



# Student & Family Handbook 2024-2025

This document includes Excel Academy Charter High School's  
Code of Conduct  
and  
Bullying Prevention & Intervention Policy

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Dear Excel Academy Families:

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

We've compiled this Handbook to help you become familiar with Excel Academy's school rules, expectations for members of our community, and school policies and procedures. Please 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. 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 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

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## EXCEL ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL

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### *Our Mission*

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

In the pursuit of academic excellence, students partake of a rigorous college preparatory extended-day program. Students strive to be well versed in a traditional body of knowledge across content areas, enabling them to challenge old ideas and create new knowledge. Students are expected to embrace challenges, collaborate, draw connections, and engage in intellectual discourse and debate.

Excel also shapes an intimate, supportive, engaging school community – where classes are personalized, parents are partners, and teachers lead with passion and commitment. Adults model and students develop and live the values of caring, respect, and responsibility.

Excel Academy generates for students a transforming experience at an age when they are forging their very identities and lifetime aspirations. Excel Academy cultivates in them the belief that they are the masters of their own destinies: each one capable of greatness and responsible for serving the community and the world around them.

## SECTION 1: ACADEMIC POLICIES AND PRACTICES

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### A. Grading, Graduation Requirements, and Advisory

#### Grading

Excel Academy Charter High School (EACHS) students are held to a higher standard. Students are graded on a scale of 60-100. The minimum passing grade is a “C.” In order for a student to pass a course without summer requirements s/he must earn a cumulative average of at least 70 for the year.

If a student earns a grade between 60 and 70 in any course, s/he will be required to attend summer school in order to master objectives and earn up to 5 additional points for the course. In the event that a student is unable to attend summer school, a family member will have to excuse them and students will not be able to earn additional points for the course. Students may attend summer school for up to 2 courses.

If a student earns a grade below 60 in any course, s/he has failed that course.

<i>Grading Scale</i>			
<u>Final Average</u>	<u>Mark</u>	<u>College Prep</u>	<u>AP</u>
96.5 - 100	A+	4.33	5.33
92.5 - 96.5	A	4.00	5.00
89.5 - 92.5	A-	3.75	4.75
86.5 - 89.5	B+	3.50	4.50
82.5 - 86.5	B	3.25	4.25
79.5 - 82.5	B-	3.00	4.00
76.5 - 79.5	C+	2.75	3.75
72.5 - 76.5	C	2.50	3.50
69.5 - 72.5	C-	2.25	3.00
66.5 - 69.5	D+	1.25	2.25
62.5 - 66.5	D	1.00	2.00
0.00 - 62.5	D-	0.00	0.00

#### **Report Cards and Progress Reports**

Report cards are distributed four times during the academic year. Grade reports are distributed to students during the midpoints of these quarters. Parents are required to come to school to pick up their child’s report card for the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> quarters and to meet with teachers.



## Graduation Requirements

The items listed below are *minimums* required for graduation by Excel Academy Charter High School.

Course Requirements	MASS CORE	EACHS – Years	EACHS – Credits
English (9-12)	4	4	16
Mathematics (to at least Pre-Calculus)	4	4	16
Lab Science (Includes Biology, Chemistry, Physics)	3	3	12
History (Includes US and World History)	3	3	12
Foreign Language	2 (same language)	3 (same language or score 4 or 5 on AP language)	12
Grade Level Seminar	0	2	1
Electives*	0	4	8
P.E.	4	4	4

\*Early college coursework will count for elective credit.

Non–Course Requirements	EACHS Credits	Notes
Course load	n/a	<p>In grades 9-12, all students must maintain a full course load including 5 core courses (In disciplines of ELA, Math, Science, History, and Foreign Language), P.E., Grade Level Seminar, and 1 Elective course.</p> <p>Participation in academic support tutorials or early college coursework may replace a core course or elective course, pending approval by the student’s advisor and Head of School.</p>

**Advisory**

Students meet daily in advisory, a group of 14-18 students in their grade level with a grade level faculty advisor. In advisory, students develop academic habits and social emotional skills and build community with their peers. Advisors monitor students’ grades, attendance, and overall school performance, and provide families with updates on students’ progress and performance at least monthly. If a student is experiencing challenges in school, the student’s advisor or another member of the Excel faculty will contact families to communicate about the challenge and collaboratively plan interventions to support the student.

**Homework**

Students are assigned 2 -3 hours of homework every night. Parents are encouraged to discuss assignments with students and check their homework.

## **Academic Warning**

Excel Academy sets high academic expectations for all of its students in order to ensure that they are prepared for the rigors of college. **Therefore, any student that has a grade below 70 in Math, English, History, Science, Spanish, or an Elective course will be placed on academic probation.** In 9<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> grade, academic probation means that a student is ineligible to play sports and may have other limitations to their privileges. In 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade specifically, academic probation means that a student is required to attend a study hall during the day for 20-25 minutes.

Any student that has academic probation will also be placed on a special academic intervention plan that is developed by the student's teachers, their grade level team, and school leaders.

Students will have the opportunity to earn their way off of academic warning once they have raised their grade above a 70.

## **Failure of a Course**

Students who earn a D will be required to retake a class during the Summer School session to complete the course. Grades received in the retake course will be factored into the final grade for the school year. Students can only retake a maximum of two classes per summer school session, but they will earn academic credit for all courses with a grade of D or above. Because of the length of the session, students cannot miss more than 1 day of school and receive credit for the course.

Students can take a maximum of two courses during summer school. Any student who earns an F in a course may be required to retake the course or repeat the grade.

## **College and Career Counseling**

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. The College and Post-Secondary Success (CAPS) office uses a student-centered approach to provide all our students and their families with comprehensive college and career counseling beginning in grade 9 and continuing well after they graduate from our high school. Our goal is that every one of our students has access to the resources and support necessary to make college a reality and to achieve a post-secondary degree. By the time students graduate from EACHS, they will possess the self-knowledge, college-knowledge, and career knowledge to craft their own post-secondary plan that is aligned with their long-term goals and to execute on that plan. We believe that for the vast majority of students, earning a post-secondary degree will create the most options for career pathways and life success. We also recognize that achieving a post-secondary degree is not the long-term goal for all of our students and therefore, we will work with them to craft alternative post-secondary pathways toward successful completion of their long-term goals.

In grades 9 and 10, students participate in a variety of college and career trips as well as receive support to identify and pursue summer opportunities aligned with their values and interests. We believe that summertime is an essential time for students to continue their exploration of personal values and long-term goals. It is also critical to help students build their resume for college access and build their college and career identities. To that end, we will provide support for students to spend their summers meaningfully. This may include finding, applying and attending formal pre-college programming on college campuses, summer jobs, academic interest programs, or recreational programs. In grades 11 and 12, students receive 1-1 college and career counseling to identify and pursue personal post-secondary goals. Additionally, all alumni receive post-secondary support for 4-6 years after XLHS graduation.

**Goals:**

100% of our graduating seniors will have a productive post-secondary plan aligned with their goals. In service of this, we will meet with 100% of our families throughout the post-secondary planning process.

9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Summer Opportunities Support</li><li>● College and career visits</li></ul>
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● College and career visits</li><li>● PSAT</li><li>● Summer Opportunities Support</li></ul>
11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Weekly class focusing on college and career exploration and the college and career application process</li><li>● Optional SAT Prep</li><li>● Individual post-secondary planning meeting with all 11th grade families</li><li>● Students take the SAT in April</li><li>● Visits from College Admissions representatives</li><li>● Support students in requesting letters of recommendation</li><li>● Summer Opportunities Support</li><li>● College and Career Field Trips</li></ul>
12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Weekly class focusing on college and career application preparation and post-secondary success plans</li><li>● Individual college trips</li><li>● Visits from College Admissions representatives</li><li>● Family events: Financial Aid Process, FAFSA Completion, Financial Aid Award Analysis Overview</li><li>● Financial Aid Completion Support</li><li>● Individual post-secondary planning meeting with all 12th grade families</li><li>● Senior Signing Day event</li><li>● College transition and success programming</li></ul>

**B. Specialized Instruction and Supports**

**Special Education and Section 504 Accommodation Plans**

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

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

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

Students with disabilities who qualify for services or accommodations 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.

### **Accommodations**

Each and every student at Excel Academy is held to the highest expectations based upon the child's abilities. Students with IEPs and 504 plans are provided with accommodations 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 student's IEP service delivery grids and on teacher observation. Learning Specialists and Core Content Classroom Teachers collaborate

and co-teach classes for these students to better enable *all* students to access the curriculum and make progress.

- 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 meet with students to provide additional, small group support in reading and in homework completion during study hall or during other flexible periods of the day to check-in about student progress.
  - Students with IEPs who require a partially or substantially separate placement will receive support in a self-contained program or classroom, following a curriculum that is rigorous based on the student's needs and determined by the IEP team.

Excel High School has fully substantially separate classes which are available to any Excel student with an IEP, should their IEP team determine that it is their LRE and that our program is an appropriate fit.
- **Related Services**
  - Excel Academy Charter Schools provides related services (e.g., occupational therapy, speech and language therapy, counseling, etc.) for students who have these services listed in their IEPs or 504 plans. The frequency and duration of these 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 academic screening to determine whether students may need additional support or are functioning with a disability. In addition, Grade Level Teams facilitate the Child Study Team process, by which students enter the Response to Intervention (RTI) system of supports. Students who enter RTI may be referred for a special education or core evaluation if the team recommends it after observing the student's response to interventions.

A parent who suspects that their child has a disability may request a referral or evaluation at any time in writing, by reaching out to their school's Dean of Culture Supports or Head of School.

### **Special Education Parent Advisory Council**

Excel's Special Education Parent Advisory Council meets regularly throughout the school year and is open to any Excel parent. Meeting dates are posted at the start of the school year at [www.excelacademy.org](http://www.excelacademy.org). For more information, please contact Excel's Director of Compliance at [cgrabus@excelacademy.org](mailto:cgrabus@excelacademy.org)

### **Multi Lingual Learner (MLL) Education**

Excel Academy Charter Schools English Language Learner Program was developed to serve the needs of MLL and FMLL students, keeping in mind the academic mission of Excel Academy.

Upon enrollment at Excel, families fill out a home language survey (sent home in multiple languages), indicating whether or not a student speaks a language other than English at home. During required new student testing, students whose families answer any question with a language other than "English" receive

language screening to see if they qualify for MLL services unless their records indicate they have previously been screened.

After making a final determination about MLL status, the MLL team will make a placement determination for the student based on the student's WIDA level and in accordance with recommended minutes from the Department of Education. Students may receive services in ELD courses, which replace grade-level courses and meet graduation requirements, or will receive language services via inclusion. Parents of any student who will receive MLL services receive a letter of notification, with the option of opting out. Parents of students who were language screened who will not receive MLL services receive a letter explaining that they will not be receiving those services.

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 FMLL, or Former Multi-Lingual Learner. Any change in student status is reported to families.

### **MLL Parent Advisory Council**

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

## **SECTION 2: STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT**

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### **A. Purpose and Philosophy**

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

### **B. Core Values**

Excel Academy Charter High School is committed to developing well-rounded individuals who contribute productively to their communities. As such, students will learn and uphold a community code which is connected to our PRIDE core values. Excel's high school students will be expected to demonstrate our values by being *Purposeful, Reflective, Inquisitive, Dedicated, and Empathetic*.

#### **Purposeful**

As Excel students, we act with intention, live in the present moment, and make changes that help us grow and thrive. In this way, we discover paths that align with our passions. We understand that every choice creates pathways and consequences for the future, and seek through reflection to make purposeful choices that align with our values, goals, and that with practice, comes purpose.

### **Reflective**

As Excel students, we regularly reflect on our current practices, habits, and mistakes. We welcome both positive and critical feedback while constantly looking for ways to improve.

### **Inquisitive**

As Excel students, we are curious and hungry to learn! We seek joy through ideas, and we are eager to apply our learning to solve relevant problems. We participate fully in every aspect of school life, and excel in both academic and extracurricular activities.

### **Dedicated**

We are dedicated. We embrace challenges and overcome obstacles in order to achieve our goals. We work hard daily and act with purpose recognizing that we control our own destiny. We will not allow negative people or other outside influences distract us from what is important.

### **Empathetic**

As Excel students, we deeply value each other's perspectives, and we seek to understand the values and experiences that shape each member of the community. Our commitment to empathy drives us to care for each other and to actively cultivate a compassionate and generous school community.

## **C. Rules and Expectations**

The most important value at Excel Academy is respect. Helping students develop the art of respect is a school-wide goal and will be modeled by all adults at Excel Academy. The students are expected to demonstrate the following elements of respect:

### **Expectation 1: *Respect for Self***

By their manner of acting, speaking, and interacting, students are to carry themselves with a sense of dignity. A respectful school community is characterized by responsible school citizenship. The following rules encourage safe and responsible decision-making by each student at Excel Academy Charter High School.

#### **Rule 1.1: No Drugs or Alcohol**

Excel Academy Charter High School maintains that the possession and/or use of illicit drugs and unlawful possession and/or use of alcohol by minors is wrong and can be physically and/or emotionally harmful to students. This includes the rising trend of e-cigarette usage, including vaping, dabbing, and using JUUL devices or those that are designed for the same or similar purposes. Therefore, Excel Academy Charter High



School has strict rules against possession, sale, transfer, and/or use of these substances in school or at school-sponsored activities, including athletic and social events that occur outside the school day.

