EXCEL
ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOLS

Student and Family Handbook 2026-2027

Excel Academy Chelsea
180 2nd Street
Chelsea, MA 02150
617-336-9970

Excel Academy East Boston
58 Moore Street
East Boston, MA 02128
617-874-4080

Excel Academy Greenway
375 Bremen Street
East Boston, MA 02128
617-561-1371

Excel Academy High School
401 Bremen Street
East Boston, MA 02128
617-326-3574

www.excelacademy.org

Table of Contents

Excel Academy Charter Schools: Overview

Mission 5
Our Expectations & Values 5

School & Family Engagement – Accountability Contract

School – Student – Family Accountability Contract 7

School Policies & Procedures

A. Hours of Operation 9
B. Family Communication 9
C. Attendance 10
D. Homework 11
E. Make-Up Work 11
F. Academic Supports 11
G. Specialized Instruction & Supports 11
Special Education and Section 504 Accommodation Plans 11
Multilingual Learner Education 13
H. Dress Code 14
I. Sample Daily Schedule 16
J. Restroom Policies 18
K. School Meals 18
L. Grading and Promotion Policies 19
M. Student Advisors 21
N. Additional Requirements 21
O. Enrichment Activities & Athletics Programming 21

General School Information

A. Transportation 23
B. Health Care 23
Health Office 23
Medication 24
Health Screenings 25
Health Education, Sex Education, & Sexuality Education Policy 25
C. Emergency Protocols 25
D. Visitor Policy 26
E. Non-Discrimination 26
F. Harassment 27
G. Student Records 31
H. Directory Information Policy 32

Code of Conduct

A. Purpose 34
B. Philosophy 34
C. Behavioral Infractions 34
D. Middle School – Low Level Infractions 35
E. High School – Low-Level Infractions 35
F. Alternatives to Suspension 36
G. Out of School Suspension 36
H. Out of School Suspension and/or Expulsion 36
I. Procedures for Disciplinary Action 37
J. Appeal to the CEO 40

K. Exception for Emergency Removal 41
L. School-wide Education Service Plan 41
M. Expulsion 41
N. Discipline of Students with Special Needs 42
O. Student Searches 44
P. Bus Behavior 44
Q. Field Trips & End of Year Events 44
R. Cheating, Plagiarism, and Copying Other's Work 45

Appendices

A: Graduation Requirements & Competency Determination 46
B: Overview of Alternative Graduation Pathways Proposal 48
C: Bullying Prevention & Intervention Plan 50
D: Restraint Policy 61
E: Allergy Policy 65
F: Responsible Use of Technology Policy 68
G: Student Use of Artificial Intelligence Policy 71
H: AHERA Management Plans 77
I: Security Cameras 78
J: Acknowledgement of Access 79

August 2026

Dear Excel Academy Families:

We are honored to welcome you to Excel Academy Charter School. To our new families, welcome to our school community, and to our returning families, welcome back to a new school year! We know that our success as a school depends on investment and support from our families and students, and we look forward to forming or continuing positive partnerships with each of you. We expect a lot from members of the Excel Academy community, and in turn, you can expect a lot from us.

We've compiled this handbook to help you become familiar with Excel Academy's school rules, expectations for members of our community, and school policies and procedures. Please refer to this handbook at the beginning of the school year to orient yourself to school policies and consult it throughout the school year if you have questions about school policy. Please also do not hesitate to reach out to school administration should you have questions about school policy beyond what is covered within this Handbook. If there are any updates to policies during the school year, we will post the updates to our website.

We are incredibly excited to have your participation in our community and look forward to an excellent school year.

Sincerely,
Excel Academy Faculty and Staff

Excel Academy Charter Schools: Overview

Mission

Excel Academy Charter Schools prepares students to succeed in high school and college, apply their learning to solve relevant problems, and engage productively in their communities.

Our Expectations and Values

Excel Academy holds members of the school community—students, families, and staff—to the highest standards. To provide the very best education for Excel Academy students, we work together to create an atmosphere conducive to academic excellence. To create this environment, we collectively and consistently ensure that Excel Academy students meet our important foundational expectations. In our middle schools, those expectations live in our PREP values, and at our high school, our PRIDE values.

Figure 1: School Wide Expectations		
Middle School - PREP Values (5th-8th Grade)		Excel High School Values (9th-12th Grade)
P	Come to school and class Prepared to succeed	Growth: We choose outcomes over ego and see to get better every day.
R	Show Respect to your classmates, self, teachers, and school.	Achievement: We set the highest bar and believe we can all reach it.
E	Engage by listening, participating, volunteering, asking insightful questions	Ownership: We are agents of change who solve the problems we see.
P	Professional: Stay organized, follow all directions and procedures	Dedication: We stick with the work and do not give up.
		Humanity: We learn from and uplift everyone in our community.

Excel Academy believes that having shared values is a key driver of student culture and our work in meeting the mission. We want students to build academic identities that will allow them to pursue and fulfill their post-secondary goals and we believe that a shared investment in the HABITS values will create the school environment that will allow that to happen.

Figure 2: School Wide Expectations	
HABITS VALUES	
Hard Work	We take on and persevere through challenges
Accountability	We follow through with responsibilities for ourselves and our community
Bravery	We speak our truth and take risks in the classroom to grow our understanding and evolve as a community
Inquisitiveness	We ask questions of ourselves, our teachers, and our community to make sure we are all doing our best. Our classrooms push academic inquiry
Teamwork	We are honest, trustworthy and respect each other's differences
Safety	We know that learning and growing happens when we're safe and we commit to keep one another physically and emotionally safe

School & Family Engagement – Accountability Contract

The Excel Academy School – Student – Family Accountability Contract represents some of the most important responsibilities for being a member of the Excel Academy community. For students, the Contract provides an overview of being a student at Excel. For families, the Contract outlines the most important expectations the school will hold you to provide the best possible education for our students. In exchange for what students and families do, the faculty and administration of Excel Academy will work tirelessly to provide students with a safe environment in which they can achieve academic success.

Excel Academy Charter Schools
School – Student – Family Accountability Contract

When you joined the Excel Academy Charter School community, you joined a team. To achieve our mission of student success in High School, College and beyond, we must work together. We all must have a full and clear understanding of the responsibilities of the members of this team. The Excel Academy School – Student – Family Accountability Contract spells out the most important responsibilities.

SCHOOL COMMITMENT

High Quality Education

1. We will work tirelessly to ensure that our students get the excellent education they deserve. We will neither make nor accept excuses for our students but will support them to succeed.
2. We will work a longer school day, a longer school year, offer students extra help and support, and always offer our students the best we have.

Respect & Fairness

3. We will encourage and respect every student. We will listen to students and their needs. We will not tolerate students disrespecting each other.
4. We will teach and uphold Excel Academy's PREP values consistently and fairly. We will communicate with families when students fail to meet expectations just as when they exceed expectations. Decisions, including consequences, will be made in the best interest of our students.
5. We will give students recognition, incentives and privileges if they consistently meet and exceed our expectations and will fairly deliver consequences if they do not meet those expectations.

Communication

6. We will communicate regularly with families about their child's progress and make ourselves available in person and on the phone.
7. We will return parent phone calls and emails as soon as possible, usually within 24 hours.

Homework and Academic Support

8. We will assign quality homework to reinforce and support skills and concepts learned in class.
9. We will support students with excellent teaching to meet their diverse needs.

Safety

10. We will always work to provide a safe learning environment. We will always work to protect the safety, dignity and rights of all individuals.

FAMILY COMMITMENT

Attendance and Promotion

1. I will ensure that my child comes to school every day on time.
2. I will not schedule family vacations during school time. I will do my best to schedule important appointments for out of school time.
3. I understand that my child may be retained if he/she fails 2 or more core academic classes and may be retained if he/she is absent for more than 10% of the school year. If my child fails 1 class, he/she must successfully complete Excel's summer program to be promoted to the next grade.

Homework & Academic Support

4. I will provide a quiet place to study and see that my student completes homework and reading.
5. If requested by the school, I will review my child's homework assignments to ensure they are complete and have put forth their best effort. I will help my child study for tests/quizzes, give them support when they

need help and praise when they do well.

6. I understand that my child is in danger of failing their courses if their grade is below a 75 and that they may need to stay afterschool for academic supports.

Behavior & Dress Code

7. I understand that my child will receive consequences as outlined in our Code of Conduct if they violate the Code of Conduct and I will be required to come into school for a family meeting. I understand that my child may be subject to expulsion if s/he is found to be in violation of Massachusetts laws (M.G.L. c. 71, §37H and §37H1/2) governing the terms for expulsion from school.
8. If student behavior requires it, I will come to school immediately. If Out of School Suspended, I will remove my child from the building until my child has fulfilled the terms of his/her suspension.
9. I understand that the school follows a strict bullying prevention and intervention plan and if my child violates that plan they will experience the consequences stated in that plan.
10. I will ensure my child adheres to the dress code daily.

Support & Communication

11. I agree to work as part of a team for the academic success & behavioral growth of my child. I will return phone calls, review & sign documentation sent home including progress reports & report cards I will attend family conferences and meetings about my child.

STUDENT COMMITMENT

Effort & Help

1. I understand that my education is extremely important. Being a student is my job. I will always work, think and behave in the best way I know how. I am capable of achieving my goals and success!
2. I will do whatever it takes for my fellow students and me to learn. I will do my homework. I will work to exceed the school's expectations.
3. If I need help, I will ask for it. If I can give help, I will give it. I won't criticize other students.

Attendance & Uniform

4. I will come to school ready to learn on time each day in order to complete my morning responsibilities and be in class on time.
5. If I need to miss class or school, I will ask for and make up all assignments. I will stay after school if/when I am required to do so.
6. I will wear the proper uniform every day and remain in uniform throughout the day.

PREP & PRIDE Expectations

7. I will listen to directions and put my best effort in my work. If I cannot find the solution or need support, I will ask my teacher for help. I will also regularly collaborate with my peers. I will be honest with my teachers and myself.
8. If I make a mistake, I will tell the truth and accept responsibility for my actions. I will do the right thing, even when no one is watching.
9. I will respect my teachers, my peers and myself. I will refrain from all disrespectful behavior.
10. I understand our PREP/PRIDE expectations and will embody them every day. I will follow the school rules to protect the safety and rights of all individuals and not detract from the educational opportunities of others. I'll accept the consequences if I do not meet our school expectations.

By acknowledging receipt of this handbook, I am acknowledging my responsibility in upholding the School - Student - Family Accountability Contract.

School Policies and Procedures

A. Hours of Operation

Middle School

Mondays through Thursdays, the regular school day runs from 8:00am until 3:15pm On Fridays, the regular school day runs from 8:00am until 1:30pm. Throughout the year the school schedules early dismissals at 11:30am. The dates of these early dismissals will be included on the school calendar provided to families and can be found on the school's website.

The school building will open to students by 7:45am on Monday-Friday. Students should arrive by 7:45 am to ensure they are set up for the day and seated by 8:00am. On Mondays-Thursdays, students should not be on school grounds after 3:15pm without permission from the school. On Fridays, students should not be on school grounds after 1:30pm without permission from the school.

High School

Mondays through Wednesdays, the regular school day runs from 8:30am until 3:45pm. On Thursdays, the regular school day runs from 8:30am until 2:30pm. On Fridays, the regular school day runs from 8:30am until 1:50pm. Throughout the year the school schedules early dismissals at 11:55am. The dates of these early dismissals will be included on the school calendar provided to families and can be found on the school's website. The school building will open to students by 7:00am on Monday-Friday.

Inclement Weather Closing

In the event of poor weather conditions such as heavy snow or hurricanes, please visit Excel Academy's website or social media pages for updates regarding school cancellations. Excel Academy Charter Schools will be closed when either Boston Public Schools OR Chelsea Public Schools are closed due to inclement weather. Thus, if Boston Public Schools OR Chelsea Public Schools are closed, so too are all Excel Academy schools.

B. Family Communication & Engagement

To best support students, we aim to be partners with families. Families should expect frequent communication with staff members from Excel, including both written and verbal communication. We also hold report card conferences minimally twice per year and expect families to attend and engage in discussions around their child's performance. Families should contact staff by telephone or e-mail and understand that we will try and return calls within 24 hours. In addition, meetings can be arranged at any time by appointment. If a parent needs to see a staff person more immediately, the parent should report directly to the Main Office, which will facilitate the soonest possible contact. Below are some examples of communication and events to expect at both the middle and high school grades.

- Annual family orientation at the beginning of each year to review updated policies and expectations
- Back to School Night (September)
- Weekly PREP/PRIDE Reports that include grades, behavior data, and attendance
- Report Card Conferences (following the 1st and 2nd trimesters in middle school, following quarters 1, 2, & 3 at the high school)
- Teacher/Advisor texts and phone calls (as needed)
- Dean of Culture Office (as needed)

C. Attendance Policy

Given the fast pace and high rigor of Excel Academy's curriculum, missing a school day at Excel can have a detrimental effect on a student's learning. Regular attendance is required. Parents/Guardians are expected to ensure that their child is in school; please do not allow your child to miss a day of school except for serious illness. Excessive absences will be considered a violation of the School-Student-Family Accountability contract. We ask that families not schedule vacations or non-emergency appointments during school time. Families should take advantage of early dismissal on Fridays, as well as half-days and school vacations, to schedule appointments and travel. All student absences, including illness, suspension, appointments, vacations, excessive incomplete days, etc. count as absences.

Excused absences do not count towards truancy but are still considered an absence and are counted towards a student's chronic absenteeism. The following is an inclusive but not exhaustive list of reasons an absence may be considered excused:

- Illness (doctor's note is required if the absence is for longer than three consecutive days)
- Religious holidays
- Medical or counseling appointments
- Death or illness of a family member
- A local or state crisis (determined by the principal)
- Housing hardship (McKinney-Vento Act)
- Court appointment

Any student who exceeds 18 absences in a school year may be retained (10% of the school year). The Head of School will review on a case-by-case basis the promotion or retention of students who exceed 18 absences during the school year and weigh other factors including the student's academic performance and grades, age, maturity, and overall readiness for the subsequent grade. Students who are absent for any reason (except those described in our attendance policy as excused absences) may receive zero PREP Points for that day(s) at our middle schools or -20 PRIDE points at the high school.

In cases of truancy, Excel Academy Charter Schools may report the student and/or family to certain state agencies or file an official complaint with the court. According to M.G.L. c. 76 and c. 72, § 8, all students under 16 years of age are expected to be in school. All students under the age of 16 will be expected to comply with these laws and the school will follow procedures set out in M.G.L. c. 76, § 18 if the student does not comply with the law. In cases of truancy, the Head of School (or their designee) will investigate the situation. Excel Academy Charter Schools operate in compliance with Department of Transitional Assistance requests and requirements, which can include mandated reporting of truancy to appropriate state agencies.

Excel keeps accurate records of attendance and will make the records available for inspection by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education as needed. All questions regarding student attendance and attendance records should be directed to the school's front office.

If a student is absent for the first ten days of school and there has been no successful contact between the family and the school to explain his or her absences, that student may lose his or her seat at Excel Academy and may be considered un-enrolled from the school.

Students who are absent from school cannot attend or participate in any school-sponsored activities occurring on the day of the absence, unless the school has given advance permission. Late students must check in at the main office before reporting to class. Similarly, students being dismissed early must check out with the main office before leaving campus.

If a student needs to be sent home due to a behavioral infraction, a parent/guardian must come to the school, meet with the Head of School and/or Dean of Culture, and remove the student from school grounds. Students being sent home for behavioral infractions will not be dismissed unless the parent or guardian has physically come to the school (please see Code of Conduct for more details), unless certain rare exceptions apply.

Middle School Early Dismissals

For their own safety, middle school students must be picked up by a parent, guardian or designated emergency contact person to be dismissed prior to the end of the school day. A note or phone call requesting that a student be dismissed on his/her own is not sufficient and cannot be honored. This policy applies to all early dismissals, including appointments and illness.

High School Early Dismissals

Students getting dismissed for excused reasons require a confirmation of appointment OR a parent to come in person to get them for it to be considered excused. Students with unexcused dismissals are marked skip to all missed classes and lose PRIDE points The main office doesn't accept late-breaking dismissal requests unless they are emergencies (last hour/period of the day).

D. Homework

Homework is an essential component of Excel Academy's academic program. In our younger grades, we support students by providing a planner and opportunities to track homework daily. Homework is a component of student's grades. Failure to complete or submit homework will result in lower grades. If a student is absent, it is their responsibility to make up for any missed work.

E. Make-Up Work Policies

Students who are not in school miss critical academic assignments and assessments. Excel Academy students are required to make up any missed schoolwork, including assessments. Upon return to school after an absence, students will receive their assignments and deadlines for completion from teachers or school administration. Students may earn merits by taking initiative to check with teachers to receive make-up work and by turning in make-up assignments by the deadlines.

F. Academic Supports

At Excel Academy, we work tirelessly to assist our students in their pursuit of academic success. In addition to the specific supports already noted above, and those supports in place for students with specific learning needs (e.g., Special Education students, Multilingual Learners), there are many specific ways in which struggling students are supported by our staff, including targeted academic interventions

G. Specialized Instruction and Supports

Special Education and Section 504 Accommodation Plans

Excel is proud to serve many students who qualify for Individualized Education Plans (IEPs). Excel Academy Charter Schools adheres to all federal laws and regulations regarding students with special needs, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Excel does not discriminate against students with disabilities in its admissions process, and each and every student who enters its doors receives a free and appropriate public education (FAPE). Students at Excel are educated in

the least restrictive environment (LRE) in an inclusive classroom to the maximum extent possible. Research shows that students with disabilities receive a better education when they are learning alongside their general education peers in an inclusive setting.

Students with disabilities who qualify for services receive either an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or a Section 504 Accommodation Plan (504 Plan). These plans are developed as the laws direct: by a team composed of the student's teachers, Learning Specialist, service providers, if applicable (e.g., counselor, occupational therapist, speech and language pathologist), and the parent(s)/guardian(s). Collaboration and communication between all team members is ongoing and crucial in helping students meet their academic potential. At Excel, we believe that parents are invaluable partners in the education process, and that all educators have a responsibility to ensure that the educational needs of all students are met.

A parent who is seeking more information about Excel's interventions, supports, or Special Education and Section 504 processes and procedures should reach out to their school's Dean of Student Supports or to their child's learning specialist. Any parent may also request a copy of Excel's Special Education Processes and Procedures Manual.

Accommodations

Each and every student at Excel Academy is held to the highest expectations based upon the child's abilities. Students with IEPs and 504 plans are provided with accommodations necessary for them to make appropriate progress in the general education curriculum. These accommodations are documented in their IEP or 504 plan, and are decided by the team supporting that student, including teachers, related service providers, parents, and the student themselves if appropriate.

Special Education Continuum of Services

Students with IEPs at Excel Academy are supported in a variety of ways according to the continuum of services offered by each Excel campus and across our network.

Figure 2: Special Education Continuum of Services	
Description of Excel's Continuum of Services for Students with Disabilities	
Teacher Collaboration and Consultation	Learning Specialists (Special Education Teachers), General Education Teachers, and/or Services providers meet regularly to discuss the needs of students with special needs via structured weekly office hours, collaboration on accommodated assignments and frequent, more informal drop-in meetings to discuss student needs. Additionally, general education and special education teachers work together to ensure students are receiving appropriate materials, classroom accommodations, testing accommodations, and/or modifications on a daily basis.
Services Provided in the General Education Classroom	Students who need to be supported in the general education classroom by a Learning Specialist are identified at the beginning of the school year based on the services outlined in their IEPs and on teacher observation of new and incoming students. Learning Specialists and Core Content Classroom Teachers collaborate to determine what these students need in the classroom to better enable them to access the curriculum. Consequently, all students receive differentiated instruction on a daily basis; these supports ensure compliance with students' IEP needs, but also provide a maximally inclusive environment for all students.
Services Provided Outside the General Education Classroom	Students with IEPs may receive out-of-class support from Learning Specialists if the student's team determines it is necessary. Learning Specialists provide specially designed instruction through small group support to promote mastery of IEP goals and access to the general education curriculum. Students with IEPs who require a partially or substantially separate placement will receive support in a self-contained program or classroom, following a curriculum that is rigorous based on the student's needs and determined by the IEP team. Excel's fully substantially separate classes and programming

	are located at Excel East Boston and Excel Academy High School and available to every Excel student, should their IEP team determine that it is their LRE and that our program is an appropriate fit.
Related Services	Excel Academy Charter Schools provides related services (e.g., occupational therapy, speech and language therapy, counseling, etc.) for students who have these services listed in their IEPs or 504 plans. The frequency and duration of these services are determined by the student's Team.

Child Find and Student Identification

Excel takes seriously its responsibility to find and identify any students with a disability. All new students receive record reviews to determine whether they are a student identified as having a disability and receiving supports and/or services via an IEP or 504 plan. Excel additionally conducts academic screening to determine whether students may need additional support via the school's Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) or are functioning with a suspected disability. In addition, MTSS/SST/Grade Level Teams facilitate the Child Study Team process, by which students enter Excel's Multi-Tiered System of Supports. Students may be referred for a special education or core evaluation if the Child Study Team recommends it after observing the student's response to interventions. A parent who suspects that their child has a disability may request a referral or evaluation at any time in writing, by reaching out to their school's Dean of Student Supports or Head of School.

