



The Exploris School

The Exploris School Board Regular Monthly Meeting

Date and Time

Thursday July 27, 2023 at 4:30 PM EDT

Location

The Exploris School: Elementary Campus
17 S Swain St, Raleigh, NC 27601, USA
5th Grade Classroom

Agenda

	Purpose	Presenter	Time
I. Opening Items			4:30 PM
A. Record Attendance		Edward Buchan	1 m
B. Call the Meeting to Order		Steven Darroch	1 m
C. Approve Minutes	Approve Minutes	Edward Buchan	2 m
Approve minutes for The Exploris School Board Regular Monthly Meeting on June 22, 2023			
D. Public Comment		Steven Darroch	15 m
PUBLIC COMMENT			

Fifteen minutes will be allocated on the agenda for public input at each meeting.
Additional time may be added at the discretion of the Chair.

	Purpose	Presenter	Time
	<p>Public comment may be oral, in person, or in written form to be read by the Chair.</p> <p>Public comment is limited to no more than 3 minutes per person.</p> <p>It is recommended that public comment be written out and provided to the board following the three minutes to ensure the entire message is heard by the board.</p> <p>Each speaker will clearly state their full name and county of residence.</p> <p>All public comment should be factual and should not include personally identifiable information of students or personnel in order to maintain confidentiality. Speakers should avoid using names of students or staff and maintain confidentiality and privacy standards.</p> <p>All public comments will be taken under advisement by the Board, but will not elicit an immediate written or spoken response. The names of persons providing public comment and a brief summary of topics or input will be included in the meeting minutes published.</p> <p>A response will be provided to the stakeholder within seven (7) days.</p> <p>Specific issues about a particular student or teacher should be addressed to the elementary or middle school director, rather than the Board of Directors.</p>		

II.	Committee Reports		4:49 PM
A.	Governance	Vote	Ryan Boyce
			10 m
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss and vote on the Handbook Revisions proposed by the Committee. • Discuss and vote on new state law regarding Paid Parental Leave. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ The State of North Carolina recently enacted a paid Parental Leave Policy into law. We do not yet have full guidance from NCDPI OCS, but we know that Charter School Boards must vote to opt in to the policy. ◦ It is the recommendation of Leadership that we opt to follow this policy. We will have access to substitute teacher funding (for instructional staff ONLY, unfortunately) if we follow the policy. 		
B.	Finance	Vote	Koren Morgan
			10 m
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly Financial Reports 		

	Purpose	Presenter	Time
	• Vote to approve Annual Audit Engagement Letter		
C. Educational Excellence	Vote	Eric Grunden	10 m
	• Discuss and vote to accept the Annual Educational Excellence Report .		
D. Director Evaluation & Support	Discuss	Steven Darroch	5 m
E. Facilities	Vote	Josh Corbat	5 m
	• Updates on Facilities Project		
	• Review and approve Floor Care contract for summer 2023		
F. Kaizen	FYI	Daniel Hencher	5 m
	Kaizen leaders will give an update to the Board.		
III. Meeting Items			5:34 PM
A. Directors Report	Discuss	Deborah Brown	5 m
	• Monthly Report & Updates (The Directors Report will not be made verbally during meetings. Please review the written report prior to the meeting. We will answer questions and provide critical updates and vote on any requested items.)		
B. Board Business	Discuss	Steven Darroch	15 m
	• Response to last month's Public Comment		
	• Update on DEI Audit and Training.		
	• Vote on Board Meeting Calendar for 2023-2024		
	• Discuss ongoing COVID Response and any changes to be made		
	• General Discussions		
IV. Closed Session			5:54 PM
A. Facilities & Legal Items	Discuss	Josh Corbat	10 m

Purpose

Presenter

Time

- Updates on Facilities

V. Closing Items

6:04 PM

A. Adjourn Meeting

Vote

Coversheet

Approve Minutes

Section: I. Opening Items
Item: C. Approve Minutes
Purpose: Approve Minutes

Submitted by:

Related Material:

Minutes for The Exploris School Board Regular Monthly Meeting on June 22, 2023

APPROVED



The Exploris School

Minutes

The Exploris School Board Regular Monthly Meeting

Date and Time

Thursday June 22, 2023 at 4:30 PM

Location

The Exploris School: Elementary Campus
17 S Swain St, Raleigh, NC 27601, USA
5th Grade Classroom

Directors Present

D. Deaton, E. Buchan (remote), E. Grunden, R. Boyce (remote), S. Carothers (remote), S. Darroch

Directors Absent

A. Rodriguez, D. Hencher, M. Townley, T. Kingsberry, T. Void

Ex Officio Members Present

D. Brown, E. Burton, J. Corbat

Non Voting Members Present

D. Brown, E. Burton, J. Corbat

Guests Present

K. Morgan

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

S. Darroch called a meeting of the board of directors of The Exploris School to order on Thursday Jun 22, 2023 at 4:46 PM.

C. Approve Minutes

E. Grunden made a motion to approve the minutes from The Exploris School Board Regular Monthly Meeting on 05-25-23.

D. Deaton seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

D. Public Comment

Laurel Passera: concerned about rumors of high staff turnover, and does Exploris pay attention to staff attrition and are there plans to communicate this to the public.

II. Committee Reports

A. Governance

R. Boyce made a motion to reappoint S. Darroch and A. Rodriguez to new terms as board members in their current positions.

D. Deaton seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

B. Finance

E. Grunden made a motion to Approve the proposed FY 23-24 budget.

R. Boyce seconded the motion.

E. Burton described increase in funding for student support services.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

C. Educational Excellence

D. Director Evaluation & Support

E. Facilities

F. Kaizen

III. Meeting Items

A. Directors Report

D. Deaton made a motion to approve the week of July 4 as a holiday for staff.

R. Boyce seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

E. Grunden made a motion to Approve new FY23-24 staff hires and approve FY22-23 resignations.

D. Deaton seconded the motion.

DB: Addition of Hope Woodworth to the new hire list.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

B. Board Development: Revisiting Committee Goals

C. Board Business

IV. Closed Session

A. Facilities & Legal Items

S. Carothers made a motion to Enter closed session.

R. Boyce seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

D. Deaton made a motion to exit closed session.

S. Carothers seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

V. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 6:08 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

R. Boyce

Documents used during the meeting

- Bank Account Balances 5-31-23.pdf
- 05. Income Statement - 2023.05 - Exploris.pdf
- 06. Balance Sheet - 2023.05 - Exploris.pdf
- FY24 Budget for Board Approval 6-22-23.pdf
- 03. Board Report - 2023.5 - Exploris.pdf
- June 2023 Exploris Leadership Team Board Report.pdf
- Governance Committee Template.pdf

- Facilities Committee Template.pdf
- Educational Excellence Committee Plan.pdf
- Committee Template - Finance Committee.docx.pdf

Coversheet

Governance

Section: II. Committee Reports

Item: A. Governance

Purpose: Vote

Submitted by:

Related Material:

2023-24 Exploris Personnel Handbook.docx

2023-24 Exploris Family & Student Handbook.docx

23-24 Highlights and Summary of Revisions to the Exploris Handbooks.docx



The Exploris™ School
Empowering Learners to Improve Our World

2023-2024

PERSONNEL HANDBOOK

**The Exploris School
Elementary Campus**

**17 S. Swain St.
Raleigh, NC 27601**

**Phone: (919) 715-0333
Fax: (919) 715-0916**

**The Exploris School
Middle Campus**

**401 Hillsborough St.
Raleigh, NC 27603**

**Phone: (919) 715-3690
Fax: (919) 715-2042**


Table of Contents

Section 1: Introduction to The Exploris School	5
Our History	5
Our Mission	5
Our Vision.....	5
Core Values.....	6
Commitment to Our Community.....	7
Section 2: Basic Work Standards	8
2.1 Staff Hours.....	8
2.2 Field Experiences	8
2.3 Use of Automobiles	10
2.4 Travel and Business Expenses.....	10
2.5 Outside Employment.....	10
2.6 Gifts and Gratuities.....	10
2.7 Inclement Weather: Closures and Delays.....	11
2.8 Weather Conditions and Student Safety.....	11
2.9 Smoking.....	14
2.10 Firearms & Weapons	14
2.11 Media	14
2.12 Safety	14
2.14 Use of School Networks and Equipment.....	15
2.15 Remote Learning	15
Section 3: Salary Plans	16
3.1 Salaries	16
3.2 Salary Review.....	17
3.3 Pay Schedule	17
3.4 Direct Deposit.....	17
Section 4: Benefits	18
4.1 Eligibility	18
4.2 Insurance.....	18
4.3 Retirement and Training.....	19
4.4 Child Care.....	20
4.5 Lottery Priority	20
Section 5: Leave Benefits.....	21
5.1 Holidays and School Vacations	21
5.2 Paid Time Off.....	21
5.3 Substitute Procedures	22
5.4 Annual Leave and PTO Payout	23
5.5 Donated Paid Time Off Leave.....	23



2023-2024
Personnel Handbook

5.6 Family and Medical Leave (FMLA)	23
5.7 Maternity and Paternity Leave	23
5.8 Military Leave	24
5.9 Jury Duty	24
5.10 Leave Without Pay	24
5.11 Advancement of Leave	24
5.12 Infectious Diseases	24
Section 6: Family and Medical Leave Policy	25
6.1 Eligibility	25
6.2 Reasons For Taking Leave	26
6.3 Advance Notice, Medical Certification, and Other Reports	26
6.4 Medical Insurance Coverage	27
6.5 Reinstatement	27
6.6 Paid Time Off Benefits	27
6.7 Workers' Compensation and Disability Leave	28
6.8 Application for FMLA Leave	28
6.9 Designating the Leave	28
Section 7: Employment Policies and Practices	29
7.1 Equal Employment Opportunity	29
7.2 Employee Classification	29
7.3 Recruitment And Selection	29
7.4 Orientation of New Employees	30
7.5 Personnel Records	30
7.6 References And Employment Inquiries	30
7.7 Disciplinary Action	30
7.8 Death In Service	31
7.9 Background Check	31
7.10 Discrimination and Harassment Policy	31
7.11 Supporting Transgender or Transitioning Staff Members and Students	32
7.13 The Exploris School Grievance Policy	33
Section 8: Policies On Child Abuse, Neglect, And Harm To Self And Others	40
8.1: Mandatory School Mental Health Training	40
8.2 Child Abuse and Neglect	40
8.3 Student Threat to Harm to Self or Others	41
Section 9: Substance Abuse Policy	42
9.1 Purpose	42
9.2 Prohibited Conduct	42
9.3 Testing Policy	42
9.4 Confirmation Tests	43
9.5 Confidentiality	43

 2023-2024
Personnel Handbook

9.6 Rehabilitation44

Section 10: No Contract.....45



Section 1: Introduction to The Exploris School

Our History

Exploris opened as one of the first charter schools in North Carolina in 1997. The school was attached to the Exploris Museum, an interactive museum with an international focus, and enrolled 53 sixth grade students from Wake and Johnston counties in its first year and grew to a sixth through eighth grade middle school. As a Global Education school, its early mission was to help people of all ages learn to respect their differences and appreciate their similarities. Exploris was heralded as an adolescent-centered, self-directed learning environment that engaged students actively, taking an integrated approach to learning using major themes and projects. From its inception, the school sought to provide a nurturing and respectful atmosphere with high expectations for all learners. Keeping Exploris's mission at the forefront, the school expanded to include elementary students in grades K - 5.

Exploris fosters a collaborative, real-world, approach to curriculum design and implementations. Using national and state standards as a jumping off point, teachers work together to create a compelling lens that drives the acquisition of content and skills. Teachers seek out university, governmental, and industry partnerships that add to the content-knowledge delivered to students. From these experts, teachers also learn of current, complex issues that help to contextualize student learning and make it relevant for students. By tackling current issues and working with experts to brainstorm solutions, students understand that they have something to offer the world. The work of Exploris students matters today.

Gone are the ringing bells, rows of desks, and fill-in-the-blank worksheets. For most of the day, students and teachers are engaged in challenging learning experiences that explore a topic or theme in depth. Their studies call for intellectual inquiry, physical exploration, and community service. On any given day, these explorations may take them outside the school building to do environmental research, conduct interviews in local businesses, or carry out other fieldwork assignments. Students work individually, in small groups, and as a member of their "crew" or class. Together they learn to draw on the strengths of a whole class.

Our Mission

The Exploris School is a diverse learning community that engages students in challenging, relevant, relationship-based education. Through experiential, project-based learning we empower students to foster a just and sustainable world.

Our Vision

Empowering learners to improve our world.



Core Values

Exploris has been serving students in the downtown Raleigh community for over 20 years and is committed to growing our school in size and diversity to expand support and opportunity for all students. Our educational program is built around 4 core pillars: Global Education, Project-Based Learning, Co-Teaching, and Responsive Classroom. The articulation of our core values ground the school in our educational approach and community partnerships.

INNOVATION - In a constantly changing world, the ability to approach challenges in a new way is vital. Exploris teachers and students approach the learning process through divergent thinking, creativity, ideation, and risk-taking.

SOCIAL EMPOWERMENT - Students learn best when they are exposed to meaningful, complex issues that are applicable to their own lives. Teachers engaged students in current, relevant issues by solving authentic problems that are being addressed beyond the four walls of the school building. Students realize that they have the power to change how their world works. They know how to navigate public systems, lobby public officials, and present their research and opinions as responsible citizens. Student work is tangibly connected not only to the local community but to other regions of the world and to past and future events.

RELATIONSHIPS - A nurturing school environment is one where students are encouraged to build and maintain positive relationships and collaborate with their teachers, parents, peers, and community. With a keen understanding of the unique development of the age group which they teach, teachers are intentional about the structures and relationship-building activities that they design. Positive relationships and collaboration result in a tapestry of learners who know they can depend on each other and work together in almost any situation. The end-product is deeper and Exploris students experience a collective sense of accomplishment and ownership.

REFLECTION - In an ever changing world of new ideas, the importance of reflecting on one's own thinking and the thinking of others cannot be underestimated. Exploris values the creation of time to slow down, to reflect, and to build connections.

CRAFTSMANSHIP - Producing an exemplary product is challenging. It takes attention to detail, grit, perseverance, revision, and tenacity. It takes a growth mindset and a dedication to competing with one's own personal best.

CURIOSITY - True knowledge does not occur without curiosity. Students are empowered to ask questions about the world around them and to explore possible answers.

RESPONSIBILITY - Students will take ownership of their learning and accountability for their actions and behavior. Students will recognize the importance of character, integrity, and honesty.



CONNECTIONS TO NATURE - When students witness the power and elements of the natural world through adventure and stewardship, they begin to view themselves as just one species within a larger system.

Commitment to Our Community

At Exploris, we learn through our commitment to our core values. Each student and family is part of our school community, bringing unique strengths and ideas to our school. Our school is stronger when families take an active role in our school community. As the African proverb states, “It takes a village to raise a child,” and we believe it takes a community to help a school thrive. We encourage every family to share in this commitment to the school community through service.

Service to our school community looks different for each family. For some, a dedication to leading a neighborhood carpool enables other students safe and reliable transportation to and from school. For others, we welcome family members into our classrooms to lead Explorations and Electives. Service on our School Board, our Parent Teacher Organization, or the numerous working groups and committees is how some families choose to engage in strengthening our community. For those with schedules that are unpredictable, active engagement with Crew Teachers and offers of support when possible are much appreciated and integral to the successful education of our students. However you can commit to serving our school community, we welcome you. We ask that each family please aim to join us in whatever way they can for at least five hours each month. Together, our combined efforts will help us grow as a school community and continue to provide the exceptional education we believe every child deserves.



Section 2: Basic Work Standards

2.1 Staff Hours

While Exploris is committed to providing a flexible work schedule that meets the requirements of the position and the employee, the mission of the school is founded upon the engagement of students. The school day for staff working at the Middle Campus begins at 7:45 a.m. and typically ends at 3:30 p.m., and for staff working at the Elementary Campus begins at 8:10 and ends at 4:00 p.m., although after school meetings and events, such as faculty meetings, IEP meetings, curriculum and showcase nights, school dances, etc., may necessitate a need to stay beyond the defined time or arrive before the defined time. Staff should plan to arrive at school in time to be prepared to receive students for the day and to avoid conflict with family carpool arrivals. Staff should plan to work when students are in session, and submit a leave request for time off to attend any off-campus appointments. Office and support staff hours at both campuses will be 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Staff members who are consistently late to work or consistently leave early without prior permission could be required to meet with their Campus Director, complete an action plan, or be required to take paid time off, depending on the situation and frequency of occurrence. Staff members who have specific situations that might require them to arrive late or leave early should consult with their campus director to work out a mutually agreeable plan. Staff members who occasionally need to arrive late or leave early, such as for a doctor's appointment, should secure the permission of their Campus Director and complete a leave request form if their arrival or departure will cause them to miss an hour or more of the school workday.

2.2 Field Experiences

Staff members should follow the Checklist for Planning and Conducting a Field Experience prior to communicating the event to families or scholars and prior to securing any arrangements with community partners. Teachers/staff members should allow at least two weeks in advance when planning for a field experience. Field experiences that require travel outside the city limits of Raleigh should be discussed in advance and require the approval of the Campus Director so we can better support the experience and communicate with families.

The teacher/staff member in charge of an event or field experiences is responsible for:

- Ensuring that students are adequately supervised and safe.
- Bringing all emergency contact information, first aid kit, and any required student medication.
- Informing the front office prior to leaving school and providing an estimated time for return along with the roster of attendees and cell phone numbers where they can be



2023-2024

Personnel Handbook

reached. The teacher/staff member should inform the front office when they return to school.

- Working with the student support team to make sure that lunches that have been ordered can either be canceled or picked up and delivered to the field experience site. This includes determining if any students who receive free or reduced price lunches need food support for this event.
- Managing the budget, collection of funds, and ensuring the affordability of the field experience. If there is a cost to the field experience, staff members should anticipate scholarship needs ahead of time and consult with leadership to make sure we can support all students participating BEFORE communicating plans to families. All field experiences that have a cost associated with them must also have an approved budget that is shared with the Campus Director prior to finalizing plans and communicating about the trip to families. This is to make sure all costs are covered and can be supported for all students.
- Checking in with the EC and Student Support Teams to determine if any students with an IEP or 504 plan have specific needs that will require accommodations during the field experience, and make those arrangements as needed.
 - Recruiting adult chaperones to provide assistance. Communication with chaperones is very important and is the responsibility of the teacher/staff member in charge of the event or trip.
 - Volunteers who will be alone with students (for example, while driving a car) must complete a background check before the field experience.
 - All volunteer drivers must submit a copy of their driver's license and auto liability insurance prior to the beginning of the trip.
 - The teacher/staff member must ensure that all chaperones are familiar with safety procedures in the event of an emergency.

EC Support and Behavior Concerns: Field experiences are a key part of our educational experience. Students who might be excluded from a field experience because of a disciplinary issue should be allowed administrative review before the final decision is made to deny that opportunity. If students with an IEP have specific accommodations listed that could apply during the field experiences, a plan for support must be developed for them.

Contracts of any kind over \$5,000 need Exploris School Board approval, so staff should notify the Directors when planning longer field experiences so we have time to bring them before the Board for approval prior to paying the invoices and communicating to students and families.



2.3 Use of Automobiles

When an employee uses their privately owned automobile for pre-approved Exploris business travel exceeding 20 miles round trip, they shall be reimbursed at the annual federal mileage reimbursement rate. When using personal vehicles to drive to or from a field experience, funds for this reimbursement must be collected in the due course of planning the field experience, which is the responsibility of the team of the teacher/staff member requesting reimbursement. The employee is responsible for complying with motor vehicle laws and for obtaining adequate insurance coverage of their automobile.

If staff members will transport students in the staff member's personal vehicle, they should follow the "rule of three" and make sure they are never alone in a car with a child and that they are always with another adult or multiple children in the vehicle.

Staff cannot be required to use their personal vehicle for student transport.

2.4 Travel and Business Expenses

Reasonable expenses incurred by an employee while on business for Exploris such as copying, transportation, parking, meals, and lodging will be reimbursed in accordance with procedures and standards as set forth in The Exploris School's financial policies. All expenses must be pre-approved using [The Reimbursement Request Form](#). If a pre-approval is not completed, then the employee may not be reimbursed by the school for their travel and business expenses. In addition, all reimbursement requests must be accompanied by receipts. Travel within Wake County for a whole-staff, off-site professional activity will not be eligible for reimbursement.

2.5 Outside Employment

Employees shall accept no outside employment that presents a conflict of interest with responsibilities at Exploris. Educational materials created while teaching at Exploris will be used to support The Exploris School mission and vision and not be utilized for personal gain or sold commercially either during or after employment with The Exploris School. Following federal copyright rules, materials created for the classroom while a staff member is employed at Exploris shall have the copyright retained by The Exploris School. The Exploris School, in serving our mission to scale out best practices, does support requests to share under Creative Commons guidelines, provided that the designations of Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike

and have the Create Commons license symbol applied as follows: CC BY-NC-SA



2.6 Gifts and Gratuities

Employees who are offered, receive, or anticipate that they may receive a gift of any value or favor in conjunction with their roles at the school shall immediately notify their Campus



2023-2024
Personnel Handbook

Director. This shall not apply to or restrict the acceptance of gifts or tokens of minimal value offered up to an estimated \$50 in value and accepted openly from students, parents, or other persons in recognition or appreciation of service. Group gifts from the PTO and other organizations that are given to the entire staff are exempt from this policy and do not need to be reported. Employees may not use their position at Exploris for personal gain or advantage. Employees shall accept no gift or gratuity that presents a conflict of interest with their responsibilities at The Exploris School.

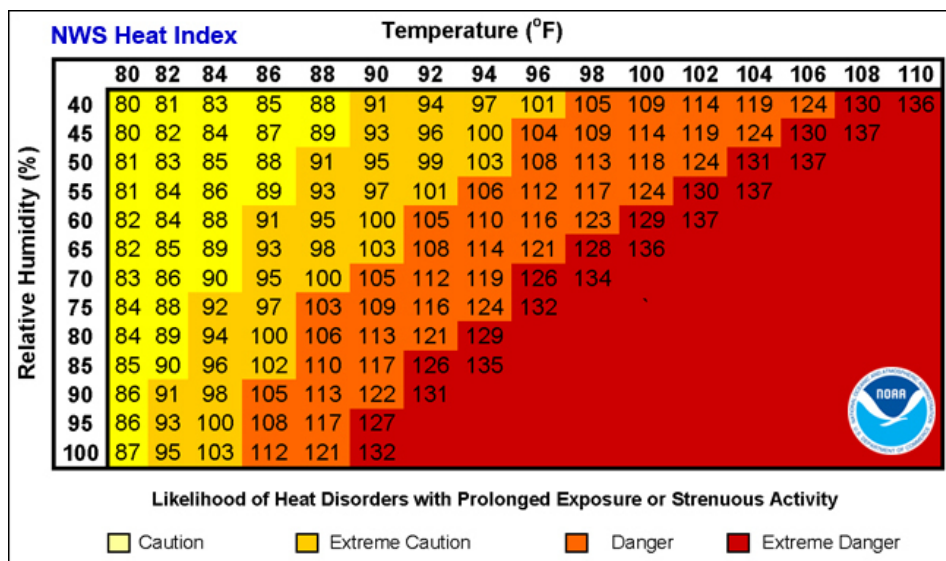
2.7 Inclement Weather: Closures and Delays

The Exploris School will follow the Wake County Public School System for inclement weather closures and reserves the right to make an independent decision to close for weather related issues if the safety of staff and students might be affected. If Wake County Public School System has extended closures due to road conditions (for example, waiting to clear secondary roads) Exploris may decide conditions are clear enough around our campus to warrant a return to learning on the Exploris campus. For any WCPSS delayed openings or school closures that arise out of situations not related to inclement weather, the Exploris School will operate independently. Employees should check their school email and phone messaging for updates. Notifications will also be posted on Exploris social media and through assorted news outlets. If conditions allow, the school may designate a remote learning day if physical campuses are closed. On remote learning days, staff is providing instruction and students are completing work.

2.8 Weather Conditions and Student Safety

2.8a: Warm Weather Conditions

When temperatures are predicted to be 95°F or higher, student activity outside after 1:00 p.m. should be avoided or limited to 15-20 minutes at a time. When a day is designated as a Code Orange day, student activity outside will be limited to 15 minutes for the entire day. When a day is designated as a Code Red day, student activities should take place indoors only.

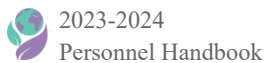


PRECAUTION	PROCEDURE	PRECAUTION	PROCEDURE
LIGHT YELLOW CAUTION	Observe students or staff members susceptible to heat illness (e.g., individuals who are obese or suffer from asthma, etc.). Water should be readily accessible to everyone.	ORANGE DANGER	All students and staff going outdoors should be under constant and careful supervision. Breaks from physical activity should be every 20-30 minutes with water readily accessible to everyone. Fluid replacement is vital!
YELLOW EXTREME CAUTION	Observe students or staff members susceptible to heat illness (e.g., individuals who are obese or suffer from asthma, etc.). Water should be readily accessible to everyone.	RED EXTREME DANGER	Postponing outdoor physical activities or moving physical activity to air-conditioned indoor settings is recommended for all students and staff. If outdoor activity is required, constant supervision is needed. Water must be readily available! Fluid replacement is vital!

References: State Climate Office of North Carolina http://www.nc-climate.ncsu.edu/climate/heat_index_climatology.php

2.8b Cold Weather Conditions

Increased caution is necessary when temperatures are below 32°F. Temperature plus wind velocity, or wind chill, is a prominent factor in determining cold weather safety. As the speed of the wind increases, it carries heat away from the body more quickly. Staff should limit student outdoor time to under 30 minutes if the temperature is near or below freezing.



2.8c Severe Weather: Lightning

In cases where thunderstorms are bringing lightning into the area, staff should follow the 30-30 rule, which means waiting 30 minutes after the last lightning flash is seen or the last roll of thunder is heard to resume outdoor activity. It may seem safe to return to activity after the storm has passed, but lightning can and does strike at least 10 miles away from the storm even after the clouds have moved on. This phenomenon is known as a “bolt out of the blue.” Every time lightning is seen or thunder is heard, the 30 minute clock should be reset.

2.8d Air Quality Alert Days

Due to ground-level ozone and particulate levels being higher than usual, the National Weather Service may declare a Code Orange, Code Red, or Code Purple for air quality that is separate from alerts for temperature. On days that are designated as Code Orange for air quality (but not for temperature) staff should limit student outside time to 15-20 minutes at a time and watch for students or colleagues who may be sensitive to air quality and exhibit signs such as fatigue, trouble breathing, increased heart rate, and other signs of stress. If noticed, staff and students affected should return indoors, drink water, and call for assistance from administration to determine next steps for care. Inside, classroom air purifiers should be turned on to high and ionizer settings, and windows should remain closed.

On days that are designated as Code Red for air quality (but not for temperature) staff should severely limit time outside to short periods of 5 minutes for things like travel between buildings, and then apply the above guidelines for Code Orange days.

On days designated as Code Purple, no outside activities should be conducted. Students arriving early to school should immediately be allowed inside, and carpool riders should wait inside for their ride to be called. Administration will consider whether or not to cancel in person learning and move to a remote learning day based on this severe level of weather conditions and will notify staff and family of any decisions.

2.8e Dressed Appropriately for Weather

Exploris staff should note if students are dressed appropriately for weather conditions. Exploris staff may limit a student’s time outdoors if the student is not dressed appropriately for the weather, or may have the student complete an indoor activity instead. Families, administration, and counseling staff should be notified if staff members notice a student who is consistently not dressed appropriately for weather conditions.



2.9 Smoking

Exploris is a smoke-free and tobacco-free environment. Smoking, use of electronic cigarettes, chewing tobacco, or vaping is prohibited.

2.10 Firearms & Weapons

No firearms, weapons, or facsimiles of firearms or weapons of any type are allowed on The Exploris School property or at any Exploris School function.

2.11 Media

All inquiries from the media shall be referred to the Director Team. Teachers should feel free to contact appropriate news outlets in order to promote school happenings; however, this should be done in coordination with the Directors.

Staff should take care with personal social media and be aware that even with privacy settings, personal pictures and posts can often be discovered by colleagues, students, families, and the media. Staff members are representatives of the school and should avoid comments and postings that are negative about the school, colleagues, families, or students or that could create a disruption to the school environment. Staff should avoid posting pictures of, or comments about, current Exploris students on their private social accounts.

2.12 Safety

The Exploris School is committed to a safe work environment and to adherence to all federal and state safety regulations.

2.12a Staff Members Injured at School

Staff members injured at school should notify their direct supervisor as soon as possible.

2.12b Students Injured at School

Staff members should notify their direct supervisor as soon as possible following any injury of a student on campus or during a school-sponsored activity. Staff members will be responsible for completing all required forms and reports in a timely manner and staying abreast of policies such as concussion awareness.

2.12c Student Medical Conditions and Medication

Staff members are responsible for complying with all medical directives of students in their care and for safe management and storage of student medications, inhalers, epipens, etc. Staff



2023-2024
Personnel Handbook

members must ensure that when leaving campus with students, all appropriate emergency medications are with them.

2.12d Building Security and Student Supervision

Staff members are responsible at all times for the safety and supervision of the students in their care. Basic responsibilities include keeping all exterior doors closed and locked, closing and locking all windows before leaving the school for the day, keeping your building access code secure and not sharing it with students, and practicing the three components of active supervision: moving, scanning, and interacting with students. Staff cell phone usage when responsible for student supervision during the day should be brief and limited to necessary school-related communications.

2.13 Political Campaigning

While The Exploris School encourages all employees to be involved in the community, political campaigning by any employee on the school's time and using the school's resources is strictly prohibited in accordance with relevant federal, state, and local statutes. In addition, employees may not make statements purporting to represent the views of The Exploris School with regard to political campaigns. Violation of this policy could jeopardize The Exploris School's tax-exempt status and staff members who do not comply with these policies could be subject to disciplinary action.

