



Student & Family Handbook 2023-2024

Our Mission:

Excel Academy's 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.

RI Location

Excel Academy Rhode Island
622 Woonasquatucket Ave
North Providence, RI 02911
401.680.6086

www.excelacademy.org/ri

MA Locations

**Excel Academy
East Boston**
58 Moore Street
East Boston, MA 02128
617.874.4080

**Excel Academy
Chelsea**
180 2nd Street
Chelsea, MA 02150
617.336.9970

**Excel Academy
Greenway**
375 Bremen Street
East Boston, MA 02128
617.561.1371

www.excelacademy.org



Dear Excel Academy Families:

We are honored to work with you at Excel Academy Charter School. We know that our success as a school depends on investment and support from our families and students, and we look forward to forming partnerships with each of you. We have high expectations of all members of Excel Academy's community in order to achieve our mission of preparing students to succeed in post-secondary opportunities, apply learning to solve relevant problems, and engage productively in communities.

We've compiled this handbook to help you become familiar with Excel Rhode Island's (XLRI) school rules, expectations for members of our community, and school policies and procedures. Please reference 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. This handbook also serves as an agreement in the shared pursuit of excellence. 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. We hope this handbook will be a valuable resource to you!

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

Sincerely,

The Faculty and Staff
Excel Academy Charter Schools and Excel Academy Rhode Island

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EXCEL RHODE ISLAND: AN OVERVIEW

Our Mission

Excel Academy's 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.

Our Values and Expectations

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. Our student-facing values are listed below and captured in the acronym PACK. By living the values, students demonstrate their own academic prowess while contributing to the strength of the wolf pack. We are the Wolves, after all.

Below is a breakdown of each element of PACK.

Element	Student Commitment
Persevere	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● I will start my work on my own even when it's challenging● I will use strategies to solve problems, such as asking a question or using my resources.● I will use my time productively by staying focused on the task at hand● I will use self-regulation strategies to stay in the game
Accountable	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● I will own my behaviors and actions when I make a mistake.● I will accept consequences and take the needed steps to reenter the classroom and re-engage in learning● I will do what is right, even when no one is looking● I will ask for feedback, measure my progress, and celebrate my growth
Contribute to a community of care	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● I will support our community of learners (sharing resources, getting others on task, assisting students with learning vs. providing answers)● I will make sure all students are included (ie open to working with all students)● I will call out harmful and unjust language and behaviors● I will spread joy (say hi, make a new friend, celebrate growth, etc.)
Knowledge-seeker	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● I will show enthusiasm for learning by participating (in class discussions, in turn and talks, by asking questions)● I will try new opportunities and learn from my mistakes● I will learn about myself and others in order to build a just

	<p>community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● I will pursue opportunities to be an independent learner (reading independently, extending learning outside of school - including by doing homework well, go to the library, ask about how to improve grades, asking questions)
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SCHOOL POLICIES & PROCEDURES

A. Hours of School Operation

The school building will open to students at 7:45am on Monday-Friday. Students must arrive by 7:59 am in order to be ready to begin by 8:00am. Students who arrive at or after 8:01am will be considered late.

Dismissal is from 3:00-3:05. Students may only be on school grounds after 3:05 with permission from the school, which includes participation in the afterschool program.

Inclement Weather Closings:

In the event of poor weather conditions such as heavy snow or hurricanes, please visit Excel Academy Rhode Island's website or social media pages for updates regarding school cancellations. Excel Academy Rhode Island will be closed if Providence Public Schools, North Providence Public Schools, or Central Falls Public Schools are closed due to inclement weather.

B. Attendance Policy

Given the fast pace and high rigor of Excel Academy Rhode Island's curriculum, missing a school day at Excel can have an unfavorable impact on a student's learning. Regular attendance is required.

Parents are asked to ensure that their child attends school regularly. We ask that families not schedule vacations or non-emergency appointments during school time.

All student absences, including illness, suspension, appointments, vacations, excessive incomplete days, etc. count as absences. Excused absences are granted for religious observances, for court-mandated appearances including immigration proceedings with proper documentation, for disability-related appointments, and for bereavement. Students are afforded rights under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act ("Section 504"), the Americans with Disabilities Act ("ADA"), and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act ("IDEA") should their absences be related to a disabling condition. Other rare exceptions may apply.

In order to help ensure that students do not exceed 18 absences in a school year, Excel has certain support policies in place. They are detailed below:

- At 5 student absences, Excel will contact the family in writing.
- At 10 student absences (or five absences within the first academic quarter), Excel's administration will require a meeting with the student's family and advisor, during which an Attendance Contract will be established aimed at ensuring attendance patterns improve.
- At 12+ student absences, Excel's administration will require a family meeting to discuss violation of our attendance policy.
- **Any student who exceeds 18 absences in a school year may be retained.** 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.

In cases of truancy, Excel Academy Rhode Island may report the student and/or family to certain state agencies or file an official complaint with the court. According to R.I.G.L §16-19-1 Compulsory Attendance, all children who are between the ages of 6 (before September 1) and 18 must be in school. A child may, if they are at least 16 years old and have an alternative learning plan for obtaining a high school diploma or its equivalent, be granted a waiver to the compulsory attendance requirement by the CEO.

Excel keeps accurate records of attendance and will make the records available for inspection by the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) as needed. All questions regarding student attendance and attendance records should be directed to the school's Office Manager.

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. Students must be present for at least half of the school day in order to be marked as present in school for the day; if a student arrives significantly late or is dismissed significantly early so that he/she is not present for at least 50% of the school day, he/she will automatically be marked absent for the day.