Special Education Parent Advisory Council

Excel's Special Education Parent Advisory Council meets regularly throughout the school year and is open to any Excel parent. Meeting dates are posted at the start of the school year at www.excelacademy.org. For more information, please contact Excel's Director of Compliance and Case Management, Carlye Vaickus at cvaickus@excelacademy.org.

Multilingual Learner Education

Excel is proud to serve many students who are current Multilingual learners (MLLs) or Former Multilingual Learners (FMLL)s and each school campus provides a continuum of support to English-Language Learners via our English Language Education program, aligned to programmatic requirements and best practices established by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE).

Upon enrollment at Excel, families are required to fill out a home language survey (sent home in multiple languages), indicating whether or not a student speaks a language other than English at home. During required new student testing, students whose families answer any question with a language other than "English" receive language screening to see if they qualify for MLL services. After making a final determination about MLL status, the MLL specialist places students in appropriate English Language Development groups, which are determined based on the student's WIDA level and in accordance with recommended minutes from the Department of Education. Parents of any student who will receive MLL services receive a letter of notification, with the option of opting out. Parents of students who were language screened who will not receive MLL services receive a letter explaining that they will not be receiving those services. Individual student progress towards goals is monitored through ELL and FELL monitoring. Annually, MLL students take the ACCESS, an assessment which both gives families and teachers an update on their student's language progress and can potentially result in a student being reclassified as a FELL, or Former English Language Learner. Any change in student status is reported to families.

MLL Parent Advisory Council

Beginning in the 2018-2019 school year, in accordance with the LOOK Act, Excel formed a Parent Advisory Council for families of ELL students. Please see Excel's website for updates and meeting dates.

Counseling & Social-Emotional Supports

Counselors are an integral part of Excel's staff at each middle school campus. If a student has regular counseling

services as a part of an IEP or 504 plan, your child's counselor will reach out to you for informed consent at the start of each school year. All students may request to check in with a counselor at any time, and families will be contacted if the counselor believes that the student will benefit from regular or ongoing counseling support in or out of school. All students receive regular instruction in social emotional learning as a part of Excel's holistic community supports.

H. Dress Code

Excel Academy Charter Schools has a dress code, specified below for each grade band (Middle School and High School). The following dress code applies for during all school days and during all school-sponsored events.

The Excel Academy dress code has been adopted to improve the educational environment for all students. Specifically, we have instituted a dress code for the following reasons:

- to foster a sense of school identity, team and community;
- to prepare students for the expectations related to professional attire that future institutions, organizations and employers will have;
- to increase school safety and security by making the presence of visitors/outsiders immediately apparent; and
- to reduce the cost of clothing for families.

Middle School Dress Code Policy

It is the goal of the school to have a dress code which makes things easier for parents and students rather than more difficult. For that reason, we have made every effort to be clear about this policy and consistent in its enforcement. Parents who have questions or concerns should contact the Dean of Culture immediately and seek clarification. There are two uniforms at Excel Academy's middle school campuses. They are the Regular School Uniform and the Fitness Uniform. Every student is required to have both. Students wear the Fitness uniform on days they have Fitness Class as well as on Friday.

We believe that, in fairness to all our students and families, we must ensure that all students adhere to the same code and so we will uphold the dress code strictly. To support families in adhering to the dress code, we have made the dress code clear and detailed to reduce ambiguity. Please read the code and purchase school clothing accordingly. At the middle school grades, parents of students who are not in dress code will be notified and may be asked to bring the proper attire to school. Students will not attend class until they are in the proper uniform and will complete academic work in the office. In addition, dressing inappropriately may result in disciplinary consequences.

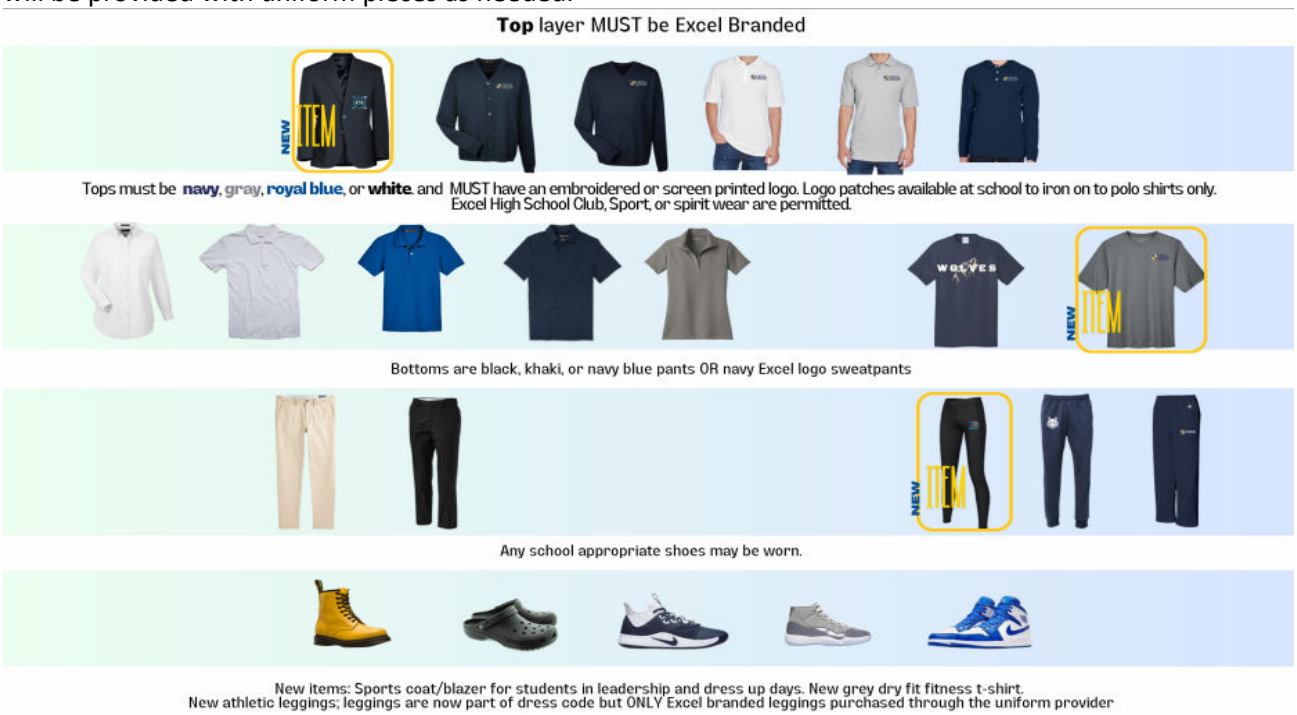
Figure 3: Middle School Uniform Requirements

Fitness Uniform [Friday & Fitness Day]	Dress Uniform [3 days per week]
● Gray T-Shirt (short sleeve or long sleeve) ○ Women's ○ Men's ○ Children's ● Navy Sweatpants (no logo except Excel logo, no leggings) ○ Women's or Women's ○ Men's or Men's ○ Children's ● Sweatshirt ○ Women's	● Navy Blue Polo Shirt (short or long sleeve) ○ Men's ○ Women's ○ Children's ● Khaki or Navy Pants ○ Women's (Navy), Women's (Khaki) ○ Men's (Navy), Men's (Khaki) ○ Children's (Navy), Children's (Khaki) ● Navy Sweater ○ Women's ○ Men's ○ Children's

○ Men's ○ Children's	● Fleece Jackets ○ Men's ○ Women's ○ Children's
Shoes	**Other Items (Socks, belts, undershirts, etc)**
Black shoes or sneakers (all black except soles and logos), sneakers must be worn with fitness uniforms. Note: Must be closed-toe. Crocs, slides, and sandals **are not allowed.**	Socks: Any color/style as long as school appropriate. Belts: Black, Brown, or Navy may be worn with the Dress Uniform Undershirts: May be white, black, gray, or navy with no logos visible.
Required Items: Note the shades of gray and blue – it is critical that you purchase the correct color uniform items. There are links below to show photos and options, but you are **not** required to purchase through these links. Sweatshirts, Fleece Jackets, and Sweaters may be worn with any uniform. We recommend having 2 fitness uniforms and 3 regular uniforms per student with 1-2 sweaters/sweatshirts.	

High School Dress Code Policy

The high school dress code can be described as bridging uniformity with many additional options of self-expression. There are core uniform pieces, but there are many opportunities for groups to have sweaters, t-shirts, or other items to show school pride, team pride, and club or group celebrations. Below are the specific for core uniform options; others can be purchased through the groups, clubs, or teams. At the high school grades, students will be provided with uniform pieces as needed.



Purchasing of Clothing

Families may purchase many uniform items at the store of their choice except the Excel branded clothing (middle school: gray t-shirt and blue fitness sweatpants and blue fitness shorts are required).

Uniform pieces with the Excel logo can be purchased at Elite Embroidery located at 319 Shirley Street in Winthrop, (617) 539-3300. www.elite-embroidery.com. You may also scan the QR code below and can also purchase items on Amazon at Target, etc.

Dress Code Exemptions

Exemptions to the uniform dress code shall be permitted when the dress code's requirements infringe upon a student's sincerely held religious belief or when dress code requirements are incompatible with a student's individual physical or mobility needs. Exemptions from the dress code must be appropriate and approved by the Head of School or Dean of Culture. Any family with uniform questions or in need of financial assistance for uniform purchasing should reach out to the Dean of Culture at their campus.

Other Dress Code Specifics

- In general, students may not wear clothing with logos, unless it is the Excel logo.
- Clothing must be sized appropriately to fit the student. Clothes may not be too big or too small.
- Students may not wear clothing with significant stains (e.g. large ink blots, food stains, etc.).
- Students may not alter their clothing in any way (e.g. writing/drawing, cutting, etc.)
- Once students enter the school building, wearing of hats, bandanas, doo-rags, kerchiefs, or jackets is not permitted. Hats worn in the school building will be kept in the Dean of Culture's office and returned at the end of the school day. Repeated violations of this policy will necessitate a parent coming to pick up these items from school.
- Please keep in mind that students are held accountable for any messages worn on accessories or clothing (bracelets, shirts, hats, pins on backpacks, etc.) including both written words and symbols. Wearing a statement will receive the same consequences as saying the statement aloud. In addition to issuing consequences for inappropriate messages on clothing, the school may confiscate and return to the student's parent or guardian clothing or accessories with inappropriate messages.
- When students enter the school building, they must be in the proper uniform. Students must be in uniform while on school grounds and may not change out of their uniform before dismissal.
- Students may not use cell phones, or headphones/music equipment unless specifically given permission from a staff member while in the school building. These items may be confiscated and the student will be subject to disciplinary consequences.
- Students who wear the wrong uniform for a given day (i.e. wearing the Fitness Uniform on a day on which they should wear the School Uniform or vice versa) are considered out of uniform.

I. Sample Daily Student Schedules

Middle School

Students should arrive at Excel everyday by 7:45am to ensure they are able to fulfill their morning responsibilities. Any student arriving after 8:00AM is tardy. As shown on the sample schedule below, on Mondays - Thursdays, students engage in an activity before academic class periods begin - either grade-wide community meetings or more advisory/homeroom meetings. Students have seven 55-minute academic class periods. The classes are broken up by a 10-to-15-minute break, 20-30-minute recess and 20-30 minute lunch. Students have a double period of English once a week and a double period of Math once a week. Students have a 55-minute WIN (What I Need) period four days per week in which students work on specific interventions targeted toward their individual needs. Depending on need, students may receive support in numeracy, literacy, social emotional learning, tutoring, study hall and others. A staggered dismissal begins at 3:15. By 4:15 all students will be dismissed. On Fridays, students have three 55-minute classes and a 15-minute break. Students have lunch at 11:30am and a 90-minute enrichment activity. Below is a sample schedule only. For each campus, student, times, schedule, and course offerings may vary.

Figure 4: Middle School Sample Schedule			
Monday - Thursday		Friday	
Time	Activity	Time	Activity
7:45 AM	Arrival & Set-up	7:45 AM	Arrival & Set-up
8:00 AM	Community Block	8:00 AM	Community Block
8:25 AM	Social Studies	8:25 AM	English
9:20 AM	English	9:20 AM	Math
10:15 AM	Break	10:15 AM	Break
10:30 AM	WIN	10:30 AM	Science
11:25 AM	Recess	11:25 AM	Lunch
11:50 AM	Lunch	11:50 AM	Community Block
12:20 PM	Art	12:00 PM	Enrichment
1:15 PM	Science	1:30 PM	Dismissal
2:10 PM	Math		
3:05 PM	Community Block		
3:15 PM	Dismissal		

High School Sample Schedule

Figure 5: High School Sample Schedule				
Monday-Wednesday		High School Thursday		High School Friday
By 8:30	Arrive at school	By 8:30	Arrive at school	
8:30- 8:50	Advisory	8:30 - 8:45	Advisory	
8:55- 9:50	AP English Language	8:50 - 10:10	AP English	Study Hall
9:55- 10:50	AP Spanish Language & Culture	10:15 - 11:35	AP Spanish Language & Culture	AP Precalculus
10:55- 11:50	Performing Arts 3	11:40 - 12:00	Lunch / Affinity Group Block	
11:55- 12:20	Lunch / Affinity Group Block	12:05 - 12:25	Office Hours / Affinity Group Block	
12:25- 12:45	Office Hours / Affinity Group Block	12:30 - 1:50	Performing Arts 3	US History
12:50- 1:45	Mon: Study Hall Tues: Grade Level Seminar Wed: PE	1:55 - 2:30	Assembly / Open Mic (SES Programming)	Dismissal / Staff Meetings
1:50- 2:45	AP Precalculus			
2:50- 3:45	US History			
3:45 - 4:30	After-school clubs and sports			

J. Restroom Policies

At Excel, we ensure students are spending most of their time on learning while also understanding the importance of students taking care of personal needs. We implement the following procedures around restroom use. Please note, that any medical condition requiring unlimited restroom use will be accommodated upon receipt of a doctor's note. Additionally, all Excel schools have ADA compliant restrooms.

There are vape detectors in each bathroom that can sense if vaping, smoking, loud noises, or tampering is taking place in the bathroom. When this alarm sounds, the deans or administrators may ask questions and search every student in the bathroom at the time, given the alarm. This search may include the use of metal detector wands. There are no exceptions for one student to be searched and not another. Should that occur, deans will attempt to notify the family and may require additional follow up if the student is consistently missing class or found in the bathrooms when alarms are sounding.

Students may use the bathroom for which gender they identify or may check in with the dean's office to access a single stall, non-gendered bathroom. This request must be approved by a student's dean or other administrator familiar with that student.

Middle School

The middle school schedule was built to ensure students can use the restroom during non-instructional times, about every 2 hours. This includes during arrival, morning break, lunch and recess, and at the end of the school day. With that, we understand that students will need to use the restroom at other times during the day. Each trimester, students are given emergency bathroom passes to be used as needed. If they exceed this number of passes they may be required to check in with the culture team.

High School

The high school sets bathroom policies to ensure safety and maximize educational time. Students in lower school (grades 9-10) have bathroom trackers that do not allow them to exceed a certain number of bathroom uses during instructional time each quarter. They may use the bathroom without any tracking at class transitions, before school, lunch, and after school. Missing instructional time should be rare. Students in any grade that consistently miss class for bathroom use, or take too long in the bathroom may receive additional consequences like detentions or parent phone calls and may not be eligible for off campus privileges.

There are vape detectors in each bathroom that can sense if vaping, smoking, loud noises, or tampering is taking place in the bathroom. When this alarm sounds, the deans or administrators may ask questions and search every student in the bathroom at the time, given the alarm. There are no exceptions for one student to be searched and not another. Should that occur, deans will attempt to notify the family and may require additional follow up if the student is consistently missing class or found in the bathrooms when alarms are sounding.

K. School Meals

The school participates in the Community Eligibility Provision of the National School Breakfast and Lunch Program and provides free meals to all students. Families of students who have particular dietary restrictions should alert the school's Dean of Operations and nurse as early in the school year as possible. Students will have the option to have breakfast and lunch daily. Students who participate in after-school clubs may also have an after-school snack. All meals and snacks are provided to students free of charge.

Students may choose to bring a lunch/snack from home, but families need to be mindful of any campus specific allergy requirements.

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: USDA Discrimination Complaint Form , from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
   Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
   1400 Independence Avenue, SW
   Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. Fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. email: program.intake@usda.gov

L. Grading and Promotion Policies

At Excel, our mission is to prepare students to succeed in high school and college, apply their learning to solve relevant problems, and engage productively in their communities. Central to this mission is ensuring that our students graduate equipped with the academic mastery, critical thinking skills, and character necessary to thrive in higher education and beyond.

Middle School

Excel Academy students take four core academic classes (mathematics, English, social studies, and science) during a given school year. All students take one art class and one fitness/health class every week. In addition, all students take one elective class per week which varies by grade.

At the midpoint of each academic trimester, students will receive Progress Reports with information about their performance in each core subject area. At the end of each trimester, students will receive formal Report Cards with detailed information about their performance in each core subject area. On each Report Card, students receive one grade per core subject area. All grades are based on a 0 to 100% scale.

In each core academic course, students will receive at the beginning of the year a Course Description that describes assignment types and their weight in the course grade. The assignment type weight indicates what percent of the trimester course grade is comprised from each type of assignment. Assignment type weights vary by course, and typically the assignment types will include unit assessments (tests), quizzes, homework, in-class assignments, participation, and/or organization.

Honor Roll: At the end of each trimester, an Honor Roll will be published. Students with all four core grades above

90% earn High Honor status. Students with all four core grades above 80% earn Honor status. All honor roll students will be recognized at a formal ceremony each trimester.

Failure: At the end of the year, the trimester grades for each core academic subject are averaged together into a final, yearlong Course Grade.

- In all grades, the yearlong Course Grade is calculated as an average of the grade from each trimester.
- A student fails a core subject if his/her final, yearlong Course Grade is below 70%.

Promotion Policy: If a student passes all core subjects, with an average of 70.0% or higher, and has not been absent for more than 15 days of the school year, the student is promoted automatically to the next grade level. If a student fails one core subject, he/she must attend summer school and complete the requirements of summer school in order to be promoted to the next grade level. Summer school is held for a specified number of days, typically 10 days in mid-July, and requirements include daily on-time attendance in uniform, class participation, completion of in-class and homework assignments, and and/or achieving a passing score on the end-of-summer-school exam. If the student does not meet the requirements of summer school, he/she may be retained. If a student fails two or more core subject areas, he/she may be retained and could repeat the grade level.

High School

At Excel Academy Charter High School, students must earn the following credits to graduate. Each credit is equivalent to a full year of a course:

- 4 credits in English
- 4 credits in Mathematics
- 3 credits in History (including US History)
- 3 credits in Laboratory Science (including Biology, Chemistry, or Physics; Computer Science may be used to replace a Laboratory Science credit by Principal's exception)
- 2-3 credits in a Language
- 0.5 credits in Grade Level Seminar (0.25 credits / year in 11th and 12th grade)
- 1 credit in PE (0.25 credits/year)
- 2 years of an Electives pathway, except by Principal's exemption
- A full schedule - all students must take a full course load all years, even if they have completed other graduation credits, unless a shortened schedule is part of their IEP. A full course load is 6 classes + PE in 9th-10th grade and 5 classes + PE/GLS in 11th-12th grade.

A student earns a credit by earning a passing grade (60% or above) for the year in a course. A student's grade for the year is the average of their 4 quarter grades plus their final exam.

In each course, students will receive at the beginning of the year a Course Description that describes assignment types and their weight in the course grade. The assignment type weight indicates what percent of the quarter course grade is comprised from each type of assignment. Assignment type weights vary by course, and typically the assignment types will include unit assessments (tests), quizzes, homework, in-class assignments, participation, and/or organization.

Honor Roll: At the end of each quarter, an Honor Roll will be published. Students with all grades above 90% earn High Honor status. Students with all grades above 80% earn Honor status. All honor roll students will be recognized at a formal ceremony each quarter.

Promotion Policies: If a student passes all courses with a grade of 60% or above, that student is automatically promoted to the next grade level. A student can repeat individual classes in high school without repeating the

grade level. If a student has to repeat 2 or more classes, or has to repeat 1 class that is a 4 year requirement (English or Math), they may be retained in the same grade level. Students' grade levels reflect the number of years they have to meet all their graduation requirements and earn a diploma.

Local Competency Determination

Additionally, every high school in Massachusetts is required to outline their local competency determination in addition to high school graduation requirements. The details of Excel's Competency Determination can be found in Appendix A. Students who meet eligibility criteria may participate in an alternative graduation pathway, see Appendix B for details.

M. Student Advisors

At the beginning of the school year, all students are also assigned an Advisor. Advisors, who are assigned a small group of students, will develop and maintain close relationships with their advisees throughout the school year. Families should expect to hear updates from their child's advisor on a regular basis. Families should also see their child's advisor as the point person for all non-subject specific questions and concerns.