2.14 Use of School Networks and Equipment

Staff should be aware that activities that are conducted on school devices, over school networks, and/or during the school day should not detract from professional duties and are subject to the Freedom of Information Act. Use of personal equipment over personally funded networks should not interfere with the job duties of the employee during work hours.

2.15 Remote Learning

Should the school need to utilize a remote learning plan (for example, in the case of extended building closures for illness, construction, or weather), staff should follow the Digital Teaching & Learning guidelines set by the school for expectations for the teaching day and for providing remote instruction or services.



Section 3: Salary Plans

3.1 Salaries

Employee salaries will be determined at the time of employment and evaluated approximately annually thereafter. The initial salary will be stated in the Employment Confirmation Letter.

Teacher salaries are calculated using the State salary scale and adding an Exploris supplement based on years of service. The following chart outlines the Exploris teacher supplement rates.

Years at Exploris Supplement

No License	10%
0-9 years	14%
10-17 years	16%
18-24 years	18%
25+ years	20%

* 5 Years may be transferred in.

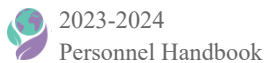
The Teaching Partner Salary Scale, based on years of experience at Exploris, is outlined below.

Years	Gross salary
0	\$27,360.00
1	\$27,770.40
2	\$28,186.96
3	\$28,609.76
4	\$29,038.91
5	\$29,474.49
6	\$29,916.61
7	\$30,365.36
8	\$30,820.84
9	\$31,283.15

10	\$31,752.40
11	\$32,228.68
12	\$32,712.11
13	\$33,202.79
14	\$33,700.84
15	\$34,206.35
16	\$34,719.44
17	\$35,240.24
18	\$35,768.84
19	\$36,305.37
20	\$36,849.95
21	\$37,402.70

22	\$37,963.74
23	\$38,533.20
24	\$39,111.20
25	\$39,697.86
26	\$40,293.33
27	\$40,897.73
28	\$41,511.20
29	\$42,133.87
30	\$42,765.87
31	\$43,407.36
32+	\$44,058.47

NOTE: Up to 5 years of comparable K-12 classroom



teaching experience can be transferred in.

3.2 Salary Review

Salary adjustments will be made as appropriate and may be based on one or more of the following criteria: Job performance, length of service, change in certification or degree status, and/or position reclassification.

3.3 Pay Schedule

Each employee will be paid on a monthly basis at the end of each month. Payroll dates will be published at the beginning of each school year. Employee salaries are paid over a 12 month period from July 1 - June 30. Returning 10-month employees are paid in advance of their contracted start date (August) for the new school year. Advance payments of salary are to be returned to Exploris if an employee fails to return at the start of the new school year. Employees starting in August during their first year will be paid over an 11-month pay schedule in year 1 of employment and over a 12-month pay schedule in subsequent years of employment, resulting in lower monthly payments in the second year of employment. Employees who leave their position midyear will have payment prorated based on the date of the termination of their employment. Since Exploris teachers are paid in advance, the employee who is terminating their position may need to return any advance payment of salary.

3.4 Direct Deposit

All employees are required to use direct deposit for the depositing of their paychecks.



Section 4: Benefits

4.1 Eligibility

The Exploris School provides group medical, dental, and vision insurance to employees. All employees regularly scheduled to work 30 hours or more per week are eligible to enroll on the first day of employment with The Exploris School. The Exploris School contributes to the group medical and dental for all eligible employees.

Regular full-time employees who work a normal schedule of 30 hours per week or more are eligible for medical benefits. The Exploris School will pay 100% of the medical premium and 25% of the dental premium for the employee. The employee portion of the medical, dental, and vision monthly premium is handled through monthly payroll deductions. Employees will be provided with the medical, dental, and vision costs during Open Enrollment each year.

Employees who are eligible for benefits can also elect coverages for their dependents at additional costs, which are outlined each year in the employee insurance booklet, which can be obtained from the HR and Operations Manager and which contains a complete description of available benefits and assorted costs.

Employees that work less than 30 hours and temporary employees, such as substitute teachers, are not eligible for any benefits.

4.2 Insurance

4.2a Health Insurance

Please refer to the employee insurance booklet, which can be obtained from the HR and Operations Manager, for a complete description of benefits.

- Exploris pays 100% of the premium for employee-only medical coverage for employees who work 30 or more hours per week (100% employed).
- Exploris does not offer medical coverage to an employee who works less than 30 hours a week (less than 75% employed).
- Exploris also offers a Health Savings Account if the employee is enrolled in the HSA qualified health insurance plan. Exploris will contribute \$45 per month to the employee's HSA account. Employees may also contribute to their HSA account up to the contribution limit defined by law.

4.2b Dental Insurance

Please refer to the employee insurance booklet, which can be obtained from the HR and Operations Manager, for a complete description of benefits.



2023-2024

Personnel Handbook

- Exploris pays 25% of the premium for employee-only dental coverage for employees who work 30 or more hours per week (75% or more employed).
- Exploris does not offer dental coverage to an employee who works less than 30 hours a week (less than 75% employed).

4.2c Vision Insurance

Employees that work 30 hours or more a week (75% or more employed) are eligible for Vision insurance. Exploris does not contribute to the vision premium, thus the employee pays 100% of the premium.

4.2d Life Insurance

Please refer to the employee insurance booklet for a complete description of benefits. The Exploris School offers Life Insurance coverage at no cost to employees that work 30 hours or more per week.

4.2e Short-term/Long-term Disability

Please refer to the employee insurance booklet for a complete description of benefits. The Exploris School offers Short-term disability and Long-term disability coverage at no cost to employees that work 30 hours or more per week.

4.3 Retirement and Training

4.3a 401(k) Retirement Plan

Employees can contribute up to the United States Federal limits of pre-tax income from payroll deductions into a 401(k) retirement plan. Employees may enroll, decrease, increase, or discontinue their contributions on a quarterly basis. The Exploris School will match employee contributions, as organizational resources allow, at a rate determined annually by the Board of Directors. The maximum amount may increase annually. Please refer to The Exploris School's 401(k) provider for updated information and details on vesting of The Exploris School's contribution.

Exploris matches 50% of employee contributions up to 8%. Exploris matching contributions maximum is 4% of the salary for all employees if an employee makes contributions of 8%.

4.3b Career Development and Training Assistance

As part of an employee's annual progress review, the employee and their Campus Director will review personal career development needs and the needs of the school. Employees may be eligible for reimbursement of workshop/conference registration, materials, or other incidental



2023-2024
Personnel Handbook

fees up to a maximum amount that is predetermined by their Director. Areas of professional learning, training, study, or presentations must be related to an employee's work at The Exploris School as well as the continuous improvement needs of the school. All assistance and leave must be approved in advance by the Leadership Team. Reimbursement is contingent upon the availability of organizational resources. Documentation of satisfactory completion must be received in order to be considered for reimbursement.

4.4 Child Care

When the Before and After Care program is in operation, child care is provided free of charge for children of employees who attend Exploris. This care is available while the employee is at school conducting school business. Registration is required. If the employee would like to utilize Before and After Care for periods of time beyond their job responsibilities, they are responsible for paying all required fees.

4.5 Lottery Priority

Staff members who are employed at least 80% at Exploris can receive priority admissions in our lottery under the lottery provision for children of eligible staff members. For Exploris employees, "children" is defined as biological children, foster children, stepchildren, children under the legal guardianship of the employee, or children domiciled with the employee.



Section 5: Leave Benefits

All leave except leave for holidays scheduled for the whole school on the annual calendar is subject to prior written approval by the employee's Campus Director. The electronic Leave Request Form must be completed for any time that the employee is not fulfilling their primary job responsibilities. One form should be completed for each day of leave requested.

5.1 Holidays and School Vacations

The Exploris School's holidays are: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Memorial Day, Juneteenth, Independence Day, Labor Day, Yom Kippur, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. School will be closed on all holidays and school vacations denoted on the annual school calendar.

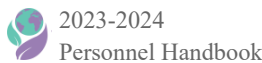
5.2 Paid Time Off

Beginning July 1, 2015, full-time employees who work 40 hours a week will earn up to 1 paid time off day per month over a 10-month term to be utilized for sick days and personal business. Staff members who are 11-month employees will earn up to 11 days of paid time off, and staff members who are 12-month employees will earn up to 12 days of paid time off. Staff shall not request paid time off days the day before or after school vacations or during testing periods. Such requests will be considered only for extenuating circumstances. Staff members' primary responsibility while school is in session is fulfilling their contracted responsibilities to the school and to students; time off should not be requested in order to schedule personal vacations. Leave requests of more than two days in a row must be approved by the Campus Director.

There will be blackout times designated by the Leadership Team at the beginning and end of the school year to allow for collaboration. This will ensure the successful planning, organization, and implementation of school procedures and policies are completed for the opening and closing of the school year.

5.2a Service Leave or Floating Holiday

Employees may take up to eight hours per year to volunteer in a school or a service organization of their choice or for religious or personal observances not already built into the school calendar. The Campus Director must approve the leave request and be notified in writing at least one week in advance. The employee must provide written documentation from the school or service organization if the employee chooses to use this leave day for service. This category of leave may not be carried over in full or in part as a paid time off balance into the next school year.



5.2b Partial Days Leave

Leave may be taken in half day or full day increments. Employees who expect to be away from their duties for more than one hour should request a half day of paid time off.

5.2c Paid Time Off for Part Time Employees

Employees who work fewer than 40 hours per week will earn leave in proportion to their percentage of employment, for example, .5 days of paid time off per month for 50% employment or .8 days per month for 80% employment.

5.2d Leave Carryover

For any full time Exploris employee returning for the following school year, up to 5 paid time off days will be carried over into the subsequent school year. Staff employed by the school at 80% of full time work will earn .8 Paid Time Off Days per month worked and four days may be carried over into the following school year. Staff employed at 50% of full time work will earn .5 Paid Time Off days per month and 3 days may be carried over into the following school year.

Exploris employees employed by the school prior to July 1, 2015 with accrued sick leave may roll over all sick leave days earned prior to July 1, 2015, and will continue to receive short-term and long-term disability. This leave will be referred to as “grandfathered sick leave.” Once an employee’s bank of accrued sick leave gets down to 15 grandfathered sick leave days, their days will be capped at a maximum of 15 paid time off days per year. The Leadership Team must approve any exceptions to this policy.

If an Exploris employee terminates employment before the end of the school year and was paid in advance of their accrual of paid time off days, the final paycheck will be adjusted to reflect paid time off days actually earned during their time of employment.

5.3 Substitute Procedures

Staff are responsible for notifying their Campus Director and team members as soon as an absence is anticipated. As much notice as possible is appreciated so that accommodations can be made. Administrators should be notified no later than 6:00 a.m. on the date of the absence. Teachers are responsible for providing lesson plans and maintaining a folder of class lists, schedules, and back up lesson plans. Once a Campus Director has been notified of the absence, the Director will secure a substitute teacher for the day. Staff members may also make arrangements for a substitute to cover for them in their absence, and should notify the Director of the name of the substitute teacher who has agreed to provide coverage. All staff will be provided with a list of pre-approved substitutes. If an external sub from the pre-approved substitute list is not able to be recruited, the teacher or Campus Director must make arrangements with an



2023-2024
Personnel Handbook

internal colleague. Staff members are responsible for notifying their Director if illness or a personal issue will cause them to need to leave school before the school day has ended or will cause them to arrive late.

If the employee is teaching classes in a remote learning environment and will be absent, they shall notify their Director and team members as soon as possible and follow the procedures outlined in the Digital Teaching and Learning Guide.

5.4 Annual Leave and PTO Payout

Exploris employees do not accrue annual leave and are not paid for unused paid time off days if they leave Exploris.

5.5 Donated Paid Time Off Leave

At any time, employees may donate up to five paid time off days per year to a pool of shared paid time off. This “leave bank” can be accessed by Exploris employees through the policies described here. The donated Paid Time Off leave pool is funded through employee donations, therefore, there is no guarantee of hours that might be available. An employee may access the donated Paid Time Off leave pool in the event of an extraordinary personal event or medical situation that will require the employee to be out for an extended period of time to care for themselves or an immediate family member. Any employee who wishes to access the donated leave in the leave bank must first have exhausted their own available paid time off. The Donated Paid Time Off Leave bank can also be requested in extraordinary situations, if the employee’s Paid Time Off leave has been depleted. The requesting employee must submit a certification of illness or injury from the member’s or immediate family member’s health care provider. Unused days contributed to the pool would not carry over to the next school year. Any employee wishing to use this pool must have exhausted their paid time off and must apply to the Director Team for approval.

Employees receiving other payments such as worker’s compensation, short-term disability, long-term disability, or paid parental leave are not eligible to receive donations from the pool of donated time off or direct donation of paid time off from colleagues.

5.6 Family and Medical Leave (FMLA)

The Exploris School follows the federal guidelines for Family and Medical Leave. See Section 6.

5.7 Maternity and Paternity Leave

For employees not eligible for Family and Medical Leave, The Exploris School provides a maternity/paternity leave benefit, which allows employees to combine sick leave and short-term disability leave. Prior position and salary may not remain the same. Spouses may take up to five



days for family leave. This applies to all full-time employees and any part-time employees who have worked at The Exploris School for more than twelve months and work more than twenty hours a week.

5.8 Military Leave

The Exploris School will provide military leave as required by law. All employees will be protected against loss of income as a result of participation in annual encampment or training duty in the United States Military Reserves or National Guard. In these circumstances, The Exploris School will pay the difference between what the employee earns from the government for military service and what the employee would have earned normally on the job at The Exploris School. This difference will be paid for up to two weeks per calendar year. The Employee must inform their Campus Director in writing as early as possible when requesting military leave.

5.9 Jury Duty

Necessary time off without loss of pay shall be granted to employees called for jury duty. The employee may retain the fee earned from jury duty. The Employee must inform their Campus Director in writing as early as possible when assigned for jury duty.

5.10 Leave Without Pay

The Exploris School's teachers are considered twelve-month employees for group insurance purposes but are paid for ten months of work over a twelve month period. In addition, Exploris grants time off to all employees on the days and breaks designated by the academic calendar for the current school year. Leave without pay will be considered on a case-by-case basis for employees that have exhausted all other applicable forms of leave. The standard Leave Request process shall be followed to request leave without pay.

5.11 Advancement of Leave

An advance on a future year's leave is not permitted.

5.12 Infectious Diseases

In the case of local infectious disease outbreaks, employees shall follow the guidelines and recommendations set by the school and local authorities in regards to screening, cleaning, prevention, reporting, and quarantine protocols and may be eligible for additional leave as per state or federal legislation that is passed after the publication of this handbook.

Section 6: Family and Medical Leave Policy

6.1 Eligibility

The Exploris School (“the Employer”), in accordance with the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993, **permits eligible employees to take up to twelve weeks of unpaid leave in a twelve month period** for the birth or placement of a child or a serious health condition. This policy sets forth employee eligibility and obligations associated with taking a qualifying FMLA leave.

Employees who have worked for the employer for at least twelve months and at least 1,250 hours during the twelve month period immediately prior to the date the leave will commence may take up to twelve workweeks of unpaid leave during any twelve month period.

An eligible employee may also take up to 26 workweeks of leave during a single 12-month period to care for a covered service member with a serious injury or illness when the employee is the spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin of the service member. An eligible employee is limited to a combined total of 26 workweeks of leave for any FMLA-qualifying reasons during the single 12-month period.

Employees are entitled to take up to twelve weeks of unpaid FMLA leave in any twelve month period. For purposes of this policy, the twelve-month period on which eligibility for leave shall be based is a period measured backward from the date an employee last used FMLA leave. Therefore, if an employee takes four weeks of FMLA leave on February 1; four weeks of FMLA leave on April 1; and four weeks of FMLA leave on August 1, the employee will not be entitled to any additional FMLA leave until the following February 1. At that time, he or she will be entitled to four weeks of leave. On April 1 he or she will be entitled to another four weeks, and so forth.

Eligible spouses who work for Exploris are limited to a combined total of 12 workweeks of leave in a 12-month period to share for the following FMLA-qualifying reasons:

- The birth of a son or daughter and bonding with the newborn child,
- The placement of a son or daughter with the employee for adoption or foster care, and bonding with the newly-placed child, and
- The care of a parent or other legal dependent with a serious health condition.

Eligible spouses who work for the same employer are also limited to a combined total of 26 workweeks in a single 12-month period to care for a covered servicemember with a serious injury or illness if each spouse is a parent, spouse, son or daughter, or next of kin of the servicemember (commonly referred to as “military caregiver leave”). This limitation also applies to a combination of military caregiver leave and leave for the other qualifying reasons listed above.



6.2 Reasons For Taking Leave

FMLA protected leave may be taken for any of the following occurrences:

- Birth and/or care of the employee's newborn child.
- Placement of a child for adoption or foster care.
- Care of the employee's spouse, child, other legal dependent or parent who has a serious health condition.
- A serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform any one of the essential functions of their job or requires the employee to be absent from work to obtain medical treatment from a qualifying health care provider.

6.3 Advance Notice, Medical Certification, and Other Reports

The employee seeking FMLA leave must provide at least thirty days advance written notice when the need for leave is foreseeable. If an employee fails to provide thirty days notice, leave may be denied until thirty days after the date notice is given. If leave must begin in less than thirty days from the date notice is given, the employee must give as much notice as is practicable (one or two business days after learning of the necessity for leave). In cases where the need for leave is unforeseeable, employees must give as much notice as possible under the circumstances. Requests for leave should be submitted to the employee's supervisor.

Leave taken because of the birth of a child or to care for a newborn child or child placed in the employee's home by adoption or foster care must be taken within the twelve-month period immediately following the child's birth or placement.

Employees who have accrued paid leave time (sick, vacation, personal) are not required to substitute such accrued paid leave to cover any period of otherwise unpaid FMLA leave. If, however, an employee elects to do so, once an employee has exhausted their bank of accrued paid leave, the duration of the FMLA leave will be unpaid.

The employee must provide a medical certification form completed and signed by the employee's health care provider when the request for leave is due to the employee's own serious health condition or to care for a seriously ill spouse, child or parent. Failure to provide certification of a serious health condition within the appropriate time frame may result in leave being delayed or denied.

The employee must notify the employer every thirty days of their status and intent to return to work. Employees on leave longer than thirty days may be required to recertify their serious health condition or the serious health condition of a family member by submitting documentation to verify health status. In such circumstances, failure to provide documentation within fifteen



calendar days after each thirty day anniversary date will result in the leave losing its FMLA protection.

The employee must provide a medical certification (fitness for duty report from physician) to resume work before returning from leave due to the employee's own serious health condition. Otherwise, the employee may not be permitted to return to work until he or she submits the required certification. Failure to provide a fitness for duty report after the end of the FMLA leave may result in the employee being terminated from employment. The fitness for duty report must list any limitations upon the employee's ability to return to work, as well as the anticipated duration of such limitations.

6.4 Medical Insurance Coverage

If the employee is covered under the employer's group health insurance plan during unpaid leave, the employer will continue to pay its portion of the health insurance premium, and the employee must continue to pay their share of the premium to the employer. Failure of the employee to pay their share of a premium will result in loss of coverage if the premium is more than thirty days late.

If the employee does not return to work after the expiration of the leave, the employee may be required to reimburse the employer for payment of health insurance premiums paid during the period of unpaid leave, unless the employee does not return to work due to:

- the continuation or onset of a serious health condition either affecting the employee or the employee's family member which would otherwise entitle the employee to leave under the FMLA.
- certain circumstances beyond the employee's control.

6.5 Reinstatement

Upon return from FMLA leave, the employee will be reinstated to the same or equivalent job, with the same pay and benefits, unless the employee has received a written notice that special circumstances apply. The Exploris school reserves the right to reassign the employee to an equivalent role at a different grade level or subject area if needed.

6.6 Paid Time Off Benefits

During unpaid leave, the employee will not accrue paid time off benefits and will not receive holiday pay.



6.7 Workers' Compensation and Disability Leave

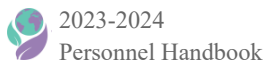
Any employee who takes FMLA leave for a condition which also qualifies for workers' compensation or disability leave will not be entitled to substitute accrued paid leave for the period covered by workers' compensation or disability benefits, but such time will be counted against the employee's twelve week FMLA entitlement. If an employee is certified to return to a light duty position, but chooses not to do so, and instead chooses to remain on FMLA leave, or if such employee's workers' compensation or disability benefits cease for any reason, such employee will then be required to substitute accrued paid leave for the duration of the FMLA leave. If the employee exhausts their accrued paid leave, the remainder of the leave will be unpaid.

6.8 Application for FMLA Leave

Each employee seeking FMLA leave will be provided an application. Applications for leave must be submitted in writing to the Director Team. Applications must be submitted at least thirty days prior to the leave when the need for leave is foreseeable, or as soon as possible if thirty days' notice is not practicable under the circumstances.

6.9 Designating the Leave

An employee will normally be advised whether their leave will be counted as FMLA within two business days after making a request for leave. If the employer does not designate the leave as FMLA leave and the employee wants the leave to be counted as FMLA leave because the leave was due to an FMLA-qualifying reason, the employee must, within two days after returning to work, notify the employer of his/her desire to have the leave counted as FMLA leave. Failure to notify the employer within two business days after returning to work that leave was taken for an FMLA-qualifying reason will result in such leave losing its FMLA protection. Any such request must be in writing, and submitted to the employee's direct supervisor.



Section 7: Employment Policies and Practices

7.1 Equal Employment Opportunity

Exploris is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, or age. There will be no retaliation or reprisal against any employee for making such a report or for filing any discrimination charge with any federal or local agency.

7.2 Employee Classification

- Regular Full-Time: 40 hours/week
- Regular Part-Time:
 - 30-39 hours/week
 - 20-29 hours/week
 - 1-19 hours/week
- Temporary: Will last no longer than six months. May be reviewed for possible extension.

Note: The Exploris School will determine employee work schedules. Employees shall be required to work as needed, including regular school schedules and other school events deemed necessary, such as attendance at faculty meetings, training, open houses, parent conferences, etc.

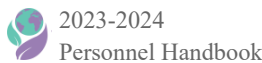
Each employee will also be classified as either “Non-Exempt” or “Exempt.” Classification will be noted in the employee’s job description.

Non-Exempt: An employee who is covered under the federal Fair Labor Standards Act must be paid in accordance with the minimum wage rate provisions of the law. Overtime or compensatory time will be paid to non-exempt staff for time worked in excess of 40 hours/week. On a daily basis, all non-exempt employees must document their hours worked in a manner required by The Exploris School.

Exempt: An employee exempt from the minimum wage and overtime provisions of the federal Fair Labor Standards Act.

7.3 Recruitment And Selection

The Exploris School typically advertises positions in-house, on the school’s web site, and through ads in major publications, electronic job search services such as Indeed, and other electronic sources. An applicant must submit a formal cover letter and resume to be considered for any position. Any false or erroneous information intentionally reported to The Exploris School, regardless of when discovered, may be grounds for dismissal.



7.4 Orientation of New Employees

Each new employee will meet with the administrative staff to review the requirements and responsibilities of the position. Each employee will receive an Employment Confirmation Letter within 30 days of their start date, which will include the start date, benefits and other pertinent information. Each employee will also receive a position profile, which will include general and specific expectations and responsibilities. Each employee shall fill out the necessary personnel paperwork prior to beginning employment with The Exploris School. Each new employee is required to attend the orientation for new staff at the beginning of the school year.

7.5 Personnel Records

All personnel records are confidential and are kept under lock and key by the Directors. Only the Directors, HR and Operations Manager, Members of the Exploris School Board, or the employee themselves may have access to that employee's personnel records. Personnel files contain records of performance reviews, promotions, disciplinary actions, leave records, grievances, and training offered or completed by the employee. Each employee may request a review of their personnel file at any time. All employee reviews of personnel files will take place in the office where the records are stored and under the supervision of an Exploris Director or HR and Operations Manager. Medical and dental records are kept separate from personnel records and are also confidential.

7.6 References And Employment Inquiries

References may be given upon request from the employee or employee's prospective employer. Information will be limited to job specific information (dates of employment, job title, job performance, job responsibilities, and salary). No employee will be given a general letter of reference. All letters of reference must be addressed to a specific employer and a copy of that letter must be placed in the employee's personnel file. A period of four weeks notice is requested in the event an employee intends to terminate their employment with The Exploris School so the school can provide for continuity of instruction and safe supervision of students.

7.7 Disciplinary Action

Grounds for disciplinary action for Exploris employees include but are not limited to the following: Violation of The Exploris School personnel policy, behavior disruptive to the school climate, culture, and environment, failure to complete assigned responsibilities on a consistent basis, insubordination, theft of monies, illegal acts committed during work time, acts which reflect adversely on The Exploris School's reputation in the community, and inappropriate behavior with staff, students, or visitors to The Exploris School.



The Director of Resources, Director of Elementary Grades, or Director of Middle Grades shall take actions regarding termination, suspension, demotion, or classification. If the Leadership Team believes there are grounds for disciplinary action, they may impose an immediate suspension with pay for an employee while an investigation is conducted.

7.8 Death In Service

In the event of the death of a staff member, the salary earned as of the last day of work, and any other benefits to which the employee was entitled will be paid to the deceased employee's estate, spouse, or named beneficiary.

7.9 Background Check

Because The Exploris School is dedicated to children and to the public interest, all Exploris employees are subject to a criminal background check. Each prospective employee as part of the application process will provide The Exploris School with their addresses for the past 10 years. Any falsification of information for this check will result in disciplinary action, including possible termination.

7.10 Discrimination and Harassment Policy

It is the policy of The Exploris School to maintain a safe and supportive school environment for all students and staff, free from harassment, intimidation, and/or bullying and free from discrimination due to actual or perceived race, color, creed, ethnicity, national origin, citizenship/immigration status, religion, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, disability, or weight.

Discrimination means any act or failure to act that unreasonably and unfavorably differentiates treatment of others based solely on their membership in a socially distinct group or category, such as race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or gender identity or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics. Discrimination may be intentional or unintentional,

Harassment, including sexual or gender-based harassment, is not limited to specific situations or relationships. Types of unlawful harassment covered by this policy include harassment of an individual because of that person's sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, religion, color, national origin, age, disability, or any other classification protected by law. It may occur between fellow students or co-workers, between supervisors and subordinates, between employees and students, or between non-employees, including visitors and volunteers, and employees or students. Harassment may occur between members of different genders or the same gender. The Exploris School also strictly prohibits sexual harassment in any form. The definition of sexual harassment is as follows:



Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, graphic, or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

1. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or a condition of an individual's employment;
2. Submission to or a rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for employment decisions affecting such individual; or
3. Such conduct has a purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

The Exploris School will not tolerate any unlawful harassment or discrimination of employees. Any employee who engages in any form of unlawful harassment will be disciplined. Discipline may include, but is not limited to transfer, demotion, suspension, or termination. The Exploris School also forbids retaliation of any type against an employee for reporting any type of unlawful harassment. Complaints alleging discrimination or harassment based on a person's biological or gender identity must be handled in accordance with procedures outlined in our harassment policy.

If an employee feels that he or she has been unlawfully harassed at work, or feels that a fellow employee is being unlawfully harassed, The Exploris School encourages the employee to immediately notify their Campus Director. If possible, such notice should be in writing (signed and dated), stating the date, place, time, nature of harassment, and the name(s) and position(s) of the offending party and any witnesses to the alleged harassment. If a Director is involved in harassment in any way, or for some other reason a Director cannot be approached, then The Chair of the Exploris School Board of Directors should be notified.

The Exploris School encourages reports of any such acts when they happen. All reports of unlawful harassment and/or discrimination will be investigated promptly. In all cases, the employee who reports unlawful harassment will be advised of the results of the investigation. To the greatest extent possible, The Exploris School will attempt to maintain the confidentiality of any harassment and/or discrimination investigation. The disclosure of any information relating to a charge of unlawful harassment and/or discrimination will be made only on a need-to-know basis.

7.11 Supporting Transgender or Transitioning Staff Members and Students

It is the school's policy that transgender and transitioning employees are treated with dignity, respect, and sensitivity in the workplace.

In addition, Educators play an essential role in creating a supportive school culture and advocating for the well being of all students. It is important for school staff, students and parents to be aware that transgender, non-binary, and gender non-conforming students may be at a



2023-2024
Personnel Handbook

higher risk for peer ostracism, victimization, and bullying because of bias and/or the possibility of misunderstanding and lack of knowledge about their lives. Employees must be proactive in creating a school culture that respects and values all students and fosters understanding of gender identity and expression within the school community and utilizes the guidelines and support provided.

Gender Support Guidelines are intended to help our school promote the educational and social integration of transgender, non-binary and gender non-conforming students and staff and ensure a safe learning and working environment free from discrimination and harassment. The Exploris School expects all employees to fully comply with this policy.

Information contained in personnel records about an employee's transgender status (such as the sex they were assigned at birth) is confidential and should not be disclosed except with the employee's consent or to supervisory or HR staff with a legitimate job-related reason to access such records.

Employees who intend to transition on the job should meet with their Campus Director and an HR representative to create a plan for their workplace transition. The employee is welcome to involve a chosen support person in any such meeting or discussion. Workplace transition planning should include topics such as the date the transition will formally occur at work; what updates will be made to workplace records and electronic accounts; how and when coworkers will be informed; and, if the employee works with students, what information will be shared with students and their families. It is ultimately the employee's decision when to formally transition at work and what information to disclose to coworkers prior to a formal transition.

7.11a Staff Records

Employees are entitled to have their preferred name appear on all unofficial records (for example: Staff ID, email address). Official records, such as payroll and benefits, may require documentation of a legal name and gender change. Staff requests should be submitted to the Director of Resources or their designee.

