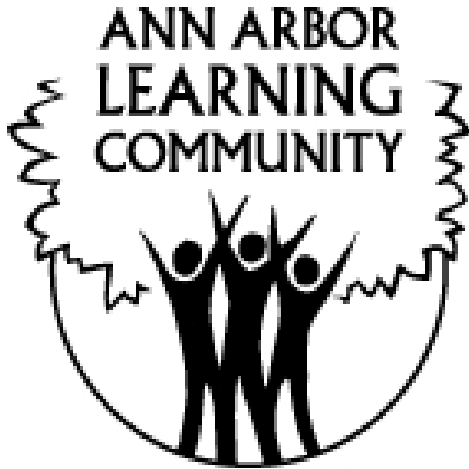


Ann Arbor Learning Community

***Family
Handbook
2010/2011***



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Mission Statement:

The mission of Ann Arbor Learning Community is to nurture independent learners as they acquire the tools they need to shape an environmentally and socially responsible future. Furthermore, in a supportive, student-centered community that appreciates uniqueness, AALC helps students develop a strong sense of self and lifetime love of learning. The school fosters the development of essential life skills and core academic knowledge through small, multi-aged classrooms that honor the learning and creative strength of each student.

About the School:

Ann Arbor Learning Community is a public charter academy authorized by Eastern Michigan University in the fall of 1998. The school currently serves kindergarten through eighth grade with an enrollment of more than 300 students.

Educational Philosophy:

Ann Arbor Learning Community is committed to the rigorous development of student intellect, curiosity and cooperation with a focus on helping students value themselves, their peers and their community. A safe and nurturing environment supports the social and emotional development of children, which is fundamental for effective student learning. Our learning community – made up of students, teachers, staff and families working together – affirms and supports a variety of learning styles and believes that students require multiple opportunities to demonstrate their mastery of concepts. Student's understanding of how they learn empowers them. In our pursuit we promote participatory learning that is experiential, student-centered, developmentally based and individualized to student's particular learning styles and strengths.

Ann Arbor Learning Community is unique in many ways. What sets AALC apart from other schools is the adherence to the four agreements: (1) Mutual Respect, (2) Appreciations/No Put Downs, (3) Attentive Listening, (4) Right to Participate/Right to Pass. Keeping the 4 agreements at the forefront of all we do, the following principles shall serve as touchstones while we work toward achieving our goals: Strong Community, Effective Communication, Commitment to Continuous Quality

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Improvement, and a Culture of Tolerance and an Appreciation of Diversity.

Innovative Educational Plan:

The Ann Arbor Learning Community will utilize thematic, experiential education to reach its goals of a strong curriculum while enhancing the development of life skills. The school will operate by the following concepts:

1. Challenging, integrated student-centered curriculum which emphasizes strong foundations and basic skills: reading, writing, mathematics, science, technology, speaking and listening
2. Constant balance between basics and creativity:
 - Encouragement of self-discipline
 - Encouragement of exploration, inquiry and inventiveness
3. Cooperative project work across age groups:
 - Organic garden created and cared for by students
 - Environmental/outdoor educational program --- starting with short hikes (early elementary grades), expanding to extended field trips (later elementary grades) and week-long excursions (middle school grades)
 - Strong performing and visual arts program
 - Student educational progress is assessed through parent-teacher conferences, portfolios, individual learning plans and the State of Michigan mandated MEAP test.
The school also uses the IOWA test given in the spring to first through eighth grade students to determine an individual student's rate of gain for the year. Staff may also use the Brigance Test of Basic Skills to determine appropriate instructional levels
4. Students involved as responsible participants
5. Small classes for optimal learning experiences
6. Accommodation of a range of learning styles and levels

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Learning Obligations:

Students and parents are active participants in the process of developing each student's individual educational goals. Along with this freedom comes a commitment from the student to acknowledge his or her responsibility to reach their highest educational potential.

The Faculty:

The school's philosophy demands exceptional teachers. Our teachers are gifted professionals who respect children as individuals and value education as a lifelong process. Instead of teacher-as-technician, we advocate teacher-as-artist. The teachers will provide an environment where learning is easily connected to the students' daily lives. All of our teachers carry the necessary educational certification. Many have advanced degrees. They continue in professional development to improve their proficiency.

Sense of Community:

Students and staff are responsible for creating a caring, safe and supportive learning community. The school has adopted four Community Agreements to help us reach that goal. They include:

1. Mutual Respect
2. Attentive Listening
3. Appreciation/ No Put Downs
4. Right to Participate/ Right to Pass

These agreements are in place across the school. Teachers work with their students to help them learn specific skills related to our agreements. Learning to live these agreements will make our community a better place to work and learn.

This model of education can only reach its ultimate goals through a strong commitment from our parent community. Parents have the opportunity to become involved in the growth and richness of the Ann Arbor Learning Community in many ways. Parents can contribute to the life of the school by participating in school activities; board committees, the PTSO,

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fund-raising and work parties and as room representatives. Your participation is valuable to our school.

Diversity:

Ann Arbor Learning Community's staff and families promote diversity and seek a school population that mirrors our community. We encourage families to share their history, beliefs and celebrations. All students will be treated without discrimination and each child will have many opportunities to learn more about the world and to learn to value the rich diversity that makes the world such a special place.

The Campus:

Ann Arbor Learning Community is located at 3980 Research Park Drive. This is the fifth year in our new building and we are very excited to be able to provide so much more to our students and families. We now have eighteen classrooms, art and music rooms, a gymnasium, a media and library center, many areas for students to work in small and large groups, as well as a great deal of outdoor space for students to learn and play.

Administrative Organization:

One of the strengths of public school academies is the ability to make on-site decisions. The team of the administrators, teachers and the Board of Directors will make the decisions to achieve the students' optimum learning opportunities.

A school board consisting of local representatives will guide the operation in setting policy and assuring appropriate and ethical administration of those policies. Advisory committees will function to assist in maintaining excellent academic and business quality. Eastern Michigan University will oversee all of the operations assuring that the school and its personnel meet the highest levels of professionalism.

The Dean:

The chief administrative officer of the school, Ticheal Jones, is an experienced educator who works for our school. She has the responsibility of coordinating the entire school program under the direction of our board of directors.