For their own safety, **students must be picked up by a parent, guardian or designated emergency contact person in order to be dismissed prior to the regular dismissal time.** A note or phone call requesting that a student be dismissed on their own is not sufficient and cannot be honored. This policy applies to all early dismissals, including appointments and illness.

Likewise, if a student needs to be sent home due to a behavioral incident, a parent/guardian will 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 incidents 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.

C. Homework

Homework is a chance for students to get additional practice with new concepts, finish essential classwork, and to do spiral review of previous content. Students can expect regular homework assignments in their core content areas and are expected to keep up with what is assigned by using an agenda. The following is true of homework at XLRI:

- Homework counts for 15% of grades
- Homework grades weigh more heavily towards completion and effort than accuracy
- Homework is meaningfully connected to performance
- Optional homework club after school for students who want additional support

Homework is not to be used as a form of punishment under any circumstances.

D. 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 priority assignments and deadlines for completion from teachers or school administration. Additionally, students have opportunities for re-dos and re-takes on key assignments and as communicated by the teacher.

E. 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 interventions and after school programming. Please reach out if you would like specific information on how your child's academic and social emotional needs are being met.

F. Specialized Instruction and Supports

Special Education and Section 504 Accommodation Plans

Excel is proud to serve many students with disabilities, many of whom qualify for Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) or Section 504 plans. 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 child's advisor, to the Head of School, or to the Special Education Administrator. Any parent may also request a copy of Excel's Special Education Processes and Procedures Manual.

Accommodations

Students with IEPs and 504 plans are provided with accommodations and/or services 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.

- **Consultation between Learning Specialists, Classroom Teachers and/or Service Providers**
 - These team members meet on a regular basis 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.
 - Core content classroom teachers and learning specialists 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 their IEPs and on teacher observation. 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 may also meet with students to provide additional, small group support in reading and in homework completion that is part of a student’s IEP and is part of Excel’s Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS).
- Students with IEPs who require a partially or substantially separate placement will receive support in a small group outside of the general education classroom, following a curriculum that is rigorous and as aligned to the general education curriculum as possible, based on the student’s needs and determined by the IEP team.

- **Related Services**

- Excel Academy 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 meetings 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 and universal academic screening to determine whether students may need additional support or are functioning with a disability. In addition, we operate a Child Study Team process, by which students enter Tier 2 and/or 3 within 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, or earlier if there is a parent or team member request based on the student’s needs.

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 Local Advisory Council (SELAC)

In our founding years Excel is seeking interested parents or guardians to form and serve as members of our Special Education Local Advisory Council, or SELAC. The SELAC will seek to meet twice annually 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 Rhode Island’s Director of Student Supports at ahannon@excelacademy.org

Multilingual Learners/English Learners Education

Excel is proud to serve many students who are current MLLs or Former MLLs and refers to these students as Emerging Bilinguals within our school walls, to promote a sense of accomplishment, identity, and pride. The English Language Instructional Program (ELIP) was designed to serve the needs of MLL and Former MLL students, keeping in mind the academic mission of Excel Academy.

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 of the first three questions with a language other than “English” receive language screening to see if they qualify as an MLL for services.

After making a final determination about MLL status, the school ensures that any MLL students are placed in instructional cohorts with access to the Collaborative ESL & General Education model. Parents of any student who is eligible for 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.

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 Former MLL.

or Former MLL. Students who are reclassified as Former MLLs are actively monitored for two years by the school in accordance with federal and Rhode Island regulations. Any change in student status is reported to families. Communication with all families, including families of MLL students, is in their preferred language.

G. Dress Code

In partnership with families, Excel Academy Rhode Island has adopted a dress code. The following dress code applies during all school days and during all school-sponsored events.

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.

Families whose students are not in dress code will be notified and may be asked to bring the proper attire to school.

Dress Code: Regular School Uniform

Mandatory Items

(Every student must have at least one of the following items in each category)

- **Uniform Top Options**

- Grey Polo Top
- Grey Polo long-sleeve
- Grey T-shirt
 - Uniform tops do not have to have the Excel Logo, but may not contain any other visible brand logo.
 - Uniform tops with the Excel logo must be purchased from the Tommy Hilfiger vendor site.
 - Uniform tops without the Excel logo may be purchased from any clothing site/location.

- **Uniform Bottom Options**

- Khaki/Navy Blue pants
- Khaki/Navy Blue shorts
- Khaki/Navy Blue skort
 - Uniform bottoms do not have to have the Excel Logo, but may not contain any other visible brand logo.
 - Uniform bottoms with the Excel logo must be purchased from the Tommy Hilfiger vendor site.
 - Uniform bottoms without the Excel logo may be purchased from any clothing site/location.
 - Shorts may NOT be athletic shorts or biker shorts.
 - Pants or shorts may: not be torn, ripped or distressed of any kind.
 - Capri-length pants are allowed so long as they meet the requirements of pants noted above.

- **Fitness Uniform Top Options**

- Grey T-shirt
- Grey long-sleeve t-shirt
 - Fitness uniform tops do not have to have the Excel logo, but may not contain any other visible brand logo.
 - Fitness uniform tops with the Excel logo must be purchased from the Tommy Hilfiger vendor site.

