



Student/ Family Handbook



Letter from the Head of School

July 2023

Dear Students and Families,

Welcome to Liberation Academy! On behalf of the entire Liberation Academy community, I am delighted to extend a warm and heartfelt welcome to all our new students and families. We are thrilled to have you join our school family and embark on an exciting journey of learning, growth, and discovery.

At Liberation Academy, we believe that education is a transformative experience that empowers individuals to reach their full potential. Our dedicated team of educators is committed to providing a nurturing and inclusive learning environment where every student can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

As the Head of School, I want to assure you that we are dedicated to fostering a positive and safe atmosphere that promotes respect, collaboration, and a love for learning. We strive to create a school community that values diversity and embraces the unique talents and perspectives of each individual.

Throughout the academic year, we offer a rich and comprehensive curriculum that is designed to challenge and inspire our students. Our dedicated teachers are passionate about their subjects and are committed to helping students develop critical thinking skills, creativity, and a lifelong love for learning.

In addition to academic excellence, we understand the importance of providing a well-rounded education. Our school offers a wide range of extracurricular activities, clubs, and sports teams, allowing students to explore their interests and develop leadership skills. We encourage all students to actively participate in these opportunities and discover their passions beyond the classroom.

Effective communication between the school and families is vital for student success. We are committed to keeping you informed and involved in your child's education. Our school website,



newsletters, and parent-teacher conferences are just a few of the avenues through which we will share important updates, events, and achievements.

We believe that education is a partnership between the school, families, and the community. We encourage and value your active participation and engagement in your child's education. Together, we can create a supportive and nurturing environment that allows our students to thrive and reach their goals.

Once again, welcome to Liberation Academy. We are excited to embark on this educational journey with you and look forward to getting to know each and every one of you. Should you have any questions or need further information, please do not hesitate to contact our school office.

Warmest regards,

Brian King

Founder and Executive Director



Introduction and Acknowledgements

The Governing Board of Liberation Academy developed this handbook to help inform Families of the policies, processes, and conduct expected of students and families that attend Liberation Academy.

The founding team is excited that you chose to attend Liberation Academy! Those who embark on this journey to work at this school take on a bigger responsibility of representing this community and that in which they were cultivated. Welcome to the pride!

Our Mission

Through rigorous, relevant instruction, community collaboration, and the development of innate skills, Liberation Academy will empower students that will become problem solvers equipped to impact their community and the world.

About The School

Liberation Academy will be located in College Park, GA and serve grades 5-8 at full growth. Our approach to learning is one rooted in student culture, hands on-learning, rigor, and relevance. Students will engage in a problem based learning model that allows students to apply classroom

**Leadership
School Administrators**

NAME	POSITION	DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	EMAIL ADDRESS
Brian King	Principal	All	brian.king@liberationacademy.org
Takisha Anderson	Associate Director of Operations	All Building and Non-Academic Matters	takisha.anderson@liberationacademy.org
Alexandria Rackston	Director of Special Services	All academic matters including special education, scheduling, and school culture.	arackston@liberationacademy.org



Governing Board

A board of directors governs the school. These individuals bring a diverse set of skills and backgrounds to the school. Their unrelenting dedication to fulfilling the mission of the school is evident in their commitment to the students of Liberation Academy.

Nicole Long

Contessa Clark

Rae Oglesby

Manoj Mehta

Kendall Scott

Lorlita Spann



ATTENDANCE AND PROMOTION

In order to achieve our ambitious mission, scholars at Liberation Academy must be in school, ready to learn EVERY SINGLE DAY. Out of respect for your scholar's learning, regular attendance is mandatory and poor attendance will receive intervention from our school administration. We encourage families to not schedule vacations and non-emergency appointments during school time. Families should take advantage of holidays and school vacations, to schedule appointments and travel.

ABSENCES

Absences are only "excused" for illness, suspension, a verifiable family emergency, court order, observation of religious holidays, certain visits with a parent or legal guardian in military service as further defined by State Board of Education Rule 160-5-1-.10, or some other reason deemed by the Head of School to have merit based on the circumstances. Documentation must be provided for an absence to be "excused". To be counted as present, a scholar must remain in school until 11:30 a.m. If a scholar comes to school, and must go home before 11:30 a.m., then the scholar's attendance status will be changed from "Present" to "Half Day Absent."

Additionally, if a scholar arrives to school after 11:30 a.m., they will be marked as "Absent." All other absences, including those related to trips or vacations taken outside of school-wide breaks, are considered "unexcused."

TARDIES AND EARLY DISMISSALS

Scholars are expected to be inside the school building, in full uniform from 8:00 AM – 3:30 PM Monday – Friday. Scholars arriving at school after 8:00 a.m. are marked tardy. Early dismissals are when scholars are signed out of school before 3:10 p.m. In order to ensure a safe and orderly dismissal, no scholar is allowed to be signed-out after 2:30 p.m. and will be dismissed through our normal dismissal procedure.



CONSEQUENCES

If after trimester 1, a scholar's attendance rate is 85% present or lower, the scholar is at risk of retention. Similarly, if a scholar is tardy or dismissed early for 25% of days, they are also at risk of retention. Exceptions to this policy are made on extremely rare occasions for long-term hospitalizations, court-mandated appearances and religious observances. Additionally, scholars are afforded rights under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the Individuals with

Disabilities Education Act should their absences be related to a disabling condition.

- Eight absences in a : If a scholar misses eight (8) days of school in one semester, it is considered a significant amount of time missed and a serious concern. At this point, the school will require that the parent/guardian meet with the scholar's teacher for a mandatory conference. At this meeting, both the family and the school will discuss the problem, its impact on the scholar's education and develop an attendance plan.
- Eighteen cumulative absences: When a scholar is chronically absent (defined as 18 absences at any point in the year), the school will require that the parent/guardian meet with the scholar's teacher, as well as a school administrator to discuss the problem, its significant impact on the scholar's education, and the risk of retention.
- Sixteen tardies and/or early dismissals in a trimester: If a scholar is tardy or signed out from school before 3:15 p.m. Sixteen (16) times in a trimester (25% of total school days), it is considered a significant amount of time missed and a serious problem. The parent/guardian will meet with the scholar's teacher to discuss the attendance concerns, the impact on the scholar's education, and the potential solutions that can prevent tardiness/ early releases in the future.
- Thirty-two cumulative tardies: If a scholar is excessively tardy (defined as 32 tardies at any point in the year), the school will require that the



parent/guardian meet with the scholar's teacher, as well as a school administrator to discuss the problem, its significant impact on the scholar's education, and the risk of retention.

- If a scholar is absent the first five (5) days of school without an explanation or has unexcused absences for ten consecutive days during the school year, then that scholar may lose his or her seat at Liberation Academy or be considered withdrawn from the school consistent with state law.
- At any point in the academic year, the school reserves the right to schedule a meeting with a parent/guardian of a scholar whose attendance is a critical concern.

Finally, According to State Board of Education ("SBOE") Rule 160-5-1-.10, all scholars under 18 are expected to be in school. All scholars under the age of 18 will be expected to comply with these laws and the school will follow procedures set out in SBOE 160-5-1-.10 if the scholar does not comply with the law. In cases of truancy, The Head of School (or her/his designee) will investigate the situation. Ethos Classical operates in compliance with SBOE 160-5-1-.10 requirements, which can include mandated reporting of truancy to appropriate state agencies.

EARLY DISMISSALS

The parent/guardian, or designee must sign the scholar out with the Front Office before removing the scholar from school grounds prior to the end of the school day. Scholars will not be dismissed unless the parent or guardian has physically come to the Front Office. Early dismissal requests for pickup after 2:30 p.m. will not be granted. Likewise, if a scholar needs to be sent home due to a behavioral infraction or medical need, a parent/guardian must come to the school, meet with a school administrator, and then remove the scholar from school.

DISMISSAL AND AFTER-SCHOOL

Scholars will be dismissed from school at 3:30 p.m. Parents/guardians who arrive before dismissal must wait in the carpool line or designated walkers' area until



scholars are dismissed by their teacher. In order to ensure a timely dismissal for all scholars, we are unable to provide early dismissal for scholars in the last 45 minutes of school. The last 45 minutes of the day contain important learning for scholars, and this part of the day is critical to ensuring that all necessary Homework and announcements get home with scholars.

If parents need to speak to a teacher or conduct any other classroom business, this should occur by appointment with the teacher only.

Families who do not pick their scholars up on time (3:45 p.m) will be charged \$15 per scholar per day for Late Pick Up.

Timely pick-up of scholars is critical so that our already hard-working and highly dedicated team members do not have to stay after their normal working hours. Keep in mind that Liberation Academy teachers are salaried employees and do not earn overtime when they work beyond their regular schedule.

ARRIVAL AND EARLY MORNING PROCEDURES

Liberation Academy opens its doors at 7:30 a.m. every day. Scholars are welcome to arrive any time between 7:30 a.m. and 8:00 a.m.

- If scholars are eating school breakfast, they must arrive inside the building by 7:45 a.m.
- If scholars are not eating school breakfast, they must arrive inside the building by 8:00 a.m.