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Mrs. Jones is available at the school on a daily basis. You may reach her by calling the school office, leaving a voice message on the answering machine, or by sending her an email.

Mrs. Jones values the insight and support of all our parents and will make every effort to help students get the best possible educational experience. Your input and ideas are always welcomed.

School Hours and Procedures

School Hours:

- Hours: School begins promptly at **8:30 AM** and is dismissed at **3:40 PM**
- School Doors Open: 8:15 AM
- Office Hours: 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM

Attendance:

Daily student attendance has been demonstrated to be a key element in academic success. Ann Arbor Learning Community students are expected to be in attendance and on time (8:30 AM) every day that school is in session. By school policy, a student who has ten unexcused absences or tardies will receive a letter notifying the parents. Should the situation not be resolved, the student will be reported to the authorities as being truant from school.

Tardiness:

It is important for children to arrive at school by 8:30 AM. Early morning meeting and greeting is an important part of the student's social day. It really helps students get off on the right foot with their friends. Class meetings are frequently held first thing in the morning and are times when the class reviews and plans for the day, problem-solves or receives instruction for the morning's tasks. Children who habitually arrive late often feel lost and have a difficult time trying to catch up.

Being five minutes late each day adds up. A student can miss the equivalent of 15 hours of instruction in just one school

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year. In the worst case scenario, excessive tardiness can impede learning and cause a student to be retained at the same grade level.

As a parent/guardian you need to notify the school if your child will not attend. Unconfirmed absences or tardiness will be considered unexcused.

Directions for Driveway Access - pick up and drop up procedure:

Please **enter** the school driveway from the **West** end (nearer Ellsworth entrance to Research Park) and **exit** at the **East** end (nearer State St. entrance to Research Park).

Drop Off:

School begins promptly at 8:30. Attendance will be taken promptly at 8:30AM. Students should be dropped off at AALC between 8:15 and 8:30 AM. Parents should pull up to the curb at the main entrance; stop and let students disembark, and then pull away from the curb.

At no time is a student to run across lanes of traffic or between parked cars. An adult must accompany students across the parking lot to insure their safety.

If the student arrives at school any time after 8:30, the parent/guardian should park in the lot and walk the student into the building, to the office. PARENTS (NOT THE STUDENT) MUST SIGN THE STUDENT IN. Late arrivals are considered unexcused unless a parent signs the student in. Please do not simply drop the child on the curb after 8:30, as there will not be any supervision at that time.

Parking:

If parents need to come into the building, please find a parking space in the lot and proceed into the building. Do not park or leave your car at the curb.

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Leaving During the School Day:

Children may leave during the school day **only** if picked up by a parent or guardian or with the written permission of a parent or guardian. Parents must also stop in the office and sign students out. Children are not allowed to wait in an unsupervised part of the building.

You must notify the office and/or your student's teacher if your student is to leave the building with anyone except a regularly scheduled ride. Similarly, unless you have made prior arrangements with their parents, please do not take students other than your own without written permission from the parents and advising the office of the change.

Plan Ahead:

Families are asked to make after school plans in the morning before leaving home. Parents should notify the classroom teacher in writing if regular after school plans are to be altered and your child will not be riding home with their parent or guardian. Although the school telephones are always available to students for emergency situations we try to keep the lines free at the end of the day for incoming calls. We appreciate your efforts to make plans in advance. Last minute changes can increase the risk of communication failures.

End of the Day Dismissal Procedure:

During the first week of school, parents were issued a large card with their child(ren)'s name(s) listed. This card should be placed on the back of the passenger side sun visor. Please notify the office if you need a replacement at any time throughout the year.

Upon arriving at 3:40pm to pick up your child(ren), please stay in your car and follow along in the curbside lane. Have the passenger side sun visor down and turned so the names face out towards the "Guide" (an AALC Staff member or designated parent) standing on the curb. The Guide will relay the listed names, via walkie-talkie, inside the school when a parent has arrived and the listed child(ren) will be dismissed and sent outside from the back door to enter the car from the curbside lane. **Please do not park or leave your car in the curbside lane.**

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If you carpool other children please let the office know as soon as possible so that all the appropriate names can be placed on your list. Additionally, if your child(ren) are regularly dismissed to someone else specified on your child's release paperwork, you may request a pick up sign for him or her. On the occasion when a new person picks up your child(ren) they must park and come into the office so we can verify who they are and that they are listed as having the authority to pick up your child(ren).

If you have parked your car or have forgotten your card, you will need to come into the building to pick up your child and escort them to your car.

Late Fees:

Ann Arbor Learning Community staff work an eight-hour day, starting at 8:00 AM and ending at 4:00 PM. When students are not picked up by 4:00, someone must extend their day to supervise. This is not only an imposition but can interfere with the staff member's professional work and personal obligations.

Parents who do not pick up their students by 4:00 PM, (12:30 PM on Half Days) will incur a late fee of \$1.00 a minute.

This fee should be paid directly to the staff person who stays overtime to supervise your child.

Emergencies:

If you know that you will be late or find out that you must send an alternate ride to pick up your child, call the school to let us know ahead of time. Staff and students worry when parents or guardians don't arrive at school on time. Students are not to leave school with anyone except their regularly scheduled rides without prior notification.

Illness:

If your child complains of discomfort in the morning, please keep him or her home. When children say that they don't feel well, it is usually genuine. Sending them to school ill is unfair both to them and to their classmates exposed to their illness. We

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do not keep children in from recess. If they are not feeling well enough to go outside, they should remain at home.

If you feel that your child is complaining day after day of headaches or stomachaches that you believe to be invented, you should talk to the Dean or classroom teacher about those concerns and together we can try to find the cause.

In case of a short illness, a call or note from home should be sent to the teacher. For an illness of long duration please contact the teacher via phone, email or note to discuss the possibility of sending work home.

Absences:

If your child will not be in school or will be arriving late due to a doctor's appointment, etc. please call the office and let us know ahead of time. If the student is absent for medical appointments, short illness or a pre-approved vacation, the absence can be recorded as parent excused, but only if you notify the school

We need communication about any long-term pattern of absences. In the case of excessive absences (ten or more absences), a student may be required to have a doctor's note for each absence to count as excused. If the situation fails to improve, a student may be considered truant and we may need to involve other agencies.