"*Alcoholic Beverage*": any liquid intended for human consumption as a beverage and containing one half of one percent or more of alcohol by volume at sixty degrees Fahrenheit. (G.L.c.138, s.1)

"*Controlled Substance*": any substance or drug that is defined as a controlled substance under the provisions of G.L.c.94C.

**Possession:**

Staff members or students who have reason to believe that a student is in possession of drugs or alcohol will report this information to a member of the Dean of Culture Office. The student's dean will investigate the matter, may involve the police, and, if appropriate, shall take the following steps:

- The parent(s) or guardian(s) are notified, a disciplinary hearing is conducted, and the student is suspended. The student will be referred to the counseling department and may also be denied participation in school-sponsored extracurricular activities, lose off-campus privileges, and/or be recommended for expulsion by the Dean of Culture.

The possession of vape pens, dabs or pods, lighters, rolling papers or materials, etc. will be considered possession of paraphernalia and the aforementioned disciplinary action shall be taken. The possession of THC oil will be considered as possession of marijuana.

**Use (Under the Influence):**

Staff members or students who have reason to believe that a student is under the influence of a drug or alcohol will report the student to the Dean of Culture Office. The student's Dean will investigate the matter and, if appropriate, shall take the following steps:

- Notify the parent(s) or guardian(s) and have them arrange for the student to be taken home from the nurse's office. The student must remain under supervision until a meeting is arranged with the student, administrator, and the parent/guardian. A disciplinary hearing will be conducted and the student will be suspended. Mandatory counseling is arranged. The student may also be denied participation in school-sponsored extra-curricular activities, lose off campus privileges, and/or be recommended for expulsion by the Dean of Culture.

The use of THC oil, whether through a vape or otherwise, will be treated as consumption of marijuana and fall under the disciplinary procedures set forth above. Consumption of tobacco or nicotine through vaping, or otherwise, will be considered as use of prohibited drugs and be subject to disciplinary action set forth above. Additionally, vaping non-addictive substances, including flavored water vapors and vitamin oils will be treated as paraphernalia and follow the disciplinary procedures set forth above.

**Sale, Transfer, and Distribution:**

Staff members or students who have reason to believe that they have witnessed the sale or transfer of these substances shall report this immediately to the Dean of Culture Office. The student(s) will be requested to turn over contraband to the dean. The student's dean will hold a disciplinary hearing.

The Dean of Culture shall determine if sufficient cause exists and, if so, file a Disciplinary Report and notify the Juvenile Officer of the Police Department. The Dean of Culture or designated administrator, in consultation with the Police Department, will determine whether to file charges. All contraband will be turned over to the student's parents or to the Police Department. In addition to the above, the following consequences shall prevail:

- The student, parent, and administrator shall meet with the student's dean where disciplinary action, including expulsion, will be considered. The student will receive mandatory counseling, lose off campus privileges, and may be denied participation in school-sponsored extracurricular activities. If a senior violates **Rule 1.1**, they may be denied attendance and participation in senior activities, including prom and graduation.

Sharing, borrowing, or holding another student's vape pen, pod, dab, etc. will be considered as distribution, and be subject to the disciplinary procedures set forth above.

### **Rule 1.2: Attendance and Truancy Policies Attendance Policy**

Given the fast pace and high rigor of high school academics, missing a school day at Excel can have a detrimental effect on a student's learning. For this reason, we strongly encourage regular attendance, and have accountability and support in place for students who are not attending regularly. As required by Massachusetts law, Excel records **daily** student attendance for all students.

For the purposes of this policy, the words below have the following definitions:

- **Chronically Absent:** when a student misses 10% or more of their days in school, regardless of whether such absences are excused or unexcused
- **Excused Absences:** absences from school, whether for individual periods of a day or an entire day or days where the student or parent has notified Excel Academy in advance or as soon as practical after the absence in an emergency situation. Examples, include, but are not limited to illness, medical appointments, religious observance, bereavement, and legal appointments.
- **Habitually Truant:** a school-aged student who is not excused from attendance and who willfully fails to attend school for more than 8 school days in a quarter.
- **Unexcused Absences:** absences from school, whether for individual periods of a day or an entire day or days where the student or parent has not notified Excel Academy in advance or as soon as practical after the absence in an emergency situation, without advanced notification to Excel.

Parents are expected to ensure that their child is in school regularly, and only permit students to be absent for serious illness or significant events. We ask that whenever possible, families not schedule vacations or non-emergency appointments during school time. We encourage families to take advantage of 1:50pm dismissal on Friday, as well as half-days and vacations, to schedule appointments and travel.

Attendance is taken through several systems. Students scan into school for daily attendance through the SchoolPass system. Teachers take class attendance in DeansList, and both systems import data to PowerSchool. After a student scans in in the morning, for the remainder of the day, class by class attendance is captured by the teacher of that class. All students will be given an ID card. If a student misplaces their card, they will be responsible for purchasing a new card for \$5.00.

If a student will be absent on a given day or for a given school period, parents are asked to notify Excel by 8:35 AM on the day of the absence via the attendance hotline (families may reach out to the main office at 617.326.3574 for the attendance hotline number). If a parent does not report the student as absent within 48 hours of the absence], the student's absence will be marked as unexcused. Excel Academy understands that families may forget to contact the school. Therefore, if a family fails to notify the school on the day of the absence, Excel Academy will contact the student's parent(s) by noon to confirm the student's absence. Students who are absent for 3 or more consecutive days of school may be asked to provide medical documentation to support the excused absence.

Students may not miss more than 25 days in a school year. Doing so may result in repeating the grade. All student absences, including excused absences, will count towards this threshold of 25. Additionally, unexcused absences result in lost PRIDE points. However, we do excuse certain absences so that students do not lose PRIDE points or privileges. Excused absences will not count against a student's PRIDE score, but students will still be expected to make up all work on the days they miss.

If a student misses 25 or more periods of a given class, either due to absence, tardiness, dismissals, or skipping, that student may lose credit for the class and have to repeat the class the following year. It is vital that students keep track of their attendance in class for this reason.

Students trending to exceed the 25-absence limit will be required to meet a higher grade standard to demonstrate mastery despite their absences, such as a 70% final grade to be promoted, versus a 60%. For example, if a student misses 25 or more periods of Period 1 English, they will be required to meet a 70% average to pass the class. Similarly, if a student misses 25 or more full school days, they will be required to meet a 70% average to pass all classes. The system for higher-grade standard requirements is maintained by the school's Attendance Lead.

In order to help ensure that students are present in class regularly and able to receive credit for all classes, Excel has certain support policies in place. They are detailed below:

- For every absence, Excel Academy will notify the family of the students' absence within three days of the absence, as required by law.
- If Excel Academy has not received notification of the student's absence from the parent within 48 hours of the unexcused absence, Excel Academy will notify the parent of the student's unexcused absence,
- At 5 student absences (either excused or unexcused), the student's advisor will support the student with an Attendance Intervention Plan. The student's Grade Level Dean will contact the family to inquire as to the reasons for the absences and discuss a plan to improve the student's attendance. The Attendance Intervention Plan will be developed jointly and agreed upon by Excel Academy, the student, and the student's parent with input from relevant school personnel. Excel Academy will make all reasonable efforts to hold this meeting with all participants in-person.
- Where a student has at least 5 days during a school year in which the student misses 2 or more periods unexcused, the student's advisor will support the student with an Attendance Intervention Plan. The student's Grade Level Dean will contact the family to inquire as to the reasons for the absences and discuss a plan to improve the student's attendance.

- At 7 student absences (whether excused or unexcused), Excel’s administration will require a meeting with the student’s family and advisor and may proceed with a truancy filing.
- At 10 consecutive unexcused absences, the Dean’s Office will send home a letter to the student’s parent or guardian offering an exit interview, which is intended to discuss reasons for the student leaving the school permanently and consider alternative education programs and services or other placements.
  - This letter will be sent within 5 days of the 10<sup>th</sup> consecutive absence;
  - This letter will be sent in English and the parent / guardian’s primary language
  - This letter will offer at least 2 dates and times for the exit interview and will include contact information of the appropriate Dean for the parent / guardian to schedule the exit interview;
  - The exit interview will occur within 10 days of Excel’s sending the notice. A parent or guardian may extend the time for the exit interview, but under no circumstances will the exit interview be held more than 14 days after Excel sends the notice;
  - Excel will convene a team of relevant school personnel to participate in the exit interview with the student and parent / guardian;
  - During the exit interview, Excel will provide the student with information about the detrimental effects of early withdrawal from school, the benefits of earning a high school diploma, and the alternative education programs and services that may be available;
  - If Excel does not receive a response from the student’s parent or guardian within the permissible timeframe, Excel will proceed with the student withdrawal process.
- The school reserves the right to retain any student who exceeds 25 absences (whether excused or unexcused) to school or in a given class.
- Students who are absent for any unexcused reason will lose PRIDE Points on their weekly Performance Report.
- In cases of habitual truancy, Excel may report the student and/or family to certain state agencies or file an official complaint with the court.

Students who are absent from school, regardless of the reason, may not be permitted to attend or participate in any school-sponsored activities occurring on the day of the absence.

According to M.G.L. c. 76 and c. 72, § 8, all students under 16 are expected to be in school. All students under the age of 16 are expected to comply with these laws and the school will follow procedures set out in M.G.L. c. 76, § 18 if the student does not comply with the law. In cases of habitual truancy, the Principal (or her/his designee) will investigate the situation. Excel Academy Charter School operates in compliance with Department of Transitional Assistance requests and requirements, which can include mandated reporting of habitual truancy to appropriate state agencies and the juvenile court.

Excel keeps accurate records of attendance and will make the records available for inspection by the DOE 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 five days of school, or at least ten consecutive days during the school year, 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 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. Excel will work closely with students and families where student absences are related to or caused by a student's disability.

### **Rule 1.3: No Academic Dishonesty**

Excel Academy Charter High School's high academic standards are an important part of our success and school culture. These standards are in place to help each student realize the potential they have for growth and achievement. As such, plagiarism and cheating are viewed as a violation of our academic standards and our school values. This erodes the strong culture and standards students and teachers work to uphold. Students who choose to cheat and/or plagiarize will receive significant consequences including an automatic zero for any assignment on which they cheated and/or plagiarized; if a student cheats or plagiarizes more than once, they could receive additional behavioral consequences, up to an out of school suspension. To ensure fairness in the assignment of these consequences, helping, cheating, and plagiarizing are outlined below. Helping, cheating, and plagiarism can include but are not limited to:

#### *Helping*

*Helping a peer is encouraged, as it promotes a collaborative learning experience and contributes to a strong academic environment. However, it is important to note that helping a peer is not the same as cheating or plagiarizing. To distinguish between what helping **is** and what helping **is not**, please see the scenarios below:*

- **Helping is** pointing out mistakes in a classmate's paper (marking incorrect spelling, run on sentences, etc.); **helping is not** rewriting a section for your classmate with corrections made.
- **Helping is** explaining steps without specific information (First, find a common denominator); **helping is not** telling a student what the solution to the calculations would be.
- **Helping is** asking questions that break down a bigger question into small parts (asking what a key word means, or who a person mentioned in the question)
- **Helping is** guiding a student to find the right answer in an available resource (that's in the notes from yesterday; that was in the section of the book on cellular respiration); **helping is not** pointing to the answer in your notes.
- **Helping is** collaborating with a group to complete individual assignments (brainstorming evidence to support a claim, brainstorming multiple answers to open ended questions), **helping is not** splitting up the assignment and sharing answers to each section.

#### *Cheating*

- Copying another student's work.
- Allowing another student to copy your work.
- Communicating answers, in any way, during a test or quiz.
- Telling students who have not taken a test or quiz what questions are on it.
- Using resources not allowed on an assignment or assessment to come up with answers including: notes, calculator, textbook, answer key, etc.
- Taking a test, quiz, or answer key and either using or distributing it to other students.
- Changing your grade electronically or on an assignment that has been passed back.

### *Plagiarism*

- Submitting someone else's work, words, or ideas as your own without giving proper citations or credit (using an upperclassman's paper from a previous year, copying the paper of a student from another class, having a friend or family member write the paper for you, downloading a paper from the internet, using AI or ChatGPT to generate answers).
- Allowing someone else to submit your work, or a part of your work, as their own.
- Copying definitions or explanations from the internet or other sources in your work without properly citing the source.
- Copying phrases, sentences, or paragraphs from an article, book, or website and placing them in your work without proper citation.
- Buying or copying a piece of art and submitting it as your own.
- Paraphrasing another person's words or ideas without crediting them with the information.

Specific guidelines on group work, use of resources in completing assignments, and proper citation of sources will be provided by each individual teacher. Expectations set by teachers regarding Academic Integrity in their class will be treated the same as those listed above.

### **Expectation 2: Respect for Others**

Respect for others means showing support and encouragement, and refraining from insulting, deriding, or humiliating others; physically, emotionally or sexually harassing other students is not tolerated in any form. Respect for adults and the learning environment is fostered by listening and following instructions, using appropriate tone of voice; honoring a teacher's need to present a lesson to the entire class; and by accepting feedback on work and behavior.

