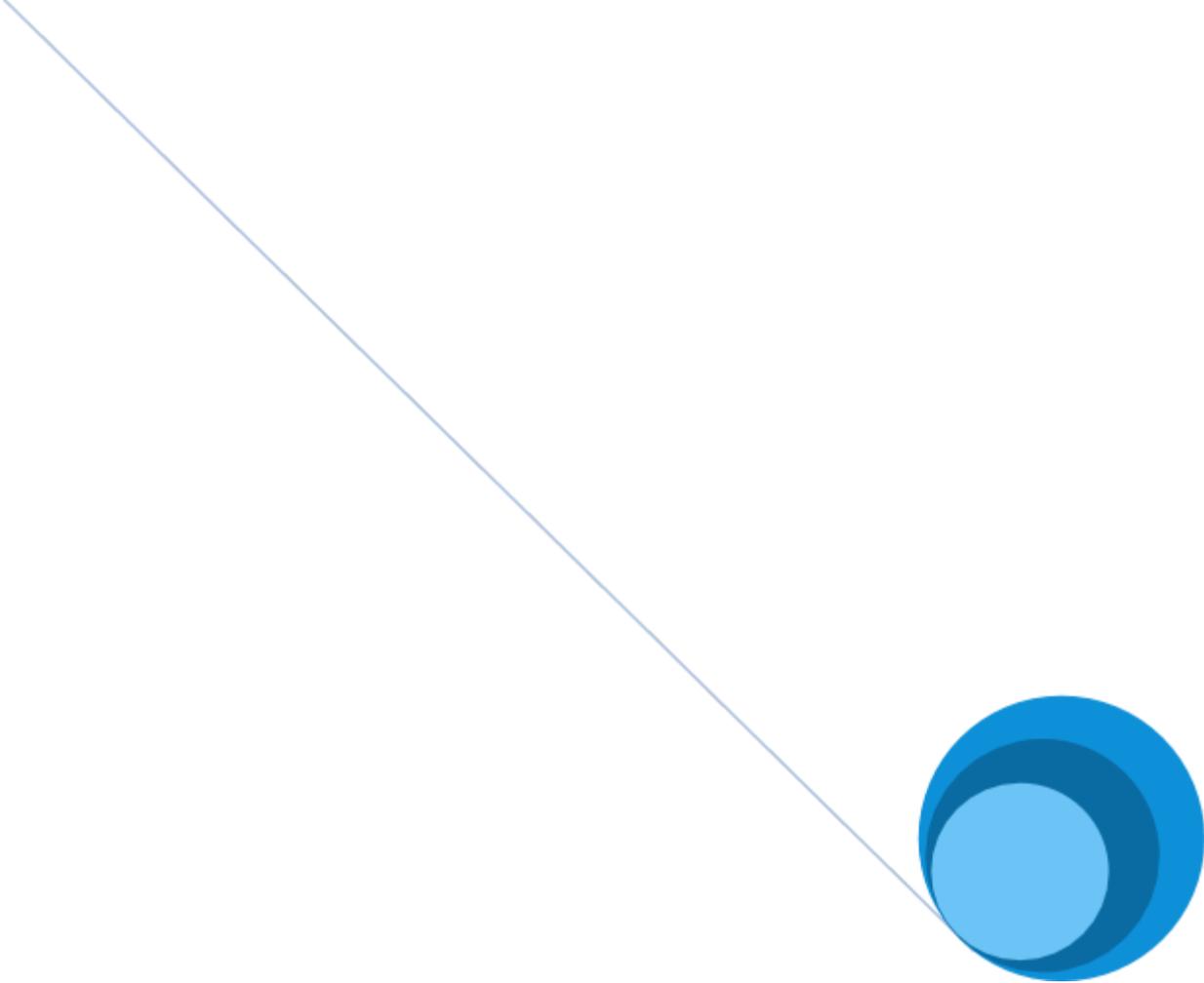


# Academy of the City

Student-Parent Handbook



## Letter from the Principal

Dear Parents,

Academy of the City Charter School is dedicated to an open partnership between the school and parents/guardians to work collaboratively. We all have the best interests of children in working with them to help develop the ability to be creative, independent and confident decision makers. In creating a vibrant learning community, we must be open to listening and learning from one another. This means creating an open and honest line of communication and to create programs and experiences for every child that is founded on the principles of best practices in education.

We are committed to implement and reflect upon the school's entire academic, extracurricular, and support programs, so that student success will not be only in the area of English Language Arts and Mathematics, but also in Science, Social Studies, Art, Music and Movement. We recognize that the social and emotional life of our community of learners is vital. We will create a safe environment where every child is willing to take risks in their learning and make inquiries into subject areas that they are unsure about. Developing a positive sense of self and feeling a part of the school's learning community is important for all of our children.

We both honor and respect the diversity of our community and accept that individual needs are important, yet understand that we are members of a bigger community that must support each other and find ways to respect and co-exist in a harmonious manner. Our Peace Curriculum is a starting place for this understanding and habit of mind to form.

This handbook is a guide and a resource that allows you to understand and support how we wish to create a positive learning environment. It is a guiding document that we ask that you read and discuss with your child, as appropriate. We also suggest that you use the school's website at [www.academyofthecity.org](http://www.academyofthecity.org) to get additional information on what is happening at the school.

I am dedicated to working with each and every child and family to create a positive learning environment, to work collaboratively with the community as well as to ensure that each child has the best opportunity to develop and sustain the love of learning.

Take care,

Richard Lee  
Principal

## Letter from the Board

Dear Members of Our School Community,

The Board of Trustees of Academy of the City Charter School is proud and excited to welcome you to an extraordinary educational adventure. We are a collaborative school where every member of the community -- students, parents and guardians, family members, teachers, administration and the Board of Trustees – is a vital component. To educate our students to become life-long learners, to be moral citizens of our complex world and to meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century with courage, creativity and entrepreneurial spirit, we rely upon all of the members of the community to nurture, cherish and support our students.

From opening day, parents are encouraged to participate in the school and their children's education. Some of the many opportunities available are becoming active in the Parent Community Organization, volunteering in the school, working with the Board of Trustees, communicating with your children's teachers, participating in classroom activities or class trips, attending school events and reading with your children every night. AoC's Administration and Board are committed to constant outreach to our school community and the surrounding communities of Western Queens to make sure that the school's curriculum, enrichment and after school programs, parent workshops and partnerships with community organizations meet the needs of our students and their families.

Serving as a beacon in charter education, our school is based upon a progressive, child-centered, content rich educational philosophy that has been turning out lifelong learners who are successful in every walk of life for over 100 years. AoC's students come to school excited and eager to learn.

Since any educational philosophy is only as good as a school's educators, we are extremely grateful for our visionary principal, Richard Lee, his extraordinary and innovative administrative staff, and our staff of dedicated, experienced classroom teachers and other professionals (special education teachers, English language learner teachers, a guidance counselor, an art teacher, a chorus leader and resident musicians). And most important, we are grateful for our students and their families who come from every corner of Community School District 30 and will bring to our school community their ideas, their talents and their eagerness to learn.

We welcome all members of our community to our open monthly Board meetings where we hope you will share your thoughts, experiences, and hopes and dreams for our students and the Academy of the City Charter School.

Sincerely yours, Nancy R. Sills, Board Chair

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## School Overview

### WHAT IS A CHARTER SCHOOL?

Charter schools are public schools that operate independently according to the terms of a five-year performance contract or “charter.” Charter schools commit to meet specific goals for academic performance and their charter can be revoked if agreed-upon results are not attained.

Like all publicly funded schools, charter schools must meet Regents requirements and state laws for health, safety, civil rights and student assessment. In addition, charter schools must accept all students through a lottery process and cannot discriminate in their admission policy.

Charter schools can be started by educators, parents, community leaders and not-for-profit organizations, and are approved only after a rigorous review process. Once schools open, they are governed by a not-for-profit board of trustees. They are exempt from some state and local regulations regarding curriculum development, personnel hiring and financial management, but must succeed in meeting or exceeding the goals established for their academic programs.

Charter schools receive state funding for each student. In addition to this per pupil funding, several state and federal grants are available, and charter schools are welcome to fundraise from private sources as well. Charter schools do not receive any city, state, or federal funding for facilities.

### MISSION STATEMENT

Academy of the City Charter School will be a community-based charter school based on principles of:

- Community involvement
- Workplace democracy
- Reflective practices in pedagogy, management and governance
- Professional development
- Accountability
- Transparency
- Entrepreneurialism

Our students will become independent thinkers, lifelong learners, and responsible members of their communities. We are committed to an educational philosophy rooted in social justice, inquiry, experiential and collaborative learning, and supported by continual professional development and reflective practice. Through a literacy-based, integrated curriculum that encourages community and honors diversity, our students receive the education they will need to meet the academic and social challenges of the best high schools, to be prepared for our best colleges and universities, and to thrive in today’s world.

## Academy of the City Charter School

## LEARNING MODEL

At Academy of the City Charter School we will educate our students to become independent-thinkers, lifelong learners and responsible members of their communities. We are committed to an education philosophy rooted in social justice, encompassing inquiry, experiential and collaborative learning, and supported by continual professional development and a reflective practice. Through a literacy-based, integrated and standards-driven curriculum that encourages community and honors diversity, Academy of the City Charter School students will receive the broad education needed to meet the academic and social challenges of the best high schools, to be prepared for our best colleges and universities and to thrive in today's world.