Clothing Suggestions:

- **General Guidelines:** Children should wear casual clothes to school. Outdoor activity is planned every day so please be sure that children are suitably dressed for the weather. Each child will have a space for his/her belongings. All items sent to school should be clearly **labeled** with the family name. A thin permanent marker works well. We suggest that all students, particularly K and 1st, keep an extra set of clothes at school in case the clothes they are wearing become wet or muddy at recess.
- **Shoes, Slippers and Tennis Shoes:** Since the students spend so much time on the floor, it is important not to have muddy shoes or boots in the classroom. One method that parents have found helpful is to purchase an inexpensive pair of tennis shoes or slippers and mark them clearly with

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the child's name. These can be left at school throughout the week.

Items from home:

Students should not bring items from home that have not been approved by the classroom teacher. This would include toys, movies or videos, collector cards, portable cd's/ipods/walkmans, pets or any other animals, real weapons of any sort, items that may be seen as dangerous (i.e. plastic swords), birthday/party treats. In addition to needing prior approval, AALC will not be responsible for lost, broken or stolen items.

School Closings:

Listen and watch for Ann Arbor Learning Community closing information. Tune to one of the following radio stations for announcements about school closings or delayed starting times: WWJ 950, WJR 760 AM, 1600 WAAM. Closing information will also be shown on television Channels 2 and 4, and it will also be posted on the front page of the website, www.annarborlearningcommunity.org. Oftentimes our school name is shortened on the television scrolls; it may read Ann Arbor Learning. A good rule of thumb: if Ann Arbor Public is closed, so are we.

Snack, Lunch and Recess

AALC continues to have a **Nut Free Zone** policy to ensure the safety and welfare of all of our students. While this will be an adjustment for most it is a potentially life threatening situation for some. Individuals with nut allergies in our school will have safe zones that have little to no exposure to nut allergens, surface type or airborne.

If your student is placed in a class (odd numbered classrooms) that has an individual with nut allergies then the classroom will be a **Nut Free Zone**. Students will be eating snack in their classrooms daily. **Nut Free Zone** classrooms will require students to bring in foods that contain no nut products on a daily basis. If this will be a difficult issue for your student please

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contact the school office and we can try to make another class placement. A summary of the school policy is below.

***** Nut Free Zones ***** No student, employee, visitor, tenant, substitute staff or leasee of Ann Arbor Learning Community may bring any products containing nuts, products made of nuts or products that have been exposed to nuts into the designated **Nut Free Zones** of the building. **Nut Free Zone** signs will be posted in each zone and notice placed on all points of entry of **Nut Free Zones** within the building. Anyone bringing nuts within a **Nut Free Zone** will have to remove them immediately and any surface having been exposed to nuts or nut by- product will be washed with appropriate bleach/water as determined by Health Department guidelines.

The identity of student(s) or staff with nut allergies will not be disclosed to the student body, but all staff will be notified. Students identified as having nut allergies must have on file with Ann Arbor Learning Community a physical form, with physician signature that indicates specific allergy, potential reactions and treatment options.

Lunch Time:

- Organization: The student lunch time is thirty minutes in length. There are four lunch periods:
 - Middle school (6-8) is from 11:00am – 11:30am
 - Intermediate (4-5) is from 11:40am – 12:10pm
 - Early primary (K-1) lunch is from 12:20pm – 12:50pm
 - Primary (2-3) lunch is from 1:00pm – 1:30pm
- Lunch: Students must bring lunches from home. In order for students to have energy for afternoon activities they need nutritious lunches. Students are not allowed to bring pop or beverages in glass containers. We encourage students to take home food that is left uneaten for two reasons: (1) less edible food is thrown out and (2) we hope parents will see what foods aren't eaten regularly and make substitutions as necessary.
- Sharing: Students should eat their own food and not "share" with others. What is intended as a kindness could have a sad outcome. We have many students with food allergies.

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- Lunch/Noon Hour Activities: During the lunch period students are encouraged to relax and enjoy their lunches and conversation with other students.
- Staff will make provisions for students who require extra time to finish their food. Please contact your student's classroom teacher if this is the case.
- **Help, I don't have a lunch**: **If a student does not have a lunch, they will first be asked to call a parent to provide a lunch for them.** Some parents will have food delivered to school. Parents are also encouraged to pre-order from '**Lunch Pals**'. Lunch Pals will deliver a healthy lunch to the school for a fee of \$5.00. Lunch Pals orders can be taken directly at www.whatscookinga2.com.
- Parent Visits: Parents are welcome to join their children for lunch. Some families find this is a way to keep in touch and enjoy lunch together.

Staffing:

Lunch Supervisors are hired to assist and monitor students during the lunch time. We may have AALC parents in this role. They will work closely with the classroom staff to make lunch hour an enjoyable experience for all of our students. In addition to the four agreements, the lunch room expectations are:

- **BE SAFE** Eat only the food you bring
 Stay in lunch area – in sight of an adult
 Walk; do not run, Stay in your own space
- **BE KIND** Appreciations/No put downs
 Use voice control (inside voice)
 Be courteous
- **BE RESPONSIBLE** Food is to be eaten, not played with
 Pick up after yourself

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Classroom Recess:

Each class will have recess breaks during the day. All children will participate in recess. Recess is an important part of the school day. All children need the opportunity to run, shout and socialize. After several hours inside the fresh air is invigorating.

Children who are healthy enough to come to school are expected to go outside with their class. Only in rare cases, with a doctor's written note, will children be allowed to remain inside. Adequate inside supervision is not always available when the rest of the class is outdoors.

School Programs

K – 8 Physical Education:

Each student attends physical education at least once weekly. Students learn about team activities, individual skill building activities, the importance of exercise and health benefits of physical activity.

K – 8 Vocal Music:

Students receive vocal music instruction at least once weekly. Students explore rhythm instruments, develop basic music skills, sing, and learn to perform in song.

K – 8 Art:

Each student attends art class at least once weekly. A variety of activities and experiences are presented to the students covering a broad range of art history, appreciation and techniques.

4 – 8 Instrumental Music:

Students in fourth grade begin instruction on the recorder. At fifth grade with director and parent permission, all students have the opportunity to participate in the year-long AALC Prep band. Students in third grade have the option of beginning instruction on the recorder. Students in sixth – eighth grade may participate in the AALC year-long Concert band.