7.13 The Exploris School Grievance Policy

Includes Grievance Procedure for Section 504 and Special Education (Individuals with Disability Education Act):

Article I: Introduction and Values

The Exploris School seeks to promote harmony among its employees, faculty, students, and parents and to encourage equitable solutions to problems arising among them. The School believes that most concerns and differences are best addressed through open and honest communication conducted in an informal, respectful, and civil manner and that effective

Commented [1]: I will copy the "final" policy from the Student/Family Handbook here and change all instances of "Parent" to "Personnel" for consistency.



2023-2024
Personnel Handbook

resolution depends on direct, prompt and constructive dialogue. The following procedures are adopted to meet these goals. NOTE: See Parent Handbook: Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying.

Definition of a Grievance: A grievance is a formal complaint regarding specific decisions made by school personnel that alleges that such decisions have adversely affected the person making the complaint or the dependent of the person making the complaint. A grievance can be made when a student or parent believes that school and board policy or law has been misapplied, misinterpreted, or violated. The term “grievance” does not include any matter for which the method of review is prescribed by law, for which there is a more specific board policy providing a process for addressing the concern, or upon which the board is without authority to act.

Article II: Parent Grievance Procedures

Section 1. Responsibility and Authority of the School Leadership Team: 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 Leadership Team of the School and these individuals are best suited to resolve conflicts that arise with respect to these issues. The Board has the authority to appoint, employ, and remove the Leadership Team, but primary responsibility and authority over faculty, staff and volunteer organizations of the School are vested in the Leadership Team. The Board, therefore, will exercise any authority in this policy conservatively and narrowly so as not to usurp the authority granted to the Leadership Team.

Section 2. Informal Procedures: A parent should first attempt to resolve any grievance through discussion with the relevant teacher(s) or other involved persons. If the parent’s concern is not adequately addressed through an informal discussion with the teacher and/or staff involved, the parent should next attempt to resolve the grievance with the appropriate supervisor, if applicable. If a grievance cannot be resolved in an informal manner, the parent may initiate a formal grievance procedure.

Section 3. Formal Grievance Procedure: In instances where informal means are ineffective or otherwise not feasible, the School offers these more formal grievance procedures. Grievance proceedings and information shall be kept confidential at all levels to the extent possible 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 who files a grievance under this policy (or against a student whose parent files a grievance) in good faith.

Commented [2]: Do we want the Parent Grievance Policy in the Personnel handbook?

Commented [3]: It can be helpful for staff to know what the process is-- for example, if a parent is filing a grievance against a teacher for something that happened in the classroom.

Commented [4]: What about removing the bulk of the language from this handbook and simply adding a line linking to the appropriate section in the Student/Family Handbook?

Commented [5]: Sure, I'm all for efficiency here!



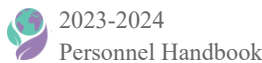
(A) Level One - Supervisor Request and Conference. A parent may, by written request, seek a formal conference with the relevant supervisor to address an unresolved grievance.

1. 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 supervisor adequately understand the nature of the grievance.
2. The request shall be filed within fifteen (15) business days of the most recent incident(s) or last informal attempt to resolve the grievance, provided that such attempt was made within ten (10) business days of the last incident.
3. Following receipt of the written request, the supervisor shall, whenever possible, conduct a conference with the aggrieved parent(s) within ten (10) business days. Within five (5) business days following the conference, the supervisor will state in writing their decision with regard to the grievance and a copy will be given to the parent.

(B) Level Two - Appeal to the Leadership Team. If the grievance is not resolved, the parent(s) may appeal the supervisor's decision in writing to the Leadership Team if the full Leadership Team was not involved in the Level One Conference.

1. The appeal must be made within five (5) business days following receipt of the supervisor's written Level One response to the grievant. The Leadership Team will review the grievance and conduct an informal investigation as necessary.
2. The Leadership Team shall issue a written response to the parent and the Level One supervisor/staff within ten (10) business days following receipt of the written appeal.
3. Decisions of the Leadership Team are final and not subject to further appeal, except in the following instances:
 - a. Decisions involving an alleged violation of a contractual right;
 - b. Decisions involving an alleged violation by the School of state or federal law; or
 - c. Decisions based on allegations of conduct by the Leadership Team in violation of law or school policy.
4. The Board of Directors, through its Grievance Committee, retains discretion to determine whether an alleged violation involves a "final" or "appealable" decision by the Leadership Team. The Grievance Committee may consider all available evidence in the record established at the time of the decision and any other evidence it deems necessary for consideration. In addition, the Grievance Committee has the authority to grant a discretionary appeal in exceptional circumstances.

(C) Level Three - Appeal to the Board Grievance Committee: Appeal of Rights and Discretionary Appeals. If a parent is not satisfied with the disposition of the grievance at Level Two, the parent may, within five (5) business days of receiving notice of the decision of the



Leadership Team, submit a written request to the Grievance Committee Chairperson to appeal the Leadership Team's decision and to request a formal hearing.

1. Within five (5) business days of receiving the written request for appeal, the Grievance Committee Chairperson shall issue a written notice to the parent and the Leadership Team indicating whether the Leadership Team's determination is "final" in nature or whether the Board, in its discretion or by right of appeal, shall grant a hearing. The notice shall also specify, if a hearing is granted, the time it will occur and guidelines by which it will be conducted.
2. When a hearing is granted, a panel of the Grievance Committee consisting of at least three people shall hear the grievance within ten (10) business days of the date the Chairperson's notice is issued to the parent.
3. The Grievance Committee panel may affirm, reverse, or modify the decision of the Leadership Team. Following the hearing, the parent and Leadership Team shall be informed in writing of the panel's decision within five (5) business days after the hearing, whenever feasible.
4. The decision of the Grievance Committee panel is final OR the decision of the Grievance Committee panel may be appealed to the full Board of Directors.

Article III: Employee Grievance Procedures

Section 1. Informal Procedures:

A faculty or staff member (the "employee") should first attempt to resolve any concerns through discussion with their supervisor and/or other involved persons. If a concern cannot be resolved in such an informal manner, the employee may initiate a formal grievance procedure.

Section 2. Formal Grievance Procedure:

In instances where informal means are ineffective or otherwise not feasible, the School 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. An employee grievance is a formal written claim by an employee or group of employees identifying the concern, identifying the individual or group's resolution attempts, and identifying the law, policy, or practice that is implicated by the concern. No one shall retaliate against an employee who files a grievance under this policy in good faith.

(A) Level One - Supervisory Request and Conference. An employee may, by written request, seek a formal conference with their immediate supervisor to address an unresolved grievance.

1. 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 supervisor adequately understand the nature of the grievance.

2. The grievance shall be filed within fifteen (15) business days of the incident(s) or the last informal attempt to resolve the grievance, provided that such attempt was made within ten (10) business days of the last incident.
3. Following receipt of the written request, the supervisor shall, if feasible, conduct a conference with the aggrieved employee within ten (10) business days of the written report. Within five (5) business days following the conference, the supervisor will state in writing their position on the grievance, and a copy will be given to the employee.

(B) Level Two - Appeal to the Leadership Team. If the grievance is not resolved, the employee may appeal the supervisor's decision in writing to the Leadership Team if the full Leadership Team was not involved in the Level One Conference.

1. The appeal must be made within five (5) business days following receipt of the supervisor's written Level One response to the employee. The Leadership Team shall issue a written response to the parent and the Level One supervisor/staff within ten (10) business days following receipt of the written appeal.
2. Decisions of the Leadership Team are final and not subject to further appeal, except in the following instances:
 - a. Decisions involving an alleged violation of a contractual right;
 - b. Decisions involving an alleged violation by the School of state or federal law;
 - c. Decisions based on allegations of conduct by the Leadership Team in violation of law or school policy; or
 - d. Decisions involving suspension without pay or dismissal of the employee.
3. The Board retains discretion to determine whether an alleged violation involves a "final" or "appealable" decision by the Leadership Team. 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. In addition, the Grievance Committee has the authority to grant a discretionary appeal in exceptional circumstances.

(C) Level Three - Appeal to the Board: Appeals of Right and Discretionary Appeals. If an employee is not satisfied with the disposition of their grievance at Level Two or is subject to suspension without pay or dismissal by the Leadership Team the employee may, within five (5) business days of receiving notice from the Leadership Team, submit a written request to the Grievance Committee Chairperson to appeal the Leadership Team's decision and to request a formal hearing.

1. Within five (5) business days of receiving the written request for appeal, the Grievance Committee Chairperson shall issue a written notice to the employee and the Leadership Team indicating whether the Leadership Team's determination is "final" in nature or



2023-2024

Personnel Handbook

whether the Board, in its discretion or by right of appeal, shall grant a hearing. The notice shall also specify, if a hearing is granted, the time it will occur and guidelines by which it will be conducted.

2. When a hearing is granted, a panel of the Grievance Committee consisting of at least three people shall hear the grievance within ten (10) business days of the date the Chairperson's notice is issued to the employee.
3. The Grievance Committee panel may affirm, reverse, or modify the decision of the Leadership Team.
4. The decision of the Grievance Committee panel is final OR the decision of the Grievance Committee panel may be appealed to the full Board of Directors.

Article IV: Grievance Committee Structure and Rules

Section 1. Composition of the Grievance Committee:

The Grievance Committee shall consist of no fewer than three members of the Board of Directors, appointed by the Chairperson of the Board of Directors and confirmed by a vote of the full Board. One member of the Grievance Committee shall be designated by the Chairperson of the Board of Directors to serve as the Chairperson of the Committee.

Section 2. Parent Liaison:

One member of the Board of Directors shall be appointed by the Chairperson of the Board of Directors and confirmed by a vote of the full Board to serve as Parent Liaison. This individual shall not sit on the Grievance Committee. Their primary role will be to help parents understand the grievance procedures and to provide process guidance to aggrieved parents. Parents who approach other members of the Board of Directors with grievances will be referred to the Parent Liaison.

Section 3. Training:

On an annual basis, all members of the Grievance Committee and the Parent Liaison will receive training provided by an attorney or other qualified individual with regard to confidentiality, impartiality, and other topics relevant to effective execution of their duties.

Section 4. Timelines:

Failure of a parent or employee to comply with the procedural timelines listed below may result in denial of a grievance request. Extensions in timelines may be granted if the relevant decision maker determines there is a reasonable need for such extension. Similarly, the timelines for actions to be taken by school personnel or board members may be extended, with notice to the aggrieved party, when there is a reasonable need for extension or extension is in the best interest of an effective process.



2023-2024
Personnel Handbook

Section 5. Forms:

The Leadership Team or Board may develop one or more grievance forms to facilitate and document the various steps of the grievance process.



Section 8: Policies On Child Abuse, Neglect, And Harm To Self And Others

8.1: Mandatory School Mental Health Training

Topics include: Youth mental health, suicide prevention, substance abuse, teenage dating violence, and in accordance with SL 2019-245, child sexual abuse prevention, and sex trafficking.

- All staff who work with students shall receive 2 hours of training in even numbered years beginning in 2020 on the topic of child sexual abuse and sex trafficking.
- All staff who work with children must receive 6 initial hours of training regarding student mental health and learning and 2 hours subsequent annually.
- All staff must receive 2 hours of suicide prevention training annually.
- All new employees must be trained on both trainings named above for a total of 8 training hours.

8.2 Child Abuse and Neglect

In accordance with [North Carolina Statute 7B-301](#), the school's policy establishes guidelines for the prevention of child abuse/neglect and for responding to allegations of child abuse by an employee or volunteer of The Exploris School. The policy follows [state definitions for abuse and neglect and mandatory reporting laws](#). This policy is applicable to all paid and volunteer staff members of The Exploris School.

The Directors of The Exploris School are responsible for the enforcement of this policy, as well as for training and education of staff and volunteers in accordance with [North Carolina Statute 7B-301](#).

The following outline provides information on safeguards against abuse/neglect and the initial steps to respond to allegations of abuse/neglect:

- Safeguards Against Abuse: A Crisis Management Plan for the Prevention of Child Abuse has been incorporated into the policies of The Exploris School.
- Preventive Measures
 - All applicants for employment and volunteer positions will be required to report any prior accusations of or convictions for child abuse.
 - Criminal background checks will be conducted on all new employees and volunteers prior to their commencement of work.
 - Staff and volunteers will make sure that on a foreseeable basis, they are never alone with a child.



In the event of abuse or neglect, all staff members have a duty to report the information. If a staff member receives information deemed to be abuse or neglect, notify the Director on site and the counselor as soon as possible by phone, text, or in person. If the student contacts you after school hours or you are unable to get in touch with the Director on site or counselor you must report the incident to Child Protective Services as soon as possible. For more information regarding reporting laws, please visit [North Carolina Child Reporting Laws](#). In the event Child Protective Services cannot be reached local law enforcement should be contacted immediately. All mandatory reporters must complete the following form as documentation of the report: [CPS Reporting Form](#).

8.2a Responding to the Alleged Victim

An appropriate response toward the victim and the victim's family is a critical step in the healing process. Nothing should be done to blame the victim nor to minimize or deny the reported behavior. Every effort must be taken to assure that the victim and the victim's family understand that The Exploris School takes the allegations seriously. The care and safety of the victim is the first priority. Investigators must avoid taking an adversarial posture.

8.2b Responding to the Alleged Perpetrator

A single individual should not try to determine whether the accused is telling the truth. Rather, professional investigators will assist in the investigation and determination of the facts. Until the investigation has been completed, the alleged perpetrator will be removed from any position from which there could be a possibility of behavior similar to the alleged actions. The Exploris School will treat the alleged perpetrator with dignity. The Director Team of The Exploris School and the Board Chair will negotiate the future status of the employee or volunteer. A finding that child abuse has occurred will result in the immediate dismissal of the perpetrator.

8.3 Student Threat to Harm to Self or Others

If a student threatens to harm themselves or another person, whether it be another student or staff member, it must be immediately reported to the Director on-site and the school counselor in person, by phone, or text. At that point complete the steps outlined within the [Emergency Preparedness and Crisis Manual, found on page 25](#).

Section 9: Substance Abuse Policy

9.1 Purpose

The purposes of this Substance Abuse Policy (“Policy”) are as follows:

- To encourage employees with alcohol and drug problems to seek assistance in overcoming those problems;
- To provide assistance to employees with dependency problems;
- To reduce the risk of injury to person or property; and
- To reduce absenteeism, tardiness, and unacceptable job performance.

9.2 Prohibited Conduct

The following conduct, as well as any other conduct that is at variance with specific requirements of this policy, will result in immediate discipline up to and including termination:

- Employees shall not consume alcoholic beverages either upon the premises of The Exploris School or in vehicles being used in service to The Exploris School.
- Employees shall not illegally use or possess prescription drugs not prescribed for them.
- Employees shall not refuse to submit to an alcohol or drug test when requested by their supervisor.
- Employees shall not alter or attempt to alter a sample submitted for testing under this policy, nor may employees submit a sample that is not the employee’s sample.
- Employees shall immediately notify their supervisor if they have been either arrested for, or convicted of, any drug or alcohol-related crime.

9.3 Testing Policy

“Cause Testing.” Each employee, regardless of their job duties, as a condition of continued employment, shall submit to a drug or alcohol test if there is cause to believe that the employee is engaging in prohibited conduct, as that term is defined in this Policy.

- *Definition of “Cause.”* “Cause” includes, but is not limited to, being involved in any occurrence which requires further investigation in The Exploris School’s discretion; involvement in an accident; engaging in conduct in violation of company policy; violence; conduct exhibiting less than total consciousness or self-control; difficulty in performing normal physical tasks; exhibiting the odor of alcohol or marijuana; or any unusual appearance or behavior.
- *Transportation for “Cause” testing.* When an employee is tested based on cause, The Exploris School will transport the employee to the site for the collection of a sample for testing purposes.



9.4 Confirmation Tests

As a part of this Policy, all positive test results will be confirmed by a second test on the same sample before any employment action is taken based on a test result. The following specific procedures apply to testing pursuant to this Policy:

- *Drug confirmation tests.* An initial drug test will be conducted on all samples. If the initial test is positive, the confirmation test will be conducted using a process called gas chromatography with mass spectrometry (“GC/MS”) or an equivalent scientifically accepted method. All such tests will be conducted by laboratories certified by the National Institute of Drug Abuse or “NIDA”.
- *Alcohol confirmation tests.* Initial tests will be conducted using a process that identifies the presence of alcohol in saliva. If this test is positive, and the employee appears capable of making a decision, then the employee will be given the option of submitting immediately to either a urine or a blood alcohol confirmation test. Testing a urine sample for alcohol is not as accurate as testing a blood sample; however, The Exploris School will not require employees to submit to the withdrawal of blood. Therefore, an employee who initially tests positive for alcohol will be given the option of submitting either to a blood or a urine confirmation test. The employee will be bound by the confirmation test procedure he or she selects.
- *Medical Review Officer.* The Exploris School’s insurance carrier will provide the services of a Medical Review Officer (“MRO”) to review all positive confirmation test results and explore with the employee the possibility of a false positive test result. Positive confirmation tests will not be reported to The Exploris School until the employee in question has been given the opportunity to consult with the MRO.
- *Incapacitated employees.* If the employee does not appear to be capable of making an immediate decision concerning the option of submitting to either a urine or a blood alcohol confirmation test, the initial test result will be final and the employee will be suspended pending a determination of employment status.
- *Refusal to submit to a test.* Any employee who refuses to submit to an initial alcohol or drug test or who refuses to submit to a confirmation alcohol or drug test will be subject to immediate discipline, up to and including termination.

9.5 Confidentiality

The results of all drug and alcohol tests will be treated as confidential. Unless an employee gives their written consent, The Exploris School will not release the employee’s drug or alcohol test records to a subsequent employer.



9.6 Rehabilitation

- *Self-identification.* The Exploris School encourages any employee who has a substance abuse problem to come forward and identify themselves as having a problem. Such an employee will not be immediately terminated, but instead may be required to complete a 30-day unpaid rehabilitation leave of absence. An employee may use sick and vacation leave or short term disability if available for these 30 days. However, an employee will not be eligible for a 30-day rehabilitation period if they request the opportunity for rehabilitation in response to being asked to submit to a substance abuse test, if the employee has tested positive under this Policy, or if the employee has otherwise violated this Policy.
- *Participation in treatment during rehabilitation.* During the rehabilitation period, the employee will be required to provide The Exploris School with proof of participation in treatment, which will include, at least, regular attendance by the employee at Narcotics Anonymous or Alcoholics Anonymous meetings.
- *Probation following rehabilitation.* If the employee successfully completes the rehabilitation period, he or she will be placed on probation for the balance of their employment. The terms of the probation will include submission by the employee to drug or alcohol testing at the request of The Exploris School. Employees who test positive for drugs or alcohol while on probation will be terminated immediately.



2023-2024
Personnel Handbook

Section 10: No Contract

This policy does not constitute a contract for employment of a specific duration. All employees of The Exploris School are employed at will, and the employment relationship may be terminated by The Exploris School or by the employee at any time or for any reason. The Exploris School reserves the discretion to rescind or modify this policy, in whole or in part, with or without notice. Other employment policies and procedures remain applicable to employees to the extent that these policies and procedures do not conflict with the substance abuse policy.

- Revised August 13, 2012
- Revised August 12, 2015
- Revised August 18, 2016
- Revised August 1, 2017
- Revised June 27, 2018
- Revised August 1, 2019
- Revised July 28, 2020
- Revised August 8, 2021
- Revised August 1, 2022
- Revised July 27, 2023



The Exploris™ School
Empowering Learners to Improve Our World

2023-2024

FAMILY & STUDENT HANDBOOK

**The Exploris School
Elementary Campus**

**17 S. Swain St.
Raleigh, NC 27601**

**Phone: (919) 715-0333
Fax: (919) 715-0916**

**The Exploris School
Middle Campus**

**401 Hillsborough St.
Raleigh, NC 27603**

**Phone: (919) 715-3690
Fax: (919) 715-2042**

Table of Contents

Section 1: Introduction to The Exploris School	6
Our History	6
Our Mission	6
Our Vision.....	6
Core Values.....	7
Commitment to Our Community.....	8
Exploris Hallmarks	9
Section 2: Curriculum & Design	10
Project-Based Learning.....	10
Field Experiences and Service Learning.....	12
Academic Accountability.....	13
Section 3: School Logistics	15
Family Communication	15
School Hours.....	15
Before and After School Care.....	15
Food and Snacks	16
Food Allergies	16
Transportation	17
Enrollment/Lottery Policy	22
Class Requests	22
Protocol for Requesting a Crew Change in Mid-Year.....	23
Section 4: Student Health and Safety.....	24
We Are Strict About Safety.....	24
Building security	24
Emergency Contacts and Notification	24
Inclement Weather / School Closings.....	25
Weather Conditions & Outdoor Activities	25
Health and Medical.....	28
Student Safety, Emotional Health, and Wellbeing	30
Student Supervision	31
Search of Student's Person or Belongings.....	31
Background Checks for Employees.....	32
Volunteer Expectations and Confidentiality	32
Background Checks for Volunteers	33
Field Experience Chaperones	33
Student Sleeping Accommodations for Overnights.....	34



2023-2024
Family & Student Handbook

Section 5: The Code of Student Conduct.....	36
Our Exploris Philosophy.....	36
Expected Student Behavior.....	36
The Three Levels of Supports.....	37
Levels of Interventions and Consequences for Violations of the Code of Student Conduct...	38
Levels of Consequences.....	39
Definitions for Problem Behavior and Consequences for Students.....	40
Acceptable Use of School Technology.....	47
Attendance & Tardies	48
Bullying Policy & Procedure	50
Corporal Punishment / Physical Restraint	51
Dress Code Policy and Procedures	51
Colognes, Perfumes, Body Lotions, and Sprays	52
Drugs and Alcohol	52
Extended Suspension for Students with Disabilities	53
Student Conflict/Peer Mediation.....	53
Items from Home	53
School Counselor	55
Section 6: School, Parent, and Student Rights and Responsibilities.....	56
McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and Policy.....	56
Non-Discrimination / Non-Harassment of Students and Staff	56
Right to Confidentiality of Access to Student Records	57
Rights under the No Child Left Behind Act	58
Section 504.....	58
Special Education: Child Find for Students with Disabilities	60
Student Rights & Supports	61
Title I and Federal Programs.....	62
Appendix I: The Exploris School Grievance Policy	63
Article I: Introduction and Values	63
Article II: Parent Grievance Procedures	63
Article III: Grievance Committee Structure and Rules.....	66
Appendix II: Acceptable Use Policy for School Technology.....	68
While using the Exploris network resources, technology, and the internet on school properties:	68
Consequences for Unacceptable Use of the School Technology.....	69



2023-2024

Family & Student Handbook

Section 1: Introduction to The Exploris School

Our History

Exploris opened as one of the first public charter schools in North Carolina in 1997. The school was attached to the Exploris Museum, an interactive museum with an international focus, and enrolled 53 sixth-grade students from Wake and Johnston counties in its first year and subsequently grew to a sixth through eighth grade middle school. As a Global Education school, its early mission was to help people of all ages learn to respect their differences and appreciate their similarities. Exploris was heralded as an adolescent-centered, self-directed learning environment that engaged students actively, taking an integrated approach to learning using major themes and projects. From its inception, the school sought to provide a nurturing and respectful atmosphere with high expectations for all learners. Keeping Exploris's mission at the forefront, the school expanded in YEAR to include elementary students in grades K - 5.

Exploris fosters a collaborative, real-world, approach to curriculum design and implementation. Using national and state standards as a jumping-off point, teachers work together to create a compelling lens that drives the development of content and skills. Teachers seek out university, governmental, and industry partnerships that add to the content-knowledge delivered to students. From these experts, teachers also learn of current, complex issues that help to contextualize student learning and make it relevant for students. By tackling current issues and working with experts to brainstorm solutions, students understand that they have something to offer the world. The work of Exploris students matters today.

Gone are the ringing bells, rows of desks, and fill-in-the-blank worksheets. For most of the day, students and teachers are engaged in challenging learning experiences that explore a topic or theme in depth. Their studies call for intellectual inquiry, physical exploration, and community service. On any given day, these explorations may take them outside the school building to do environmental research, conduct interviews in local businesses, or carry out other fieldwork assignments. Students work individually, in small groups, and as a member of their "crew" or class. Together they learn to draw on the strengths of a whole class.

Our Mission

The Exploris School is a diverse learning community that engages students in challenging, relevant, relationship-based education. Through experiential, project-based learning we empower students to foster a just and sustainable world.

Our Vision

Empowering learners to improve our world.

Core Values

Exploris has been serving students in the downtown Raleigh community for over 20 years and is committed to growing our school in size and diversity to expand support and opportunity for all students. Our educational program is built around 4 core pillars: Global Education, Project-Based Learning, Co-Teaching, and Responsive Classroom. The articulation of our core values ground the school in our educational approach and community partnerships.



INNOVATION - In a constantly changing world, the ability to approach challenges in a new way is vital. Exploris teachers and students approach the learning process through divergent thinking, creativity, ideation, and risk-taking.

SOCIAL EMPOWERMENT - Students learn best when they are exposed to meaningful, complex issues that are applicable to their own lives. Teachers engaged students in current, relevant issues by solving authentic problems that are being addressed beyond the four walls of the school building. Students realize that they have the power to change how their world works. They know how to navigate public systems, lobby public officials, and present their research and opinions as responsible citizens. Student work is tangibly connected not only to the local community but to other regions of the world and to past and future events.

RELATIONSHIPS - A nurturing school environment is one where students are encouraged to build and maintain positive relationships and collaborate with their teachers, parents, peers, and community. With a keen understanding of the unique development of the age group which they teach, teachers are intentional about the structures and relationship-building activities that they design. Positive relationships and collaboration result in a tapestry of learners who know they can depend on each other and work together in almost any situation. The end-product is deeper and Exploris students experience a collective sense of accomplishment and ownership.



2023-2024

Family & Student Handbook

REFLECTION - In an ever changing world of new ideas, the importance of reflecting on one's own thinking and the thinking of others cannot be underestimated. Exploris values the creation of time to slow down, to reflect, and to build connections.

CRAFTSMANSHIP - Producing an exemplary product is challenging. It takes attention to detail, grit, perseverance, revision, and tenacity. It takes a growth mindset and a dedication to competing with one's own personal best.

CURIOSITY - True knowledge does not occur without curiosity. Students are empowered to ask questions about the world around them and to explore possible answers.

RESPONSIBILITY - Students will take ownership of their learning and accountability for their actions and behavior. Students will recognize the importance of character, integrity, and honesty.

CONNECTIONS TO NATURE - When students witness the power and elements of the natural world through adventure and stewardship, they begin to view themselves as just one species within a larger system.

Commitment to Our Community

At Exploris, we learn through our commitment to our core values. Each student and family is part of our school community, bringing unique strengths and ideas to our school. Our school is stronger when families take an active role in our school community. As the African proverb states, "It takes a village to raise a child," and we believe it takes a community to help a school thrive. We encourage every family to share in this commitment to the school community through service.

Service to our school community looks different for each family. For some, a dedication to leading a neighborhood carpool enables other students to have safe and reliable transportation to and from school. For others, we welcome family members into our classrooms to support teachers and lead Explorations. Some families choose to engage in strengthening our community through service on our School Board, our Parent Teacher Organization, or the numerous working groups and committees that carry out the business of the school. For those with schedules that are unpredictable, active engagement with Crew Teachers and offers of support when possible are much appreciated and integral to the successful education of our students. However families can commit to serving our school community, we welcome you. **We ask that each family please aim to join us in whatever way they can for at least five hours each month.** Together, our combined efforts will help us grow as a school community and continue to provide the exceptional education we believe every child deserves.

Commented [1]: There has been a lot of energy around crafting a "Time, Talent, and Treasure" policy. I'm going to work on that next. I think we should include it in this section when we've finished crafting it.



2023-2024

Family & Student Handbook

Exploris Hallmarks

- Deep learning of state and national standards through the context of current, complex issues or community needs.
- Integrated use of computers and other technology to develop research and critical thinking skills.
- Field Experiences allowing students to learn about and provide service to their community.
- Adventure and environmental education to challenge students, foster teamwork, and nurture students' understanding of nature; including a culminating Outward Bound experience in the 8th Grade Year.
- Global Arts (including Art, Connected World, Health & Wellness/Movement, and Music (ES only) to further develop critical thinking, global awareness, empathy, and craftsmanship.
- Self-reflection through goal setting, student self-assessment, and student-led portfolio conferences.
- International exchanges of middle school students and staff with students in Hiroshima, Japan and Gefrees, Germany.
- Dedication to the environment by limiting the amount of student waste and energy produced.
- Our teachers and staff members go by their first names. This is part of our culture, which fosters respect within relationships and not necessarily by titles. Some of our students prefer to put Ms. or Mr. in front of our first names. We respect their desire to do so.
- Students and Teachers Often Dress Casually. Because we are a hands-on school, teachers and students need to dress appropriately for whatever activities are called for on a given day. We are often up to our elbows in goopy materials and the natural world. Appropriate dress for a visit to a museum, for science experiments and messy art projects, and for venturing to the river will vary. Families are asked to be knowledgeable about activities on a given day by reading the weekly grade-level letters to assure that their children are dressed appropriately for the weather and activities of the day.



2023-2024

Family & Student Handbook

Section 2: Curriculum & Design

A great deal of thought, research, and practice has gone into designing our school's structure. We haven't always made the same decisions that were made by the schools in our childhoods. Some of what you see at Exploris may look unfamiliar. You may be surprised that certain school pieces are missing. You may notice some unexpected new things. This section should explain some of these surprises.

Project-Based Learning

The Exploris curriculum is integrated around projects including the formal units we call Expeditions. The world is not compartmentalized into neat little boxes, but instead intertwines various content matter and skills. Science, language and communication, math, and social studies work together to paint a fuller picture of our world and are thus embedded in grade-level standards, community outreach and involvement, extensive collaboration, and a public culminating activity.

Our Classroom Space Is Used Flexibly

In an Exploris classroom, work areas are arranged to help students collaborate in both small and large groups. This requires group tables, breakout spaces, and workstations as opposed to rows of individual desks. Students may also use hallways and other spaces outside the classroom for learning.