ACADEMICS

REPORT CARDS

Teachers and staff utilize report cards each quarter to formally communicate a scholar's academic and behavioral performance. Grades do reflect effort but are focused on a scholar's level of mastery of the material. Report cards will be based on standards and reflect the learning of the scholar. For the 2023-2024 school year, Liberation Academy has scheduled mandatory parent conferences on the following dates:

- **1st Quarter-September 29, 2023**
- **2nd Quarter-December 15, 2023**
- **3rd Quarter-March 8, 2024**
- **4th Quarter-May 17, 2024**

Grading Policy

Grades should be based on the individual student's mastery of standards in the Georgia Performance Standards for the grade level in which the student is currently placed and is subject to any Individual Education Plan (IEP) where applicable.

The grading scale in Liberation Academy is as follows:

A	100-90	Excellent
B	89-80	Good
C	79-70	Fair
F	Below 70	Failing

We will work with families to schedule a 20-minute time slot for their conference. Please note that scholars do not report to school on these days.



Homework

Homework is an essential component of Liberation Academy educational program. The work and problems we send home is designed to reinforce the knowledge and skills that were taught in class, help scholars develop a deeper understanding of academic concepts, and promote the habits that we recognize will be important in college, career, and life. Because we know how important it is to teach these values to scholars, homework and problem based issues will be assigned every night at Liberation Academy. It is critical that families review and sign their scholars homework and monitor its completion every night.

Academic Honesty

All schoolwork submitted by students must represent the efforts of the individual student. Any form of academic dishonesty is prohibited. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to:

- forgery/plagiarism
- copying or stealing another person's class work
- allowing another person to copy one's own class work
- doing another person's class work
- creating more than one copy of one's work for distribution
- intentionally accessing another's material and using it as one's own
- downloading information from other sources and presenting it as one's own
- unauthorized copying of software
- unauthorized copying of hard copy or software to develop one's own software.
- accessing answer keys or other textbook materials online without instructor consent.

Any student who cheats or who plagiarizes material from any source (print or multimedia) will receive a failing grade for the assignment in question.

Teachers will contact the student's parent or guardian once it is proven that the student has exhibited academic dishonesty.



This work is what truly helps support scholars to be successful and prepared for college and we take it seriously.

Teachers will:

- Create meaningful assignments
- Be certain that every assignment is understood
- Relate the assignment to what was learned in class
- Use Lifework as a way to check for understanding of the skill and content

Scholars will:

- Be responsible for completing assignments on time, accurately, and neatly.
- Complete all missed assignments due to absences
- Read every day
- Always try their hardest

Parent/guardian(s) will:

- Provide time and a quiet place for scholars to complete homework
- Help the scholar develop responsibility by completing all of their assignments
- Be aware of all assignments (by looking at the agenda), and review the child's work
- Talk to their child about what he or she learned at school and encourage their child to speak through the problems solving skills learned in class
- Develop a positive attitude about learning
- Read to or with their child every night for 15 minutes

INTERVENTION

Liberation Academy recognizes that all scholars will learn and grow in different ways and at different speeds. As such, some scholars may require additional support in the curriculum. Scholars may require support because of language, special needs, or



trouble with a specific concept. Liberation Academy will take clear steps to provide scholars and families with the support they need. This may include individual attention in the classroom, small group instruction or individual support outside of the classroom. If additional time after school is required, parents/guardians will be notified in advance.

ASSESSMENTS

In addition to the traditional classroom assessment measures, we will use several other assessment tools to evaluate the progress of our elementary scholars:

Externally-created exams: Liberation Academy scholars are held to the same standards as other scholars in Georgia. Scholars will take the state assessments in grades 5-8 in math, reading, and writing in order to demonstrate grade-level proficiency.

Interim assessments: Liberation Academy will administer interim assessments to demonstrate regular scholar progress and to address scholars' ongoing academic needs. These interim assessments will be given in the core areas of Language Arts And Mathematics.

PROMOTION POLICY

The Head of School is authorized to make initial grade placement of a scholar and to promote, accelerate or retain scholars after initial grade placement. After initial grade placement, a scholar is expected to progress through the grades one year in each grade receiving the benefits of academic, social and physical growth usually accompanied with a full year of development.

On occasion, it may be in the best interest of the scholar to have a new grade placement, be accelerated more than one grade, or be retained in the current grade. In this event, supporting documentation with interventions already offered to the scholars will be provided by the school. If a scholar's parent/guardian or teacher believes one of these grade changes should be considered, a written request for consideration should be provided to the Head of School, including the reasons for



such consideration.

The final decision regarding placement, acceleration, promotion, or retention of a scholar rests solely with the Head of School.

The Head of School shall consider the following non-exhaustive list of factors when making such decisions:

1. The education record of the scholar, including but not limited to a scholar's grades, standardized test scores, reading, speaking and math skills, the curriculum of each grade, the available teacher(s) skill(s) delivering the instruction, and available programs.
2. Attendance
3. Discipline
4. The physical, social and emotional readiness of the scholar for the curriculum of each grade.
5. The current research on grade placement, promotion, acceleration and retention.
6. The recommendation of the scholar's parent/guardian and teachers.
7. The Promotion Requirements described below.
8. The applicable laws governing these decisions.

SCHOLAR SUPPLIES

The easiest way to manage supplies in primary classrooms without disrupting classroom time or having unprepared scholars is to have shared supplies within the classroom. Liberation Academy aims to provide scholars with their own supplies and we



do not ask families to purchase materials besides the scholar's headphones. The purchase of these supplies are covered through the scholar's fee of \$85. The fee is due by October 9, 2023.

Behavioral - Code of Conduct

Behavioral expectations for middle school scholars are designed to promote a positive and respectful learning environment. Liberation Academy scholars are expected to:

1. **Respect:** Scholars are expected to show respect to teachers, staff members, peers and themselves. This includes using appropriate language, listening attentively, valuing themselves and others' opinions, and treating everyone with respect, kindness and empathy.
2. **Responsibility:** Liberation Academy Scholars are expected to take responsibility for their actions and academic progress. This includes completing assignments on time, being prepared for class and actively participating in classroom activities.
3. **Following Rules and Policies:** Scholars are expected to follow the rules and policies set by the school. This may include guidelines for dress code, technology usage, hallway behavior, and behavior in the cafeteria or during school events.
4. **Integrity and Honest:** Scholars are expected to act with integrity and honesty. This includes refraining from cheating, plagiarism, and dishonesty in academic work, as well as being truthful and accountable for their actions.
5. **Conflict Resolution:** Scholars are encouraged to resolve conflicts peacefully and respectfully. They should seek appropriate avenues, such as talking to a teacher or counselor, to address any concerns or conflicts they may encounter.
6. **Digital Citizenship:** Scholars should demonstrate responsible and ethical behavior when using technology. This includes using appropriate language and content online, respecting the privacy of others, and understanding the potential consequences of their digital actions.
7. **Safety:** Scholars are expected to prioritize their own safety and the safety of others. They should follow safety procedures and guidelines, report any safety concerns or hazards, and refrain from engaging in behaviors that may cause harm or endanger others



At Liberation Academy, our goal is to provide a safe environment that allows all students to learn.

LOCATION OF VIOLATIONS

Students are expected to follow the Code of Conduct and meet expectations when

- On school property;
- In a motor vehicle being used for a school related purpose;
- At a school-related activity, function or event;
- En route to or from school;
- At any time or place when the student’s behavior has a direct and immediate effect on maintaining order, safety, health and discipline in the school;

Below is a list of several infractions that will warrant a consequence. Minor infractions will result in In-School Suspension (ISS) or after school detention. Major infractions can result in out of school suspension (OSS) or expulsion.

The following are examples of certain infractions. Liberation has discretion to interpret this handbook and to characterize various infractions.

Level 1 Infractions	Level 2 Infractions	Level 3 Infractions
o Tardies	o Assault (No Harm)	o Assault (With Harm)
o Presence in an unauthorized area	o Battery (No Harm)	o Battery (With Harm)
o Excessive talking	o Disruptive behavior	o Habitual Level 2 offenses
o Distracting behavior	o Fighting	o Fighting (w/ harm)
o Defiance	o Inappropriate language	o Group Fight
	o Cheating	o Leaving campus
	o Selling unauthorized items	o Using/selling drugs



Liberation

ACADEMY

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">o Blatant refusal to follow directionso Property vandalismo Tampering with school technologyo False information/Identificationo Classroom Disruptiono Leaving campuso Bus misconducto School Disruptiono False information/Identificationo Misuse of technologyo Truancyo Theft (Under \$1000)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">o Severe verbal abuse of a student/staff member.o Severe misuse of technology.o Threats that do not reach a level 3 infraction level.o Bullyingo Theft (Over \$1000)o Extortiono Violating suspension conditionso Harassment/Discriminationo Sexual Harassment
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Level 4		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Arson o Assault of an employee o Battery of an employee o Weapons on campus o Gang related activity o Group Fight (w/harm to school and/or individuals) o Terroristic or major threats 		

Consequences

Detention

Detention is served after school on Tuesdays and Thursdays..

If a student is not successful in detention, further consequences may follow. For students that do not attend their assigned detention date, their detention will be reassigned and/or receive one period of in-school-suspension (ISS).

In-School-Suspension (ISS)

Students that commit more severe infractions will receive in-school-suspension (ISS). Students



that receive a full day of ISS, or longer, are to report directly to the ISS room each day and remain there until told otherwise. Students in ISS are expected to abide by the rules of ISS for the duration of their stay. If students are not successful in ISS, they will be subject to more severe consequences.

Out of School Suspension (OSS)

Students that commit infractions that warrant OSS are not allowed to be in the building or any school events until their suspension has concluded. Short-term OSS can last 1 -10 days. Some of the infractions that warrant Short-Term OSS may also result in Long-Term OSS (suspension for greater than 10 days) or expulsion from school.