N. Additional Requirements

Community Service Requirement – Middle School

One component of the Excel Academy mission is to graduate students who will "engage productively in their communities." To further expose students to needs within their communities, develop good service-related habits, and ensure that the school's mission is fulfilled, all students are expected to serve the surrounding communities while enrolled at Excel Academy. All required community service hours will be completed through school-sponsored activities.

Extra-Curricular Programming - High School

One component of the Excel Academy mission is to graduate students who will "engage productively in their communities." To further expose students to needs within their communities, develop strong leadership, service and social skills, and ensure that the school's mission is fulfilled, all students are expected to earn an extra-curricular credit each year while enrolled at Excel Academy. All extra-curricular credits will be completed through participating in one season of a sport, or an entire year of an affinity group, club, or other group. The credits are awarded through attendance supervised by the group leader, advisor, or coach and completed by each students' advisor.

O. Enrichment Activities & Athletics Programming

Excel Academy's program focuses relentlessly on the development of core academic skills. However, in order to best prepare our student body for future pursuits, students must also be exposed to extracurricular activities on a regular basis.

Middle School

At the middle school grades, on Fridays from 12:00-1:25pm, the school will offer Enrichment activities for all students. Students will sign up for a specific Enrichment activity at the beginning of each season (i.e. fall, winter, and spring). While some activities will be taught by Excel Academy staff members, most activities will be taught by external instructors. Please be advised that some Enrichment activities (e.g. sports teams) may last beyond regular dismissal time and/or occur off school grounds. In such situations, families will receive permission slips which detail this additional information.

High School

At the high school, there are interscholastic opportunities to compete in soccer, volleyball, cross country, cheerleading, dance, basketball, esports, wrestling, track, flag football, baseball, and softball. The high school also encourages students to join any number of clubs such as the Environmental Club, Model United Nations, or to join an affinity group: Black Caucus, Arab Student Union, Asian Student Association, Pride Association of Excel, Immigration Advocates of Excel, Young Men's Leadership Group, or Women's Alliance. A goal of Excel Academy's programming is to give students as many artistic, athletic, leadership, service, and vocational opportunities as possible, alongside the academic opportunities the school provides. In support of this, students have extra-curricular credit they must earn each year to qualify for graduation, which can be earned by being a member of an athletic group, club, affinity group, or leadership group. Exemptions may apply for specific (recovering from a pandemic) or individual cases.

Student Behavior Policy for Extra-Curricular Activities

Attending after-school extra-curricular activities such as athletic events as an athlete or a fan is a privilege, and students will be held to high expectations for their behavior at these events. Specifically:

- Student athletes will be expected to maintain good academic and behavioral standing to participate in athletic competitions. Specific standards for participation in athletic competition will be set by each campus and communicated by coaches to their teams at the start of the season. Student athletes who do not meet the requirements may be ineligible to attend or participation in games, practices, team events, etc., at the discretion of the school administration and the coach.
- Fans are expected to follow Excel's Code of Conduct and school consequences may be given at games.
- Fans may not interact with players during the game.
- If a student who is not allowed to attend an after-school extra-curricular activity chooses to do so, he/she should be referred to the Dean of Culture immediately on the following school day. The Dean of Culture will determine the appropriate consequences.

II. General School Information

A. Transportation

Students Attending Excel East Boston or Excel Greenway

Our transportation policy for our middle school campuses located in Boston mirrors that of the Boston public school system.

- Boston Residents Attending Excel East Boston or Excel Greenway
  - 5th grade students who live more than one mile from their school are eligible for bus transportation provided by Boston Public Schools Transportation.
  - 6th grade students who live more than 1.5 miles from their school will receive school bus transportation provided by Boston Public Schools Transportation.
  - 7th and 8th grade students are eligible for an M7 MBTA pass provided by Boston Public Schools Transportation.
- *Chelsea Residents Attending Excel East Boston or Excel Greenway*
  - Excel Academy will provide a private bus for students in grades 5-8 from Chelsea who attend Excel East Boston or Excel Greenway.

Students Attending Excel Academy Chelsea Campus

Transportation is not provided for students who attend Excel Chelsea campus. Students are eligible for an MBTA S pass which provides access to discounted fare.

Students Attending Excel Academy Charter High School

All High School students are provided with an M7 bus pass.

B. Health Care

Health Office

The goal of the Health Office is to provide professional health care and guidance and to coordinate the resources of the school, home and community as they pertain to the total health of students and staff. The Health Office operates on a limited schedule which will be shared with families during orientation.

Medical Records

Massachusetts state law requires all students enrolling in a new school to have a physical examination before entering the school. Before a student can enroll in the school, the school must have on file the following forms:

- *Medical Requirements Checklist.* This form contains records showing that the student has: 1) had a physical exam in the twelve months prior to the start of the school year; 2) up to-date immunizations; and 3) permission to receive screenings for vision, hearing, BMI and scoliosis.
- *Health Information Form.* This form provides important information about a student's emergency contacts, health care providers, and insurance. Most importantly, it gives the school permission to initiate emergency medical treatment in the event that a parent or guardian cannot be reached.

All student medical records will remain confidential and accessed only by school employees with a school-related need to know.

Authorization To Dispense Medication Form

If a student requires medication while in school, the school must have on file an Authorization to Dispense

Medication form, filled out by the student's physician. No student is allowed to bring medication to the school without the nurse's full knowledge. Students who have provided the school with medication dispensation authorization forms should bring the medication (other than Tylenol and ibuprofen, which the school will stock in the health office) to the school on the first day, or contact the school to make other arrangements. All medication must be presented in its original container from the pharmacy and must be brought in by a parent or accompanied by a note from the parent.

Medication

Before students may carry or self-administer any medications during the school day, the student, parent or guardian and the school nurse must enter into an agreement specifying the conditions under which such medication may be administered, and the parent or guardian must provide written authorization for the student to administer the medication.

If medication for a chronic condition must be administered during school hours, the medication must be provided to the school nurse in a pharmacy or manufacturer-labeled container provided by parents or guardians. Students who are taking prescription medication should request the pharmacy to prepare separate prescriptions for home and school so that the medication is not forgotten in school and treatment is not disrupted. Medication should be provided in no more than a thirty-day supply.

The medication dispensation authorization form requirement applies to all medication, including Tylenol and ibuprofen. If a student needs to take Tylenol or ibuprofen during the school day, the student must have on file the authorization signed by his or her physician and a parent or guardian, giving the school permission to administer the medication during the school year. The medication dispensation authorization form requirement also applies to asthma inhalers, which students should keep in their backpacks. If a student needs to use his/her asthma inhaler during the school day, he/she should go to the health office to self-administer the inhaler.

Health and Illness

The school requests that children do not come to school if they are ill. If school staff believes that a child needs to see a doctor, is contagious, increases the risk of illness to other children, or requires prolonged individual staff attention that interferes with the safety and regular functioning of the classroom, the school will contact families and ask them to pick up and take their child home. Excel Academy's policy related to allergies and allergens is appended in this Handbook, see Appendix

Parents will be contacted if a child has a moderate-to-high fever; is experiencing vomiting or diarrhea; shows signs of contagious diseases; and/or has an illness that prevents the child from participating in activities.

Other Health Issues

A. Parents of students with special concerns or who are considered "at risk"-- those with diabetes, asthma, seizures, severe allergies, etc. – should advise the school nurse of the condition, any medications taken by the student, any side effects of such medication, and the manner in which acute episodes should be handled.
B. If the student's oral temperature is over 100.0 F , they must stay at home until his/her temperature has been normal (98.6 F) for at least twenty-four (24) hours without the aid of medicine. Students who return to school while they are ill contribute to the proliferation of illness during the school year. If students return to school with a fever or develop an oral temperature of 100.0 F during the school day, the school nurse will send these students home after evaluation.

   If students develop a highly contagious disease such as chicken pox, strep throat, impetigo, pertussis, bacterial

conjunctivitis or an infestation of head lice, please notify the Health Office at once. Any of these conditions will result in dismissal from school after evaluation by the school nurse. An antibiotic or other treatment approved by a health care professional must by administered for a minimum of twenty-four (24) hours before the student will be permitted to return to school. The school nurse must evaluate students who have had any infectious/contagious condition before they will be permitted to return to class.

State law requires all students to have been vaccinated with up-to-date immunizations. Students who have not been vaccinated may be excluded from school.

Health Exams and Screenings

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts requires the following screenings for school age children in middle schools:

- Vision Screening: Grades 5, 6, 7, 8, 10
- Hearing Screening: Grade 7, 10
- Height, Weight, and BMI screening: Grade 7, 10
- Postural Screening: Grades 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9
- Substance Abuse Verbal Screening: two grades of school district's choice. Excel screens in grades 7 and 9.

If the school nurse identified any findings for your child during the screening process, a letter will be sent home to inform you and ask that you seek further medical assessment or evaluation for the identified issue. Please let the school nurse know when you have followed up with the physician and if we can assist with any necessary accommodations if required.

Any information disclosed by a child during the substance abuse screening is confidential, unless the screener determines that the child is at serious risk of doing harm to him/herself or others. Nothing disclosed by a child during this screening is used for disciplinary purposes.

All new students who transfer into Excel are required to have a physical exam within twelve months of entry with documentation to be given to the school nurse. Although physical exams are not done on a school-wide basis, parents are urged to maintain their child's health by periodic examinations from their private physician.

Health Education, Sex Education, and Sexuality Education Policy

Excel provides a comprehensive health education curriculum designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills to make responsible, well-informed personal health decisions. The health education curriculum covers a wide variety of topics, including human sex education and human sexuality issues.

Under Massachusetts law, parents or guardians have the right to exempt their children from any portion of a curriculum that primarily involves human sexual education or human sexuality issues by submitting written notification to the school principal. The written notification should specify the lessons from which the child is to be exempted. A child who is exempted will not be penalized because of the exemption. The school may provide alternative assignments for exempted students. A copy of the health education curricula and related materials will be maintained in the main office for review.

C. Emergency Protocols

In order to be best prepared for an emergency, Excel Academy holds quarterly emergency drills, including fire

drills. Excel Academy also holds a minimum of two sets of Crisis Response drills each year, including an active shooter drill with students and staff. All staff are trained annually in Excel's crisis response procedures and plan. This training ensures that staff are able to address emergency situations and also enables them to facilitate drills with students. All students are encouraged but not required to participate in these drills. If a family has a question about Excel's crisis response procedures or wishes to opt their student out of the drills, they should contact the Head of School at their child's school directly. In the event of an emergency, Excel Academy follows a specific Crisis Response protocol and will communicate with families as soon as it is safe to do so.

D. Visitor Policy

Parents are welcome and encouraged to visit Excel Academy at any time during the school year. All visitors are required to report to the Main Office upon entering the building. Upon reporting to the Main Office, each visitor will sign in and receive a visitor's badge or sticker. Any visitor who does not report to the office or is found in the building without authorization will be asked to leave immediately. In case of an emergency at home, parents or guardians should contact the Main Office either by phone or in person. Under no circumstances should parents or guardians contact students in their classrooms or attempt to withdraw students from the building without notifying and receiving permission from staff members in the Main Office.

E. Non-Discrimination

Excel Academy Charter Schools does not discriminate in admission to, access to, treatment in, or employment in its services, programs and activities, on the basis of race, color or national origin, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI); on the basis of sex or pregnancy, in accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; on the basis of disability, in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) and Title B of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA); or on the basis of age, in accordance with the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1974 (ADEA). In addition, no person shall be discriminated against in admission to Excel on the basis of race, sex, color, creed, sex, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, mental or physical disability, age, homelessness, natural or protective hairstyle, ancestry, athletic performance, special need, proficiency in the English language or a foreign language, or prior academic achievement, as required by M.G.L.c.71, §89(1); 603 CMR 1.06(1). Finally, no person shall be discriminated against in obtaining the advantages, privileges or access to courses of study offered by Excel on account of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, or homelessness as required by M.G.L, c. 76, § 5.

Inclusivity and Non-Discrimination for Students who Identify as LGBTQIA+

Excel Academy takes very seriously our responsibility to provide a safe learning environment for all students, including and especially those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or transitioning, questioning, intersex, or asexual. To respect the privacy of all students, any student may request increased privacy via an alternative restroom or changing area.

Participation in competitive athletics, sports, athletic teams, competitions, and contact sports shall be facilitated in a manner consistent with the student's gender identity asserted at school and in accordance with any bylaws or regulations instituted by the league or by the state of Massachusetts.

When a student who identifies as transgender, gender nonbinary or gender nonconforming, or their family shares their status as such with Excel, staff will meet with the student and/or family to understand the student's preferences and needs related to pronouns and language, different preferred name if relevant, and use of restroom and locker room facilities. All Excel students will have access to facilities that correspond to their gender identity as expressed and asserted at school, if they wish, or a separate nonintegrated space if that is their choice.

If you would like to reach out to Excel about your child's gender identity, expression, orientation, or with any

questions about this policy, please contact your Head of School or Excel's Managing Director of Academic Leadership and Diversity and Inclusion, Darren Gray (dgray@excelacademy.org).

F. Harassment

Excel Academy Charter Schools is committed to maintaining a school environment free of harassment based on race, color, religion, gender identity, national origin, age, gender, sexual orientation, homelessness, or disability or any other protected class as defined by federal and Massachusetts law. Harassment by administrators, certified and support personnel, students, vendors and other individuals at school or at school sponsored events is unlawful and is strictly prohibited. Excel Academy Charter Schools requires all employees and students to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner with respect to their fellow employees, students and all members of the school community.

1. Definitions of Harassment

In general, harassment includes communications such as jokes, comments, innuendoes, notes, display of pictures or symbols, gestures, or other conduct that offends or shows disrespect to others based upon race, color, religion, gender identity, national origin, age, gender, sexual orientation, homelessness, or disability.

By law, what constitutes harassment is determined from the perspective of a reasonable person with the characteristic on which the harassment is based. What one person may consider acceptable behavior may reasonably be viewed as harassment by another person. Therefore, individuals should consider how their words and actions might reasonably be viewed by other individuals. It is also important for individuals to make it clear to others when a particular behavior or communication is unwelcome, intimidating, hostile or offensive.

2. Sexual Harassment

While all types of harassment are prohibited, sexual harassment requires particular attention. Sexual harassment includes sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and/or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

1. Acceptance of or submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment or education.
2. The individual's response to such conduct is used as a basis for employment decisions affecting an employee or as a basis for educational, disciplinary, or other decisions affecting a student.
3. Such conduct interferes with an individual's job duties, education or participation in extracurricular activities.
4. The conduct creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work or school environment.

3. Harassment and Retaliation Prohibited

Harassment in any form or for any reason is absolutely forbidden. This includes harassment by teachers, administrators, certified and support personnel, students, vendors and other individuals in school or at school related events. In addition, retaliation against any individual who has brought harassment or other inappropriate behavior to the attention of the school or who has cooperated in an investigation of a complaint under this policy is unlawful and will not be tolerated by Excel Academy Charter Schools.

Persons who engage in harassment or retaliation may be subject to disciplinary action, including, but not limited to reprimand, suspension, termination/expulsion or other sanctions as determined by the school administration and/or Board of Trustees, subject to applicable procedural requirements.

4. Bullying

Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 71, Section 37H and 37O, bullying is prohibited and may result in disciplinary action by the school administration. Students who are victims of bullying, who witness bullying activity, or who are retaliated against for reporting bullying, should report the incident to the Dean of Culture. Students may also report to a teacher or guidance counselor, or other trusted adult in the building, who will in turn report the incident to the Dean of Culture. Further details of Excel's policies and procedures for responding to allegations of bullying can be found in the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan appended to this document.

5. Hazing

Excel Academy complies with Massachusetts Anti-Hazing Law (MGL c. 269) and does not tolerate hazing in any form. Further information about Excel's approach may be found in our Code of Conduct.

Grievance Procedure for Harassment and/or Discrimination Where to File a Complaint

Any student or employee who believes that Excel has discriminated against or harassed her/him because of her/his race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or homelessness, in admission to, access to, treatment in, or employment in its services, programs, and activities may file a complaint with the Principal or Head of School. If the Principal or Head of School is the person who is alleged to have caused the discrimination or harassment, the complaint may be filed with the Chief Executive Officer.

Complaints of Harassment by Peers: In the event the complaint consists of a student's allegation that another student is harassing him/her based upon the above-referenced classifications, the student may, in the alternative, file the complaint with the complaint manager. The name of the Building Complaint Manager is the Dean of Culture.

Complaints of Discrimination Based on Disability: A person who alleges discrimination on the basis of disability relative to the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of a person, who because of a handicap needs or is believed to need special instruction or related services, pursuant to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Chapter 766, and/or the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, must use the procedure outlined in the Massachusetts Department of Education's *Parents' Rights Brochure* rather than this Grievance Procedure. A copy of the brochure is available from the Learning Specialist.

A person with a complaint involving discrimination on the basis of a disability other than that described above may either use this Grievance Procedure or file the complaint with the U.S. Department of Education at the address provided at the end of this Grievance Procedure.

Contents of Complaints and Timelines for Filing

Complaints under this Grievance Procedure must be filed within 30 school days of the alleged discrimination. The complaint must be in writing. The Grievance Administrator, or any person of the grievant's choosing, may assist the grievant with filing the complaint. The written complaint must include the following information:

1. The name and school (or address and telephone number if not a student or employee) of the grievant.
2. The name (and address and telephone number if not a student or employee) of the grievant's representative, if any.
3. The name of the person(s) alleged to have caused the discrimination or harassment (respondent).
4. A description, in as much detail as possible, of the alleged discrimination or harassment.
5. The date(s) of the alleged discrimination or harassment.
6. The name of all persons who have knowledge about the alleged discrimination or harassment (witnesses), as can be reasonably determined.
7. A description, in as much detail as possible, of how the grievant wants the complaint to be resolved.

Investigation and Resolution of the Complaint

Respondents will be informed of the charges as soon as the Grievance Administrator deems appropriate based upon the nature of the allegations, the investigation required, and the action contemplated.

The Grievance Administrator will interview witnesses whom s/he deems necessary and appropriate to determine the facts relevant to the complaint, and will gather other relevant information. Such interviews and gathering of information will be completed within fifteen (15) school days of receiving the complaint.

Within twenty (20) school days of receiving the complaint, the Grievance Administrator will meet with the grievant and/or her/his representative to review the information gathered and, if applicable, to propose a resolution designed to stop the discrimination or harassment and to correct its effect. Within ten (10) school days of the meeting with the grievant and/or representative, the Grievance Administrator will provide written disposition of the complaint to the grievant and/or representative and to the respondent(s).Notwithstanding the above, it is understood that in the event a resolution contemplated by Excel Academy involves disciplinary action against an employee or a student, the complainant will not be informed of such disciplinary action, unless it directly involves the complainant (i.e., a directive to "stay away" from the complainant, as might occur as a result of a complaint of harassment).

Any disciplinary action imposed upon an employee or student is subject to applicable procedural requirements. All the timelines specified above will be implemented as specified, unless the nature of the investigation or exigent circumstances prevent such implementation, in which case, the matter will be completed as quickly as practicable. If the timelines specified above are not met, the reason(s) for not meeting them must be clearly documented. In addition, it should be noted that in the event the respondent is subject to a collective bargaining agreement which sets forth a specific timeline for notice and/or investigation of a complaint, such timelines will be followed.

Confidentiality of grievants/respondents and witnesses will be maintained, to the extent consistent with Excel Academy's obligations relating to investigation of complaints and the due process rights of individuals affected.

Retaliation against someone because he/she has filed a complaint under this Grievance Procedure is strictly prohibited. Acts of retaliation may result in disciplinary action, up to and including suspension or expulsion/discharge.

Complaints of Discrimination Based on Sex, Sexual Identity, or Gender (Title IX)

Excel's formal Title IX policy is available on Excel's website or by request from the Title IX coordinator. All students, staff, parents and guardians, and community members who believe they have experienced or witnessed an act or acts of sexual harassment or abuse at school (defined as in a classroom, all school common areas, on or immediately adjacent to school premises, on school property, on a school bus or other school-related vehicle, at a school bus stop, or at any school-sponsored or school-related activity or event whether or not it is on school grounds) should notify the Title IX Coordinator, Amy Cruz (acruz@excelacademy.org) so that the school may review the incident complaint, assist in submitting a formal complaint, and open an investigation into the conduct if appropriate.

Contents of Complaints and Timelines for Filing

Complaints under this Grievance Procedure must be filed within 30 school days, with the exception of Title IX complaints, of the alleged discrimination. Complaints under Title IX do not have a time limitation The complaint must be in writing. The Grievance Administrator, or any person of the grievant's choosing, may assist the grievant

with filing the complaint. The written complaint must include the following information:

1. The name and school (or address and telephone number if not a student or employee) of the grievant.
2. The name (and address and telephone number if not a student or employee) of the grievant's representative, if any.
3. The name of the person(s) alleged to have caused discrimination or harassment (respondent).
4. A description, in as much detail as possible, of the alleged discrimination or harassment.
5. The date(s) of the alleged discrimination or harassment.
6. The name of all persons who have knowledge about the alleged discrimination or harassment (witnesses), as can be reasonably determined.
7. A description, in as much detail as possible, of how grievant wants the complaint to be resolved.