- Fitness uniform tops without the Excel logo may be purchased from any clothing site/location.
- **Fitness Uniform Bottom Options**
 - Black sweatpants
 - Black basketball shorts
 - Black leggings
 - Fitness uniform bottoms do not have to have the Excel logo, but may not contain any other visible brand logo.
 - Fitness uniform bottoms with the Excel logo must be purchased from the Tommy Hilfiger vendor site.
 - Fitness uniform bottoms without the Excel logo may be purchased from any clothing site/location.
 - Shorts may NOT be athletic shorts or biker shorts.
- **Uniform sweatshirts:**
 - Grey crewneck sweatshirt
 - Grey ³/₄ zip sweater
 - Grey fleece zip-up jacket
 - Uniform sweatshirts do not have to have the Excel logo, but may not contain any other visible brand logo.
 - Uniform sweatshirts with the Excel logo must be purchased from the Tommy Hilfiger vendor site.
 - Uniform sweatshirts without the Excel logo may be purchased from any clothing site/location.
 - Sweatshirts with a hood will not be allowed to be worn inside of any classroom.
- **Socks:**
 - Socks can be purchased at a store of your choice.
 - Students may wear any brand, color, and length of socks.
 - If socks have an image or design, it must be school appropriate ie. no profanity, explicit content or paraphernalia.
- **Sneakers:**
 - Students may wear any brand or color of sneakers.
 - Sneakers cannot make noise of any kind.
 - Students are not allowed to wear Crocs, slides, or slippers.

Optional Items

(Students may choose to wear the following in addition to the mandatory school dress code. All items below may not have any logos except the Excel logo.)

- **Belt:**
 - If have an image or design, it must be school appropriate ie. no profanity, explicit content or paraphernalia.
 - A belt will be expected to be worn if a student's pants do not fit their waist appropriately.

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, durags, bonnets, handkerchiefs, or jackets is not permitted. Students will place these personal items into their backpacks.
- 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 student will be instructed to put the item into their backpacks or Team Culture/staff members can hold it on the student's behalf. 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.

Purchasing of Clothing

There are two uniforms at Excel Academy's middle school campuses. There is both a Regular School Uniform and the Fitness Uniform. Every student is required to have both. Students are expected to wear their Fitness uniform on days where they have Physical Education class. Students may not wear their fitness if they do not have Physical Education class.

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.

H. Sample Daily Student Schedules

Sample Schedule

Note: This is a sample schedule only. For each student, times, schedule, and course offerings may vary. Students have 3 core content classes a day, with 4 sessions of each core content a week. Friday's feature a culture block.

7:45-8:00	Arrival
8:00-8:25	Morning Meeting
8:28-9:28	Math
9:31-10:31	PE or Art
10:34-10:59	Recess
11:02-11:27	Lunch
11:27-11:35	Quiet Time
11:35-12:35	Intervention
12:35-12:50	PM break
12:50-1:50	ELA
1:53-2:53	Science
2:53-3:00	PM homeroom
3:00-3:05	Dismissal

I. School Supplies

XLRI will provide students with needed supplies for classes at the start of the year. Students are expected to protect and maintain all school supplies to the best of their ability. The school may ask families to contribute school supplies that will be shared in the classroom, including items such as tissues, pencils, pens, etc.

Students should not bring non-essential items of value to school – monetary or otherwise – since they cannot be securely stored. Although Excel Academy prides itself on being very safe, the school does not accept

responsibility for any missing items of value. Students who bring inappropriate items to school, including but not limited to toys, iPods, electronic tablets, and laser pointers, will have such items confiscated. A parent or guardian will come to the school to retrieve said items, as students may not retrieve confiscated items themselves. Repeated violations may result in high level consequences.

The following food and supply items are prohibited at XLRI because they pose a distraction to the learning environment. Bringing these items may result in disciplinary action:

- Juice, Juice Pouches, Juice Boxes
- Soda
- Gatorade
- Takis
- Colored Snacks/Chips
- Candy (all kinds)
- Gum
- Sharpies

Students who choose to bring a cell phone or other electronic mobile device to school do so at their own discretion/risk and the school does not accept responsibility for the security of such items that are brought onto school grounds. Before students walk into the school building students are to place their phone in their backpack and only retrieve their cell-phone once they are on the bus or at the pick up location during dismissal. Students may not use cell phones, smart watches and/or headphones/music equipment. Furthermore, all mobile devices shall remain silenced when stored in their personal belongings and out of sight during the school day. If a staff member notices technology out at an unapproved time, they will instruct them to put them in their backpacks on silent or off. Inability to meet this commitment will result in intervention from school based staff including but not limited to the device being collected and held until the end of the day. Repeated violations will require explicit family partnership aligned to Excel's Code of Conduct.

J. School Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, and Snack

XLRI participates in the National School Breakfast and Lunch Program. Families are asked to complete meal eligibility applications at the beginning of the school year to determine eligibility for free and reduced meals. We urge families, regardless of whether they think they will qualify, to return the form.

No student shall be refused a meal due to an inability to pay for such a meal. The fact that a student may not be able to pay for a meal shall remain confidential.

Families of students who order lunch and have particular dietary restrictions should alert the school's Dean of Operations and nurse as early in the school year as possible.

Breakfast

Near the end of every month, students receive a menu of breakfast options for the following month. Breakfast is available daily and is consumed in the classroom.. Students can choose to take a breakfast any morning, and are not required to pre-order.

Lunch

Near the end of every month, students will be given a calendar displaying the school lunch meals that will be served each day of the following month.Lunch is available daily and is consumed in the cafeteria.. Students can choose to take lunch any day, and are not required to pre-order.

Snack

A snack will be provided at the start of afterschool programming for students participating in afterschool activities. This snack is free of charge.