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6 – 8 Fine Arts, Physical Education, Health and Electives:

Middle school students will take Physical Education, Health, Art and Music Class. This will be offered for the entire school year.

Middle school students will have two elective classes each semester. Elective classes that may be taught (these are only a few examples and may differ each semester): Advanced PE, drama, art, historical studies, creative writing, debate.

- If a student participates in band, that counts as one of the electives each semester. The student will choose one other elective each semester.

Before and After Care Programs:

We are very excited that we continue to be able to provide before and after school care at our building.

Community Day Care will be coordinating the program. If you need before and after school care you may call (734) 761-7101. They can also be reached by email at maryanna@communitydaycareinc.org.

Health, Emergencies and Safety

Immunization Records:

Michigan State law requires that we have immunization information on all children prior to their entry into school. As part of the enrollment procedure a health form with immunization information is required. Students may not attend school without meeting health requirements in this area.

Emergency Information Forms:

Every year families are asked to provide up-to-date instructions in the event of an emergency. This includes where to call if a child becomes ill during school, the name of a back-up person you authorize to act on your behalf if the school cannot reach you, your doctor and dentist and the emergency room you wish your student to be taken to if necessary. We rarely need all this information but it is important and necessary. You should also include the names of all persons you authorize to pick up your student from school. As a matter of safety, only persons that you list will be allowed to remove your student from school.

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Emergency Health Policy:

In the event of an accident or illness, school personnel will attempt to contact a parent immediately. For serious injuries the City of Ann Arbor's Emergency Service (911) will be called prior to the parents/guardians. If a parent cannot be reached and it is apparent that emergency medical attention is needed, school personnel will arrange to have the student transported to a hospital emergency room.

Medication Procedures:

If your student is required to take medication during the school day, a prescription form from the school office must be signed by a parent **and** a doctor stating how the medication is to be administered and must be returned to the school office along with the medication. We do not allow students of any age to self-administer medication, with the exception of inhalers or epi-pens, and we must have a form on file for your child to do so. We require a signed release from parents to administer medication of any kind. Students that need to take over the counter medications (this includes cough drops and all over the counter medications), must complete a non-prescription form and it must be signed by a parent only.

- Medication File: Ann Arbor Learning Community personnel maintain a medication file that includes a log of the type of medication, its dosage, the date and time of administration and the name of the person administering the medication (except for special cases such as field trips, all medication will be administered by office staff).
- Labeling Medication: Medication to be given at school must be in its original container and labeled as follows; name of the student, medication name, physician, dosage, direction and the date. Non-prescription medication must be labeled with the student's name, dosage and directions for administration.
- Storage of Medication: All medication to be given at school will be kept in a secure place in the office. Please advise the office if the medication needs to be refrigerated and we will accommodate for that. Students may not keep medication in

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their classrooms, backpacks or lunch boxes (with the exception of inhalers and epi-pens).

Parents' Absence from Home:

If either parents or guardians will be out of town please inform us in writing. Your student's teacher will need to know this and the school office requires the following information:

- Name of the person who will be caring for your student
- Temporary address and phone number if they are not staying at your residence
- Your out of town address and telephone number to reach you in the event of an emergency

Allergies:

The school should be informed of all student allergies. This should be noted on your student's emergency information form. We should be advised of allergies to insect stings, foods or medications. Please advise us of any information about your student's asthmatic symptoms and manifestations.

See Nut Free Zone policy.

Illness / Contagious Diseases:

Students at school should be well enough to participate in the regular program of indoor and outdoor activities. **Students with signs of illness should be kept home.** Teachers will send students home when they think a student is either unable to participate fully or is exposing others to illness.

In the case of sudden illness the student will be isolated from others and a parent called to take the student out of school. If a parent cannot be reached, the person designated by the parent on the emergency information form will be contacted.

Students that have had **diarrhea, been vomiting, or a temperature of 99.6 or above should stay home or will be sent home** and must not return until the student has not had diarrhea, vomited or their temperature has been normal (98.6) for twenty four hours.

If a student has a diagnosed medical condition or a stress related illness that may mimic a contagious disease, please discuss it with the student's teacher.

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If your student becomes ill with strep throat, head lice, chicken pox, pink eye or other highly contagious diseases, please notify the school promptly. We will inform other parents that their student has potentially been exposed.

Head lice are highly contagious. If you discover lice let us know immediately and keep your child at home until treatment has been completed. The County Health Department can provide information about treatment.

Emergency Safety Procedures:

Every class and meeting room will have emergency procedures posted by the hallway door. This will specify the procedures to be followed in case of fire or severe weather emergencies. Regular school drills will be held to assure all students and staff are familiar with and can follow the procedures.

In the event a fire warning should sound or the severe weather alarm is issued, EVERYONE in the building must immediately move to safety. If visitors are not under the immediate direction of a teacher, simply follow the nearest group of students. During a drill or actual emergency there should be no talking. It is vital that all adults serve as examples for our students at such a time so we can protect our students during potentially hazardous circumstances.

In the event of a local or national emergency, the school will work closely with local officials to determine the best course of action. In most scenarios the school would either evacuate or shelter in place. If the situation warranted, we would lock down the building and only allow authorized individuals to enter. We know that your children are as irreplaceable as our own. We will take every step necessary to insure their continuing well-being.

Student Responsibility Policy

Ann Arbor Learning Community believes students deserve a high degree of freedom in their educational experience. Along with this freedom comes responsibility. AALC students are held responsible to set personal standards that are high yet attainable and to give their all in reaching these

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goals. Our students are also held responsible for respecting all others who make up our Learning Community.

All students will demonstrate respect for themselves, their peers, teachers, other adults, equipment and supplies, and the building and grounds. Respect is demonstrated by students in both actions and words. Care for each other and the environment is an integral part of our curriculum and our view of personal dignity and responsibility. Students who abuse themselves, others, or their environment either verbally or physically are subject to guidance and consequences for their actions to awaken their sense of responsibility.

