Third Grade Reading Guarantee is a program to identify scholars from kindergarten through grade 3 that are behind in reading. Schools will provide help and support to make sure scholars are on track for reading success by the end of third grade.

Advancing to Fourth Grade

In accordance with Ohio Law, except for those exempt from the requirements of the Third Grade Reading Guarantee, scholars **must** meet a minimum score on the state reading test to move onto the fourth grade. The Ohio Department of Education and Workforce has approved the use of an alternative measure for 3rd grade scholars to demonstrate an acceptable level of reading performance for promotion to fourth grade that may be used in the event a scholar was unable to demonstrate proficiency on the state reading test. Stepstone Academy will participate in this measure by administering Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA Measurement of Academic Progress (MAP)). Scholars participating in this alternative measure are not excused from participation in required state assessments. Promotion results are based on annually approved promotion scores determined by Ohio Department of Education and Workforce and are in accordance with the Third Grade Reading Guarantee requirements.

Promotion and Retention for Scholars with a Disability

Promotion and retention of previously identified scholars with a disability shall be subject to the factors and policy above but shall also consider the contents of the scholar's IEP.

Title I Parent Involvement Policy

The School will provide opportunities for parents to formulate suggestions, interact and share experiences with other parents and participate appropriately in decision-making about the School's Title I plan and revisions in the parental involvement plan. In connection therewith, the School will hold an annual orientation meeting where parents will meet their child's teacher and be reassured of their right and responsibility to be involved in their child's education. The School has a Parent Involvement Policy in place, which shall be made available upon request to the School Head of School.

Notice of Rights Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (“FERPA”) and Authorization to Release Scholar Directory Information

FERPA affords parents and scholars over 18 years of age (“eligible scholars”) certain rights with respect to the scholar’s education records. These rights are:

- The right to inspect and review the scholar’s education records within 45 days of the day the School receives a request for access. Parents or eligible scholars should submit a written request to the Head of School, or appropriate school official, that identifies that record(s) they wish to inspect. The Head of School, or appropriate school official, will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible scholar of the time and place where the records may be inspected. If copies are requested, the School may charge the requesting party reasonable copying costs.
- The right to request the amendment of the scholar’s education records that the parent or eligible scholar believes are inaccurate or misleading. Parents or eligible scholars may ask the School to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write the Head of School, or appropriate school official, clearly identifying the part of the education record they want changed and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. If the School decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible scholar, the School will notify the parent or eligible scholar of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible scholar when notified of the right to a hearing.
- The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the scholar’s education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to a School Official with a legitimate educational interest in the education records. A “School Official” is a person employed, contracted, or volunteering with the School in an administrative, supervisory, academic or support staff position (whether paid or unpaid), including, but not limited to: employees (whether employed by the Board or a third party), a member of the School’s Threat Assessment Team; a person with whom the School has contracted to perform a special task (i.e. attorney, auditor, outside consultant); and a person serving on the Board. A School Official has a “legitimate educational interest” in an education record when the School Official needs to review the record in order to fulfill their responsibility on behalf of the School, such as when the School Official is performing a task that is specified in their job description or by a contract agreement or other official appointment; performing a task related to a scholar’s education; performing a task related to the discipline of a scholar; providing a service or benefit relating to the scholar or scholar’s family, such as health care, counseling, or assisting with the college application procedure; and any other purpose that the Board deems necessary as related to a scholar’s education.
- The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the school to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the office that administers FERPA are:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-5901

- The School intends to forward any and all education records to another school which has requested such records for the purpose of the student’s potential enrollment at that school. The student’s parents, or eligible student, upon request, may receive copies of

the records disclosed or have the opportunity to request a hearing to challenge the content of the record. The School has the discretion of which education records to disclose to the potential new school and FERPA does not provide parents, or an eligible student, the right to prevent such disclosure or prevent the School from communicating general information about the student to the school in which the student seeks to or intends to enroll

- FERPA protects the privacy of scholar's education records. Under FERPA, most information about our scholars cannot be made public without the consent of parents/guardians. However, if the School designates information as directory information, FERPA allows the release of scholar directory information unless the scholar's parent(s)/guardian(s) inform the School in writing not to release such information.