#### **Rule 2.1:** No Bullying or Cyberbullying

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

#### **Rule 2.2:** Appropriate Cell Phone Use

Students' cell phones should remain off and away throughout the course of the day. Examples of phone misuse include: texting or using social media during instructional time, in the hallways, or in the bathrooms, or using a phone to cheat. Students misusing their cell phone may be referred to the Dean's Office, be placed on a phone plan, lose phone privileges during study halls, or receive other consequences based on the nature of the phone misuse.

#### **Phone Plan Procedure:**

Students may be placed on a Phone Plan as a consequence for repeated cell phone misuse. In this case, students may be asked to bring their cellphones to the Deans' Office each morning. Phones are securely

locked in the Dean's Office until the end of the day, when students may pick up their phones. Students who fail to check in their phone at the beginning of the day may be required to check their phone in for an additional period of time.

**Rule 2.3:** No Hazing

*Massachusetts Anti-Hazing Law: M.G.L. c. 269, Section 17. Hazing; organizing or participating; hazing defined.*

*Section 17.* Whoever is a principal organizer or participant in the crime of hazing, as defined herein, shall be punished by a fine of not more than three thousand dollars or by imprisonment in a house of correction for not more than one year, or both such fine and imprisonment.

The term "hazing" shall mean any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person. Such conduct shall include whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the weather, forced consumption of any food, liquor, beverage, drug or other substance, or any other brutal treatment or forced physical activity which is likely to adversely affect the physical health or safety of any such student or other person, or which subjects such student or other person to extreme mental stress, including extended deprivation of sleep or rest or extended isolation.

Notwithstanding any other provisions of this section to the contrary, consent shall not be available as a defense to any prosecution under this action. (Amended by 1987, 665.)

*M.G.L. c. 269, Section 18. Failure to report hazing.*

Section 18. Whoever knows that another person is the victim of hazing as defined in section seventeen and is at the scene of such crime shall, to the extent that such person can do so without danger or peril to himself or others, report such crime to an appropriate law enforcement official as soon as reasonably practicable. Whoever fails to report such crime shall be punished by a fine of not more than one thousand dollars. (Amended by 1987, .665.)

*M.G.L. c. 269, Section 19. Copy of secs. 17--19; issuance to students and student groups, teams and organizations; report.*

Section 19. Each institution of secondary education and each public and private institution of postsecondary education shall issue to every student group, student team or student organization which is part of such institution or is recognized by the institution or permitted by the institution to use its name or facilities or is known by the institution to exist as an unaffiliated student group, student team or student organization, a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen; provided, however, that an institution's compliance with this section's requirements that an institution issue copies of this section and

sections seventeen and eighteen to unaffiliated student groups, teams or organizations shall not constitute evidence of the institution's recognition or endorsement of said unaffiliated student groups, teams or organizations.

Each such group, team or organization shall distribute a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen to each of its members, plebes, pledges or applicants for membership. It shall be the duty of each such group; team or organization, acting through its designated officer, to deliver annually, to the institution an attested acknowledgement stating that such group, team or organization has received a copy of this section and said sections seventeen and eighteen, that each of its members, plebes, pledges, or applicants has received a copy of sections seventeen and eighteen. and that such group, team or organization understands and agrees to comply with the provisions of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen.

Each institution of secondary education and each public or private institution of postsecondary education shall, at least annually, before or at the start of enrollment, deliver to each person who enrolls as a full time student in such institution a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen.

Each institution of secondary education and each public or private institution of postsecondary education shall file, at least annually, a report with the board of higher education and in the case of secondary institutions, the board of education, certifying that such institution has complied with its responsibility to inform student groups, teams or organizations and to notify each full time student enrolled by it of the provisions of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen and also certifying that said institution has adopted a disciplinary policy with regard to the organizers and participants of hazing, and that such policy has been set forth with appropriate emphasis in the student handbook or similar means of communicating the institution's policies to its students. The board of higher education and, in the case of secondary institutions, the board of education shall promulgate regulations governing the content and frequency of such reports, and shall forthwith report to the attorney general any such institution which fails to make such report. (Amended by 1987, 665.)

**Rule 2.4:** No Inappropriate Public Displays of Affection

Excel Academy is a professional environment and as such all students must conduct themselves as professionals. Therefore, students must show respect for themselves and others by restraining from inappropriate public displays of affection. These actions include, but are not limited to excessive kissing, hand



holding, extended hugging, and sitting on another student's lap. Any student found participating in these acts will be told to correct themselves and/or receive a PRIDE record deduction

**Rule 2.5:** No Harassment

Excel Academy Charter School 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 Charter School 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. Claims of harassment should be made to the Dean of Culture or Title IX coordinator within the High School's Network Office, Sarah Kantrowitz.

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.

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.

Harassment and Retaliation is 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 School.

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.

### **Expectation 3: Respect for the School Environment**

Students demonstrate respect for the school environment by respecting their personal property and the property of other students; by maintaining their textbooks and other materials; and by caring for the school grounds and property, especially by pitching in to keep them clean and neat.

#### **Rule 3.1: No Vandalism or Destruction of Property**

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) will be notified of any vandalism or destruction of property and a discipline hearing may be conducted by the student's dean. Suspension, repair of and/or restitution for the damage may be assigned. The Police Department may become involved in warranted cases.

*Massachusetts General Law Chapter 266, Sections 126, 126A and 126B* pertain to the defacement of natural scenery, personal property and tagging. *Section 126* prohibits the painting or in any manner affixing to public property or the property of another any words, device, trademark, ad or notice without the consent of the property owner. An offender may be punished by a fine of up to \$100.00 plus the cost of removing the defacement.

Any defacement within the limits of the public way is declared to be a public nuisance that may be removed by any person. For malicious painting, marking, scratching, etching, or otherwise marking, injuring, marring, defacing, or destroying the real or personal property of another, including but not limited to a wall, fence, building, sign, rock, monument, gravestone, or tablet, *Section 126A* provides for a penalty of up to three years in State Prison, a fine of \$1500.00 or triple the value of the property marked, the cost of removal, and one year suspension of the perpetrator's driver's license.

If a violation of these statutes is motivated by bigotry or bias, it may constitute a "hate crime" as defined by *General Laws Chapter 22C, Section 32*.

#### **Rule 3.2: No Trespassing on Private Property**

Students are prohibited from trespassing on any private property around Excel Academy Charter High School during school hours. Students should be aware that it is not uncommon for the owners of such property to call the police.

#### **Rule 3.4: Chromebook and Network Care**

Each student at Excel Academy Charter High School will receive a Chromebook to be used during their time as an Excel student. The Chromebook remains the property of Excel Academy Charter High School and

must be returned to the school if the student leaves the school prior to graduation. While expected wear and tear will be repaired under the device's warranty, extreme damage or loss of the device - whether intentional or not - must be paid at the expense of the student. If a student device, including school Chromebooks, tablets, and PC laptops, is reported as missing or stolen while in possession of a student, an administrator will lock the device, attempt to pinpoint its exact location, and administer consequences and charge the student the fee if deemed appropriate. We discourage students from bringing in personal laptops, tablets and computers. These can be harmful to the school's network, and Excel Academy Charter High School is not responsible for theft or damage of student's personal electronics. Additionally, students should refrain from streaming large videos and music requiring large amounts of network capacity as this slows and occasionally overwhelms the school's network. The Chromebook Policy is shared with families annually and includes more details on expected Chromebook use and charges.

#### **Expectation 4: Respect for Differences**

Diversity and tolerance is a key strength of any enduring community; students build community by demonstrating sensitivity to physical, cultural, gender, and differences in sexual orientation, and by refraining from the use of stereotypes, insults, or harassment.

#### **Rule 4.1: Foster an Inclusive and Non-Discriminatory Environment**

##### ***Inclusivity and Non-Discrimination for Students who Identify as LGBTQA+***

Excel Academy takes very seriously our responsibility to provide a safe learning environment for all students, including and especially those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or transitioning, questioning, intersex, or asexual.

To respect the privacy of all students, any student may request increased privacy via an alternative restroom or changing area.

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

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

If you would like to reach out to Excel about your child's gender identity, expression, orientation, or with any questions about this policy, please contact your Head of School or Excel's Managing Director of Academic Leadership and Diversity and Inclusion, Darren Grey.

## **D. Dress Code**

Excel Academy Charter High School has a dress code that offers students optionality while upholding professionalism. The dress code applies during all school days, unless otherwise approved by the school.

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

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

### **Enforcement of Policy**

There are three types of uniforms at Excel Academy Charter High School: (1) Core uniform, (2) Professional uniform, and (3) Fitness uniform. Students are required to wear the Fitness uniform on days when they have their Physical Education class. On all other days, students may choose to wear either the Core or Professional uniform.

It is the goal of the school to have a dress code which makes things easier for parents and students rather than more difficult. For that reason, we have made every effort to be clear about this policy and consistent in its enforcement. Parents who have questions or concerns should contact the school immediately and seek clarification.

Like all school policies, the dress code policy is strictly enforced. Although it may seem as if small exceptions should be no problem, we cannot allow deviations from this code. It is important that all students adhere to the same code. If an exception is made for one student, it would then have to apply to all students, and the code has changed. It is in the best interest of everyone if Excel enforces its policies completely. Please read the code and purchase school clothing accordingly. We have tried to make the policy clear and detailed in order to reduce ambiguity. Families who have concerns or questions should contact the school immediately.

When students enter the school building, they must be in the proper uniform. Students must be in uniform while on school grounds and may not change out of their uniform before dismissal. Students will only be allowed to attend their classes if they are in dress code; students out of uniform will be referred to the Dean of Culture office where the uniform issue will be rectified before they will be sent to class. The high school has developed a uniform policy and system that minimizes missed class time for uniform issues. Dressing inappropriately or being repeatedly out of dress code result in disciplinary consequences. Consequences may include loss of points, lunch detention, and in school suspension. Students who wear the wrong uniform for a given day (i.e. wearing the Fitness Uniform on a day on which they should wear the Core or Professional Uniform or vice versa) are considered out of uniform. Students who are frequently or egregiously out of uniform will be asked to call home so that a parent/guardian brings their uniform. If a parent/guardian cannot bring a uniform the student may be sent home to change.

## **Purchasing of Clothing**

Families may purchase all uniform items at the store of their choice, as long as they meet the specific guidelines. Examples of guidelines include,

- **Skirt:** must be all khaki, all black, or all navy
- **Fitness track pants:** must be purchased through Elite Embroidery
- **Fitness shorts:** must be solid navy blue

Excel Academy Charter High School has partnered with Elite Embroidery. While families are not required to purchase items from these vendors, except for track pants, they should assume that any item purchased through the school-approved vendors are compliant with the dress code, as long as the items are of appropriate size and are worn as intended.

Contact information of approved vendors and order forms and instructions will be distributed to families.

## **Uniform Guidelines**

### **1. Core Uniform**

- While not all pieces of clothing must have the Excel logo, at least one piece of clothing must have a visible Excel logo, whether the logo is embroidered on the clothing, sewn/ironed on as a patch, or pinned on with a lapel pin.
- As a part of the Core Uniform outfit, students are required to wear:
  - a choice of a bottom (pants, skirts, or shorts)
  - a top (polo shirt, Excel-sponsored t-shirt, Excel club or athletic gear)
  - a choice of shoes (dress shoes or sneakers)
  - socks
- Below are the guidelines for each item in the core uniform:

<b>CORE UNIFORM</b>		
<b>Clothing Item</b>	<b>Color</b>	<b>Guidelines</b>
Pants	Khaki Black Navy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Cotton blend</li><li>● Pants may not be extremely worn or faded</li><li>● Straight leg, jogger, or regular fit only (no low-rise, flare, bell-bottom, cargo, wide-legged, overly tight or baggy)</li><li>● No logo or pattern other than Excel logo or a small dress pant logo on rear pocket</li></ul>
Skirt	Khaki Black Navy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Solid color</li><li>● No shorter than 3 inches from the bottom of the knee</li><li>● Body con skirts are not permitted</li></ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● May not be worn with any color socks or tights other than black, navy, white, or nude</li> </ul>
Shorts	Khaki Black Navy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Cotton blend (no denim or corduroy)</li> <li>● No more than two side pockets and two back pockets (no cargo shorts)</li> <li>● No logo or pattern other than Excel logo or a small dress pant logo on rear pocket</li> <li>● No shorter than 3 inches from the bottom of the knee</li> <li>● May not be worn with any color socks other than black, navy, or white</li> </ul>
Polo shirt	Royal Blue Gray White Navy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Cotton blend</li> <li>● Short-sleeve or long-sleeve, with collars</li> <li>● 2 or 3 buttons</li> <li>● Solid color (no patterns or print)</li> <li>● No logos other than Excel logo</li> </ul>
T-Shirt	Excel T-Shirts <b>Only</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Must</b> be Excel-sponsored</li> <li>● Cotton blend</li> <li>● Short-sleeve or long-sleeve</li> </ul>
Sweater / cardigan	Navy Gray	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Buttoned or closed</li> <li>● Crewneck or V-neck</li> <li>● Solid color (no patterns or print)</li> <li>● No logo other than Excel logo</li> <li>● <b>Must be worn with Excel logo or pin</b></li> <li>● No distracting or unusually large buttons</li> </ul>
Dress shoes	Black Brown Navy Gray White	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● No color logos or metal, even on soles</li> </ul>
Sneakers	Any color	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Any combination of the acceptable colors listed is permitted</li> <li>● No offensive visuals or language</li> </ul>
Socks	Any color	No unprofessional patterns or print that includes offensive visuals or language