K. Grading and Promotion Policies

At XLRI, we are committed to anchoring our grading philosophy in equitable grading practices which means that our grades will reflect grade level mastery of standards and that we have transparent framing and rationale for what we are grading and how we are grading. Grades should provide clarity for students and families on their academic progress on grade level, rigorous work.

XLRI's commitment to equitable grading practices

Grades accurately reflect student understanding of academic skills and concepts through equitable grading practices that include:

- Providing multiple and flexible opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate understanding (“re-teach, re-do, re-grade”)
- Utilizing various forms of assessment that are accessible (with appropriate accommodations, modifications), and differentiated (different ways for students to engage/show what they know) to accurately represent student understanding.
- Maintaining transparent student-centered grading criteria based on individual student goals and supports
- Emphasizing teacher reflection and consideration of institutional biases, support for diverse learners, student identity, and past school experience
- Building intrinsic motivation, trusting student and teacher relationships, collaborative family partnerships, and self-awareness through opportunities for students to reflect on grades as progress toward learning goals and specific content understanding

Excel Academy students take four core academic classes (Mathematics, English, Social studies, and Science) during a given school year. Each class meets for four 60-minute blocks per week for the entire school year.

All students take two art classes and two physical education/health classes every week.

During the 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. We will use a minimum of 50% for all assignments, including assignments that students do not complete. This will ensure a more equitable spread for each letter grade (i.e. A=90-100, B= 80-89, C= 70-79, F = 50-69) and prevent students from being unable to bring up their grades or “recover” from one low or missing assignment.

Gradebooks have the following breakdown:

- Formative - Exit Ticket/Cool Down, checkpoints/quizzes: 30%
- Summative - End of Unit Traditional, Performance Exam: 35%
- Classwork/Participation: 20%
- Homework: 15%

Honor Roll: At the end of each quarter, 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 at the end of each trimester.

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

- In grade 5 and grade 6, the yearlong Course Grade is calculated as an average of the grade from each trimester.

A student fails a core subject if their final, yearlong Course Grade is below 70.0%.

Promotion Policies:

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, they will meet with an appointed staff member who will serve as a summer advisor to ensure academic success. If the student does not meet the requirements of summer school, they may be retained.

If a student fails two or more core subject areas, they may be retained and repeat the grade level.

L. Homeroom Teachers & Advisors

At the beginning of the year, all students are assigned a **Homeroom**. Homeroom teachers serve as advisors to their students and will develop and maintain close relationships with their class 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.

M. Family Communication Expectations

Frequent communication is a critical element of a successful home-school partnership. The following outlines what families can expect at a minimum.

Advisor Expectations

- Advisors are expected to contact the families of each student in their advisory approximately once a month, or three times a trimester, with an update on the students' progress. Texts or emails are okay if that is the communication method the family has indicated as a preference.
- Advisors call all families of students in their advisories by mid-September to introduce themselves.

Classroom Teacher Expectations

- Teachers call the families of students who are on track to fail at the mid-trimester mark prior to progress reports being sent home. The family should hear from the teacher before seeing the grade in writing.

Staff Expectations

- All staff are expected to call the family of any student sent out of class or to the Dean's Office within the same day.
- All staff are expected to call the families of students who demonstrate repeated minor behavior issues.

N. Student DeansList Reports

Excel Academy will utilize DeansList to provide students, families, and teachers with a frequent, comprehensive report of student performance. Students will accrue Pack Points by meeting and exceeding Behavioral, Academic, and Attendance expectations. Students will lose points for infractions to school rules and expectations. The following outlines what you can expect as it pertains to the reports:

- Frequency: Students will receive a PACK report composed by DeansList on a weekly basis - every Friday during morning or PM homeroom.
- Format
 - Year-to-date sum of days marked present, tardy, absent, and early dismissals.
 - Total occurrences of positive PACK points, resets, deductions, and referrals
 - Weekly sum of total PACK points accrued and deducted
 - Year-to-date sum of PACK points earned and PACK points spent
 - Numerical grade per content area
- Accountability
 - Students will be given an opportunity to reflect on their PACK reports with their homeroom advisors.
 - Students are required to have a parent/guardian sign their weekly PACK reports and return them to their homeroom advisor on Monday morning.
 - The Dean Team will collect all PACK reports from each homeroom advisor and input data into tracker
 - The Dean Team will be responsible for contacting families of students who do not return their PACK report
- Incentives
 - Students who earn 100+ PACK points in their weekly total on their PACK Report will be permitted to come to school in Free Dress/Dress Down on Monday
 - Students MUST return with a signed PACK Report in order to be in Free Dress/Dress Down
 - Students who are in Free Dress/Dress Down without having a signed PACK Report should be referred to the Deans' Office for being out of uniform.

O. 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 in order 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 participate in games, practices, team events, etc., at the discretion of the school administration and the coach.
- All fans are expected to follow Excel Academy's Code of Conduct.
- Fans may not interact with players during the game.
- School consequences may be issued at games.

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.

P. Goal Setting

Following major assessments, we will conduct student conferences in order to update students on their progress and set and/or revisit their growth goals. Students will hold on to their growth card as an anchor for knowing their goal, understanding their progress, and knowing what assessments are upcoming. MAP, which stands for Measures of Academic Progress, is an assessment taken three times a year in reading and math to measure student growth. Students will have individual growth goals set using MAP. Families are encouraged to speak with their children about their goals and data. Suggested questions include the following: what are your goals? How do you feel about your progress? What actions are you taking to meet your goals?