Investigation and Resolution of the Complaint

Respondents will be informed of the charges as soon as the Grievance Administrator deems appropriate based upon the nature of the allegations, the investigation required, and the action contemplated. The Grievance Administrator will meet with the complainant, respondent, and interview witnesses whom s/he deems necessary and appropriate to determine the facts relevant to the complaint, and will gather other relevant information. Such interviews and gathering of information will be completed within fifteen (15) school days of receiving the complaint.

Within twenty (20) school days of receiving the complaint, the Grievance Administrator will meet with the complainant grievant and/or her/his representative to review the information gathered and, if applicable, to propose a resolution designed to stop the discrimination or harassment and to correct its effect. Within ten (10) school days of the meeting with the grievant and/or representative, the Grievance Administrator will provide written disposition of the complaint to the grievant and/or representative and to the respondent(s).

Notwithstanding the above, it is understood that in the event a resolution contemplated by Excel Academy involves disciplinary action against an employee or a student, the complainant will not be informed of such disciplinary action, unless it directly involves the complainant (i.e., a directive to "stay away" from the complainant, as might occur as a result of a complaint of harassment).

Any disciplinary action imposed upon an employee or student is subject to applicable procedural requirements.

All the timelines specified above will be implemented as specified, unless the nature of the investigation or exigent circumstances prevent such implementation, in which case, the matter will be completed as quickly as practicable. If the timelines specified above are not met, the reason(s) for not meeting them must be clearly documented. In addition, it should be noted that in the event the respondent is subject to a collective bargaining agreement which sets forth a specific timeline for notice and/or investigation of a complaint, such timelines will be followed.

Confidentiality of grievants/respondents and witnesses will be maintained, to the extent consistent with Excel Academy's obligations relating to investigation of complaints and the due process rights of individuals affected.

Retaliation against someone because he/she has filed a complaint under this Grievance Procedure is strictly prohibited. Acts of retaliation may result in disciplinary action, up to and including suspension or expulsion/discharge.

Appeals

If the grievant is not satisfied with a disposition by a Grievance Administrator, the grievant may appeal the disposition to the Board of Trustees by writing to the Board Chair:

Caitlin Brumme
Board Chair, Excel Academy Charter School
58 Moore Street
East Boston, MA 02128

The Board of Trustees will issue a written response on the appeal to the grievant within thirty (30) school days of receiving the appeal.

Grievances and complaints lodged pursuant to Title IX will be handled in accordance with the specific processes set forth in Excel's Title IX Policy.

Generally, a grievant may file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, JW McCormack POCH, Boston, Massachusetts 02109-4557, telephone (617) 223-9662, TTY (617) 223-9695 as follows:

1. Within 180 calendar days of alleged discrimination of harassment, or
2. Within 60 calendar days of receiving notice of Excel Academy Charter School's final disposition on a complaint filed through Excel Academy Charter School, or Within 60 calendar days of receiving a final decision by the Massachusetts Department of Education, Bureau of Special Education Appeals, or
3. Instead of filing a complaint with Excel Academy.

G. Student Records

Standardized Testing

Students at Excel will take the state-mandated standardized assessment in all grade levels. Families will be sent score reports to update them on their child's annual progress when they are available by the state, typically in late fall or early winter.

Student Records, Access, Amendments

Federal and state laws provide parents and eligible students (those who are age 14 or older) with rights of confidentiality, access, and amendment relating to student records.

Excel Academy's Operations team maintains student records during and after each student's tenure. Each student's permanent record will include their transcript and standardized testing scores. Each student's temporary record will include documents related to enrollment at Excel, report cards, scholarship awards, health office records, and other information related to the student's education. The temporary record will be destroyed the summer following the student's withdrawal or graduation from Excel Academy. Families who would like a copy should request a copy at the time of withdrawal or graduation.

A parent or eligible student has a right to access student records and to seek their amendment if the parent or eligible student believes them to be inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights. In order to obtain access or to seek amendment to student records, please contact the Head of School.

Appeals (603 CMR 23.09)

If any decision made by the principal or his/her designee regarding student records is not wholly or partially

satisfactory to the student or parent, they have the right to appeal to the CEO of Excel. Within two weeks of the appeal, the CEO will be notified of the appeal, review the issues presented, and compose a written decision to the affected student or parent that states the reasons for the decision. If this does not satisfy the affected student or parents, they may present their case to the Board of Directors of Excel Academy Charter Schools.

Student Records - (Access by non-custodial parents)

Massachusetts General Laws c. 71, §34H ("Section 34H") governs access to student records by a parent who does not have physical custody of a student. Generally, Section 34H requires a non-custodial parent seeking access to submit a written request and other documentation to the Head of School on an annual basis. Parents who have questions or concerns regarding access to records by non-custodial parents are requested to contact the Head of School for detailed information regarding the procedures that must be followed under Section 34H.

Confidentiality

Release of student records generally requires consent of the parent or eligible student. However, there are certain exceptions; for example, staff employed or under contract to the district may have access to records as needed to perform their duties. Excel also releases a student's complete student record to authorized school personnel of a school to which a student seeks or intends to transfer without further notice to or receipt of consent from the eligible student or parent. Additionally, as noted below, Excel Academy has the practice of releasing certain Directory Information.

H. Directory Information Policy

FERPA Policy

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and related Massachusetts (603 CMR 23.000) and Rhode Island (R.I. Gen. Laws s. 16-71-3) laws require that Excel, with certain exceptions, obtain your written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from your child's education records.

One of those exceptions concerns the disclosure of "directory information" (as defined in this policy). Excel may disclose appropriately designated directory information without prior written consent, unless you have advised Excel to the contrary in accordance with outlined procedures. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow Excel to include information from your child's education records that is generally publicly accessible or is not considered harmful to disclose in certain school publications. Examples of school publications that may include directory information are:

- A playbill, showing your student's role in a drama production;
- The annual yearbook;
- Honor roll or other recognition lists; and
- Graduation programs
- Class Schedule

Excel may also disclose directory information, to outside organizations without a parent's prior written consent. Outside organizations include, but are not limited to, companies that manufacture class rings or publish yearbooks. In addition, two federal laws require Excel to provide military recruiters, upon request, with the following information – names, addresses and telephone listings – unless parents have advised Excel that they do not want their student's information disclosed without their prior written consent.

If you do not want Excel to disclose any or all of the types of directory information from your child's education records without your prior written consent, you must notify Excel by emailing enrollment@excelacademy.org. **Your written notification must be received by Excel by September 1st annually**. If at any time you wish to revoke your written, you may do so, and must submit revocation of consent https://forms.gle/riygz3sMRcE6abcn9. Any requests for Excel to refrain from disclosing your student's directory information must either state that Excel may not disclose **any** directory information OR it must specifically identify the types of directory information that Excel may not disclose. Where a parent does not specify the types of directory information to be excluded, Excel will assume that the parent requests that **all** directory information be excluded.

To be clear, directory information will be disclosed unless Excel has received a written request from a student's parent not to disclose the directory information. Excel will not disclose personally identifiable information concerning your student that is **not** directory information without a parent's prior written consent. For the purposes of this policy, Excel has designated the following information as directory information:

- Student's name
- Age
- Date of Birth
- Grade level
- Dates of attendance
- City of residence
- Graduating class
- Student Family/Guardian Phone Number
- Honors and awards
- Student Family/Guardian Zip Code
- Student Family/Guardian Email Address
- Major field of study
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- Post-high school plans
- Photographs
- Artwork
- Weight and height of the members of athletic teams
- Student ID number, user ID, or other unique personal identifier used to communicate in electronic systems but only if the identifier cannot be used to gain access to education records except when used in conjunction with one or more factors that authenticate the user's identity, such as a PIN, password, or other factor known or possessed only by the authorized user
- State Assigned Student Identifier ("SASID")

Excel reserves the right and discretion to amend this policy, and parents and students will be notified of any amendments via the school website.

Code of Conduct

A. Purpose

Excel Academy Charter Schools has created a Code of Conduct in order to maintain a focused, respectful, and productive space for learning and to prepare students to become engaged citizens who follow rules set by our communities. The Code of Conduct describes expected behaviors at Excel Academy and those that are considered inappropriate or unacceptable (which we will call "behavioral infractions") and the consequences of those behaviors.

B. Our Philosophy

Excel students are able to access college preparatory education in a joyful and productive community. Our goal is to keep students in class learning. However, when a student's actions do not meet the school community's clearly defined standards for reasonable and acceptable behavior, they will not be permitted to disrupt the education or infringe on the safety of others. This is the basis of our student Code of Conduct. Excel Academy expects that students engage in safe and respectful behavior at school to ensure a productive school and classroom community.

C. Behavioral Infractions

Enforcement of Excel Academy's Code of Conduct is based upon a framework of positive behavior and intervention system. Our goal is to ensure students can access a college preparatory education and therefore implement a tiered system of consequences, ensuring students are able to remain in school whenever possible. Specifically, minor infractions generally result in less severe consequences while larger infractions generally result in more severe consequences. Furthermore, first-time infractions generally result in less severe consequences while repeated infractions generally result in more severe consequences.

As described elsewhere in this Handbook, Excel Academy will not tolerate acts of bullying or harassment, including acts of cyberbullying. Any reports of alleged bullying will be investigated and responded to according to the guidelines laid out in the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy appended in this handbook. Furthermore, retaliation against a person who reports, provides information about, or witnesses alleged bullying or harassment is prohibited. The following list of behavioral infractions is not comprehensive; it offers examples of inappropriate or unacceptable behaviors. While we have stated possible consequences for certain behavioral infractions, Excel staff has sole discretion to determine the consequence of each behavioral infraction.

A school-related behavioral infraction refers to the violation of this code occurring:

- while the student is on school grounds or school-related transportation
- during school-sponsored activities and trips
- during all other school-related events
- off school grounds that results in substantial disruption to the school environment

Students are expected to respond respectfully to the authority and direction of school staff. Behaviors that are considered disrespectful include but are not limited to: rolling of the eyes, making inappropriate remarks or sounds in response to a request, or questioning a staff person's action or authority in a disrespectful manner. Such disrespect will not be tolerated. At Excel we seek to help students become mature young adults. To that end, while we will not tolerate disrespect, we do allow for students to express disagreement in a respectful manner. The school has developed routines and procedures that enable students to easily express such disagreement with respect for all involved. Failure to disagree respectfully will result in further consequences.

D. Middle School Low-Level Infractions

Off-PREPs

If a student commits any of the following infractions, the student will receive an off-PREP. In addition to an off-PREP, the student may receive additional targeted, corrective consequences and/or lose other school privileges as determined by Excel Academy staff. Infractions which may warrant an off-PREP include, but are not limited to: being out of uniform, being unprepared for class, not engaging with classwork, making inappropriate noises during class, failing to follow directions or school procedures, talking out of turn, and not following hallway expectations.

Automatic Consequences

If a student commits any of the following infractions, the student may receive an Automatic Consequences. Infractions which warrant an Automatic Consequences include, but are not limited to: Earning a specific number of off-PREPs in a day, low-level disrespect towards a fellow student, low-level disrespect towards faculty, staff, or other members of the school community, low-level disrespect of school property, deliberately disrupting class, being found in any of the restricted areas of the school, or outside the school, engaging in physical contact that causes a disruption, possessing an electronic device (e.g., cell phone) in school, failing to return forms by school-mandated deadlines (e.g., PREP Reports, Report Cards), possession of, or drinking, soda or caffeinated beverages.

In-Class Restitution

At times, particular infractions warrant consequences that are more severe than Automatic Consequences and less severe than Out-of-School Suspension. Therefore, Excel Academy has an In-Class Restitution model ensuring that a student has access to the curriculum while working to restore themselves to full membership in the community. During In-Class Restitution, a student is typically seated apart from other students in the classroom, signifying loss of social privileges. Students who are on In-Class Restitution are able to fully participate in lessons, access the curriculum, and receive support from teachers. In some cases, teachers will authorize students on In-Class Restitution to work with peers, particularly when necessary for completing group assignments or projects. More details regarding In-Class Restitution are outlined in the next section.

Specific infractions which may warrant In-Class Restitution from the community include, but are not limited to: low-level forging, cheating, plagiarism or dishonesty, skipping school or after school commitments, multiple referrals during the week.

In addition, students who have not met behavioral expectations over an extended period of time, as measured by a PREP Report score less than a specific school-determined threshold, may face In-Class Restitution. In order to promote and uphold our school community's values and Code of Conduct, students who communicate with a student who is currently on In-Class Restitution at undesignated times may also earn consequences.

E. High School - Low-Level Infractions

Students in the high school are expected to maintain a focus on academic growth and strong community behavior; while grades are a measure of growth, a weekly point total is a measure of behavior. These points are renewed each week, and points are lost for absences, tardies, behaviors against our values (including talking during instruction, misuse of class time, phone misuse, late to class, detention, or referrals to the deans office). In all grades, high point totals result in additional freedom such as off campus access at lunch or other rewards. A low point total at the end of each week will result in Loss of Privileges (LOP), served after school from Monday to Wednesday from 3:50-4:20 for grades 9 and 10, and served during lunch for grades 11 and 12.

Additionally, students that are late to school or receive a detention will turn in their phones to the deans office

until they have served the assigned detention. Students that do not serve detention on the assigned date will be re-assigned another day and time, and if not served, will have a parent meeting and additional consequences may apply. Students that are referred to the deans office typically will serve an automatic detection, served at lunch if referred in the morning, or after school is referred after lunch.

Students may also earn Apologies and Reparation Time (A&R), which is an intervention used in place of a suspension, or in addition to a high level suspension. A&R is a temporary loss of social time, where a student spends advisory, lunch, study hall, and after school in completing service, self reflection exercises, or an educational report in order to grow and repair harm done in the community. This may be done as a result of fighting, bullying, harassment, drug use, plagiarism or sustained lack of response to other interventions.

F. Alternatives to Suspension

As much as possible, Excel Academy Charter Schools will seek alternative consequences to suspension including but not limited to counseling services, restorative justice practices, and accountability and reparations. However, there are infractions for which suspension is an appropriate and necessary consequence.

G. Out-of-School Suspension

Infractions which may warrant an Out-of-School Suspension include, but are not limited to:

- Gross disrespect of a fellow student including, but not limited to, bullying and harassment as described in our policies and procedures
- Gross disrespect of faculty, staff, visitors, volunteers, or school transportation providers
- Damaging, destroying, or stealing personal or school property or attempting to do so (including graffiti)
- Using or possessing tobacco products, vaping products or equipment, or electronic cigarettes.
- Committing sexual, racial, or any form of harassment or intimidation as defined in our policies and procedures
- Using abusive, vulgar or profane language
- Making verbal or physical threats, empty or otherwise, to any member of the Excel community
- Setting off false alarms
- Gambling
- Serious forgery, plagiarism, or cheating
- Leaving school grounds without permission
- Being in a restricted zone for an extended amount of time.
- Being charged with a felony (see M.G.L. c. 71, *§37H1/2 in Appendix)*
- Repeated offenses for which the student has already earned In-Class Restitution

If a student has earned a short-term or long-term suspension, Excel Academy Charter Schools schedule a re-entry meeting with the student, family, and school support team to discuss re-engagement in learning, along with interventions and support, prior to the students return date. Supports include, but are not limited to positive behavioral interventions, trauma informed approaches, restoration, counseling services, check-ins with the Dean of Culture, and educational support.

H. Out-of-School Suspension and/or Expulsion

MA law (M.G.L. c. 71, §37H and §37H1/2) provides the Head of School with the authority to expel students without Board involvement for the following behavioral infractions:

- Possessing a dangerous weapon including but not limited to a knife or a gun
- Possessing a controlled substance as defined in M.G.L. c. 94C including but not limited to illegal drugs (e.g. marijuana) and prescription medication
- Assaulting educational personnel.

- Being convicted of a felony or being found guilty of committing a felony either by admission or adjudication.

In addition, the Head of School has the authority to assign a long-term out-of-school suspension of students for up to 90 days for behavioral infractions including, but not limited to,the following:

- Repeated, deliberate and fundamental disregard of school policies and procedures
- Possession, use, or distribution of alcohol
- Assault (i.e. threatening assault, hitting, kicking, punching, slapping, pushing) against fellow students or other members of the school community
- Theft or destruction (or attempted theft or destruction) of personal or school property including arson
- Harassment, bullying and violations of civil rights, as delineated in the Excel Academy Student and Family Handbook

In addition to any of these infractions, any breaches of Federal law, Massachusetts State law, or bylaws of the city in which the school is located, may be handled in cooperation with the local police department and may result in long-term out-of-school suspension and/or expulsion.

As set forth in M.G.L. c. 71, §37H3/4, students serving a short-term suspension or long-term suspension have the opportunity to, as applicable, make up assignments, tests, papers, and other schoolwork as needed to make academic progress during the period of his or her removal from the classroom or school. Students who are suspended or expelled for more than 10 school days are entitled to an opportunity to make academic progress while suspended or expelled. In these circumstances, the School must create an education service plan for the student to be executed while the student is out of school.

I. Procedures for Disciplinary Action

The following section explains the procedures for determining consequences students may face for violation of this Code of Conduct. All students are entitled to due process commensurate with the disciplinary consequences to which they may be subject.

At each campus, students may be required to reflect on their choices during or after the school day. Excel will make reasonable efforts to reach families by phone to notify them of consequences earned. Students will be expected to serve consequences even if the school is unable to reach the family.

In-Class Restitution

Requirements: In the morning, students will need to check in with the Deans of Culture who will reiterate the expectations of In-Class Restitution. Students on In-Class Restitution will:

- Attend classes, receive instruction and teacher support, and complete all class assignments
- Earn signatures for each ICR period to show necessary improvement in class and during non-instructional time.
- Generally, not complete assignments collaboratively with peers, except when specifically instructed to do so by a teacher for the purpose of a group assignment
- Be seated apart from other students, to signify that they have temporarily lost full social privileges in the community
- Generally, not participate in recess or in social time during lunch, breaks, and other non-instructional periods
- Not attend reward events including field trips, dances etc. (exceptions may be made in extraordinary circumstances at the sole discretion of the school administration)

Violation of the requirements of In-Class Restitution may result in additional days of In-Class Restitution or an out of school suspension. The number of days on In-Class Restitution, determined by a school administrator, will be commensurate with the severity of the behavioral infraction. For each day that a student does not meet the requirements of In-Class Restitution, he/she may be required to complete an additional day of suspension.

Out-of-School Suspensions and Expulsion: Short-Term Suspension

For suspension between one and ten days, the following procedures will apply: When an infraction occurs, the student will be removed from class and sent to the Main Office, Deans of Culture's' office, or another designated school location.

Student Notice

An administrator informs the student orally of the following:

- The disciplinary offense
- Basis for the charge
- Potential consequences, including the potential length of the suspension
- The opportunity for the student to have a hearing with the Deans of Culture concerning the proposed suspension, including the opportunity to dispute the charges and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident and for the parent to attend the hearing; the date, time and location of the hearing
- The student's parent or guardian will be notified of the incident by a school administrator

Unless a student presents a danger or risk of substantial disruption to the educational process, the student and the parents shall receive oral and written notice and an opportunity to present her/his version of the relevant facts at a disciplinary meeting.

Efforts to Involve Parents

The administrator will make reasonable efforts to notify the parent of the opportunity to attend the disciplinary hearing. To conduct a disciplinary meeting without the parent present, the administrator will document reasonable efforts to include the parent. The administrator is presumed to have made reasonable efforts if the administrator has sent written notice and has documented at least two (2) attempts to contact the parent in the manner specified by the parent for emergency notification. The student and family shall receive written notice of the following in English and the primary language spoke in the student's home:

- the disciplinary offense;
- the basis for the charge;
- the potential consequences, including the potential length of the student's suspension;
- the opportunity for the student to have a disciplinary hearing with the administrator concerning the proposed suspension, including the opportunity to dispute the charges and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident, and for the parent to attend the hearing;
- the date, time, and location of the disciplinary hearing; and
- the right of the student and the student's parent to interpreter services at the meeting if needed to participate.

Format of Disciplinary Hearing

The administrator will discuss the disciplinary offense, the basis for the charge, and any other pertinent information. The student also will have an opportunity to present information, including mitigating facts, that the administrator should consider in determining whether other remedies and consequences may be appropriate.

The administrator will provide the parent, if present, an opportunity to discuss the student's conduct and offer information, including mitigating circumstances, that the administrator should consider in determining consequences for the student.

Decision

The administrator will provide written notice to the student and parent of his/her determination and the reasons for it, and, if the student is suspended, the type and duration of suspension. The notice of determination may be in the form of an update to the original written notice of hearing. The administrator will provide the family with opportunities for the student to make up assignments and other such school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of removal. Prior to the student's re-entry to the Excel Academy community following an Out of School suspension, the following may be requested:

- The student will write a letter of apology and publicly present this letter to Excel Academy staff and/or students.
- An administrator will contact the parent/guardian to schedule a required re-entry meeting if necessary.
- Students who are suspended two or more times may be asked to submit a reasonable and genuine plan for improvement in addition to an apology to the Deans of Culture Students.
- The student may have to meet additional conditions as required by Excel Academy.