The educational goals of Academy of the City Charter School are addressed by both the structure and substance of the school's programs. Academy of the City Charter School embraces a literacy-based liberal arts foundation enriched with consistent and coherent exposure to music, foreign language, fine arts and physical education. Structures and processes are in place to foster the development of each student's mind, character, and health, in each classroom and in the school as a whole, with their families, and within the community.

Academy of the City Charter School recognizes the importance of STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) as essential to future sustainability. The school will implement daily math and science curricula, providing a basis for developing understanding and skills necessary for solving problems and making responsible decisions in our increasingly technological world.

Academy of the City Charter School fully embrace educational technology and have internal processes to assure the school is technologically relevant. Children, from an early age, are taught digital literacy and responsible media use.

## Governance

### SUNY, CHARTER SCHOOLS INSTITUTE

In 2010, SUNY, Charter Schools Institute (CSI) granted Academy of the City's Board of Trustees its initial charter to operate a school offering grades K-5. CSI is the school's authorizer and is entrusted to monitor and supervise the school's compliance with its charter. Each year AOC must submit to CSI an Annual Report on its progress towards meeting the Accountability Plan. CSI also does inspection and monitoring visits to the school to observe how the school is functioning and to ensure that the school is meeting the terms of its charter, complying to all laws, rules and regulatory statutes, and most importantly providing students with an appropriate and excellent educational experience.

To learn about CSI's role in monitoring the school visit their website at [www.newyorkcharters.org](http://www.newyorkcharters.org).

## **BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

The AOC Board of Trustees is made up of individuals from a variety of professional and ethnic backgrounds. Trustees must be approved by the Charter School Institute of the State University of New York and perform their work in the public interest. Trustees receive no compensation for their work at AOC, and their children must go through the same lottery procedure as all children in New York State in order to be admitted to AOC.

The function of the Board is to preserve the mission of the school by overseeing its functions, and by taking whatever steps might be necessary to ensure the viability of the organization. The board is responsible for all issues of compliance and accountability with state and federal agencies.

The Board's primary role is to provide vision and guidance to the school. The daily functioning of the school is entirely in the hands of the school's leadership and administrative teams. The Board, however, makes major decisions about the direction of the school and monitors all progress in all critical areas such as curriculum, facilities, and finance. The Board must also convene and concur on any expulsionary procedure. Trustees may be reached by e-mail, generally in the format of: first initial, last name @academyofthecity.org.

For more information on election of the Board of Trustees, please reference the bylaws, which can be found on the Board of Trustees page on our website.

## **Parent Involvement and Communication**

### **VOLUNTEERING and GETTING INVOLVED**

Parents are encouraged to participate in school-related activities. All parents are automatically members of Academy of the City Charter School's Parent Community Organization (PCO) and are urged to become actively involved. PCO members can volunteer as lunchtime assistants, office help, field trip chaperones, and ambassadors of goodwill to local businesses and politicians. The PCO can also sponsor fundraising events.

Another way to participate is by working directly with your child's teacher. This may involve reading to the class, sharing cultural information, careers, or anything else a teacher might like assistance with. In addition, parents participate in many school wide planning activities. Parents have served on committees to develop the school's strategic plan and will continue to play a role in the development of the school's success.

### **PARENT COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION**

The PCO is your voice, and the co-chairs of the PCO usually come to each meeting of the Board of Trustees to update them about your concerns. Your involvement is crucial to the success of Academy of the City Charter School. Because this is our first year, we will be in the process of developing the PCO as

## **Academy of the City Charter School**

well as all of the norms and culture expected. Parents will also have three seats on the Board of Trustees, which will be the ultimate voice of the PCO and how they will have the greatest effect on the school.

### **PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES**

Formal parent/teacher conferences are scheduled twice each year to facilitate open communication between parents and teachers regarding students' progress. Please refer to the School calendar for specific dates. Parents may also schedule informal conferences or conversations with teachers or School leaders at any time throughout the year.

### **NEWSLETTERS and LETTERS**

Parents will receive regular newsletters featuring a letter from the Principal as well as announcements of upcoming events and School wide activities. The school also sends an electronic or paper version of a monthly letter with an updated calendar of events. It is an important document that keeps you abreast of what is happening in school and issues that may affect your child's education and achievement.

## **Hours of Operation**

Academy of the City Charter School breakfast begins at 8:00 a.m. and instruction begins promptly at 8:30 a.m. and ends at 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. ***Students will not be admitted into the school building before 7:50 a.m.*** It is important that families do not leave an unattended child on the school premises before there is adult supervision.

Faculty and staff members will greet students in the morning and dismiss the children in the afternoon, ensuring that each student exits the school in a safe and orderly fashion.

Children not enrolled in an after-school program are not permitted on School grounds after 4:15 p.m. If a child is left at the School after hours, the parent or emergency contact will be called to arrange for pick-up. ***If a student is picked up later than 4:15 p.m., s/he may be admitted into the after school program and the parent/caregiver will be responsible for the cost of that program.***

### **SCHOOL CLOSING AND EMERGENCIES**

Academy of the City Charter School will follow the lead of New York City's Department of Education with regards to decisions about the opening and closing of school due to weather and other emergencies. School closings or emergencies will be announced on NY1 and WINS 1010. In addition, a message will be placed on the school's voice mail system (718-487-9857) announcing the emergency closing.

## **Academy of the City Charter School**

## Curriculum and Instructional Design

At the heart of Academy of the City Charter School is a highly structured curriculum that sets high expectations and provides individualized monitoring to assist students in attaining ambitious goals for achievement. Academy of the City Charter School provides a strong academic foundation for students that will prepare them for success throughout life.

### LANGUAGE ARTS, MATHEMATICS, SCIENCE, SOCIAL STUDIES

Reading, writing, arithmetic, reasoning, and research are fundamental disciplines essential to academic success. Academy of the City Charter School is committed to providing students at all grade levels with daily instruction and experience in core curriculum areas. Academy of the City Charter School has created and utilizes curricula designed to directly address New York State Learning Standards, including the Common Core Standards in all subject areas and to enable students to reach their highest potential. Students also receive instruction in music, chorus, art, and physical education weekly.

#### English Language Arts

Grades K–5 use Readers and Writers Workshop as well as Phonics and Spelling programs.

#### Mathematics

Grades K–5 use Go Math & TERC Investigations in Mathematics and other supplemental materials.

#### Science

Grades K–5 use FOSS and Delta in addition to other supplemental materials.

#### Social Studies

Students will explore communities around the world. They will begin to develop an understanding of how different communities around the world use resources, make economic decisions and are governed.

### HOMEWORK

Homework assignments are given regularly. Helping your child with homework is an excellent way for parents to learn about the curriculum and its goals. Teachers will vary assignments to make homework productive and interesting. The following chart indicates about how much time we expect students to spend on homework each night. In addition to regular homework assignments, **all children must spend at least 10-15 minutes reading each night.**

Kindergarten - 10 minutes

1<sup>st</sup> Grade - 15 minutes

2<sup>nd</sup> Grade - 20 minutes

3<sup>rd</sup> Grade - 30 minutes

4<sup>th</sup> Grade - 40 minutes

5<sup>th</sup> Grade – 50 minutes

Here are some ways you can help your child with his or her homework experience.

- Make homework rules together with your child. Decide when and where it will be done.
- Give your child a healthy snack before he or she begins homework.
- Provide a quiet place and enough time for your child to do homework, such as a desk in his or her room or the kitchen table. Make sure there is sufficient light and that distractions are limited.
- Show an interest in your child’s homework and ask him or her about it each night.
- Encourage your child to work independently. Assist him or her if needed, unless otherwise noted.

#### **FIELD TRIPS**

Field trips will be planned throughout the year for academic enrichment. Parents/guardians will receive advance notice and a permission slip must be signed in order for the student to participate except local neighborhood walking trips. Off-site release forms for neighborhood walks were signed during the enrollment process. For all other trips, students without signed permission slips will remain at the school.

### **Academic Intervention Services and Pupil Personnel Services**

Academic Intervention Services (AIS) is designed to help prevent student failure and to keep students functioning at their very best. AIS can be used to remediate as well as enrich. AIS is comprised of the following teams and departments: Child Study Team, Learning Specialist, Special Education, and English Language Learner teachers (ELL), and Guidance Counselor.

#### **SPECIAL EDUCATION**

Academy of the City Charter School’s Special Education program serves students who have an Individual Education Program (IEP), which mandates: Special Education Teacher Support Service (SETSS) also known as Resource Room, Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, and/or counseling. Academy of the City Charter School does not have an Integrated Team Teaching (ITT),

or the more restrictive 12-1-1 or 8-1-1 self-contained special education classes. Special education services are delivered on a push-in as well as pull-out basis, depending on their needs.

### **ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE**

English as a Second Language is taught by certified teachers to eligible students based on their results on the LAB(R) test. Students are pulled out to meet with the ESL teacher for either one or two periods each day. The amount of time each student spends in ESL classes each day is determined by the score they receive on the LAB(R). Students must pass both NYSESLAT and the NYS English Language Arts exams to exit the ESL program.