See below for the minimum and maximum consequences for each tier of infractions:

Level 1 Minimum Consequences	Level 1 Maximum Consequences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restorative Practices • 1 days of after school detention • School based interventions and restorative measures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 days of after school detention • School based measures and restorative measures
Level 2 Minimum Consequences	Level 2 Maximum Consequences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restorative Practices • 1 day of in-school suspension • School based interventions and restorative measures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 days of ISS (or up to) • 4 days of OSS • Repeat offenders of tier two offenses may be referred to the review board to evaluate the student’s status at the school. • Severe tier 2 offenses can be moved to level 3 offenses • School based interventions and restorative measures
Level 3 Minimum Consequences	Level 3 Maximum Consequences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restorative Practices • 3 days of OSS • School based interventions and restorative measures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 days of OSS and referral to a disciplinary hearing for long-term suspension or expulsion. • School based interventions and restorative



	measures
Level 4 Minimum Consequences	Level 4 Maximum Consequences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restorative Practices • 10 Days OSS • Disciplinary Hearing • School based interventions and restorative measures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 days of OSS and referral to a disciplinary hearing for long-term suspension or expulsion. • Some school infractions that qualify as a level 4 offense may require notification to law enforcement.

Discipline Policy

Liberation Academy’s discipline policy sets out the rules of student behavior applicable to all students and the procedures for imposing discipline on students who violate these rules. Liberation Academy employs a restorative justice approach to discipline, designed to redress the mistake and any harm it caused by giving students the opportunity to reflect, remedy, and improve.

Disciplinary actions are determined by our faculty. When the school recommends more than 10 days OSS, the student will receive a hearing before a hearing officer. Consequences are designed to fit the offense. Parents may be asked to participate, particularly where there are serious transgressions and/or failure to abide by attempts at mediation.

The Board authorizes the immediate removal of a student upon a finding by the Executive Director or their designee that the student poses a threat of harm to self or others, as evidenced by the prior conduct of such student and in accordance with law.

No student may be confined in an unattended locked space except in an emergency situation while awaiting the arrival of law enforcement personnel. For the purpose of this policy, a student is unattended if no person has visual contact with the student, and a locked space is a space that the student cannot reasonably exit without assistance.

Enforcement

The Executive Director or their designee is responsible for the oversight of development of additional regulations and procedures regarding student conduct needed to maintain proper



behavior in schools under their supervision. All such regulations and procedures shall be consistent with Board-adopted discipline policies.

Faculty have the authority and responsibility to make and enforce necessary rules for internal governance in the classroom, subject to review by the Chief Executive Officer or their designee. The Board expects each teacher to maintain a satisfactory standard of conduct in the classroom. All staff are required to enforce policies, regulations and procedures in a manner that is fair and developmentally appropriate and that considers the student and the individual circumstances involved.

All employees of Liberation Academy shall annually receive instruction related to the specific contents of the discipline policy and any interpretations necessary to implement the provisions of the policy in the course of their duties including, but not limited to, approved methods of dealing with acts of school violence, disciplining students with disabilities and instruction in the necessity and requirements for confidentiality.

Expulsion

Defined as the removal of a student from school (or school bus) for a period beyond the current semester. Where appropriate, a hearing officer may determine that expulsion is the appropriate consequence for a given offense. Any such decision may be appealed to the school's governing board. Where imposed, permanent expulsion means a student may not return to Liberation Academy at any time.

Probation

"Probation" means that a student is placed on a trial period during which the student is expected to maintain good behavior. A student found guilty of certain offenses may be placed on probation by the Chief Executive Officer. Violation of a local school or school system rule while on probation may result in further disciplinary action.

Restrictions on School Activities

Absent extraordinary circumstances, students who are suspended or expelled will not be allowed to participate in any school-sponsored activities, including the prom or graduation exercises, if these occur during the period of suspension or expulsion.

Major Offenses/Reporting to Law Enforcement

Under Georgia law, Liberation Academy is required to report certain crimes or offenses to law enforcement.



Prohibited Conduct

The following are descriptions of prohibited conduct. In addition to consequences determined by Liberation Academy, Liberation Academy will notify law enforcement, when necessary, and document violations in the student's discipline file pursuant to law and Board policy:

1. Arson
Starting or attempting to start a fire or causing or attempting to cause an explosion
2. Assault
Attempting to kill or cause serious physical injury to another; killing or causing serious physical injury to another.
3. Automobile/Vehicle Misuse
Discourteous or unsafe driving on or around school property, unregistered parking, failure to move vehicles at the request of school officials, failure to follow directions given by school officials or failure to follow established rules for parking or driving on school property.
4. Battery
Hitting, striking and/or attempting to cause injury to another person; placing a person in reasonable apprehension of imminent physical injury; physically injuring another person.
5. Bullying
Intimidation, harassment and attacks on a student or multiple students, perpetuated by individuals or groups. See the definition of bullying below.
6. Bus or Transportation Misconduct
Any offense committed by a student on, while waiting for, or entering transportation provided by or through the school shall be punished in the same manner as if the offense had been committed at the student's assigned school. In addition, transportation privileges may be suspended or revoked.
7. Dishonesty
Any act of lying, whether verbal or written, including forgery.
8. Disrespect to Staff
Willful or continued willful disobedience of a directive or request by a Liberation Academy's staff member or disrespectful verbal, written, pictorial, or symbolic language



or gesture that is directed at a Liberation Academy staff member and that is rude, vulgar, defiant, in violation of school policy or considered inappropriate in educational settings.

9. Disruptive Conduct or Speech

Verbal, written, pictorial or symbolic language or gesture that is directed at any person and that is disrespectful, rude, vulgar, defiant, in violation of Liberation Academy's policy or considered inappropriate in educational settings or that materially and substantially disrupts classroom work, school activities or school functions.

10. Drugs/Alcohol

- a. Possession, sale, purchase or distribution of any over-the-counter drug, herbal preparation or imitation drug or herbal preparation.
- b. Possession, use of, or attendance while under the influence of or soon after consuming any unauthorized prescription drug, alcohol, narcotic substance, unauthorized inhalants, controlled substances, illegal drugs, counterfeit drugs, imitation controlled substances or drug-related paraphernalia.
- c. Sale, purchase, transfer or distribution of any prescription drug, alcohol, narcotic substance, unauthorized inhalants, controlled substances, illegal drugs, counterfeit drugs, imitation controlled substances or drug-related paraphernalia.

11. Extortion

Threatening or intimidating any person for the purpose of obtaining money or anything of value.

12. Failure to Meet Conditions of Suspension

Coming within 1,000 feet of Liberation Academy while on suspension for an offense that requires reporting to law enforcement or for an act of school violence or drug-related activity. See section of this regulation entitled, "Prohibition Against Being on or Near School Property During Suspension."

In determining whether to suspend or expel a student, consideration shall be given to whether the student poses a threat to the safety of any child or school employee and whether the student's presence within 1,000 feet of the school is disruptive to the educational process or undermines the effectiveness of the school's disciplinary policy.

13. False Alarms (see also "Threats or Verbal Assaults")

Tampering with emergency equipment, setting off false alarms, making false reports; communicating a threat or false report for the purpose of frightening, disturbing, disrupting or causing the evacuation or closure of school property.



14. Fighting (see also, "Assault")

Mutual combat in which both parties have contributed to the conflict either verbally or by physical action.

15. Harassment/Discrimination

Use of verbal, written or symbolic language based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, disability, age or any other characteristic that has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with a student's educational environment or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive educational environment. Examples of illegal harassment include, but are not limited to, graffiti, display of written material or pictures, name calling, slurs, jokes, gestures, threatening, intimidating or hostile acts, theft or damage to property. See also the definition of harassment, intimidation, and bullying below.

16. Hazing

Any activity that a reasonable person believes would negatively impact the mental or physical health or safety of a student or put the student in a ridiculous, humiliating, stressful or disconcerting position for the purposes of initiation, affiliation, admission, membership or maintenance of membership in any group, class, organization, club or athletic team including, but not limited to, a grade level, student organization or school-sponsored activity. Hazing may occur even when all students involved are willing participants.

17. Public Display of Affection

Physical contact that is inappropriate for the school setting including, but not limited to, kissing and groping.

18. Sexual Harassment/Discrimination

a. Use of unwelcome verbal, written or symbolic language based on gender or of a sexual nature that has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with a student's educational environment or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive educational environment. Examples of sexual harassment include, but are not limited to, sexual jokes or comments, requests for sexual favors and other unwelcome sexual advances.

b. Unwelcome physical contact based on gender or of a sexual nature when such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with a student's educational performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive educational environment. Examples include, but are not limited to, touching or fondling of the genital areas, breasts or undergarments, regardless of whether or not the touching occurred through or under clothing.



19. Sexual Misconduct

Exposing of body parts to another individual including, but not limited to, possession, transfer or exposure of images, electronic or otherwise, of the body parts or sexually explicit images of oneself or others, and/or initiating or participating in an act of a sexual nature.