This School has designated a scholar's name to be directory information available to be released without prior consent unless the parent(s)/guardian(s) have informed the School, in writing, not to do so.

Education of Homeless Children and Youth

Children who meet the Federal definition of "homeless" will be provided a free and appropriate public education in the same manner as all other students of the School. To that end, homeless students will not be stigmatized or segregated on the basis of their status as homeless and will be assigned to the school serving those non-homeless students residing in the area in which the homeless child is actually living. No homeless student will be denied enrollment based on a lack of proof of residency. No Board policy, administrative guidelines, or practice will be interpreted or applied in such a way as to inhibit the enrollment attendance, or school success of homeless children.

Homeless students will be provided services comparable to other students in the School including:

- Transportation
- Educational services for which the homeless student meets eligibility criteria including services provided under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act or similar State and local programs, educational programs for children with disabilities, and educational programs for students with limited English proficiency
- Programs in vocational and technical education
- Programs for gifted and talented students
- School nutrition programs

McKinney-Vento Homeless Children and Youth Program Overview

Virginia Runner shall serve as the School's local liaison for homeless children and youth. To the extent that the School receives assistance from the Federal Program for Education for Homeless Children and Youth, it shall comply with requirements to coordinate services for homeless students with local social service agencies and programs, including those funded under the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act. Contact the local liaison for more information on this program, including processes for when a dispute as to which school the scholar may attend arises.

Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) Notification

Description of Intent

The School follows a philosophy of continuous improvement and honest, objective data analysis. This philosophy requires well-planned and sometimes independent research efforts to determine the effectiveness of the School's programs and strategies. From time to time, the School will collect and analyze student performance data and various measures of effectiveness. In addition, families may be asked to participate in surveys or focus groups. Such research shall always be undertaken ensuring student privacy is protected and in compliance with the PPRA, as amended. For example, the names of the student, parent, and family members will not be revealed, and results will only be reported in the aggregate or by sub-groupings of sufficient size so that anonymity of the participants is safeguarded.

Rights Afforded by the PPRA

The PPRA affords emancipated minors and students of age eighteen (18) and older and parent of minors certain rights regarding the School's conduct of surveys, collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and conduct of certain physical exams. These rights include the following:

- The right to provide consent before students is required to submit to a survey that concerns one or more protected areas ("Protected Information Survey") if the survey is funded in whole or in part by a program of the U.S. Department of Education. Protected areas include the following:
 - Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's parent
 - Mental or psychological problems of the student or student's family
 - Sex behavior or attitudes
 - Illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior
 - Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships
 - Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or clergy
 - Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or Parent/Guardian
 - Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility
- The right to receive notice and an opportunity to opt a student out of the following:
 - Any other Protected Information Survey, regardless of funding
 - Any nonemergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the School or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a student, except for hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under state law
 - Activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information obtained from students for marketing or to sell or otherwise distribute the information to others
- The right to inspect, upon request and before administration or use, of the following:
 - Protected Information Surveys of students
 - Instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes
 - Instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum

These rights transfer from the parent to the student if the student is eighteen (18) years old or is an emancipated minor under state law or by court order.

Notification Procedures

The School will work to develop and adopt policies regarding these rights in consultation with parents. The School will also work to make arrangements to protect student privacy in the administration of Protected Information Surveys and the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes.

The School will directly notify the parent of these policies annually in this PPRA Notice or after any substantive changes. The School will also directly notify by U.S. mail, e-mail, or other reasonably available method, parents of students who are scheduled to participate in the specific activities or surveys described in this PPRA Notice and will provide an opportunity for the parent to opt students out of participation of the specific activity or survey. The School will make this notification to parents near the beginning of the school year if it has identified the specific or approximate dates of the activities or surveys at that time. For surveys and activities scheduled after the school year starts, the parent will be provided reasonable notification of the planned activities and surveys covered by the PPRA and will be provided an opportunity to opt their students out of such activities and surveys. The parent will also be provided an opportunity to review any pertinent surveys. The following is a list of the specific activities and surveys covered under this requirement:

- Collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales or other distribution
- Administration of any Protected Information Survey funded in whole or in part by U.S. Department of Education
- Any nonemergency, invasive physical examination, or screening as described above in the Rights Afforded by the PPRA

Where a Student is scheduled to participate in these activities, the Student will be notified as described above.