The role of teachers at AALC is to provide an enriching learning environment to each of our students. Other than typical classroom management, teachers are not expected to be disciplinarians. We expect that when students arrive at school in the morning they have had a good night's sleep, have eaten a nutritious breakfast, come to school with the necessary materials/equipment and are ready to learn. If that is not the case, and discipline becomes an issue, you will need to resolve the problem with your own child in order for him or her to continue their enrollment at AALC.

Parental support is an integral part of our Student Responsibility Policy. You will be advised when something more than minor discipline becomes necessary. It is our hope that you will work as partners with the school in providing a loving but firm, consistent environment in which your child can grow and learn. Students in Kindergarten through eighth grade exhibiting extreme types of behaviors (racial or religious slurs of any kind, sexually explicit language or behavior, swearing, physical or verbal assault, disrespect for adults, equipment or school property) or who interfere with other students' ability to learn will be subject to the following guidelines and the additional guidelines listed under Safe School Policy.

Kindergarten-Fifth Grade

First Occurrence: The teacher will inform the student that they are breaking school rules and a note regarding the incident will be placed in their school files. A note

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will also go home in the child's backpack, to the child's parent/guardian. **Please note:** *If a student's action is severe enough that there is a significant injury to another person, suspension or permanent exclusion may be warranted after the first, second or third occurrence.*

Second Occurrence: First occurrence action steps and the student will be informed by the teacher AND/OR the dean that they have broken a school rule and the teacher AND/OR dean will notify the parents by telephone. A note will also be placed in the child's file.

Third Occurrence: Second occurrence action steps and the student will be suspended for a minimum of one day (or as determined by Dean) AND/OR until the teacher, dean and parent can schedule a mutually convenient meeting time to resolve the issue.

Fourth Occurrence: Third occurrence action steps and the student will be suspended for a minimum of ten days (or as determined by Dean) AND until the teacher, dean and parent can schedule a mutually convenient meeting time to resolve the issue AND/OR will be permanently suspended.

Due Process Rights:

A student's constitutional rights will be safeguarded at all times. To ensure this, guidelines have been established by the Board and will be provided to all parents and students in the student handbook. The Board shall act on any appeal, which must be submitted in writing, to an expulsion (Policy 5610 and/or Policy 5610.01), a request for reinstatement or a request for admission after being permanently expelled from another district (Policy 5610.01).

Short-term suspension

- A student must be given both written notice of suspension and the reasons therefore and the

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opportunity to respond to the charges against him/her prior to the suspension.

- An appeal may be addressed to the Dean whose decision will be final.

Long-term suspension and expulsion

- A student and his/her parent or guardian must be given written notice of the intention to suspend or expel and the reasons therefore and an opportunity to appear with a representative before the Dean to answer the charges.
- The student and or his/her guardian must also be provided a brief description of the student's rights and the hearing procedure, a list of witnesses, if any, who will provide testimony to the Dean, and a summary of the facts to which witnesses may testify.
- At the student's request the hearing may be private, but the Board and Dean must act publicly.

Sixth-Eighth Grade

Goal of Our Middle School Discipline Plan

The goal of our plan is to provide a non-threatening environment in which students can reach their fullest academic potential. It will enable us to instill in each individual an awareness of his/her importance and the need for cooperation and adherence to the Four Agreements in our school environment. Having clear expectations assists students in understanding how to relate to others both in and out of the classroom. When parents and teachers work together, a positive classroom and social climate is created, and academic achievement is increased.

How the Plan Will Work

The plan utilizes a rubric-based approach to ensure that everyone knows how Middle School discipline is handled. With a rubric-based approach, consequences never come from a person; they come from a rubric as a result of a person's actions. Therefore, consequences at school will not only help students learn to behave appropriately, but will also teach students how to respect themselves and others.

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A copy of the discipline rubric is located on the school's website or a copy can be obtained from the front office. Each Middle School student will be given one at the beginning of the school year.

Care Of School Property:

The willful damage or destruction of school property is unlawful. Students and their parents will be held liable for damage to school property. If necessary, proper authorities will be notified of any serious or chronic school damage by a student.

Sexual Harassment:

Ann Arbor Learning Community will provide a system of safeguards to prevent sexual harassment activity at the school or sponsored outings. Ann Arbor Learning Community will not tolerate sexual harassment against or by any student, employee, volunteer or visitor. This policy applies to all individuals involved with or representing Ann Arbor Learning Community.

Safe School Policy

Ann Arbor Learning Community Board of Directors endeavors to ensure that Ann Arbor Learning Community is a safe place for teaching, learning and working. Physical and/or verbal assaults committed by a student against school personnel and/or other student(s) will not be tolerated. Student possession of any dangerous weapons will not be tolerated. The following is guided by mandated legislation through the State of Michigan. Ann Arbor Learning Community will take swift and appropriate disciplinary action for the following infractions:

Weapons:

School policy prohibits students from bringing anything to school that could be used as a weapon or that looks like a weapon. This means no toy guns, jack knives, lighters, etc.

Any student in possession of a dangerous weapon, as defined by law, or who commits arson or criminal sexual conduct

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on school district property or at a school sponsored event shall be permanently expelled from the school district/academy for a period of not less than one hundred eighty (180) days.

Physical Assaults Against School Personnel:

The Board shall permanently expel any student in grade 6 or above if the student commits a physical assault against a district employee or against a person engaged as a volunteer or contractor for the district on school property, on a school bus or other school related vehicle, or at a school-sponsored activity or event. For students in kindergarten through fifth grades, situations will be handled on a case by case basis. Physical assault is defined as intentionally causing or attempting to cause physical harm to another through force or violence.

Physical Assaults Against Students:

The Board may expel any student in grade 6 or above for up to 180 days if the student commits a physical assault against another student on school property, on a school bus or other school related vehicle, or at a school-sponsored activity or event. For students in kindergarten through fifth grades, situations will be handled on a case by case basis. Physical assault is defined as intentionally causing or attempting to cause physical harm to another through force or violence.

Verbal Assaults:

Any student in grade 6 or above who commits a verbal assault on school property, on a school bus or other school related vehicle, or at a school sponsored activity or event against a student, district/academy employee or against a person engaged as a volunteer or contractor for the district may be expelled by the Board for up to 180 days. For students in kindergarten through fifth grades, situations will be handled on a case by case basis.