Our Classrooms Have Ongoing Conversations and Are Full of Movement

Student conversation is the center of much of our learning here. We believe that deep learning takes place when children challenge one another, ask questions, share ideas, and build on one another's knowledge verbally. Throughout the day, students will be getting out of their seats to gather materials, consult with those around them, and gather resources around the classroom.

We Use Primary Sources as Much as Possible

We believe children can learn authentically by using authentic resources. Although they have access to some textbooks, students more often gather information from community experts, industry leaders, nonfiction and fiction trade books, publications, and the Internet. By exploring primary sources, children gain information-gathering skills that they use to independently problem-solve and conduct research in the real world.

Students are Responsible for Their Own Learning

We expect our students to be responsible for their own learning. Our teachers do not pour knowledge into passive students. Rather, they interact, question, prompt, and set up physical and



2023-2024

Family & Student Handbook

intellectual environments for students. Within this context, we expect students to explore, wonder, hypothesize, create, and discuss their ideas about the world. This is hard work. We want to hear families' perceptions about their children and their experiences at Exploris. We expect families to check in with their students' teachers and to be interested in their learning, but we do not expect families to complete work for students or to manage their child's learning. We want family feedback about our projects and our culture. We expect every member of the team to actively participate in the learning experience.

Revising Work Is a Habit Here

Students at Exploris normally aren't finished with a piece of work until they do multiple drafts of it. This expectation reaches across grades and disciplines. Improving on work again and again is common practice here. Teachers guide students from draft to draft. Students collaborate to assess the work of their peers. Rubrics set high standards for finished pieces and guide students as they strive to get their work to meet these high standards.

Learning is Public and Collaborative

Our students' work is often assessed by their peers. Students read their writing out loud, solicit comments, and present project drafts for formal peer critiques. We do public work just like in the real world. Having an authentic audience keeps us on our toes, supporting quality work with high standards.

Service and Social-Emotional Learning Are Part of Our Curriculum

We focus on social-emotional learning and service as well as academics. Quality academic work is mirrored by the quality of the ways in which we treat one another, our community, and our environment. Students are encouraged to be compassionate, disciplined, courageous, and responsible. For example, your student's crew may take time during the day to discuss why a crewmember has been mistreated. They may take twenty minutes to pick up litter at a neighborhood park. They may spend an hour a week visiting an aging community member. These types of activities are critical to our mission of engaging students to build a connected, just, and sustainable world.

Students Share Responsibility for our Community Spaces

As part of our desire to create a stronger school culture, students share responsibility for keeping our school clean and presentable. Student crews will be assigned duties during the week to clean tables, chairs, floors, windows, and to take garbage and compost out at the end of their lunch period to get the room ready for the next group of students.



2023-2024

Family & Student Handbook

Field Experiences and Service Learning

Field Experiences are Central to Our Curriculum

Learning extends beyond Exploris's walls; it connects to the world. Students work in the "field" sometimes once or twice a week. The field may be a wetland, a museum, a community garden, a science lab, a courtroom, a national forest, etc. Field experiences are deeply woven into each teacher's curriculum. Attendance is required on all field experiences just as it is in the classroom.

We ask that families sign one blanket field trip form (and Medical Release Form) that covers permissions for all trips within the Triangle area. Walking field experiences are part of our routine learning environment. Families will be notified through their class newsletter or website whenever field experiences that require transportation are planned. Your student must have this form on file to attend. Please return this form and any medication forms by the first day of school. Students arriving late (after class has left campus) or without a Medical Release Form will be placed in the care of another adult (either in another classroom or in the Director's or Counselor's office).

Field Experiences and Student Behavior or Disciplinary Issues

Students with behavioral needs or disciplinary issues that could put themselves or others at risk during a field experience may be offered a different educational experience from the planned field experience, subject to administrative review.

Families who opt out of a field experience for anything other than a medical reason should plan to keep their scholar home. The absence will be coded as an unexcused absence and no alternate curriculum will be provided.

Students who have a medical reason to miss a field experience will be offered an alternate assignment but should stay home that day, or the school will have a provision for onsite supervision if the trip is less than a half day in length. Directors reserve the right to consider the pattern of student behaviors or any recent major disciplinary issues as a reason to withhold a field experience. Families will be notified within a reasonable time frame, unless the disciplinary concerns are severe and emerge close to the time of the trip. In those cases, the absence will be considered an in-school or out of school suspension, and alternate work will be provided accordingly. Refunds will not be offered for any advance payment if a scholar is pulled from a field experience for disciplinary reasons.



2023-2024

Family & Student Handbook

Overnight Field Experiences

Each year, many grades will take an overnight trip. It will last 1-5 days, depending on the grade level. These field experiences are a big part of who we are as a school. They allow our crews to develop positive cultures, stretch students beyond their comfort level, and create opportunities for leadership and adventure. Students who are comfortable taking risks out of the classroom often gain the confidence to take bigger risks in the classroom, building confidence as leaders and collaborators. **Student attendance is NOT optional because the field experiences are part of our education curriculum.** Therefore, you must be willing to let your child participate in these overnight educational experiences. Overnight and field experiences outside of the Triangle area will require a separate permission slip.

Costs of overnight trips will be communicated to families as early as possible in the planning process. Scholarships are available for students who qualify. Scholarship applications are available from the crew teacher, school counselor, or in the front office.

Academic Accountability

Exploris strives to create an environment of academic rigor that will prepare students to excel in high school and in the world beyond schooling. Because Exploris utilizes standards-based and portfolio assessments as the primary means of evaluating student performance, it is imperative that all students complete classwork and homework in a timely manner. A comprehensive collection of completed work will be necessary to ensure that students are prepared to compile a portfolio that demonstrates their academic ability.

Portfolio Assessment and Student-Led Conferences

At Exploris, student portfolios are the place where students house evidence of intellectual achievement, academic growth, and responsibility for learning. Students use these portfolios to present their learning at student-led conferences throughout the year. These conferences not only tell you how your student is doing in school, but they help your student take responsibility for their own learning. Conferences provide an occasion for students to reflect on their progress, set goals for future work, and make a public presentation to the most important people in their lives. Students prepare for these conferences by choosing their best work, revising work, writing reflections on their learning, and practicing presentation skills. We expect families to come with their students for every teacher/family/student conference in the school year. Teachers analyze the portfolios and other classroom assessments to determine progress toward academic targets which they share in Achievement Reports. Portfolios and student-led conferences are crucial tools for revealing student growth. They help teachers and students notice missing links in a child's learning and acknowledge and celebrate a child's accomplishments. In the 8th grade students present a cumulative passage portfolio to school staff, family, and community members.



2023-2024

Family & Student Handbook

This culminating event helps determine a student's readiness for high school. Specific dates for student led portfolio conferences and for 8th grade Passage Portfolios are listed on the school calendar. Families should plan to attend these conferences and are discouraged from asking for a different date or time or treating these days as additional family vacation days. Requests for a change in date for a portfolio conference will be honored if possible; families are asked to recognize that requests to meet outside of these prearranged times can strain our staff and their availability may be limited.

Achievement Reports

Teachers will provide formal, written Achievement Reports documenting student progress in the major areas of learning and development at the end of each trimester. Instead of evaluating students using letter grades (A, B, C, D, and F) or using a number scale (1, 2, 3, or 4), we assess our students' work in terms of individual progress towards achieving a standard. You will see words such as "Beginning," "Developing," or "Accomplished." We make these evaluations using rubrics, models, and exemplars based on state standards. Standards for high quality work are discussed, and sometimes created with students, before their work begins and throughout the process.

Standardized Testing

As a public school, Exploris is required to administer all standardized tests mandated by the NC Department of Public Instruction including EOG's for grades 3-8 and the EOC for Math I. Exploris considers data gleaned from these tests as one barometer of student learning but does not consider the results of this testing as the primary factor in assessing student growth or achievement. In an effort for students to do their "personal best" on these tests, there will be some specific test review, with an emphasis on activities meant to relieve student test anxiety. There will not be a great emphasis placed on "teaching to the test" prior to administration. In addition to state assessments, Exploris administers the MAP, Measure of Academic Progress, three times per year. This is a computerized adaptive test which helps teachers, parents, and administrators improve learning for all students and make informed decisions to promote a child's academic success. The mClass test is administered to assess the development of reading skills in early grades. Other school-based testing may be administered to contribute to the data-driven effort of educating your student.



2023-2024

Family & Student Handbook

Section 3: School Logistics

Family Communication

Families are integral partners and should feel comfortable contacting teachers with questions or concerns about their student's learning. Exploris teachers are with students for most of the day and planning instruction for the rest, therefore please allow 48 hours for staff to reply to emails or phone calls.

Please schedule an appointment in advance to meet with a teacher or administrator to ensure that they are available to discuss your questions or concerns and give you their undivided attention.

Your crew teacher will be your central point of contact for any school concern or question. Please reach out to them directly, and they can direct your concern to the best person on staff to provide a response.

School Hours

Elementary 8:30-3:15

Students can be dropped off beginning at 8:10 AM. For students needing supervision prior to that window, a Before School Care Program is available. More information and a fee schedule can be found on the school's website. **Students who enter the carpool line after 8:25 will be marked tardy and must report to the office to sign in and be accompanied by an adult.** **Students who are tardy are subject to consequences as outlined within the Code of Student Conduct.**

Middle 8:15-3:15

Students can be dropped off beginning at 7:55. For students needing supervision prior to that window, a Before School Care Program is available. More information and a fee schedule can be found on the school's website. **Students who arrive after 8:10 will be marked tardy and must report to the front office to sign in and are subject to consequences as outlined within the Code of Student Conduct.**

Before and After School Care

The only supervision before or after the school's official times are through the fee-based Before and After School Care Program. Any students arriving to school earlier than 20 minutes before the start time will be escorted to the Before School Care rooms and parents will be billed accordingly (please see our website for more details). Any students remaining at school after the end of dismissal will be sent to After School Care and families will be billed accordingly. We understand that occasional circumstances arise that make it difficult to arrive at school on time to



2023-2024

Family & Student Handbook

pick up your student . On these occasions, please notify the office in advance as soon as possible. The Student Code of Conduct and expectations for behavior apply for both before and after school care. Scholars who have repeated disciplinary issues during these programs can lose access to before or after school care.

Elementary Before Care: 7:15-8:10; Elementary After Care: 3:40-6:00

Middle Before Care: 7:00-7:55; Middle After Care: 3:30-6:00

See the school website for additional details.

Please keep in mind that children cannot wait alone outside the school since they will not be supervised. Please register your student for Before School Care if they need to be dropped off early or After School Care if they need to stay past dismissal.

Food and Snacks

Exploris strives to promote a dining experience that includes an aesthetic conducive to enjoying both one's food and the company of others. Because Exploris has no formal lunch program, families must provide lunch for their students on a daily basis. The school coordinates with a third-party lunch vendor to provide families with a nutritious, well-balanced option if they desire to order lunch for their student. The school will work with families to provide lunch for those students who qualify for the Free and Reduced Lunch Program and have met the requirements on the Economically Disadvantaged Student Form.

Exploris emphasizes the use of fruits, vegetables, or whole grains as the primary snack and water as the primary beverage. Refrigerators and Microwaves are not available for student lunches. Please be sure to send a reusable water bottle with your student each day. Nutritious foods fuel your student's work and play; however, sweets do not. Please limit the amount of sweets that you send to the school. Soft drinks, gum, and candy are not to be brought on the school's campuses. Additionally, we ask families not to bring in or send cupcakes, donuts, or other such treats for student birthdays. This is especially important for the safety of students with food allergies.

We cannot accept lunch deliveries from professional companies such as Grubhub, Uber Eats, or others. It creates a safety hazard to have other adults and cars not vetted by the school on our campus during the school day.

Food Allergies

In order to protect children or staff who have a life-threatening allergy we may have to ask the school community to refrain from bringing certain items on campus. Families should communicate with the school in a timely manner about any student allergies. School Leadership will communicate to all families any grade-level specific or campus-wide food restrictions that



2023-2024

Family & Student Handbook

must be considered by the Exploris community. Families and students are expected to follow all guidance from School Leadership regarding food allergies.

Waste-Free Lunch

At Exploris, all food and snack waste that is “packed in” will also be “packed out.” As a U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Award Winner, Exploris is committed to environmental stewardship. As such, we strive to make waste reduction a priority.

One of the best places to start is with lunch and snack waste. A waste-free lunch program is a process of educating students, families, and school staff about where our trash ends up and how we, as individuals, can reduce the amount of trash we generate. Waste-free lunch programs favor the use of reusable food containers, drink containers, utensils, and napkins. They discourage the use of disposable packaging, such as prepackaged foods, plastic bags, juice boxes and pouches, paper napkins, and disposable utensils.

A Waste-Free lunch not only helps to reduce waste at the school, it helps families to be aware of their child’s eating habits while at school. Please make sure to check your student’s lunch box each day and talk with your student about their food choices.

Transportation

At Exploris, we have chosen to focus our resources on teacher quality and a safe facility, rather than providing transportation for students on school buses. All families who can provide transportation to and from school are asked to do so.

Due to the school’s limited parking and queuing lanes, public transportation and carpooling are strongly encouraged. Exploris staff and the PTO will gladly help families form carpool groups. Watch for emails and communication on the PTO Blog beginning the week before school starts.

Parking

Elementary Campus:

It is important that families keep in mind that the elementary campus is temporarily located in a residential area that was not intended for heavy traffic. Please be respectful of our neighbors and help us to remain a welcome addition to the neighborhood.

Please DO NOT block driveways, park facing the wrong direction, or park in a way that prevents the smooth flow of traffic. Please park in the following areas:

- Marked parking spaces in the elementary school’s parking lot. Do not park along the queuing or driving lanes.



2023-2024

Family & Student Handbook

- ONLY along the Northbound traveling (or eastern side facing New Bern Ave.) on S. Swain Street.

Middle School Campus:

There is NO on-site parking available for families. Exploris's parking lots are reserved for staff parking ONLY. This includes those picking up for After School Care. Please be mindful that faculty and staff and employees of neighboring businesses must be able to enter and leave the parking lots whenever necessary. Please do not enter the parking lot until carpool has started so as to allow our neighbors and staff to exit if needed. Families must park in the appropriately labeled spaces on the street or in public parking lots. Cars parked on the Exploris Middle campus are subject to towing by our neighboring businesses and landlords.

Drop Off & Pick Up Safety Guidelines

Exploris is an urban school in busy neighborhoods with limited parking. To keep everyone safe, to get students into their classrooms on time, and to keep traffic flowing freely, we need to work together.

In addition, city construction projects near our campuses can sometimes close off lanes or direct drivers to detours. Please stay aware of any changes or signage in the carpool areas and follow posted directions.

Please make sure that all drivers who will be dropping off/picking up your child are aware of the following requirements:

Please use the Drop Off/Pick Up directions (below) for dropping off and picking up students. Do not pull over on the side of the street to pick up or drop off your child on the sidewalk or corner. Students should only exit and enter cars once the car has entered the designated parking lot and come to a complete stop.

In order to have a smooth drop off and pick up procedure, drivers/passengers may not get out of your car if you are in the queuing lanes. If you need to get out of your car for any reason, please park in designated areas and walk up.

DO NOT USE CELL PHONES at any time in the pick-up or drop-off lines. Cell phones distract drivers and lead to accidents. In the interest of safety, please refrain from using your phone.

DRIVE SLOWLY: Watch for children walking and biking. Be extra careful anywhere near the school.

ONLY TURN RIGHT out of school lots: This is a city requirement! As part of the school's approved transportation plan, the city required that only right-handed turns be allowed into and out of the parking lots during peak hours.



2023-2024

Family & Student Handbook

USE CROSSWALKS: Please **DO NOT** walk through the car lines! Exploris discourages jaywalking as it is extremely unsafe.

BUCKLE UP: Before pulling away, make sure your children are either safely on the sidewalk or bucked in their seat.

NO EARLY DISMISSAL after 2:45 p.m. After 2:45, your child will not be dismissed until the published dismissal times. During that time, all students should be dismissed via the walk-up or carpool lines. Please keep this guideline in mind when scheduling things like doctor and dentist appointments.

All Elementary campus students not picked up by TIME will be taken to After Care and a fee will apply. All Middle campus students not picked up by 3:30 p.m. will be taken to After Care and a fee will apply.

WALK OFF: Students may walk off campus at dismissal to meet a ride at a designated off-campus location. To avoid conflict with our established carpool patterns, we ask that this location is not at a place where your parked car would disrupt traffic flow and/or is at least two blocks away from the school. Once a student leaves for the day, they may not return to campus. For example, students may not go to a Food Hall and then return to Exploris to be picked up. Families are responsible for student safety and for following local traffic regulations and policies once students leave the Exploris campus.

Elementary Campus Drop-Off and Pick-Up

Rules For Car Line

Please make sure that all drivers who will be dropping off/picking up your child are aware of these requirements:

The Elementary School driveway is one-way. Please follow the signs indicating where to enter and exit the lot.

Never turn left when either entering or leaving the school's property. All vehicles dropping students off in the morning should approach the school from Hargett Street, turning right onto S. Swain Street, right into the school driveway, and driving around to the school's administrative building entrance. Adults will be in place to greet your students in the morning.

Whenever possible, we ask for students sitting in the back to exit from the driver's side. We know this is very different from what other schools do.

If entering or exiting from the passenger side, students should always walk in front of the vehicle that they are exiting or will be entering.



2023-2024

Family & Student Handbook

Do not store backpacks or other belongings in the trunk. Students should not walk behind your vehicle to retrieve items. This is unsafe as other cars are pulling in behind you.

Vehicles should then exit the school's drive by turning right onto S. Swain St. toward New Bern Ave. and then turn right on New Bern Ave.

Elementary Campus Dismissal

It would be helpful to display a paper with the names of the children you are picking up (first and last) typed in a font size that allows the text to take up most of the paper. A staff member will be standing in the lot with a walkie-talkie and will call your child's name to ensure your child is ready for loading.

If you have a special circumstance and need to pick up a child or children earlier than the above posted times, please contact the Elementary front office.

*All Elementary grades students not picked up by 3:40 will be taken to After School Care in the school's multipurpose room and a fee will apply.

Middle School Drop-Off and Pick-Up

Rules For Carpool Line Drop-Off

Drop off: All vehicles dropping students off in the morning should turn south onto Harrington St. from Hillsborough St., turn right into the rear parking lot of the school (next to Ugly Monkey) and pull in as far as possible before letting students out.

Students cannot exit their cars off along Hillsborough St. or in the lot by the main entrance. All students should wait until their car is fully pulled into the parking lot behind the school before exiting the vehicle. All cars should exit the back of the parking lot by turning right ONLY onto W. Morgan St.

Do not allow students to store backpacks or other belongings in the trunk. Students should not walk behind your vehicle to retrieve items. This is unsafe as other cars are pulling in behind you.

Students should be prepared to get out of cars in the parking lot quickly and enter the building. No vehicles should be left unattended in the parking lot.

Middle Campus Dismissal

Pick up all students between 3:15 and 3:30 p.m. in the Harrington Street (Ugly Monkey) lot.

Vehicles should turn south onto Harrington Street and turn right into the Harrington lot. Because of the amount of traffic on Hillsborough Street, please DO NOT approach from Hillsborough traveling east. We strongly recommend that families traveling east take Peace Street to N. West



2023-2024

Family & Student Handbook

to N. Harrington. Families traveling from the North, South, or West should travel to W. Edenton and then turn left on N. Harrington Street. Approach the school by turning right onto Harrington, turning right into the Ugly Monkey Parking Lot, then exiting by turning right onto Morgan Street. NO LEFT TURNS.

Pull into the lot as far as possible in order to get between 3 and 4 cars into the lot at one time. All vehicles exiting the Harrington lot should turn right onto W. Morgan Street. All middle grades students not picked up by 3:30 will be taken to after-school care and a fee will apply.

Field Experience/Field Trip Transportation

We need families' help both in transporting children on field trips and in chaperoning trips, but student safety has to remain our primary concern. Parents who agree to drive on field experiences are required to complete the **Vehicle Insurance Declaration** and the **Volunteer Transportation Assurance** form, which will be shared with families directly. Submit these forms annually to the front office along with a copy of your valid N.C. driver's license and insurance card. We ask that parents' cars are in good repair, with a current state inspection, and that parents have a cell phone to communicate with the school in the event of an emergency. You are encouraged to contact your insurance agent and inquire about obtaining additional coverage for transporting children other than your own.

All students must be properly restrained in cars. North Carolina law states that a properly used car seat or booster seat is required for children less than age 8 and less than 80 lbs.

The law does not specify which type of car seat can be used at any age or weight, only that the seat is used properly in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and meets all federal safety standards in place when the seat was manufactured.

When a child reaches age 8 (regardless of weight) or 80 pounds (regardless of age), a properly fitted seat belt can be used in place of a car seat or booster seat.

Booster seats can only be used with lap and shoulder seat belts. They can NEVER be used with a lap belt only. A child who weighs at least 40 pounds can legally be restrained using only a properly fitted lap belt if there is no lap and shoulder belt available for use with a booster seat, however this is not considered to be the safest option.

The recommendation according to NC law is that all children less than 12 -13 years of age should sit in the back of the vehicle.

Drivers are expected to know and follow the laws and recommendations for proper restraint of children, use all cautionary measures when driving students to and from field experiences, and refrain from using a cell phone while driving.



2023-2024

Family & Student Handbook

Prior to departure, all drivers will be given clear and concise directions. These directions will include:

- Step-by-step directions from the point of departure to the point of arrival and the same directions in reverse.
- Map to the point of arrival (if available).
- Contact phone number of the destination point if applicable.
- Contact phone number for the Exploris leader in charge. Likewise, the chaperone should leave their cell phone number with the class leader.

We ask that volunteer drivers follow the route provided by the teacher and DO NOT make impromptu stops at fast food restaurants or other such detours.

Enrollment/Lottery Policy

All students entering Kindergarten-8th grade and who are residents of North Carolina are invited to apply for enrollment. Kindergarten students must have reached the age of 5 on or before August 31 of the year of enrollment. It is important to keep in mind that all students who are not currently enrolled must apply for admission, including siblings of currently enrolled students. Students are admitted through the lottery and offered a seat in a specific grade. If, after acceptance, a family wishes to request that the student be placed in a different grade based on their academic progress, that student would be placed on the waitlist for that newly requested grade.

More information on the school's lottery policy, procedures, and preference status can be found on our website on the Admissions page.

Class Requests

Every year we get many questions about class requests for the following year as students move from one crew to another. Our primary consideration in developing class lists is balance. We look at the students that are moving into or leaving each crew, and attempt to balance it with regard to grade level, gender, ethnicity, economic diversity, academic and behavioral needs, student relationships, etc. This is a collaborative process involving teachers and administrative staff. Often there are many unknowns, especially the new students who will be joining us in August.

In past years our efforts to honor family requests have made achieving the right balance more difficult. Multiple requests in a given classroom make the task even more complicated. Families are not aware of all issues as to placement and can't be told for reasons of confidentiality.

Requesting a classroom has several other consequences as well, including that when one family's request is honored, it affects other families at that grade level. To accommodate one request,



2023-2024

Family & Student Handbook

many students may have to be moved. This is unfair to parents who do not make requests. Though class requests are confidential, inevitably teachers may learn of them, which can contribute to poor morale.

Often a group of parents request one classroom due to student friendships. These requests are not practical to accommodate and may lead to negative feelings among families and toward office staff who develop the class lists. Exploris is fortunate to have incredibly talented and qualified teachers. While one teacher or classroom may seem to better “fit” a student, all of our teachers are fully capable of working with all students. Every year, classroom environments will change. One year a crew may seem ideal; and the next it may not. We all need to work together to encourage and support strong classrooms.

For the reasons given above, we strongly discourage classroom requests. Most requests will not be granted. If you feel strongly about requesting a classroom, you must submit a letter in the spring before the end of the school year. Please be sure to include your reasoning. You may be placed in the class of your choice for reasons not related to your request.

Protocol for Requesting a Crew Change in Mid-Year

Occasionally, a parent/guardian may want to request a change of crews for their student. Such changes are strongly discouraged by Exploris unless there are strong and compelling reasons to do so. In most circumstances there is no room in the other crew to accommodate such a change. If such a change is to be requested, the following protocol must be followed.

First, the parent/guardian must meet with the child's crew teacher to discuss concerns as to how and why the child's needs are not being met. Intervention strategies should be discussed and implemented.

After 10 school days there will be a follow-up conversation between the parent/guardian and crew teacher to check in on progress. At that time there will be a decision to continue with the interventions, modify the interventions, or begin a more formal process of requesting a change of crew. If a change of crew is still being requested, the parent, crew teacher, and Campus Director will discuss issues and develop a further plan of action to resolve the situation within the current crew assignment. The new plan of action will be closely monitored for an additional ten school days. If the situation is resolved, no further action will be taken. If the family is still interested in a change of crew, there will be a meeting with the family, crew teacher, the prospective crew teacher, and the Campus Director. This meeting would be to discuss the pros and cons of such a move. If this group decides that there are enough compelling reasons to move the student, a change of placement will occur. Campus directors reserve the right to modify this timeline depending on individual circumstances.



2023-2024

Family & Student Handbook

Section 4: Student Health and Safety

We Are Strict About Safety

Your student's safety is our top priority. Exploris follows safety measures conscientiously and always errs on the cautious side. Every precaution is taken to ensure your student's safety at all times. All of our teachers and staff are experienced and vigilant about high safety standards. Exploris has routine emergency drills and has established an Emergency Procedures Manual and Crisis Intervention Team so that we can effectively address any crisis that may arise.

We ask that families support our efforts to establish and implement safety guidelines. Please report all unsafe conditions immediately to your child's crew teacher or to a Director.

Building security

In conjunction with safety goals, Exploris will enforce our security measures during the school day. All exterior doors will be locked and remain so throughout the day. Exterior doors should never be propped open during the school day, and parents and visitors must enter the building and sign in at the main front office. Students may not use staff codes to enter the building. All visitors must ring the bell and enter through the main office. Students are not permitted to open the doors for parents and visitors as this is a safety concern.

Exploris uses limited video surveillance on both campuses as a security measure. Footage from the video surveillance system is subject to FERPA regulations on a case by case basis.

Emergency Contacts and Notification

During the course of normal activities for school, emergencies or accidents may occur. In the event of an accident or emergency, the school will contact you and/or your emergency contacts directly or through our electronic alert system via phone call, text, and/or email.

Families should assist the school and help ensure each child's safety and wellbeing by making sure that the office has your current contact information as well as additional emergency contacts.

Please make sure to let your contacts know that you have done this, because it is imperative that we are able to reach a responsible adult at all times when a student is involved in school activities.

Please notify your student's teachers and the office if any contact numbers change throughout the year. If you are requesting a change to the directory for which family members can be listed as primary contacts, we may ask for proof of custody to ensure that any changes in student contact information and family/guardian notification complies with legal custody and guardianship.



2023-2024

Family & Student Handbook

Inclement Weather / School Closings

The Exploris School will follow the Wake County Public School System for inclement weather closures and reserves the right to make an independent decision to close for weather related issues if the safety of staff and students might be affected. If Wake County Public School System has extended closures due to road conditions (for example, waiting to clear secondary roads) Exploris may decide conditions are clear enough around our campus to warrant a return to learning on the Exploris campus. For any WCPSS delayed openings or school closures that arise out of situations not related to inclement weather, the Exploris School will operate independently. Notifications will also be posted on Exploris social media and through assorted news outlets. If conditions allow, the school may designate a remote learning day if physical campuses are closed. On remote learning days, staff is providing instruction and students are completing work.

Weather Conditions & Outdoor Activities

Families should be aware that Exploris students are often outside in all different weather conditions and should provide clothing that is appropriate for changing conditions, footwear that is appropriate for walking outside, rain gear as needed, and sunscreen as desired.

Time spent outdoors is an integral part of the school day. Properly clothed, school-aged children can participate in safe, vigorous play in an outdoor environment in most weather conditions. Exploris staff may limit a student's time outdoors if the student is not dressed appropriately for the weather, or may have the student complete an indoor activity instead.

Increased caution is necessary during extremes in heat and cold.

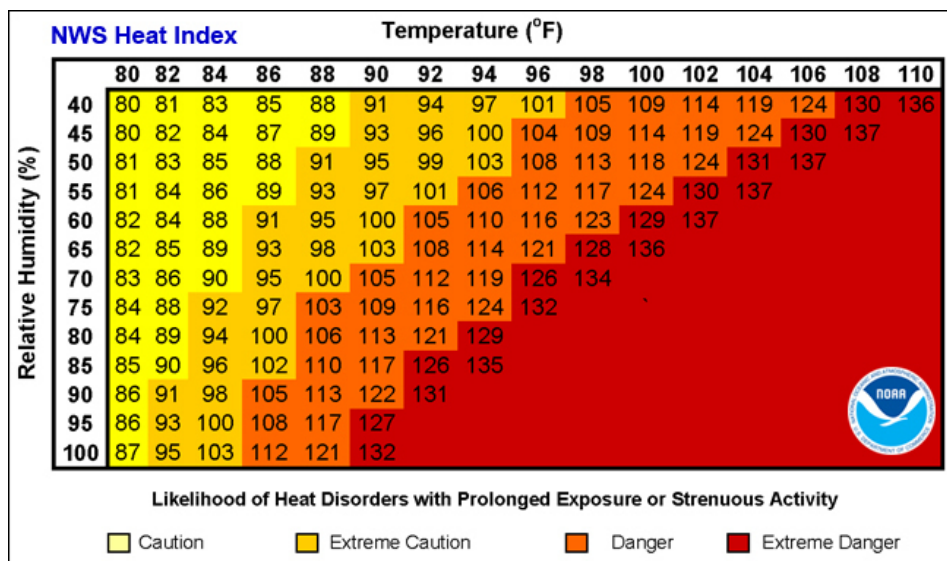
2.8a: Warm Weather Conditions

When temperatures are predicted to be 95°F or higher, student activity outside after 1:00 p.m. will be avoided or limited to 15-20 minutes at a time. When a day is designated as a Code Orange day, student activity outside will be limited to 15 minutes for the entire day. When a day is designated as a Code Red day, student activities will take place indoors only.