20. Technology Misconduct

a. Unauthorized use of cellular telephones, personal computers, or unauthorized use of electronic devices during instructional time.

b. Attempting, regardless of success, to gain unauthorized access to technology system or information; to use Liberation Academy's technology to connect to other systems in evasion of the physical limitations of the remote system; to copy Liberation Academy's files without authorization; to interfere with the ability of others to utilize Liberation Academy's technology; to secure a higher level of privilege without authorization; to introduce computer "viruses," "hacking" tools, or other disruptive/destructive programs onto or using Liberation Academy's technology; or to evade or disable a filtering/blocking device.

c. Violation other than those listed in (2) or of the Board Technology Acceptable Use Policy or regulations, administrative procedures or netiquette rules governing student use of Liberation Academy's technology.

21. Theft

Theft, attempted theft or knowing possession of stolen property.

22. Threats or Verbal Assault

Verbal, written, pictorial or symbolic language and/or gestures creating a reasonable fear of physical injury or causing school property damage. Threats by students, whether made on campus or off school grounds, which constitute a "true threat" against the Liberation Academy, its students or employees, will be immediately reported to law enforcement officials and will subject the student to suspension and a possible referral for expulsion. The definition of "true threat" shall be construed in accordance with applicable law and encompasses those.

23. Tobacco

Defined as possession and/or use of any tobacco products on school grounds, school transportation or at any school activity.



24. Truancy

Absence from school without the knowledge and consent of parents/guardians and/or the school administration; excessive non-justifiable absences, even with the consent of parents/guardians.

25. Unauthorized Entry

Entering or assisting any other person to enter a LEA facility, office, locker, or other area that is locked or not open to the general public; entering or assisting any other person to enter a LEA facility through an unauthorized entrance; assisting unauthorized persons to enter a LEA facility through any entrance.

26. Vandalism

Willful damaging or the attempt to cause damage to real or personal property belonging to the school, staff or students.

27. Weapons

- a. Defined as the possession or use of any instrument or device, which is customarily used for attack or defense against another person; any instrument or device used to inflict physical injury to another person.
- b. Possession or use of a firearm as defined or any instrument or device, or any instrument or device defined as a dangerous weapon

28. Group Fight

This is an altercation that involves 3 or more individuals engaged in a mutual, or non-mutual physical altercation. Involvement in this type of activity may also be qualified as gang activity depending on the circumstances. See also the definition of "Battery".

HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION, AND BULLYING

The school prohibits acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying (including cyber-bullying and sexual harassment) of any student on school property or at a school-sponsored event. Bullying is defined as (1) any willful attempt or threat to inflict injury on another person, when accompanied by an apparent present ability to do so; (2) any intentional display of force such as would give the victim reason to fear or expect immediate bodily harm; or (3) any intentional written, verbal, or physical act which a reasonable person would perceive as being intended to threaten, harass, or intimidate that (A) causes another person substantial physical harm or visible bodily harm; (B) has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's education; (C) is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating or threatening educational



environment; or (D) has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school. It can be non-verbal, verbal, emotional, or physical. The term applies to acts which occur on school property, on school vehicles, at designated school bus stops, or at school related functions or activities or by use of data or software that is accessed through a computer, computer system, computer network, or other electronic technology of a local school system. The term also applies to acts of cyberbullying which occur through the use of electronic communication, whether or not such electronic act originated on school property or with school equipment, if the electronic communication (1) is directed specifically at students or school personnel, (2) is maliciously intended for the purpose of threatening the safety of those specified or substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school, and (3) creates a reasonable fear of harm to the students' or school personnel's person or property or has a high likelihood of succeeding in that purpose.

All school employees, volunteers, and students are required to report prohibited incidents of which they are aware to the Executive Director, who is then responsible for determining whether an alleged incident constitutes a violation. In so doing, the Executive Director will conduct a prompt, thorough, and complete investigation of the reported incident, and prepare a report documenting the prohibited incident that is reported.

Note: If referred to a hearing, state law requires that, upon a finding by the disciplinary hearing officer, panel, tribunal of school officials that a student in grades 6 through 12 has committed the offense of bullying for the third time in a school year, such student shall be assigned to an alternative school.

DUE PROCESS PROCEDURES

The following due process procedures only govern the suspension or the expulsion of a student from the school's regular educational program. If a student charged with violation of this Student Code of Conduct has been returned to the regular school program pending a decision, then such action of reinstatement shall not limit or prejudice the school's right to suspend or expel the student following that decision.

A. Suspension of Ten (10) School Days or Less

As a general rule, prior to any suspension of the student, the school administration shall provide the student with the following due process:

1. The student will be informed of the charges against him/her, and, if the student denies the charges, the school administration shall provide the student with an explanation of the evidence.



2. The student shall be provided an opportunity to explain his/her version of the facts.

If a student's presence in school poses an immediate danger to persons or property or an ongoing threat of disruption to the educational process, the school administration may immediately suspend the student, and as soon thereafter as reasonable, provide the student with his/her due process rights as set forth in this section.

If, after providing the student with his/her due process rights, the school administration determines that the student has engaged in a prohibited act under this Student Code of Conduct, then he/she may impose a disciplinary penalty of a suspension not to exceed ten (10) school days. The school administration shall inform (in person or by phone) the student's parent of the suspension and of the reasons and conditions of the suspension. A decision to suspend a student for ten (10) or fewer school days is final and not subject to further review or appeal.

B. Suspension for Ten (10) or More School Days and Expulsion

The Head of School has the discretion to recommend a long-term suspension or expulsion upon referring a matter to hearing. Hearings shall be heard before a hearing officer designated by the school.

Acts of misconduct warranting long-term suspension or expulsion require that the student be immediately placed on suspension for up to ten (10) school days pending the hearing.

1. Hearing for Long-Term Suspension or Expulsion

If a student is charged with a violation of the Student Code of Conduct carrying a consequence of long-term suspension or expulsion, the student and his/her parent shall be notified of such in writing, as well as the student's rights of due process as set forth herein.

The written notice of violation shall state the nature of the violation, the proposed consequence, and the student's and parent's right to a due process hearing at a specified time and place to determine (i) whether a violation occurred and (ii) whether the consequence of such violation merits the imposition of a long-term suspension or expulsion.

The notice shall also set forth the date, time, and location of the hearing, the right of the student and his/her parent to have an advocate of their choice to participate in the hearing at their expense, the right of the student to review and observe the evidence offered against him or her



during the hearing, and the right of the student to present written evidence or testimony on the student's behalf.

The hearing shall consist of two phases: Phase 1 to determine whether the student is responsible for the alleged offense; and, if he or she is determined to be responsible, Phase 2 to determine the appropriate consequence. The hearing shall be held in closed session before a hearing officer. At the hearing, the school will present the facts showing the alleged violation. The student or his/her advocate may call witnesses and present evidence in response. An audio recording of the hearing shall be made and provided to the student at his/her request. A written transcript shall be provided at the student's request and expense.

At the conclusion of the hearing, the hearing officer shall issue a decision.

2. Appeal of Long-Term Suspension or Expulsion

A student may appeal a decision by the hearing officer to the Board of Directors. The appeal must be (a) made in writing within ten (10) days of receipt of the decision by the hearing officer; (b) contain the reasons that the decision should be reviewed or reconsidered; (c) be signed by the student and his/her parent; and (d) be delivered to the Board of Directors by way of certified first class mail or electronic mail.

The Board of Directors shall review the decision of the hearing officer for the erroneous application of the handbook's provisions based upon the grounds presented by the student in his/her written request for appeal.

The request for appeal shall be presented at the next regular meeting of the Board of Directors following receipt of the notice of appeal, at which time the Board of Directors shall review the written request for appeal. The appeal will be considered in closed session, and shall be conducted in accordance with the rights of confidentiality adhering to Education Records as that term is defined in 20 U.S.C. § 1232g. The Board of Directors shall notify the student and his/her parent of the result in writing within five (5) business days of the board meeting at which the appeal was heard.

DISCIPLINARY PROCESS FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS

Students who are served under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act ("IDEA") or under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 have the same rights and responsibilities as other students and may be disciplined for the same acts of misconduct outlined herein.



The Code of Conduct applies to students with Individual Education Programs ("IEP") except when an IEP explicitly requires something different through the goals and objectives of the IEP or a Behavior Intervention Plan ("BIP"). Just like any other student, a student with an IEP can be suspended. Once a student has been suspended out of school for more than ten days in a school year, a manifestation determination must be conducted before the eleventh day of suspension.

Parents may request a hearing to challenge the outcome of a manifestation determination. The child shall remain in his or her current educational placement while the hearing is pending.

PRIDE Time

Liberation PRIDE Time is an initiative at Liberation Academy that aims to celebrate and promote cultural diversity, inclusivity, and understanding within the school community. It provides a designated time for students and staff to come together to appreciate and learn about different cultures, traditions, and experiences. Here is an overview of Liberation Culture Hour:

Purpose:

- a. Promote Cultural Awareness: Liberation Culture Hour creates an environment where students and staff can gain a deeper understanding and appreciation for the diverse cultures represented within the school community and beyond.
- b. Foster Inclusivity: It aims to foster a sense of belonging for all students by acknowledging and respecting their cultural identities and backgrounds.
- c. Encourage Dialogue: Liberation Culture Hour provides a platform for open and respectful dialogue, where students and staff can share their experiences, traditions, and knowledge with one another.

Frequency and Duration:

- a. Liberation Culture Hour (considered PRIDE hour) is typically held daily as determined by the school administration and cultural committee.
- b. The duration of the session may vary, but it is generally structured to fit within a designated time block, such as one class period or an extended lunch period.