If a student has not met the above requirements, he or she may earn In-Class Restitution. Students are responsible for completing academic work missed during the suspension. The completed work will receive full credit, if submitted by deadlines in accordance with the school make-up policy. If a student does not complete this work, the student may face standard academic consequences (e.g., no academic credit).

Out-of-School Suspensions and Expulsion: Long-Term Suspension

Prior to a suspension of more than ten days, the following procedures will apply:

The student shall receive written notice in English and the primary language spoke in the student's home which will include all of the components for a short-term suspension above, plus the following:

- In advance of the disciplinary hearing;
- The opportunity to review the student's record and the documents upon which the administrator may rely in making a determination to suspend the student or not;
- The right to be represented by counsel or a lay person of the student's choice, at the student's/parent's expense;
- The right to produce witnesses on his or her behalf and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident, but the student may not be compelled to do so;
- The right to cross-examine witnesses presented by the school district;
- The right to request that the meeting be recorded by the administrator, and a copy of the audio recording provided to the student or parent upon request; and
- The right to appeal the administrator's decision to impose long-term suspension to the Chief Executive Officer.

Format of Hearing

The Hearing will afford the rights set forth in the notice above. The administrator will also provide the parent, if present, an opportunity to discuss the student's conduct and offer information, including mitigating circumstances, that the Head of School should consider in determining consequences for the student.

Decision

Based on the evidence, the Head of School will determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense, and, if so, after considering mitigating circumstances and alternatives to long-term suspension, what remedy or consequence will be imposed, in place of or in addition to a long-term suspension. The administrator will send the written determination to the student and parent by hand-delivery, certified mail, first-class mail, email to an address provided by the parent for school communications, or any other method of delivery agreed to by the school and the parent. If the administrator decides to suspend the student on a long-term basis, the written determination will:

1. Identify the disciplinary offense, the date on which the hearing took place, and the participants at the hearing;
2. Set out the key facts and conclusions reached;
3. Identify the length and effective date of the suspension, as well as a date of return to school;
4. Include notice of the student's opportunity to receive education services to make academic progress during the period of removal from school (if more than 10 cumulative days);
5. Inform the student of the right to appeal the administrator's decision to the superintendent or designee. Notice of the right of appeal will be in English and the primary language of the home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate, and will include the following information stated in plain language:
    a. The process for appealing the decision, including that the student or parent must file a written notice of appeal with the superintendent within five (5) calendar days of the effective date of the long-term suspension; provided that within the five (5) calendar days, the student or parent may request and receive from the superintendent an extension of time for filing the written notice for up to seven (7) additional calendar days; and that
    b. The long-term suspension will remain in effect unless and until the superintendent decides to reverse the administrator's determination on appeal.

No long-term suspension will extend beyond the end of the school year in which such suspension is imposed.
All decisions made by the Head of School regarding long-term suspension of a student for any reason other than the four outlined in M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H and 37H1/2 will be in writing and are subject to review by the Chief Executive Officer, if requested.

J. Appeal to the CEO

If a decision by an administrator, following the parent meeting, results in suspension of a student for more than 10 cumulative school days for the school year, the student may appeal the decision to the CEO. In order to do so the student or parent must file a notice of appeal with the CEO within five (5) calendar days with a seven (7) day postponement option. The CEO must hold the hearing within three (3) school days of the student's request, unless the student or parent requests an extension of up to seven (7) additional calendar days. If the appeal is not filed within this time frame, the CEO may deny the appeal, or may allow the appeal in his or her discretion, for good cause.

The following apply:

- The CEO will make a good faith effort to include the parent in the hearing. The CEO will be presumed to have made a good faith effort if he or she has made efforts to find a day and time for the hearing that would allow the parent and CEO to participate. The CEO will send written notice to the parent of the date, time, and location of the hearing.
- The CEO will conduct a hearing to determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense of which the student is accused, and if so, what the consequence will be. The CEO will arrange for an

audio recording of the hearing, a copy of which will be provided to the student or parent upon request. The CEO will inform all participants before the hearing that an audio record will be made of the hearing and a copy will be provided to the student and parent upon request.
- The student will have all the rights afforded to the student at the administrator's hearing for long-term suspension as described above.

The CEO will issue a written decision within five (5) calendar days of the hearing which meets the requirements for a long-term suspension as described above. If the CEO determines that the student committed the disciplinary offense, the CEO may impose the same or a lesser consequence than the administrator, but will not impose a suspension greater than that imposed by the administrator's decision. The decision of the CEO constitutes the final decision of the school.

K. Exception for Emergency Removal

Notwithstanding the provisions for short or long-term suspension set forth above, a student who is charged with a disciplinary offense may be removed temporarily from school if the continued presence of the student poses a danger to persons or property, or materially and substantially disrupts the order of the school, and, in the administrator's judgment, there is no alternative available to alleviate the danger or disruption.

The temporary removal will not exceed two (2) school days following the day of the emergency removal, during which time the administrator will provide the following, as applicable to the length of suspension:

- Make immediate and reasonable efforts to orally notify the student and the student's parent of the emergency removal, the need for emergency removal, and other applicable matters;
- Provide written notice to the student and parent as provided in Section C or D above, as applicable;
- Provide the student an opportunity for a hearing with the administrator, as applicable, and the parent an opportunity to attend the hearing, before the expiration of the two (2) school days, unless an extension of time for hearing is otherwise agreed to by the administrator, student, and parent; and
- Render a decision orally on the same day as the hearing, and in writing no later than the following school day.

An administrator may not remove a student from school on an emergency basis for a disciplinary offense until adequate provisions have been made for the student's safety and transportation.

L. School-Wide Education Service Plan

Students serving short-term suspension or long-term suspension have the opportunity to earn credits, as applicable, make up assignments, tests, papers, and other schoolwork as needed to make academic progress during the period of his or her removal from the classroom or school.

M. Expulsion

Students are subject to expulsion (i.e., permanent exclusion) by the Head of School for the conduct listed below:

- Possession of a dangerous weapon*
- Possession of a controlled substance (such as marijuana, cocaine, or prescription drugs not authorized by the school nurse)
- Assault on teachers, administrative staff or other educational personnel

*This includes not only knives and guns, explosive devices and realistic replicas of such weapons/devices, but also other objects used to assault another person or to otherwise create a dangerous situation, such as a baseball bat, a pair of scissors, matches or a lighter. While such objects would not always constitute "dangerous weapons",

administrators and educational professionals will review the circumstances of each case and make a reasonable determination about whether a particular object in a student's possession constitutes a dangerous weapon in the school setting. Any illegal weapon will be turned over to the Police Department.

Students are also subject to long term suspension/expulsion by the Head of School when charged/convicted of a felony based upon the standards and procedures set forth in M.G.L. c.71, §37H1/2.

Any student who is removed from school for a disciplinary offense under G.L. c. 71, §37H or §37H½ for more than ten (10) consecutive days will have an opportunity to receive educational services and make academic progress during the period of removal under a school-wide education service plan, and will be so informed at the time of the suspension/expulsion.

Procedures Applicable to Conduct Covered by M.G.L. C.71, §37H and 37H ½

When considering the exclusion of a student from school for possession of a dangerous weapon, possession of a controlled substance (such as marijuana, cocaine, or prescription drugs not authorized by the school nurse), or assault on teachers, an administrator may place a student on short term suspension (ten (10) days or less) based upon an informal hearing, to be followed by a formal hearing before the Head of School within that period of suspension to determine whether to take additional disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion from school.

1. The informal hearing will be in the form of a conference between the student and the Head of School or designee. At this conference, the student (1) shall be informed of the reason for the conference, (2) shall be given the opportunity to present his or her side of the story, and (3) shall be given a decision on the suspension. If the administrator deems delay of the hearing necessary to avoid danger or substantial disruption, this process may occur immediately after, rather than before, the suspension.
2. Prior to putting a suspension into effect, the Head of School or designee shall make a reasonable effort to telephone and inform the student's parent or guardian of the impending suspension.
3. A letter will be mailed to the parent/guardian of the suspended student stating:
    a) The reason for the suspension
    b) A statement of the effective date and duration of the suspension
    c) A statement regarding whether or not the Head of School will schedule a formal hearing to consider further discipline, up to and including expulsion from school in accordance with M.G.L. c. 71, §37H

When considering a suspension/expulsion of a student charged with/convicted of felony, the Head of School will use the standards and procedures set forth in M.G.L. c.71, §37H1/2. In addition, prior to initiating such procedures, the Head of School may meet informally with the student and/or his/her parents to review the charge and the applicable standards if he/she deems appropriate.

N. Discipline of Students with Special Needs

Federal and state law provide certain procedural rights and protections relating to discipline of students who have been identified under such laws as having special needs based upon a disability.

1. A suspension of longer than then (10) consecutive days or a series of suspensions that are shorter than ten (10) consecutive days but constitute a pattern are considered to represent a change in placement for the student.
2. When a suspension that constitutes a change in placement of a student with disabilities, relevant members of the Team, as determined by the parent and the schools, convene prior to the 10th day of suspension to review all relevant information in the student's file, including the IEP, any teacher observations, and any

relevant information from the parents, to determine whether the behavior was caused by or had a direct and substantial relationship to the disability or was the direct result of the district´s failure to implement the IEP–this is considered a "Manifestation Determination Review" (MDR) meeting.

3. If the Team determines that the behavior is NOT a manifestation of the disability, then the suspension or expulsion may go forward consistent with policies applied to any student without disabilities, except that Excel will still offer:
    a. Access to the school's Educational Service Plan;
    b. Services to enable the student, although in another setting, to continue to participate in the general education curriculum and to progress toward IEP goals;
4. The team may choose to conduct, as appropriate, a functional behavioral assessment and to implement behavioral intervention services and modifications, to address the behavior so that it does not recur. Regardless of the manifestation determination, Excel may place the student in an interim alternative educational setting (as determined by the Team) for up to 45 school days under the following circumstances:
    a. On its own authority if the behavior involves weapons or illegal drugs or another controlled substance or the infliction of serious bodily injury on another person while on school premises or at a school-sponsored event or, considered case by case, unique circumstances; or
    b. On the authority of a hearing officer if the officer orders the alternative placement after Excel provides evidence that the student is "substantially likely" to injure him/herself or others. In either case, the interim alternative education setting enables the student to continue in the general curriculum and to continue receiving services identified on the IEP, and provides services to address the problem behavior.
5. If the Head of School, the parent, and other relevant members of the Team determine that the behavior IS a manifestation of the disability, then the Team completes a functional behavioral assessment and behavioral intervention plan if it has not already done so. If a behavioral intervention plan is already in place, the Team reviews it and modifies it, as necessary, to address the behavior. Except when he or she has been placed in an interim alternative educational setting in accordance with part 4, the student returns to the original placement unless the parents and Excel agree otherwise or the hearing officer orders a new placement. Not later than the date of the decision to take disciplinary action, the school district notifies the parents of that decision and provides them with the written notice of procedural safeguards. If the parent chooses to appeal or Excel requests a hearing because it believes that maintaining the student´s current placement is substantially likely to result in injury to the student or others, the student remains in the disciplinary placement, if any, until the decision of the hearing officer or the end of the time period for the disciplinary action, whichever comes first, unless the parent and Excel agree otherwise.
6. If, prior to the disciplinary action, Excel had knowledge that the student may be a student with a disability, then Excel makes all protections available to the student until and unless the student is subsequently determined not to be eligible. Excel may be considered to have prior knowledge if:
    a. The parent had expressed concern in writing; or
    b. The parent had requested an evaluation; or
    c. The student is in the initial evaluation process; or
    d. Excel staff had expressed directly to the special education director or other supervisory personnel specific concerns about a pattern of behavior demonstrated by the student. Excel may not be considered to have had prior knowledge if the parent has not consented to evaluation of the student or has refused special education services, or if an evaluation of the student has resulted in a determination of ineligibility.

O. Student Searches

In order to maintain the security of all its students, Excel Academy Charter School staff reserve the right to conduct searches of its students and their property when there is reasonable suspicion that the student has violated the law or a school rule. If searches are conducted, the school will ensure that the privacy of the students is respected to the extent possible, and that students and their families are informed of the circumstances surrounding and results of the search. At the high school grades, hand-held metal detector wands may be used as a part of the search process. School cubbies and desks, which are assigned to students for their use, remain the property of Excel Academy Charter Schools, and students should, therefore, have no expectation of privacy in these areas.

P.Bus Behavior

The Excel Academy Charter School Code of Conduct applies to students while on school bus transportation to and/or from school. Families are strongly encouraged to reinforce the importance of proper bus behavior and the potential consequences for bad behavior. The following additional rules apply to the bus:

- Putting hands out of the bus, throwing objects, using obscene language, and not obeying the bus driver, are all infractions, in addition to those listed in part (C) of this Code of Conduct.

More serious behavior (i.e. fighting) will be investigated and assigned consequences just as if it happened on school grounds. Excel Academy reserves the right to assign seats on the school bus.

- First infraction = consequence consistent with the Code of Conduct (i.e. same as if infraction occurred on school ground) and one week bus suspension
- Second infractions = consequence consistent with the Code of Conduct (i.e. same as if infraction occurred on school ground) and one month bus suspension
- Third infraction = consequence consistent with the Code of Conduct (i.e. same as if infraction occurred on school ground) and loss of bus privilege for the rest of the school year.
- Infractions, if serious enough, can warrant immediate loss of bus privileges. Other consequences (e.g., off-PREPs, Automatic Consequences, suspensions) apply as well. Students engaged in misconduct on the bus will receive all due process protections described in the Code of Conduct.

Consequences for misconduct by Special Education students riding on transportation provided by their Individual Education Plan will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

Q. Field Trips/End-of-Year Events

The school's curriculum may sometimes require outside learning experiences or special school events. During these activities, it is important for all students to be responsible for their behavior since the site of the activity or event is a temporary extension of the school grounds.

A permission slip that allows students to attend all school-sponsored field trips and events will be sent home at the beginning of the school year and should be signed by a parent or guardian. The school will attempt to notify all parents and guardians before each school-sponsored trip.

Generally, students will participate in academic field trips unless they have failed to return the required permission slip or been suspended out of school on the day of the trip. Non-academic field trips, such as end-of-year trips to amusement parks, are considered rewards for meeting the expectations of the community throughout the year. A student may be considered ineligible for a non-academic "reward" trip for reasons including but not limited to: repeated low-level misbehaviors, involvement in a disciplinary incident on a prior trip, poor school attendance, misbehavior or severe lack of academic effort in the days prior to the trip, etc. Students who are considered ineligible for attending a trip will be required to attend school that day.

If parents or other volunteers assist with such trips or events, students must afford these chaperones the same respect they would provide to teachers. Appropriate behavior must be maintained when attending school-sponsored events, and riding on school-provided transportation. Past inappropriate behavior may result in loss of privileges in attending or participating in class trips and events, end-of-year or otherwise.

R. Cheating, Plagiarism, and Copying Other's Work

Cheating on homework or exams, using resources inappropriately, and copying other people's work students' or otherwise – is not only unfair but in the case of plagiarism, illegal, including the use of artificial intelligence (AI) to fully create the assignment. If students are unsure about an assignment or unsure about a test question or testing procedure, they should go to their teacher and ask for direction. Specific guidelines regarding cheating and plagiarism will be reviewed with students during the beginning of each school year and continued throughout the year. The school will determine appropriate consequences but cheating, plagiarism, and copying others work may result in In-Class Restitution, Suspension, loss of academic credit, and/or other consequences. Excel is working towards a final policy on the use of artificial intelligence for work completion, including our view on artificial intelligence and plagiarism.

Appendix A: Graduation Requirements & Competency Determination

Local Context

In November 2024, Massachusetts voters approved Ballot Question #2, which eliminated the state-wide requirement for high school students to pass the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) tests in mathematics, science and technology, and English to receive a high school diploma. The MCAS served the role of a state-wide common competency determination, assessing whether a student has mastered 10th grade standards. While students are still expected to participate in these assessments, passing them is no longer a state-wide graduation prerequisite. It is now up to each individual district to determine local graduation requirements and local competency determinations demonstrating students' mastery of 10th grade standards.

Excel's Commitment to College Readiness

At Excel, our mission is to prepare students to succeed in high school and college, apply their learning to solve relevant problems, and engage productively in their communities. Central to this mission is ensuring that our students graduate equipped with the academic mastery, critical thinking skills, and character necessary to thrive in higher education and beyond.

In light of recent changes to the statewide graduation requirements, Excel reaffirms our commitment to rigorous academic standards. As part of our revised graduation requirements, we will continue to require students to meet a 469 minimum score on the ELA MCAS, Mathematics MCAS, and the Biology MCAS, as we believe the MCAS assessment provides us with an external validator, which will continue to support us in ensuring our coursework and internal assessments are rigorous and standards aligned. In addition, students will continue to be expected to complete a course sequence aligned to MassCore expectations. We believe that these two requirements are essential litmus tests in our students' journey towards college success.

Additionally, Excel is instituting a competency determination that includes earning a passing final grade in key courses, such as English I, English II, English I and II Foundations, English Language Development, Algebra I, Algebra Foundations, Language of Math, Geometry, Geometry Foundations, Algebra II Foundations, Physics or Biology, Language of Science, and Biology Foundations. This ensures that students demonstrate mastery of critical content and skills at the end of each academic year, further solidifying their readiness for the rigors of college coursework.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">Figure 1: Local Graduation Requirements & Competency Determination</th></tr>
<tr><th colspan="3">Overview of Changes</th></tr>
<tr><td>Broad Definition</td><td colspan="2">Earning a diploma = local graduation requirements + competency determination</td></tr>
<tr><td>Prior to Nov 2024</td><td colspan="2">Earning a diploma = local graduation requirements + statewide competency determination</td></tr>
<tr><td>Class of 2025</td><td colspan="2">Earning a diploma = previous graduation requirements + demonstrating mastery of the skills, competencies and knowledge contained in the state academic standards and curriculum frameworks in the areas measured by the MCAS high school tests described in section one I administered in 2023, by either passing the MCAS and/or earning a passing final grade in the aligned courses.</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Class of 2026 and beyond</td><td colspan="2">Earning a diploma = local graduation requirements + local competency determination</td></tr>
<tr><td>Local Graduation Requirements</td><td>Local Competency Determination</td></tr>
<tr><td>1. Passing Core Requirements
2. (New) MCAS score of 469 in ELA & Math and 470 in Science (Biology)</td><td>(New) Passing Final Grade in
a. English I or English I Foundations + English Language Development
b. English II or English II Foundations + English Language Development
c. Algebra I or TGA Math or Algebra Foundations + Language of Math
d. Algebra II or Algebra II Foundations + Language of Math
e. Geometry or Geometry Foundations + Language of Math
f. Biology or Biology Foundations + Language of Science</td></tr>
</table>

Alternative Graduation Requirement (MCAS):

Although we believe almost every student can and will earn a passing score on the MCAS assessment, we know there are students with significant cognitive disabilities who may require an alternative way, other than the MCAS, to demonstrate their mastery of grade level standards. Below is our proposal on the process for identifying a student that would qualify for an alternative to the MCAS graduation requirement.

This section provides the options for IEP team members to determine how each student with a disability will participate in MCAS. It is not a question of whether the student with a disability will participate in MCAS testing; rather, educators must determine the appropriate and allowable format of MCAS testing for all students.

- Option 1: The student participates in standard MCAS testing under routine testing conditions.
- Option 2: The student participates in standard MCAS testing using necessary accessibility features and accommodations to demonstrate knowledge and skills.
- Option 3: The student demonstrates grade-level or near grade-level skills but has a complex and significant disability and will participate in the MCAS Grade-Level Portfolio.

Definition for Students with the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities

Massachusetts's definition of students with the "most significant cognitive disabilities" applies to a small number of students with disabilities for purposes of their participation in state-wide alternate assessments (e.g., MCAS-ALT, Alternate ACCESS for ELLs). IEP teams must also take into account information included in the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's guidance to help discussions of whether a student can be identified as a student with the most significant cognitive disabilities and therefore considered eligible to participate in an alternate state-wide assessment.

Massachusetts defines "students with the most significant cognitive disabilities" as students who:

- have cognitive disabilities evidenced by significant delays in attaining age-level academic achievement standards, even with systematic, extensive, individually designed instruction, related services, and modifications; and
- have cognitive disabilities that significantly impact their educational performance and ability to apply learning from one setting to another; and
- require extensive, direct individualized instruction and substantial supports to achieve measurable gains on the challenging State academic content standards for the grade in which the student is enrolled; and
- perform significantly below average in general cognitive functioning and adaptive behavior. This is defined as a student functioning two or more standard deviations below the mean on commonly accepted norm-referenced assessments in both cognitive functioning and adaptive behavior *(e.g., two or more adaptive skill areas such as daily living skills, communication, self-care, social skills, and academic skills).*

Appendix B: Overview of Alternative Graduation Pathways Proposal

Excel Academy Charter High School remains committed to ensuring that every student has a meaningful and rigorous path to high school graduation. While most students are expected to meet the graduation requirements approved by the Board in March 2025, a small number of students may be unable to demonstrate mastery through MCAS scores and course grades due to significant cognitive disabilities or specific circumstances related to being a multilingual learner (MLL).