"Verbal assault" means a threat of an immediate harmful or offensive touching, coupled with an apparent immediate ability to commit same, and which puts a person in a reasonable apprehension of such touching; or, the use of offensive language directed at a person, where such language is

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likely to provoke a reasonable person to physical violence; a bomb threat (or similar threat) directed at a school building, other school property, or a school related event. For purposes of this policy, the definition of assault also includes written threats.

Teacher Empowerment to Suspend:

Pursuant to MCL § 380.1309(2), the type of conduct for which teachers may unilaterally suspend students in grades 6 and above from a class subject or activity for up to one day, is expressly limited to misconduct involving a physical assault committed against another student or other school personnel. Physical assault is defined as intentionally causing or attempting to cause physical harm to another through force or violence. Following a teacher initiated suspension the teacher shall send the student to the Dean's office and immediately report the suspension and reason for the same to the Dean. The teacher shall schedule a conference with the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) and the Dean to discuss the suspension as soon as possible. The teacher and Dean shall be in attendance at the conference. Any student suspended pursuant to this policy shall not be allowed to return to the class from which he or she was suspended until the passage of one full school day from the time of the student's infraction unless otherwise permitted to return by the teacher who ordered the suspension and the Dean's concurrence. Furthermore, suspended students under this section shall not be permitted during the term of the suspension to attend other classes in the school building or extracurricular activities unless the Dean or designee permits the student to continue the school day under appropriate supervision. This policy does not negate the Dean's discretion to impose a multiple day suspension or expulsion beyond the teacher's statutorily limited suspension period when the student's conduct warrants a more severe disciplinary action in the Dean's sole discretion.

Application to Students with Disabilities:

This policy shall be applied in a manner consistent with the rights secured under federal and state law to students who are determined to be eligible for special education programs and services.

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Annual Review:

As part of its oversight function, the Board will annually revisit and review the effectiveness of the policy and, if necessary, consider any policy or procedural changes that may increase the policy's efficacy.

LEGAL REF: MCL 380.1311; 750.82; 750.235a; 752.891 (Weapons Free School Law). MCL 380.1309 (Teacher Suspensions); MCL 380.1311a (Physical and Verbal Assaults Against School Personnel); MCL 380.1310 (Physical Assaults Against Students).

Homework Policy

In the lower elementary grades (K-3) a limited amount of homework is generally expected of students and such assignments will be planned to ensure successful completion. In the intermediate grades (4-5) and Middle School (6-8), homework assignments should become a systematic part of each student's educational program. Assignments will increase in frequency and scope as the student progresses through school so that by the end of sixth grade at least one hour a night is regularly expected of each student. Homework assignments will be designed to meet the needs and capabilities of each individual child and will be planned to insure successful completion.

Students who elect to participate in extracurricular activities such as band or community sports will have to take considerable responsibility in meeting the academic homework requirements as well as the extracurricular practice requirements. Parents should notify teachers if length and skill level is inappropriate for their child. Individual accommodations may be made.

Student Study Team Policy

When a parent or teacher would like support or assistance in providing for a child's unique needs, a Student Study Team can be requested to address academic and/or social concerns. The Team may be composed of any of the

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following members: parents or guardians, teacher, child, principal, lunchroom supervisor, tutor or any other person directly involved with the child. The group schedules a meeting time to discuss the student, the student's strengths and present concerns, and interventions implemented to date and the results of each intervention. The Team pools their expertise to brainstorm possible solutions. The solutions could be implemented in the classroom, at home, through educational alternatives and/or other resources available within the school. The Team will plan a course of action, determine a timeline (specified time period to implement course of action), and set a follow-up date. If at the follow-up date the concern has been resolved the Team will be disbanded. If the concern continues, another meeting of the Team is called to look at the results of the initial plan and to address any further educational interventions that remain untried. If after the second course of action improvement in the concern has not been noted or the general educational resources have not yet proved successful the Team may recommend a referral to meet the student's needs.

Field Trip Policy

One of the ways that the Ann Arbor Learning Community is unique is the commitment to the belief that students learn best by being actively involved in firsthand experiences. Both one day and extended field trips are integral parts of our curriculum at all levels.

- **Permission slips:** Permission slips are always required for all trips. At the beginning of the school term parents/guardians are asked to complete a three-mile radius walking permission slip that can be used for the rest of the year. The teacher or driver carries permission slips along on all field trips, long or short, for emergency phone contact, etc.
- **Transportation:** AALC does not own a bus or van. Most often, parents volunteer to transport students to and from events and field trip sites. All drivers must be licensed and insured. Copies of license and proof of insurance must be given to the office to keep on file. All children must be

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provided a seat with fully functioning lap/shoulder belts. Occasionally, local public transportation will be utilized. Parents will be notified on their permission slip if transportation other than parent/ staff volunteers is utilized.

- Donations: Field trips are an important part of our school experience. Parents may choose to make a donation to the class trip fund to help underwrite expenses.

The cost of field trips is calculated by teachers for parents on a per child basis and determined by the expense of the trip. The excursions may include day walking trips or extended trips such as group camping or large city trips. Decisions about long trips are made by the teacher, parents and students (when appropriate) of individual classrooms.

To simplify the accounting work for the office this year, we are requesting that families make their field trip donations once or twice during the year. For Early Primary, Primary and Intermediate the suggested donation amount is \$50.00 for the year. For Middle School the suggested donation amount is \$20.00, and does not include the end of the year Middle School Trip. Donations towards your student's field trips may be paid entirely in September or can be payable in installments: \$25 in September and \$25 in February.

The school population must raise any cost above Ann Arbor Learning Community's level of funding. For extended trips, parent donations have proven to be more effective than standard fundraising. Ann Arbor Learning Community will undertake some fundraising projects to support school-wide activities and trip scholarships.

- Money: Any money brought to school by a student should be placed in an envelope and labeled with the student's name, class and purpose.
- Scholarships: It is Ann Arbor Learning Community's policy that no student is denied an opportunity to participate due to financial burden. It is our belief that all students should have equal access to every educational opportunity offered by our school. All students in a classroom will have the opportunity to participate in every field trip that their class takes whether or not the student's family was able to contribute. If the total school or class funding falls below the necessary level, the entire class will not participate.