Reporting a Violation

The parent or student who believes their rights have been violated may file a complaint to the following:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202-5901

Notice of Nondiscrimination and Grievance Procedures

Including Title II, Title VI, Title IX, Section 504 and ADA

The School does not discriminate on the basis of religion, race, color, national origin, sex, disability or age in its programs, activities, or employment. The Board will vigorously enforce its prohibition against harassment based on sex, race, color, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, genetic information, or any other unlawful basis.

Further, it is the policy of the School to provide an equal opportunity for all students, regardless of race, color, creed, age, disability, religion, gender, ancestry, national origin, place of residence, or social or economic background, to learn through the curriculum offered in the

School.

The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policies of the School or to address any complaint of discrimination:

Virginia Runner, Director of Operations

Stepstone Academy
3328 Carnegie Avenue
Cleveland, Ohio 44115

Virginia.Runner@stepstoneacademy.org

440-260-6416

Acknowledgment of the 2024-2025 Handbook

We received a copy of the Stepstone Academy's Student and Family Handbook for 2024-2025. We have read and understand the Handbook and consent, support, and agree to follow the policies, procedures, and Code of Conduct as outlined in the Handbook. We recognize that although this Parent/Student Handbook reflects the current policies of the School, it may be necessary to make changes from time to time to best serve the needs of the School and its students, especially in the upcoming year. As a result, we agree to make affirmative efforts to review new policies and information related to changes at the School on a regular basis.

Scholar's Name: _____ Grade: _____

Parent's/Guardian's Name:

(Print Name Clearly)

Agreed to by:

Scholar's Signature

Date

Parent's/Guardian's Signature

Date

This agreement will be placed in the scholar's file.

Stepstone Academy Media Release

STUDENT INFORMATION FORM

TO BE COMPLETED BY PARENT or GUARDIAN:

Please print clearly:

Name of Participating Student

Age

School

City/Town/Zip

Grade

I/We understand that as part of our child's/my attendance at the School, photos, videos, and quotations may be taken for use in publications and reports about the program. I/We further understand that members of the news media invited to cover the program may take photos, videos, and quotations.

I/We grant permission to the School and its Governing Authority, Management Company, Sponsor, employees, agents and representatives to use such materials for the promotion of the program and to use this student's name, photographic likeness, alone or in a group, in any publication, document, TV production, video or to release said name or likeness to any media outlets including, but not limited to, newspapers, magazines or TV stations for publicity and/or recognition purposes and/or to use this student's name and/or photographic likeness, alone or in a group, on the official web site of the School and/or management company.

I agree that I and/or my child shall have no right, title, or interest in any photo or videotape covered by this agreement and waive any right to compensation for such use. I release the School, its Board members, the Management Company, Sponsor, employees, agents, representatives and all organizations and individuals related to the School from any and all liabilities or damages that result from the use of this student's name and/or photographic likeness as described above.

Signature of Parent or Guardian

Date

- PLEASE FILL OUT THIS FORM CLEARLY AND COMPLETELY.
- PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO THE SCHOOL.

STEPSTONE ACADEMY
Internet Safety Policy

The Board of Directors has adopted the following policy with respect to Internet safety. The School shall employ technology protection measures that: (a) prevent user access over its computer network to, or transmission of, inappropriate material via Internet, electronic mail, or other forms of direct electronic communications; (b) prevent unauthorized access, including but not limited to “hacking”, and other unlawful online activity; (c) prevent unauthorized online disclosure, use, or dissemination of personal identification information regarding minors; and (d) comply with the Children’s Internet Protection Act. All computers are to be used in a responsible, efficient, ethical and legal manner. Failure to adhere to this policy and the guidelines below will result in the revocation of the user’s access privilege. Unacceptable uses of the computer/network include but are not limited to:

1. Violating the conditions of the state or federal laws dealing with students’ and employees’ rights to privacy;
2. Using obscene, profane, lewd, rude, inflammatory, threatening, derogatory, or other language that may be offensive to another user;
3. Reposting (forwarding) personal communication without the author’s prior consent;
4. Copying commercial software in violation of copyright law;
5. Harassing another person;
6. Posting false or defamatory information;
7. Plagiarizing information found on the Internet;
8. Using the network for financial gain, for commercial activity or for any illegal activity;
9. Accessing, viewing, and/or transmitting inappropriate material;
10. Damaging technology devices or systems;
11. Using technology to disrupt the educational process, or in violation of this policy;
12. Unauthorized disclosure, use and dissemination of personal identification information regarding minors; and
13. “Hacking” or gaining unauthorized access to other computers or computer systems, or attempting to gain such unauthorized access.

To the extent practicable, technology protection measures (or “Internet filters”) shall be used to block or filter Internet, or other forms of electronic communications, access to inappropriate information. Filtering, or blocking, is applied to visual depictions of material deemed obscene, child pornography, or to any material deemed harmful to minors. The filter serves to block minors from accessing inappropriate matter on the Internet and the World Wide Web.

The technology protection measures may only be disabled by an authorized person and only for bona fide research or other lawful purposes.

Additionally, it shall be the responsibility of all members of the staff to educate, supervise and monitor appropriate usage of the online computer network and access to the Internet and ensure that the same is in accordance with this policy, the Children's Internet Protection Act, the Neighborhood Children's Internet Protection Act and the Protecting Children in the 21st Century Act. To the extent feasible, the School shall take steps to promote the safety and security of users of the School's online computer network when using electronic mail, chat rooms, instant messaging, and other forms of direct electronic communications.

The School will provide age-appropriate training for students who use the School's Internet facilities. The training provided will be designed to promote the School's commitment to:

- a. The standards and acceptable use of Internet services as set forth herein;
- b. Student safety with regard to:
 - i. Safety on the Internet;
 - ii. Appropriate behavior while online, on social networking Websites, and in chat rooms; and
 - iii. Cyberbullying awareness and response
- c. Compliance with the Children's Internet Protection Act

The School makes no warranties of any kind, either express or implied, that the functions or the services provided by or through School's network will be error-free or without defect. The School will not be responsible for any damage users may suffer, including but not limited to, loss of data, interruptions of service, or exposure to inappropriate material or people. The School is not responsible for the accuracy or quality of the information obtained through the system. The School will not be responsible for financial obligations arising through the unauthorized use of the system. Users or parents of users will indemnify and hold the School harmless from any losses sustained as the result of misuse of the system by user.

The use of technology is a privilege and an important part of the School's overall curriculum. The School will, from time to time, make determinations on whether specific uses of technology are consistent with School policies for students and employees of the School but does not warrant that the technology resources will meet any specific requirements of the student or other users, or that it will be error free or uninterrupted. The School always reserves the right to monitor and log technology use, to monitor file server space utilization by users, and examine specific network usage (as may be deemed necessary) for maintenance, safety or security of the technology resources, or the safety of the user.

A user who violates this Policy, shall at a minimum, have his or her access to the computer network and Internet terminated, which the School may refuse to reinstate. Violation of this Policy may include the user permitting another to use his or her account or password to access the computer network or Internet, including any user whose access has been denied or terminated.

DEFINITIONS

For purposes of this Policy:

A “minor” is anyone under the age of 18.

“Harmful to minors” means any picture, image, graphic image file or other visual depiction that: (a) taken as a whole and with respect to minors, appeals to a prurient interest in nudity or sex; (b) depicts, describes, or represents, in a patently offensive way with respect to what is suitable for minors, an actual or simulated sexual act or sexual contact, actual or simulated normal or perverted sexual acts, or a lewd exhibition of the genitals; and (c) taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value as to minors.

“Technology Protection Measure” means a specific technology that blocks or filters Internet access to visual depictions that are:

1. Obscene, as that term is defined in Section 1460 of Title 18 of the United States Code;
2. Child Pornography, as that term is defined in Section 1226 of Title 18 of the United States Code; or
3. “Harmful to minors.”

“Sexual act” and “sexual contact” have the meanings given such terms in Section 2246 of Title 18 of the United States Code.