This policy outlines an *Alternative Graduation Pathway* for eligible students who are not on track to meet Excel's graduation requirements, while maintaining high standards and aligning with prioritized academic content. It is intended as a supplement to, not a replacement for, the existing graduation policy.

Student Eligibility

To be considered for the Alternative Graduation Pathway, a student must:

- Participate in MCAS testing during the 9th and 10th grades; and
- Be unable to meet the graduation requirements through traditional MCAS or course-based competency determination; and
- Meet one of the following criteria:

1. Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities	2. Multilingual Learners (MLLs)
As defined by DESE, including: • Significant delays in academic achievement despite extensive, individualized instruction; • Substantial support needs to make measurable progress on grade-level standards; • Documented cognitive and adaptive functioning two or more standard deviations below the mean on accepted assessments.	Students who meet at least one of the following: • Fewer than two years in U.S. schools at time of MCAS administration; • An overall ACCESS score of 2.0 or lower by the start of junior year; • Identified as SLIFE (Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education), per DESE guidelines.

Note on LEAP Students

Students enrolled in Excel's LEAP program, which serves those with the most profound cognitive disabilities and who are not accessing academic content aligned to high school standards, are not expected to complete either the traditional or alternative graduation pathway. These students are not on track to earn a high school diploma and will instead work toward a Certificate of Completion, as determined by their IEP team, and they take the MCAS Alt.

Portfolio Graduation Pathway

Eligible students will complete a *standards-based portfolio* demonstrating mastery of prioritized 10th-grade standards in Biology, ELA, and Math. This portfolio offers an alternative method for demonstrating readiness for graduation while upholding academic standards.

Portfolio Requirements

- Students must submit at least one independently completed work sample per prioritized standard in each content area.
- Acceptable work samples include essays, unit tests, lab reports, and/or projects that reflect key skills and knowledge in the course.

- Each submitted sample must be aligned to the content's scope and sequence and reflect the type and rigor of assessment used in general education settings.
- Work must be completed 100% independently by the student, without scaffolding beyond typical classroom accommodations.

Scoring and Review Process

- Each work sample is scored using a common rubric; a score of 3 out of 5 is required to demonstrate mastery.
- Portfolio scoring follows a three-step process:
    1. The course teacher scores each assessment.
    2. The Department Chair or Instructional Coach verifies alignment and scoring consistency.
    3. The Director of Student Supports (DOSS) conducts a final review and ratification.

Implementation Notes

- Sample collection may begin as early as the 9th grade for students identified as potentially eligible.
- Biology portfolios will be reviewed in the spring of 10th grade; ELA and Math in the spring of 11th grade.
- Rubric development, norming processes, and teacher training will be managed by high school instructional leadership team.

Appendix C: Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

Priority Statement

At Excel Academy Charter Schools, students are held to the highest behavioral standards and we work to foster a positive and safe learning environment. Excel Academy expects that all members of the school community will treat each other in a civil manner and with respect for differences.

Excel Academy Charter schools is committed to providing all students with a safe learning environment that is free from bullying and cyber-bullying. This commitment is an integral part of our comprehensive efforts to promote learning, and to prevent and eliminate all forms of bullying and other harmful and disruptive behavior that can impede the learning process. The school's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan ("Plan") describes the school's comprehensive approach to addressing bullying and cyber-bullying. This Plan also describes the school's commitment to working with students, staff, families, law enforcement agencies, and the community to ensure a safe school environment for all. In consultation with these constituencies, we have established this Plan for preventing, intervening, and responding to incidents of bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation. The Head of School at each campus is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Plan. All teachers and staff are responsible for ensuring consistent implementation of anti – bullying and anti-harassment protocols.

We will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including any form of bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation, in our school buildings, on school grounds, or in school-related activities. We will investigate promptly all reports and complaints of bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation, and take prompt action to end that behavior and restore the target's sense of safety. We will support this commitment in all aspects of our school community, including curricula, instructional programs, staff development, extracurricular activities, and parent or guardian involvement.

We recognize that certain students may be more vulnerable to become targets of bullying, harassment, or teasing based on actual or perceived characteristics, including race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic, status, homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, or sensory, disability, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics. The school or district will identify specific steps it will take to create a safe, supportive environment for vulnerable populations in the school community, and provide all students with the skills, knowledge, and strategies to prevent or respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing.

Assessing Needs and Resources

Deans of Culture from each campus periodically meet to assess the school climate at each campus, analyze campus-specific disciplinary data, and review and analyze any incidences of bullying that occur. Deans of Culture also regularly reflect on the efficacy of tools such as consequences, mediation, relationship-building, and other strategies typically used to prevent repeat incidences of bullying. To further collect data around school safety and climate, Excel Academy administers regular surveys to all staff members and an annual survey to students to collect student feedback on school climate. Leadership reflects on these survey responses at least annually to inform actions taken to improve school culture and ensure a safe school climate for all.

At least once every four years beginning with the 2015-16 school year, the district will administer a Department of Elementary and Secondary Education-developed student survey to assess school climate and the prevalence, nature, and severity of bullying in our schools. Additionally, the school or district will annually report bullying incident data to the Department.

Planning and Oversight

Each campus's Head of School and Dean of Culture are responsible for the following tasks under the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan:

- Receiving reports on bullying;
- Collecting and analyzing building- and/or school-wide data on bullying to assess the present problem and to measure improved outcomes;
- Creating a process for recording and tracking incident reports, and for accessing information related to targets and aggressors;
- Planning for the ongoing professional development that is required by the law.
- Planning supports that respond to the needs of targets and aggressors;
- Choosing and implementing the curricula that the school or district will use;
- Developing new or revising current policies and protocols under the Plan, including an Internet safety policy, and designating key staff to be in charge of implementation of them;
- Amending student and staff handbooks and codes of conduct;
- Leading the parent or family engagement efforts and drafting parent information materials; and
- Reviewing and updating the Plan each year, or more frequently.

Training and Professional Development

Annual Staff Training

Excel Academy campuses hold approximately two weeks of annual, required staff training in August each year, which will include training in all Excel procedures and policies including the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan and its implementation. This training will include staff duties under the Plan, an overview of the steps that the Head of School or designee will follow upon receipt of a report of bullying or retaliation, and an overview of the bullying prevention curricula to be offered at all grades throughout the school.

Additionally, during "Grade Level Team" meetings teacher cohorts will work together to plan best practices for teaching and reviewing behavior expectations and for building positive and respectful relationships with and among students. Staff members hired after the start of the school year will receive the training as part of their induction.

Ongoing Professional Development

Excel is committed to ongoing professional development to support staff to create a school climate that promotes safety, civil communication, and respect for differences. We have committed to build the skills of staff members to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying. Staff training content will include information on:

- developmentally (or age-) appropriate strategies to prevent bullying;
- developmentally (or age-) appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents;
- information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among an aggressor, target, and witnesses to the bullying;
- research findings on bullying, including information about specific categories of students who have been shown to be particularly at risk for bullying in the school environment;
- information on the incidence and nature of cyberbullying;
- Internet safety issues as they relate to cyberbullying; and
- Professional development will also address ways to prevent and respond to bullying or retaliation for students with disabilities that must be considered when developing students' Individualized Education

Programs (IEPs). This will include a particular focus on the needs of students with autism or students whose disability affects social skills development.

Written notice to staff

The school or district will provide all staff with an annual written notice of the Plan by publishing information about it, including sections related to staff duties, in the Employee Handbook.

Access to Resources and Services

Identifying Resources

Each campus has a Student Support Team (SST) made up of the Nurse, Counselor, Dean of Culture, and Head of School, and may also include other members such as a Dean of Student Supports and/or a teacher. The team will receive referrals of students needing a variety of social-emotional supports including but not limited to issues affecting targets of bullying, aggressors, and/or retaliating students. The SST will refer students to services as appropriate. Students may be referred to school counseling, frequent check ins with the Nurse or another team member, individualized behavior plan support, or external services.

Counseling and Other Services

During the SST meetings, the team will decide next steps for in-school counseling or other services for all parties involved in a bullying incident as soon as reports are given. In the event that the students require counseling in a language other than English, the school will arrange for counseling in the child's native language.

Excel Academy provides a range of other services that help prevent bullying and address the needs of both target and aggressor students. These will be implemented on an individualized basis as determined appropriate by SST, and may include:

- Family meetings
- Mediation lead by the Dean of Culture
- Collaborative Problem Solving with a staff member
- Individualized behavior or incentive plans
- Frequent check-ins with a Dean, Nurse, or other staff member
- Peer mentoring
- Leadership development groups, such as Young Men's Leadership Group / Young Women's Leadership Group
- Individualized instruction in social skills / pragmatics
- Targeted support groups addressing other areas of student need, such as motivation or executive functioning skills
- (For a student aggressor) Restorative justice process including peer mentorship, written apology, and relationship repair

One of the most important resources we have in creating a positive and healthy school climate is the development of strong relationships between students and staff. Excel's Homeroom and Advisory structures are specifically designed to foster these positive relationships. Teachers implement team-building and relationship-building lessons throughout the year during Homeroom, and regularly lead student-lead reflection during Homeroom on school values and decision-making to promote a healthy and positive team environment. All students are assigned an Advisor who is charged with developing a relationship with the student, overseeing his/her overall academic and social-emotional progress in school, and maintaining a line of personal communication with the student's parents/guardians. Advisor caseloads are typically no more than ten students.

For students on the autism spectrum, the IEP team will consider and specifically address the skills needed to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment, and teasing. When an evaluation indicates a disability that affects social skills development, or when the student's disability makes him/her vulnerable to bullying, harassment or teasing, the IEP will be drafted to address the skills needed to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing.

When the services described above do not adequately address the needs of target and aggressor students, the SST will refer students to outside agencies. Agencies the SST commonly refers to include local counseling agencies, local health centers, substance abuse prevention and intervention resources, and the Department of Children and Families.

Supports for Homeless Students

Education of Homeless Children

Excel Academy Charter Schools is committed to ensuring that Homeless Children and Youth have equal access to a free, appropriate public education as provided to other students who attend Excel Academy Charter Schools. Excel Academy Charter Schools (hereafter, "Excel") shall fulfill this commitment in accordance with the provisions of the federal McKinney Vento Homeless Education Act. Excel policies must strive to eliminate barriers to Homeless Children and Youth students succeeding in school.

Homeless Children and Youth are defined as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. The term includes:

- Children and youth who are:
    - Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason (sometimes referred to as "doubled-up");
    - Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
    - Living in emergency or transitional shelters;
    - Abandoned in hospitals;
- Children and youth who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
- Children and youth who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
- Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above.

Enrollment of Homeless Children and Youth

Excel must strive to inform Homeless Children and Youth of their educational rights, enroll them in school, and coordinate the services necessary to ensure their success. Homeless Children and Youth may enroll themselves or be enrolled by a parent, non-parent caretaker, older sibling, a caseworker, or designated liaison.

Excel shall admit any homeless student who enrolls at Excel via the same processes as any other student, described in Excel's Enrollment Policies, even if they do not have the documents usually required for enrollment, such as school records, medical records, or proof of residency. If a Homeless Child or Youth arrives without records, Excel must assist the family, parent, or guardian and contact the previously attended school system to obtain the required records.

Enrollment shall mean a Homeless Child or Youth attending classes and participating fully in school activities, classes, educational opportunities, meals, social and athletic events, clubs, teams, and other services. Further, Excel, along with the homeless student's district of temporary residence, shall provide transportation to all

Homeless Children and Youth to and from school as required by the McKinney Vento Homeless Education Act.

Excel must ensure that all Homeless Children and Youth are able to participate in Federal, State, or local food programs as soon as possible. The fact that a Homeless Child or Youth has an Individual Education Plan (IEP) may not be used to delay the student's enrollment or attendance, and such IEP shall be promptly implemented.

Though the Massachusetts immunization statute, G.L. c. 76, § 15 generally requires students to provide proof of immunization prior to enrollment, the federal McKinney Vento Homeless Education Act overrides the state immunization law. If a Homeless Child or Youth arrives lacking immunizations or immunization or medical records, Excel has the responsibility to obtain relevant academic records, immunizations, or immunization or medical records and to ensure that the Homeless Child and Youth are attending school while the records are obtained.

Homelessness Education Liaison

Excel is committed to providing its students and families experiencing homelessness with equal access to a public education as is provided to other children at Excel. Assistance in addressing issues relating to the education of students and unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness, please contact the School Counselor or the schools Homeless Education Liaison.

Academic and Non-Academic Activities

Specific Bullying Prevention Approaches

Excel Academy's general approach to preventing bullying is incorporated into our character education approach. Bullying prevention curricula will be informed by current research which, among other things, emphasizes the following approaches:

- Using scripts and role plays to develop skills;
- Empowering students to take action by knowing what to do when they witness other students engaged in acts of bullying or retaliation, including seeking adult assistance;
- Helping students understand the dynamics of bullying and cyberbullying, including the underlying power imbalance;
- Emphasizing cybersafety, including safe and appropriate use of electronic communication technologies;
- Enhancing students' skills for engaging in healthy relationships and respectful communications; and
- Engaging students in a safe, supportive school environment that is respectful of diversity and difference.

The above criteria are used in both elective courses focused on character development and in daily Homeroom activities in order to strengthen students' specific social and behavioral skills. Through daily reinforcement of these skills, the school creates a cooperative and positive environment and creates opportunities for students to have positive interactions with classmates with whom they may not have apparent interests or commonalities.

Specific objectives and lessons surrounding bullying, cyberbullying and retaliation will be taught in 5th and 7th grade elective courses in addition to Health class. Health class curricula will specifically address bullying, cyberbullying, retaliation and internet safety with lessons based on the Michigan Model for School Health.

General Teaching Approaches that Support Bullying Prevention Efforts

The following approaches are integral to establish a safe and supportive school environment. These underscore the importance of our bullying intervention and prevention initiatives

- Setting clear expectations for students and establishing school and class routines;
- Creating safe school and classroom environments for all students, including for students with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender students, and homeless students;
- Using appropriate and positive responses and reinforcement, even when students require discipline;
- Using positive behavioral supports;
- Encouraging adults to develop positive relationships with students;
- Modeling, teaching, and rewarding pro-social, healthy, and respectful behaviors;
- Using positive approaches to behavioral health, including collaborative problem-solving, conflict resolution training, teamwork, and positive behavioral supports that aid in social and emotional development;
- Using the Internet safely; and
- Supporting students' interest and participation in non-academic and extracurricular activities, particularly in their areas of strength.

Policies and Procedures for Reporting and Responding to Bullying and Retaliation

Reporting Bullying or Retaliation

Reports of bullying or retaliation may be made by staff, students, parents or guardians, or others, and may be oral or written. Reports should be made or relayed to the Dean of Culture. School staff members are required to transmit any reports directly to the Dean of Culture.

Reports can be made anonymously, and may be made for instances of bullying or retaliation. Written reports can be delivered in person, through the mail, or via e-mail. Oral reports can be given on a voice-mail, in person, or on the phone.

Information on reporting procedures will be made available each year to students, families, and staff via the Employee Handbook and the Student and Family Handbook. A student who knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying or retaliation shall be subject to disciplinary action. All community members are reminded that bullying and harassment are strictly prohibited by Excel's Code of Conduct, noting that Code applies to actions taken in the following areas:

- On school grounds;
- On school related transportation;
- On school field trips; and
- Any out of school infraction that negatively impacts school culture, including cyberbullying.

Reporting by Students, Parents, Guardians, and Others

The school expects all members of the school community who witness and incident of bullying to report it to the Dean of Culture, or to the Head of School when the Dean of Culture is the alleged aggressor, or to the CEO of Excel Academy Charter Schools when the Head of School is the alleged aggressor. Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report. Students, parents or guardians, and others may request assistance from a staff member to complete a written report. Students will be provided practical, safe, private, and age-appropriate ways to report and discuss an incident of bullying with a staff member, or with the Dean of Culture, or Head of School when Dean of Culture is the alleged aggressor.

Reporting by Staff

When a staff member becomes aware of conduct that may be bullying or retaliation, he/she will report the

incident immediately to the Dean of Culture in addition to following all other customary disciplinary procedures. When the Dean of Culture is the alleged aggressor, the staff member will report to the Head of School. When the Head of School is the alleged aggressor, the staff member will report to the CEO of Excel Academy Charter Schools.

Responding to a Report of Bullying, Cyber-Bullying, or Retaliation

Before investigating, the Dean of Culture will take steps to ensure safety of targets and witnesses. The Dean of Culture will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation, as necessary. The Dean of Culture will implement appropriate strategies for protecting from bullying or retaliation a student who has reported or witnessed bullying or retaliation. Responses taken to restore a sense of safety for the alleged target student or a student witness, and/or to protect the alleged target and witness from possible further incidents may include, but not be limited to:

- Creating a personal safety plan.
- Pre-determining seating arrangements for the target and/or the aggressor (if a student) in the classroom, at lunch, or on the bus.
- Identify a staff member who will act as a "safe person" for the target.
- Altering the aggressor's schedule and access to the target.

The Dean of Culture, working with the Head of School and other staff, will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation, as necessary.

Upon determining that an incident of bullying has taken place, the Dean of Culture will notify parents of the target and the student aggressor of this, and of the procedures for responding to it. Notice will be consistent with state regulations under 603CMR 49.00. If the reported incident involves students from another school, the Dean of Culture will promptly notify by telephone the principal or designee of the other school(s) of the incident so that each school may take appropriate action.

At any point after receiving a report of bullying or retaliation, including after an investigation, if the Dean of Culture has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor, the Dean of Culture will notify the local law enforcement agency. Notice will be consistent with the requirements of 603CMR 49.00. If an incident occurs on school grounds and involves a former student under the age of 21 who is no longer enrolled in school, the Dean of Culture shall contact the local law enforcement agency if he or she has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the student aggressor.

Investigations

The Dean of Culture will promptly investigate all reports of bullying or retaliation and, in doing so, will consider all available information known, including the nature of the allegation(s) and the ages of the students involved.

During the investigation the Dean of Culture will, among other things, interview students, staff, witnesses, parents or guardians, and others as necessary. The Dean of Culture will remind the alleged student aggressor, target, and witnesses of the importance of the investigation, their obligation to be truthful and that retaliation against someone who reports bullying or provides information during a bullying investigation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

Interviews may be conducted by the Dean of Culture or by other staff members as determined by the Dean of Culture, and in consultation with the school counselor, as appropriate. To the extent practicable, and given his/her obligation to investigate and address the matter, the Dean of Culture will maintain confidentiality during the investigative process. The Dean of Culture will maintain a written record of the investigation and present that

record to the Head of School upon concluding the investigation.

Procedures for investigating reports of bullying and retaliation will be consistent with Excel Academy policies and procedures for disciplinary investigations and our Code of Conduct.

Determinations

Upon completing the investigation, the Dean of Culture and Head of School will discuss the result of the investigation and will make a determination based upon all of the facts and circumstances. If, after investigation, bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the Dean of Culture will take steps to ensure:

1. The target and/or reporter (if different from the target) is made to feel safe and is in no way restricted in participating in school or benefitting from school activities. As part of this process, the Dean will meet with the target and his/her parents or guardians to assess the target's need for additional social or emotional supports, and to ensure the successful restoration of the target's safety.
2. The aggressor faces appropriate disciplinary consequences under Excel's Code of Conduct and that the aggressor and the family of the aggressor are given access to additional resources. As part of this process, the Dean will meet with the aggressor and his/her parents or guardians to assess the aggressor's need for additional social, emotional, or other intervention to address any underlying issues that may have contributed to the incident. The Dean of Culture will ensure that the aggressor and his/her parents or guardians understand that any repeated instance of bullying behavior will meet with increasingly severe disciplinary consequences.

The Dean of Culture will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor about the results of the investigation and, if bullying or retaliation is found, what action is being taken to prevent further acts of bullying or retaliation. Because of the legal requirements regarding the confidentiality of student records, the principal or designee cannot report specific information to the target's parent or guardian about the disciplinary action taken unless it involves a "stay away" order or other directive that the target must be aware of in order to report violations.

The Dean of Culture will inform the parent or guardian of the target about the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Problem Resolution System and the process for accessing that system, regardless of the outcome of the bullying determination. Contact information for the Problem Resolution System can be found under section VIII of this Plan.

Responses to Bullying

Teaching Appropriate Behavior Through Skill-Building

Should Excel Academy determine that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the school may use a range of responses that balance the need for accountability with the need to reach appropriate behavior. Skill-building approaches that the Dean of Culture and Student Support Team (SST) may implement to better support both target students and aggressor students include:

- Offering individualized skill-building sessions based on the Excel anti-bullying curricula;
- Providing relevant educational activities for individual students or groups of students, in consultation with advisors and other appropriate school personnel;
- Implementing a range of academic and nonacademic positive behavioral supports to help students understand pro-social ways to achieve their goals;
- Meeting with parents and guardians to engage parental support and to reinforce the anti-bullying curricula and social skills building activities at home;

- Adopting behavioral plans to include a focus on developing specific social skills; or
- Making a referral for evaluation.