### **CHILD STUDY TEAM**

The Child Study Team is a collaborative effort in which classroom teachers, specialists, speech and language therapist, administrators and others work together to create intervention plans for students who may be struggling with behavioral, emotional, or academic issues. The goal of the CST is to act as a means of early intervention to assist children to improve their performance and to give teachers more resources and tools to successfully work with struggling students.

### **GUIDANCE COUNSELOR**

The school guidance counselor collaborates with the Principal, AP, and other faculty members on the social, emotional, and academic functioning of all students. The guidance counselor:

- Provides IEP counseling to students
- Works with parents, students, and teachers around issues of child abuse and neglect
- Does crisis intervention
- Runs affinity groups for students experiencing chronic problems and difficult issues

### **GUIDANCE PROGRAM**

The guidance program assists faculty and staff in providing individual students with the skills necessary to reason, communicate, understand themselves and what lies ahead, and to find their way into the most favorable areas of activity for growth and development. Guidance department provides:

- Individual and group counseling
- Monitoring of academic grades throughout the year
- Study and organizing skills instruction

### **ASSESSMENTS**

Academy of the City Charter School employs a variety of assessment tools including standardized tests, state mandated exams, informal and informal assessments from teacher created tests and quizzes, student portfolios, and performance assessments. Expectations and performance on these varied assessments guide the development of curricula on each grade level, the development of student remediation, and instructional strategies aimed at improved academic achievement.

## **STUDENT PROMOTION & RETENTION POLICY**

1. Parents will be notified early if a student is failing to make normal grade level progress. Academic warning letters notices are mailed home usually in January or February. A parent/teacher conference takes place in March that should indicate whether the child is at grade level. The final notices are sent in May that indicate a child is in doubt for promotion to the next grade.
2. Factors affecting promotion include, but are not limited to: results on standardized tests that are below grade level, poor classroom work production including reading, writing and math assessments and/or attendance under 90% attendance.
3. The school will meet with parents to discuss progress being made by the student during the March conferences and May notice.
4. If the school decides student retention is necessary, there will be a meeting with parents to discuss the steps that must be taken.
5. Decisions on student retention are the final determination of the school's administration.

## **Supply Lists**

In preparation for the school year, grade-specific supply lists are sent to each family.

## **Admission, Re-Enrollment, Transfers**

### **ADMISSION OF NEW STUDENTS**

Academy of the City Charter School is open to all children, on a space-available basis within each grade. Preference is given only to siblings of admitted students and residents of District 30. The School does not discriminate on the basis of sex, sexual preference, handicaps, race, religion, national origin, intellectual or athletic ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, disability, proficiency in English, or any other basis prohibited by law. To apply for Kindergarten, a child must have his or her fifth birthday before December 31st of the enrollment year.

## **Academy of the City Charter School**

Students are selected by open lottery. There are no admission requirements, and no tests are given to determine whether or not admission is granted. Once all available slots are filled, all other applicants will be placed on a waitlist. Students will be admitted from the waitlist as places become available in each grade, in the order provided by the school's admissions lottery.

#### **RE-ENROLLMENT OF CURRENTLY ENROLLED STUDENTS**

To secure your child's place at Academy of the City Charter School for the next school year, you must officially re-enroll him or her. In January, re-enrollment packets are mailed home along with the deadline for re-enrollment. Students whose re-enrollment packets are received after the deadline will be added to the waitlist and admitted on a space-available basis.

#### **TRANSFERS**

The School asks that, whenever possible, parents provide at least two weeks notice if a student must transfer from Academy of the City Charter School for any reason. Such notice will allow the School to process the necessary transfer paperwork, including having the student's records transferred. It will also enable the School to fill the vacant seat with another student from the waitlist.

#### **SPECIAL NEEDS**

In keeping with the rules and regulations that govern the provision of special education, Academy of the City Charter School will meet the requirements of IDEA and the charter law. Academy of the City Charter School uses the processes and policies of the New York City Department of Education, to implement the IEP of each student. If the school finds that it cannot implement the IEP of a given student, Academy of the City Charter School will work with the NYC Department of Education to provide either services or placement. The school provides Resource Room services and other related services such as counseling, speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, and physical therapy. Please address questions to the Principal as they relate to special education.

## **General Policies**

#### **MONEY AND OTHER VALUABLE PROPERTY**

Students are encouraged to leave all money and other valuable property at home. The School assumes no responsibility for the loss or theft of such articles.

#### **CELL PHONES, BEEPERS, PDAS, etc**

**Students are not allowed to use cell phones, beepers, or other personal electronic devices at school.**

They are distractions and can interfere with positive social interactions. Cell phones and other electronic devices that are taken out of backpacks or book bags will be taken and will need to be picked up by a parent/guardian. The School will not be responsible for lost or stolen cell phones or electronic devices.

### **CANDY, GUM, AND TOYS**

Students may not bring candy, gum, toys, or any non-school related items to School. Candy and gum will be discarded. Toys will need to be picked up by a parent/guardian.

### **BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS**

Academy of the City Charter School has adopted a policy to develop healthy eating habits. Birthdays are a special time in a child's life, and we offer the opportunity to celebrate this time once a month for all children whose birthday falls in that month. For children who have birthdays in July, they can be celebrated in June. For children who have birthdays in August, they can be celebrated in September.

The classroom celebration should be 10-15 minutes and a small snack can be provided by the parents. This snack must be individually packaged such as cupcakes or fruit and needs to take into account any child(ren) with allergies.

### **SOLICITATION AND USE OF COMMON AREAS**

Solicitation of or by any student, parent, or staff member on School property for any cause except those authorized by the Principal is strictly prohibited. The school's common areas include the playground, hallways, restrooms, cafeteria, gymnasium and multipurpose room. Because students from every grade use these areas under the supervision of various faculty and staff, it is important to establish rules and expectations that are commonly understood and consistently applied. With such rules in place, staff can focus on encouraging good character among students rather than correcting misbehavior.

Staff will continuously encourage appropriate behavior in the school's common areas through positive and friendly interactions with students. Verbal praise will be used to recognize students who exercise courtesy, safety, and respect. The Principal will visit classrooms or use the intercom to compliment good behavior in the school's common areas.

## **Responsibilities in Common Areas**

Following are the school's goals for student conduct in each of the common areas.

Playground:

Students will play safely in all games and on all equipment, showing consideration and respect for others.

Hallways:

The hallways of the school will be a safe and quiet environment where people interact with courtesy and respect.

Restrooms:

The restrooms at the school will be clean and safe. A pass procedure is established to keep the traffic controlled. At all times, teachers will use their discretion in sending children to the bathroom on a case by case basis.

Meals:

Lunches and snacks at the school will be enjoyed in a safe, clean, and friendly environment where people interact with courtesy, manners, and respect.

Assemblies:

Students will demonstrate respectful behavior during assemblies by listening, participating, and following directions.

### **Before and After School:**

Students will arrive at and depart from the school in a safe and orderly manner. Abusive, bullying, or disrespectful behavior will not be tolerated during arrival and dismissal or at any other time during the school day or on or around school property. This especially applies to those students riding the school bus—such behavior on a moving vehicle endangers the lives of students and drivers alike. **If a student cannot show he or she can behave responsibly on the bus, the privilege of riding the bus will be suspended and may, in some cases, be denied completely.**

### **DRESS CODE**

Academy of the City Charter School uniform policy was proposed by the Parent Community Organization and approved by the Board of Directors. The dress code is:

#### **Mandatory**

- Navy blue pants/skirts/skortis or jumpers
- a solid color polo shirt (long or short sleeve) with the Academy of the City Charter School patch. **Denim and jeans are not acceptable.**

#### **Optional**

- Navy blue sweatshirt or sweater; can be pullover or zippered, with Academy of the City logo.

Children must dress in compliance with school rules of sanitation and safety in a manner that conforms to community standards of decency and modesty. If student clothing is deemed inappropriate, the child's parent or guardian will be called to bring in acceptable clothing.

- Shoes and socks must be worn at all times for health and safety reasons.

## **Academy of the City Charter School**

- Shorts may be worn; however, the bottom of the shorts should be at the child’s fingertips or below. Shorts that are extremely short are not permitted.
- Strapless dresses, halter tops, midriff tops and see-through shirts are not permitted.
- Hats, caps, scarves, and other head coverings are not permitted unless required by religious practice.
- Appropriate dress, for weather and activities, on Physical Education days are: Fall or Spring: shorts, tee shirts, sneakers Winter: wind pants /sweatpants, tee shirts/sweatshirts, sneakers.
- Please note that **sneakers are required in order to participate in Physical Education**. This is for your child’s safety.

## Lunch

All parents/guardians must submit a Free and Reduced Priced Meal Application so that payment status may be established. While these forms are being processed, all students who desire meals provided through the School will receive them.

Parents are asked to make lunch payments on a monthly basis by cash or money order made payable to Academy of the City Charter School and to deliver these payments to the School office. When it is necessary for a student to pay in cash, parents are encouraged to seal the money in an envelope with the student’s name printed on the outside. The envelope should be delivered to the School office at the beginning of the school day to reduce the risk of loss or theft. **Parents who do not pay for lunches in a timely manner run the risk of having your child being denied lunch.** Every attempt will be made to remind parents to pay. We do not wish to cancel lunches or resort to collection agencies to assist us in getting payments that are due.