2023-2024

Family & Student Handbook



PRECAUTION	PROCEDURE	PRECAUTION	PROCEDURE
LIGHT YELLOW CAUTION	Observe students or staff members susceptible to heat illness (e.g., individuals who are obese or suffer from asthma, etc.). Water should be readily accessible to everyone.	ORANGE DANGER	All students and staff going outdoors should be under constant and careful supervision. Breaks from physical activity should be every 20-30 minutes with water readily accessible to everyone. Fluid replacement is vital!
YELLOW EXTREME CAUTION	Observe students or staff members susceptible to heat illness (e.g., individuals who are obese or suffer from asthma, etc.). Water should be readily accessible to everyone.	RED EXTREME DANGER	Postponing outdoor physical activities or moving physical activity to air-conditioned indoor settings is recommended for all students and staff. If outdoor activity is required, constant supervision is needed. Water must be readily available! Fluid replacement is vital!

References: State Climate Office of North Carolina http://www.nc-climate.ncsu.edu/climate/heat_index_climatology.php

Cold Weather Conditions

Increased caution is necessary when temperatures are below 32°F. Temperature plus wind velocity, or wind chill, is a prominent factor in determining cold weather safety. As the speed of the wind increases, it carries heat away from the body more quickly. Staff will limit student outdoor time to under 30 minutes if the temperature is near or below freezing.



2023-2024

Family & Student Handbook

Severe Weather: Lightning

In cases where thunderstorms are bringing lightning into the area, staff will follow the 30-30 rule, which means waiting 30 minutes after the last lightning flash is seen or the last roll of thunder is heard to resume outdoor activity. It may seem safe to return to activity after the storm has passed, but lightning can and does strike at least 10 miles away from the storm even after the clouds have moved on. This phenomenon is known as a “bolt out of the blue.” Every time lightning is seen or thunder is heard, the 30 minute clock should be reset.

Air Quality Alert Days

Due to ground-level ozone and particulate levels being higher than usual, the National Weather Service may declare a Code Orange, Code Red, or Code Purple for air quality that is separate from alerts for temperature. On days that are designated as Code Orange for air quality (but not for temperature) staff should limit student outside time to 15-20 minutes at a time and watch for students or colleagues who may be sensitive to air quality and exhibit signs such as fatigue, trouble breathing, increased heart rate, and other signs of stress. If noticed, staff and students affected should return indoors, drink water, and call for assistance from administration to determine next steps for care. Inside, classroom air purifiers should be turned on to high and ionizer settings, and windows should remain closed.

On days that are designated as Code Red for air quality (but not for temperature) staff should severely limit time outside to short periods of 5 minutes for things like travel between buildings, and then apply the above guidelines for Code Orange days.

On days designated as Code Purple, no outside activities should be conducted. Students arriving early to school should immediately be allowed inside, and carpool riders should wait inside for their ride to be called. Administration will consider whether or not to cancel in person learning and move to a remote learning day based on this severe level of weather conditions and will notify staff and family of any decisions.

Dressing for Cold & Wet Weather

When colder temperatures and rain approach, please be reminded that it is very important for students to come to school every day with the appropriate winter clothing for outside activities. If you have a child in need of winter clothing or rain gear please let the school know so that they may help you find appropriate clothing for your student.

Exploris activities take place rain or shine, so being prepared with a sturdy rain poncho and shoes that are appropriate for the weather is important to consider each day.

Below please find guidelines to assist you in sending your child to school outfitted for outside activities in cold weather.



2023-2024

Family & Student Handbook

Weather Conditions and Clothing Recommendations

- Mild (45-55 degrees): Lightweight Coat & Hat
- Moderate (35-44 degrees): Heavy Coat, Hat, Gloves or Mittens, Closed Toe Shoes, and Scarf
- Cold (34 degrees or below): Heavy Coat, Hat, Gloves or Mittens, Closed Toe Shoes, and Scarf
- Snow: Heavy Coat, Hat, Gloves or Mittens, Closed Toe Shoes or boots, and Scarf
- Soggy, Wet Conditions: Coat, Hat, Closed Toe Shoes or rain boots, waterproof poncho

Health and Medical

Medications

Students who need to receive medication (prescription or over-the-counter) during the school day or during a field experience must have a medical release on file. The medical release is completed as part of the Enrollment Forms each year. To update the medical release for a student, please contact the Crew Teacher, who will direct you to the appropriate team members for documentation purposes. The front office has a locked storage location for medication and distribution of medication is tracked on a daily log.

In order for The Exploris School to administer medication to your child during the school day, the following conditions must be met:

1. Medication (both prescription and over-the-counter) must be in the ORIGINAL packaging with administration directions clearly viewed on the packaging. If a prescription, the prescription date on the packaging must be within date (not expired) and include clear directions for administration from the prescribing doctor. Please send enough medication for the number of days needed.
2. Medication must be given to school personnel. Students ARE NOT allowed to carry medicine with them, not even a cough drop. The only exceptions are for students needing to carry a prescribed asthma inhaler or epipen.

Health Forms

Before the first day of school, all students must submit a North Carolina Health Assessment Form, signed by a physician, that identifies any health issues important for the school to know about and certifies that your child has all required immunizations. North Carolina state law requires that documentation of immunization be provided to the school within 30 days of a student's first day of school. Parents who do not wish to have their child immunized based on religious beliefs or advice from the doctor that immunizations pose a risk to their student's



2023-2024

Family & Student Handbook

health, must submit their request for a waiver in writing, including their physician's statement. Parents must also complete the Medical and Emergency Release form for each child each year.

Health Plans

Consistent with the State Board of Education policy GCS-G-006, school personnel shall be made aware of the existence of health problems including asthma, diabetes, seizure disorder, and life-threatening allergies (anaphylactic reaction) for the purpose of emergency care as well as daily programming. In these cases a copy of the student's healthcare plan will need to be provided. This plan is created in conjunction with the family and their designated healthcare provider.

Illness

If your child contracts a communicable illness, please inform Exploris staff immediately so that we may inform other parents of their child's possible exposure and help parents make informed decisions about their child(ren)'s health.

If your child has a fever, vomiting, diarrhea or other adverse symptoms, please keep your child at home to recover for at least 24 hours. We require that they be free of such symptoms without the aid of medication or fever reducer before they return to school. If such symptoms develop at school, you will be asked to pick up your child. Before sending your child to school, be sure they feel well enough to have a positive, productive day in a manner considerate of the health of others.

COVID-related Illness

Students who present with any of the common symptoms of COVID-19, including runny or stuffy/congested nose, coughing, upset stomach, and/or fever, will be asked to show results of a negative COVID test before returning to school. If a student tests positive, they will be asked to stay home for at least 5 days, be free of fever without the use of fever-reducing medication, and have other symptoms improving. In addition, they will be asked to wear a face mask that covers their mouth and nose for 5 calendar days at all times while participating in indoor or outdoor school activities.

Concussion

The Exploris School utilizes a multidisciplinary team approach to support students suffering with concussion issues. The team at the school level includes appropriate Exploris staff, parents, students, and healthcare providers, all focusing on student wellbeing during and after the injury.



2023-2024

Family & Student Handbook

Lice, Scabies, Ringworm, and Other Conditions Transmitted through Physical Contact

If live lice are discovered on a student, the child's parent/legal guardian will be notified that day by telephone. The family is asked to pick up the child as soon as possible, treat the child's hair/scalp for lice, and remove as many nits (eggs) as possible. After treatment, the child may return to school the following day. An Exploris staff member will assist families by rechecking a child's head after proper treatment.

Exploris does not have a “no nit” policy. The American Academy of Pediatrics states that “no nit” policies in schools are detrimental, causing lost time in the classroom, inappropriate allocation of the health service team’s time for lice screening, and a response to infestations that is out of proportion to the medical significance. Children should not be allowed to miss valuable school time because of head lice.

Head lice should never be associated with poor hygiene, dirty hair, or lack of parental care. Washing hair does not kill head lice, as they can survive underwater for several hours. Anyone, whether their hair is long or short, clean or dirty, can get head lice.

Removing the nits and live lice with a special fine-tooth comb, though time-consuming, is the most effective way to get rid of lice. You can remove any remaining lice and nits manually with your fingernails. They do not wash out.

In the case of physical conditions like scabies or ringworm or other conditions that are transmitted by physical contact, the student must have confirmation of the condition by a medical professional and remain out of school for at least 24 hours after treatment has started. After that period, they may return to school and should cover the affected area with clothing such as long sleeves or appropriate bandages to reduce possibility of transmission.

Student Safety, Emotional Health, and Wellbeing

At the Exploris School we are committed to working with families, community organizations, and law enforcement agencies to ensure student safety and wellbeing. In cases where a child welfare is in question (e.g. suspected physical abuse, self-harm, substance abuse, sexual assault, suicidal ideation, etc.) staff will immediately inform a school administrator. In all cases the priority will be the child's immediate safety and taking actions in alignment with mandatory reporting laws. Once the immediate situation is diffused the school will work with families and local agencies to create an ongoing support plan.



2023-2024

Family & Student Handbook

Student Supervision

Our faculty provides supervision of students when they are on campus during the normal school day or when they are participating in a school-related field experience. Many of the faculty are trained in basic first-aid techniques and CPR. In addition, teachers are required to carry cell phones or school-issued communication devices like walkie-talkies to any off-site activity so that they can consult with the appropriate resources needed in the event of an emergency.

In emergency situations, our goal is to provide immediate and appropriate care for the student by:

- Preventing further harm to the student or other students which may include moving the student.
- Providing comfort care and urgent care in situations involving breathing or bleeding.
- Referring immediately to the parent and/or medical professionals.

When an accident happens at school that results in serious injury, the school staff will use information from the Medical Release Form to contact parents or the person(s) they have designated. If needed, we will call 911 while we are still trying to reach a parent. We will make every attempt to call families as soon as possible to involve them in the decision-making process, unless time and urgency are issues. If the injury is minor, the classroom teacher will exercise their judgment in making a decision to call the family. In most cases, families will be alerted so they will have the option of viewing the injury themselves.

Search of Student's Person or Belongings

In any case where there is reasonable suspicion a student may be intending harm to self or others, the student's person and belongings may be searched. Reasonable suspicion is satisfied when two conditions exist: (1) The search is justified at its inception, meaning that there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that the search will reveal evidence that the student has violated or is violating the law or school rules or that the student may have the means and intent to do harm to self or others, and (2) The search is reasonably related in scope to the circumstances that justified the search, meaning that the measures used to conduct the search are reasonably related to the objectives of the search and that the search is not excessively intrusive in light of the student's age and sex and the nature of the offense. School officials and sworn law enforcement officers may conduct a search without reasonable suspicion or probable cause if the student voluntarily consents to the search. Voluntariness is determined on the basis of the circumstances—including the student's age, education level, and mental capacity—and the context of the search. School officials may conduct random or blanket searches not because of individualized suspicion, but as a preventive measure. This type of search will not be utilized by school officials if any type of suspicion is present.



2023-2024

Family & Student Handbook

Anything found in the course of a search can be used as evidence against the student. The evidence may be:

1. Seized and admitted as evidence in any suspension or recommendation for expulsion proceeding.
2. Returned to the parent or guardian of the student.
3. Destroyed, if it is of no significant value.
4. Given to a law enforcement officer if applicable.

Background Checks for Employees

It is the policy of the Exploris school not to employ or to continue the employment of classified, professional, or administrative personnel who may be deemed unsuitable for service by reason of arrest and/or criminal conviction. While an arrest or conviction of a crime, in and of itself, may not be an automatic bar to employment, if an arrest or conviction relates to suitability of the individual to perform duties in a particular position, such person may be denied employment or in the case of current employees, may face disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Accordingly, a criminal records check will be conducted of applicants and/or newly hired employees, including substitutes. If an applicant is hired prior to the completion of the criminal records check, the employment shall be considered conditional pending a review of the results of the check.

Volunteer Expectations and Confidentiality

Exploris is a cooperative enterprise: Our families, teachers, Board, and administrative staff share the responsibilities and rewards of operating our school. Our families experience firsthand the school environment, become advocates for their children, and enrich the school community with their ideas, interests, talents, and resources. There are significant opportunities for involvement: Volunteering in our K-8 Explorations classes, helping with off-site fieldwork trips, serving on our PTO board, supporting the office, chaperoning overnight trips, etc. Parents are always welcome to visit the school and join their child's class, but we ask you to plan your visit with your child's teacher. Planned, organized visits support instruction and help ensure the safety of all students and staff. Please keep in mind that visitors can sometimes distract students and inadvertently disrupt the learning environment. It is difficult for teachers to stop and instruct/prepare for volunteers while they are teaching, and advance notification is required to make the most of your contribution. All parents and volunteers should sign in at the front office before proceeding to the classroom.



2023-2024

Family & Student Handbook

The Directors may place limits on the frequency or conditions of school visits or communication by parents or other visitors to avoid disruption and to ensure that a positive, safe, and constructive educational environment is maintained for all.

Remember that the teacher's first responsibility during class hours is to teach students. Therefore, we ask that you refrain from engaging in conversation about your child's progress when assisting in the classroom or during field experiences. If you would like to discuss your child's individual progress, teachers are happy to set up an appointment to meet with you outside of the normal school day. When you volunteer in school-related events, you may be exposed to sensitive issues involving students and families other than your own, including academic and social/disciplinary challenges. Just as you would like for adults who interact with your child to be sensitive to issues of confidentiality, we ask that you treat information about all students with care.

If you have particular concerns about children that stem from your observations during school activities, please consult that student's classroom teacher. Always refrain from inappropriate interactions with students and other parents that breach these confidentiality guidelines.

As family volunteers, we ask that you respect the direction and/or guidelines established by the sponsoring teacher in a given activity or the school's Directors. Although employees are open to the ideas and feedback of parents who are involved in an activity or outing, it is the school employee who must make a final decision in the event of an emergency or difficult situation. Please note that we are a drug, alcohol, and tobacco-free campus. This policy applies to staff and parents volunteering or attending any school sponsored event or trip in which students are present and is essential to our continued participation in federal grant programs.

Background Checks for Volunteers

Exploris supports and encourages volunteers in our schools. Volunteers work in cooperation with the school to help in meeting the needs of children and the school staff. The school's Directors hold the sole responsibility for the recruitment, monitoring, and/or dismissal of community and parent volunteers.

Any family member or volunteer who participates in school-related activities and may have an opportunity to be alone with a student as part of that activity will be asked to complete a Federal and State background check. If two or more non-related adults work together with students, or if Exploris staff continually and directly supervises the volunteer, the Directors may determine a background check unnecessary.

Field Experience Chaperones

Opportunities exist for parents/guardians to accompany on field experiences, and in fact, we depend on your help for safe transportation and supervision. If you have signed up to participate



2023-2024

Family & Student Handbook

as a class chaperone, you will be agreeing to stay with the group, monitor children, and make decisions in the best interest and safety of the children. While we encourage your involvement, volunteers must keep in mind that the purpose of fieldwork is educational, not recreational, and class trips should not be a substitute for a family outing. Chaperones will be expected to remain with the class at all times and should not remove their child from the group for side trips or to leave early. Chaperones are expected to support teachers' disciplinary and behavior guidelines, to uphold grade-level rules, and to treat all children with fair and equal consideration. Siblings or family pets will not be permitted on trips, so that chaperones can be fully attentive to the needs of the students and provide the safety needed. If a trip should lend itself to involvement of siblings, this will be communicated to families.


All chaperones must follow school rules. On overnight trips, and at all times, chaperones must abstain from using tobacco and alcohol products. Teachers reserve the right to designate an appropriate number of chaperones for their group and to establish rules specific to the activities of the fieldwork. These rules, along with directions and emergency contact numbers, will be communicated to families in writing in advance of the trip. Failure to adhere to these guidelines may result in a parent or volunteer not being allowed to chaperone on future fieldwork experiences. As is the case with any classroom activity, teachers will make final decisions on chaperones and trip organization.

Student Sleeping Accommodations for Overnights

In order to assure appropriate privacy during an overnight excursion, the Exploris school will take the following precautions:

1. Sleeping arrangements will be made that clearly separate male and female students. Exceptions may be made for children who are brother and sister and have an adult family member staying with them. Exceptions may also be made depending upon the programming of partner organizations (i.e. Heifer International groups students co-educationally.)
2. No sleeping arrangement can be made that would place only one adult with one or more children unless all are members of the same family.
3. No sleeping arrangement can be made that would place an adult with children of the opposite sex unless they are members of the same family.

It is expected that all overnight field experience participants agree to act courteously and responsibly, will comply with all regular Exploris rules and policies, and comply with any additional rules set forth by the grade-level team applicable to the overnight trip. Violations of these rules and policies will result in immediate dismissal from the excursion. In the event of a dismissal, parents/guardians are responsible for making transportation arrangements to pick up their student in the field.

 2023-2024
Family & Student Handbook



2023-2024

Family & Student Handbook

Section 5: The Code of Student Conduct

Our Exploris Philosophy

We use a responsive classroom approach that focuses on the strong relationship between academic success and social emotional learning. To be successful in and out of school, students need to learn a set of social and emotional competencies such as relationships, collaboration, responsibility, empathy, and reflection. They also need to learn a set of academic competencies such as academic mindset, perseverance, learning strategies, and academic behaviors.

The purpose of the code of student conduct is four-fold:

1. To illustrate expected student behaviors
2. To describe violations of the Student Code of Conduct and associated interventions and consequences that may be enforced
3. To outline student rights, privileges, and responsibilities
4. To provide information about how to get help from school personnel

Equally important to sharing what is expected of students is that Exploris policies and practices support social emotional learning and positive behavior choices. Developing positive and effective student behaviors requires collaborative efforts from school, home, and community organizations and agencies.

Families should note that enrolling at The Exploris School means acceptance of school policies and the student code of conduct. Families are responsible for reading the Family and Student Handbook and being aware of expectations and policies for student conduct.

Expected Student Behavior

We believe everyone deserves a safe, supportive, and orderly learning environment. We encourage appropriate behaviors by teaching, guiding, directing, and providing opportunities for new learning to occur. We create opportunities for students to practice and succeed in making responsible and effective choices in order to reach their social, emotional, and academic potential and contribute to the school community. Our mission is to empower learners to improve our world.

The Code of Student Conduct shall apply to all students engaged in or traveling to or from school or school-sponsored activities at all times on all school grounds, public spaces, spaces owned or operated by community partners, vehicles, field experiences, and school events, including cases where student behavior off campus violates this code of conduct and has a negative impact on the school's reputation or learning environment.



2023-2024

Family & Student Handbook

I will maintain a positive relationship with myself by:

- Attending school regularly and being on time.
- Following rules and directions of adults.
- Doing my schoolwork and homework with craftsmanship.
- Practicing positive behavior choices.
- Remaining within my designated school area/classroom unless I have permission to leave my assigned area.
- Learning from the consequences of my behavior.
- Choosing not to bring tobacco, alcohol, other drugs or weapons to school.
- Dressing in a way that is appropriate for the learning environment and planned activities.

I will maintain a positive relationship with others by:

- Being understanding of others feelings.
- Using positive words with others (no put downs).
- Treating others like I want to be treated.
- Being an upstander for others and not bullying or threatening.
- Being honest by telling the truth and taking responsibility.
- Working with others in a positive and inclusive way.
- Keeping my hands and body to myself.
- Using appropriate language at school.
- Working with others to manage negative behaviors and emotions.
- Using respectful, positive, and considerate tone of voice and body language when I am speaking to others.
- Listening when others are speaking.

I will maintain a positive relationship with my school environment by:

- Taking care of things in my school and on school grounds.
- Not bringing dangerous or distracting things, such as matches, lighters, toys, fireworks, alcohol/tobacco/other drugs, medicine not prescribed for me, etc.
- Using school materials or classmate's materials for their intended purpose.
- Using computers as directed by adults (see Acceptable Use Policy).
- Conducting myself in a safe and considerate way that reflects a positive image.
- Leaving spaces as they were or better. I will clean up and participate positively in cleaning tasks. I will not engage in defacing, removing, digging, destroying, or disturbing the features of private and public spaces.

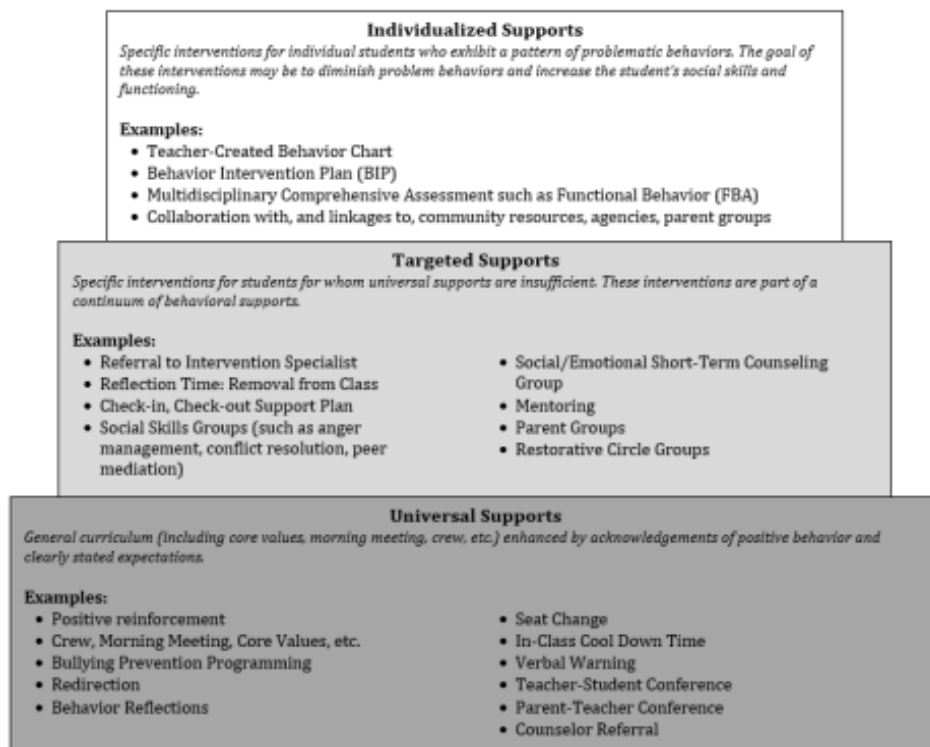
The Three Levels of Supports

Supports may include (but are not limited to) the examples below:



2023-2024

Family & Student Handbook



Levels of Interventions and Consequences for Violations of the Code of Student Conduct

As with any incident of student behavior, school administrators must exercise informed judgment as to whether a student's actions constitute a violation of the school policies and/or the Code of Student Conduct. The levels, shown on the following page, guide administrators to use progressive interventions to impact student behaviors. The administrator will use their discretion and apply interventions and consequences appropriate to the situation. Restitution for loss or damage could be required in addition to any other prescribed consequences.

The following chart is intended as a guide to determine appropriate consequences. **Repeated chronic or cumulative offenses may require higher levels of intervention/consequences.** For serious violations, interventions/consequences may begin at a higher level and/or be reported to local law enforcement agencies. Incidents involving suspected harm of a child may be reported to Child Protective Services.

Levels of Consequences

Level	Disciplinary Option
1- Teacher managed	Warning Mentoring Letter of apology In-class time-out (take a break) Loss of privileges Time out in another classroom setting Use of Student Reinforcement of appropriate behaviors reflection/problem-solving Student email to parent worksheet Confiscation of item by teacher Seat change Redirection and reteaching expected Teacher conference with student behaviors
2- Teacher Managed	Parent/guardian involvement required Parent contract Parent or guardian accompany student to Confiscation of item (pick up in school, classes or on field experience office) Conflict resolution Supervised time-out outside of classroom Peer mediation Working Lunch/Lunch Detention Conference with parent/guardian Required help hall (before or after school) Behavior Contract Community service assignment, as a form Teacher and/or administrator or restitution conference with student and/or parent Monitored/Limited transitions

Commented [2]: This table can be re-made for better formatting.



2023-2024

Family & Student Handbook

3- Administrator Managed (considered an office referral)	Parent/guardian notification required Parent contract Suspension (1-5 days) Parent or guardian accompany student to school, classes or on field experience Reteaching expected behaviors Conflict resolution Alternative school-based program Peer mediation Restricted Activity or Use of Technology Working Lunch/Lunch Detention Detention (before/after school or lunch) Required help hall (before or after school) Community service assignment, as a form or restitution
4- Administrator Managed (office referral)	Parent/guardian notification required Restricted activity Suspension (5-10 days) Modified school day Restricted use of technology
5-Administrator Managed (office referral)	Parent/guardian notification required Extended Suspension (10+ days)
6- Administrator Managed (office referral)	Expulsion (to be considered only in the most extreme cases, which could be a single incident or multiple repeated violations of school policy and behavior codes.). More serious offenses may result in recommendation for expulsion following due-process procedures. Please note that under charter school law, other North Carolina public schools, including Wake County Public Schools, will not accept students suspended or expelled from The Exploris School for the duration of their suspension or Expulsion.

Definitions for Problem Behavior and Consequences for Students

Offense/Violation



2023-2024

Family & Student Handbook

Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs (including unauthorized prescription drugs),**drug paraphernalia Level: 3, 4, 5, 6****Definition**

Alcoholic substances, tobacco, inhalants or other intoxicants, and controlled dangerous substances, including prescription drugs, over the counter medications, look-alikes, and substances represented as controlled substances, and drug paraphernalia.

Possession

The student has on his/her person, or within the student's personal property, or has under the student's actual or constructive control, any of the substances listed in this offense.

Consumption/Use

The student has consumed, ingested, assimilated, inhaled, or injected any of the substances listed in this offense.

Distribution/Sale

A student has disseminated or transferred any of the substances listed in this offense with or without compensation.

Possession with Intent to Distribute

The student has in his/her possession, as previously defined, any of the substances listed in this offense in a quantity or packaging to indicate intent to distribute or transfer to another person/people with or without compensation.

Commented [3]: These tables can be combined into one.

Arson/Fire**Level: 3, 4, 5, 6****Definition:**

Attempting to, aiding in, or setting any fire on school property. This includes unauthorized possession of a flammable liquid or materials with the intent to set fire

Assault on a Student**Level: 3, 4, 5, 6****Definition:**

Causing or attempting to cause physical injury to another student. For the purposes of this policy serious physical injury shall refer to any significant or aggravated bodily injury, including but not limited to broken bone(s), loss or chipping of teeth, loss or impairment of vision, loss of consciousness, internal injuries, scarring or other disfigurement, significant bleeding, lacerations resulting in sutures, significant bruising, severe or prolonged pain, any injury requiring hospitalization for any period of time, and/or any injury resulting in medical treatment beyond simple first aid procedures.

Assault on School Personnel or Other Adult**Level: 3, 4, 5****Definition:**

Causing or attempting to cause physical injury to any school employee or other adult.



2023-2024

Family & Student Handbook

Assault involving weapon/dangerous instrument/substance

Level: 3, 4, 5, 6

Causing or attempting to cause serious physical injury to another student, school personnel or other adult by using a weapon, dangerous instrument, or dangerous substance.

Filming an Assault or Inappropriate Act

Level: 3, 4, 5, 6

Students who record video of any physical altercations or other inappropriate acts at school or at school events will have their phones confiscated and could face disciplinary consequences including suspension. Any student who refuses to disperse while witnessing an incident is subject to suspension.

Bomb Threat

Level: 3, 4, 5, 6

Definition:

The making of threats or providing false information concerning the presence of explosive material or devices on school property without cause in writing, in person, or by phone

Bullying/Harassment

Level: 3, 4, 5

Definition:

Any repeated, systematic pattern of gestures or written, electronic, or verbal communications, or any physical act or any threatening communication on school property; at any school sponsored function that places a student or school employee in actual and reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property; or creates or is certain to create a hostile environment by substantially interfering with or impairing a student's educational performance, opportunities, or benefits. A hostile environment means that the victim subjectively views the conduct as bullying or harassing behavior and the conduct is objectively severe or pervasive enough that a reasonable person would agree that it is bullying or harassing behavior.

Harassing or bullying behavior includes, but is not limited to, acts reasonably perceived as being motivated by any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, socioeconomic status, academic status, gender identity, physical appearance, sexual orientation, or mental, physical, developmental, or sensory disability, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics (additional information regarding this policy can be found in the Student Code of Conduct).

Contamination

Level: 3, 4, 5, 6

Definition:

Putting any substances in another person's food or drink or on their body, which poisons or contaminates that food, drink, or person's body.

Destruction of Property/ Vandalism

Level: 1, 2, 3, 4

Definition:

Damage, destruction, or defacement of property belonging to the school or others. The level of the offense may depend on whether the property is damaged by the student's action/s that was

Completely accidental

Unintentional but impactful (roughhousing, "playing")

Negligent (threw something intending for the trashcan but hit and broke a laptop, for example)

Intentional w purpose to cause harm or damage

Disrespect

Level: 1, 2, 3, 4

Definition:

Inappropriate comments or physical gestures to others.

Disruption to Classroom/School

Level: 1, 2, 3, 4

Definition:

Behavior (including possession of toys) that interferes with instruction, learning, and a safe and orderly environment, which includes, but is not limited to: chronic talking, throwing objects, horseplay, teasing, refusal to remain in seat, selling items without permission, rude noises, etc.



2023-2024

Family & Student Handbook

Dress Code Violation

- **1st offense:** Teacher conference with student
- **2nd offense:** Director conference with student
- **3rd offense:** Director meets with student and family to discuss behavior and expectations

Definition:

Clothing should cover the torso, midriff, and backside. It should have straps or sleeves. Clothing, imagery, and accessories that display or promote negative messages or that disrupt the school's educational environment are not permitted. These could include drugs, weapons, alcohol, or tobacco-related information, obscenities, put-downs, innuendo, polarizing political messages, or offensive graphics/words. If a teacher questions the appropriateness of a student's dress, the student will be referred to an administrator. If the administrator determines that the student is inappropriately dressed, the student will be given the opportunity to call home and have other clothing delivered (additional information regarding this policy can be found in the Student Code of Conduct).