STEPSTONE ACADEMY
ANTI-HARASSMENT, ANTI-INTIMIDATION, or ANTI-BULLYING POLICY
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ANTI-HARASSMENT, ANTI-INTIMIDATION OR ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

I. Introduction

It is the policy of the Board of Directors that any form of Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying behavior, whether in the classroom, on school property, including, without limitation, school buses, to and from school, at School-Sponsored events, or online via the Web, is expressly forbidden. Periodically, the School shall review the policy and consult with parents, school employees, school volunteers, students and community members regarding necessary revisions.

- A. Students who have been determined to have engaged in prohibited behaviors are subject to disciplinary action, which may include suspension or expulsion from school. The School's commitment to addressing such prohibited behaviors, however, involves a multifaceted approach, which includes education and the promotion of a school atmosphere in which Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying will not be tolerated by students, faculty or school personnel.
- B. It is imperative that Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying be identified only when the specific elements of the definition are met because the designation of such prohibited incidents carry special statutory obligations. However, misconduct by one student against another student, whether or not appropriately defined or not, will result in appropriate disciplinary consequences for the perpetrator.

II. Definition of Terms

- A. "Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying" means either of the following:
 - 1. Any intentional written, verbal, electronic, or physical act that a student or group of students exhibits toward another particular student more than once and the behavior both:
 - a. Causes mental or physical harm to the other student; and
 - b. Is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening or abusive educational environment for the other student.
 - 2. Violence within a dating relationship.
- B. "Electronic Act" means an act committed through the use of a cellular telephone, computer, pager, personal communication device or other electronic communication device.

ANTI-HARASSMENT, ANTI-INTIMIDATION OR ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

- C. In evaluating whether conduct constitutes Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying, special attention should be paid to the words chosen or the actions taken, whether such conduct occurred in front of others or was communicated to others, how the perpetrator interacted with the victim and whether the victim's reaction was reasonable or foreseeable under the circumstances, and the perpetrator's motivation, either admitted or appropriately inferred.
- D. A School-Sponsored Event shall mean any activity conducted on or off school property (including school buses and other school-related vehicles) that is sponsored, recognized or organized by the School or on behalf of the School.

III. Types of Conduct

- A. Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying can include many different behaviors including overt intent to ridicule, humiliate or intimidate another student or school personnel. Examples of conduct that could constitute prohibited behaviors include, but are not limited to:
 - 1. Physical violence and/or attacks;
 - 2. Threats, taunts and intimidation through words and/or gestures;
 - 3. Extortion, damage or stealing of money and/or possessions;
 - 4. Exclusion from the peer group or spreading rumors; and
 - 5. Repetitive and hostile behavior with the intent to harm others through the use of information and communication technologies and other Web-based/online sites (also known as "cyber bullying"), such as the following:
 - (a) Posting slurs on Web sites where students congregate or on Web logs (personal online journals or diaries);
 - (b) Sending abusive or threatening instant messages or email;
 - (c) Using camera phones to take embarrassing photographs of students and posting them online or sending them to third parties; and,
 - (d) Using Web sites to circulate gossip and rumors to other students; and
 - (e) Excluding others from an online group by falsely reporting them for inappropriate language to Internet service providers.

ANTI-HARASSMENT, ANTI-INTIMIDATION OR ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

IV. Publication of Policy

A. Publication of the prohibition against Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying and related procedures.

1. The prohibition against Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying shall be publicized in any student handbooks and in any of the publications that set forth the comprehensive rules, procedures and standards of conduct for schools and students in the School. In addition, information regarding the policy shall be incorporated into employee training materials.

V. Complaints

A. Written Complaints

1. Students and/or their parents or guardians may file reports regarding suspected Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying. Such written reports shall be reasonably specific including person(s) involved, number of times and places of the alleged conduct, the target of suspected Harassment, Intimidation and/or Bullying, and the names of any potential student or staff witnesses. Such reports may be filed with any school staff member or administrator, and they shall be promptly forwarded to the building principal for review and action in accordance with Section 6.