Students are advised to refrain from sharing food with other students to minimize the spread of viruses and bacteria, and the risk of allergic reaction.

Students will practice etiquette and hone their clean-up skills during mealtimes.

## Attendance, Arrival and Dismissal

### ARRIVAL

Children cannot arrive earlier than 8:00am without supervision as teachers and staff are setting up for the day. Early arrivals must wait in the lobby until 8:00am. K & 1st grade breakfast will be served in cafeteria. Grades 2nd–5th will have (optional) breakfast and morning work in their respective classrooms.

## LATENESS

Breakfast begins at 8:00 a.m. and classroom instruction begins promptly at 8:30 a.m. It is critical that all students be prepared to begin at that time. A student who is late misses valuable instructional time.

Grades K & 1st - Any student who arrives after 8:30 a.m. will be considered late and this will be officially noted. If a student is late four times, the problem will be regarded as chronic, and remedial action will be necessary.

Grades 2nd thru 5th - Any student who arrives after 8:15 a.m. will be considered late and this will be officially noted. If a student is late four times, the problem will be regarded as chronic, and remedial action will be necessary.

## ABSENCES

Parents must contact the main office by 9:00 a.m. by phone whenever a child is going to be absent **and** send a written excuse to the teacher when the child returns to school.

The following reasons are sufficient cause for an excused absence: a.) illness, b.) death in the family, c.) inclement weather, which would be dangerous to the life or health of the child, d.) legal quarantine, e.) emergency conditions as determined by the Principal or designee, and f.) prior permission from the Principal and consent from the parent/legal guardian.

In the event that extraordinary circumstances require that the student be absent from School, an Authorized Absence Plan may be developed jointly by the teacher, the Principal, and the student's parent or legal guardian. The plan will define the length of the absence and the means by which the student will make up the work he or she will miss. The plan must be approved and signed by the Executive Director and the parent/guardian prior to the student's absence.

If a student returns to school after an absence without a note, the teacher will call the parent to remind him or her to send a note the following day. If a note is not received within two school days of the absence, the absence will be regarded as unexcused. **After four unexcused absences, the appropriate legal authorities will be contacted.** Parents are reminded that it is their legal obligation to make certain their children are in school, and legal sanctions for truancy include fines. Excessive absences may lead to a child being retained in his or her current grade level and also reported to the appropriate authorities.

## DISMISSAL

Students at Academy of the City Charter School are dismissed at 4:00 p.m. If you are picking up your child by automobile, please be careful not to interfere with school buses. **Teachers are allowed to dismiss children only to the company of parents/guardians or people whose names are on the Emergency Contact list submitted to teachers at the beginning of the year.** Parents may put as many names as they wish on the Emergency Contact list and are advised to check periodically with teachers to make sure that this information is current.

It is a good idea to send your child’s teacher a note any time a new person is picking up your child, even if this person is on the Emergency Contact list. This will help avoid confusion and misunderstandings.

If it is necessary for a student to be dismissed from school before the end of the school day, parents must provide **written notification** to the school office by the child that will be picked up and the name of the person who will come for the child. This notice must be received by the School office by 3:00 p.m. the day of the early dismissal. **Only adults who are listed in the school’s records as being authorized will be allowed to take students from the school in these cases.**

## Transportation

For students who are eligible, free or half-price MetroCards or yellow school bus transportation is provided by the NYC Department of Education. Yellow bus stops are determined by the NYC Department of Education according to their guidelines. Academy of the City Charter School will accommodate new parents in getting their children on an existing route, but cannot create a new route unless there are 11 other children in the same area that also need transportation. Despite our best efforts, there are occasional days when Academy of the City Charter School and NYC Dept. of Education’s schedules do not coincide. **These are generally the week or so before the DOE busing begins.** On such days parents must make alternate arrangements to transport their child to school.

Yellow bus drivers operate with strict instructions. They are not allowed to transport students younger than 5 years old, or children who are not regular riders who want to visit their friends after school. They are not allowed to drop a child off at a bus stop if no adult is waiting for him or her—they will return to the school with the child at the end of the route.

It is important to get to know the bus driver on your child’s route and to keep the driver informed of any changes in your plans. Teachers and the Administration should always be informed of any changes as well. **Parents are never allowed on the bus.**

Parents and students are reminded that, by NYC Department of Education policy, lost or stolen MetroCards are not necessarily replaceable immediately. Students must wait until such information is entered in the Department of Education’s database and new cards are issued. Some public bus drivers will allow students to travel with a letter provided by the school, indicating a student is eligible for a card and is awaiting a new one.

### GENERAL ELIGIBILITY

Students must be at least 5 years old by December 31st of the school year and live within a 5-mile radius of the school to be eligible for a MetroCard or yellow bus service.

### ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES FOR METRO CARDS:

GRADE	DISTANCE	ELIGIBLE FOR:
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K–Grade 2	Less than ½ mile	Half-Fare MetroCard
K–Grade 2	½ mile or more	Full-Fare MetroCard or Yellow School Bus
Grades 3-6	Less than ½ mile	No transportation provided
Grades 3-6	½ mile to 1 mile	Half-Fare Metrocard
Grades 3-6	1 mile or more	Full-Fare Metrocard or Yellow School Bus

**BEHAVIOR RULES FOR THE BUS**

- Children must immediately take a seat and wear their seatbelts while the bus is in motion.
- Children may talk in low voices but may not shout or scream.
- Children may not hit other children or adults on the bus for any reason.

Consequences for failure to abide by the rules will result in suspension and ultimate loss of riding privileges.

**School Bus Infractions and Responses**

<p>Level One Infractions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Refusal to follow instructions of bus personnel</li> <li>- Yelling at other students inside the school bus, or at bus personnel</li> <li>- Bringing unauthorized items on the school bus for usage while riding (food items, electronic devices)</li> </ul>	<p>Possible Responses to Level One Infractions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Parents will be notified of the incident</li> <li>- Student will meet with administration to discuss the incident</li> <li>- Student(s) with the assistance of school personnel will facilitate students in acquiring skills to avoid a re-occurrence</li> <li>- A repeat of infraction can result in a suspension of riding privileges, duration of suspension can range from (1-5 days)</li> </ul>
<p>Level Two Infractions:</p>	<p>Possible Response to Level Two Infractions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Parents/guardian will be notified of</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Student(s) refusal to stay seated with a seatbelt while the school bus is in motion</li> <li>- Students changing assigned seat without permission from bus personnel</li> <li>- Students yelling out of windows to persons outside of the bus</li> <li>- Touching other students repeatedly when asked to cease</li> <li>- Exhibiting disrespectful behavior towards other students and bus personnel (i.e., profane language, or gestures directed towards other students or bus personnel)</li> </ul>	<p>the incident</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Student will meet with administration to discuss the incident</li> <li>- Student (s) with the assistance of school personnel will facilitate student in acquiring skills to avoid a re-occurrence</li> <li>- Student can face a suspension of riding privileges ranging from (2-5 days)</li> </ul>
<p>Level Three Infractions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Physical altercations involving another student or bus personnel</li> <li>- Theft of property</li> <li>- Verbally or physically bullying another student</li> <li>- Throwing objects out of windows</li> <li>- Bringing a weapon on the school bus</li> <li>- A consistent pattern of level one and two behaviors</li> </ul>	<p>Possible Response to Level Three Infractions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Parent conference</li> <li>- Bus suspension (3+ days, leading to possible suspension and ultimate expulsion from school)</li> <li>- Suspension from regular scheduled school program</li> <li>- Students with the assistance of school personnel will facilitate acquiring skills to avoid a re-occurrence</li> </ul>

## Health and Safety

Students' health and safety is the school's foremost responsibility. The following information describes the precautions taken to protect the well being of all students. If your child has any specific health, safety, or security needs, please inform the school so that appropriate accommodations can be made.

### NURSE

Academy of the City Charter School has the services of an on-site nurse to assist students who are ill or injured. Parents will be notified whenever a student has been referred to the school nurse. If the nurse requests that a child be sent home, **the child must be picked up immediately.**

Parents or students may also wish to consult with the nurse on matters related to hygiene, nutrition, substance abuse, depression, child abuse and neglect, or other issues of concern.

### MEDICATION

The school nurse and the student's teacher must be informed of any prescription medication that a student is required to take at school. To dispense prescription medication to students, the nurse **must** receive a written order from the student's doctor and a permission slip from the student's parent or guardian. All medications should be brought to the school nurse in its original prescription container, labeled with the student's name, the name of the medication, the date of expiration, and the proper dosage.

***Students are not permitted to bring non-prescription medications to School.*** If, during the course of the school day, it is necessary for a student to receive common, non-prescription medication (e.g., Tylenol), the school nurse will dispense it with proper authorization. Parents must inform the school of any allergies to or restrictions on non-prescription medication that their children might have. Also, please notify the school nurse in writing if your child has a chronic illness that may affect his or her performance at school.

### ACCIDENTS

The school nurse or a trained staff member will administer initial treatments for minor injuries. The student's parent or emergency contact will be notified immediately by phone whenever medical treatment is administered to a student, and an incident report will be kept in the student's permanent file. **In such cases, it is especially crucial that the school have working phone numbers for students' parents and for alternate contacts in the event that a parent is unavailable.** Please be vigilant in keeping the school's records for your child up-to-date.