GENERAL SCHOOL INFORMATION

A. Transportation

Excel Academy Rhode Island will provide school bus transportation to and from campus to all students during the 2023-2024 school year. Bus routes are assigned by the school and will be communicated to families in August.

B. School Health

School Wellness Office

The goal of the Wellness Office is to provide appropriate health care and guidance and to coordinate the resources of the school, home and community as they pertain to the total health of students. Students are only permitted to go to the nurse during the day if they have a pre-identified need, or if they have an exceptional health need (ie - significant bleeding, throwing up, fever). Mild incidents, such as scratches, minor cuts, headaches, etc. may be remedied inside of the classroom versus a student being sent to the Health office.

Allergy Policy

Excel Academy's policy related to allergies and allergens is appended in this handbook.

Medical Records

Rhode Island state law requires schools to ensure that all students enrolling in a new school have received appropriate physical examination, screenings, and vaccinations. The school nurse is responsible for maintaining student health records confidentially in accordance with Rhode Island regulation. 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) information regarding the student's history with screenings for vision, hearing, BMI and scoliosis.
 - A student that does not have documentation of a recent physical exam prior to the start of the school year may enroll, but must complete a physical exam and provide documentation within 6 months of enrollment.
- *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.
- *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 their 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.

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. Please note that Excel has developed appropriate policies for the mitigation and management of COVID-19, which can be found on our website and are shared during parent orientation.

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 their 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.
- C. 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 healthcare professional must be 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.
- D. 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.

C. Health Exams and Screenings

Rhode Island requires that schools ensure that students have received the following screenings for school age children in middle schools:

- Vision Screening
- Hearing Screening
- Speech/Language Screening
- Scoliosis (postural) Screening
- Dental Health Screening

If the school nurse determines that your child must be screened at school you will receive a letter of notification regarding when the screening will occur, as well as notification if there are any findings or referral recommendations as an outcome from the screening.

All new students who transfer into Excel are required to have a physical exam within six 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.

D. 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 Rhode Island law, parents or guardians have the right to exempt their child from the health and family life curriculum program by written directive to the Head of School. 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. Upon written request, a student/parent/guardian may review the health education curricula.

E. Emergency Protocols

In order to be best prepared for an emergency, and in accordance with Rhode Island Law Excel Academy holds monthly emergency drills, including following the requirements for fire drills and lockdown 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.

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.

F. Visitor Policy

Families 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 escorted to the Main Office for support.

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.

G. Non-Discrimination

Excel Academy 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, sex, sexual orientation or gender identity in accordance with the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI and VII); on the basis of sex and sexual orientation and gender identity, 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 II 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 Academy on the basis of race, color, creed, gender identity/expression, ethnicity, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, age,

ancestry, athletic performance, special need, proficiency in the English language or a foreign language, or prior academic achievement. No person shall be discriminated against in obtaining the advantages, privileges, or access to the courses of study offered by Excel Academy on the basis of race, gender identity/expression, color, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation. Finally, pregnant scholars are allowed to remain in regular education classes and participate in extracurricular activities with non-pregnant scholars throughout their pregnancy, and after giving birth are permitted to return to the same academic and extracurricular program as before giving birth (Title IX).

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, trans-gender or transitioning, questioning, intersex, or asexual. 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 Director of Diversity and Inclusion.

H. 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. 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 Rhode Island 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

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 Rhode Island's Anti-Hazing Law (§ 11-21-1) and does not tolerate hazing in any form. Further information about Excel's approach may be found in our Code of Conduct.

6. Grievance Procedure for Harassment and/or Discrimination

Where to File a Complaint:

Any student or employee who believes that Excel Academy Rhode Island has discriminated against or harassed her/him because of her/his race, color, national origin, 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 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. All relevant complaints will be investigated by 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 Rhode Island Department of Education's *Procedural Safeguards* rather than this Grievance Procedure. A copy of the brochure is available from the Learning Specialist and [here](#).

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

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, Sarah Kantrowitz skantrowitz@excelacademy.org so that the school may review the incident, 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 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 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 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

Any party to a grievance who is not satisfied with a disposition by a Grievance Administrator may appeal the disposition to the RI Board of Trustees by writing to the Board Chair. The RI Board of Trustees will issue a written response on the appeal to the grievant within thirty (30) school days of receiving the appeal. The Rhode Island Department of Education provides [guidance here](#) for the dispute resolution process if not resolved with the RI Board of Trustees.

To write to the Board Chair of the RI Board of Trustees:

Brett P. Smiley
mayor@providenceri.gov
Providence City Hall
Mayor's Office
25 Dorrance Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

I. 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 18 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 seven years after the student leaves Excel Academy.

Per R.I.G.L. § 16-71, The Educational Records Bill of Rights Act, 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 building Principal or Head of School. If any decision made by the principal or their designee regarding student records is not wholly or partially satisfactory to the student or parent, they have the right to appeal in accordance with R.I.G.L. § 16-39. Under FERPA, if the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. If the requested amendment is still denied, the parent or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information.

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.

Directory Information Policy

Excel Academy wishes to make clear that all individual student records of the school are confidential. However, consistent with federal and state law and regulations governing student records, Excel Academy designates the following information as "directory information" (as defined by the Family Educational

Rights and Privacy Act and related Rhode Island laws and regulations) that may be released to the general public, third parties and outside organizations without the written consent of a student and/or his or her parents/guardians:

- student's name;
- student's parents' / legal guardians' contact information (e.g., home phone number, cell phone number, email address, residential address)
- student's contact information (only if the student has reached the age of majority) (e.g., home phone number, cell phone number, email address, residential address)
- dates of attendance;
- class;
- major field of study;
- participation in officially recognized activities and sports;
- weight and height of the members of athletic teams;
- honors and awards; and
- post-high school plans.