Taking Disciplinary Action

If the Head of School or designee determines that disciplinary action is appropriate, the disciplinary action will be determined on the basis of facts found by the investigation conducted by the Dean of Culture including the nature of the conduct, the age of the student(s) involved, and the need to balance accountability with the teaching of appropriate behavior. Discipline will be consistent with this Plan and with Excel's Code of Conduct. Discipline procedures for students with disabilities are governed by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA), which should be read in cooperation with state laws regarding student discipline. All students will be provided with the protection under the law and under this Plan regardless of their legal status.
If the Head of School or Dean of Culture determines that a student knowingly made a false allegation of bullying or retaliation, that student will be subject to disciplinary action.

Promoting Safety for the Target and Others

The Dean of Culture, in conjunction with the Head of School and other staff, will consider what adjustments, if any, are needed in the school environment to enhance the target's sense of safety and that of others as well. One strategy that Excel may use is to increase adult supervision at transition times and in locations where bullying is known to have occurred or is likely to occur. In addition, Excel will make sure that the target student is able to get to and from school safely and free of bullying.

Within a reasonable period of time following the determination, the Dean of Culture will contact the target to determine whether there has been a recurrence of the prohibited conduct and whether additional supportive measures are needed. If so, the Dean will work with appropriate school staff to implement them immediately.

Responding to a Report of Bullying by School Staff

A report of bullying by school staff can be submitted by students, parents, or staff by the same reporting procedures outlined above. Such reports should be submitted to the Dean of Culture directly, or to the Head of School when the Dean of Culture is the alleged aggressor, or to the CEO of Excel Academy Charter Schools when the Head of School is the alleged aggressor.

In responding to a report of bullying by school staff, the school will employ the same policies and procedures as outlined above, except that the Head of School will directly conduct the investigation (or the CEO or designee will conduct the investigation if the Head of School is the alleged aggressor). Specifically, the Head of School (or CEO or designee) will:

- Ensure a safety plan is in place to protect the target student and/or witnesses from further bullying or retaliation prior to conducting an investigation;
- Ensure parent/guardian notification procedures as outlined previously are followed;
- Ensure that a thorough investigation is completed;
- Emphasize with all parties involved in the investigation (including aggressor, target, and witnesses) the importance of being truthful;
- Emphasize with all parties involved in the investigation that retaliation against someone who reports bullying or provides information during a bullying investigation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action;
- Determine whether bullying has taken place based on the results of the investigation;
- Determine appropriate actions to resolve the situation, which will include disciplinary action if bullying has taken place, and determine appropriate steps to restore safety for the target student, witnesses, and others in the community.

Excel Academy Charter Schools does not tolerate bullying or harassment of any kind and will respond thoroughly to any report of alleged bullying by a staff member. Staff who engage in bullying or harassment will face disciplinary action as outlined in the Employee Handbook.

Collaboration With Families

Parent Education and Resources

Excel Academy will offer education programs for parents and guardians that are focused on the parental components of the anti-bullying curricula and any social competency curricula used by the school. The programs will be offered in collaboration with family meetings such as annual Family Orientation, annualBack to School Night, Family Conferences, regular meetings of parent-teacher organizations at various campuses, regular meetings of the Special Education Parent Advisory Council, and other family engagement organizations within Excel.

Notification Requirements

Each year Excel Academy will inform parents or guardians of enrolled students about the anti-bullying curricula that are being used. This notice will include information about the dynamics of bullying, including cyberbullying and online safety. Excel Academy will include this Plan as well as the school's Internet Safety Policy in the Student and Family Handbook, and each year will provide families with paper copies of the Handbook as well as post the Handbook on the school's website. The Handbook will be available in the language(s) most prevalent among parents or guardians.

Prohibition Against Bullying & Retaliation

Acts of bullying, which include cyberbullying, are prohibited:

- On school grounds and property immediately adjacent to school grounds;
- At an Excel-sponsored or Excel-related activity, function, or program whether on or off school grounds;
- At a school bus stop;
- On a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased, or used by Excel;
- Through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased, or used by Excel;
- At a location, activity, function, or program that is not school-related through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by Excel if the acts create a hostile environment at school for the target and witnesses, infringe on their rights at school, or materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of the school.

Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying is also prohibited. As stated in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, nothing in this Plan requires the district or school to staff any non-school related activities, functions, or programs.

Problem Resolution System

Any parent wishing to file a claim/concern or seeking assistance outside of the district may do so with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Program Resolution System (PRS). That information can be found at: https://www.doe.mass.edu/prs/, emails can be sent to compliance@doe.mass.edu or individuals can call 781-338-3700. Hard copies of this information are also available at Excel Academy Charter School's Network Office.

Definitions

Aggressor is student or a member of a school staff who engages in bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation toward a

student.

Target is a student against whom bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation has been perpetrated.

Bullying, as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, is the repeated use by one or more students or a member of a school staff of a written, verbal, or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a target that:

- causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property;
- places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself or of damage to his or her property;
- creates a hostile environment at school for the target;infringes on the rights of the target at school; or
- materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Cyberbullying is bullying through the use of technology or electronic devices such as telephones, cell phones, computers, and the Internet. It includes, but is not limited to, email, instant messages, text messages, and Internet postings. See M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O for the legal definition of cyberbullying.

Hostile environment, as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, is a situation in which bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule, or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of a student's education.

Retaliation is any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a student who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying.

School staff includes, but is not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, support staff, or paraprofessionals.

Target is a student against whom bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation has been perpetrated.

Relation to Other Laws

Consistent with state and federal laws, and the policies of Excel Academy Charter Schools, no person shall be discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town or in obtaining the advantages, privilege and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic status, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, sexual orientation, homelessness, or mental, physical, developmental, or sensory disability, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics. Nothing in this Plan prevents Excel Academy Charter Schools from taking action to remediate discrimination or harassment based on a person's membership in a legally protected category under local, state, or federal law, or school or district policies.

In addition, nothing in the Plan is designed or intended to limit the authority of Excel Academy Charter Schools to take disciplinary action or other action under M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H or 37H½, M.G.L. c. 71, §§41 and 42, M.G.L.c 76 § 5, or other applicable laws, or local school or district policies, in response to violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether this Plan covers the behavior.

Appendix D: Restraint Policy

Introduction and Purpose

Maintaining an orderly, safe environment conducive to learning is a top priority at Excel Academy Charter Schools. In accordance with state law, Excel Academy Charter Schools has determined that physical restraint on a student will only be administered when needed to protect a student and/or a member of the school community from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm; and if non-physical interventions would not be effective.

Physical restraint shall be used only in emergency situations after other less intrusive alternatives have failed or been deemed inappropriate, and with extreme caution. School personnel shall use physical restraint only with two goals in mind.

1. To protect a student and/or a member of the school community from immediate, serious, physical harm;
2. To prevent or minimize any harm to the student as a result of the use of physical restraint.

Definitions

The following definitions appear at 603CMR 46:02:

- Extended Restraint: A physical restraint the duration of which is longer than twenty (20) minutes.
- Physical escort: Touching or holding a student without the use of force for the purpose of directing the student.
- Physical restraint: The use of bodily force to limit a student's freedom of movement.

Prohibited Restraints

Excel Academy Charter Schools prohibits the use of mechanical restraint, chemical restraint, or seclusion. In addition, prone restraint is prohibited unless the staff member(s) administering the restraint have received in-depth training according to the requirements of 603CMR 46.04(3). Finally, any physical restraint administered in a manner inconsistent with 603CMR 46.00 is prohibited. The use of "Time out" procedures during which a staff member remains accessible to the student shall not be considered "seclusion restraint".

Use of Physical Restraint

Physical restraint shall be considered an emergency procedure of last resort and shall be prohibited except when a student's behavior poses a threat of assault, or imminent, serious, physical harm to self or others and the student is not responsive to verbal directives or other lawful and less intrusive behavior interventions, or such interventions are deemed to be inappropriate under the circumstances. Any physical restraint shall be limited to the use of such reasonable force as is necessary to protect a student or another member of the school community from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm.

Physical restraint is prohibited as a means of punishment, or as a response to destruction of property, disruption of school order, a student's refusal to comply with a school rule or staff directive, or verbal threats that do not constitute a threat of imminent, serious physical harm to the student or others. Physical restraint may never be used as a standard response for an individual student. No written individual behavior plan or individualized education program (IEP) may include use of physical restraint. Physical restraint is an emergency procedure of last resort.

No teacher or other employees or agents of the school shall be precluded from using such reasonable force as is necessary to protect students, other persons or themselves from an assault by a student.

Excel Academy Charter Schools shall develop methods for preventing student violence, self-injurious behavior, and suicide, including individual crisis planning, behavior intervention plans, and de-escalation of potentially dangerous behavior occurring among groups of students or with an individual student.

Proper Administration of a Physical Restraint

At the beginning of each school year, the Head of School will identify specific school personnel who are authorized to serve as a school-wide resource to assist in ensuring proper administration of physical restraint. These staff members will participate in an in-depth training program in the use of physical restraint, which the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education recommends be at least 16 hours in length, with refresher training occurring annually thereafter.

Only school personnel who have received training pursuant to 603CMR 46.00 shall administer physical restraint. Whenever possible the administration of physical restraint shall be administered in the presence of at least one adult who does not participate in the restraint. A person administering physical restraint shall only use the amount of force necessary to protect the student or others from injury or harm. Additionally, school personnel administering a physical restraint shall use the safest method available and appropriate to the situation.

School personnel shall discontinue the restraint as soon as the student is no longer an immediate danger to him/herself or others, or the student indicates that he or she cannot breathe, or if the student is observed to be in severe distress such as having difficulty breathing, or sustained or prolonged crying or coughing.

During the administration of a restraint, school personnel shall continuously monitor the physical status of the student, including skin temperature and color, and respiration. Additionally, restraints shall be administered in such a way as to prevent or minimize physical harm.

If at any time during a physical restraint the student expresses or demonstrates significant physical distress, including but not limited to, difficulty breathing, the student shall be released from the restraint immediately, and school staff shall take steps to seek medical assistance.

All physical restraint must be terminated as soon as the student is no longer an immediate danger to self or others, or the student indicates that he or she cannot breathe, or if the student is observed to be in severe distress, such as having difficulty breathing, or sustained or prolonged crying or coughing. If a student is restrained for a period longer than 20 minutes, program staff shall obtain the approval of the Head of School or designee. The approval shall be based upon the student's continued agitation during the restraint justifying the need for continued restraint. School personnel shall review and consider any known medical or psychological limitations, known or suspected trauma history, and/or behavioral intervention plans regarding the use of physical restraint on an individual student.

Whenever physical restraint is administered school personnel will follow the reporting procedures described below.

Staff Training

All school personnel will be trained regarding the school's physical restraint policy as well as the school's behavior support policies. The Head of School will arrange training to occur in the first month of each school year, and for employees hired after the school year begins, within a month of their employment. Training shall include information on the following:

1. The role of the student, family, and staff in preventing restraint;
2. The program's restraint prevention and behavior support policy and procedures;

3. Interventions that may preclude the need for restraint, including de-escalation of problematic behaviors and other alternatives to restraint in emergency circumstances;
4. When behavior presents an emergency that requires physical restraint, the types of permitted physical restraints and related safety considerations;

Identification of program staff who have received in-depth training in the use of physical restraint pursuant to state law (603CMR 46.03).

Verbal and Written Reports: School Personnel

School personnel shall report the use of any physical restraint. The staff member shall verbally inform the administration of the physical restraint as soon as possible, and no later than the close of the school day in which the restraint was administered. A written report shall be provided to school administration no later than the next school day. The Head of School or his/her designee, shall maintain an ongoing record of all reported instances of physical restraint, which, upon request, shall be made available to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Verbal and Written Reports: Parents/Guardians

The Head of School or designee shall verbally inform the student's parents or guardians of any physical restraint within 24 hours of the event, and shall send a written report within three school days following the use of the physical restraint. The report shall be sent to an email address provided by the parent for communications about the student, or by regular mail postmarked no later than three school working days of the restraint. If the school or program customarily provides a parent of a student with report cards and other necessary school-related information in a language other than English, the written restraint report shall be provided to the parent in that language. The Head of School or designee shall provide the student and the parent an opportunity to comment orally and in writing on the use of the restraint and on information in the written report.

Review of Restraint Data

The Head of School shall conduct a weekly review restraint data to determine whether one or more students may has been restrained multiple times during a week. If any student has been restrained multiple times during a week, the Head of School shall convene one or more teams as deemed appropriate to assess the student's progress and needs. The assessment shall include at least the following:

1. review and discussion of the written reports submitted pursuant to the prior sections, and any comments provided by the student and parent about such reports and the use of the restraints;
2. analysis of the circumstances leading up to each restraint, including factors such as time of day, day of the week, antecedent events, and individuals involved;
3. consideration of factors that may have contributed to escalation of behaviors, consideration of alternatives to restraint, including de-escalation techniques and possible interventions, and such other strategies and decisions as appropriate, with the goal of reducing or eliminating the use of restraint in the future;
4. agreement on a written plan of action by the program.

The Head of School shall also conduct a monthly review of school-wide restraint data and take steps to reduce or eliminate the use of restraint within the school where appropriate. This review shall consider patterns of use of restraints by similarities in the time of day, day of the week, or individuals involved; the number and duration of physical restraints school-wide and for individual students; the duration of restraints; and the number and type of injuries, if any, resulting from the use of restraint. The principal shall determine whether it is necessary or appropriate to modify the school's restraint prevention and management policy, conduct additional staff training on restraint reduction/prevention strategies, such as training on positive behavioral interventions and supports, or take such other action as necessary or appropriate to reduce or eliminate restraints.

Reporting of Injuries

When a restraint has resulted in injury to a student or program staff member or when an extended restraint has been administered, the School shall provide a copy of the written report to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) postmarked no late than three school working days of the administration of the restraint. The School shall also send the Department a copy of the record of physical restraints maintained by the principal for the 30-day period prior to the date of the reported restraint.

Every Excel Academy campus shall collect and annually report data to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education regarding the use of physical restraints. Such data shall be in reported in a manner and form directed by DESE.

Complaint Procedures

Informal resolution of concern: Before initiating a formal complaint procedure, a student or his/her parent/guardian who has concerns regarding a specific use of a physical restraint may seek to resolve his/her concerns by raising the issue with the Head of School. The student and/or his/her parent/guardian should direct their concerns regarding a specific use of a physical restraint to the Head of School within ten days of the parent/guardian's receipt of the written report from the school detailed above. The Head of School shall attempt within his/her authority to work with the individual to resolve the complaint fairly and expeditiously. If the student and/or his/her parent/guardian are not satisfied with the resolution, or if the student and/or his/her parent/guardian does not choose informal resolution, then the student and/or his/her parent/guardian may proceed with the formal complaint process detailed below.

Formal resolution of concern: A student or his/her parent/guardian, who has concerns regarding a specific use of a physical restraint, may seek to resolve his/her concerns regarding a specific use of a physical restraint by submitting a written complaint to the CEO of Excel Academy Charter Schools. The student and/or his/her parent/guardian should submit this letter within twenty (20) days of the parent/guardian's receipt of the written report from the school. The written complaint shall include (a) the name of the student; (b) the name of the school where the physical restraint allegedly occurred; (c) the name of the individuals involved in the alleged physical restraint; (d) the basis of the complaint or concern; and (e) the corrective action being sought. The CEO or designee shall conduct an investigation into the complaint promptly after receiving the complaint. In the course of its investigation the CEO or designee shall contact those individuals that have been referred to as having pertinent information related to the complaint. Strict timelines cannot be set for conducting the investigation because each set of circumstances is different. The CEO or designee will make sure that the complaint is handled as quickly as is feasible. After completing the formal investigation, the directors shall contact the individual who filed the complaint regarding the outcome of its investigation and its determination as to whether any corrective action is warranted.

Additional information can be obtained from Keith Guerin (Dean of Culture) who can be reached at kguerin@excelacademy.org.

A copy of the regulations may also be obtained at http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr46.html

Appendix E: Allergy Policy

Purpose and Goal

Excel Academy Charter Schools aims to reduce the risk of exposure to food allergens, educate our school community, and maintain a protocol for responding to student needs. The goal of the Life Threatening Allergy (LTA) Protocol and Guidelines is to:

- Reduce the risk of life-threatening food based allergic reactions
- Prepare for allergic reactions to food
- Respond appropriately to food allergy emergencies

Excel Academy Charter Schools will take the steps outlined in this document to help achieve these goals. At the same time, no policy can eliminate entirely the risk of life-threatening allergic reactions. Students and their families are ultimately responsible for protecting themselves in consultation with their own doctors.

Background

Allergic food reactions can span a wide range of severity of symptoms. The most severe and potentially life-threatening reaction is anaphylaxis[3]. The most common causes of anaphylaxis in children include allergies to foods (most common are fish, shellfish, peanuts/tree nuts), latex, bee stings, and medications.

Anaphylaxis can occur immediately or up to two hours following allergen exposure, so it is important to:

- Identify students at risk
- Have appropriate preventative policies
- Be prepared to handle an emergency

Responsibilities of Excel Academy Charter Schools

Excel has created a plan for addressing life-threatening food based allergic reactions and trains staff annually on the following:

- The most common allergens that cause life threatening allergies
- Ways to recognize symptoms of an allergic reaction
- Steps to take in the event of an allergic reaction
- The correct use of Epinephrine Auto injectors

Additionally, Excel advises students not to trade or share outside food or utensils, encourage non-food celebrations, creates applicable student Allergy Action Plan (AAP) or Individual HealthCare Plan (IHCP) available in the nurse's office, has Epinephrine Auto-injectors available in the nurse's office or in other clearly designated locations as indicated in the AAP or IHCP, and familiarizes teachers with the AAP or IHCP of their students on a need-to-know basis.

Excel's Nurse Responsibilities

1. Meet with the parent/guardian of a student with LTA and develop an AAP or IHCP for the student. During meetings with parents/guardians, discuss the use of a MEDIC-ALERT bracelet and other methods of identification for students with LTAs.
2. Anaphylaxis is the potentially life-threatening medical condition occurring in food allergic individuals after exposure to their specific food allergens. Anaphylaxis refers to a collection of symptoms affecting multiple systems in the body, the most dangerous of which are breathing difficulties and a drop in blood pressure or shock, which are potentially fatal.In conjunction with the Head of School/Principal, provide in-service training and education for staff regarding LTA, symptoms, risk reduction procedures and emergency procedures including demonstration on how to use the Epinephrine Auto-injector.
3. Make information regarding LTAs accessible for staff.

4. Familiarize teachers with the AAP or IHCP of their students and any other staff member who has contact on a need to know basis.
5. Follow the Department of Public Health regulations governing the administration of prescription medications as well as regulations that permit registration of non-licensed personnel to be trained and administer Epinephrine Auto-injector.
6. Discuss with parents/guardians the appropriate numbers of and locations for storing Epinephrine Auto-injectors.
7. Maintain emergency protocols.

Excel's Staff Responsibilities

1. Review student(s) AAP or IHCP with the nurse and parents/students as deemed appropriate.
2. In collaboration with the nurse and parent, guide students as to classroom, cafeteria (as appropriate), and official school activity protocols regarding the management of food.

Protocol for Food during the School Day

1. The Head of School/Principal and faculty will determine whether school-wide events should include food.
2. Use of food in any classroom activity or school events will not be initiated by parents/guardians or students.
3. In advance of classroom activities or school-wide events that include food, the following guidelines must be followed:
    a. The teacher discusses with the school nurse plans to include food in instruction or activities.
    b. The nurse reviews whether students in the activity have a history of a life-threatening allergy.
    c. The teacher follows guidelines for food usage in classroom activity.

Responsibilities of Staff Providing Food Services

1. Be sensitive to potential food allergens.
2. Supply cleaning materials for washing and sanitizing tables.
3. Participate in training regarding safe food handling practices.
4. Wear non-latex gloves when serving food.

Responsibilities during Fields Trips, Athletics, and other Out-of-School Activities

1. At the beginning of the year and as appropriate thereafter, review emergency procedures to be followed when out of the building for students who may have a medical emergency.
2. Consider the risk for allergen exposure when planning an out-of-school activity and work to mitigate such risks.

Responsibilities of Students

1. Take responsibility for avoiding allergens.
2. Do not trade or share outside foods.
3. Wash hands before and after eating.
4. Learn to recognize symptoms of an allergic reaction.
5. Promptly inform an adult as soon as accidental exposure occurs or symptoms appear.
6. Develop a relationship with the school nurse or other trusted adult in the school to assist in identifying issues related to management of the allergy in the school.
7. Carry their own Epinephrine Auto-injector as appropriate and prescribed by a doctor.

Responsibilities of Parents and Guardians

1. Inform the school nurse of your child's allergies in writing prior to the opening of school (or

immediately after a diagnosis).

2. Arrange to meet with the school nurse to develop an AAP or IHCP for the student and provide medical information from their child's treating physician as needed to write the plans.
3. Provide the school a list of foods and ingredients to be avoided.
4. Provide the school nurse with adequate supplies of up-to-date emergency medications.
5. Complete and submit all required medication forms.
6. Provide a medic alert ID for your child, if possible.
7. Encourage students to wash hands before and after handling food, communicate clearly as soon as s/he feels a reaction is starting, understand their allergies and how to prevent and recognize potentially unsafe situations, take as much responsibility for his/her own safety as is feasible, carry his/her own Epinephrine Auto-injector when appropriate, read labels.
8. Inform the school of any changes in the child's LTA status.
9. Provide the school with a physician's letter if the student no longer has allergies.