## FIRE DRILLS/EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

The school will have at least 10 fire and 2 shelter drills during school hours. Specific signals and procedures have been established for all types of disaster drills, and safety areas have been designated. Teachers are equipped with instructions, and all drills will be practiced with students on a regular basis.

## VISITOR IDENTIFICATION

To help ensure a safe and secure learning environment for your children, **all visitors** to Academy of the City Charter School are required to show ID, sign in at the school office, and to wear a visitor's pass. Faculty and staff have been instructed to escort anyone not having a pass immediately to the main office for identification.

## Student Records and Confidentiality

Every student is required to complete and submit the following as part of the registration process:

- *Birth Certificate*
- *Proof of residence.* This can be a utility bill (but not a cable bill)
- *Enrollment Form.* This form is used to record all basic information about the student and the family, including home, work, and emergency telephone numbers. It is extremely important that a parent or guardian sign this form.
- *Free and Reduced Price Meals Application.* This form must be completed for all students and will be held in strict confidence.
- *Medical Forms.* This set of forms must be submitted for all students within the first 30 days of attendance. If you have questions about immunization requirements or other medical issues, please contact your physician or the school nurse. It is the responsibility of each parent or guardian to keep their child's medical information, including food allergies, up to date.
- *Record Release.* This form gives the School permission to obtain all records pertaining to a given student from his or her previous school. This form must be completed and should include the telephone number and address of the previous school, as well as the signature of a parent or legal guardian.
- *Media Release Form.* Academy of the City Charter School may seek public interest and media coverage. If for any reason, you do not wish to have your child photographed, video taped, or contacted by the media, you may state so on this form.

It is critical that the School be notified **immediately** of any changes in a student's name, address, phone number, responsible parent, or any other information provided at the time of registration. Such changes should be communicated in writing and sent to the School Secretary.

Academy of the City Charter School complies with all confidentiality laws protecting the privacy of its students and their families. Information regarding a student's progress will be shared only with parents or guardians, appropriate members of the School's faculty and staff, and any professional consultants

retained for the purpose of measuring and/or improving instructional quality. When information regarding student performance is made public, it will be presented in such a way as to avoid the identification of specific, individual students.

### **FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)**

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

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

Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student’s education records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible students to review the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies.

Parents or eligible students have the right to request that a school correct record, which they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information.

Generally schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student in order to release any information from a student’s education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR S 99.31):

- School officials with legitimate educational interest
- Other schools to which a student is transferring
- Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes
- Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student
- Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school
- Accrediting organizations
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena
- Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies
- State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law

## **Complaint Policy Procedures**

### **Academy of the City Charter School**

## FORMAL COMPLAINTS

*A formal complaint involves an alleged violation of law and/or charter. Examples of formal complaints are:*

- Improper discipline of a special-education student (violates IDEA)
- Billing the wrong district for a student (violation of Charter Schools Act)
- Child abuse in the school (violation of New York State law)

*Issues involving a violation of law and/or charter may be resolved informally, but the complainant can at any time during the process initiate the formal complaint process.*

Procedures for filing a formal complaint:

*All formal complaints from a parent, individual or public agency must be submitted in writing. If you wish you may pick up a complaint form in the school's main office. The complaint should include:*

- The nature of the violation
- The facts on which the statement is based
- The signature and contact information of the person filing the complaint
- If alleging violations with respect to a specific child, include:
  - ° The name and address of the residence of the child
  - ° A description of the nature of the problem of the child (the concerns that led you to file the complaint), including the facts relating to the problem
  - ° A proposed resolution of the problem to the extent known and available at the time the person is filing the complaint

What to expect once a formal complaint has been filed:

1. *Please submit your complaint to one of the Administrative Assistants in the main office. S/he will date stamp it and place in the mailbox of the Principal.*
2. *All formal complaints will be reviewed by the Board Chair of Board of Trustees within 5 business days.*
3. *The Board Chair will respond to your complaint in writing within 10 business days.*
4. Upon resolution of a complaint, Academy of the City Charter School will provide you with:

*A written determination and any remedial action to be taken and the reasons for such determinations*

*A written notice informing you of your right to appeal the determination to SUNY, Charter Schools Institute if the complaint involves a violation of law or charter*

*A copy of the SUNY's grievance policies (as they are posted on the website of the Institute at <http://www.newyorkcharters.org/parentResources.htm#questions>).*

## The Formal Complaint Appeal Process

*SUNY Charter Schools Institute's role in the formal complaint process is a limited one, and it is generally restricted to appeals after the school's board of trustees has handled the complaint. Detailed instructions for filing an appeal are available on the Parent Resources pages of the Institute's website:*

<http://www.newyorkcharters.org;parentResources.htm#questions>.

## **INFORMAL COMPLAINTS**

Many types of complaints do not involve violations of law or charter. Examples of informal complaints are:

- "Xena pulled my daughters' hair. Can't she move seats?"
- "I want my son in a different class or section."
- " My child was retained in the 3rd grade and I think she should be in the 4th grade." (No discrimination; assume charter was followed)
- "I think my child deserves an 'A' in that course, not a 'B'."

It is the desire of the school to work closely with parents and students to resolve issues that are problematic for either party in a manner that is respectful and thoughtful and beneficial for both parties. It is the hope of the school that issues that would fall in the category of 'informal complaints' be resolved quickly at the school level and is not handled by the school's Board of Trustees.

Procedures for filing an Informal Complaint:

- Complaints on behalf of your child should be made as quickly as possible to the teacher. You may submit your complaint in writing, orally, or via email to the teacher or person involved. The school directory has a complete list of all email addresses.
- If the teacher does not resolve the issue to your satisfaction you may take your complaint to an administrator—the Principal or Assistant Principal.
- If your complaint is about a school administrator or teacher, and you have not been able to resolve it with person involved, you should proceed to the Principal.
- If your complaint is about the Principal, you should file your complaint in writing to the President of the Board of Trustees.

What to expect once an informal complaint has been filed:

You should expect a response within five business days. If you do not get a response in a reasonable amount of time you may move the complaint up the chain of command. If no action is taken at all, you may proceed directly to the Board of Trustees, under what would be a violation of this policy, which is part of the school's charter.

Upon resolution of your complaint, Academy of the City Charter School will provide you with:

## **Academy of the City Charter School**

A response that includes the reason for the action taken, if any. Response to informal complaints may take the form of oral or written communication. To the extent possible, the school will keep a written record of informal complaints.

#### The Informal Complaint Appeal Process

If a parent is not satisfied with the resolution or action taken by a teacher, staff member or administrator, he or she may appeal to the Principal.

Academy of the City Charter School Board of Trustees does not handle appeals of informal complaints, unless the initial complaint was about the Principal.

**Principal:** Richard Lee, 31-29 60th Street, Woodside, NY 11377. rlee@academyofthecity.org

**President of the Board of Trustees:** Nancy Sills, 31-29 60th Street, Woodside, NY 11377, nsills@academyofthecity.org

SUNY Charter Schools Institute does not handle appeals of informal complaints.

## Responsibilities of School Personnel

### PRINCIPAL AND ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

The role of the Principal with regard to discipline is to guide staff and students in their efforts to ensure student success—the central mission of the school.

Working with the school’s Guidance Counselor, Assistant Principal, and Dean of School Culture, the Principal will provide training and continued support to teachers as they strive to teach students to follow the *Peace Curriculum* and school rules.

The Dean of School Culture will assist staff in responding to severe misbehavior, such as uncooperative behavior and physically dangerous and/or illegal acts, as well as any chronic or recurring problems. In certain cases, the Principal will initiate break periods, parent conferences, suspensions, or other consequences. The Principal may also contact the appropriate law enforcement authorities, depending on the nature of the infraction. If the Principal is unavailable to assist with a crisis situation, the school’s Administrative Staff will direct referrals to another assigned staff member.

### TEACHERS AND SUPPORT STAFF:

The classroom teacher is the center of the school’s character education and discipline policy. Academy of the City Charter School recognizes the need for a cooperative relationship between students, parents, and educators. We need and expect teachers and staff to:

- Be models of the *Peace Curriculum*.

## Academy of the City Charter School

- Be prepared and enthusiastic in implementing the curriculum.
- Use consistent and compassionate guidance procedures.
- Help maintain an atmosphere conducive to good behavior.
- Strive to create a positive learning environment.
- Help students resolve conflicts in a constructive and compassionate manner.
- Seek to involve students in the development of classroom policy.
- Plan a flexible curriculum to meet the needs of all students.
- Differentiate instruction to meet the needs of all students.
- Encourage parent and community participation.
- Be well-groomed, and conduct themselves in a safe and responsible manner.
- Be consistently on time and prepared.
- Work cooperatively with colleagues, parents, and administrators.
- Seek changes in an orderly and approved manner.

All teachers will implement three basic principles of classroom management and discipline:

- At the beginning of the school year, students will be taught how to behave responsibly in each type of classroom activity, and these lessons will be reinforced throughout the year as necessary.
- Teachers will strive to provide positive reinforcement by interacting frequently with each student when the student is behaving appropriately.
- When misbehavior occurs, teachers will redirect actions or calmly and consistently implement mild classroom “consequences,” corrective actions taken in response to inappropriate behavior, using such instances as teaching opportunities. The focus of interaction with each student should continue to be primarily positive.