Students and/or their parents/guardians, however, may “opt-out” of the release of any element of directory information detailed above by notifying School Operations in writing by September 1st of each school year that such information shall not be released. Absent receipt of a written objection by September 1st of each school year, the directory information will be released without further notice or consent.

CODE OF CONDUCT

A. Purpose

Excel Academy Charter Schools has created a Code of Conduct in order to:

- maintain a respectful space for learning
- allow students to focus on their learning
- prepare students to become engaged citizens who follow rules set by our communities.

The Code of Conduct describes behaviors that Excel Academy considers inappropriate or unacceptable (which we will call “behavioral infractions”) and the range of potential consequences of those behaviors.

B. Our Philosophy and Approach

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.

As described in the Bullying and Prevention and Intervention Policy found in Appendix A of 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. Furthermore, retaliation against a person who reports, provides information about, or witnesses alleged bullying or harassment is prohibited.

The upholding of Excel Academy’s Code of Conduct is based upon a progressive framework. Specifically, minor violations generally result in less severe consequences while larger violations generally result in more severe consequences. Furthermore, first-time violations generally result in less severe consequences while repeated violations generally result in more severe consequences. We aim to support students and adults to reflect, take ownership, and repair relationships to ensure a positive and safe community for all. Our response to behavior is aligned with a Responsive Classroom ideology and mindset and adheres to the Providence Schools Code of Conduct.

C. Handbook Violations

The following list of handbook violations is not comprehensive; it offers examples. While we have stated possible consequences, Excel staff has sole discretion to determine the consequence of each incident.

A school-related handbook violation 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
- on/by means of a provided device or internet connection, as outlined in Appendix B Responsible Use of Technology Policy

Students are expected to interact respectfully with school staff. Examples of disrespectful interactions may 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 in a disrespectful manner. Such disrespectful actions are not in line with Excel’s community values.

Just as students can earn PACK points for demonstrating PACK values, students can lose points for not meeting expectations. The following is a list of behaviors that warrant a loss of points:

- lack of work completion
- peer distraction
- off-topic conversation
- not following teacher’s directions

- computer misuse
- cell phone use
- misuse of materials (including writing on body)
- inappropriate language
- physical contact, including horseplay
- locker misuse
- restroom/water misuse
- hallway transition

The following list of behaviors warrant immediate removal from class:

- gross disrespect (disorderly conduct, disrespect, insubordination, threats)
- learning obstruction/escalation of behaviors
- obscene language/aggressive contact
- hate speech/racial slurs
- leaving without permission or unsupervised transition

With the progressive nature of the Code of Conduct in mind, there are specific behaviors and handbook violations which may warrant more severe consequences. Specifically, behaviors that may warrant Out-of-School Suspension include, but are not limited to:

- Alcohol
- Arson
- Assault/Battery of a Student
- Assault/Battery of a Teacher
- Bomb Threat
- Controlled Substances - Sale of/Possession with intent to sell
- Controlled Substances - Under the influence
- Disorderly Conduct
- Fighting / Physical Altercation
- Fire Regulation Violation
- Gang Activity - Nonviolent incident
- Harassment: Aggressive pressure or intimidation; unwelcome verbal or physical contact
- Harassment: Prejudice / Hate Crimes
- Insubordination / Disrespect
- Larceny / Theft
- Leaving school grounds without permission
- Obscene / Abusive Language towards a student
- Obscene / Abusive Language towards a teacher
- Sexual Misconduct / Battery
- Threat / Intimidation
- Tobacco Products
- Trespassing / Restricted Area
- Vandalism
- Weapon Possession

Our goal is to keep students in class learning. Besides suspension, disciplinary actions may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- loss of recess
- mandatory family meeting
- after school detention
- in class restoration
- reverse suspension (family member sits in class with the student)

D. Procedures for Suspension

The following section explains the procedures once it is determined a violation of the Code of Conduct will result in a suspension.

In-School Suspension

If a student commits an offense or series of offenses that do not warrant an out of school suspension, the behavior may call for an in-school suspension. The student is subject to the following:

- If necessary for the safety of others, the student is immediately removed from class and/or school.
- The student is provided notice of the allegation of an offense, and is entitled to respond to the allegations against them...
- The Head of School, or their designees addresses the conduct, response of the student facing the allegations, and assigns the appropriate consequence.
- Written notice is provided in the form of a letter sent home with the student. Such notice includes a description of the incident or incidents resulting in the in-school suspension.

For all suspensions there must be a reinstatement meeting with the family and student. A parent or guardian will be required to meet with an administrator regarding the violations prior to a scholar's return to school.

Scholars who have received an in-school suspension are expected to attend school, however, will not be permitted to remain in their classroom during in-school suspension. An alternative setting will be provided for them to complete schoolwork.

Short-Term Out of School Suspension

- If a student commits an offense or series of offenses that warrant an out of school suspension, the behavior may call for a short-term out of school suspension (10 days or less). The student is subject to the following: If necessary for the safety of others, the student is immediately removed from class and/or school.
- The student is provided notice of the allegation of an offense, and is entitled to respond to the allegations against them.
- The Head of School, or their designees addresses the conduct, response of the student facing the allegations, and assigns the appropriate consequence.
- The parent/guardian is notified by the school and will need to pick the student up from school immediately.
- Written notice shall be provided in the form of a letter sent home with the student. Such notice a description of the incident or incidents resulting in the suspension.