Electronic Devices:

Level: 1, 2, 3, 4

Personal technology devices (including but not limited to smart phones, tablets, laptops, etc.) may be used by students for instructional purposes with the permission and under the supervision of the teachers and in compliance with the Acceptable Use Policy as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct. Possessing or using devices outside of this guidance can be subject to disciplinary consequences.

Failure to Report a Firearm or other weapon

Level: 3, 4, 5

Any student who has knowledge that another student possesses or intends to bring a firearm or other weapon on any school campus or to any school activity shall report this information to school or law enforcement authorities immediately



2023-2024

Family & Student Handbook

Exploris believes that gangs and gang-related activities pose a serious safety threat to students and staff members and can significantly disrupt the educational environment.

No student shall participate in any gang-related activities. For purposes of this policy:

- i. A gang is any ongoing organization, association, or group of three or more persons, whether formal or informal, having as one of its primary activities the commission of criminal acts, and having a common name or common identifying sign, colors or symbols.*
- ii. Gang-related activities are any activities engaged in by a student on behalf of an identified gang; to perpetuate the existence of an identified gang; to effect the common purpose and design of an identified gang; or to represent gang affiliation, loyalty, or solidarity.*

Conduct prohibited by this policy includes:

- i. Wearing, possessing, using, distributing, displaying, or selling any clothing, jewelry, emblems, badges, symbols, signs, visible tattoos and body markings, or other items, with the intent to convey or promote membership or affiliation in any gang;*
- ii. Communicating either verbally or non-verbally (gestures, handshakes, slogans, drawings, etc.), with the intent to convey or promote membership or affiliation in any gang;*
- iii. Tagging, or otherwise defacing school or personal property with symbols or slogans intended to convey or promote membership or affiliation in any gang;*
- iv. Requiring payment of protection, money or insurance, or otherwise intimidating or threatening any person in connection with gang-related activity;*
- v. Inciting other students to intimidate or to act with physical violence upon any other person in connection with gang-related activity;*
- vi. Soliciting others for gang membership;*
- vii. Committing or conspiring to commit illegal acts in connection with gang-related activity.*

Hazing

Level: 3, 4, 5

Definition:

An act that subjects a student to potential harm and is affiliated with initiation into a student organization or team. Hazing may involve an act committed against a student or a situation in which a student is coerced into committing an act.

Inappropriate Language

Level: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Definition:

Using vulgar, abusive, or threatening spoken or written language or gestures, such as use of profanity, making "finger guns," and sexual innuendo. Hate speech, defined as derogatory language directed at another person verbally or in writing and based on race, religion, sexuality, ability, country of origin or appearance will automatically trigger a level 3 consequence or above.

Inciting or Participating in a School Disturbance

Level: 3, 4, 5

Definition:

Intentionally participating in or recruiting others to cause a disruption to the school atmosphere



Indecent Exposure/Sexual Behavior

Level: 3, 4, 5, 6

Engaging in behavior which is indecent, consensual, overly affectionate, or of a sexual nature, including possessing or transmitting sexually explicit images

Insubordination (Uncooperative Behavior)

Level: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Definition: *Refusing to follow a reasonable request to a specific direction/instruction of an adult through disobedience, defiance, unruliness, or noncompliance which includes, but is not limited to, walking away when an adult is talking to you, talking back to an adult, refusal to work in class, refusal to turn off or put away an electronic device, or refusal to report to the office*

Integrity

Level: 1, 2, 3, 4

Engaging in or attempting to engage in cheating, plagiarism, counterfeiting, falsification, violation of software copyright laws, or violation of computer access shall be subject to disciplinary action. The following actions are specifically prohibited:

- *Cheating- giving or receiving of any unauthorized assistance on academic work*
- *Plagiarism- copying the language, structure, or idea of another and representing it as one's own work.*
- *Falsification- verbal or written statement of any untruth.*
- *Violation of software copyright laws- unauthorized duplication of computer software (computer piracy), printed material related to computer software, and/or the use of pirated computer software.*

Leaving an Area and/or Leaving Class

Level: 1, 2, 3, 4

Definition:

Leaving the classroom or other assigned area on or off campus without permission from the adult in charge.

Matches/Lighter(s)

Level: 2, 3

Definition

Possession of matches or lighter(s) without attempting to use them. Using them falls under fire/arson.

Non-Compliance

Level: 1, 2, 3

Definition:

Student engages in a low or high intensity of failure to comply with adult requests. Individualized consequences may be stated in a behavior contract.



2023-2024

Family & Student Handbook

Physical Aggression/ Fighting

Level: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Physical Aggression: Taking any action or making comments or written messages that might reasonably be expected to result in a fight or physical altercation. Fighting (physical altercation). Fighting and physical altercation will automatically be moved to a level 3 or more.

School/Class Attendance

Level: 1, 2, 3

Being tardy to class, skipping class/school, leaving campus without permission, or being in an unauthorized area is prohibited. Out of school suspension should be used as a last resort as a consequence for violation of this rule

Sexual Assault

Level: 4, 5, 6

Definition: Physical sexual attack on school system staff, or another student

Sexual Harassment

Level: 3, 4, 5, 6

Definition:

Unwelcome sexual advances, sexual comments on physical appearance, unwanted touching, requests for sexual favors, and/or other inappropriate verbal, written, or physical conduct of a sexual nature, directed toward others. Includes "sexting" and sharing or asking for sexually explicit images. "Pantsing" "bra snaps" and other attempts to remove another person's clothing constitutes sexual harassment.

Stealing/Theft

Level: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Definition:

Taking, obtaining, or attempting to take property of another person or institution without permission or knowledge of the owner.

Trespassing

Level 3, 4, 5

Definition:

Being on school property without permission, including while suspended or expelled; includes breaking and entering.

Unsafe Actions

Level: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

Definition:

Any action that has the potential to cause danger or physical harm to self or others; including but not limited to reckless behavior in a vehicle or on a field experience, with or without intent to harm.



2023-2024

Family & Student Handbook

Weapons (including look-a-like and toy items)**Level: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6****Definition:***A weapon is, by way of illustration and without limitation, one of the following:**Possession and/or use of:***Firearms***A firearm as defined in 18 U.S.C. 921 of the federal code. Examples include handguns, rifles, shotguns, and bombs. Refer to the federal code for the complete definition.***Knife***This shall include, but is not limited to, switchblade knife, hunting knife, star knives, razors (including straight or retractable razor) **Gun** (including look-a-like gun)**Any gun of any kind, loaded or unloaded, operable or inoperable, including any object other than a firearm which is a look-a-like of a gun. This shall include, but is not limited to, pellet guns, paintball guns, stun guns, tasers, BB guns, flare guns, nail guns, and airsoft guns.***Other Weapons***Any implement which could cause, or is intended to cause bodily harm, other than a firearm, gun or knife.**Including but not limited to explosives, laser pointers, brass knuckles, box cutters, nunchaku, spiked gloves, spiked wristbands, any mace derivative, tear gas device, or pepper spray product.***Acceptable Use of School Technology**

Students will have the opportunity to use The Exploris School's computer resources, which includes access to the Internet. Student use of technology develops skills in defining, accessing, managing, integrating, evaluating, creating, and communicating information. For computers that are accessed by minors, and in accordance with the Children's Internet Protection Act (federal law enacted December 2000), The Exploris School implemented technology protection measures to block or filter Internet access to pictures and sites that: (a) are obscene, (b) are child pornography, or (c) are harmful to minors. We are committed to providing safe and quality instructional opportunities for all students. The student is responsible for appropriate behavior while using computer resources, including the internet. Teachers monitor student activities while online for appropriateness and instructional relevance.

Students shall:

- Use the provided school network account in an ethical, responsible, and legal manner for school-related tasks only.
- Communicate with others using appropriate language in a courteous and respectful manner.
- Maintain the privacy of their personal information, such as name, address, phone number, account passwords, social security numbers, and respect the privacy of others.
- Use only user accounts and passwords provided by the school.
- Comply with copyright laws and intellectual property rights of others.
- Keep their screen easily visible to adults at all times.



2023-2024

Family & Student Handbook

Students shall not:

- Seek to override or bypass computer or network security provisions, including but not limited to turning off Hapara, Gaggle, or other school approved monitoring programs during school hours and on school devices.
- Use any network account for non-school related activities or to create accounts for personal use on websites.
- Access or attempt to access networks other than those approved
- Conduct unauthorized copying of licensed software; download or copy files without permission; or install personal software on computers.
- Plagiarize online content.
- Create fake accounts or attempt to impersonate others online
- Read, send, or forward personal email, chat messages, or instant messages.
- Use or import offensive, obscene, libelous, disruptive, or inflammatory language, pictures, or other material on any school computer or network.
- Remove or damage computer components.
- Knowingly access unauthorized computer workstations or software to tamper with or destroy data.
- Use electronic resources for commercial, personal purchasing, or illegal purposes.
- Use electronic resources for personal social media including blogging, social network sites, gaming, or to conduct cyber bullying.
- Share user account information or passwords with others.

Directed Internet use

- Requires appropriate adult supervision (i.e., staff members or their adult designees are present to the extent that active monitoring of student access to the Internet occurs).
- Internet use is permitted at all levels and in compliance with above stated conditions.
- Internet searches will be conducted using The Exploris School approved search engines and sites.

Penalties for Misuse of Technology

Consequences for violations of the Acceptable Use Policy for School Technology are addressed in the Code of Student Conduct (Computer Misuse).

Attendance & Tardies

All students are expected to attend school on all days of the established school calendar as approved annually by the Exploris Board of Directors and in compliance with North Carolina school attendance laws. The entire process of education requires a regular continuity of instruction, classroom participation, learning experiences, and study in order to reach the goal of



2023-2024

Family & Student Handbook

maximum educational benefits for each individual child. It is particularly true in a project-based environment that regular attendance is vital to achieving high academic outcomes given the rich educational discussions, fieldwork, and visiting experts that are a part of the day-to-day experience. Since many classroom activities are collaborative experiences, when one student is absent, the whole group is affected. Students who are frequently absent find it difficult to keep up. Missing a day of school means missing a crew activity that cannot be replicated at home.

If a student is absent from school, parents **must** contact their Crew Teacher through email stating the child's full name, the reason for the absence, and the presumed return date to school. All absences from school are considered unexcused until a written or emailed excuse is received from the parent/guardian. Upon receipt of written notification, absences may be considered excused for only the following reasons, in accordance with Exploris School Board policy and state law:

- Illness or Injury
- Quarantine
- Death in the Immediate Family
- Religious Observances
- Medical or Dental Appointments (with a note from the doctor)

In accordance with North Carolina's compulsory attendance law, G.S. 115C-378 parents will be notified after a student has accumulated 3 unexcused absences. Parents will be notified in writing when a student has accumulated 6 unexcused absences. If a student accumulates 10 unexcused absences, parents will be called to attend a Truancy Hearing. For more information on the Board's Absentee and Tardy policy, please go to the "Policies" section on our school website, found within the Family Resources menu.

Likewise, tardiness and early dismissals disrupt the learning process, for both the tardy student and his/her classmates. Please do all that you can to make sure your child is in class to the greatest extent possible. Please schedule family trips, appointments, etc. after school hours or during breaks as identified on the school calendar. Students arriving after the start time are considered tardy and must sign in at the school office. Disciplinary consequences may apply if tardiness is excessive.

If an emergency arises, and a parent/guardian needs to check a student out, it is important that the parent/guardian communicates with the child's crew teacher in case an off-campus trip is scheduled for that day. If someone other than a parent or legal guardian is to pick up a child during the school day, the parent/guardian must provide information to the Exploris teachers in writing about whom, when, and why that person will be picking up the child. **Except for emergency situations, the office will NOT send messages to students about pick-up, nor are students allowed to have cell phones on during the school day. Please make arrangements ahead of time.**



2023-2024

Family & Student Handbook

There will be NO EARLY DISMISSAL after 2:45 p.m. After 2:45, your child will not be dismissed until the published dismissal times. During that time, all students should be dismissed via the walk-up or carpool lines.

Bullying Policy & Procedure

[State Law regarding bullying](#)

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school-aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time.

In order to be considered bullying, the behavior must be aggressive and include:

- An Imbalance of Power: Kids who bully use their power—such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity—to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.
- Repetition: Bullying behaviors happen more than once and create a pattern of behaviors. Some specific examples of behavior that could be considered bullying include, but are not limited to; teasing, slurs, innuendo, derogatory remarks, name calling, spreading rumors, and circulating written materials or pictures that are either derogatory or insulting to an individual or group.

Reporting Harassing and Bullying Behavior

1. Any student who believes that he or she has been harassed or bullied in violation of this policy should report such behavior immediately to a teacher, counselor, or administrator.
2. A school employee who has witnessed or has reliable information that a student has been subject to any act of harassing or bullying behavior shall report the incident asap to the director on site
3. Any person may report an act of harassment or bullying anonymously using the [“Say Something” state-wide anonymous reporting system](#) or [“Anonymous Bullying Report Form.”](#) which is a direct link from the menu on The Exploris School website. However, disciplinary action may not be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

Investigation of Bullying

Reports of bullying activity will be investigated by the Director on site and staff. Parents of the participants and victims will be notified. If warranted, formal disciplinary action will be taken by the Director on site as outlined in the level of consequences.



2023-2024

Family & Student Handbook

Cyberbullying

Instances of reported cyberbullying during the school day, on school grounds and over school devices will be handled in the manner described above. If the school is informed of inappropriate online comments/postings by students that happen outside of the school day, outside of the school network, or off the school campus, the following guidelines will apply:

- It is beyond our scope to police all online content.
- We will offer support to the student/family who reports, which may include consultations with our counseling staff, recommendations on tools to block and limit access to specific sites or tools, and recommendations on how to contact the hosting platform to report comments and activities.
- We will notify all parties as a courtesy, with the understanding that we do not evaluate, investigate, authenticate, follow up, or discipline such reports.
- We will follow up to see if the behaviors are carrying into the school environment.
- We will help students clarify the difference between bullying, which is behavior that is sustained, organized, creates a hostile environment, and random instances of unpleasant social media comments or conflicting political or social opinions.

Corporal Punishment / Physical Restraint

Corporal punishment is defined as action taken by school employees to spank or otherwise physically handle a student in any way to purposely inflict punishment. **No corporal punishment will be administered to students by anyone in the school.** Physical restraint is reasonable and appropriate physical intervention or force by trained staff may be employed as necessary for the following purposes:

- To quell a disturbance threatening physical injury to others
- To obtain possession of weapons or other dangerous objects upon a student or within the control of a student
- For the purpose of self-defense
- For the protection of persons or property
- Any such acts are not in conflict with the legal definition of child abuse and will not be construed to constitute corporal punishment within the meaning and intention of this policy.

Dress Code Policy and Procedures

Throughout our world, cultures set standards and norms for dress. Context is one factor that determines the appropriateness of clothing choices. The standard for what's acceptable when attending a sporting event is typically different from what's acceptable in a workplace. What's acceptable at a shopping mall is typically different from what's acceptable at a wedding or in a



2023-2024

Family & Student Handbook

place of worship. In addition to being a place of learning and work, Exploris serves as a demonstration site for educators from around the world. As such, Exploris's expectations for student dress reflects that context. Students should wear clothing that is well-suited to the school environment.

Learning at Exploris often happens off campus and may involve long walks or experiences in natural environments, in workplace settings, or even on religious sites. As such, shoes and clothing should be chosen carefully so that students are prepared to engage in these experiences and follow the requests and guidelines from any host site. The appropriateness and safety of footwear and clothing for a particular activity will be determined by the child's supervising teacher. If it is determined that a student is not appropriately dressed for the activity, the parent will be contacted for a change of clothing/shoes. If alternate clothing/shoes are not available, the student may miss out on the activity.

Clothing should cover the torso and backside. Clothing, imagery, and accessories that display or promote negative messages are not permitted. These could include drug, weapon, alcohol, or tobacco-related information, obscenities, put-downs, innuendo, political messages, or offensive graphics/words. If a teacher questions the appropriateness of a student's dress, the student will be referred to an administrator. If the administrator determines that the student is inappropriately dressed, the student will be given the opportunity to call a parent and have other clothing delivered. If the parent/guardian cannot be reached the school will provide clothing for the student when possible. Habitual violations will be considered willful disrespect and non-compliance on the part of the student and formal disciplinary action will be taken:

- **1st offense:** Teacher conference with student
- **2nd offense:** Director on site conference with student
- **3rd offense:** Director on site meets with student and parent to discuss behavior

Colognes, Perfumes, Body Lotions, and Sprays

Students should not bring cologne, perfume, scented lotions, and spray deodorant products to school. These items and their aerosol propellants can trigger asthma and other allergic reactions in sensitive individuals. If they are found at school, they may be confiscated under the guidelines above. If they are applied at home before arriving at school, they should be applied sparingly with a reminder that our classrooms and hallways are crowded and students often work in close quarters with one another. Sunscreen, solid, and roll-on deodorant are exceptions.

Drugs and Alcohol

The possession and use of illicit substances is illegal and harmful. The Exploris School and Board of Directors prohibits the unlawful possession, use, or distribution of illicit substances on school premises or as part of any school activities. Compliance with drug and alcohol laws is



2023-2024

Family & Student Handbook

mandatory for all parents, students, and staff. Information on drug and alcohol counseling is available to all students upon request from the school counselor. Students who are caught with drugs, alcohol, and vapors are subject to drug testing to ensure the safety of the student. The Exploris School will provide the cost, location and procedures necessary to the parent/guardian for the student to return to school and ensure safety of the student.

Extended Suspension for Students with Disabilities

When the school system seeks to suspend students with disabilities for more than ten days, the Individual Education Program (IEP)/504 team must meet within ten days of the student's removal from school. The purpose of this meeting is to determine whether or not the behavior was a manifestation of the student's disability.

If the IEP/504 team determines that the behavior is related to the student's disability, the student is returned to school immediately.

For students with IEPs:

- Regardless of whether the conduct is related to the disability, if the incident for which the student is being disciplined involves a dangerous weapon, a controlled dangerous substance, or serious bodily injury, the school system can unilaterally place a special education student in an alternative education setting for up to 45 days.
- If the IEP team determines that the conduct is not related to the disability, the student is subject to the regular discipline procedures explained herein.

Student Conflict/Peer Mediation

Students are encouraged to work with one another, teachers, the counselor, and administrators to resolve conflicts and prevent hostility. Peer mediation is a student-based, voluntary process for resolving conflict among students, grade kindergarten through 8th grade. The school counselor or Directors can assist with this process. Peer mediation supports safe teaching and learning environments by increasing student responsibility for behavior and decreasing time spent on discipline. In some cases, students may be given the option to meet with mediators or other outside consultants who are trained and meet with individuals or groups of students in pairs. The goal is to repair relationships and reduce negative peer interactions that interfere with the learning environment.

Items from Home

Students should only bring appropriate academic-related items to school. Unrelated magazines, toys, trading cards, etc. should remain at home. Any items **(including cell phones)** that disrupt



2023-2024

Family & Student Handbook

the learning environment in any way or present a safety hazard will be confiscated according to the following guidelines:

- **1st offense:** Teacher will collect and return to the student at the end of the school day on the first occasion (Warning)
- **2nd offense:** Items will be held in the office until a parent/guardian can pick them up on the second occasion and their after. (Family Involvement)
- **3rd offense:** Item will be held in the office. Director meets with the student and parent to discuss the behavior. (Office Referral)
- **Additional offenses:** Items will be held in the office and additional consequences will be applied as outlined in the code of student conduct.

Cell phones must be turned off when school is in session and during before/aftercare. Cell phones are not to be used during the school day except when requested by their teacher for educational purposes. Teachers may require students to place cell phones in grade level designated areas.

Responsibility for Personal Property

All personal property, including personal computers, brought to school is brought at the owner's risk. The Exploris School cannot assume responsibility for any property belonging to students. Distracting or inappropriate objects will be taken from a student and returned at the end of the day. Repeated violations will require a parent conference. Students should not bring large sums of money to school. If it is necessary to bring a large sum of money, that money should be taken to the office. Please note that in recent years the rise in popularity of AirPods and other in-ear Bluetooth devices has also corresponded with a rise in loss and theft of these small and hard-to-distinguish items. Students are encouraged to leave these items at home or secured in their bookbags during the day. It is also best practice to label all personal items in a permanent manner so as to distinguish them from other similar items if the need arises.

School visits and Classroom Observations:

Federal Law under IDEA and ESSA mandate that parents have the right to schedule an observation as part of their meaningful participation in determining their child's educational placement. These observations can help parents gather key information about their child's behavior, classroom dynamics, and the appropriateness of a placement.

Observations may not interfere with the delivery of instruction or disrupt the learning environment. Any Exit conferences with the teacher or campus director/designee must occur at a prescribed time away from students and after instructional time.

Visitors may not take photos, take video, or audio recordings while in the classroom observing. Any notes taken during the visit are the presumed opinion of the observer and are not considered an accurate written record of the classroom environment or events.



2023-2024

Family & Student Handbook

Upon arrival, visitors must follow established procedures for entering the main building including but not limited to: Signing in, presenting a photo ID, and wearing a visitors' badge. The visitor badge must be worn at all times and placed in a visible location. Visitors are to be escorted to the classroom by a staff member prior to the start of class. At the conclusion of the observation a staff member should be called to escort the parent/guardian back to the office.

Parents/guardians may not have access to student performance or behavioral records outside of their own child's. In addition, the campus director and/or their designee should discuss with the parent/guardian the importance of maintaining confidentiality regarding observations of other students within the classroom

School Counselor

The Exploris school counselor serves as a resource to students, staff, and community. The school counselor's duties range from counseling individual students, to working with parents and outside agencies to secure and promote the social and emotional health of our students. Additionally, the school counselor works closely with teachers, instructional support staff, and administrators to help identify and support students that may have unique learning needs.

Confidentiality in Counseling:

When a student indicates that he or she is thinking about hurting himself or herself or other students, school personnel are required to take action to ensure the safety of the student or other students. This action may include sharing of information with the school principal, parents, and other outside agencies. No statement, oral or written, made by a student seeking counseling for any form of drug abuse may be used as admissible evidence against him/her in any proceedings.



2023-2024

Family & Student Handbook

Section 6: School, Parent, and Student Rights and Responsibilities

McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and Policy

The [McKinney-Vento Act \(42 U.S.C. § 11431 et seq.\)](#) is a federal law that addresses the needs of children and youth experiencing homelessness. The law defines homeless to include the following temporary living situations due to hardship:

- Living with a friend, relative, or other person
- Hotel or motel
- Shelter or transitional housing
- Car, park, or other public place
- Campground or inadequate home
- Youth living on their own, runaway youth, or youth kicked out of the home

The McKinney-Vento Act addresses educational challenges created by homelessness and guarantees students the right to enroll, attend, and succeed in school. The law places the responsibility for guaranteeing the rights of students experiencing homelessness in states and school districts (NCHE, 2014).

As a requirement of the federal law, all public school districts in the United States must appoint a liaison that will ensure compliance with the federal law. For more information, contact Exploris's McKinney-Vento Coordinator at counselor@exploris.org and click on the links below to learn more about parent rights, student rights, and the dispute resolution process.

- [Parent Rights, Student Rights, Dispute Resolution Policy](#)
- [Dispute Resolution Form](#)

Non-Discrimination / Non-Harassment of Students and Staff

It is the policy of The Exploris School to maintain a safe and supportive school environment for all students and staff, free from harassment, intimidation, and/or bullying and free from discrimination due to actual or perceived race, color, creed, ethnicity, national origin, citizenship/immigration status, religion, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, disability, or weight. The school also extends all programs and activity possibilities to students based upon their individual interests and potential without discrimination according to handicapping conditions.

Discrimination means any act or failure to act that unreasonably and unfavorably differentiates treatment of others based solely on their membership in a socially distinct group or category, such as race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or gender identity or by association with



2023-2024

Family & Student Handbook

a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics. Discrimination may be intentional or unintentional.

Harassment, including sexual or gender-based harassment, is not limited to specific situations or relationships. It may occur between fellow students or co-workers, between supervisors and subordinates, between employees and students, or between non-employees, including visitors and volunteers, and employees or students. Harassment may occur between members of different genders or the same gender. Complaints alleging discrimination or harassment based on a person's biological or gender identity must be handled in accordance with procedures outlined in our bullying and harassment policy.

Right to Confidentiality of Access to Student Records

The *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)* guarantees to parents/guardians of students under 18 and the eligible student (18 and older) the right to:

- Inspect and review the educational records of the student within 45 days after the day The Exploris School receives a request for access.
- Request the school to disclose information in the educational records to persons/agencies outside the school.
- Request the amendment of the educational records to ensure that the records are not inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the privacy or other rights of the student.
- File with the US Department of Education a complaint concerning alleged failures by the school to comply with the requirements of FERPA.

Parents/Guardians or eligible students who wish to inspect educational records should submit a written request to the Director Team that identifies the records they wish to inspect. One of the directors will make arrangements for access and notify the parent/guardian or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

Parents/Guardians or eligible students who wish to amend the education record should write to the Director Team and clearly identify the part of the record they want changed and specify why it should be changed. If the school decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent/guardian or eligible student, the school will notify the parent/guardian or eligible student of the decision and of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent/guardian or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

The right to provide written consent before the school discloses personally identifiable information (PII) from the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.



2023-2024

Family & Student Handbook

One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official includes a person employed by the school as an administrator, educator, or support staff member, or a person serving on the School Board. A school official also may include a volunteer, contractor, or consultant who, while not employed by the school, performs an institutional service or function for which the school would otherwise use its own employees and who is under the direct control of the school with respect to the use and maintenance of PII from education records, such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist. A school official typically has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

Upon request, the school discloses education records without consent to officials of another school or school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll, or is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes of the student's enrollment or transfer. The Exploris School will forward such records on request.

The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the Exploris School to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

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

Rights under the No Child Left Behind Act

Parents and Students have the right to the professional qualifications of the school's classroom teachers. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 governs elementary and secondary education, allows for parents to ask for certain information about their child's classroom teachers, and requires the school to give this information to parents in a timely manner if they ask for it.

[Specifics regarding Parents Rights to Know.](#)

Section 504

As a parent/guardian, if you believe there might be a disability, please reach out to your child's crew teacher or our 504 coordinator (Exploris School Counselor) by contacting the school.

Many students have conditions or disorders that are not readily apparent to others. They may include conditions such as specific learning disabilities, diabetes, epilepsy and allergies. Hidden disabilities such as low vision, poor hearing, heart disease or chronic illness may not be obvious, but if the disabilities are not properly diagnosed and they substantially limit that child's ability to receive an appropriate education as defined by Section 504, they may be considered to have an



2023-2024

Family & Student Handbook

“impairment” under Section 504 standards. As a result, these students, regardless of their intelligence, will be unable to fully demonstrate their ability or attain educational benefits equal to that of non-disabled students (The Civil Rights of Students with Hidden Disabilities under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973). For more information about protecting students with disabilities please visit [US Dept of Education- Office of Civil Rights](#).

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a national law that protects qualified individuals from discrimination based on their disability. The nondiscrimination requirements of the law apply to employers and organizations that receive financial assistance from any Federal department or agency. It is a civil rights legislation for persons with disabilities, designed to prevent any form of discrimination based on disabilities, who are otherwise qualified or protected. For more information [click here](#). If a student qualifies, then a 504 plan is created.

A Section 504 Plan is a legal document falling under the provisions of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. It is designed to plan individualized services to assist students with disabilities who are in a regular education setting. A 504 Plan is not an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) as is required for exceptional students. However, if the student no longer needs special instruction and is moving to a regular education placement s/he could be placed under a 504 Plan.

How Does an Individual Qualify as Disabled Under Section 504?

There is no specific mention of learning disabilities in Section 504, however the law defines a person as disabled if he or she:

- has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities,
- has a record of such an impairment, or
- is regarded as having such an impairment. 28 CFR Sec. 36.104.

Learning, speaking, seeing, walking, and hearing among others listed in The Americans With Disabilities Amendments Act are all considered major life activities. As a general rule, if a child is [eligible for services under IDEA](#) (Individuals With Disabilities Education Act) he or she qualifies for protection under Section 504. However, not all students covered by Section 504 are eligible for IDEA-related services. Section 504 has a broader definition of “disability” as compared to the disabilities covered under IDEA and so it pertains to many more people.

Section 504 requires that school districts provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to qualified students in their jurisdictions who have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, regardless of the nature or severity of the disability. Under Section 504, FAPE means providing regular or special education and related aids and services designed to meet the student’s individual educational needs as adequately as the needs of nondisabled students are met.



2023-2024

Family & Student Handbook

Resources and Dispute Procedures for Section 504:

- [National Center for Learning Disabilities- 504](#)
- [Parent and Educator Resource Guide for Section 504](#)
- [Section 504 Overview](#)
- [Section 504 Parent and Student Rights](#)
- [Non-Discrimination/Non-Harrasment of students and staff](#)
- [Procedural Safeguards](#)
- [Formal Grievance Procedure](#)

Special Education: Child Find for Students with Disabilities

The Exploris School is required to locate and identify young people with physical, emotional or intellectual disabilities who may be in need of special education and related services. Parents of children aged two years old or younger who may be in need of such services should contact the Exceptional Children Coordinator or School Counselor so that we may assist you in contacting Head Start.

The *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004* ensures that all eligible children with a disability who are in need of special education receive a free appropriate public education. IDEA mandates that eligible students receive individualized instruction specially designed to meet the unique needs of the learner.

To the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or other educational facilities, are to be educated with children who are not disabled. In addition, to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities are to participate with non-disabled peers in both non-academic and extracurricular activities. Unless the individualized education program for the child with disabilities requires some other arrangement, the child is to be educated in the school that they would attend if they were not disabled. Special classes, separate schools or removal of children requiring special education from the regular educational environment shall occur only when the needs of a child are such that education in the regular classes cannot be accomplished satisfactorily.