Though these principles will serve as useful guides, each teacher, student, and situation is unique. Teachers will use professional discretion to select the specific procedures that fit individual student needs and particular situations.

Teachers will work in collaboration with other staff to solve problems that are chronic or severe. Techniques that may be used by teachers in dealing with minor behavior problems as well as procedures for responding to chronic misbehavior are described under “Encouraging Appropriate Conduct.”

#### **SCHOOL NURSE OR MEDICAL PERSONNEL**

The school nurse will be available to faculty, staff, and students for consultation on such matters as personal hygiene, nutrition, substance abuse, depression, child abuse, or neglect. The nurse will also provide medical care for students who are ill or injured. When the nurse is not on school grounds, staff will assist students in need and will determine whether parents should be contacted and the student sent home.

## Responsibilities and Rights of Students

Students shall have the right to:

- attend school and benefit from quality educational opportunities.
- be informed of all school rules and regulations, and the consequences of breaking those rules and regulations.
- receive due process in all disciplinary actions. This shall include a grievance procedure.
- receive a free and appropriate education, which will include instruction using texts and materials at a level, which allows an opportunity for success.
- know in advance how grades in a class will be determined.
- use school facilities, properties, and materials.
- hear, examine, and express divergent points of view; this shall include freedom of speech, written expression, and symbolic expression.
- be shown personal respect by other students and school personnel.
- be supported in their social and emotional growth.
- enjoy appropriate break times for exercise.
- decide whether or not to participate in symbolic (e.g., flag salute) or religious activities.
- dress and groom in such a way as to express personal preferences within the parameters of the school dress code.
- peacefully assemble on school grounds in a way that does not disrupt the school day, the ability of teachers to teach or the rights of other students.
- enjoy reasonable degrees of personal privacy. However, upon reasonable suspicion, student's spaces and belongings may be searched for prohibited or illegally possessed substances or objects.

Students shall have the responsibility to:

- arrive on time and attend all classes daily.
- come to class with appropriate working materials and be responsible for his/her own work.
- complete classroom assignments and homework to the best of her/his abilities.
- understand the teacher's grading system and monitor his/her own progress in each class.
- respect and protect school facilities, properties, and materials.
- abide by the rules set forth by the school and individual classroom teacher and accept the consequences of acceptable and unacceptable behavior.
- cooperate with school personnel in cases involving disciplinary actions; they should follow prescribed steps of grievance procedure and accept final decisions.
- refrain from profane or inflammatory statements.
- conduct themselves in a safe and responsible manner.
- know and observe school rules of dress and appearance.

- consider and respect the divergent points of view of others; they should also be sure that their personal expressions (speech, written, or symbolic) are not damaging to or infringing on the rights of others.
- respect the rights of others to participate in symbolic or religious activities of their choice.
- abide by the rules and guidelines of extracurricular activities and clubs; they should show good school spirit and sportsmanship.
- support and take an active interest in student government.
- assemble in such a way as to avoid disrupting the educational process or conflicting with school rules.

## **Responsibility of Parents/Guardians**

Parents are encouraged to participate fully in the education of their children. Support and cooperation of parents are vital. Parents are expected to support the academic learning of their child by maintaining high expectations for both the student and the school. The major role of parents with regard to discipline and character education at the school is to demonstrate consistent interest in the child's progress at school and support for the child's best efforts. Parental support provides an enormous incentive for a child to strive for excellence.

Parents may be asked to help teach their child specific skills, such as remembering homework, learning to be more independent, or managing anger appropriately. If parents are asked to assist staff, specific information will be provided on ways to help the student.

If there is a severe or recurring problem, parents will be asked to help staff teach the student an alternative set of behaviors. In such cases, it is important to recognize that teaching a student to behave appropriately as a contributing member of the school community is in the student's best interest. By working together, parents and staff can help the student acquire the skills that will increase opportunities for success. Failure to comply with the specifics of the school's plan for teaching appropriate behavior and continued student misbehavior may result in the student's expulsion.

Parents who have concerns about their child's adjustment to the school or any aspect of the school's program and policies will be asked to discuss their concerns first with their child's teacher. Every teacher at the school will be prepared to work with parents and will respond to parental concerns appropriately and expeditiously. The Guidance Counselor, Conductor of Curriculum and Instruction and Principal will also be available if there are issues that continue to persist.

### **PARTICIPATION**

- Attend all parent-teacher conferences.
- Attend school functions and activities with your child.
- Become an active member of the Parent Community Organization.

- Respond promptly to school requests for information or permission.

#### ENVIRONMENT

- Ensure that your child is clean and dressed according to the school's dress code.
- Maintain regular medical and dental checkups for your child. Help your child maintain a healthy lifestyle by leading one yourself.
- Communicate openly with your child in order to help solve any school problem.
- Support school officials in maintaining a safe and orderly school environment.
- Discuss the *Peace Curriculum* with your child.
- Ensure that your child understands that possessing or handling any type of weapon on school property, on the way to or from school, or at any school event is prohibited and will lead to expulsion and notification of the police and New York State Education Department.
- Provide a good nutrition for your child and ensure that they are well rested and prepared to attend school for each day it is open

#### EDUCATION

- Fill your home with books. Read together every night.
- Make certain your child's attendance at school is regular and punctual and that all absences are properly excused and in compliance with school procedures.
- Instill in your child the desire to learn. Plan family visits to museums, libraries, theatres, and science centers.
- Become acquainted with the school, staff, curriculum, and activities.
- Ensure that your child has the necessary materials and supplies needed for school.
- Ensure that your child has a quiet and proper place and time to study at home.

#### RESPECT

- Be respectful of Academy of the City Charter School's teachers, staff, and the rules that guide the school. Treat all members of our learning community with the same level of basic respect and patience that you yourself wish to receive in return. Do not smoke while on school grounds.
- Guide your child, from the earliest years of his or her life, to be polite, to exercise self-control, and to be accountable for his or her actions.
- Teach your child, by word and example, respect for law, for the authority of the school, and for the rights and property of others.
- Encourage your child to respect honest work and to develop an interest in exploring broader fields of knowledge.

- Know and understand the rules your child is expected to observe at school, be aware of the consequences for violations of these rules, and accept legal responsibility for your child’s actions.
- Accept the right of the Board of Trustees to require respectable behavior of all students and non-students at all activities involving the school. Understand that the rulings of the Board reflect the final authority at the school on all matters pertaining to discipline.
- Encourage your child to respect and learn about the different cultures represented by our diverse student body

#### EXPRESSION

- Encourage your child to conduct him/herself in an appropriate manner so as to contribute towards the educational progress of his or her classmates.
- Insist that your child never make obscene gestures, libelous, racist or sexist statements, or use intimidating tactics toward others.
- Encourage your child to dress appropriately so that his or her appearance will not disrupt the educational process or activities.

## Encouraging Appropriate Conduct

### ACKNOWLEDGING APPROPRIATE CONDUCT

#### Positive Interactions and Positive Feedback

Each day, staff at Academy of the City Charter School encourages our students to behave appropriately and to develop positive relationships with adults and children. Our staff works in a friendly, supportive manner. Students who demonstrate good citizenship as peacemakers are rewarded with esteem building praise and recognition such as “Alicia, you have been very responsible in remembering to bring your homework on the day it is due”.

Positive interactions with peers and adults will include:

Greeting each other

Using kind words

Taking turns

Resolving conflict with our words

Showing concern for others’ feelings

Respecting personal space and property

## CONSEQUENCES FOR MINOR MISBEHAVIOR

We expect that the great majority of our students will strive to meet Academy of the City Charter School's expectations for responsibility and self-discipline. We also understand, however, that no single set of procedures will be effective in helping every student develop the skills and attitudes necessary for success. Therefore, a series of interventions has been designed for students who have not been motivated by the school-wide procedures. As teachers and faculty adapt disciplinary procedures to meet individual needs, the focus will remain positive and an emphasis will be placed on the continuing need for calm and consistent consequences.

### **MAKING AMENDS MAY INVOLVE :**

an apology;  
community or school service;  
fixing, replacing, and/or paying for damage  
caused.

Students will learn that certain actions are unacceptable at the school and misbehavior has consequences. Students who engage in any type of misbehavior, whether minor or severe, will be reminded and redirected to correct their behavior using verbal and non-verbal signals. When a student fails to respond, nonpunitive consequences will be used. We will begin with requiring the student to make amends and/or restore the situation. In all cases, parents will be informed of the child's inappropriate behavior and the restitution requirement.

### **Other Non-Punitive Consequences**

Other non-punitive consequences that may be used to help support the student are: Increased structure and supervision, moving the child, taking away objects related to misbehavior, narrowing the child's choices, taking a privilege or responsibility away. These consequences serve to control behavior in the classroom and will be used at teacher discretion. In classroom "go-and-return" (taking a break) is also used.