Appendix F: Appropriate Use of Technology Policy

Purpose

Excel Academy provides students and staff with access to technology, devices, and the Internet to support teaching, learning, and school operations. The use of these resources is a privilege, not a right, and must align with the school's educational mission and community standards.

Scope of Use

Technology resources include, but are not limited to:

- School-issued devices (e.g., Chromebooks, laptops, tablets)
- School-managed accounts (e.g., email, Google Workspace, learning platforms)
- School networks and Internet access

These resources are intended for educational and school-related purposes.

Internet Access and Content Filtering

Excel Academy complies with the Children's Internet Protection Act by:

- Filtering Internet access to block content that is obscene, harmful to minors, or otherwise inappropriate for a school setting
- Monitoring use of school-issued devices and accounts to support student safety and appropriate use
- Providing education on appropriate online behavior, including digital citizenship, cyberbullying awareness, and safe use of social media

While filtering systems are in place, the school cannot guarantee that all inappropriate content will be blocked. Students are expected to report any inappropriate content to a staff member immediately.

Inappropriate Use

Below are examples of inappropriate use of Excel's Internet service. The list is not exhaustive but illustrates inappropriate use.

- disclosing, using or disseminating personal identification information about self or others;
- accessing, sending or forwarding materials or communications that are defamatory, pornographic, obscene, sexually explicit, threatening, harassing, or illegal; students should not attempt to access blocked content: online content that includes aggressive, violent, academically dishonest, pornographic, or time-wasting content;
- using the Internet service for any illegal activities such as gaining unauthorized access to other systems, arranging for the sale or purchase of drugs or alcohol, participating in criminal gang activity, threatening others, transferring obscene material, or attempting to do any of the above;
- using the Internet service to receive or send information relating to dangerous instruments such as bombs or other explosive devices, automatic weapons or other firearms, or other weaponry;
- vandalizing school devices by causing physical damage, reconfiguring the computer system, attempting to disrupt the computer system, or destroying data by spreading viruses and malware, or by any other means;
- copying or downloading of copyrighted material without authorization from the copyright holder, unless the copies are used for teaching (including multiple copies for classroom use), scholarship, or research. Users shall not copy and forward or copy and upload any copyrighted material without prior approval of the Head of School;
- plagiarizing material obtained from the Internet. Any material obtained from the Internet and included in one's own work must be cited and credited by name or by electronic address or path on the Internet.

Information obtained through e-mail or news sources must also be credited as to sources;
- using the Internet service for commercial purposes;
- downloading or installing any commercial software, shareware, freeware or similar types of material onto network drives or disks without prior permission of the Dean of Operations; and possessing or accessing information on School property related to “Hacking”, or altering, or overriding network security or policies.

Internet Safety

Use of the Internet has potential dangers. While Chromebooks, PCs, and tablets are valuable tools for enhanced student learning, Excel Academy is required by the Children’s Internet Protection Act to ensure safe use of student technology. Administrators at Excel Academy will a) monitor and filter student internet activity, and b) educate students regarding appropriate online behavior

The following are basic safety rules pertaining to all types of Internet applications:

- Never reveal *any* identifying information such as last names, ages, addresses, phone numbers, parents' names, parents' employers or work addresses, or photographs.
- Use the "back" key whenever you encounter a site that you believe is inappropriate or makes you feel uncomfortable.
- Immediately tell a teacher or school administrator if you receive a message that you believe is inappropriate or makes you feel uncomfortable.
- Never share your password or use another person's password. Internet passwords are provided for each user's personal use only. If you suspect that someone has discovered your password, you should change it immediately and notify your teacher or a school administrator.

Access to Excel’s Internet service is a privilege not a right. Excel Academy reserves the right to deny, revoke or suspend specific user privileges and/or to take other disciplinary action, up to and including suspension, expulsion (students), or dismissal (staff) for violations of this policy. The school will advise appropriate law enforcement agencies of illegal activities conducted through Excel’s Internet service. The District also will cooperate fully with local, state, and/or federal officials in any investigation related to any illegal activities conducted through the service.

School-Issued Email Accounts

Excel Academy provides each student with an email address registered within the school’s domain. This email access provides students with additional resources, including user-level access to programs and software online. Depending on the grade level, this software may include Google Suite for Education, Clever, various additional Google apps, and other applications. School-issued email accounts also provide access to communications to and from teachers, peers, and other community members.

Students who receive school-issued email accounts are responsible for the content sent and received using the account. Students should use their email addresses for school purposes in accordance with the expectations noted in this policy. School-issued email accounts remain the property of Excel Academy, and Excel Academy reserves the right to monitor and review the content of student email accounts without warrant or notice. Students who participate in inappropriate use of email are subject to consequences as outlined in this handbook, which may include temporary or permanent loss of access to the school-issued email account.

When students transfer out of Excel Academy, their school email accounts will be closed. Excel will maintain the email accounts of graduated students for a period of time not less than 60 days after graduation to ensure that graduates can transfer any accounts or records linked to their emails to a new email address.

Privacy

Users should not have an expectation of privacy or confidentiality in the content of electronic communications or other electronic files sent and received on the school network or stored in the user's directory, disk drive, or cloud service. Excel Academy reserves the right to examine all data involved in the use of Excel's Internet service or a school-issued device. While using an Excel-issued Chromebook, or while logged onto an Excel-issued student account, student activity both on and off-campus will be monitored by the Dean of Culture. Internet email messages are not private and may be considered public records subject to disclosure. When necessary to protect the health and safety of school community members, the content of email messages, including text and images, may be disclosed to law enforcement or other third parties without prior consent of the sender or the receiver. Network administrators may review communications to maintain integrity system-wide and ensure that users are using the system responsibly.

Parents/guardians do not have a right to search their student's email account. If a parent or guardian has a safety-related concern or other concern about their child's usage of school-issued technology or email, the parent should contact the Head of School. The school administration will review the student's email content, if needed, and will share information with the parent or guardian as deemed necessary to protect the student's well-being and safety.

Responsible Usage of School-Issued Devices

Excel Academy issues a Chromebook to each enrolled student. In some circumstances, Excel may issue other devices to students. School-issued devices are the property of Excel Academy and are expected to be returned to the school at the end of the school year or at other times as directed by the school staff.

Students are expected to demonstrate responsibility when handling and using school-issued devices. Teachers will work with scholars to ensure that they understand proper care and use of different technology devices, such that expectations for the care of devices are clear. Proper care of devices includes safe handling when transporting devices, ensuring a clear workspace when using devices, and returning devices to their proper location.

Willingly and intentionally damaging or destroying school-issued devices is not an acceptable usage of technology, and may result in a handbook violation and/or loss of access to school-issued devices.

Appendix G: Student Use of Artificial Intelligence Policy

Section 1: Purpose and Approach

Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) is increasingly shaping how people learn, work, solve problems, and engage with the world. Excel Academy's mission is to prepare students to succeed in high school and college, apply their learning to meaningful problems, and contribute productively to their communities. Because AI will be an undeniable part of that future, preparing students to navigate it ethically, effectively, and purposefully is a vital extension of our work.

At the same time, AI cannot replace the practice, struggle, and revision required for true intellectual development. The work students do at Excel is designed to support the development of authentic skills and learning, which is core to our mission. The purpose of the policy is to provide clear guidelines and parameters for the use of AI, particularly while students are building foundational skills in reading, writing, mathematics, and analysis.

This policy reflects a clear stance:

- AI should support student learning, not replace it
- Students should develop independence before relying on tools
- Expectations should be clear and consistent across classrooms
- Academic integrity remains central in all work
- We have a responsibility to teach students how to use AI.

Scope of This Policy

This policy applies to generative AI tools that students can use independently to produce or support their work. These tools generate text, ideas, or solutions based on user prompts (such as ChatGPT, Gemini, or similar tools).

This policy is focused specifically on situations where students use Generative AI tools, for which they'll be expected to cite and explain usage, such as initiate prompts, generate responses, and/or incorporate responses into their work. Some instructional tools used in class may include AI features as part of a structured learning experience (for example, platforms that provide guided feedback or suggestions). In those cases, teachers will provide specific guidance. While the principles of this policy still apply, those tools are considered part of instruction rather than independent AI use.

Excel Academy reserves the right to modify or update this AI policy as technology and educational practices evolve. Parents and students will be notified in writing of any significant changes to these guidelines

Section 2: Data Privacy, Safety, and Network Access

Excel Academy is committed to protecting student privacy and ensuring a safe digital environment. Because AI tools are third-party technologies that collect and process data, the following expectations apply to all students:

1. Data Protection Standards: To protect personal and institutional security, students should never enter the following into any AI system:

- Personal Identifiers: Full names, home addresses, phone numbers, or personal email addresses.
- School Records: Student ID numbers, grades, transcripts, or disciplinary information.
- Private Content: Identifying information or photos of other students, teachers, or family members.
- Sensitive Work: Unreleased school projects or confidential school data.

2. Access and Managed Accounts: At this time, Excel Academy does not provide or manage student accounts for third-party AI tools. This will not shift without parental notification in the future.

- Network Restrictions: Access to AI platforms may be restricted on school-managed devices and networks to ensure data privacy and maintain a focused learning environment.
- Personal Responsibility: Students are responsible for adhering to the age requirements and Terms of Service of any AI tool they use.
- Standard of Accountability: The standards for transparency and academic integrity outlined in this policy apply to all work submitted to Excel, regardless of where or on what device the AI was accessed. Whether a tool is accessed at home or on a personal device, the student remains 100% accountable for the final output.

3. Criteria for Future Integration: As the AI landscape evolves, Excel will evaluate tools for potential school-sanctioned use based on:

- Privacy Compliance: Their ability to protect student data in alignment with federal and state laws (e.g., COPPA, FERPA).
- Policy Alignment: Consistency with existing technology and acceptable use policies.
- Instructional Value: The tool's demonstrated ability to support specific learning objectives and critical thinking.

Section 3: Student AI Use at Excel

AI use in Excel is defined at the assignment level. For each assignment, teachers are responsible for clearly communicating:

- Whether AI is allowed to help produce work
- How it may be used to produce work
- What students must complete independently

Teachers decide when and how to use AI based on the assignment's goals. Some assignments aim to develop foundational skills and therefore require independent work. Others may permit AI to assist with idea development, revision, or exploration.

To promote consistency across classrooms, teachers should specify the level of AI use for major assignments. For this policy, a major assignment is any task designed to evaluate a significant portion of student understanding, writing, or performance. Teachers are also encouraged to display/house AI expectations in a location that students can reliably access, such as Google Classroom. This can be defined at the school or department level.

The default expectation at Excel, however, is that students are not allowed to use AI to produce work unless they have explicit permission from teachers or administrators. Students are responsible not only for completing their work but also for understanding the expectations related to that work.

General Inquiry vs. Production of Academic Work

We recognize that students interact with AI tools outside of school. Casual use for general inquiry does not require disclosure. This includes actions such as asking AI to explain a broad concept, reviewing examples or formulas, or checking your understanding of a general topic.

While permitted, reliance on these tools should not replace the independent struggle and thinking required for learning. The moment AI contributes to the specific ideas, structure, language, or content of an

assignment, it crosses from general inquiry into academic production. At that point, AI use must align exactly with the assigned AI Level below.

AI Use Levels for the Production of Work

Excel uses a shared set of AI use levels to define how AI may be used in assignments. These levels ensure consistency across classrooms and provide clear expectations for students and teachers. If no level is provided on an assignment, students should assume no AI use.

Figure 1: AI Use Levels Descriptions

Level	Description	What You Can Do	What You Cannot Do	What You Must Do
Level 0	No AI Use	Complete all work independently	Use AI in any way	Submit fully independent work
Level 1	AI for Understanding	Ask AI to explain concepts, clarify ideas, or provide examples	Use AI to generate, outline, or draft any part of your final answer	Ensure the submitted product is entirely your own creation
Level 2	AI as a Support Tool	Use AI for feedback, outlining, organizing ideas, or practice	Use AI to generate final responses or complete assignments	Revise and produce your own final work
Level 3	AI as a Collaborative Tool	Use AI to generate ideas, drafts, or partial content	Submit AI-generated work without meaningful revision	Significantly revise, improve, and take ownership of work
Level 4	AI Integration	Use AI as a core part of the assignment as directed	Ignore documentation or process expectations	Clearly document the use of AI and evaluate the provided sources

Regardless of the assigned level:

- Students are responsible for the accuracy and quality of their work.
- Students must understand everything they submit.
- Students must be able to explain their thinking independently.
- Students should support their thinking, not replace it.

Middle School and High School Expectations

Expectations for AI use differ between middle school and high school because students are developing as learners over time.

At Excel Academy, our middle school program focuses on developing foundational skills in writing, critical thinking, analysis, and problem-solving. Students are expected to complete all assignments using their own intellect and effort. As a result, the use of generative AI tools is prohibited unless such use is explicitly integrated into a specific lesson or module vetted and approved by school and network leadership. Any AI-based task will be clearly communicated by the teacher as part of the official curriculum.

In high school, expectations shift. Students are preparing for environments in college and the workforce where AI is widely available and may even be expected. At this point, teachers have the flexibility to determine what level of Generative AI use is acceptable for students. However, the use of Generative AI should serve an explicit pedagogical purpose for students and should be defined at the assignment level.

Section 4: Student Expectations: What You Should and Should Not Do

These expectations apply across all assignments and all uses of AI.

Transparency and Showing Your Work

A core expectation at Excel is that students can demonstrate how they arrived at their work. This expectation does not change when AI is used. AI tools can generate ideas, language, and solutions quickly. Because of this, it must be clear what thinking belongs to the student and how AI contributed to the final result. Transparency is what allows teachers to understand student learning and ensures that submitted work reflects real understanding. Students are responsible not only for the final product, but for the process that led to it.

When using AI, students should expect to:

- Explain how AI was used in completing the assignment
- Identify the types of prompts or questions they asked
- Describe how AI responses were changed, improved, or revised
- Demonstrate that they understand and can explain the final work

This may take different forms depending on the assignment, including:

- written reflections
- submission of prompts or chat history
- annotations or drafts
- verbal explanation of thinking

Departments and school teams have the flexibility to define this based on previous experience, common expectations, and types of work assignments.

How Transparency Connects to AI Use Levels

Expectations for transparency increase as AI use becomes more central to the assignment. In practice, this often means that teachers may ask students to show or explain more about their process.

Level 1 (Understanding): Transparency may be minimal, but students must still ensure their work reflects real understanding.

- *A teacher might ask a student to explain their thinking verbally or in writing, or complete part of the work in class to confirm independent understanding.*

Level 2 (Support): Students may be asked to describe how AI supported their process.

- *A teacher might ask students to include a short note with their assignment (for example: "I used AI to help organize my outline") or be prepared to explain how they used AI if asked.*

Level 3 (Collaboration): Students should expect to clearly explain how AI contributed to their work and how they revised or improved it.

- *A teacher might ask students to submit an early draft alongside their final version, highlight changes they made after using AI, or briefly explain what they kept, changed, or rejected from AI-generated content.*

Level 4 (Integration): Transparency is required for the assignment. Students must document and explain their AI use as part of demonstrating their learning.

- *A teacher might require students to submit their AI prompts and responses, annotate how they used them, or include a reflection explaining how they directed the tool and evaluated its output.*

Transparency is not about compliance. It is about ensuring that students are practicing the skills and learning

from the academic work, rather than just completing it.

Students Should:

- Follow the AI use level assigned by their teacher
- Use AI to support learning, not replace thinking
- Ensure their work reflects their own understanding
- Be able to explain how they completed their work
- Verify the accuracy of AI-generated information
- Ask for clarification when expectations are unclear
- Be transparent about how AI was used

Students Should Not:

- Use AI when it is not allowed
- Submit AI-generated work as their own/without attributing or acknowledging AI usage
- Use AI to complete work where students are demonstrating mastery independently.
- Paste assignment prompts into AI tools and submit the output.
- Use AI on tests or assessments unless explicitly permitted
- Rely on AI in place of effort or learning
- Enter personal or sensitive information into AI tools
- Enter identifying information or photos of others (teachers, staff, or students)
- Use AI to create misleading, harmful, or inappropriate content

Understanding the Limits of AI

AI tools are not always reliable. They can generate incorrect, incomplete, or misleading information. They may also reflect bias or present data confidently but inaccurately. Students are responsible for:

- verifying information before using it
- questioning AI-generated responses
- ensuring that their work is accurate and reliable

When the use of AI is permitted, teachers may support students in developing these skills through modeling, examples, or feedback.

Section 5: Academic Integrity and Consequences

The use of AI does not change the expectation that students must demonstrate their own learning. AI-related violations occur when students:

- use AI when it is not allowed
- use AI beyond the assigned level
- present AI-generated work as their own
- fail to meet transparency expectations
- Use generative AI to generate inappropriate content related to school, staff, or students.

At Excel, responses to these situations balance accountability with learning. Sometimes, misuse shows a misunderstanding. Other times, it shows intentional behavior. Students will be helped to understand expectations, and unclear expectations will be clarified before any consequences are given.

Determining AI Misuse

Teachers and school leaders will use professional judgment and expertise to determine whether a student has misused AI. Evidence of misuse may include:

- inability to explain the submitted work
- Inconsistencies and wide variations in the quality of work
- differences between drafts and final submissions

AI detection tools should be used carefully, but they are not entirely dependable on their own. AI detection scores alone are not sufficient evidence of a violation. In cases of disagreement, the student's ability to demonstrate the process or verbally explain the work will be the deciding factor.

Academic Integrity Response Structure

AI misuse will be addressed using a tiered response system. The level of response is determined by a combination of the severity of the misuse (what the student did), frequency or pattern of behavior (whether it is repeated), and the context of the assignment (practice work, major assignment, or formal assessment). As with all academic integrity and discipline systems, responses are based on professional judgment rather than a fixed sequence of consequences. Note that there will likely be movement between levels is based on severity, frequency, and assignment context. More serious assignments (essays, interim assessments, exams) may result in higher-level responses even on a first occurrence. Additionally, misuse that harms others is addressed through existing disciplinary systems.

Figure 2: Academic Integrity Response to AI Misuse

Level	Description	Response
1	• Not citing AI use when required • Using AI beyond allowed support (rewording too heavily) • Incomplete or unclear disclosure	• Revision or redo of work • Clarification of expectations • Teacher feedback or conference
2	• AI-generated sentences or paragraphs in an assignment • Using AI to complete homework or parts of an assignment • Repeated concerns with following AI expectations	• Reduced grade, assignment cap, or loss of credit • Required redo or alternative assessment (when appropriate) • Conference with teacher or leader • Possible family communication
3	• Submitting fully AI-generated work as original • Using AI on quizzes, interim assessments, or exams • Ongoing or intentional misuse after prior interventions	• Loss of credit or assignment failure • Escalation aligned with school discipline policy

Appendix H: AHERA Management Plans

As per 40 CFR Part 763.93 (g), Excel Academy Charter School's AHERA Management Plans are maintained in the main office of each applicable Excel Academy Charter School campus. AHERA Management Plans are available for review during normal school hours. Please reach out to Chris Reed (creed@excelacademy.org) to schedule a time to review the documents. A reasonable fee may be charged for requested copies.

Appendix I: Security Cameras

To support the safety and security of our students, staff, and visitors, Excel Academy utilizes security cameras in and around the school building. Cameras may be placed in public areas, such as hallways, entrances, parking lots, and other common spaces. Security cameras are not installed in areas where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy, such as restrooms or locker rooms.

Security cameras are used for monitoring and security purposes only. Footage is not actively monitored but may be reviewed by school administrators or law enforcement in the event of a safety concern, disciplinary matter, or legal requirement. All recordings are the property of Excel Academy and may be retained or deleted in accordance with school policy and applicable laws.

Appendix J: Acknowledgement of Access

Excel Academy Charter Schools Middle School Student & Family Handbook: Acknowledgement of Access to Handbook

I acknowledge that the Excel Academy Charter Schools Middle School Student and Family Handbook (hereafter, "the Handbook") is available in both hard copy format (upon my request) and electronic format at www.excelacademy.org. I further acknowledge that the Handbook contains important information regarding the school's policies and procedures, including but not limited to the student Code of Conduct, non-discrimination, anti-hazing, and bullying prevention policies, use of physical restraint, specialized instruction and special education services, attendance and schedule requirements, and family communication and parental involvement. I further acknowledge that this Handbook is not a contract between Excel and my student, and this Handbook does not guarantee any outcomes or services for my student.

I understand it is my responsibility as a parent/guardian of an Excel Academy Charter School student to obtain and read a copy of the Handbook, and to understand the rules, regulations, and procedures of the school contained therein. Should my child or I have any questions regarding the content of the Handbook, I can contact the school administration for further clarification.

Parent/Guardian Signature	Date
Parent/Guardian Name (Print)	Student Name