What do I do if I think my child might need specially designed instruction?

At Exploris, we provide special education and related services according to the federal mandates of the [Individual with Disabilities Education Act \(IDEA\)](#) and the regulations of the North Carolina Public School Law, Article 9.

If you would like to request that your child be evaluated for special education services or if you have questions regarding your child's IEP and services please contact your child's teacher of record or our Exceptional Children Coordinator.



2023-2024

Family & Student Handbook

Resources and Dispute procedures for IDEA

- [Parent Rights and Responsibilities](#)
- [Garantias de Procedimiento Manual de Derechos de los Padres](#)
- [North Carolina Dept. Public Instruction Dispute Resolution](#)
- [Formal Grievance Procedures](#): See The Exploris School Grievance Procedure
- [Formal Grievance Procedures: Spanish](#)

Commented [4]: I will update this document and double-check the links when we have voted on the Grievance Policy.

Student Rights & Supports

School Problems

If a student has a problem related to discipline, security, personal safety or welfare, or vandalism, the student should:

1. Tell the nearest teacher, adult, or staff member.
2. Talk with the director on site or counselor right away.
3. Express feelings. It is natural to feel worried and upset. Talk to someone who will listen and understand perhaps your crew teacher and/or counselor. It is important to talk with a trusted adult.
4. Ask to talk with the school counselor, who can help students learn ways to deal with problems so that they may feel safer and more comfortable when faced with a similar problem in the future.
5. In addition to alerting school personnel, a student should tell their parent/guardian about the problem.

Personal Problems

For help with personal problems which may affect a student's school life or activities:

1. If possible, discuss the problem with parents/guardians.
2. If a student and their parents/guardians cannot solve the problem. The student may speak with a teacher with whom they feel comfortable.
3. The school counselor is trained to offer help with personal problems. The counselor can also lead students/families to other resources that they may not be aware of.
4. The Campus Director will also be able to discuss the problem with the student and attempt to work on a solution. If they are unable to do so, they will seek additional assistance.

[Gender Support Guidelines](#): These guidelines are intended to help our school promote the educational and social integration of transgender, non-binary and gender non-conforming students and ensure a safe learning environment free from discrimination and harassment. While



2023-2024

Family & Student Handbook

inadvertent slips and honest mistakes may occur from time-to-time, the intentional and persistent refusal to respect a student's gender identity or chosen name and pronoun is prohibited and may constitute discrimination, harassment, or bullying.

Title I and Federal Programs

***What is Title I, Part A?** Title I, Part A (Title I) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) provides financial assistance to local educational agencies (LEAs) and schools with high numbers or high percentages of children from low-income families to help ensure that all children meet challenging state academic standards. Federal funds are currently allocated through four statutory formulas that are based primarily on census poverty estimates and the cost of education in each state.*

In support of strengthening student academic achievement, The Exploris School receives Title I, Part A funds and therefore must jointly develop with, agree on with, and distribute to parents and family members of participating children a written parent and family engagement policy, agreed on by such parents, that shall describe the means of carrying out the requirements of The Every Students Succeeds Act (ESSA) Section 1116.

Please click on this link to access the policy: [Parent Family Engagement Policy](#) | [Parent Family Engagement Policy \(Español\)](#)

School-Parent Compact and Parents Right to Know

In order to fulfill the requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA) of the Elementary and Secondary Act (ESEA), The Exploris School agrees to implement the formation of a partnership between the home, school, and community; recognizes that the family is the child's first and most important teacher; and provide students with the skills to meet the challenging academic standards required by the North Carolina State Department of Public Instruction.

- Each year, The Exploris School will ensure the School-Parent Compact is updated in collaboration with stakeholders and provided to all parents to review and sign.
- As a parent you have the right to request information regarding student participation in state-required assessments [in accordance with ESSA's Parents Right to Know](#).
- Each year, The Exploris School shall provide notice to parents of the school's written parent and family engagement policy and parents' right to know.



2023-2024

Family & Student Handbook

Appendix I: The Exploris School Grievance Policy

Includes Grievance Procedure for Section 504 and Special Education (*Individuals with Disability Education Act*):

Article I: Introduction and Values

The Exploris School seeks to promote harmony among its employees, faculty, students, and family members and to encourage equitable solutions to problems arising among them. The School believes that most concerns and differences are best addressed through open and honest communication conducted in an informal, respectful, and civil manner and that effective resolution depends on direct, prompt and constructive dialogue. The following procedures are adopted to meet these goals.

This policy utilizes the term “family member” to denote a parent or guardian with direct custodial responsibilities for a student, and is meant to include adult family members with formal or informal guardianship responsibilities of the student.

Those seeking to submit a formal grievance are required to first consult with the Family and Employee Liaison (see Article III, Section 2 of this policy). The Family and Employee Liaison’s role is to impartially facilitate the grievance process set forth in Article II of this policy, as well as support the family member or employee in producing the required documents and adhering to required timelines.

Definition of a Grievance: A grievance is a formal complaint regarding specific decisions made in violation of school policy by school personnel that alleges that such decisions have adversely affected the person making the complaint or the dependent of the person making the complaint. A grievance can be made when a student or parent believes that school and board policy or law has been misapplied, misinterpreted, or violated. The term “grievance” does not include any matter for which the method of review is prescribed by law, for which there is a more specific board policy providing a process for addressing the concern, or upon which the board is without authority to act.

Article II: Parent Grievance Procedures

Section 1: Responsibility and Authority of the School Leadership Team

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 Leadership Team of the School and these individuals are best suited to resolve conflicts that arise with respect to these issues. The Board has the authority to appoint, employ, and remove the Director Team, but



2023-2024

Family & Student Handbook

primary responsibility and authority over faculty, staff, and volunteer organizations of the School are vested in the Director Team. The Board, therefore, will exercise any authority in this policy conservatively and narrowly so as not to usurp the authority granted to the Director Team.

Section 2: Informal Procedures

A family member should first attempt to resolve any grievance through discussion with the relevant teacher(s) or other involved persons. If the family member's concern is not adequately addressed through an informal discussion with the teacher and/or staff involved, the family member should next attempt to resolve the grievance with the appropriate Director, if applicable. If a grievance cannot be resolved in an informal manner, the family member may initiate a formal grievance procedure.

Section 3: Formal Procedures

In instances where informal means are ineffective or otherwise not feasible, the School offers these more formal grievance procedures. Grievance proceedings and information shall be kept confidential at all levels to the extent possible and permitted by law. A family member grievance is a formal written claim by a family member or group of family members (including from multiple families) 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 family member who files a grievance under this policy (or against a student whose family member files a grievance) in good faith.

Level One – Supervisor Request and Conference. A family member may, by written request, seek a formal conference with the relevant supervisor 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 supervisor adequately understand the nature of the grievance.

1. The request shall be filed within fifteen (15) business days of the most recent incident(s) or last informal attempt to resolve the grievance, provided that such attempt was made within ten (10) business days of the last incident.
2. Following receipt of the written request, the supervisor shall, whenever possible, conduct a conference with the aggrieved family member(s) within ten (10) business days of receipt of the written request. Within five (5) business days following the conference, the supervisor will state in writing his or her decision with regard to the grievance and a copy will be given to the family member.



2023-2024

Family & Student Handbook

Level Two - Appeal to the Director Team. If the grievance is not resolved, the family member(s) may appeal the supervisor's decision in writing to the Director Team if the entirety of the Director Team was not involved in the Level One Conference.

1. The appeal must be made within five (5) business days following receipt of the supervisor's written Level One response to the grievant. The Director Team will review the grievance and conduct an informal investigation as necessary.
2. The Director Team shall issue a written response to the family member and the Level One supervisor/staff within ten (10) business days following receipt of the written appeal.
3. Decisions of the Director Team are final and not subject to further appeal, except in the following instances:
 - a. Decisions involving an alleged violation of a contractual right;
 - b. Decisions involving an alleged violation by the School of state or federal law including Section 504, special education, or IDEA;
 - c. Decisions based on allegations of conduct by the Director Team in violation of law or school policy.
4. The Board of Directors, through its Grievance Committee, retains discretion to determine whether an alleged violation involves a "final" or "appealable" decision by the Director Team. The Grievance Committee may consider all the available evidence in the record established at the time of the decision and any other evidence it deems necessary for consideration. In addition, the Grievance Committee has the authority to grant a discretionary appeal in exceptional circumstances.

Level Three - Appeal to the Board Grievance Committee (Third Party Representation):

Appeal of Rights and Discretionary Appeals. If a family member is not satisfied with the disposition of the grievance at Level Two, they may, within five (5) business days of receiving notice of the decision of the Director Team submit a written request to the Grievance Committee Chairperson to appeal the Director Team decision and to request a formal hearing.

1. Within five (5) business days of receiving the written request for appeal, the Grievance Committee Chairperson shall issue a written notice to the parent and the Director Team indicating whether the Director Team determination is "final" in nature or whether the Board, in its discretion or by right of appeal, shall grant a hearing. The notice shall also specify, if a hearing is granted, the time it will occur and guidelines by which it will be conducted.
2. When a hearing is granted, a panel of the Grievance Committee consisting of at least three people shall hear the grievance within ten (10) business days of the date the Chairperson's notice is issued to the family member.
3. The Grievance Committee panel, a third party representative, may affirm, reverse, or modify the decision of the Director Team.



2023-2024

Family & Student Handbook

4. Following the hearing, the family member and the Director Team shall be informed in writing of the panel's decision within five (5) business days after the hearing, whenever feasible.
5. The decision of the Grievance Committee panel is final OR the decision of the Grievance Committee panel may be appealed to the full Board of Directors.

Commented [5]: This step is a bit confusing. What's the point of stating that the decision is "final" if there is technically another appeal that can be done?

Article III: Grievance Committee Structure and Rules

Section 1: Composition of the Grievance Committee

The Grievance Committee shall consist of no fewer than three members of the Board of Directors, appointed by the Chairperson of the Board of Directors and confirmed by a vote of the full Board. One member of the Grievance Committee shall be designated by the Chairperson of the Board of Directors to serve as the Chairperson of the Committee.

Section 2: Family and Employee Liaison

Annually at a meeting of the Board, one member of the Board of Directors shall be appointed by the Chairperson of the Board of Directors and confirmed by a vote of the full Board to serve as Family and Employee Liaison. This individual shall not sit on the Grievance Committee. His or her primary role will be to help family members and employees understand the grievance procedures and to provide process guidance to aggrieved parties. Those who approach other members of the Board of Directors with grievances will be referred to the Family and Employee Liaison.

Section 3: Training

On an annual basis, all members of the Grievance Committee and the Family and Employee Liaison will receive training provided by an attorney or other qualified individual with regard to confidentiality, impartiality, and other topics relevant to effective execution of their duties.

Section 4: Timelines

Failure of a family member or employee to comply with the procedural timelines listed in this policy may result in denial of a grievance request. Extensions in timelines may be granted if the relevant decision-maker determines there is a reasonable need for such extension. Similarly, the timelines for actions to be taken by school personnel or Board members may be extended, with notice to the aggrieved party, when there is a reasonable need for extension or extension is in the best interest of an effective process.



2023-2024

Family & Student Handbook

Section 5: Forms

The Director Team or Board may develop one or more grievance forms to facilitate and document the various steps of the grievance process.



2023-2024

Family & Student Handbook

Appendix II: Acceptable Use Policy for School Technology

We expect students to use all electronic resources, laptops, and other handheld devices brought from home (including phones) for educational purposes only as approved by the teachers while on the school's campus. If you choose to bring a personal device to use at school you may be required to install school approved monitoring software, programs, browsers, or extensions for school use. Access is a privilege, not a right. As a technology user, students are expected to act in a considerate and responsible manner. Misuse of the network resources or internet will result in consequences for the inappropriate behavior, and access may be restricted.

Students (if able) should read the following rules of network etiquette and then electronically sign the corresponding section of the re-enrollment form to show that you understand your responsibilities. Family members should read this section aloud to students who are unable to read it to themselves.

While using the Exploris network resources, technology, and the internet on school properties:

- I will communicate politely. I will treat others with respect. I will not harass or attack others, or use expressions of bigotry, racism, sexism, or other types of hurtful language, pictures, or expressions. I will not send, display, or use profanity, obscenity, sexually explicit, or offensive material.
- I will use my school email account for schoolwork and educational purposes only. I will not use that email address to set up other accounts unless given explicit direction from a teacher to do so.
- I will protect privacy and safety by not disclosing private or personal information about myself and or others on the Internet. I will never falsify my identity.
- I will keep my password private and will not attempt to use another person's password.
- I will use the network/Internet and other school-given electronic resources for school-related, educational activities as assigned by my teachers. This also means that I will not attempt to use the computer to buy or sell any products, for illegal activity, or for political purposes.
- I will not tamper with or change a computer file that isn't mine, copy or download files or programs, or modify the computer's settings without permission from my teachers.
- I will recognize and respect the intellectual property of others by not plagiarizing or using copyrighted materials from the Internet without permission of the author. I will cite the source when appropriate.
- I will respect the integrity of the Exploris network system. I will enter authorized systems only. I will never try to circumvent security measures on either Exploris's Network or computers at any remote site. I will not tamper with or alter the system in such a way that would disrupt the network.



2023-2024

Family & Student Handbook

- I will use equipment responsibly. I will not attempt to damage or vandalize the computer hardware, electronic systems, software, or networks.
- I will not make, or attempt to make, any malicious attempt to harm or destroy data of another user, including the uploading, downloading, or creation of computer viruses.
- I will not turn off or circumvent any school monitoring programs such as Hapara or Gaggle.

Consequences for Unacceptable Use of the School Technology

If I violate any part of this policy, the school administrator will evaluate the severity and level of the violation and determine the appropriate level of consequence warranted. Consequences will be assigned in accordance with our school Code of Conduct outlined in the Family and Student Handbook.



Highlights and Summary of Revision to the Exploris Handbooks for 2023-2024

Staff	Family
Made minor editorial and formatting corrections	Made minor editorial and formatting corrections
Clarified language around parental leave days and updates based on the new NC guidelines	Clarified that acceptance of a seat at Exploris constitutes acceptance of all Exploris policies, with or without any signatures of receipt of handbooks
Clarified language around specific leave policies	Clarified a few health policies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other contagious conditions (like ringworm, etc) and policies for treatment (similar to our lice policy language) • Changed references to “nausea” to “vomiting”
Added that any off-site whole-school PD within a certain mileage 10 miles of the school location is not eligible for mileage reimbursement	Added language that scholars who participate in Exploris based extended care programs must follow the Exploris student code of conduct in order to attend. Failure to follow behavior expectations could mean denial of participation.
Added: If any staff member conducts a threat assessment on a student after hearing self harm or threatening language, or refers the student to counseling for a threat assessment, the family and admin. must be notified about the situation and about the assessment results.	Middle grade tardies change: “Middle 8:15-3:15 Students can be dropped off beginning at 7:55. For students needing supervision prior to



	<p>that window, a Before School Care Program is available. More information and a fee schedule can be found on the school's website. Students who arrive after 8:15 8:10 will be marked tardy and must report to the front office to sign in and are subject to consequences as outlined within the Code of Student Conduct. “</p>
Added directions about steps that should be completed when planning a Field Experience and created a stand alone checklist linked in the handbook	Added instructions that any requests for changes to the Student Directory must reflect custody policies and documentations and align w DSS 5760 (For example, check custody documentation before adding a new name to contact lists for student issues)
Clarified the term “leadership” to be more clear about when it refers to a campus administrator, to the 3 person administrative team, or the 5 person leadership team of the 3 Directors plus 2 Staff Teacher Leaders.	Added that non-verbal threats could include gestures like a “finger gun” directed at others.
Added language around copyright of materials created while employed at Exploris and the use of Creative Commons licensing.	Clarified that conduct off school grounds/outside of the school day that both violates the Exploris Code of Conduct and negatively impacts the school community is subject to disciplinary action under the Code of Conduct
Added language to both staff and family handbook around air quality alert days that are separate from severe temperature alerts	Added some clarifications that the school leadership reserves the right to exercise discretion in recruiting family volunteers and that past adult conduct or records could limit an adult's access



	to the physical school building, school events, and chaperoning field experiences
Added a short section on responsibilities of staff related to building security and student safety that outlines staff expectations to secure doors and windows, protect their door codes, and actively supervise students.	Our Medication guidelines have been revised in our enrollment forms; the handbook needs to be updated to match this. -JTC
Added insurance information and policies (health, dental, disability, etc.) and retirement benefits	Added language that students with serious disciplinary records could be denied or offered alternatives to planned field experiences. IE– suspensions for fighting/aggression could keep you from Outward Bound, suspensions for failure to comply with expectations could keep you from going to a workplace visit, etc. This includes language that the school is not required to issue refunds to families if their student is denied participation in a school field experience or event due to the student's disciplinary issues.
Clarified Paid Time Off policies and procedures for requesting PTO	Clarified the protocol for attendance notifications from “call the school” to email attendance@exploris.org and email The crew teacher
	<p>Added Policies around family school visits and classroom observations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal Law under IDEA and ESSA mandate that parents have the right to schedule an observation as part of their meaningful participation in determining their child's educational placement; These observations can help parents gather key information



	<p>about their child's behavior, classroom dynamics, and the appropriateness of a placement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observations may not interfere with the delivery of instruction or disrupt the learning environment. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Any Exit conferences with the teacher or principal/designee must occur at a prescribed time away from students and after instructional time. ○ Visitors may not take photos, take video, or audio recordings while in the classroom observing. Any notes taken during the visit are the presumed opinion of the observer and are not considered an accurate written record of the classroom environment or events. ○ Upon arrival, visitors must follow established procedures for entering the main building including but not limited to: signing in, presenting a photo ID, and wearing a visitors' badge. The visitor badge must be worn at all times and placed in a visible location. ○ Visitors are to be escorted to the classroom by a staff member prior to the start of class. ○ At the conclusion of the observation a staff member should be called to escort the parent/guardian back to the office. ○ Parents/guardians may not have access to student performance or behavioral records outside of their own child's. In addition, the principal and/or their designee should discuss
--	---



	with the parent/guardian the importance of maintaining confidentiality regarding observations of other students within the classroom
	Updated the prohibited items/weapons section to include ammunition and laser pointers
	Added that “pantsing” and “bra snapping” is a form of sexual harassment and is prohibited
	Dress code update that clothing “should be appropriate for the activity” (allows for everything from camping to visiting a mosque and for weather-related clothing issues)
	Clarified the current expectations for families to volunteer with the school and what that support might look like
	Clarified policies on food allergies and the expectations that families will comply with any requests from the school to provide an allergen-free environment when severe student needs are documented
	Added: Students should minimize the use of perfumes, colognes, and scented lotions to avoid allergens and asthma triggers in sensitive individuals. These items should also not be brought to the school campus and will be temporarily confiscated and returned to an adult if they are found on school grounds
	Clarified that if a scholar chooses to not attend a field



	experience, unless it's a medical issue, an IEP/504 Issue, or a disciplinary issue, it is an unexcused absence and the school is not obligated to provide an alternate curriculum/education for those days. (Ex– opting out of Outward Bound or the DC trip)
	.
	-

Coversheet

Finance

Section:	II. Committee Reports
Item:	B. Finance
Purpose:	Vote
Submitted by:	
Related Material:	Exploris_TJT engagement letter.pdf Bank Account Balances 6-30-23.pdf 03. Board Report - 2023.6 - Exploris.pdf 05. Income Statement - 2023.06 - Exploris v2.pdf 06. Balance Sheet - 2023.06 - Exploris v2.pdf



Certified Public Accountants

June 23, 2023

To the Board of Directors
The Exploris School

We are pleased to confirm our understanding of the services we are to provide for The Exploris School for the year ended June 30, 2023.

Audit Scope and Objectives

We will audit the financial statements of the governmental activities, the business-type activities, the aggregate discretely presented component units, each major fund, and the aggregate remaining fund information, including the disclosures, which collectively comprise the basic financial statements, of The Exploris School as of and for the year ended June 30, 2023. Accounting standards generally accepted in the United States of America (GAAP) provide for certain required supplementary information (RSI), such as management's discussion and analysis (MD&A), to supplement The Exploris School's basic financial statements. Such information, although not a part of the basic financial statements, is required by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board who considers it to be an essential part of financial reporting for placing the basic financial statements in an appropriate operational, economic, or historical context. As part of our engagement, we will apply certain limited procedures to The Exploris School's RSI in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America (GAAS). These limited procedures will consist of inquiries of management regarding the methods of preparing the information and comparing the information for consistency with management's responses to our inquiries, the basic financial statements, and other knowledge we obtained during our audit of the basic financial statements. We will not express an opinion or provide any assurance on the information because the limited procedures do not provide us with sufficient appropriate evidence to express an opinion or provide any assurance. The following RSI is required by GAAP and will be subjected to certain limited procedures, but will not be audited:

1) Management's Discussion and Analysis.

We have also been engaged to report on supplementary information other than RSI that accompanies The Exploris School's financial statements. We will subject the following supplementary information to the auditing procedures applied in our audit of the financial statements and certain additional procedures, including comparing and reconciling such information directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the financial statements or to the financial statements themselves, and other additional procedures in accordance with GAAS, and we will provide an opinion on it in relation to the financial statements as a whole in a report combined with our auditors' report on the financial statements.

1) Schedule of Expenditures of Federal and State Awards.

2) Statements of Revenue, Expenditures, and Changes in Fund Balance – Budget and Actual

The objectives of our audit are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and issue an auditor's report that includes our opinions about whether your financial statements are fairly presented, in all material respects, in conformity with GAAP, and report on the fairness of the supplementary information referred to in the second paragraph when considered in relation to the financial statements as a whole.

Building Partnerships that Deliver...

The Exploris School
June 23, 2023
Page 2

Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not absolute assurance and therefore is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with GAAS and *Government Auditing Standards* will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements, including omissions, can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if there is a substantial likelihood that, individually or in the aggregate, they would influence the judgment of a reasonable user made based on the financial statements. The objectives also include reporting on:

- Internal control over financial reporting and compliance with provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and award agreements, noncompliance with which could have a material effect on the financial statements in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*.
- Internal control over compliance related to major programs and an opinion (or disclaimer of opinion) on compliance with federal statutes, regulations, and the terms and conditions of federal awards that could have a direct and material effect on each major program in accordance with the Single Audit Act Amendments of 1996 and Title 2 U.S. *Code of Federal Regulations* (CFR) Part 200, *Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards* (Uniform Guidance).

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements and Single Audit

We will conduct our audit in accordance with GAAS; the standards for financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards*, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States; the Single Audit Act Amendments of 1996; and the provisions of the Uniform Guidance, and will include tests of accounting records, a determination of major program(s) in accordance with Uniform Guidance, and other procedures we consider necessary to enable us to express such opinions. As part of an audit in accordance with GAAS and *Government Auditing Standards*, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit.

We will evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management. We will also evaluate the overall presentation of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and determine whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation. We will plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement, whether from (1) errors, (2) fraudulent financial reporting, (3) misappropriation of assets, or (4) violations of laws or governmental regulations that are attributable to the government or to acts by management or employees acting on behalf of the government. Because the determination of waste and abuse is subjective, *Government Auditing Standards* do not expect auditors to perform specific procedures to detect waste or abuse in financial audits nor do they expect auditors to provide reasonable assurance of detecting waste or abuse.

Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, combined with the inherent limitations of internal control, and because we will not perform a detailed examination of all transactions, there is an unavoidable risk that some material misstatements or noncompliance may not be detected by us, even though the audit is properly planned and performed in accordance with GAAS and *Government Auditing Standards*. In addition, an audit is not designed to detect immaterial misstatements or violations of laws or governmental regulations that do not have a direct and material effect on the financial statements or on major programs. However, we will inform the appropriate level of management of any material errors, any fraudulent financial reporting, or misappropriation of assets that come to our attention. We will also inform the appropriate level of management of any violations of laws or governmental regulations that come to our attention, unless clearly inconsequential. We will include such matters in the reports required for a Single Audit. Our responsibility as auditors is limited to the period covered by our audit and does not extend to any later periods for which we are not engaged as auditors.

We will also conclude, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the government's ability to continue as a going concern for a reasonable period of time.

Our procedures will include tests of documentary evidence supporting the transactions recorded in the accounts, tests of the physical existence of inventories, and direct confirmation of receivables and certain assets and liabilities by correspondence with selected individuals, funding sources, creditors, and financial institutions. We will also request written representations from your attorneys as part of the engagement.

The Exploris School
June 23, 2023
Page 3

We have identified the following significant risks of material misstatement as part of our audit planning:

- Management override of controls
- Revenue recognition
- Noncompliance with major programs identified as part of the Single Audit

Audit Procedures—Internal Control

We will obtain an understanding of the government and its environment, including internal control relevant to the audit, sufficient to identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to error or fraud, and to design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks and obtain evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinions. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentation, or the override of internal control. Tests of controls may be performed to test the effectiveness of certain controls that we consider relevant to preventing and detecting errors and fraud that are material to the financial statements and to preventing and detecting misstatements resulting from illegal acts and other noncompliance matters that have a direct and material effect on the financial statements. Our tests, if performed, will be less in scope than would be necessary to render an opinion on internal control and, accordingly, no opinion will be expressed in our report on internal control issued pursuant to *Government Auditing Standards*.

As required by the Uniform Guidance, we will perform tests of controls over compliance to evaluate the effectiveness of the design and operation of controls that we consider relevant to preventing or detecting material noncompliance with compliance requirements applicable to each major federal award program. However, our tests will be less in scope than would be necessary to render an opinion on those controls and, accordingly, no opinion will be expressed in our report on internal control issued pursuant to the Uniform Guidance.

An audit is not designed to provide assurance on internal control or to identify significant deficiencies or material weaknesses. Accordingly, we will express no such opinion. However, during the audit, we will communicate to management and those charged with governance internal control related matters that are required to be communicated under AICPA professional standards, *Government Auditing Standards*, and the Uniform Guidance.

Audit Procedures—Compliance

As part of obtaining reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement, we will perform tests of The Exploris School's compliance with provisions of applicable laws, regulations, contracts, and agreements, including grant agreements. However, the objective of those procedures will not be to provide an opinion on overall compliance, and we will not express such an opinion in our report on compliance issued pursuant to *Government Auditing Standards*.

Other Services

We will also assist in preparing the financial statements, schedule of expenditures of federal and state awards, and related notes of The Exploris School in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America and the Uniform Guidance based on information provided by you. These nonaudit services do not constitute an audit under *Government Auditing Standards* and such services will not be conducted in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*. We will perform the services in accordance with applicable professional standards. The other services are limited to the financial statements, schedule of expenditures of federal awards, and related notes services previously defined. We, in our sole professional judgment, reserve the right to refuse to perform any procedure or take any action that could be construed as assuming management responsibilities.

We will also prepare the Organization's federal information return for the year ended June 30, 2023 based on information provided by you. We will perform the services in accordance with applicable professional standards, including the Statements on Standards for Tax Services issued by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants. We, in our sole professional judgment, reserve the right to refuse to perform any procedure or take any action that could be construed as assuming management responsibilities. We will advise management with regard to tax positions taken in the preparation of the tax return, but management must make all decisions with regard to those matters.

The Exploris School
June 23, 2023
Page 4

You agree to assume all management responsibilities for the financial statements, schedule of expenditures of federal and state awards, and related notes, and any other nonaudit services we provide. You will be required to acknowledge in the management representation letter our assistance with preparation of the financial statements, the schedule of expenditures of federal awards, and related notes and that you have reviewed and approved the financial statements, the schedule of expenditures of federal awards, and related notes prior to their issuance and have accepted responsibility for them. Further, you agree to oversee the nonaudit services by designating an individual, preferably from senior management, with suitable skill, knowledge, or experience; evaluate the adequacy and results of those services; and accept responsibility for them.

Responsibilities of Management for the Financial Statements and Single Audit

Our audit will be conducted on the basis that you acknowledge and understand your responsibility for (1) designing, implementing, establishing, and maintaining effective internal controls relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, including internal controls over federal awards, and for evaluating and monitoring ongoing activities to help ensure that appropriate goals and objectives are met; (2) following laws and regulations; (3) ensuring that there is reasonable assurance that government programs are administered in compliance with compliance requirements; and (4) ensuring that management and financial information is reliable and properly reported. Management is also responsible for implementing systems designed to achieve compliance with applicable laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements. You are also responsible for the selection and application of accounting principles; for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements, schedule of expenditures of federal awards, and all accompanying information in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America; and for compliance with applicable laws and regulations (including federal statutes), rules, and the provisions of contracts and grant agreements (including award agreements). Your responsibilities also include identifying significant contractor relationships in which the contractor has responsibility for program compliance and for the accuracy and completeness of that information.

You are also responsible for making drafts of financial statements, schedule of expenditures of federal awards, all financial records, and related information available to us and for the accuracy and completeness of that information (including information from outside of the general and subsidiary ledgers). You are also responsible for providing us with (1) access to all information of which you are aware that is relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements, such as records, documentation, identification of all related parties and all related-party relationships and transactions, and other matters; (2) access to personnel, accounts, books, records, supporting documentation, and other information as needed to perform an audit under the Uniform Guidance; (3) additional information that we may request for the purpose of the audit; and (4) unrestricted access to persons within the government from whom we determine it necessary to obtain audit evidence. At the conclusion of our audit, we will require certain written representations from you about the financial statements; schedule of expenditures of federal awards; federal award programs; compliance with laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements; and related matters.

Your responsibilities include adjusting the financial statements to correct material misstatements and confirming to us in the management representation letter that the effects of any uncorrected misstatements aggregated by us during the current engagement and pertaining to the latest period presented are immaterial, both individually and in the aggregate, to the financial statements of each opinion unit taken as a whole.