Activities and Presentations:

- a. Guest Speakers: Inviting guest speakers from diverse backgrounds, including community members or cultural experts, can provide insights and educational experiences related to different cultures.
- b. Workshops and Discussions: Interactive workshops and discussions can be organized to explore specific cultural topics, promote dialogue, and enhance cultural understanding and empathy.

Student and Staff Involvement:

- a. Students and staff are encouraged to actively participate in Liberation Culture Hour by organizing presentations, sharing their cultural experiences, or volunteering to help with event logistics.
- b. Teachers can incorporate cultural elements into their lessons during Liberation Culture Hour, highlighting the contributions of various cultures to different subject areas.

Respectful Environment:

- a. Liberation Culture Hour promotes an atmosphere of respect, acceptance, and inclusivity. Students and staff are expected to engage in discussions and activities with an open mind, free from judgment or discrimination.
- b. Guidelines may be established to ensure that all participants treat one another with respect, actively listen, and value diverse perspectives.

Liberation PRIDE Time serves as a platform to cultivate cultural appreciation, foster positive interactions, and build a more inclusive and understanding school community at Liberation Academy. The specific details and activities of Liberation PRIDE time may vary depending on the school's vision, resources, and the cultural diversity within the student body and staff.

Liberation Academy Chromebook Contract

As a scholar at Liberation Academy Charter School, I understand that the use of the Google Chromebook has been granted to me as a privilege, not a right. I will read the agreement below and understand the consequences of not following the guidelines stated herein. Further, my teacher has clearly defined and expectations of Chromebook use and that any violation of the guidelines or this



contract represent a knowing and willful breaking of the rules.

I understand that it is my responsibility to:

- Visually inspect my Chromebook before every use and report any discrepancies to the teacher
- Choose key search words carefully when searching the Internet
- Never give out my personal information over the Internet
- Be on the correct site and stay on task

I understand that the following are unacceptable uses Chromebooks:

- Attempting to bypass or alter computer security
- Attempting, assisting, or gaining unauthorized access to computers (intentional or unintentional)
- Modifying the wallpaper or computer background
- Downloading unapproved software
- Vandalizing school machines including removing keyboard keys, drawing on keyboards, screens and covers, damaging or in any way defacing the Chromebook
- Accessing inappropriate websites
- Accessing another student's files
- Inappropriate use of any email program including Yahoo, Hotmail, Gmail etc.
- Eating or drinking when Chromebooks are in use
- Having multiple tabs opened to sites that are not used for class
- Using social media sites
- Any other unlawful, unethical, or inappropriate use of Chromebooks

I understand that if I choose to not follow these guidelines, I will have my Chromebook (or other devices) privileges taken away. In addition, I understand that if I choose to not follow the guidelines more than once I will be referred to the Administration for further consequences. Lastly, I understand that losing, damaging, defacing or vandalizing the Chromebook will result in charges and fines that must be paid by the family by the end of the school year.



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This charge may be up to \$500 based on the level of damage.

I, _____, signature (Scholar name)

_____ (Parent Name) signature agree to the terms and conditions listed above .

Today's date: _____



Cell Phone Policy

At Liberation Academy, we believe in providing a conducive and focused Learning environment that promotes academic excellence and fosters meaningful student interactions. As such, we have implemented the following cell phone policy to ensure that our students can fully engage in their education without distractions.

1. Cell Phones should be turned off or placed on silent mode during school hours. Each student will be responsible for parking their cell phones into the school's parking lot upon entering the classroom.
2. Students are not allowed to use cell phones for calls, texting, or browsing the internet during class.

Emergency Situations:

In case of an emergency or urgent need to contact a student, parents/ guardians can contact the school office, and we will facilitate communication promptly.

Before and After school hours:

*Outside of class hours, such as lunchtime, students may use their cell phones in designated areas with permission of school staff.

Cell Phone usage should not disrupt the school environment or infringe upon the rights of others.

Academic Integrity:

The use of cell phones for cheating or any form of academic dishonesty is strictly prohibited . Students are expected to uphold the school's academic integrity policy.

Consequences for Policy Violations:

Failure to adhere to the cell phone policy may result in disciplinary actions, which could include warnings, temporary confiscation until the parent picks up the phone, or other measures deemed appropriate by school administrators.

We believe that this policy will contribute to a more focused and respectful learning environment for all students at Liberation Academy. We ask for the support of parents/ guardians in reinforcing the importance of responsible cell phone usage and the value of uninterrupted learning.

By working together, we can ensure that our students have the best possible educational experience



at Liberation Academy. If you have any questions or concerns about the cell phone policy, please feel free to reach out to the school administration.

Lunch Time Rules

- Eating is only allowed in the cafeteria.
 - Special circumstances may be approved by the administration.
- Students must be seated in the cafeteria.
- Students are not permitted in the main hallway or lobby.
- Students may not congregate to block doorways or exits.
- Frisbees, balls, dancing, or horseplay are prohibited.
- Students must remain in areas supervised by school employees. Those in unauthorized areas may receive a disciplinary consequence.
- The administration reserves the right to prohibit any activity it deems disruptive.
- An administrator must approve visitors.
- Students must have a signed pass to be in hallways during lunch.



Dress Code Policy

At Liberation Academy, we believe that dress and grooming play an important role in creating a positive and respectful learning environment. Our dress code policy reflects our commitment to maintaining a professional, safe, and inclusive school culture.

<https://www.frenchtoast.com/schoolbox/schools/liberation-academy-QS61W3N>

General Guidelines

All clothing and accessories must be appropriate for school and must not interfere with the learning process. Clothing and accessories that are deemed inappropriate or disruptive by school staff will not be allowed.

Specific Guidelines

The following are specific guidelines for dress and grooming:

1. Shirts and t-shirts: Shirts and t-shirts must be the Liberation Academy logo attire. The shirt must have sleeves and must fully cover the shoulders and midriff. No tank tops, halter tops, or spaghetti straps are allowed. 5th graders will wear green tops. 6th graders will wear blue tops. Gray Zip up are optional for both grades. Gray t-shirts are for both grades.
2. Pants, skirts, and shorts: Pants and shorts can be at the parental discretion. Bottoms must be a solid color. Bottoms must be worn at the waist and must not sag or expose undergarments. Shorts and skirts must be of an appropriate length and must not be shorter than fingertip length when arms are extended by the side. No pajamas, sweat pants or athletic pants will be allowed.
3. Footwear: Footwear must be worn at all times and must be appropriate for school. No flip-flops, crocs, or open-toed shoes are allowed.
4. Headwear: Hats, caps, and other headwear may not be worn inside the building, except for medical or religious reasons.
5. Clothing with Inappropriate Messages or Images: Clothing with inappropriate or offensive



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messages or images, including but not limited to profanity, violence, drugs, and alcohol, are strictly prohibited.

Appropriate:



Inappropriate:





School Reward Policy

Liberation Academy believes that students that consistently perform well and show growth should be recognized for their efforts. Students that exhibit one, or all, of the PRIDE traits will be recognized weekly. Every week students will be measured on the following elements:

Persistence	We are relentless in the pursuit of our goals.
Responsibility	It is our duty to honor our ancestors and respect those that helped us to get where we are today.
Integrity	Do the right thing even when it is difficult.
Deliberate	We make decisions rooted in what we deem important and aligned to our goals
Excellence	We work towards being the best version of ourselves daily.

Students will receive a PRIDE report at the end of each week. This report will be sent home and brought back to school on Monday of the following week.

Students that exhibit these behaviors each month will receive an award at the end of the month celebration. Students will also be eligible for the following incentives:

Weekly Incentives

Students that exhibit these receive high marks in each of these areas will eligible to the following weekly incentives:

- Dress Down Fridays
- Pizza Lunches
- Tickets for the school store



Monthly Liberation Celebration

- At the end of each month students that are exhibiting PRIDE and making academic gains will be acknowledged
- This event is open to parents as well!

Field Trips

- Students that are regularly exhibiting academic and cultural PRIDE will be allowed to participate in field trips. Field Trips/expeditions are essential to the learning experience. If a student has not exhibited the behavior needed to properly represent themselves at school, they will not be allowed to represent the school at events outside of the school.

Communication and Family Participation

Phone Use

We at Liberation Academy understand the importance of maintaining contact with students in times of need. To ensure that students are focused on work and not a disruption to the learning environment, all parent contact should be made through the main office. **Please refrain from contacting your student on their cell phones until after 8:00 am.** All calls can be made to the main office. Messages will be delivered to the students once they are received. For emergencies, students will be allowed to use the school phone. Outside emergencies students will not be allowed to use the school phones.

Contacting Teachers

Communication between teachers and parents is important. This relationship is integral to student success. Parents will be able to reach teachers in multiple ways:

- *Email:* All teachers have a school email account and will respond within 24 hours.
- *Phone:* Messages can be left on the teacher's voice mail. Voicemail's will be answered within 24 hours. Teachers can speak before and after school.

Meeting With Teachers

Conferences will be scheduled for parents at the end of each quarter. If parents would like to meet with a teacher outside of conferences, they may be scheduled through the main office. They must be



scheduled at least 24 hours prior to the desired date. Conferences with parents can be held before school (before 8:00am) and after school (after 4:00pm).

Volunteer

We welcome the assistance of parents within our educational community. You all are among our most important stakeholders. Because our priority is the well being of the students, all volunteers must undergo a background check prior to volunteering at the school. More information can be provided from the office manager upon request.