## CONSEQUENCES FOR SEVERE MISBEHAVIOR

Most misbehavior will be handled with discussion or the use of mild consequences. However, severe misbehavior will be met swiftly with specific consequences. Severe misbehavior is defined as belonging to at least one of the following categories:

- Uncooperative behavior
- Bullying
- Physically dangerous behavior
- Illegal behavior

**Uncooperative behavior** is the direct refusal to comply with a reasonable staff instruction within a specified period of time. In such cases, the staff member involved will first remind and redirect to correct unwanted behavior. A mild consequence may be issued. The classroom teacher will make every effort to redirect student behavior in the classroom. If the student continues to ignore or disregard the instruction, in-classroom “go and return”, buddy classroom “go and return” or temporary removal from the group will be used. In severe cases, when a student is unresponsive, support providers, including the school guidance counselor, may be utilized to assist the student. Every attempt will be made to de-escalate the situation in the classroom setting.

Should the student fail to respond, he or she will be sent out of the classroom to the designated administrator and the incident will be reported to the Assistant Principal or Principal. When deemed necessary, an extended removal from the classroom or sending the child home are possible options.

**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. Types of bullying include:

<p><b>Verbal bullying</b> is saying or writing mean things.</p> <p>Verbal bullying includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teasing</li> <li>Name-calling</li> <li>Inappropriate sexual comments</li> <li>Taunting</li> <li>Threatening to cause harm</li> </ul>	<p><b>Social bullying</b>, sometimes referred to as relational bullying, involves hurting someone’s reputation or relationships.</p> <p>Social bullying includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leaving someone out on purpose</li> <li>Telling other children not to be friends with someone</li> <li>Spreading rumors about someone</li> <li>Embarrassing someone in public</li> </ul>	<p><b>Physical bullying</b> involves hurting a person’s body or possessions. Physical bullying includes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hitting/kicking/pinching</li> <li>Spitting</li> <li>Tripping/pushing</li> <li>Taking or breaking someone’s things</li> <li>Making mean or rude hand gestures</li> </ul>
<p><b>Cyber bullying</b> has been described by the U.S. Department of Education as bullying that occurs through the use of electronic technology, such as cell phones, computers, and tablets. It can also involve the use of communication tools, such social media sites, text messages, chat and websites.</p> <p>Examples of cyber bullying include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Sending hurtful, rude, or mean text messages or e-mails to others.</li> <li>● Spreading rumors or lies about others by text message or e-mail or posting on social networking sites.</li> <li>● Creating or sharing pictures, websites, videos or social media profiles, including fake profiles that embarrass, humiliate, or make fun of others.</li> </ul>		

In cases of **physically dangerous behavior**—fighting, assault, physical intimidation or striking with hands or feet —staff will firmly inform the students to stop. If the students do not respond, staff will use professional judgment to determine whether or not to intervene physically. Staff will not be required to take action that could be physically dangerous; in such cases, another teacher will be sent immediately for assistance. The Principal, Assistant Principal or other designated staff will notify parents and decide whether to contact the appropriate law enforcement authorities.

If a staff member is aware that a student is engaged in **illegal activity**, the staff member will refer the case to the Principal or designee who will notify the student’s parent or guardian and, together with the Principal, will decide whether to contact the appropriate law enforcement authorities. When episodes of severe misbehavior are cumulative, an Expulsion Hearing may be convened upon the third instance.

**CORRECTING INAPPROPRIATE CONDUCT**

The following interventions may be used in response to student misbehavior.

**POSSIBLE INTERVENTIONS TO BE USED:**

Admonishment by school personnel

Parent outreach

Intervention by counseling staff, including individual/group counseling

Restorative approaches

Peer mediation

Development of individual behavior contract

Short-term behavioral progress reports

Community service (with parental consent)

**Referral**

Referrals to the Assistant Principal or Principal will be made only in response to severe or recurring behavior problems.

When making an office referral, the referring staff member will complete a Referral Form as soon as possible after the infraction. The Assistant Principal or Guidance Counselor will keep records on referrals, which will be periodically reviewed by the school's Leadership Team. Using these records, the Leadership Team will determine the appropriate disciplinary response to help the student correct their behavior.

**Taking a Break (Extended 'Go and Return')**

At the school, breaks may be used for students who need a neutral environment to help manage their own behavior, or to cool down or reflect on inappropriate behavior. Such breaks may involve removing the student from the instructional setting to a designated area in the classroom.

The following procedure is suggested when imposing a time out. ***No student shall ever be unsupervised during a break situation.***

- Upon the behavioral infraction, the student will be sent on a short time out away from the instructional setting. The student will be told in a firm, non-emotional voice, that he or she has made the choice to continue the inappropriate behavior, and that a time out is the consequence.
- The student will be told firmly that certain behaviors damage the school community and that he or she must want to contribute to a positive community before being allowed to rejoin the class. The student will be allowed to rejoin his/her classmates when he or she can communicate this desire to the teacher.

### **Suspension**

In response to cases of severe misbehavior, the Principal, or a designee, may suspend or temporarily remove the student from school for up to ten calendar days. Suspension is regarded as a serious consequence. Once a student is suspended, he or she cannot go back and rejoin his or her class. The administration will attempt to contact parents and inform them of their child's infraction and its basic circumstances. Parents are expected to accept the suspension. ***Suspended students must be picked up immediately by their parents or guardian.*** (At the discretion of the school administration, a suspended student may be allowed to go home by bus.) The student's parents will be required to meet with the Principal, or designee, and any staff members involved in the suspension prior to the student's return to the school. During this meeting, parents are not entitled to know what specific consequences, if any, were given to the other child/children involved in the infraction. Parents are responsible for transporting children to and from these sessions. In addition, the student is required to complete homework related to the disciplinary infraction.

### **Expulsion**

Expulsion is defined as the removal of the right and obligation of a student to attend the school under the conditions set by the school's Board of Trustees. The Principal will have final authority in recommending the expulsion of a student to the Board. A student who commits any reportable crime or who has had three instances of severe misbehavior may be subject to an expulsion hearing before the Board. Expulsions are final. Expelled students are not permitted on school grounds or at any school-related functions.

### **EXPULSION PROCEDURES**

If the offense is serious and/or the student has a series of several violations, the Principal may recommend to the Board of Trustees that the student be expelled from school.

The Principal or designee may suspend the student from school and will inform the parent at the time of suspension or within three (3) school days of the intent to file written charges for expulsion and offer to meet with the parent and student to discuss the reason(s) for the suspension and expulsion. Homework assignments will be provided to the student during the period prior to the expulsion hearing. Parents are encouraged to pick up the homework or must make arrangements to secure the assignments.

Charges for expulsion will be presented to the Board of Trustees in executive session for a formal hearing. The president of the Board of Trustees, or other board member designated by the Board president, will preside over the hearing.

The parent and student may attend the hearing and have the right to bring counsel. The parent and student may elect to waive their rights to appear at the meeting by an affirmative waiver or by failing to appear at the designated time. This action will be deemed a waiver of rights to contest the expulsion.

At the expulsion hearing, the Principal or designee will present the evidence to support the charges against the student. The student or parent will have the opportunity to answer the charges against the student and to present evidence to support the student's position.

Parents must be notified within three (3) school days of the findings by the Board of Trustees.

If a parent wishes to appeal the decision of the Board of Trustees based on their belief that their child was not afforded due process and/or that some law was broken they may file a formal complaint to SUNY, Charter Schools Institute and/or the New York State Education Department in accordance with the processes and procedures detailed in the School's Complaint Policy.

#### **EXPULSION OF SPECIAL-EDUCATION STUDENTS**

Students with disabilities may be suspended for inappropriate behavior. The Principal may give a short-term suspension to a student with disabilities. The Principal may suspend a disabled student from school for a total of ten days in a school year.

The Principal may recommend a student with disabilities for a long-term suspension or expulsion (greater than ten days) by following these procedures:

1. The Principal will follow regular procedures for long-term suspension or expulsion as described above.
2. Once the director has made a recommendation for long-term suspension or expulsion of a student with disabilities, he or she will refer the matter to the Committee on Special Education of the District Office.
3. If the District Office concurs that a suspension or expulsionary hearing is in order, the parent will be notified in writing of the time and place of the proceeding.

It is important that all students and parents understand that, in addition to taking disciplinary action at the school level, certain criminal and/or disruptive behavior must be reported to the police and to New York State Education Department through VADIR (Violent and Disruptive Incident Report). The following incidents will be reported.

- Capital Crimes
- Assaults or Threats of Assault
- Possession of Weapons
- Robbery or Theft
- Sexual Abuse
- Property Damage
- Drug or Alcohol Use

Additionally, the Principal has the discretion to report any other incident occurring within the regular operation of the school.

Any student who is formally charged with a felony by a proper prosecuting attorney for an incident which is shown to have an adverse impact on the educational program, discipline, or welfare in the school in which the student enrolled shall, following an administrative hearing conducted pursuant to rules of the State Board of Education, and after due notice to the parents, parent, or guardian, and when suspension is recommended, be suspended from all classes until the determination of his or her guilt or innocence, or the dismissal of charges, is made by a court of competent jurisdiction.

The Principal may suspend students under specified conditions for lengths of time in excess of 10 school days provided daytime alternative educational options are utilized.