## 2 Professional Uniform

- While not all pieces of clothing must have the Excel logo, at least one piece of clothing must have a visible Excel logo, whether the logo is embroidered on the clothing, sewn/ironed on as a patch, or pinned on with a lapel pin.
- As a part of the Professional Uniform outfit, students are required to wear:
  - a choice of a bottom (pants or a skirt)
  - a top (dress shirt)
  - a choice of outerwear or accessory (blazer, sweater, cardigan, tie, or bow-tie)
  - a belt
  - a pair of dress shoes
  - socks
- Below are the guidelines for each item in the professional uniform:

PROFESSIONAL UNIFORM		
Clothing Item	Color	Guidelines
Pants	Khaki Black Navy	<i>(same as core uniform)</i>
Skirts*	Khaki Black Navy	<i>(same as core uniform)</i>
Shorts	Khaki Black Navy	<i>(same as core uniform)</i>
Dress shirt	White	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Must be worn with choice of a blazer, sweater, cardigan, tie, or bowtie (may not be worn alone)</li> <li>● Short-sleeve or long-sleeve, with collars and buttons for the full length of the shirt</li> <li>● Solid color (no patterns or print)</li> <li>● Shirts must be tucked into pants/skirt*</li> <li>● No logos other than Excel logo</li> </ul>
Sweater / cardigan	Navy Gray	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Must be worn with a polo or dress shirt underneath</li> <li>● Buttoned or closed</li> <li>● Crewneck or V-neck</li> <li>● Solid color (no patterns or print)</li> <li>● No logo other than Excel logo</li> <li>● No distracting or unusually large buttons</li> </ul>

Blazer	Navy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Solid color (no patterns or print)</li> <li>● No logo other than Excel logo</li> <li>● No distracting or unusually large buttons</li> </ul>
Tie / bow-tie	Navy (solid) Yellow/gold (solid) Navy/yellow (striped)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Must be solid or striped with navy and yellow (no other print or patterns)</li> <li>● No logo other than Excel logo</li> </ul>
Belt	Black Brown	<i>(same as core uniform)</i>
Dress shoes	Black Brown	<i>(same as core uniform)</i>
Socks	Any color	<i>(same as core uniform)</i>

### 3. Fitness Uniform

- Students should wear fitness uniforms only on days with Physical Education class.
- Students are required to wear:
  - a choice of a bottom (fitness shorts or fitness pants)
  - a top (gray t-shirt or Excel sponsored t-shirt)
  - socks
  - sneakers
- Below are the guidelines for each item in the fitness uniform:

FITNESS UNIFORM		
Clothing Item	Color	Guidelines
T-shirt	Gray Other Excel t-Shirt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Cotton blend</li> <li>● No logo other than Excel logo</li> <li>● May be worn with a long or short-sleeved plain undershirt that is white, navy or gray</li> </ul>
Fitness pants or leggings	Navy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Must be obtained from Elite Embroidery</li> <li>● Leggings must be purchased from Elite Embroidery and have the school logo</li> </ul>
Fitness shorts	Navy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● No shorter than 3 inches from the bottom of the knee</li> <li>● May not be worn with any color socks or tights other than black, navy, gray, or white</li> </ul>



Sneakers	Any (during fitness class)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any fitness shoes of choice may be work during instruction; students must change into core uniform shoes before returning to class</li> </ul>
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### Logos

- Students have three options for having at least one Excel logo on the outfit:
  - Purchasing embroidered clothing items from the school-approved vendors.
  - Purchasing and sewing a logo patch onto POLO SHIRTS ONLY.

### Other Dress Code Specifics

- Size:** Clothing must be sized appropriately to fit the student. Clothes may not be overly big or tight .
- Cleanliness:** Students may not wear clothing with significant stains (e.g. ink blots, food stains, etc.).
- Professionalism:** Shirts must be tucked in, shoelaces must be tied and Velcro must be fastened at all times. Tops worn for professional wear may not be overly sheer or revealing.
- Alterations:** Students may not alter their clothing in any way (e.g. writing/drawing, cutting, etc.). Pant cuffs may not be frayed.
- Headwear:** Once students enter the school building, wearing hats is not permitted.
- Outerwear:** Once students enter the school building, wearing outerwear (e.g., coats, parkas, jackets) that are not a part of the dress code is not permitted; however, school-approved sweaters, blazers, jackets, and sweatshirts are allowed.
- Accessories:** Students may not wear accessories that are unprofessional, distracting or potentially unsafe.
  - Bracelets may be worn as long as they do not distract or prevent students from completing their work. Please keep in mind that students are held accountable for any messaging worn on bracelets, shirts, hats etc. because wearing a statement will receive the same consequences as saying the statement aloud. Bracelets containing inappropriate content will carry consequences including but not limited to demerits, detentions, out of school suspensions, etc. Bracelets containing inappropriate content will be confiscated and returned to the child's parent or guardian at the end of the school day.
- Hoodies:** In general, students are not permitted to wear hoodies during academic hours. However, students who are members of sports teams, school clubs, honor's societies, or other affinity groups, may be permitted to wear their **school-approved** hoodie during academic hours. Hoodie design is subject to approval from the group's advisor as well as the Dean of Culture. Students are not permitted to wear their hood atop their head during academic hours. Students must have a uniform

top beneath their hoodies; wearing hoodies as t-shirts is not permitted. Permission to wear hoodies may be revoked at any time by the Dean of Culture Office.

### **Dress Code Exemptions/Dress Down Days**

Exemptions to the uniform dress code shall be permitted when the dress code requirements infringe upon a student's sincerely held religious belief. Exemptions from the dress code for religious reasons must be appropriate and approved by the School's Head of School or Dean of Culture.

On school organized dress down days students are encouraged to dress down in accordance with the theme for the dress down day; however, students are allowed to dress in preferred clothing as long as it meets the following expectations:

- No hats, beanies, or caps
- No ripped jeans
- No jeggings or leggings
- No clothing that is too tight
- No clothing with inappropriate images, references, or language
- No clothing that is too tight or revealing
- No crop tops
- No belt bags
- Shorts may not be shorter than 3 inches above the knee
- Any heels worn with professional wear may not exceed a height of 2 inches

### **Procedure for Dress Code Infractions**

Students who are out of uniform in the morning will be referred to the Dean's Office. Students will fill out a Uniform Reflection form and parents will be notified. If possible, parents will bring any missing items to the student. Students will automatically lose points from their PRIDE score and serve detention.

If the student is missing an item that is easily replaced- belt, pin, etc.:

- They may rent this item for a security deposit of \$2 or their cell phone.
- When students return the item, they will receive their money or phone back.
- If a student fails to return the item, they will not get their \$2 back. If they turned in their phone, they will continue to turn in their phone until they have returned the item or paid the fee.

If the student is out of uniform in a way that is not easily fixed- wrong uniform, shoes, etc.:

- The student will rent a "Uniform Under Repair" pin following the same security deposit procedure listed above.

Any time a student is out of uniform, they will receive a lunch detention that day and points lost from their PRIDE Score. Students who are consistently or egregiously out of uniform will have their parents called in or will be sent home to change and return to school in uniform.

To see sample images of appropriate uniform pieces, please see the 2019-20 Uniform Guidelines or contact the school.

### **E. Open and Off Campus**

At Excel Academy Charter High School we work hard to prepare all of our students for college and beyond. One of the ways in which we will prepare students for these challenges is by allowing 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students that have earned PRIDE release status to be eligible to go off campus for lunch. Additionally, select 10th grade students will be eligible for this privilege in the second half of their 10th grade year. Parents will be notified once off campus lunch begins for any grade level. Students who are late returning from off-campus lunch will lose that privilege for between a week and the remainder of the year, depending on the severity of the incident.

### **F. Disciplinary Reporting Policy**

Excel Academy Charter High School is an institutional member of the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) and supports the membership policies and ethical principles included in their Statement of Principles of Good Practice. When students are asked on college applications about disciplinary actions during their high school years, they are expected to answer truthfully and completely. Excel's policy regarding disclosure of disciplinary records is that we will notify colleges/schools that request such information of infractions resulting in high level suspension or expulsion.

Additionally Excel's policy, according to NACAC guidelines, is to “report any significant change in a candidate's academic status or qualifications, including conduct record, between the time of recommendation and graduation...” These include but are not limited to significant drop in grades, honor violations, suspension, and dismissal. Excel will notify colleges of such "changes of status" with a general letter after 14 days. Excel strongly encourages seniors to proactively send all institutions to which they have applied a letter of explanation prior to the letter sent by Excel. Seniors are encouraged to work with their college and career counselor when such events occur.

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## **SECTION 3: SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES FOR BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT AND DISCIPLINE**

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### **A. Student Performance Reports**

Excel Academy High School students are expected to live by the PRIDE values of **Purposefulness, Reflection, Inquisitive, Dedication, and Empathy**. Students will learn and uphold this community code which is connected to our PRIDE core values.

In order to help students abide by the PRIDE core values, each student in grade 9 and 10 will have a PRIDE Record. This will be compiled over the course of the week. Students can earn PRIDE points for particularly impressive behavior and they can lose PRIDE points for poor behavior. This Record is designed to encourage the habits necessary for students to be successful as college students and adult professionals.

At the beginning of each weekly cycle, students will start out with 99 PRIDE points. If, by the end of the week, a student has fewer than 80 points, they will serve 3 hours of detention over the course of the next week.

**Students may increase their PRIDE Score by exceeding expectations** during a given week by:

- Earning Merits from a staff member for a variety of reasons, including but not limited to:
  - Helping or supporting a classmate
  - Exemplary classroom behavior (taking initiative, showing courtesy, performing an act of kindness)
  - Outstanding effort or improvement in core academic subjects

**Students will decrease their PRIDE Score when they do not meet expectations.** Specifically, PRIDE Points are deducted when:

- Students do not meet behavioral expectations (e.g., they earn demerits or detentions)
- Students do not meet attendance expectations (e.g., they are absent, late, or dismissed early)

Students with **PRIDE** scores of less than 80 will receive Loss of Privileges for not meeting behavioral expectations and Attendance and Truancy Prevention for not meeting attendance expectations. These consequences must be served after school the following week with their Grade Level Dean. Students should complete homework or make up work during this time, work one-on-one with a teacher, participate in individual or small group tutoring, or make arrangements to otherwise work with a staff member.

## **B. Demerits**

If a student commits any of the following infractions, the student will receive a demerit. In addition to a demerit, the student may receive additional targeted, corrective consequences and/or lose other school privileges as determined by Excel Academy staff.

Infractions which may warrant a demerit include, but are not limited to:

- Being out of uniform (e.g., shirt is untucked)
- Arriving late to class
- Being unprepared for class
- Poor posture during class
- Making inappropriate noises during class
- Failing to follow directions or procedures of the class or school
- Talking out of turn
- Not walking with urgency/loitering
- Other behaviors deemed inappropriate by school staff

When a student is sent to the Dean of Culture, the following consequences are assigned:

- Automatically, ten PRIDE points are deducted from the student's PRIDE Record.
- Students are subject to the due process of suspension in cases where the infraction warrants school discipline, as laid out in this handbook.

## **C. Detention**

If a student commits any of the following infractions, the student may receive a lunch detention. If a student is required to serve detention, they will be notified by the school. Infractions which warrant a detention include, but are not limited to:

- Low-level disrespect towards a fellow student
- Low-level disrespect towards faculty, staff, or other members of the school community
- Low-level disrespect of school property
- Deliberately disrupting class
- Horseplay or engaging in physical contact that causes a disruption
- Failing to return forms by school-mandated deadlines (e.g., Progress Reports, Report Cards)

#### **D. Loss of Privileges**

If a student earns a weekly PRIDE Score of lower than 80 for their behavior, the student will receive a Loss of Privileges (LOP) for the following academic week. Students will be required to spend time after school the following week with their Grade Level Dean. During this time, students may complete homework, partner with a teacher, or participate in tutoring. Students will receive notice with their weekly Performance Reports on Friday. Excel will email a copy of the Performance Report to parents who have an email on file. Parents may follow up with their student to ask for a paper copy.

#### **E. Accountability and Reparations**

For students that skip school, or students that have perpetrated serious offenses like substance possession or sexual harassment, a restorative practice will be utilized as re-entry from their Out of School Suspension. This practice is known as Accountability and Reparations (A&R). During this time, students spend advisory, lunch, and study hall in the dean's office reflecting, making amends, and completing a necessary project to prepare to be successfully reintegrated with other students.

Students will report to the dean's office first thing in the morning. For any time served in the dean's office, the student must show completed tasks and appropriate behavior; failing to do so results in additional periods of A&R. Students may not attend reward events including field trips, dances etc. (exceptions may be made in extraordinary circumstances at the sole discretion of the school administration).