There are three tiers for volunteering See below for details:

- **Tier 1** - Volunteering for a project/events at the school when students *are not present*
- **Tier 2** - Volunteering in the classroom while a teacher is present, volunteering in the building while students *are present*, or volunteering on daytime field studies
- **Tier 3** - Volunteering on overnight trips, one-on-one tutoring, after-school care, assisting with clubs/sports, or volunteering when alone with students without another authorized adult present

Requirements for Tier 1 and Tier 2

- Attend Orientation: This is a 60-minute orientation that can be completed online or in-person. Once it has been completed, you will not need to do this again.
- Mandated Reporter Training
- Complete and Submit Required Forms: Volunteer Safety Form, Volunteer Agreement, and Mandated Reporter Certification Form

Requirements For Tier 3

- Complete all of the training for tier one and tier two
- Must complete a background check.
 - Parents will be responsible for covering the cost of their individual background check



Student Records

All requests for student records must be submitted to the front office. For students under 18, your parent(s) must submit (and if necessary retrieve) all student records and requests.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) provides protection for students and their records. FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records.

Parents should understand that their rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a postsecondary school at any age. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students." FERPA gives parents and eligible students these basic rights:

- The right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school;
- The right to request that a school amend the student's education records;
- The right to consent in writing to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from the student's education record, except under certain permitted situation; and
- The right to file a complaint with the Family Policy Compliance Office (FPCO) regarding an alleged violation under FERPA.

For more information please go to the FERPA section of the Department of Education's website:

www.ed.gov



General Grievance Policy
adopted on November 4, 2021

Liberation Academy (LA) seeks to provide a supportive, safe environment among its employees, faculty, students, and parents.

The following procedures are adopted to meet these goals.

Parent Grievances

- The Board recognizes that effective school governance requires that the primary responsibility for issues involving student discipline, curriculum, assessment and promotion and other day-to-day decisions regarding school management, lies with the faculty, staff and Principal of the School and these individuals are best suited to resolve conflicts that arise with respect to these issues. Pursuant to the Section 3 of the Liberation Academy Bylaws, the Board has the authority to appoint, employ and remove the principal but primary responsibility and authority over faculty, staff and volunteer organizations of LA are vested in the Principal. The Board, therefore, will exercise any authority in this policy conservatively and narrowly so as not to usurp the authority granted to the Principal under the Bylaws.
- **Informal Procedures:** A parent should first attempt to resolve any grievance through discussion with the relevant teacher(s) or other involved person. If a parent's concern has not been adequately addressed through an informal discussion with the teacher involved, the parent should next attempt to resolve the grievance with the appropriate Department Lead. If a grievance cannot be resolved in such informal manners, the parent may initiate a formal grievance procedure.
- **Formal Grievance Procedure:** In instances, where informal means are ineffective or otherwise not feasible, LA offers these more formal grievance procedures. Grievance proceedings and information shall be kept confidential at all levels to the extent feasible and permitted by law. A parent grievance is a formal written claim by a parent or group of parents identifying the concern, identifying the individual or group's resolution attempts, and identifying any law, policy or practice that is implicated by the concern. No one shall retaliate against a parent or student who files or whose parent files a grievance under this policy. Failure of a parent to comply with timelines listed below may result in denial of a grievance request.



- Level One – Department Lead Request and Conference. A parent may, by written request, seek a conference with the Division Director to address an unresolved grievance.
 - The request shall succinctly describe the specific grievance(s) and related details, and shall identify any specific policy, rule, regulation, or law believed to have been violated, and shall provide other relevant information to help the Department Lead adequately understand the nature of the grievance.
 - The grievance shall be filed within five days of the incident(s) or the last informal attempt to resolve the grievance, provided that such attempt was made within ten days of the last incident.
 - Following receipt of the written request, the Department Lead or supervisor shall, if feasible, conduct a conference with the aggrieved parent(s) within seven days of the written report. Within three to five working days following the conference, the supervisor will state in writing his position on the grievance and a copy will be given to the parent.
- Level Two - Appeal to the Principal. If the grievance is not resolved, the parent(s) may appeal the Department Lead or supervisor's decision in writing to the Principal if the Principal was not involved in the Level One Conference.
 - The appeal must be made within five days following receipt of the Department Lead or supervisor's written Level One response to the grievant. The Principal will review the grievance and conduct an informal hearing, when feasible, within seven working days following receipt of the written appeal.
 - Either party may, with approval by the Principal, present witnesses and other evidence to help resolve the matter. The parent shall have no right to have an attorney or other advocate present.
 - The Principal shall issue a written response to the grievant and the Level One Department Lead or supervisor within five days following the hearing and create a written record of the evidence received and determination made.
 - Decisions of the Principal are final, not subject to further appeal, except in the following instances:
 - Decisions involving an alleged violation of a contractual right;
 - Decisions involving an alleged violation by Liberation Academy of state or federal law;or



- Decisions based on allegations of conduct by the Principal in violation of law or school policy.
- The Board retains discretion to determine whether an alleged violation involves a “final” or “appealable” decision by the Principal. The Board may consider all available evidence in the record established at the time of the decision and any other evidence it deems necessary for consideration.
- Level Three - Appeal to the Board: Discretionary Appeals and Appeals of Right. If a parent is not satisfied with the disposition of his grievance at Level Two, the parent may, within five days of receiving notice of the decision or recommended action from the Principal, submit a written request to the Board Chairperson to appeal the Principal’s decision or recommendation and to request a formal hearing.
 - Within seven days of receiving the written request for appeal, when feasible, the Board Chairperson or his designee shall issue a written notice to the grievant and the Principal indicating whether Principal’s determination is “final” in nature or whether the Board shall, consequently, by discretion or by right of appeal, grant a hearing. The notice shall also specify, if a hearing is granted, the time and guidelines by which it will be conducted, including whether the hearing will be based strictly on a review of the existing record, whether the grievant will have the opportunity to be present at the hearing, the type of evidence to be considered by the Board, and other relevant procedural details.
 - If a hearing is granted, a panel of the Board consisting of at least three members shall hear the grievance within seven days from the date the Board Chairperson’s notice is issued to the grievant, except when the parties agree to extend the timeline. Any appeal to the board panel will normally be on the written record only, unless the panel determines that additional information should be presented, including an appearance and presentation of information by the grievant. The grievant and Principal shall be informed in writing of the panel's decision within seven days after the hearing, if feasible.
 - Extensions in appeal timelines may be granted if the board panel determines there is a reasonable need for such extension. The board panel may affirm, reverse, or modify the decision of the Principal.
 - The Principal or Board may develop a grievance form to assist in recording each step of the grievance process.



Appealing Board Decisions

In the case a parent or staff member is dissatisfied with the decision of the board, they may appeal to the Georgia department of Education. This step is taken after all other measures have been exhausted.

Filing a Complaint Regarding Student/Staff Decisions: [Use this Link](#).

Filing a Complaint Regarding IDEA/Special Education Services: [Use this link](#).



Title IX Policy

Prohibition of Sex Discrimination

Liberation Academy prohibits unlawful discrimination based on sex in all its education programs and activities, including admissions and employment. It is the policy [SCHOOL NAME] to comply fully with the requirements of Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972 ("Title IX"). This policy is applicable to conduct occurring on property owned, rented, or used by [SCHOOL NAME], at school-sponsored activities, while using [SCHOOL NAME]-provided equipment and technology, or transportation.

Definition of Sex Discrimination and Other Terms

Liberation Academy prohibits all forms of sex discrimination as defined by Title IX, including:

1. An employee conditioning the provision of an aid, benefit, or service on a student's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct;
2. Unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to an education program or activity; or
3. The following specific crimes as defined by federal law: "Sexual Assault" as defined by 20 U.S.C. § 1092(f)(6)(A)(v), "Dating Violence" as defined in 34 U.S.C. § 12291(a)(10), "Domestic Violence" as defined in 24 U.S.C. § 12291(a)(8), and "Stalking" as defined in 34 U.S.C. § 12291(a)(30).

As used in this policy, these terms shall be defined as follows:

1. "Complainant" means an individual who is alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment.
2. "Respondent" means an individual who has been reported to be the perpetrator of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment.

Title IX Coordinator

Liberation Academy designates the following individual to serve as its Title IX Coordinator:

Name: Takisha Anderson
Title: Associate Director of Operations
Address: 1743 Hardin Ave, College Park, GA 30337
Email: Takisha.Anderson@liberationacademy.org

Any person may report sex discrimination, including sexual harassment, whether or not the person reporting the conduct is the person alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute sex discrimination or sexual



harassment to the Title IX Coordinator. Reports may be made orally or in writing. Reports may be made at any time, including non-business hours, by using the telephone number, email, or mail to the Title IX Coordinator noted above.

The Title IX Coordinator will be responsible for directing Liberation Academy's activities to comply with Title IX and the school's policies and procedures to further the objectives of Title IX. The Title IX Coordinator will be informed of all reports and formal complaints of sexual harassment. Any questions or concerns regarding Liberation Academy's compliance or activities under Title IX should be directed to the Title IX Coordinator. The Title IX Coordinator will oversee the investigation and resolution of formal complaints made pursuant to Title IX. The Title IX Coordinator may designate deputy coordinators and delegate certain responsibilities under this policy.