For all suspensions there must be a reinstatement meeting with the family and scholar. A parent or guardian will be required to meet with an administrator regarding the infractions prior to a scholar's return to school. During suspension, scholars are only permitted on campus when escorted by a parent/guardian.

Long-Term Out of School Suspension

If a student commits an offense that calls for a long-term suspension (more than 10 days), the following steps are taken:

- If necessary for the safety of others, the student is immediately removed from class and/or school.
- The parent/guardian is immediately notified by the school.
- The school sets a hearing date. The student and/or his or her parent/guardian are notified in writing.

Please note that Excel Academy Rhode Island is required to report all suspension data to the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE). Additionally, alleged criminal behavior may result in a referral to the local police department and/or appropriate authorities.

Supplementary Instruction

Scholars who are suspended will be provided with alternative instructional materials that must be completed. Arrangements will be made between the school and each individual family for the delivery of

services, pick up/delivery of work, and the making-up of any missed assignments and classroom instructional support. All IDEA mandates will be followed for scholars with disabilities.

Due Process Procedures

Scholars with disabilities have the same rights and responsibilities as other scholars, and may be disciplined for the same behavioral offenses listed above. If a student with disabilities has an IEP that includes disciplinary guidelines, then that student will be disciplined according to those guidelines as required by IDEA. XLRI will conduct a manifestation determination for any student with an IEP prior to suspension. Suspensions for students with IEPs will not be for more than 10 cumulative days in a school year.

In addition to any of these infractions, any breaches of Federal law, Rhode Island 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.

The XLRI Board of Trustees delegates its authority to suspend students and hear appeals to the Head of School and CEO, respectively. All decisions made by the Head of School regarding long-term suspension of a student for any reason will be in writing and are subject to review by the Chief Executive Officer, if requested.

Appeal to the CEO

If a decision by an administrator, following the hearing, 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 on the appeal. 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 an appellate 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 appellate 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 affirm, reduce or overturn the suspension decision. .

The decision of the CEO constitutes the final decision of the school.

E. Discipline of Students with Disabilities

Federal laws provide certain procedural rights and protections relating to discipline of students who have been identified under such laws with having a disability:

1. A suspension of longer than ten (10) cumulative days is 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 within ten (10) days of the decision to suspend 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—"a manifestation determination."
3. 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. 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 outcome of the hearing or the end of the time period for the disciplinary action, whichever comes first, unless the parent and Excel agree otherwise.
4. If the Team determines that the behavior is NOT a manifestation of the disability, then the suspension 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; and
 - c. As appropriate, a functional behavioral assessment and behavioral intervention services and modifications, to address the behavior so that it does not recur.
5. 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. If the student carries a weapon to or possesses a weapon at school, on school premises, or to or at a school function under the jurisdiction of an SEA or an LEA;
 - b. If the student knowingly possesses or uses illegal drugs, or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance, while at school, on school premises, or at a school function under the jurisdiction of an SEA or an LEA; or
 - c. If the student has inflicted serious bodily injury upon another person while at school, on school premises, or at a school function under the jurisdiction of an SEA or an LEA; or
 - d. 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.
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:
 - e. The parent had expressed concern in writing; or
 - f. The parent had requested an evaluation; or

- g. 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. If Excel had no reason to consider the student disabled, and the parent requests an evaluation subsequent to the disciplinary action, Excel will conduct an expedited evaluation to determine eligibility. If the student is found eligible, then he/she receives all procedural protections subsequent to the finding of eligibility.

F. Student Searches

In order to maintain the security of all its students, Excel Academy Charter School reserves 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. Searches may only be conducted by the Dean of Culture and Head of School, or their designee. 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. School cubbies, lockers, 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.

G. Bus Behavior

The Excel Academy Charter School Code of Conduct applies to students while on school bus transportation to and/or from school. The following additional rules apply to the bus:

1. Students must sit in their assigned seats.
2. Unsafe behavior such as: not staying seated in assigned seat, putting hands out of the bus, throwing objects, using bad language, not obeying the bus driver, and all handbook violations. More serious behavior (i.e. fighting) will be addressed and assigned consequences just as if it happened on school grounds.

Incidents will be dealt with on a case by case basis. We have two priorities for our busing experience: Safety and fairness. Following any unsafe bus behavior, next steps and appropriate consequences if needed will be communicated by the Dean of Culture.

Incidents, if serious enough, can warrant immediate loss of bus privileges. Other consequences (e.g., suspensions) apply as well. Students engaged in misconduct on the bus will receive all due process protections described in the Code of Conduct.

Families are strongly encouraged to reinforce the importance of safe bus behavior and the potential consequences for bad behavior.

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.

H. Field Trips/End-of-Year Events

The school's curriculum may sometimes require outside learning experiences or special school events. Such field trips and special events are, by design and intention, as inclusive as possible for members of the participating class, grade, etc. and no student will be excluded from participation due to a lack of sufficient funds on the part of that student and/or his/her family. 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” trips or events for reasons including but not limited to: involvement in a disciplinary incident on a prior trip, poor school attendance, past inappropriate behavior, suspension, 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 families 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.