If a student is required to serve periods of A&R, they will be notified by the school. As with all suspension level behavior events, Excel will make reasonable efforts to reach families by phone.

#### **F. Suspension and Expulsion**

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

For suspension between one and ten days, the following procedures will apply:

##### **Student Notice**

When an infraction occurs, the student will be removed from class and sent to the Main Office, Dean of Culture's office, or another designated school location. Then, an administrator will inform the student of the following:

- The disciplinary offense

- Basis for the charge
- Potential consequences, including the potential length of the suspension
- The opportunity for the student to have a hearing with the Dean of Culture concerning the proposed suspension, including the opportunity to dispute the charges and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident and for the parent to attend the hearing; the date, time and location of the hearing
- The right of the student and the students' parent to interpreter services at the hearing if needed to participate.

**Efforts to Involve Parents**

The student's parent or guardian will be notified of the incident by a school administrator. Unless a student presents a danger or risk of substantial disruption to the educational process, the student and the parents shall receive oral and written notice and an opportunity to present her/his version of the relevant facts at a disciplinary meeting.

The administrator will make reasonable efforts to notify the parent of the opportunity to attend the disciplinary hearing. To conduct a disciplinary meeting without the parent present, the administrator will document reasonable efforts to include the parent. The administrator is presumed to have made reasonable efforts if the administrator has sent written notice and has documented at least two (2) attempts to contact the parent in the manner specified by the parent for emergency notification.

- The student and family shall receive written notice of the following in English and the primary language spoken in the student's home:
- the disciplinary offense;
- the basis for the charge;
- the potential consequences, including the potential length of the student's suspension;
- the opportunity for the student to have a disciplinary hearing with the administrator concerning the proposed suspension, including the opportunity to dispute the charges and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident, and for the parent to attend the hearing;
- the date, time, and location of the disciplinary hearing;
- the right of the student and the student's parent to interpreter services at the meeting if needed to participate

#### *Exception for Emergency Removal*

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

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

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

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

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

### Short-Term Suspension

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

- Gross disrespect of a fellow student including, but not limited to, bullying and harassment as described in our policies and procedures
- Gross disrespect of faculty, staff, visitor, volunteers, or school transportation provider
- Damaging, destroying, or stealing personal or school property or attempting to do so (including graffiti)
- Using or possessing tobacco products or electronic cigarettes.
- Disrupting In-Class Support through misbehavior
- Committing sexual, racial, or any form of harassment or intimidation as defined in our policies and procedures
- Using abusive, vulgar or profane language
- Making verbal or physical threats, empty or otherwise
- Setting off false alarms
- Gambling
- Serious forgery, plagiarism, or cheating
- Leaving school grounds without permission
- Being in a restricted zone for an extended amount of time.
- Being found in any of the restricted areas of the school, or outside the school (including the park.
- Being charged with a felony (see M.G.L. c. 71, §37H1/2 in *Appendix*)
- Being asked to report to the Dean of Culture' office during class three times in a given week
- Repeated offenses for which the student has already earned In-Class Suspension

### Format of Disciplinary Hearing:

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

### Decision:

The administrator will provide written notice to the student and parent of his/her determination and the reasons for it, and, if the student is suspended, the type and duration of suspension. The notice of determination may be in the form of an update to the original written notice of hearing.



The administrator will provide the family with opportunities for the student to make up assignments and other such school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of removal.

Prior to the student's re-entry to the Excel Academy community following an Out of School suspension, the following may be requested:

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

Students are responsible for completing academic work missed during the suspension. This work will be available in a folder for pick-up by a family member at the school daily between 3:35-4:00pm. The completed work will receive full credit, if submitted by deadlines in accordance with the school make-up policy. If a student does not complete this work, the student may face standard academic consequences (e.g., no academic credit).

### **Long-term Suspension**

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

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

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

**Decision:** Based on the evidence, the Head of School will determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense, and, if so, after considering mitigating circumstances and alternatives to long-term suspension, what remedy or consequence will be imposed, in place of or in addition to a long-term

suspension. The administrator will send the written determination to the student and parent by hand-delivery, certified mail, first-class mail, email to an address provided by the parent for school communications, or any other method of delivery agreed to by the school and the parent. If the administrator decides to suspend the student on a long-term basis, the written determination will:

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

No long-term suspension will extend beyond the end of the school year in which such suspension is imposed.

All decisions made by the Head of School regarding long-term suspension of a student for any reason other than the four outlined in M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H and 37H1/2 will be in writing and are subject to review by the Chief Executive Officer, if requested.

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

- Possessing a dangerous weapon including but not limited to a knife or a gun
- Possessing a controlled substance as defined in M.G.L. c. 94C including but not limited to illegal drugs (e.g. marijuana) and prescription medication
- Assaulting educational personnel
- Being convicted of a felony or being found guilty of committing a felony either by admission or adjudication.

In addition, the Head of School has the authority to assign a long-term out-of-school suspension of students for up to 90 days for behavioral infractions including the following:

- Repeated, deliberate and fundamental disregard of school policies and procedures
- Possession, use, or distribution of alcohol
- Assault (i.e. threatening assault, hitting, kicking, punching, slapping, pushing) against fellow students or other members of the school community

- Theft or destruction (or attempted theft or destruction) of personal or school property including arson
- Harassment, bullying and violations of civil rights, as delineated in the Excel Academy Student and Family Handbook

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

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

### **Expulsion**

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

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

\*This includes not only knives and guns, explosive devices and realistic replicas of such weapons/devices, but also other objects used to assault another person or to otherwise create a dangerous situation, such as a baseball bat, a pair of scissors, matches or a lighter. While such objects would not always constitute “dangerous weapons”, administrators and educational professionals will review the circumstances of each case and make a reasonable determination about whether a particular object in a student’s possession constitutes a dangerous weapon in the school setting. Any illegal weapon will be turned over to the Police Department.

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

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

### **PROCEDURES APPLICABLE TO CONDUCT COVERED BY M.G.L. C. 71, §37H AND 37H ½**

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

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

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

#### Appeal to the CEO

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

The following apply:

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

arrange for an audio recording of the hearing, a copy of which will be provided to the student or parent upon request. The CEO will inform all participants before the hearing that an audio record will be made of the hearing and a copy will be provided to the student and parent upon request.

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

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

## **G. Search and Seizure**

In order to maintain the security of all its students, Excel Academy Charter School staff reserve the right to conduct searches of its students and their property when there is reasonable suspicion that the student has violated the law or a school rule. If searches are conducted, the school will ensure that the privacy of the students is respected to the extent possible, and that students and their families are informed of the circumstances surrounding and results of the search. School lockers, which are assigned to students for their use, remain the property of Excel Academy Charter School, and students should, therefore, have no expectation of privacy in these areas.

## **H. Discipline of Students with Special Needs**

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

1. A suspension of longer than 10 consecutive days or a series of suspensions that are shorter than 10 consecutive days but constitute a pattern are considered to represent a change in placement for the student.
2. When a suspension occurs 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 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 Team determines that the behavior is NOT a manifestation of the disability, then the suspension or expulsion may go forward consistent with policies applied to any student without disabilities, except that Excel will still offer:
  - a. Access to the school's Educational Service Plan;
  - b. Services to enable the student, although in another setting, to continue to participate in the general education curriculum and to progress toward IEP goals; and
  - c. As appropriate, a functional behavioral assessment and behavioral intervention services and modifications, to address the behavior so that it does not recur.

4. Regardless of the manifestation determination, Excel may place the student in an interim alternative educational setting (as determined by the Team) for up to 45 school days under the following circumstances:
  - a. on its own authority if the behavior involves weapons or illegal drugs or another controlled substance or the infliction of serious bodily injury on another person while at school or a school function or, considered case by case, unique circumstances; or
  - b. on the authority of a hearing officer if the officer orders the alternative placement after Excel provides evidence that the student is "substantially likely" to injure him/herself or others. In either case, the interim alternative education setting enables the student to continue in the general curriculum and to continue receiving services identified on the IEP, and provides services to address the problem behavior.
5. If the Head of School, the parent, and other relevant members of the Team determine that the behavior IS a manifestation of the disability, then the Team completes a functional behavioral assessment and behavioral intervention plan if it has not already done so. If a behavioral intervention plan is already in place, the Team reviews it and modifies it, as necessary, to address the behavior. Except when they have been placed in an interim alternative educational setting in accordance with part 4, the student returns to the original placement unless the parents and Excel agree otherwise or the hearing officer orders a new placement. Not later than the date of the decision to take disciplinary action, the school district notifies the parents of that decision and provides them with the written notice of procedural safeguards. If the parent chooses to appeal or Excel requests a hearing because it believes that maintaining the student's current placement is substantially likely to result in injury to the student or others, the student remains in the disciplinary placement, if any, until the decision of the hearing officer or the end of the time period for the disciplinary action, whichever comes first, unless the parent and Excel agree otherwise.
6. If, prior to the disciplinary action, Excel had knowledge that the student may be a student with a disability, then Excel makes all protections available to the student until and unless the student is subsequently determined not to be eligible. Excel may be considered to have prior knowledge if:
  - a. The parent had expressed concern in writing; or
  - b. The parent had requested an evaluation; or
  - c. 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 they receive all procedural protections subsequent to the finding of eligibility.

## **I. Grievance Procedures**

### *Where To File a Complaint*

Any student or employee who believes that Excel has discriminated against or harassed her/him because of her/his race, color, national origin, sex, disability, homelessness or age in admission to, access to, treatment in, or employment in its services, programs, and activities may file a complaint with the Principal or Head

of School. If the Principal or Head of School is the person who is alleged to have caused the discrimination or harassment, the complaint may be filed with the Chief Executive Officer.

#### Complaints of Harassment By Peers

In the event the complaint consists of a student's allegation that another student is harassing him/her based upon the above-referenced classifications, the student may, in the alternative, file the complaint with the complaint manager (hereinafter referred to as "Building Complaint Manager"). The name of the Building Complaint Manager(s) is kept at the school and may be obtained from the main office.

#### Complaints of Discrimination Based on Disability

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

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

#### Contents of Complaints and Timelines for Filing

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

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

#### Investigation and Resolution of the Complaint

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

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

Within twenty (20) school days of receiving the complaint, the Grievance Administrator will meet with the grievant and/or her/his representative to review the information gathered and, if applicable, to propose a

resolution designed to stop the discrimination or harassment and to correct its effect. Within ten (10) school days of the meeting with the grievant and/or representative, the Grievance Administrator will provide written disposition of the complaint to the grievant and/or representative and to the respondent(s).

Notwithstanding the above, it is understood that in the event a resolution contemplated by the 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 time lines 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 they have filed a complaint under this Grievance Procedure is strictly prohibited. Acts of retaliation may result in disciplinary action, up to and including suspension or expulsion/discharge.

#### Appeals

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

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

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

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

1. Within 180 calendar days of alleged discrimination or harassment, or
2. Within 60 calendar days of receiving notice of Excel Academy Charter School's final disposition on a complaint filed through Excel Academy Charter School, or



3. Within 60 calendar days of receiving a final decision by the Massachusetts Department of Education, Bureau of Special Education Appeals, or
4. Instead of filing a complaint with Excel Academy.

## **J. Complaint Procedures**

If an individual believes that the school has violated any provision of the charter school law and regulations, they may file a formal complaint with the Board of Trustees. After receiving the complaint, the Board must send a written response to the individual within 30 days. 603 CMR 1.10(2). If the Board does not address the complaint to the individual's satisfaction, the individual may submit the complaint to the Commissioner of Education. 603 CMR 1.10(4). A parent/guardian may file a complaint with DOE at any time if they believe that the school has violated any federal or state law or regulation. 603 CMR 1.10(6).

## **SECTION 4: STUDENT ACTIVITIES AND EXTRACURRICULARS**

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### **A. Athletics and Performing Arts**

The focus of Excel Academy is on preparing students to succeed in college. Accordingly, academic performance will be given priority over all other competing interests. Students on academic probation will not be allowed to participate in any extracurricular activities. Coaches, advisors, and peer participants are encouraged to take an active interest in the academic progress of all students.

Furthermore, since it is a privilege to represent Excel Academy Charter High School in any performance or competition, student athletes/performers will be held to higher standards for their conduct. This includes all activities before, during, and after the actual performance or competition. Excel Academy Charter High School student-athletes/performers are expected to:

1. Display dedication to hard work in practice.
2. Display good sportsmanship in defeat, as well as in victory.
3. Display respect for officials and other competitors.
4. Display a high level of discipline and self-control at all times, even when frustrated, disappointed or injured.

If a student athlete/performer does not attend school on the day of the competition, that individual will not be allowed to participate.

### **B. Concussion Policy**

Our sports-related concussion policies and procedures are updated annually and are listed in the Athletic Handbook. Copies of the Athletic Handbook are provided to all student athletes and can be requested by contacting the Athletic Director.

### **C. Field trips and end of year**

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

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

A student may be considered ineligible for a trip for reasons including but not limited to: low Performance Report average, not returning the school-sponsored trip permission form, involvement in a disciplinary incident on a prior trip, poor school attendance, misbehavior or severe lack of academic effort in the days prior to the trip, etc. Students who are considered ineligible for attending a trip will be required to attend school that day.