Training

All Liberation Academy employees will be trained on their obligation to report known sex discrimination to the Title IX Coordinator. Liberation Academy will ensure that all employees with responsibilities under this policy receive appropriate additional training. This expressly includes the Title IX Coordinator, investigators, decision-makers, and any individual facilitating the informal resolution process. This training will include, as appropriate for the audience, the definition of Title IX Sexual Harassment, the scope of the [SCHOOL NAME]'s education programs and activities, conducting investigations, following the complaint process including submission of statements, appeals, and informal resolution processes under this policy, as applicable, and how to serve impartially, including by avoiding prejudgment of the facts at issue, conflicts of interest, and bias. [SCHOOL NAME] will ensure that decision-makers receive training on issues of relevance of questions and evidence, including questions and evidence about the irrelevance of a complainant's sexual predisposition or prior sexual behavior. [SCHOOL NAME] will ensure that investigators receive training on issues of relevance in order to create an investigative report that fairly summarizes relevant evidence.

Reports of Sexual Harassment

Liberation Academy's employees must report knowledge of sexual harassment that occurred on property owned, rented, or used by Liberation Academy, at school-sponsored activities, while using [SCHOOL NAME]-provided equipment and technology, or transportation to his or her immediate supervisor and the Title IX Coordinator. All reports of sexual harassment under this policy must be made to the Title IX Coordinator within 24 hours of receiving actual knowledge of the conduct. The Title IX Coordinator will coordinate Liberation Academy's response to such conduct in accordance with Title IX. The obligation to report sexual harassment under this policy is in addition to, and not place of, any other reporting the individual must complete under applicable law, including the reporting of child abuse and neglect.

Supportive Measures

Liberation Academy will provide supportive measures to increase access to its program and activities. Supportive measures are non-disciplinary, non-punitive individualized services offered at no cost to the



Complainant and Respondent. Supportive measures are designed to restore or preserve equal access to Liberation Academy's programs and activities. Supportive measures will be made available, as appropriate, with or without the filing of a formal complaint.

Upon receipt of a report or formal complaint of a violation of this policy, Liberation Academy will contact the Complainant to discuss the availability of supportive measures, the complainant's wishes with respect to supportive measures, and explain to the complainant the process for filing a formal complaint. Liberation Academy will also consider supportive measures, as appropriate and reasonably available, for the Respondent.

These supportive measures are designed to restore or preserve equal access to Liberation Academy's educational and working programs or activities without unreasonably burdening the other party, including measures designed to protect the safety of all parties and the broader Liberation Academy community, or measures that deter sexual harassment. While a supportive measure may impose some restrictions on a party, it will not unreasonably burden them.

Liberation Academy will maintain the privacy of supportive measures provided that the privacy does not impair Liberation Academy's ability to provide the supportive measures. Liberation Academy will maintain the confidentiality of any supportive measures provided to the complainant or respondent to the greatest extent possible.

Procedures for Filing a Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment

Any individual who feels that he or she has experienced or witnessed sexual harassment or conduct that violates Title IX may file a formal complaint with the Title IX Coordinator. The formal complaint may be filed at any time and may be done so in-person, by phone or by mail. The Title IX Coordinator will provide assistance to any individual seeking to file a formal complaint.

A formal complaint shall include the following:

1. The name and contact information of the Complainant. If the individual filing the complaint is not the individual subjected to the conduct in question, the individual filing the complaint should identify himself or herself as well as the name and contact information of the alleged victim;
2. If known, the name and contact information of the Respondent;
3. A detailed statement of the alleged conduct by the Respondent to the Complainant;
4. The date, time, and location of the alleged conduct;
5. If known, the name and contact information of any witnesses to the alleged conduct;
6. If known, potential evidence that may relate to the alleged conduct;
7. A clear statement of the Complainant's desired outcome, such as supportive measures or other relief; and



8. The signature of the Complainant or his or her guardian.

The Title IX Coordinator is authorized to sign a complaint if the individual making the complaint is not the victim of the alleged conduct or when the victim of the alleged conduct does not wish to file a formal complaint. The signature of the Title IX Coordinator on a complaint does not make Liberation Academy a party to the Complaint.

Assessment and Dismissal of Formal Complaints

Upon receipt of a formal complaint, the Title IX Coordinator will respond to any immediate health or safety concerns. The Title IX Coordinator will then conduct an initial assessment of the complaint for the sole purpose of determining whether the alleged conduct, if substantiated, would constitute prohibited conduct under this policy. Liberation Academy will complete this initial assessment within ten (10) business days of receipt of the formal complaint. Following the initial assessment, the Title IX Coordinator may take any of the following actions:

1. If the allegations forming the basis of the formal complaint would, if substantiated, constitute prohibited conduct as defined in this policy, Liberation Academy will implement appropriate supportive measures and shall initiate an investigation of the allegations under this policy. The Title IX Coordinator may also, with consent of both the Complainant and Respondent, refer the matter to the informal resolution process.
2. If the allegations forming the basis of the formal complaint would not, if substantiated, constitute prohibited conduct as defined in this policy, Liberation Academy shall dismiss the formal complaint from the Title IX grievance process.

At any time prior to the resolution of the complaint, the Title IX Coordinator may dismiss a formal complaint if:

1. The Complainant notifies the Title IX Coordinator in writing that he or she wishes to withdraw the formal complaint;
2. The Respondent is no longer enrolled or employed by Liberation Academy; or
3. Specific circumstances prevent Liberation Academy from gathering sufficient evidence to reach a determination as to the formal complaint or the allegations therein.

If the Title IX Coordinator shall send written notice of the dismissal of the complaint that includes the reasons for dismissal to both parties. The decision of the Title IX Coordinator to dismiss the complaint may be appealed by either party.

The determination regarding dismissal becomes final upon the expiration of the opportunity to appeal the decision under this policy. Once the dismissal is final, a Complainant cannot file a formal complaint under this policy concerning the same alleged conduct.

Advisors



A party may have an advisor of their choice to provide guidance through the complaint process at his or her own cost. An advisor is not required to be an attorney. The role of the advisor in the Title IX complaint process is limited to providing guidance to the party. The advisor may attend meetings and interviews during the complaint process, but he or she may not actively participate in the interview or serve as a substitute for the party.

Any individual who serves as an advisor is expected to make himself or herself available for meetings and interviews throughout the complaint process. The Title IX Coordinator, in his or her sole discretion, may determine that the actions of an advisor are hindering the orderly resolution of the complaint and [SCHOOL NAME]'s compliance with this policy and Title IX. The Title IX Coordinator may take appropriate steps to ensure compliance with this policy and the orderly resolution of complaints.

Formal Complaint Process

The Title IX Coordinator will assign an investigator to investigate the complaint and impartial decision-maker to decide the complaint. Through the investigation of the formal complaint, Liberation Academy will gather evidence and have the burden of proof. Impartial decision-makers shall apply a preponderance of the evidence standard of proof to make a final determination. The Title IX Coordinator may designate one individual or a panel of individuals as the impartial decision-maker.

Pre-Investigation Notice

Following the receipt of a formal complaint under this policy, Liberation Academy shall provide the Complainant access to this policy and provide all parties a copy of the formal complaint. The Title IX Coordinator will provide the parties the formal investigation timeline, the complaint resolution process, and the ability of each party to obtain an advisor. If appropriate, the Title IX Coordinator will discuss the informal resolution process.

Response

The Respondent shall have five (5) calendar days from the receipt of the formal complaint to provide a written response. The response may provide detail regarding the conduct in question, witnesses that may be available, other evidence to be considered, or supportive measures sought by the Respondent.

Investigation

The investigator will promptly investigate the alleged conduct and shall have the authority to speak with the Complainant, the Respondent, witnesses, and other requested participants. The impartial investigator shall provide reasonable notice of the date, time, location, participants, and purpose of the investigative interviews or other meetings. The investigator has the authority to review and collect evidence from the parties and witnesses.

Prior to completing the investigation report, the investigator shall make all evidence available for review by the complainant and respondent, subject to disclosure provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy



Act (FERPA) and other applicable law. Each party shall have ten (10) calendar days from his or her access to the preliminary investigative report to submit a written response to the investigator. The investigator shall take into consideration the written response of the parties, if any, in creating the final investigation report. The investigator will submit a final investigation report to the impartial decision-maker, the Title IX Coordinator, and each party.

Impartial Decision-Maker

The impartial decision-maker shall notify the parties that each party shall have the opportunity to provide the impartial decision-maker questions to be asked of any party or witness. The Complainant and Respondent shall have ten (10) calendar days to submit written questions to the impartial decision-maker. The impartial decision-maker shall have the authority to limit or disallow questions that are irrelevant, repetitive, abusive, or ask about specific incidents of Complainant's prior sexual behavior not offered for an allowable purpose under Title IX. The impartial decision-maker shall obtain answers to all remaining questions requested by the parties.

The impartial decision-maker will make a final determination in writing no more than ten (10) calendar days following the receipt of information responsive to his or her questions. The impartial decision-maker shall make his or her decision based on the record of the investigation and his or her inquiry.

Appeal

The Complainant, Respondent, or both parties may request an appeal of the impartial decision-maker's final determination or the Title IX Coordinator's decision to dismiss the complaint. The party seeking the appeal shall provide written notice of the appeal to the Title IX Coordinator. The Title IX Coordinator must receive the notice of appeal within five (5) calendar days of the appealing party's receipt of the final written decision of the impartial decision-maker or Title IX Coordinator. The request for appeal shall outline any basis for the appeal and the rationale that supports the appealing party's request.