I. Cheating, Plagiarism, and Copying Others’ 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. 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 directions. Specific guidelines regarding cheating and plagiarism will be reviewed with students in the beginning of the school year and continued throughout the year. The school will determine appropriate consequences but cheating, plagiarism, and copying others’ work may result in Suspension, loss of academic credit, and/or other consequences.

APPENDIX A: SAFE SCHOOL ACT, BULLYING POLICY

Excel Academy Rhode Island is committed to a safe, caring, friendly environment free from harassment, intimidation, or bullying/cyber bullying. Excel has adopted the Rhode Island Statewide Bullying Policy, also known as the Safe School Act. Students need a safe environment to learn and grow within and bullying, in any form, will not be tolerated at our school.

Bullying means the use by one or more students of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof directed at a student that:

- Causes physical or emotional harm to the student or damage to the student's property;
- Places the student in reasonable fear of harm to himself/herself or of damage to his/her property;
- Creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or abusive educational environment for the student;
- Infringes on the rights of the student to participate in school activities; or
- Materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

The expression, physical act or gesture may include, but is not limited to, an incident or incidents that may be reasonably perceived as being motivated by characteristics such as the following: race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression or mental, physical, or sensory disability, intellectual ability or by any other distinguishing characteristic. Bullying most often occurs as repeated behavior and often is not a single incident between the bullying offender(s) and the bullying victim(s).

Bullying and retaliation against any person associated with a report of bullying or the investigation thereof is prohibited at Excel Academy. School staff will take all reasonable measures to prevent bullying at school. Such measures may include professional development and prevention activities, family workshops, and scholar social groups.

All Excel Academy staff members will model respectful behavior to one another, to students, and to school visitors and families at all times. Abusive or humiliating language or demeanor is not productive and will not be tolerated. Scholars and their families are expected to demonstrate respectful behavior to other families, Excel staff members, and other scholars at all times.

Bullying Prevention Policy

Excel 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 promptly investigate 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.

Planning and Oversight:

The Head of School and Dean of Culture are responsible for the following tasks under the Bullying Policy:

- Receiving reports on bullying;
- Collecting and analyzing building- and/or school-wide data on bullying to assess the present status 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;
- Planning supports that respond to the needs of targets and aggressors;
- Developing new or revising current policies and protocols under the Safe Schools Act or related regulation, 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 Bullying Policy and Prevention Policy each year, or more frequently.

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 will be scheduled annually and on an as-needed basis and 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 this plan by publishing information about it, including sections related to staff duties, in the Employee Handbook.

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 email. 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 an 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 the 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.

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. 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 their 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 their parents or guardians to assess the target's need for additional social or emotional support, 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 their 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 their 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.

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 team 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 prosocial 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.

APPENDIX B: ALLERGY POLICY

Purpose and Goal

Excel Academy 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 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 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 anaphylaxis¹. The most common causes of anaphylaxis in children include allergies to:

- Foods (most commonly: fish, shellfish, peanuts/tree nuts)
- Latex
- Bee stings
- 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

- A. Create a plan for addressing life-threatening food based allergic reactions. Train staff regarding:
 - 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
- B. Advise students not to trade or share outside food or utensils.
- C. Encourage non-food celebrations.
- D. Make applicable student Allergy Action Plan (AAP) or Individual HealthCare Plan (IHCP) available in the nurse's office.
- E. Make Epinephrine Auto-injectors available in the nurse's office or in other clearly designated locations as indicated in the AAP or IHCP.
- F. Familiarize teachers with the AAP or IHCP of their students on a need-to-know basis.

Excel's Nurse Responsibilities

¹ 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.

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. 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 Teacher 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 their own safety as is feasible.
 - Carry their 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 C: RESPONSIBLE USE OF TECHNOLOGY POLICY

Responsible Usage of Internet

Excel Academy offers Internet access to its students and staff. The primary purpose of providing access to the Internet is to support the educational mission of the Excel Academy. Excel Academy expects that students and staff will use this access in a manner consistent with this purpose.

In order to promote Internet safety and maintain focus on educational excellence, Excel filters its web content in an effort to block access to material that is not appropriate for children. It is the policy of Excel to fully comply with CIPA, the Children's Internet Protection Act. In accordance with this law, the Internet will be filtered to limit access to only educationally appropriate sites and block material deemed to be obscene or harmful to minors in any way. Excel also blocks websites we believe to be counterproductive to learning goals. However, Excel cannot guarantee that content filtering will prevent students from incidentally or purposefully accessing content that is not educationally appropriate. Students who find inappropriate material should immediately report their access to a teacher or administrator.

Excel regularly monitors student internet usage as part of our content filtering system. Students found to be accessing content that raises concerns about their health and safety, or the health and safety of other members of the school community, may be referred to the school's Student Support Team for intervention or to the Dean of Culture if a handbook violation may have occurred.

While the Internet is a tremendous resource for electronic information, it has the potential for abuse. Excel Academy makes no guarantees, implied or otherwise, regarding the factual reliability of data available over the Internet. Users of the Excel Academy Internet service assume full responsibility for any costs, liabilities, or damages arising from the way they choose to use their access to the Internet.

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 D: ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF ACCESS

Excel Academy Rhode Island Student & Family Handbook: Acknowledgement of Access to Handbook

I acknowledge that the Excel Academy Rhode Island Student and Family Handbook (hereafter, “the Handbook”) is available in both hard copy format (upon my request) and electronic format at www.excelacademy.org/ri. 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, specialized instruction and special education services, attendance and schedule requirements, and family communication and parental involvement.

I understand it is my responsibility as a parent/guardian of an Excel Academy Rhode Island 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