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

## **SECTION 5: GENERAL SCHOOL INFORMATION**

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### **A. Hours of Operation**

In the pursuit of excellence, Excel Academy has an extended school day and school year. This gives students more time for academic growth and non-academic enrichment. It also gives students the time and support needed to make great strides in realizing their potential, both academically and personally.

Mondays through Wednesdays, the regular school day lasts from 8:30 am until 3:45 pm.

On Thursdays, the regular school day lasts from 8:30 am until 2:30pm. On Fridays, the regular school day lasts from 8:30 am until 1:50 pm.

The school building will open to students at 7:00 am Monday-Friday – The school building will close to students at 4:45 pm Monday - Wednesday, and immediately after school on Thursday and Friday.

#### *Incident Weather Closings:*

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

### **B. Dismissal**

Excel Academy Charter High School conducts a wide array of after-school activities – clubs, sport teams, study hall, tutoring, and detention. Students are encouraged to stay after school if they are registered for and involved in a structured, supervised, and sanctioned school activity. Excel Charter High School believes in the value of providing students a safe space. So, students may remain in the cafeteria until 4:35 pm. Students may lose this privilege if they act unprofessionally during that time.

**C. School Breakfast, Lunch, and Afternoon Snack**

The school participates in the National School Breakfast and Lunch Program. All students at Excel Academy Charter Schools are eligible for free breakfast and lunch under the Community Eligibility Provision. There are no forms to complete, and all students can take breakfast and/or lunch daily at no charge.

All meals served by the school are free of major allergens, including nuts. Families of students who have particular dietary restrictions should alert the school’s Food Service Manager and nurse as early in the school year as possible. Excel will work with the vendor to accommodate dietary restrictions where possible.

**D. Transportation**

**T Pass Information and Policy**

All Excel Academy Charter High School students are provided T passes.

**Types of Passes**

Type of Pass	Description
BPS M7	A monthly pass that BPS (Boston Public Schools) provides for free to transportation-eligible students. These are assigned to students who live in the city of Boston and provided by Boston Public Schools
Excel M7	A monthly pass that Excel provides for free transportation to students who live outside of Boston.

**Replacement Pass**

The student is responsible to keep their pass secure and undamaged. If any of the following situations occurs, the student will have to take the noted action steps:

Situation	Action Steps

Lost/Damaged Pass BPS M7  (Boston resident)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Fill out the “T-Pass Request Form” in the main office</li> </ol>
Lost/Damaged Pass Excel M7  (non-Boston resident)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Fill out the “T-Pass Request Form” in the main office</li> <li>2. Turn in form and pay a fee for the new pass. New pass will not be given until the fee is paid. The fee is as follows: Fees will be in increments of \$5 example: First replacement \$5, second replacement \$10, third replacement \$15 and so on.</li> </ol>
Non-working Pass	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Fill out the “T-Pass Request Form” in the main office</li> <li>2. Turn in the form and attach non-working pass. Non-working passes MUST be turned in with a form, otherwise we will assume it was lost, and students will have to pay the fee.</li> </ol>
New Address	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Fill out the “T-Pass Request Form” in the main office</li> <li>2. Turn in form and attach a copy of a proof of residence such as a utility bill or cellphone bill. It must be dated within the past 30 days. New passes will not be ordered until proof of residence is turned in.</li> </ol>

### **Wait Time for New Pass**

The passes are requested from the MBTA or Boston Public Schools. It can take up to a month for the passes to be delivered. During this wait time, the student is responsible to get to and from school on their own. Temporary passes are not available.

### **E. Fire Alarm**

Any time the fire alarm goes off (including regularly scheduled fire drills), students must obey the following procedures:

- \* Listen for the fire alarm
- \* Walk quietly to the designated exit and line up outside

### **F. Visitor Policy**

Parents are welcome and encouraged to visit Excel Academy at any time during the school year. All visitors are required to report to the Main Office upon entering the building. Upon reporting to the Main Office, each visitor will sign in and receive a visitor’s badge or sticker. Any visitor who does not report to the office or is found in the building without authorization will be asked to leave immediately.

In case of an emergency at home, parents or guardians should contact the Main Office either by phone or in person. Under no circumstances should parents or guardians contact students in their classrooms or attempt to withdraw students from the building without notifying and receiving permission from staff members in the Main Office.

## **G. Contact Us**

Excel Academy High School  
401 Bremen St.  
Boston, MA 02128  
Tel: 617.326.3574

We are committed to establishing and maintaining an open and respectful line of communication between families and Excel Academy staff, each of whom has their own phone extension and e-mail address. Families should contact staff by telephone or e-mail and understand that we will try and return calls within 24 hours in the event that a message is left. Families will also have an opportunity to meet with staff during the three scheduled parent-teacher conference days. In addition, meetings can be arranged at any time by appointment. If a parent needs to see a staff person more immediately, the parent should report directly to the Main Office, which will facilitate the soonest possible contact.

## **H. Health Office**

### ***Health Office***

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

### ***Health Exams and Screenings***

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

- Vision Screening: Grades 5, 7, 9 & 10
- Hearing Screening: Grade 6 & 10
- Height, Weight and BMI screening: Grade 7 & 10
- Postural Screening: Grades 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9

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

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

### ***Medical Records***

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

- *Medical Requirements Checklist.* This form contains records showing that the student has: 1) had a physical exam in the twelve months prior to the start of the school year; 2) up-to-date immunizations; and 3) permission to receive screenings for vision, hearing, and scoliosis.
- *Health Information Form.* This form provides important information about a student's emergency contacts, health care providers, and insurance. Most importantly, it gives the school permission to

initiate emergency medical treatment in the event that a parent or guardian cannot be reached.

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

### ***Medication***

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

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

The medication dispensation authorization form requirement applies to all medication, including Tylenol and ibuprofen. If a student needs to take Tylenol or ibuprofen during the school day, the student must have on file the authorization signed by his or her physician and a parent or guardian, giving the school permission to administer the medication during the school year. The medication dispensation authorization form requirement also applies to asthma inhalers, which students should keep in their backpacks. If a student needs to use his/her asthma inhaler during the school day, they 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. A child must be fever free for 24 hours without taking medication before returning to school. Likewise, no student should return to school if vomiting or diarrhea has taken place in less than 24 hours.

### ***Health Education, Sex Education, and Sexuality Education Policy***

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

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

### ***Emergency Protocol***

In an emergency or life-threatening situation, the procedure is as follows:

1. Parent or guardian is contacted.
2. Local EMTs are called via 911, and the student will be taken to a local hospital emergency room for further assessment and treatment. Because of the possibility of emergencies, all students must have current, completed emergency notification forms on file.

### ***Other Health Issues***

1. 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.
2. If the student’s oral temperature is over 100.0 F, they must stay at home until his/her temperature has been normal (98.6 F) for at least twenty-four (24) hours without the aid of medicine. Students who return to school while they are ill contribute to the proliferation of illness during the school year. If students return to school with a fever or develop an oral temperature of 100.0 F during the school day, the school nurse will send these students home after evaluation.
3. 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.
4. 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.

## **I. Student Records**

### ***Student Records - (General)***

Federal and state laws provide parents and eligible students (those who are age 14 or older) with rights of confidentiality, access, and amendment relating to student records. Copies of the Massachusetts Student Records Regulations (“Regulations”), detailing these rights, are available in office of the Principal and Main Office. The following is a general overview of the provisions in the Regulations.



### Access and Amendment

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.

### Appeals (603 CMR 23.09)

If any decision made by the principal or his/her designee regarding student records is not wholly or partially satisfactory to the student or parent, they have the right to appeal the CEO of Excel. Within two weeks of the appeal, the CEO will be notified of the appeal, review the issues presented, and compose a written decision to the affected student or parent that states the reasons for the decision. If this does not satisfy the affected student or parents, they may present their case to the Board of Directors of Excel Academy Charter Schools.

### Student Records - (Access by non-custodial parents)

Massachusetts General Laws c. 71, §34H (“Section 34H”) governs access to student records by a parent who does not have physical custody of a student. Generally, Section 37H requires a non-custodial parent seeking access to submit a written request and other documentation to the principal on an annual basis. Parents who have questions or concerns regarding access to records by non-custodial parents are requested to contact the Principal for detailed information regarding the procedures that must be followed under Section 34H.

### Confidentiality

Release of student records generally requires consent of the parent or eligible student. However, the Regulations provide 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.

In addition, Excel has a practice of releasing directory information, consisting of the following: the student's name, address, telephone listing, date and place of birth, major field of study, dates of attendance, weight and height of the members of athletic teams, class, participation in recognized activities and sports, honors and awards, and post-high school plans. In the event a parent or eligible student objects to the release of any of the above information, the parent/eligible student may state that objection in writing to the Principal. Absent receipt of a written objection by the third week of school, the directory information will be released without further notice or consent.

Please see the Regulations for a description of other circumstances in which student records may be released without the consent of a parent or eligible student.

Parents and eligible students have a right to file a complaint concerning alleged failures by a school district to comply with the requirements of the student records laws and regulations with the Massachusetts Department of Education, 350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148. Complaints relative to federal statutes and regulations governing student records may be filed with the Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue SW, Washington DC.

## **J. Nondiscrimination**

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

## APPENDIX A

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### Chapter 71, Section 37H

*(a) Any student who is found on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of a dangerous weapon, including, but not limited to, a gun or a knife; or a controlled substance as defined in chapter ninety-four C, including, but not limited to, marijuana, cocaine, and heroin, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the principal.*

*(b) Any student who assaults a principal, assistant principal, teacher, teacher's aide or other educational staff on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the principal.*

*(c) Any student who is charged with a violation of either paragraph (a) or (b) shall be notified in writing of an opportunity for a hearing; provided, however, that the student may have representation, along with the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses at said hearing before the principal.*

*After said bearing, a principal may, in his discretion, decide to suspend rather than expel a student who has been determined by the principal to have violated either paragraph (a) or (b).*

*(d) Any student who has been expelled from a school district pursuant to these provisions shall have the right to appeal to the superintendent. The expelled student shall have ten days from the date of the expulsion in which to notify the superintendent of his appeal. The student has the right to counsel at a hearing before the superintendent. The subject matter of the appeal shall not be limited solely to a factual determination of whether the student has violated any provisions of this section.*

*(e) Any school district that suspends or expels a student under this section shall continue to provide educational services to the student during the period of suspension or expulsion, under section 21 of chapter 76. If the student moves to another district during the period of suspension or expulsion, the new district of residence shall either admit the student to its schools or provide educational services to the student in an education service plan, under section 21 of chapter 76.*

*(f) Districts shall report to the department of elementary and secondary education the specific reasons for all suspensions and expulsions, regardless of duration or type, in a manner and form established by the commissioner. The department of elementary and secondary education shall use its existing data collection tools to obtain this information from districts and shall modify those tools, as necessary, to obtain the information. On an annual basis, the department of elementary and secondary education shall make district level de-identified data and analysis, including the total number of days each student is excluded during the school year, available to the public online in a machine readable format. This report shall include district level data disaggregated by student status and categories established by the commissioner.*

*(g) Under the regulations promulgated by the department, for each school that suspends or expels a significant number of students for more than 10 cumulative days in a school year, the commissioner shall investigate and, as appropriate, shall recommend models that incorporate intermediary steps prior to the use of suspension or expulsion. The results of the analysis shall be publicly reported at the school district level.*

## **Chapter 71, Section 37H ½**

*(1) Upon the issuance of a criminal complaint charging a student with a felony or upon the issuance of a felony delinquency complaint against a student, the principal or headmaster of a school in which the student is enrolled may suspend such student for a period of time determined appropriate by said principal or headmaster if said principal or headmaster determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school. The student shall receive written notification of the charges and the reasons for such suspension prior to such suspension taking effect. The student shall also receive written notification of his right to appeal and the process for appealing such suspension; provided, however, that such suspension shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing conducted by the superintendent.*

*The student shall have the right to appeal the suspension to the superintendent. The student shall notify the superintendent in writing of his request for an appeal no later than five calendar days following the effective date of the suspension. The superintendent shall hold a hearing with the student and the student's parent or guardian within three calendar days of the student's request for an appeal. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony on his behalf, and shall have the right to counsel. The superintendent shall have the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the principal or headmaster, including recommending an alternate educational program for the student. The superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal within five calendar days of the hearing. Such decision shall be the final decision of the city, town or regional school district with regard to the suspension.*

*(2) Upon a student being convicted of a felony or upon an adjudication or admission in court of guilt with respect to such a felony or felony delinquency, the principal or headmaster of a school in which the student is enrolled may expel said student if such principal or headmaster determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school. The student shall receive written notification of the charges and reasons for such expulsion prior*

*to such expulsion taking effect. The student shall also receive written notification of his right to appeal and the process for appealing such expulsion; provided, however, that the expulsion shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing conducted by the superintendent.*

*The student shall have the right to appeal the expulsion to the superintendent. The student shall notify the superintendent, in writing, of his request for an appeal no later than five calendar days following the effective date of the expulsion. The superintendent shall hold a hearing with the student and the student's parent or guardian within three calendar days of the expulsion. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony on his behalf, and shall have the right to counsel. The superintendent shall have the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the principal or headmaster, including recommending an alternate educational program for the student. The superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal within five calendar days of the hearing. Such decision shall be the final decision of the city, town or regional school district with regard to the expulsion.*