Appeals are limited in scope and are not a review of substantive issues of fact or a new determination of harassment or violations. Appeals will only be considered for the following reasons:

1. A procedural irregularity that affected the outcome of the complaint;
2. New evidence that was not reasonably available at the time the decision was made that could affect the outcome of the complaint;
3. The Title IX Coordinator, investigator, impartial decision-maker, had a conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents generally or the individual Complainant or Respondent that affected the outcome of the complaint; or
4. The recommended sanctions are not commensurate with the violation.



Upon receiving notice of the appeal, the Title IX Coordinator will provide the record of the complaint, the written decision of the impartial decision-maker, and the request for the appeal to the appellate decision-maker. The Title IX Coordinator will also notify both parties of the appeal with notice that each party may submit a written statement supporting or opposing the appeal to the appellate decision-maker within five (5) calendar days of receiving notice of the appeal.

The appellate decision-maker will consider the record and information provided by the parties on appeal and render a written decision within five (5) calendar days from the expiration of time for parties to submit written statements in support or opposition of the appeal. The appellate decision-maker shall confine his or her decision to the record of the complaint applying the preponderance of evidence standard to the issues on appeal. Neither party is entitled to an evidentiary hearing upon appeal and the decision of the appellate decision-maker shall be final.

Voluntary Informal Resolution Process

The parties to a formal complaint may agree to participate in an informal resolution of the complaint. If both the Complainant and Respondent agree in writing, the Title IX Coordinator will collaborate with the Complainant and Respondent to resolve the allegations in an equitable manner. This will include, as appropriate, supportive measures, corrective action, and possible disciplinary action. The informal complaint process will result in a resolution agreement. Any agreements reached as part of the informal resolution must be approved by the Title IX Coordinator. The parties will be expected to adhere to any resolution agreement and the failure to do so may result in disciplinary action. Any party may withdraw from the informal resolution process at any time prior to signing a resolution agreement and the formal complaint process will resume. The informal resolution process shall not be used in complaints involving employee harassment of students.

Emergency Removal

Liberation Academy may temporarily remove a Respondent entirely or partially from a Liberation Academy education program or activities on an emergency basis when an individualized safety and risk analysis has determined that there is an immediate threat to the physical health or safety of any student or other individual. Liberation Academy] will provide all requisite due process prior to removing a student under this policy. In cases when an emergency removal involves a student receiving services under an individualized education program ("IEP") or Section 504 Plan, Liberation Academy will comply with the provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act ("IDEA") and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

Retaliation

Liberation Academy expressly forbids retaliation against anyone who has filed a report, made a formal complaint, or provided information related to a claim of sex discrimination, sexual harassment, or Title IX compliance. Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, any form of intimidation, threats, coercion, reprisal, or



harassment. Complaints alleging retaliation under Title IX shall be filed under this policy and such complaints will be addressed promptly and equitably.

Record Retention

Liberation Academy will retain all records created or received in furtherance of its Title IX obligations in accordance with the applicable record retention schedule adopted by its Governing Board or applicable law.



Homeless Student Services

In accordance with the Education for Homeless Children and Youths: Subtitle B of Title VII of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq.) Liberation Academy (LA) adheres to the principle that all eligible children and youth, including the homeless, are entitled to a free, appropriate public education.

Students identified as homeless or “in transition” will be given full opportunity to meet state and local academic achievement standards and will be included in state and district wide assessments and accountability systems. Our school will ensure that children and youth in transition are free from discrimination, segregation, and harassment. Homeless students will be provided all district services for which they are eligible, including limited English proficiency, vocational and technical education programs, gifted and talented programs, and after school programs where applicable.

Definitions

In accordance with the Act and State Board Rule 160-5-1-.28, the term “homeless child and youth” is defined as individual who lack a fixed, adequate, and regular nighttime residence, including children and youth who are:

1. Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship or a similar reason.
2. Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations.
3. Who are living in emergency shelters.
4. Who are abandoned in hospitals or are awaiting foster care placement.
5. Whose primary nighttime residence is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation.
6. Who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, or substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings.
7. Migratory students who qualify as homeless because the children are living in any of the above described circumstances.
8. Unaccompanied and are not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.
9. A child shall be considered to be experiencing homelessness for as long as he or she is in a living situation as described above.
10. “Unaccompanied youth” means a youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian, who is in transition as defined above.
11. “Immediate” means without delay
12. “School of origin” means the school the child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled.



Identification

In collaboration with school personnel and community organizations, the school's homeless liaison (Manager of Family Engagement and Student Culture) will identify children and youth experiencing homelessness within our school. The liaison will train school personnel on possible indicators of homelessness, sensitivity in identifying families and youth as experiencing homelessness, and procedures for forwarding information indicating homelessness to the liaison. The liaison will also instruct school registrars and secretaries to inquire about possible homelessness upon the enrollment and withdrawal of every student and to forward information indicating homelessness to the liaison. Community partners in identification may include: family and youth shelters, soup kitchens, motels, campgrounds, drop-in centers, welfare departments and other local social services agencies, faith based organizations, truancy and attendance officers, local homeless coalitions, and legal services.

Admission of Homeless Students

Students are immediately admitted to LAi even if the student is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment such as previous academic records, medical records, proof of residency or other documentation. LA will make all efforts to update and keep these records current. Unaccompanied youth must also be immediately enrolled in school. They may either enroll themselves or be enrolled by a parent, non-parent caretaker, older sibling, or LA's homeless liaison.

Education of Homeless Students

All students, including those students who are homeless or in transition have a full and equal opportunity at LA. Parents and guardians of homeless students are informed of the educationally related opportunities available to their children and are provided with the opportunities to participate in the education of their children. Homeless families and students will receive educational services for which all students are eligible. Referrals to health care and immunization services, dental services, health services, and other appropriate services will be made available to all families and students.

Program Procedures

1. Sankofa Montessori is responsible for identifying a homeless liaison (Manager of Family Engagement and Student Culture).
2. Homeless students will be identified based on the definition prescribed by McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and via a numeric code in the school's student information system. All staff in the school will be trained in the identification and recruitment of homeless students.
3. The homeless liaison will provide annual training for all school staff having contact with homeless students.



4. School leadership will receive annual training on the identification and needs of homeless students.
5. The school will display flyers, brochures, and posters that identify the Homeless Liaison contact information.
6. Services for homeless students will be evaluated based on student academic achievement.

Enrollment/Withdrawal

Enrollment of Homeless students occurs at the appropriate grade level. School Operations team is trained and attentive to the identification of homeless students during the enrollment process. Any identification of a homeless student/ family will be immediately identified to the Homeless Liaison for investigation. If Sankofa Montessori is contacted by another school for a homeless student's records, requested information will be provided and sent to the requesting school district within 10 business days of receiving the request.

Program Training and Information Dissemination

The Homeless Liaison or designee annually conducts training and sensitivity/awareness activities each fall to heighten the awareness of the following personnel of the specific needs of unaccompanied and homeless youth: school leadership, teachers, and support personnel. Homeless liaison will lead and coordinate the schools' compliance with this policy and will receive training annually. Meeting documentation includes the PowerPoint presentation, agenda, and sign-in sheets. The Homeless Liaison or designee distributes posters and brochures throughout the school and the Family Resources center in the lobby. Posters and brochures are also distributed to the community throughout the year at various locations including but not limited to the following: Department of Family and Children's Services, Community Centers, Local Churches, Health Department, Fire Department, Hospital, Soup Kitchen, Local Law Enforcement, Safe Haven, and Local Doctor Offices.

Transportation

Liberation Academy will put into place a transportation plan for any identified homeless students (e.g., MARTA cards, or other supports).

Academic Credit

A student's homeless status shall not be a barrier to receiving appropriate credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed while attending a prior school.

Disputes and Resolution of Complaints

Any complaints will be submitted in writing to the Governing Board who will resolve the issue. The parent and the student will be given every opportunity to participate meaningfully in the resolution



of the dispute. If a dispute arises under the McKinney-Vento Act over eligibility, school selection, or school enrollment, the Act requires LEAs to take the following steps:

1. The child or youth shall be immediately enrolled in the school in which enrollment is sought, pending final resolution of the dispute, including all available appeals. In the case of an unaccompanied youth, the homeless education liaison (Manager of Family Engagement and Student Culture - hereafter local liaison) must ensure that the youth is enrolled immediately in the school in which the youth seeks enrollment pending final resolution of the dispute. While disputes are pending, students have the right to participate fully in school and receive all services for which they are eligible.
2. The parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth must be provided with a written explanation of any dispute-related decisions made by the school/LEA involved, including the right of the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth to appeal such decisions
3. The LEA (Governing Board) must provide this written explanation, including the reasons for its determination and information regarding the right to appeal, in a manner and form understandable to the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth.
4. The parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth can file a complaint to the Georgia Department of Education at:
Georgia Department of Education
Federal Programs Director
205 Jesse Hill Jr. Drive SE
1854 Twin Towers East
Atlanta, Georgia, 30034



Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act^[BK1]

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education.

FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students."

- Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible students to review the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies.
- Parents or eligible students have the right to request that a school correct records which they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information.
- Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR § 99.31):
 - School officials with legitimate educational interest;
 - Other schools to which a student is transferring;
 - Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
 - Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
 - Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
 - Accrediting organizations;
 - To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
 - Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
 - State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law.

Schools may disclose, without consent, "directory" information such as a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However, schools must tell parents and eligible students about directory information and allow parents and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them. Schools must notify parents and eligible students annually of their rights under FERPA. The actual means of notification (special



letter, inclusion in a PTA bulletin, student handbook, or newspaper article) is left to the discretion of each school.