B. Verbal Complaints

1. Students, parents or guardians and school personnel may make verbal complaints of conduct that they consider to be Harassment, Intimidation and/or Bullying by verbal report to a teacher, school administrator, or other school personnel. Such verbal complaints shall be reasonably specific as to the actions giving rise to the suspicion of Harassment, Intimidation and/or Bullying, including person(s) involved, number of times and places of the alleged conduct, the target of the prohibited behavior(s), and the names of any potential student or staff witness. A school staff member or administrator who receives a verbal complaint shall promptly document the complaint in writing, including the above information. This written report by the school staff member and/or administrator shall be promptly forwarded to the building principal for review and action in accordance with Section 6.

C. Protection of Person Filing Complaint

ANTI-HARASSMENT, ANTI-INTIMIDATION OR ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

1. Individuals who make complaints as set forth above may request that their name be maintained in confidence by the school staff member(s) and administrator(s) who receive the complaint. The complaints shall be reviewed and reasonable action will be taken to address the situation, to the extent such action may be taken that (1) does not disclose the source of the complaint, and (2) is consistent with the due process rights of the student(s) alleged to have committed acts of Harassment, Intimidation and/or Bullying. The School will follow appropriate intervention strategies for protecting a victim or other person from additional harassment, intimidation or bullying, and from retaliation following a report, including anonymous reporting.

D. False Complaint

1. It is a violation of this policy and procedure to knowingly report false allegations of Harassment, Intimidation, and/or Bullying. Persons found to knowingly report or corroborate false allegations will be subject to appropriate discipline.

VI. School Personnel Responsibilities

A. Teachers and Other School Staff

1. Teachers and other school staff, who witness acts of Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying, as defined above, shall promptly notify the building principal and/or his/her designee of the event observed, and shall promptly file a written, incident report concerning the events witnessed. Teachers and other school staff who receive student or parent reports of suspected Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying shall promptly notify the building principal and/or his/her designee of such report(s). If the report is a written complaint, such complaint shall be forwarded promptly (no later than the next school day) to the building principal or his/her designee. If the report is a verbal complaint by a student that is received by a teacher or other professional employee, he or she shall prepare a written report of the verbal complaint which shall be promptly forwarded (no later than the next school day) to the building principal or his/her designee.
2. In addition to addressing both written and verbal complaints, school personnel are encouraged to address the issue of Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying in other interactions with students. School personnel may find opportunities to educate students about Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying and help eliminate such prohibited behaviors through class discussions, counseling, and reinforcement of socially appropriate behavior. School personnel should intervene promptly whenever they observe student conduct that has the purpose or effect of

ANTI-HARASSMENT, ANTI-INTIMIDATION OR ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

ridiculing, humiliating or intimidating another student/school personnel, even if such conduct does not meet the formal definition of “Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying.”

B. Administrator Responsibilities

1. Investigation

- (a) The principal and or his/her designee shall be promptly notified of any written or verbal complaint of suspected Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying. Under the direction of the building principal or his/her designee, all such complaints shall be investigated promptly. A written report of the investigation shall be prepared when the investigation is complete. Such report shall include findings of fact, a determination of whether acts of Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying were verified, and, when prohibited acts are verified, a recommendation for intervention, including disciplinary action shall be included in the report. Where appropriate, written witness statements shall be attached to the report.
- (b) Notwithstanding the foregoing, when a student making a verbal complaint has requested anonymity, the investigation of such complaint shall be limited as is appropriate in view of the anonymity of the complaint. Such limitation of investigation may include restricting action to a simple review of the complaint (with or without discussing it with the alleged perpetrator), subject to receipt of further information and/or the withdrawal by the complaining student of the condition that his/her report be anonymous.

2. Remedial Actions

- (a) Verified acts of Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying shall result in an intervention by the building principal or his/her designee that is intended to ensure that the prohibition against Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying behavior is enforced, with the goal that any such prohibited behavior will cease.
- (b) Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying behavior can take many forms and can vary dramatically in seriousness and impact on the targeted individual and other students. Accordingly, there is no one prescribed response to verified acts of Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying. While conduct that rises to the level of Harassment, Intimidation or

ANTI-HARASSMENT, ANTI-INTIMIDATION OR ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Bullying, as defined above will generally warrant disciplinary action against the perpetrator of such prohibited behaviors whether and to what extent to impose disciplinary action (detention, in and out-of-school suspension; or expulsion) is a matter for the professional discretion of the building principal.