*Any school district that suspends or expels a student under this section shall continue to provide educational services to the student during the period of suspension or expulsion, under section 21 of chapter 76. If the student moves to another district during the period of suspension or expulsion, the new district of residence shall either admit the student to its schools or provide educational services to the student under an education service plan, under section 21 of chapter 76.*

### **Chapter 71, Section 37H <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>**

*(a) This section shall govern the suspension and expulsion of students enrolled in a public school in the commonwealth who are not charged with a violation of subsections (a) or (b) of section 37H or with a felony under section 37H1/2.*

*(b) Any principal, headmaster, superintendent or other person acting as a decision-maker at a student meeting or hearing, when deciding the consequences for the student, shall exercise discretion; consider ways to re-engage the student in the learning process; and avoid using expulsion as a consequence until other remedies and consequences have been employed.*

*(c) For any suspension or expulsion under this section, the principal or headmaster of a school in which the student is enrolled, or a designee, shall provide, to the student and to the parent or guardian of the student, notice of the charges and the reason for the suspension or expulsion in English and in the primary language spoken in the home of the student. The student shall receive the written notification and shall have the opportunity to meet with the principal or headmaster, or a designee, to discuss the charges and reasons for the suspension or expulsion prior to the suspension or expulsion taking effect. The principal or headmaster, or a designee, shall ensure that the parent or guardian of the student is included in the meeting, provided that such meeting may take place without the parent or guardian only if the principal or headmaster, or a designee, can document reasonable efforts to include the parent or guardian in that meeting. The department shall promulgate rules and regulations that address a principal's duties under this subsection and procedures for including parents in student exclusion meetings, hearings or interviews under this subsection.*

*(d) If a decision is made to suspend or expel the student after the meeting, the principal or headmaster, or a designee, shall update the notification for the suspension or expulsion to reflect the meeting with the student. If a student has been suspended or expelled for more than 10 school days for a single infraction or for more than 10 school days cumulatively for multiple infractions in any school year, the student and the parent or guardian of the student shall also receive, at the time of the suspension or expulsion decision, written notification of a right to appeal and the process for appealing the suspension or expulsion in English and in the primary language spoken in the home of the student; provided, however, that the suspension or expulsion shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing. The principal or headmaster or a designee shall notify the superintendent in writing, including, but not limited to, by electronic means, of any out-of-school suspension imposed on a student enrolled in kindergarten through grade 3 prior to such suspension taking effect. That notification shall describe the student's alleged misconduct and the reasons for*

*suspending the student out-of-school. For the purposes of this section, the term “out-of-school suspension” shall mean a disciplinary action imposed by school officials to remove a student from participation in school activities for 1 day or more.*

*(e) A student who has been suspended or expelled from school for more than 10 school days for a single infraction or for more than 10 school days cumulatively for multiple infractions in any school year shall have the right to appeal the suspension or expulsion to the superintendent. The student or a parent or guardian of the student shall notify the superintendent in writing of a request for an appeal not later than 5 calendar days following the effective date of the suspension or expulsion; provided, that a student and a parent or guardian of the student may request, and if so requested, shall be granted an extension of up to 7 calendar days. The superintendent or a designee shall hold a hearing with the student and the parent or guardian of the student within 3 school days of the student’s request for an appeal; provided that a student or a parent or guardian of the student may request and, if so requested, shall be granted an extension of up to 7 calendar days; provided further, that the superintendent, or a designee, may proceed with a hearing without a parent or guardian of the student if the superintendent, or a designee, makes a good faith effort to include the parent or guardian. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony, cross-examine witnesses and shall have the right to counsel. The superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal in writing within 5 calendar days of the hearing. That decision shall be the final decision of the school district with regard to the suspension or expulsion.*

*(f) No student shall be suspended or expelled from a school or school district for a time period that exceeds 90 school days, beginning the first day the student is removed from an assigned school building.*

In regard to language used in M.G.L. c.71, §37H or M.G.L. c.71, §37H1/2 or M.G.L. c.71, §37H3/4, students and families should note that Excel Academy Charter School should be considered both the school and the school district. The Chief Executive Officer should be considered the Superintendent and the Head of School should be considered the Principal.

## **Appendix B: Allergy Policy**

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### ***Purpose and Goal***

Excel Academy Charter Schools aims to reduce the risk of exposure to food allergens, educate our school community, and maintain a protocol for responding to student needs.

The goal of the LTA Protocol and Guidelines is to:

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

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

## ***Background***

Allergic food reactions can span a wide range of severity of symptoms. The most severe and potentially life-threatening reaction is anaphylaxis[1]. 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 Charter Schools***

- A. Create a plan for addressing life-threatening food based allergic reactions. Train staff regarding:
  - a. The most common allergens that cause life threatening allergies
  - b. Ways to recognize symptoms of an allergic reaction
  - c. Steps to take in the event of an allergic reaction
  - d. 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. 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:
  - a. Wash hands before and after handling food.
  - b. Communicate clearly as soon as s/he feels a reaction is starting.
  - c. Understand their allergies and how to prevent and recognize potentially unsafe situations.
  - d. Take as much responsibility for his/her own safety as is feasible.
  - e. Carry his/her own Epinephrine Auto-injector when appropriate.
  - f. 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.

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[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.

## **Appendix C: Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan**

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### ***I. Leadership***

#### **Priority Statement:**

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

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



and retaliation. The Head of School at each campus is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Plan. All teachers and staff are responsible for ensuring consistent implementation of anti – bullying and anti-harassment protocols.

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

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

This Plan is based on Excel Academy Charter Schools’ Honor Code, which was developed by students with the help of staff. This Code was created for students by students to model how they will interact with others in their community.

*The Excel Academy Charter School Honor Code*

*You’re not born a winner or a loser; you’re born a chooser.[1]*

At Excel Academy we are able to overcome any obstacles in our path because we are prepared, respectful, engaged, and professional. We believe in ourselves as individuals, and as a community we believe in each other. We help all classmates who need it, without judgment. We have the courage to tell the truth, to admit our own wrongdoing, and to hold our peers accountable for their mistakes. We understand that all our choices come with consequences. We do not tolerate lying, cheating, harassment, racism, discrimination, or any other forms of disrespect, either inside or outside the school. We strive to do what is right because it’s the right thing to do, without hoping for a reward or fearing a consequence. Excel Academy Charter Schools is a big family, and we maintain a safe and honorable community.

*For the strength of the pack is the wolf, and the strength of the wolf is the pack.[2]*

### **Assessing Needs and Resources**

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

At least once every four years beginning with 2015-16 school year, the district will administer a Department of Elementary and Secondary Education-developed student survey to assess school climate and the

prevalence, nature, and severity of bullying in our schools. Additionally, the school or district will annually report bullying incident data to the Department.

### **Planning and Oversight:**

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

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

## ***II. Training and Professional Development***

### **Annual Staff Training**

Excel Academy campuses hold approximately two weeks of annual, required staff training in August each year, which will include training in all Excel procedures and policies including the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan and its implementation. This training will include staff duties under the Plan, an overview of the steps that the Head of School or designee will follow upon receipt of a report of bullying or retaliation, and an overview of the bullying prevention curricula to be offered at all grades throughout the school. Additionally, during "Grade Level Team" meetings teacher cohorts will work together to plan best practices for teaching and reviewing behavior expectations and for building positive and respectful relationships with and among students. Staff members hired after the start of the school year will receive the training as part of their induction.

### **Ongoing Professional Development**

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

- developmentally (or age-) appropriate strategies to prevent bullying;
- developmentally (or age-) appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents;
- information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among an aggressor, target, and witnesses to the bullying;
- research findings on bullying, including information about specific categories of students who have been shown to be particularly at risk for bullying in the school environment;
- information on the incidence and nature of cyberbullying;

- Internet safety issues as they relate to cyberbullying; and

Professional development will also address ways to prevent and respond to bullying or retaliation for students with disabilities that must be considered when developing students' Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). This will include a particular focus on the needs of students with autism or students whose disability affects social skills development.

### **Written notice to staff**

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

## ***III. Access to Resources and Services***

### **Identifying Resources**

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

### **Counseling and Other Services**

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

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

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

One of the most important resources we have in creating a positive and healthy school climate is the development of strong relationships between students and staff. Excel's Homeroom and Advisory structures are specifically designed to foster these positive relationships. Teachers implement team-building and relationship-building lessons throughout the year during Homeroom, and regularly lead student-lead

reflection during Homeroom on school values and decision-making to promote a healthy and positive team environment. All students are assigned an Advisor who is charged with developing a relationship with the student, overseeing his/her overall academic and social-emotional progress in school, and maintaining a line of personal communication with the student's parents/guardians. Advisor caseloads are typically no more than ten students.

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

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

#### ***IV. Academic and Non-Academic Activities***

##### **Specific Bullying Prevention Approaches**

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

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

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

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

##### **General Teaching Approaches that Support Bullying Prevention Efforts**

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

- Setting clear expectations for students and establishing school and class routines;

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

## ***V. Policies and Procedures for Reporting and Responding to Bullying and Retaliation***

### **Reporting Bullying or Retaliation**

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

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

Information on reporting procedures will be made available each year to students, families, and staff via the Employee Handbook and the Student and Family Handbook. A student who knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying or retaliation shall be subject to disciplinary action.

All community members are reminded that bullying and harassment are strictly prohibited by Excel's Code of Conduct, noting that Code applies to actions taken in the following areas:

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

### **Reporting by Students, Parents, Guardians, and Others**

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

## **Reporting by Staff**

When a staff member becomes aware of conduct that may be bullying or retaliation, they will report the incident immediately to the Dean of Culture in addition to following all other customary disciplinary procedures. When the Dean of Culture is the alleged aggressor, the staff member will report to the Head of School. When the Head of School is the alleged aggressor, the staff member will report to the CEO of Excel Academy Charter Schools.

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

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

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

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

Upon determining that an incident of bullying has taken place, the Dean of Culture will notify parents of the target and the student aggressor of this, and of the procedures for responding to it. Notice will be consistent with state regulations under 603CMR 49.00.

If the reported incident involves students from another school, the Dean of Culture will promptly notify by telephone the principal or designee of the other school(s) of the incident so that each school may take appropriate action.

At any point after receiving a report of bullying or retaliation, including after an investigation, if the Dean of Culture has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor, the

The Dean of Culture will notify the local law enforcement agency. Notice will be consistent with the requirements of 603CMR 49.00. If an incident occurs on school grounds and involves a former student under the age of 21 who is no longer enrolled in school, the Dean of Culture shall contact the local law enforcement agency if they have a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the student aggressor.

## **Investigations**

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

During the investigation the Dean of Culture will, among other things, interview students, staff, witnesses, parents or guardians, and others as necessary. The Dean of Culture will remind the alleged student aggressor, target, and witnesses of the importance of the investigation, their obligation to be truthful and that retaliation

against someone who reports bullying or provides information during a bullying investigation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

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

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

### **Determinations**

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

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

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

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

### **Responses to Bullying**

#### *Teaching Appropriate Behavior Through Skill-Building*

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

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

### *Taking Disciplinary Action*

If the Head of School or designee determines that disciplinary action is appropriate, the disciplinary action will be determined on the basis of facts found by the investigation conducted by the Dean of Culture including the nature of the conduct, the age of the student(s) involved, and the need to balance accountability with the teaching of appropriate behavior. Discipline will be consistent with this Plan and with Excel's Code of Conduct.

Discipline procedures for students with disabilities are governed by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA), which should be read in cooperation with state laws regarding student discipline. All students will be provided with the protection under the law and under this Plan regardless of their legal status.

If the Head of School or Dean of Culture determines that a student knowingly made a false allegation of bullying or retaliation, that student will be subject to disciplinary action.

### *Promoting Safety for the Target and Others*

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

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

### **Responding to a Report of Bullying by School Staff**

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

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



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

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

## ***VI. Collaboration with Families***

### ***Parent Education and Resources***

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

### ***Notification Requirements***

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

## ***VII. Prohibition Against Bullying and Retaliation***

Acts of bullying, which include cyberbullying, are prohibited:

- On school grounds and property immediately adjacent to school grounds;
- At an Excel-sponsored or Excel-related activity, function, or program whether on or off school grounds;
- At a school bus stop;
- On a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased, or used by Excel;
- Through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased, or used by Excel;
- At a location, activity, function, or program that is not school-related through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by Excel if the acts create a hostile

environment at school for the target and witnesses, infringe on their rights at school, or materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of the school.

Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying is also prohibited.

As stated in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, nothing in this Plan requires the district or school to staff any non-school related activities, functions, or programs.

### ***VIII. Problem Resolution System***

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

### ***IX. Definitions***

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **X. Relation to Other Laws**

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

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

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[1] From You are the Miracle by Robin Crow

[2] From The Jungle Book by Rudyard Kipling

## **Appendix D: Restraint Policy**

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### ***Introduction and Purpose:***

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

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

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

### ***Definitions:***

The following definitions appear at 603CMR 46:02:

1. Extended Restraint: A physical restraint the duration of which is longer than twenty (20) minutes.
2. Physical escort: Touching or holding a student without the use of force for the purpose of directing the student.