## **Appropriate Internet Usage Policy**

Academy of the City Charter School makes available to its students access to interconnected computer systems within the School and to the Internet, the worldwide network that provides various means of accessing significant educational materials and opportunities. In order for the school to be able to make its computer network and Internet access available, all students must take responsibility for appropriate and lawful use of internet resources. Teachers and other Staff will make reasonable efforts to supervise student use of network and Internet access. Students must understand that inappropriate internet use can result in one or more of the following; school discipline, loss of the privilege of using internet resources and/or criminal prosecution.

Below is the Acceptable Use and Internet Safety Policy (“Policy”) of Academy of the City Charter School and the Data Acquisition Site that provides Internet access. Upon reviewing, signing, and returning this Policy, a student will be eligible for Internet access at the school. If a student is under 18 years of age, the “PARENT’S OR GUARDIAN’S AGREEMENT” must be signed and returned.

## **Academy of the City Charter School**

AoC cannot provide access to any student who is 18 or older until the Policy is signed and recorded or to a student under 18, until the "PARENT'S OR GUARDIAN'S AGREEMENT is signed and recorded.

Listed below are the provisions of your agreement regarding computer network and Internet use. If you have any questions about these provisions, you should contact the Director of Operations.

#### I. PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

By signing this Policy, you are agreeing to follow all rules outlined in the policy and to report violations of the policy by other students.

#### II. TERM OF THE PERMITTED USE

A student who returns a properly signed Policy will have computer network and Internet access during the remainder of the student's academic career while enrolled in Academy of the City Charter School.

#### III. ACCEPTABLE USES

A. Educational Purposes Only. Academy of the City Charter School is providing access to its computer networks and the Internet for educational purposes only.

B. Unacceptable Uses of Network. Among the uses that are considered unacceptable and which constitute a violation of this Policy are the following:

1. Uses that violate the law or encourage others to violate the law.
2. Transmittal of offensive or harassing messages.
3. Any use which is commercial in nature.
4. To use the Internet to view, transmit or download pornographic or otherwise objectionable materials.
5. To use the Internet to transmit confidential or copyright materials.
6. To use the internet to download any program, partial program or game without the express permission of the supervising teacher.
7. Any use of the internet, which causes harm to others or their property.
8. Any improper use of passwords.
9. Any programming vandalism.
10. Any "hacking" activities
11. Any activities designed to expose the school or other computers to computer "viruses".
12. Students cannot provide private information about themselves over the internet including the student's credit card or social security number.

C. Netiquette. All users must abide by rules of network etiquette, which include the following:

1. Be polite. Use appropriate language. No swearing, vulgarities, suggestive, obscene, belligerent, or threatening language.
2. Avoid language and uses that may be offensive to other users. Do not use, distribute, or redistribute jokes, stories, or other materials that are based upon slurs or stereotypes relating to race, gender, ethnicity, nationality, religion, or sexual orientation.

3. Do not assume that a sender of e-mail is giving his or her permission for you to forward or redistribute the message to third parties or to give his/her e-mail address to third parties. This should only be done with permission or when you know that the individual would have no objection.
4. Students will not cyber bully or create cyber attacks on any member of the school community.

#### IV. INTERNET SAFETY

A. General Warning: Individual Responsibility of Parents and Users. All users and their parents/guardians are advised that access to the electronic network may include the potential for access to materials inappropriate for school-aged pupils. Every user must take responsibility for his or her use of the computer network and Internet and stay away from these sites. Parents of minors are the best guide to materials to shun. If a student finds that other users are visiting offensive or harmful sites, he or she should report such use to his/her supervising teacher.

B. Personal Safety. Be safe. In using the computer network and Internet, do not reveal personal information such as your home address or telephone number. Do not use your real last name or any other information which might allow a person to locate you without first obtaining the permission of a supervising teacher. Do not arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone you “meet” on the computer network or Internet without your parent’s permission. If someone attempts to arrange a meeting with you as a result of an internet contact you must report the communication, immediately, to your supervising teacher.

C. “Hacking” and Other Illegal Activities. It is a violation of this Policy to use the School’s computer network or the Internet to gain unauthorized access to other computers or computer systems, or to attempt to gain such unauthorized access. Any use which violates state or federal law relating to copyright, trade secrets, the distribution of obscene or pornographic materials, or which violates any other applicable law or municipal ordinance, is strictly prohibited

D. Confidentiality of Student Information. Personally identifiable information concerning students may not be disclosed or used in any way on the Internet without the permission of a parent or guardian or, if the student is 18 or over, the permission of the student himself/herself. Users should never give out private or confidential information about themselves or others on the Internet, particularly credit card numbers and Social Security numbers. Only a member of the school administration may authorize the release of student information, as defined by New York law, for internal administrative purposes or approved educational projects and activities.

E. Active Restriction Measures. The School, either by itself or in combination with the Data Acquisition Site providing Internet access, will utilize filtering software or other technologies to prevent students from accessing visual depictions that are (1) obscene, (2) child pornography, or (3) harmful to minors. The School will also monitor the online activities of students, through direct observation and/or technological means, to ensure that students are not accessing such depictions or any other material that is inappropriate for minors.

Internet filtering software or other technology-based protection systems may be disabled by a supervising teacher or school administrator, as necessary, for purposes of bona fide research or other educational projects being conducted by students age 17 or older.

The term “harmful to minors” is defined by the Communications Act of 1934 (47 USC Section 254 [h][7]), as meaning any picture, image, graphic image file, or other visual depiction that taken as a whole and with respect to minors, appeals to a prurient interest in nudity, sex, or excretion; depicts, describes, or represents, in a patently offensive way with respect to what is suitable for minors, an actual or simulated sexual act or sexual contact, actual or simulated normal or perverted sexual acts, or a lewd exhibition of the genitals; taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value as to minors

#### V. PRIVACY

Network and Internet access is provided as a tool for your education. The Academy of the City Charter School reserves the right to monitor, inspect, copy, review and store at any time and without prior notice any and all usage of the computer network and Internet access and any and all information transmitted or received in connection with such usage. All such information files shall be and remain the property of the OWNCS and no user shall have any expectation of privacy regarding such materials.

#### VI. FAILURE TO FOLLOW POLICY

The user’s use of the computer network and Internet is a privilege, not a right. A user who violates this Policy, shall at a minimum, have his or her access to the computer network and Internet terminated, which the school may refuse to reinstate for the remainder of the student’s enrollment. A user violates this Policy by his or her own action or by failing to report any violations by other users that come to the attention of the user. Further, a user violates this Policy if he or she permits another to use his or her account or password to access the computer network and Internet, including any user whose access has been denied or terminated. Academy of the City Charter School may also take other disciplinary action in such circumstances. In some instances inappropriate computer and Internet use violates state and/or federal laws and may result in criminal prosecution or juvenile court action.

#### VII. WARRANTIES/ INDEMNIFICATION

AoC makes no warranties of any kind, either express or implied, in connection with its provision of access to and use of its computer networks and the Internet provided under this Policy. It shall not be responsible for any claims, losses, damages or costs (including ~ fees) of any kind suffered, directly or indirectly, by any user or his or her parent(s) or guardian(s) arising out of the user’s use of its computer networks or the Internet under this Policy. By signing this Policy, users are taking full responsibility for his/her use, and the user who is 18 or older or, in the case of a user under 18, the parent(s) or guardian(s) are agreeing to indemnify and hold the School, the Data Acquisition Site that provides the computer and Internet access opportunity to Academy of the City Charter School and all of their administrators, teachers, and staff harmless from any and all loss, costs, claims or damages resulting from the user’s access to its computer network and the Internet, including but not limited to any fees or

charges incurred through purchases of goods or services by the user. The user or, if the user is a minor, the user's parent(s) or guardian(s) agree to cooperate with the School in the event of the School's initiating an investigation of a user's use of his or her access to its computer network and the Internet, whether that use is on a School computer or on another computer outside the school's network.

#### VIII. UPDATES

Users, and if appropriate, the user's parents/guardians, may be asked from time to time to provide new or additional registration and account information or to sign a new Policy, for example, to reflect developments in the law or technology. Such information must be provided by the user (or his/her parents or guardian) or such new Policy must be signed if the user wishes to continue to receive service. If after you have provided your account information, some or all of the information changes, you must notify the person designated by the School to receive such information.

**Legal References:** Children's Internet Protection Act of 2000 (H.R. 4577, P.L. 106-554) Communications Act of 1934, as amended (47 U.S.C. 254[h],[l]) Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (20 U.S.C.6801 et seq., Part F)

#### **PUBLIC NOTICE and FREEDOM OF INFORMATION LAW (FOIL)**

##### YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO SEE PUBLIC RECORD

The amended Freedom of Information Law, which took effect on January 1, 1978, gives parents and other agencies the right of access to many public records. Academy of the City Charter School has adopted regulations governing when, where, and how one can access these public records. The regulation can be seen at all places where records are kept.

According to these regulations, records can be seen and copied at:

Academy of the City Charter School  
31-29 60<sup>th</sup> Street  
Woodside, NY 11377

The following officials will help you to exercise your right to access:

1. Agency officials who have in the past been authorized to make records available.
2. Records Access Officer(s):

Director of Operations  
Academy of the City Charter School  
31-29 60<sup>th</sup> Street  
Woodside, NY 11377

If you are denied access to a record, you may appeal to the following person(s) or body:

**Academy of the City Charter School**

Principal  
Academy of the City Charter School  
31-29 60<sup>th</sup> Street  
Woodside, NY 11377