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If your family finds it a financial burden to contribute some or all of the funds specified for field trips, please inform the school social worker or classroom teacher.

All information will remain confidential.

Fundraising and Donations

Fundraising activities are undertaken to attain specific goals (such as providing more diverse multicultural materials) and in support of the General Budget. Fundraising for individual classes, other organizations or schools is permitted during the school day or at school events only with special permission from the Dean.

Item Donations:

The Ann Arbor Learning Community gladly accepts monetary donations toward class field trips, specific projects and the General Budget. Ann Arbor Learning Community will accept equipment donations such as computers, playground equipment, bookshelves, instruments etc. These can be designated for use by a specific group if desired. We are often in need of many items and supplies. Please check with the office or teachers before donating any items and for other specific items.

Gifts Policy:

School Board policy prohibits school staff from accepting any gift representing more than a token of appreciation. Gifts of large value are understood to be gifts to the school or classroom as a whole in support of a teacher or staff member and become the property of the school.

Holiday Policy

- Religious and Cultural Holidays: Ann Arbor Learning Community actively values diversity and seeks a school population that mirrors our community. Our families hold a wide range of religious and cultural beliefs. Although we do not advocate any religion, we are interested in engaging

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students in understanding, appreciating and respecting the diverse cultural, national and religious heritage that reflects our community. For these reasons, we encourage informational and educational activities from any culture or nationality and invite children to talk about their family rituals and holidays. We expect that children will be respectful and tolerant of others' religious and cultural beliefs. Specific policies addressing cultural and religious observations have been established by the school.

- **Birthdays:** Students are allowed to bring birthday treats to celebrate their birthday if desired. We encourage parents to provide nutritious treats. Cheese, crackers, fruit, vegetables, pretzels or pizza are welcome and can be as much fun as cake or cookies. If you do plan to bring a birthday treat please check with your student's teacher in advance.

Communication

Telephone Communication:

Telephone calls will be answered in the school office. During non-school hours and when we are on the phone, messages may be left on our voice mail at the same number. Due to a high volume of end-of-the-day calls we recommend calling earlier if possible.

With staff permission, students may use the phone in their classroom to contact home in an emergency. Social arrangements need to be made in advance from home.

School/Home Communication:

We believe that close communication between home and school is essential and we welcome opportunities for parent-teacher or parent-school communication. Staying in touch with your student's teacher about your student(s) is a major responsibility of each parent, not solely the responsibility of the teacher. If for any reason you feel that you would like to talk with a teacher please send a note, leave a message at the office or call. Although teachers generally cannot leave their classes to take calls, they can make arrangements to call you later in the day. We especially appreciate you letting us know about major

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changes at home that may affect your student. You are a welcomed and vital link in your student's success.

Many parents find it helpful to touch base with staff at the beginning or end of the school day. But keep in mind that supervision and instruction of students are our primary concerns. If you need to discuss something in depth, set up an appointment to talk when the teacher is free to give your ideas or concerns their full attention.

If your concern involves your child and a particular staff member we request that you discuss the problem with the teacher first. The best solutions to concerns tend to be the ones generated closest to the point of origin. If concerns remain unresolved or additional assistance is needed please contact the dean.

Written Communication:

- **Notes:** If you need to inform a teacher about changes or have questions, a note sent by your child can begin the communication process.
- **Newsletters:** Our school publishes regular newsletters to share information about activities, invite participation, inform others about issues or publish written poetry or stories. We welcome your comments and insights. Teachers also publish class newsletters. If you would like to volunteer to organize a newsletter, please contact your student's teacher or the office.
- **Reporting to Parents:** Our reporting to parents will take the form of parent teacher conferences and written report cards. At the end of each marking period you will be informed of your child's progress in one of the two formats.

School Directory:

The school will publish a student directory. The directory is especially helpful for communication for school projects and social arrangements.

Families will need to authorize publication of student addresses and phone numbers. This can include information about father and mother, as well as stepparents. Parents may also choose not to authorize the publication of any or all of the above information.

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Each family will receive one directory. The directory may be updated or an addendum distributed midyear.

Parent Conferences:

There will be two formal conference periods. The first conference is for all parents and the second conference is to be scheduled as needed. Of course, should there be a need at other times during the year, parents and teachers can make additional arrangements. Feel free to request a meeting at any time. Do not wait if you feel there is a need for additional communication. Students are welcome and encouraged to attend all conferences.

Conferences are most useful when a two-way dialogue is established regarding a student and their personal growth. Each parent, student and teacher brings his or her own perceptions and unique information to the conference. This is a time to exchange information, share concerns and achievements and plan for future goals.

Parental Participation

School Visitations:

Parents, guardians, volunteers, and board members are warmly welcome at AALC to fulfill their roles as parents, volunteers and board members. Community members are welcome and even encouraged to come in to the school to drop off or pick up their children, to communicate with staff and faculty, and to accomplish necessary school business.

Parents who want to volunteer in or observe a classroom need to be sensitive to the confidentiality rights of all our students. What you may see concerning another student may not be discussed with others, outside of reporting any concerns to the teacher or principal. Staff may not discuss confidential information about a student to anyone except the student's parents or guardians. This can be a fine line regarding volunteer activities. Don't hesitate to ask if you have questions.

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Ann Arbor Learning Community wants and encourages parent and community involvement with the life of our school. Visits to your child's classroom can be spontaneous providing that they do not disrupt instruction. However, appointments must be made in advance to observe in any other classroom or for individual conferences. Please keep in mind that teachers really have to focus their attention on the students during the school day and will not be able to discuss specific issues relating to your student. If you feel a need to conference please set up a mutually agreeable time. During the starting and ending times of the school day (8:15 – 9:00 AM and 3:15 – 4:00 PM) when there are many transitions for students and staff it is best to leave a message in the office for the staff member you wish to speak with. This will ensure that the staff member will be better able to give the conversation the full attention it deserves.

At all times of the day, non-employees are restricted to purposeful presence and movement in the school building and on the school grounds. This is necessary to ensure the safety of everyone at AALC and to respect the integrity of the classroom.

All visitors – parents, guardians, volunteers and board members are required to sign in and out at the office and be given a visitor name tag to wear.