VII. Reporting Obligations

- A. The parent or guardian of any student involved in a prohibited incident will be notified in writing and, to the extent permitted by state and federal laws governing student privacy, will have access to any written reports pertaining to the prohibited incident.
- B. Report to the Parent or Guardian of the Perpetrator
 - 1. If after investigation, acts of Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying by a specific student are verified, the building principal or his/her designee shall notify in writing the parent or guardian of the perpetrator of that finding. If disciplinary consequences are imposed against such student, a description of such discipline shall be included in such notification.
- C. Reports to the victim and his/her parent of guardian
 - 1. If after investigation, acts of bullying against a specific student are verified, the building principal or his/her designee shall notify the parent or guardian of the victim of such finding. In providing such notification, care must be taken to respect the statutory privacy rights of the perpetrator of such Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying.
- D. List of verified acts of Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying
 - 1. A requirement that the School administrator semiannually provide the president of the School board a written summary of all reported incidents and post the summary on the district Web site, if one exists. The list shall be limited to the number of verified acts of Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying, whether in the classroom, on school property, to and from school, or at school-sponsored events.
 - 2. This policy shall not be interpreted to prohibit a reasonable and civil exchange of opinions or debate that is conducted at appropriate times and places and is protected by State or Federal Law. The disciplinary action for any student guilty of harassment, intimidation,

ANTI-HARASSMENT, ANTI-INTIMIDATION OR ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

or bullying, which shall not infringe on any student's rights under the first amendment to the Constitution of the United States.

VIII. Police and Child Protective Services

Allegations of criminal misconduct will be reported to law enforcement, and suspected child abuse must be reported to Child Protective Services, per required timelines. The School must also investigate for the purpose of determining whether there has been a violation of the School Policy or Procedure, even if law enforcement or CPS is also investigating. All School personnel must cooperate with investigations by outside agencies.

IX. Training

The School agrees to provide appropriate staff and volunteer training in the implementation of the above policy and prevention of harassment, intimidation and bullying in the School.

X. Publication of the Prohibition Against Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying

At least once each year, a written statement in substantially the form attached hereto as Exhibit A, describing the policy and the consequences for violations of the policy must be sent to each student's custodial parent or guardian. The statement may be sent with regular student report cards or may be delivered electronically.

In addition, the policy shall appear in the student handbook and in any publication that sets forth the comprehensive rules, procedures, and standards of conduct of the School.

ANTI-HARASSMENT, ANTI-INTIMIDATION OR ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Exhibit A

ANNUAL NOTICE **OF** **ANTI-BULLYING, ANTI-INTIMIDATION AND ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY**

It is the policy of the School that any form of Bullying behavior, whether in the classroom, on school property, including, without limitation, school buses, to and from school, at School-Sponsored Events, or via Electronic act (defined as an act committed through the use of a cellular telephone, computer, pager, personal communication device, or other electronic communication device) is expressly forbidden.

Students who have been determined to have engaged in prohibited behaviors are subject to disciplinary action, which may include suspension or expulsion from school. The School's commitment to addressing such prohibited behaviors, however, involves a multifaceted approach, which includes education and the promotion of a school atmosphere in which Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying will not be tolerated by students, faculty or school personnel.

Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying means either any intentional written, verbal, graphic, physical or Electronic act that a student or group of students exhibits toward another particular student more than once which causes mental or physical harm to the other student and creates an intimidating, threatening or abusive educational environment for the other student. Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying is also defined to include violence within a dating relationship.

Students who believe they have been harassed or bullied by fellow students or School employees are encouraged to promptly report such incidents to a school staff member or administrator.

Complaints will be documented and investigated in accordance with the School's policy.

Teachers and other school staff, who witness acts of Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying, shall promptly notify the building principal and/or his/her designee and shall promptly file a written, incident report concerning the events witnessed.

Additional provisions of the policy may be found in the Parent/Student handbook or obtained from the School office at any time.