3. Physical restraint: The use of bodily force to limit a student's freedom of movement.

***Prohibited Restraints:***

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

***Use of Physical Restraint:***

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

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

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

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

***Proper Administration of a Physical Restraint:***

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

***Staff Training:***

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

1. The role of the student, family, and staff in preventing restraint;
2. The program's restraint prevention and behavior support policy and procedures;
3. Interventions that may preclude the need for restraint, including de-escalation of problematic behaviors and other alternatives to restraint in emergency circumstances;
4. When behavior presents an emergency that requires physical restraint, the types of permitted physical restraints and related safety considerations;
5. Identification of program staff who have received in-depth training in the use of physical restraint pursuant to state law (603CMR 46.03).

***Verbal and Written Reports: School Personnel***

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

reported instances of physical restraint, which, upon request, shall be made available to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

### ***Verbal and Written Reports: Parents/Guardians***

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

### ***Review of Restraint Data***

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

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

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

### ***Reporting of Injuries:***

When a restraint has resulted in injury to a student or program staff member or when an extended restraint has been administered, the School shall provide a copy of the written report to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) postmarked no later than three school working days of the

administration of the restraint. The School shall also send the Department a copy of the record of physical restraints maintained by the principal for the 30-day period prior to the date of the reported restraint.

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

### ***Complaint Procedures***

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

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

Additional information can be obtained from Dean of Culture Ben Ure who can be reached at [bure@excelacademy.org](mailto:bure@excelacademy.org). A copy of the regulations may also be obtained at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr46.html>

## **Appendix E: Internet Policy**

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### ***Acceptable Use***

Internet use provides valuable opportunities for research, curriculum support, and career development. 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 Schools expects that students and staff will use this access in a manner consistent with this purpose.

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. Excel Academy has installed special filtering software in an effort to block access to material that is not appropriate for children.

Students should only use Chromebooks, tablets and their Excel student accounts as instructed by their teachers. They will receive consequences for any inappropriate use.

### *Unacceptable Use*

The following is a list of prohibited behaviors. The list is not exhaustive but illustrates unacceptable uses of the Excel's Internet Service.

- 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.



## ***Safety Issues***

Use of the Internet has potential dangers. Users are encouraged to read two brochures regarding Internet safety that the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office has prepared. The brochures are entitled *The Internet, Your Child and You: What Every Parent Should Know* and *Internet Safety: Advice from Kids Who Have Faced Danger Online*. Copies of these brochures are available on the Internet at [www.ago.state.ma.us](http://www.ago.state.ma.us).

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 the Head of School 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 the Head of School.

## ***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 user's use of Excel's Internet service. Deans of Students will monitor and track all student web activity. While using an Excel Chromebook, or while logged onto an Excel-issued student account, student activity both on and off-campus can be viewed by the Dean of Culture.

Internet email messages are not private and may be considered public records subject to disclosure. All communications 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.

## ***Violations***

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.

## **Appendix F: Student and Family Acceptable Use Policy, Requirements, and Expectations for Student Chromebooks**

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Excel Academy Charter High School views the use of electronic resources and the development of relevant technological skills as an important aspect of the learning experience in high school. With this privilege comes responsibilities for the parent and for the student to accept in order for students to stay safe, be respectful, and develop the skills and habits to succeed in an increasingly technological world.

### ***Student Responsibilities***

Students are responsible for the care and maintenance of their issued Chromebook, on and off campus, for the duration of the year. Damage should be promptly reported, and every effort should be made to ensure the safety and functioning of the Chromebook.

The parent/guardian/student are responsible for the cost of repair or replacement at the date of loss if the property is:

- Not returned at the time the student withdraws, if prior to graduation.
- Intentionally damaged.
- Damaged or lost because of negligence.
- Stolen, but not reported to school and/or police in a timely manner (2 weeks).

### ***General Maintenance and Care***

- Students should show care for the Chromebook by using a case, and not adhering any stickers, decals, or other items to the surface, screen, or keyboard.

- Chromebooks should be kept far from food and drink.
- Chromebooks should be protected, even in case, during transit, or at home, or school; heavy objects should not be placed on them, and students should be mindful of how they are placed in book bags in order not to sit or rest on them.
- Chromebooks must never be alone, unsupervised at home or school, or left in vehicles. Students may choose to leave his/her Chromebook in their locker, at their own discretion – they should not give out the combination to their lockers. Theft of a Chromebook due to negligence will be replaced at cost to the student.
- Only lift Chromebooks by supporting the base, not by lifting the screen
- Clean Chromebooks screens with a soft cloth; deeper cleaning (of keyboard) should be done by a professional, but is not required of students.
- Students may only log in under their assigned username and password. Students may not share their passwords. The owner is responsible for all content accessed on the device and any physical damage done to the device, regardless of who is logged in.
- Students are expected to report any damage to their computer as soon as possible. This means no later than the next school day.
- Students who identify a security breach or issue should report this immediately to the School Operations Manager and not discuss the breach with other students to maximize a swift solution to the issue.
- Students should notify a staff member immediately if they encounter information, images, or messages that are inappropriate, unsafe, threatening, or make them feel uncomfortable, regardless if this is on their own or another's computer.
- Students are expected to keep the devices in good condition. Failure to do so may result in bills for repair or replacement.
- Chromebooks are assigned to individual students and tracked via Excel's tech provider. Students may not swap devices with each other – students are responsible for the device that has been assigned by the school.
- Labels must remain on devices and may not be scratched, removed or covered

### ***Daily Expectations***

- Students must bring their fully charged Chromebook to school every day
  - If the Chromebook is forgotten, the student can borrow the classroom loaner for that class period, if the loaner is available. If the loaner is not available, the student will need to work without a computer for that class period.
- Students should check their email account daily and reply to teacher and staff communication in a timely (24 hour) period.
- Students can expect inspections of their Chromebooks as often as each day, and should be prepared to show appropriate content on the history, a damage free device, and a case.
- Student work must be saved frequently to their Google Drive account, and can be accessed from any computer.
- The school is not responsible for the loss of any student work

### ***Parent/Guardian Responsibility***

Parents are also required to agree to this policy by accepting liability for the device, monitoring internet use, and being aware of all expectations for student use for Chromebooks on and off campus.

### *Accept Liability*

The parent/guardian/student are responsible for the cost of repair or replacement at the date of loss if the property is:

- Not returned at the time the student withdraws, if prior to graduation.
- Intentionally damaged.
- Lost because of negligence.
- Stolen, but not reported to school and/or police in a timely manner (2 weeks).

### *Monitor Student Use*

The parent/guardian must agree to monitor and take responsibility for use of Chromebooks on campus and at school. The safest approach to keep students safe and on-task is to have a parent/guardian understand the need to be involved and engaging with a student about their use of devices and internet activities.

Some suggestions include:

- a. Find and install parental controls through your internet service provider and/or your wireless router (such as ones that restrict internet use to certain sites and at certain times of day).
- b. Develop a set of rules/expectations for device use at home.
- c. Only allow device use in common rooms of the home (e.g. living room or kitchen) and not in bedrooms; monitor use of devices through the history or ask students to show you what they have been accessing.
- d. Demonstrate a genuine interest in what your student is doing on their Chromebook. Ask questions and request that they show you his or her work often.

### *Understand All Expectations of Student Chromebook Use*

Excel Academy Charter High School students and families must understand that:

1. Unless the school is notified in writing by the parent/guardian, students are allowed access to this and other electronic resources.
2. Equipment, including Chromebooks, batteries, and chargers are on loan to students and remain the property of Excel; students may 'loan to own' Chromebooks, only after appropriate maintenance during the course of high school.
3. All users are accountable to school, district, local, state, and federal laws.
4. Use of the device and network must be used to support the goals of a students' education
5. Students and families must agree to and follow all regulations and guidelines of this agreement and of Excel staff in order to use Chromebooks.
6. All expectations, rules, and guidelines are in effect before, during, and after school hours, for all EACHS equipment—both on and off school campus.
7. All files and access data stored on EACHS equipment, the network, or cloud services are the property of the Excel network and may be subject to review and monitoring.
8. Students are expected to keep the devices in good condition. Failure to do so may result in bills for repair or replacement.
9. Excel Academy Charter School and its assigned agents reserves the right to confiscate the property at any time.

10. If a student withdraws from Excel Academy Charter High School prior to graduation, their assigned Chromebook must be returned in good condition to the Dean of Operations. If the device is returned with any damages greater than expected wear and tear, the student’s family may be responsible for costs of repair or replacement.

***Unacceptable Use***

The behaviors or actions described below, done without staff permission, will result in school consequences; severe actions such as security breaches, harassment, bullying, or lewd or sexual behavior to minors carry severe consequences and the possibility of police involvement and prosecution.

*Behaviors appropriate at school **only** under the direct supervision of an adult:*

- Instant-messaging
- Using headphones in class
- Downloading programs, music, games and videos
- Playing games
- Changing the background or settings of your Chromebook – if done, must be school appropriate and free from any sexual, drug, gang, or violent images or content.

*The following behaviors are **prohibited** at all times, on and off campus:*

- Defacing Excel issued equipment in any way. This includes but is not limited to marking, painting, drawing or etching any surface of the devices or case.
- Developing or using programs to harass others, hack, bring in viruses, or change others’ files
- Any and all posts or files not appropriate for a professional or school setting. This would include materials that mention make implicit or explicit reference to:
  - Alcohol, tobacco or drugs
  - Gangs
  - Obscene language or nudity
  - Bullying or harassment
  - Discriminatory or prejudicial behavior
- Downloading or installing unauthorized software
- Attempting to defeat or bypass Excel’s internet filter
- Modifying browser settings or any other techniques, designed to avoid being blocked from inappropriate content or to conceal internet activity
- Coaching, helping, observing, or participating in cyber-bullying or using objectionable language in public or private messages, e.g., racist, terroristic, abusive, sexually explicit, threatening, stalking, demeaning or slanderous words or references.

***Plagiarism***

All students are expected to follow existing copyright laws and educational fair use policies, including citing any sentences, passages, ideas or concepts that are created by someone other than the student.

<b>Technology Related Misbehavior</b>	<b>Equivalent Classroom or school behavior</b>	<b>Expected Consequences</b>
Email, instant messaging, shared doc for chatting, internet surfing, games, or other off task behavior	Off task behavior such as looking at magazine, passing notes, or distracting others	Demerit or Referral to the Dean of Culture

Missing case, low battery	Unprepared with school supplies or books	Demerit
Cutting and pasting without citing sources	Plagiarism or cheating	Zero on the assignment, parent meeting.
Cyber bullying	Harassment and bullying	Suspension; possible law enforcement and involvement and prosecution.
Damaging, defacing, or careless use of Chromebook	Vandalism, property damage	Possible suspension and/or payment for device
Using or sharing profanity, racist, sexually explicit, drug or gang related words or images	Inappropriate language or behavior	Suspension; possible law enforcement and involvement and prosecution.
Using an electronic resource account authorized for another user; or logging in as a guest	Unlawful or inappropriate access to another students' locker or belongings	Referral to the dean and possible suspension

### ***Wear and Replacement for Equipment***

#### **Chromebooks**

- *Repairs:* Occasionally, unexpected problems with a device with no fault to the user may arise. The Excel network will support the student to get repairs made to the device and may issue a loaner computer, or 'loaner' in the interim. Students are expected to show care for these 'loaners' as if they were their own machines. These repairs will be made at no cost to the student, provided the damage is not due to malicious intent or negligence (repairs include software crashes or errors)
- *Accidental Damage:* Accidents sometimes happen, and if they do, the cost of fixing damage will be covered approximately by the warranty paid by the student, unless after investigation the school determines the damage was intentional or due to negligence (see below)
- *Intentional Damage/Negligence* If investigation by the school or Excel's tech support reveals negligent or purposeful damage, a student and family will be liable for the entire cost of the repair or replacement of the device. The costs are as follows:
  - Full Device: \$200
  - Hinges: \$30
  - Screen: \$30
  - Keys: \$5/key
- *Stolen Devices:* Students must promptly report stolen devices. If the theft occurred off campus, the student must file a report with the police and provide the school with a police report in order to be replaced. If not, students and families assume liability for the replacement of the device.

Chromebook Chargers: EACHS will provide each student with one Chromebook charger at the time they receive their Chromebook. If the student requires an additional charger, they can purchase one on their own or purchase one for \$10 from the Main Office.

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#### **Appendix G: Acknowledgement of Access**

**Excel Academy Charter High School Student & Family Handbook: Acknowledgement of Access to Handbook**

I acknowledge that the Excel Academy Charter High School Student and Family Handbook (hereafter, “the Handbook”) is available in both hard copy format (upon my request) and electronic format at [www.excelacademy.org](http://www.excelacademy.org). I further acknowledge that the Handbook contains important information regarding the school’s policies and procedures, including but not limited to the School-Student-Family Accountability Contract, student Code of Conduct, non-discrimination, anti-hazing, and bullying prevention policies, use of physical restraint, specialized instruction and special education services, attendance and schedule requirements, and family communication and parental involvement.

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Name (Print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Name