Prospective Parents / Observing Classes:

Prospective parents and students, students of education and other interested persons are welcome to set up appointments to visit the school and speak with our staff. With a staff member as a guide, these visitors can briefly tour the school and peek into classrooms.

Visitors can also observe classes by scheduled appointment with the teacher's consent. A fifteen minute time limit for classroom visits is set for minimal disturbance to the classroom environment. Discussions of students may only occur with a scheduled appointment.

Prospective students who observe classes can participate only at the invitation of the teacher. No prospective student may be left at the school without a parent or guardian and/or an emergency medical form. A student is considered a visitor until an enrollment form is signed and the teacher is given 24 hours to prepare a place for the child in the class.

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Volunteering

Volunteering at the Ann Arbor Learning Community:

Volunteer assistance comes from many sources including students, parents, grandparents, educators, business partners, community members, friends, family and prospective families. We encourage parents to be actively involved in student-directed education and realize the importance of parents being partners in their children's education. We hope to give parents an opportunity to see how their student and others learn in a student-directed educational setting.

One aspect of student-directed education that makes it different from traditional education is the expectation that all parents are encouraged to assist with the many activities that are part of the Ann Arbor Learning Community program. Another important principle is that parents then take an increasingly active role in their student's education; school, home and the community are extensions of each other.

The amount of time each family can contribute will vary from year to year, and that's understandable. Do what you can. Every part, no matter how small, helps. Working regularly every week in the classroom, serving on a committee, working on activities from home, dropping by when you have a "free" half-hour and helping out on an emergency basis are all valid ways to help make this program work.

In general, all considerations for volunteer placement are ruled by what is best for the students in the class. Teachers are always ultimately responsible for the students' welfare and have the discretion to reassign a volunteer who may be better suited to a different job.

Some of the suggested activities included the following:

- Be a class parent
- Be a trip coordinator
- Work on a committee
- Be the volunteer coordinator

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- Be a liaison to other community committees
- Prepare materials for class from home
- Participate in PTSO
- Direct a club
- Help correct class work
- Provide refreshments or paper-goods
- Tutor or mentor a student
- Teach an enrichment course
- Help at Open Houses for prospective parents
- Help with school fundraising
- Provide child-care for another volunteer
- Take pets home during school vacation
- Make phone calls from home to solicit help
- Greet students as they enter school each morning
- Help transport students to before/after-care
- Find another person from the community to help in your place
- Help with the Science Fair, Ice Cream Social or other special event
- Share your expertise; heritage, culture, skills, talents, knowledge, experiences
- Work in the classroom; reading, listening to students read, helping with spelling or math

Confidentiality:

All volunteers at Ann Arbor Learning Community are expected to maintain the same high standards of professionalism as the paid staff. Our students should be able to expect that the adults at school will honor their right to confidentiality. Information gained about other students should remain confidential and not leave the building.

Do not discuss another student without expressed permission from that student's parents. If you have questions or concerns about another student as it pertains to your own student, please contact the classroom teacher or dean to discuss your concerns. ***Volunteers are subject to a background check.***

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Video and Audio Recording:

Persons wishing to use video or audio recording equipment must ensure that it is a public performance, such as school sponsored dramatic performances or graduation. No video or audio recordings may be shown or posted for public viewing without the expressed written parental permission for any student shown or heard in the recording. Public school sponsored performances may be video or audio taped for personal use provided the use of such equipment does not interfere with the performance or the audience.

- Audio / Video devices should be off to the side of the audience seating area so as not to interfere with viewing by others.
- Audio / Video devices should not make enough sound as to interfere with the listening by others.
- Audio / Video devices should not project an inordinate amount of light that may interfere with the performers or the viewing audience.
- **Non-public performances such as individual classroom presentations require parental permission for every participating student prior to being video or audio taped.**

Technology

Technology Code of Ethics

All students and parents must sign the Technology Code of Ethics as part of their registration work. Students agree to abide by the AALC technology policy that includes, but is not limited to, the following:

Policy

Ann Arbor Learning Community will use technology in the school as an opportunity for students and staff to enhance learning, productivity, and information processing. The Board and staff specify that the school's computer hardware and software shall be used solely for educational purposes. Ann Arbor Learning Community expressly prohibits the use of computer, related equipment, and software for the purpose of sending or receiving

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information or images of a prurient, harmful, or harassment nature.

Rights

Students and Staff:

- May use hardware and software that they have permission to use.
- May access information from approved resources outside the school district.
- May request access to the Internet to receive and send information.

Responsibilities

Students and Staff are responsible for:

- Utilizing information technology only for educational purposes, including but not limited to the attainment of outcomes, goals, and objectives specified in curriculum documents of the district or otherwise delineated by teachers, administrators, or the Board.
- Using hardware and software in a manner that enables its ongoing usage.
- Adhering to the rules including, but not limited to, those posted in classrooms or computer labs or otherwise specified by school staff, for the use of hardware, software, labs, and networks in the school.
- Obtaining permission from a school official before bringing in their own software and using it on school equipment.
- Keeping hardware and software from being relocated, removed from school premises, or modified without permission of an administrator.
- Maintaining the privacy of passwords and supporting the prohibition of publishing or discussing passwords.
- All materials received from sources outside the school district, including the Internet, under their user accounts.
- Accepting responsibility for keeping all pornographic material, inappropriate text files, or files dangerous to the integrity of the school's network, equipment, or software from entering the school.

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- Adhering to the law and district policy pertaining to copyright and privacy rights in the use of hardware and software and in the transmission of copying of text or files.
- Avoiding using the technology for personal or private business, for product advertisement, or for political lobbying.
- Avoiding using the malicious use of information technology to disrupt the use of technology by others, to harass or discriminate against others, or to infiltrate unauthorized computer systems.

Outside Communication Technology

Students and staff should refrain from using outside communication technology that may disrupt the educational environment. This includes, but is not limited to, social networking sites and texting.

Disciplinary Action

Students and staff violating any of these Rights and Responsibilities will face disciplinary action, which may include:

- Banning their use of school information technology.
- Making full financial restitution for any unauthorized expenses incurred or any damages caused by their actions.
- Attending training sessions.
- Facing additional disciplinary action deemed appropriate in keeping with the disciplinary policies and guidelines of the school up to dismissal from employment, litigation, or expulsion from school.

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