You are responsible for the design and implementation of programs and controls to prevent and detect fraud, and for informing us about all known or suspected fraud affecting the government involving (1) management, (2) employees who have significant roles in internal control, and (3) others where the fraud could have a material effect on the financial statements. Your responsibilities include informing us of your knowledge of any allegations of fraud or suspected fraud affecting the government received in communications from employees, former employees, grantors, regulators, or others. In addition, you are responsible for identifying and ensuring that the government complies with applicable laws, regulations, contracts, agreements, and grants. You are also responsible for taking timely and appropriate steps to remedy fraud and noncompliance with provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements that we report. Additionally, as required by the Uniform Guidance, it is management's responsibility to evaluate and monitor noncompliance with federal statutes, regulations, and the terms and conditions of federal awards; take prompt action when instances of noncompliance are identified including noncompliance identified in audit findings; promptly follow up and take corrective action on reported audit findings; and prepare a summary schedule of prior audit findings and a separate corrective action plan. The summary schedule of prior audit findings should be available for our review on June 30, 2023.

The Exploris School
June 23, 2023
Page 5

You are responsible for identifying all federal awards received and understanding and complying with the compliance requirements and for the preparation of the schedule of expenditures of federal awards (including notes and noncash assistance received, and COVID-19-related concepts, such as lost revenues, if applicable) in conformity with the Uniform Guidance. You agree to include our report on the schedule of expenditures of federal awards in any document that contains, and indicates that we have reported on, the schedule of expenditures of federal awards. You also agree to [include the audited financial statements with any presentation of the schedule of expenditures of federal awards that includes our report thereon OR make the audited financial statements readily available to intended users of the schedule of expenditures of federal awards no later than the date the schedule of expenditures of federal awards is issued with our report thereon]. Your responsibilities include acknowledging to us in the written representation letter that (1) you are responsible for presentation of the schedule of expenditures of federal awards in accordance with the Uniform Guidance; (2) you believe the schedule of expenditures of federal awards, including its form and content, is stated fairly in accordance with the Uniform Guidance; (3) the methods of measurement or presentation have not changed from those used in the prior period (or, if they have changed, the reasons for such changes); and (4) you have disclosed to us any significant assumptions or interpretations underlying the measurement or presentation of the schedule of expenditures of federal awards.

You are also responsible for the preparation of the other supplementary information, which we have been engaged to report on, in conformity with U.S. generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP). You agree to include our report on the supplementary information in any document that contains, and indicates that we have reported on, the supplementary information. You also agree to [include the audited financial statements with any presentation of the supplementary information that includes our report thereon OR make the audited financial statements readily available to users of the supplementary information no later than the date the supplementary information is issued with our report thereon]. Your responsibilities include acknowledging to us in the written representation letter that (1) you are responsible for presentation of the supplementary information in accordance with GAAP; (2) you believe the supplementary information, including its form and content, is fairly presented in accordance with GAAP; (3) the methods of measurement or presentation have not changed from those used in the prior period (or, if they have changed, the reasons for such changes); and (4) you have disclosed to us any significant assumptions or interpretations underlying the measurement or presentation of the supplementary information.

Management is responsible for establishing and maintaining a process for tracking the status of audit findings and recommendations. Management is also responsible for identifying and providing report copies of previous financial audits, attestation engagements, performance audits, or other studies related to the objectives discussed in the Audit Scope and Objectives section of this letter. This responsibility includes relaying to us corrective actions taken to address significant findings and recommendations resulting from those audits, attestation engagements, performance audits, or studies. You are also responsible for providing management's views on our current findings, conclusions, and recommendations, as well as your planned corrective actions for the report, and for the timing and format for providing that information.

Engagement Administration, Fees, and Other

We understand that your employees will prepare all cash, accounts receivable, or other confirmations we request and will locate any documents selected by us for testing.

At the conclusion of the engagement, we will complete the appropriate sections of the Data Collection Form that summarizes our audit findings. It is management's responsibility to electronically submit the reporting package (including financial statements, schedule of expenditures of federal awards, summary schedule of prior audit findings, auditor's reports, and corrective action plan) along with the Data Collection Form to the federal audit clearinghouse. We will coordinate with you the electronic submission and certification. The Data Collection Form and the reporting package must be submitted within the earlier of 30 calendar days after receipt of the auditor's reports or nine months after the end of the audit period.

We will provide copies of our reports to The Exploris School; however, management is responsible for distribution of the reports and the financial statements. Unless restricted by law or regulation, or containing privileged and confidential information, copies of our reports are to be made available for public inspection.

The Exploris School
June 23, 2023
Page 6

The audit documentation for this engagement is the property of Thomas Judy & Tucker, P.A. and constitutes confidential information. However, subject to applicable laws and regulations, audit documentation and appropriate individuals will be made available upon request and in a timely manner to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction or its designee, a federal agency providing direct or indirect funding, or the U.S. Government Accountability Office for purposes of a quality review of the audit, to resolve audit findings, or to carry out oversight responsibilities. We will notify you of any such request. If requested, access to such audit documentation will be provided under the supervision of Thomas Judy & Tucker, P.A. personnel. Furthermore, upon request, we may provide copies of selected audit documentation to the aforementioned parties. These parties may intend, or decide, to distribute the copies or information contained therein to others, including other governmental agencies.

The audit documentation for this engagement will be retained for a minimum of five years after the report release date or for any additional period requested by the LGC or the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. If we are aware that a federal awarding agency, pass-through entity, or auditee is contesting an audit finding, we will contact the party(ies) contesting the audit finding for guidance prior to destroying the audit documentation.

Amanda P. Habich, CPA, is the engagement partner and is responsible for supervising the engagement and signing the reports or authorizing another individual to sign them. We expect to begin our audit on approximately August 2023 and to issue our reports no later than October 31, 2023.

Our estimated fee for the audit and financial statement preparation will be \$20,000 and for the tax return will be \$3,500. Our invoices for these fees will be rendered each month as work progresses and are payable on presentation. In accordance with our firm policies, work may be suspended if your account becomes 60 days or more overdue and may not be resumed until your account is paid in full. If we elect to terminate our services for nonpayment, our engagement will be deemed to have been completed upon written notification of termination, even if we have not completed our report. You will be obligated to compensate us for all time expended and to reimburse us for all out-of-pocket costs through the date of termination. The above fee is based on anticipated cooperation from your personnel and the assumption that unexpected circumstances will not be encountered during the engagement. If significant additional time is necessary, we will keep you informed of any problems we encounter and our fees will be adjusted accordingly.

No indebtedness of any kind, incurred or created by The Exploris School shall constitute an indebtedness of the State or its political subdivisions and no indebtedness of The Exploris School shall involve or be secured by the faith, credit or taxing power of the State or its political subdivisions.

Reporting

We will issue written reports upon completion of our Single Audit. Our reports will be addressed to the board of directors of The Exploris School. Circumstances may arise in which our report may differ from its expected form and content based on the results of our audit. Depending on the nature of these circumstances, it may be necessary for us to modify our opinions, add a separate section, or add an emphasis-of-matter or other-matter paragraph to our auditor's report, or if necessary, withdraw from this engagement. If our opinions are other than unmodified, we will discuss the reasons with you in advance. If, for any reason, we are unable to complete the audit or are unable to form or have not formed opinions, we may decline to express opinions or issue reports, or we may withdraw from this engagement.

The *Government Auditing Standards* report on internal control over financial reporting and on compliance and other matters will state that (1) the purpose of the report is solely to describe the scope of testing of internal control and compliance and the results of that testing, and not to provide an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control or on compliance, and (2) the report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* in considering the entity's internal control and compliance. The Uniform Guidance report on internal control over compliance will state that the purpose of the report on internal control over compliance is solely to describe the scope of testing of internal control over compliance and the results of that testing based on the requirements of the Uniform Guidance. Both reports will state that the report is not suitable for any other purpose.

The Exploris School
June 23, 2023
Page 7

We appreciate the opportunity to be of service to The Exploris School and believe this letter accurately summarizes the significant terms of our engagement. If you have any questions, please let us know. If you agree with the terms of our engagement as described in this letter, please sign the attached copy and return it to us.

Very truly yours,
Thomas Judy & Tucker, P.A.

Amanda P. Habich, CPA

Amanda P. Habich

RESPONSE:

This letter correctly sets forth the understanding of The Exploris School.

Management signature: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____

Governance signature: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____

6/30/2023 Account Balances	
Bank Account	Balance
The Exploris School Checking	\$1,049,928.87
The Exploris School Reserves	\$1,217,967.13
The Exploris School Foundation-Annual Fund	\$70,714.02
The Exploris School Foundation-Capital Campaign	\$542,104.20

Budget Analysis Report

Account	Budget	Period Activity	YTD Activity	Remaining Budget	% Used	EOY Projection
Revenues						
STATE REVENUE	3,109,825.39	0.00	3,153,021.74	(43,196.35)	101.39	3,153,021.74
LOCAL REVENUE	1,426,626.82	125,711.57	1,548,792.72	(122,165.90)	108.56	1,617,723.77
NCACCESS GRANT REVENUE	200,000.00	34,942.35	86,141.05	113,858.95	43.07	86,141.05
FEDERAL REVENUE	276,126.26	19,100.06	275,457.87	668.39	99.76	275,457.87
FOUNDATION REVENUE	82,200.00	0.00	0.00	82,200.00	0.00	112,115.55
B&A CARE REVENUE	90,000.00	43,775.09	99,455.62	(9,455.62)	110.51	99,455.62
REVENUE - ACTIVITIES	0.00	8,514.88	174,562.16	(174,562.16)		174,562.16
Revenues	5,184,778.47	232,043.95	5,337,431.16	(152,652.69)	102.94	5,518,477.76
Expenses						
Account	Budget	Period Activity	YTD Activity	Remaining Budget	% Used	EOY Projection
SALARIES AND BONUSES	3,139,405.76	256,415.21	3,039,455.19	99,950.57	96.82	3,039,455.19
BENEFITS	659,992.88	46,787.47	600,299.09	59,693.79	90.96	600,322.91
BOOKS AND SUPPLIES	78,784.13	12,819.93	83,610.79	(4,826.66)	106.13	91,340.94
TECHNOLOGY	94,587.00	4,795.18	83,590.94	10,996.06	88.37	87,350.93
NON-CAP EQUIPMENT & LEASES	18,000.00	981.00	37,236.52	(19,236.52)	206.87	37,302.18
CONTRACTED STUDENT SERVICES	97,000.00	7,576.53	91,043.53	5,956.47	93.86	121,213.80
FIELD TRIPS/ACTIVITIES	15,200.00	4,770.28	185,629.58	(170,429.58)	1221.25	186,455.58
STAFF DEVELOPMENT	8,000.00	1,473.62	6,688.22	1,311.78	83.60	6,688.22
ADMIN SERVICES	209,550.00	23,553.28	180,973.52	28,576.48	86.36	197,350.26
INSURANCES	40,450.00	750.00	24,091.70	16,358.30	59.56	24,091.70
FACILITIES	468,144.00	17,365.77	444,741.47	23,402.53	95.00	446,014.47
B&A CARE	55,901.50	5,996.62	55,439.23	462.27	99.17	55,439.23
CLUBS	5,331.82	543.38	2,012.74	3,319.08	37.75	2,012.74
CORONAVIRUS RELIEF FUND EXPENSES	5,973.00	0.00	7,473.00	(1,500.00)	125.11	7,473.00
VARIOUS GRANTS - NCACCESS	200,000.00	0.00	86,141.05	113,858.95	43.07	86,141.05
Expenses	5,096,320.09	383,828.27	4,928,426.57	167,893.52	96.71	4,988,652.20
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	88,458.38	(151,784.32)	409,004.59			529,825.56
			estimated fund balance carryovers to FY24			41,911.69
			end of year balance projection			487,913.87

07/19/2023
06:25 AM

Page 1 of 1

THE EXPLORIS SCHOOL**Income Statement****Fiscal Year: 2023 Month: June****Include Fund(s): 1, 2, 3, 5**

Fund	Beg. Balance	MTD Actual	YTD Actual
Fund 1			
Revenue Total:	3,153,021.74	0.00	3,153,021.74
Expense Total:	3,338,882.44	(185,860.70)	3,153,021.74
Change in Fund 1 Balance:	(185,860.70)	185,860.70	0.00
Fund 2			
Revenue Total:	1,589,128.43	134,226.45	1,723,354.88
Expense Total:	825,717.22	530,597.11	1,356,314.33
Change in Fund 2 Balance:	763,411.21	(396,370.66)	367,040.55
Fund 3			
Revenue Total:	307,556.51	54,042.41	361,598.92
Expense Total:	328,792.60	32,806.32	361,598.92
Change in Fund 3 Balance:	(21,236.09)	21,236.09	0.00
Fund 5			
Revenue Total:	55,680.53	43,775.09	99,455.62
Expense Total:	51,206.04	6,285.54	57,491.58
Change in Fund 5 Balance:	4,474.49	37,489.55	41,964.04

THE EXPLORIS SCHOOL

Balance Sheet

Fiscal Year: 2023 | Fiscal Month: June
Include Funds: All

Assets

2.1010.000.000.000.000.00	Cash OP FCIT 6528	570,354.30
2.1011.000.000.000.000.00	Cash - Reserve	1,217,967.13
2.1610.000.000.000.000.00	Prepaid Expenses	11,551.58
2.1611.000.000.000.000.00	Security Deposit	15,658.00
5.1010.000.000.000.000.00	Cash OP FCIT 6528	425,955.67

TOTAL Assets: **2,241,486.68**

Liabilities

2.2282.000.000.000.000.00	EEs' Flex Spending Deductions	(970.90)
---------------------------	-------------------------------	----------

TOTAL Liabilities: **(970.90)**

Reserves and Equity

2.2960.000.000.000.000.00	Fund Equity	1,449,461.36
5.2960.000.000.000.000.00	Fund Equity	383,991.63

TOTAL Reserves and Equity: **1,833,452.99**

NET GAIN (LOSS): **409,004.59**

TOTAL LIABILITIES / RESERVES / INCOME: **2,241,486.68**

Coversheet

Facilities

Section:	II. Committee Reports
Item:	E. Facilities
Purpose:	Vote
Submitted by:	
Related Material:	Service Agreement 0623 (1).pdf

GENERAL SERVICE AGREEMENT

THIS GENERAL SERVICE AGREEMENT (the "Agreement") dated this _____ day of July, 2023

BETWEEN:

Exploris Elementary School of 15 S Swain St, Raleigh, NC 27601, USA,
Exploris Elementary School of 17 S Swain St, Raleigh, NC 27601, USA, and
Exploris Middle School of 401 Hillsborough St, Raleigh, NC 27603, USA
(individually and collectively the "Client")

- AND -

Family Cleaning Team LLC of 101 Atkinson Farm Ci, Ganer, NC 27529
(the "Contractor").

BACKGROUND:

- A. The Client is of the opinion that the Contractor has the necessary qualifications, experience and abilities to provide services to the Client.
- B. The Contractor is agreeable to providing such services to the Client on the terms and conditions set out in this Agreement.

IN CONSIDERATION OF the matters described above and of the mutual benefits and obligations set forth in this Agreement, the receipt and sufficiency of which consideration is hereby acknowledged, the Client and the Contractor (individually the "Party" and collectively the "Parties" to this Agreement) agree as follows:

Services Provided

1. The Client hereby agrees to engage the Contractor to provide the Client with services (the "Services") consisting of:
 - Stripping of Vinyl floors, Carpet Cleaning, Ceramic Tile and Grout Cleaning, and Rubber Floor Cleaning.

2. The Services will also include any other tasks which the Parties may agree on. The Contractor hereby agrees to provide such Services to the Client.

Term of Agreement

3. The term of this Agreement (the "Term") will begin on the date of this Agreement and will remain in full force and effect until the completion of the Services, subject to earlier termination as provided in this Agreement. The Term of this Agreement may be extended by mutual written agreement of the Parties.
4. In the event that either Party wishes to terminate this Agreement prior to completion of the Services, that Party will be required to provide at least 10 days' notice to the other Party.

Performance

5. The Parties agree to do everything necessary to ensure that the terms of this Agreement take effect.

Currency

6. Except as otherwise provided in this Agreement, all monetary amounts referred to in this Agreement are in US Dollars.

Compensation

7. For the services rendered by the Contractor as required by this Agreement, the Client will provide compensation (the "Compensation") to the Contractor for the flat fee of \$7,021.00.
8. The Compensation will be payable upon completion of the Services.
9. The Compensation as stated in this Agreement does not include sales tax, or other applicable duties as may be required by law. Any sales tax and duties required by law will be charged to the Client in addition to the Compensation.

Reimbursement of Expenses

10. The Contractor will not be reimbursed for expenses incurred by the Contractor in connection with providing the Services of this Agreement.

Additional Resources

11. The Client agrees to provide, for the use of the Contractor in providing the Services, the following resources:

- Furniture moving and replacing to original spot .

Confidentiality

12. Confidential information (the "Confidential Information") refers to any data or information relating to the business of the Client which would reasonably be considered to be proprietary to the Client including, but not limited to, accounting records, business processes, and client records and that is not generally known in the industry of the Client and where the release of that Confidential Information could reasonably be expected to cause harm to the Client.
13. The Contractor agrees that it will not disclose, divulge, reveal, report or use, for any purpose, any Confidential Information which the Contractor has obtained, except as authorized by the Client. This obligation will survive the expiration or termination of this Agreement and will continue indefinitely.
14. All written and oral information and materials disclosed or provided by the Client to the Contractor under this Agreement is Confidential Information regardless of whether it was provided before or after the date of this Agreement or how it was provided to the Contractor.

Return of Property

15. Upon the expiry or termination of this Agreement, the Contractor will return to the Client any property, documentation, records, or Confidential Information which is the property of the Client.

Capacity/Independent Contractor

16. In providing the Services under this Agreement it is expressly agreed that the Contractor is acting as an independent contractor and not as an employee. The Contractor and the Client acknowledge that this Agreement does not create a partnership or joint venture between them, and is exclusively a contract for service.

Notice

17. All notices, requests, demands or other communications required or permitted by the terms of this Agreement will be given in writing and delivered to the Parties of this Agreement as follows:

- a. Exploris Elementary School
15 S Swain St, Raleigh, NC 27601, USA
- b. Exploris Elementary School
17 S Swain St, Raleigh, NC 27601, USA
- c. Exploris Middle School
401 Hillsborough St, Raleigh, NC 27603, USA
- d. Family Cleaning Team LLC
101 Atkinson Farm Ci, Ganer, NC 27529

or to such other address as any Party may from time to time notify the other.

Indemnification

18. Except to the extent paid in settlement from any applicable insurance policies, and to the extent permitted by applicable law, each Party agrees to indemnify and hold harmless the other Party, and its respective affiliates, officers, agents, employees, and permitted successors and assigns against any and all claims, losses, damages, liabilities, penalties, punitive damages, expenses, reasonable legal fees and costs of any kind or amount whatsoever, which result from or arise out of any act or omission of the indemnifying party, its respective affiliates, officers, agents, employees, and permitted successors and assigns that occurs in connection with this Agreement. This indemnification will survive the termination of this Agreement.

Insurance

19. The Contractor will be required to maintain general liability insurance including coverage for bodily injury and property damage at a level that would be considered reasonable in the industry of the Contractor based on the risk associated with the characteristics of this Agreement and only to the extent permitted by law. All insurance policies will remain materially unchanged for the duration of this Agreement.

Legal Expenses

20. In the event that legal action is brought to enforce or interpret any term of this Agreement, the prevailing Party will be entitled to recover, in addition to any other damages or award, all reasonable legal costs and fees associated with the action.

Modification of Agreement

21. Any amendment or modification of this Agreement or additional obligation assumed by either Party in connection with this Agreement will only be binding if evidenced in writing signed by each Party or an authorized representative of each Party.

Time of the Essence

22. Time is of the essence in this Agreement. No extension or variation of this Agreement will operate as a waiver of this provision.

Assignment

23. The Contractor will not voluntarily, or by operation of law, assign or otherwise transfer its obligations under this Agreement without the prior written consent of the Client.

Entire Agreement

24. It is agreed that there is no representation, warranty, collateral agreement or condition affecting this Agreement except as expressly provided in this Agreement.

Enurement

25. This Agreement will enure to the benefit of and be binding on the Parties and their respective heirs, executors, administrators, successors and permitted assigns.

Titles/Headings

26. Headings are inserted for the convenience of the Parties only and are not to be considered when interpreting this Agreement.

Gender

27. Words in the singular mean and include the plural and vice versa. Words in the masculine mean and include the feminine and vice versa.

Governing Law

28. It is the intention of the Parties to this Agreement that this Agreement and the performance under this Agreement, and all suits and special proceedings under this Agreement, be construed in accordance with and governed, to the exclusion of the law of any other forum, by the laws of North Carolina, without regard to the jurisdiction in which any action or special proceeding may be instituted.

Severability

29. In the event that any of the provisions of this Agreement are held to be invalid or unenforceable in whole or in part, all other provisions will nevertheless continue to be valid and enforceable with the invalid or unenforceable parts severed from the remainder of this Agreement.

Waiver

30. The waiver by either Party of a breach, default, delay or omission of any of the provisions of this Agreement by the other Party will not be construed as a waiver of any subsequent breach of the same or other provisions.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the Parties have duly affixed their signatures under hand and seal on this _____ day of July, 2023.

Exploris Elementary School

Per: _____ (Seal)

Exploris Elementary School

Per: _____ (Seal)

Exploris Middle School

Per: _____ (Seal)

Family Cleaning Team LLC

Per: _____ (Seal)

Coversheet

Directors Report

Section:	III. Meeting Items
Item:	A. Directors Report
Purpose:	Discuss
Submitted by:	
Related Material:	July 2023 Exploris Leadership Team Board Report.pdf



The Exploris School

Directors Report

To: Board Members
From: Ethan, Josh, & Deb
Re: Monthly Board Report

Date: July 25, 2023

The following information is provided to the Board of Directors:

Enrollment

Grade Level	Active Enrollment	Class Sizes	Withdrawals Since 5/27/23	2023/2024 Applications	Open Seats	Acceptances for 23-24 SY	# Remaining on the Waitlist
Kindergarten			0	223	34	34	118
1 st Grade			0	105	7	7	91
2 nd Grade			0	122	8	8	109
3 rd Grade			0	93	3	3	83
4 th Grade			0	103	1	1	100
5 th Grade			0	94	4	4	81
6 th Grade			0	197	43	43	80
7 th Grade			0	109	8	6	85
8 th Grade			0	67	6	6	46
Total			0	1113	112	110	751

Student Support Team Report

Month	In School Suspension # students / # days	Out of School Suspension # students / # days	Minor Behavior Referrals
August	x/x	x/x	x/x
September	x/x	x/x	x/x
October	x/x	x/x	x/x
November	x/x	x/x	x/x
Total	x/x	x/x	x/x

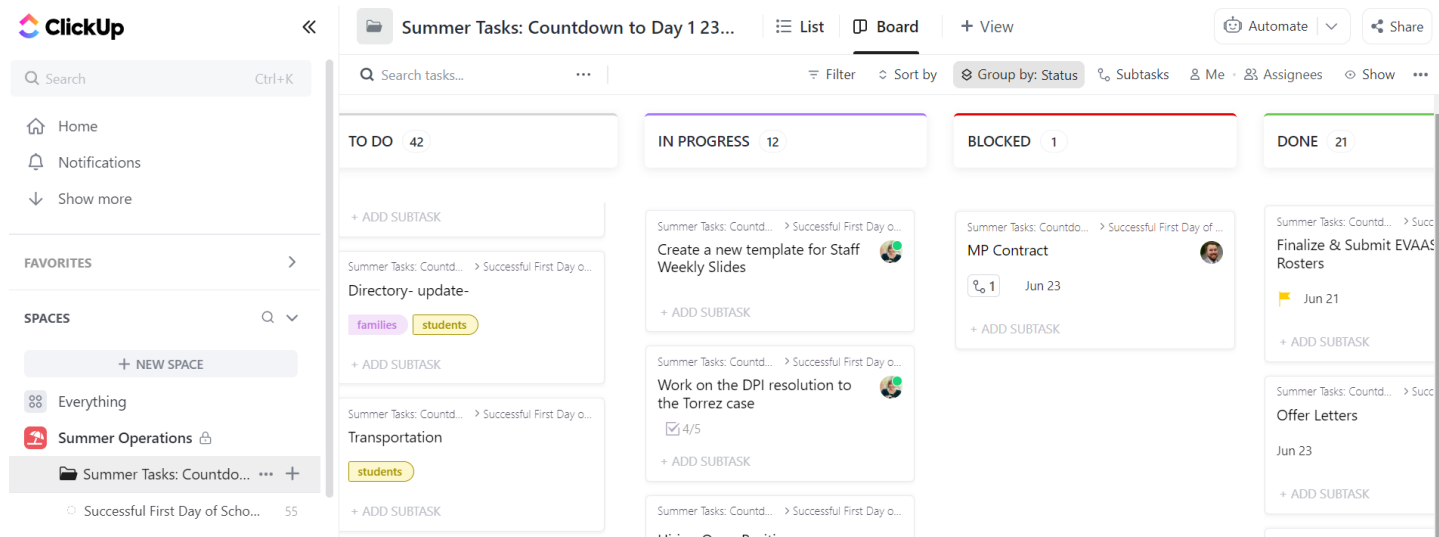
Notes on Student Support and Behaviors: None recorded yet since school is not in session.

Updates on Goals/Issues for Discussion

Summer Work: Summer work falls into two main categories: **Planning and Organization** with an eye towards what needs to be done to have a successful launch to the school year, and **summer academic programming** to continue to support scholars even when school is out.

1. **Planning:** When the scholars and 10-month staff go home, the administrative, student support, and operations team rolls up our collective sleeves for some of the busiest and most crucial work of the school year. Using a collaborative organizational tool (this year we are using "ClickUp"), we can organize all our

tasks, create checklists and subtasks, assign work to specific people, and track progress in real time. We can ask for help on a task or indicate places where the work might be blocked. We meet frequently in person and also work asynchronously, using the tool to stay in touch with work completion and needs. Here's a screenshot of what this looks like:



Some of the key items that we are working on include:

- Complete review and revision of the Staff Handbook, the Family & Student Handbook, and the Crisis Response Handbook
- Review and revisions to the master schedule (daily internal scheduling)
- Completion of the hiring process
- Facilities items such as deep cleaning floor care, and repairs
- Setting goals for the new year and crafting professional development plans to help meet those goals, including planning the important “Work Week” of the first days when staff are back in the building but before our scholars arrive and revamping our entire PD process for the year
- Planning the process for review and revision of the School Improvement Plan
- Planning new staff support for training and retention, such as the staff orientation/onboarding process, mentoring beginning teachers, and providing support for people who are new to Exploris but not necessarily new to teaching.
- Calendars of all school and community events such as testing windows, Explorations/Electives dates, family nights, stand up and SST meetings, special events such as dances, etc.

2. Summer Academic Programming

- Read to Achieve: this is a multi-week summer program where scholars who were identified as needing additional reading support are invited to attend a summer program. It is staffed by Exploris teachers and is a light and fun experience while still getting some personal and intensive reading interventions.
- 6th Grade Readiness Camp: We offer 3 half-day orientation programs for all rising 6th graders July 10th- July 28th. This is also staffed by Exploris teachers and offers scholars a chance to meet one another, to preview activities and Exploris approaches such as a short project-based learning activity, and a chance to start learning some of the procedures such as the “Walking the City” routine. Families are also invited to stay for an informal Q & A with the director. It also provides families with an early opportunity to get familiar with our carpool line procedures! The goal is to decrease the anxiety that can come with starting middle school, for both kids and families!
- Kindergarten Readiness Aug. 1st- 4th: a chance for our youngest new members to get to know their teachers and become comfortable with school routines

Human Resource Update

Staff Resignations Presented to the Board

Name	Position	Notes

Internal Staffing Changes Presented to the Board

Name	Position	Notes
Sarah Esser	Interventions Teaching Partner	moving from EC teaching partner
Jessica Harrison	EC Teacher	transitioning from part time EC Coordinator to full time EC teacher at ES

New Hires for Approval

Name	Position	Notes
Austin Cole	3rd grade Crew Teacher	
Taccata James	4th grade Crew Teacher	

Current Vacancies

4th Crew teacher forward	This position has been offered twice and the final hiring process did not result in moving forward with the candidates. We can offer more details in closed session. We have quality candidates and interviews scheduled and expect to fill the position shortly.
--------------------------	---

Fiscal Operations Update

1. Budget Amendments Requested
2. Unpaid Invoices (Time frame for payment)
3. Identified Potential Short/Long Term Issues

Important Dates (Board Attendance Requested)

- Monday, Aug. 14th 4:00- 6:00 pm Meet-The-Teacher drop in night for families and scholars- Board members are also invited to stop by both campuses!
- Join us for the PTO sponsored Popsicles in the Park event! This is a drop in on Sunday, Aug. 20th between 4:30 pm-6:30 pm (Rain date is Sunday, Aug. 27th)

Coversheet

Board Business

Section:	III. Meeting Items
Item:	B. Board Business
Purpose:	Discuss
Submitted by:	
Related Material:	_DRAFT 2023-2024 The Exploris School Board Meeting Schedule (1).pdf



The Exploris™ School
Empowering Learners to Change the World



2023-2024 The Exploris School Board Meeting Schedule

-Meetings are on the 4th Tuesday of each month at 4:30 pm

-This calendar does not include committee work sessions

-The November meeting will likely be committees only unless there is pressing Board business

Month	Date	Notes
July	7/27/23	New Board terms begin
BOARD RETREAT	TBD	Onboarding and Orientation for all members
August	Aug. 24th	
September	Sept. 28th	
October	Oct. 26th	
November	No meeting	Thanksgiving week (Traditionally only committees meet this month; a full Board mtg can be called if needed.)
December	Dec. 14th	Moved one week early to account for Exploris's closure for winter break
January	Jan. 25th	
February	Feb. 22nd	
March	Mar. 21st	Moved one week earlier to accommodate spring break
April	April 25th	
May	May 23th	
June	June 20th	(note: this is the 3rd Thursday in June in order to have a meeting closer to the actual end of school)

