

**Un**common  
Schools | New York City

**Elementary School  
Student and Family Handbook  
2018-2019**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

<b>OUR MISSION AND VISION.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>PHILOSOPHY .....</b>	<b>5</b>
Uncommon New York City Charter Schools .....	7
<b>STUDENT-FAMILY-SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY ACTION STEPS .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>BOARD OF TRUSTEES .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>CODE OF CONDUCT.....</b>	<b>10</b>
Introduction .....	10
Attendance Policy .....	10
Lateness Policy .....	11
Early Dismissal Policy .....	11
<b>DIGNITY FOR ALL STUDENTS ACT Policy.....</b>	<b>12</b>
Reporting and Investigation of Complaints of Harassment/ Discrimination and Bullying .....	13
Internet Security and Use of Technology Policy.....	14
Student Dress Code Policy .....	15
<b>Behavior and Discipline .....</b>	<b>16</b>
Disciplinary Penalties and Procedures.....	16
Prohibited Student Conduct.....	17
Procedure for Certain Discipline .....	21
Discipline of Students with Special Needs .....	24
Student Interview and Searches.....	26
Definitions.....	27
<b>ADDITIONAL POLICIES.....</b>	<b>29</b>
Homework/Life’s Work.....	29
Independent Reading .....	29
School Supplies .....	30
Student Records .....	30
Health Policies .....	31
<b>Addressing Concerns .....</b>	<b>33</b>
Informal Complaint Procedures .....	33
Formal Complaint Procedures .....	33
<b>HIGH SCHOOL Enrollment.....</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>ASSESSMENT .....</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>PROMOTION POLICIES .....</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>WITHDRAWAL.....</b>	<b>35</b>

<b>BUILDING SAFETY AND SECURITY.....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>CLOSED CAMPUS.....</b>	<b>36</b>
Visitors to the School.....	36
<b>SHARED SPACE.....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>EMERGENCIES.....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>FIRE SAFETY AND EVACUATION PROCEDURES .....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>TRANSPORTATION AND SAFETY .....</b>	<b>38</b>
Arrival and Dismissal .....	38
Bus Behavior .....	38
MetroCards.....	39
Students Who Walk .....	39
<b>FIELD TRIPS/END-OF-YEAR EVENTS.....</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>SNOW CLOSINGS.....</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>GENERAL SCHOOL INFORMATION.....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>TO CONTACT US .....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>NONDISCRIMINATION .....</b>	<b>40</b>
Title I Parent Involvement Policy.....	40
<b>FREEDOM OF INFORMATION POLICY.....</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>OPEN MEETINGS POLICY .....</b>	<b>43</b>

*Please note that additions and changes to school policies and this Handbook may be added during the year through correspondence with students and/or families.*

## **UNCOMMON SCHOOLS NEW YORK CITY**

---

Uncommon New York City Charter Schools (“Uncommon New York City” or the “School” when referring to individual schools) is a not-for-profit network of free, public charter schools that serve over 8,000 K-12 students in Brooklyn, including both single-sex and co-educational schools. Each school shares the same mission of preparing students to enter, succeed in, and graduate from college. Believing that every child has a right to a high-quality education and that a Bachelor’s degree should be within reach for every young person in the nation, Uncommon New York City builds uncommonly great schools that offer a rigorous college-preparatory curriculum infused with joy. Students are randomly selected by public lottery in grades K and 5, and we maintain waiting lists through grade 8. We currently have schools in the Bedford Stuyvesant, Brownsville, Crown Heights, Canarsie, East Flatbush, Prospect Heights, Cypress Hills, and Williamsburg neighborhoods within Brooklyn.

## **OUR MISSION AND VISION**

---

### **OUR MISSION**

The mission of Uncommon New York City is to prepare each student to enter and succeed in college.

### **OUR VISION**

Uncommon New York City prepares our students to enter, succeed in, and graduate from outstanding college preparatory high schools and colleges. We cultivate in our students the knowledge, skills, and character necessary to succeed academically, embrace responsibility, and become honorable citizens and courageous leaders.

We have a clear vision of how Uncommon New York City students will conduct themselves, both when they first enter our school and when they graduate:

- In class, we expect students to be alert, engaged, and actively participating in the classroom experience.
- In school, we expect students to be respectful, responsible, and kind and to understand that through their efforts, they will achieve.
- In life, we expect students to be contributing members of their community and society as readers, writers, mathematicians, scientists, and historians.

We know a college education will help open up endless possibilities for our students, and we know all our students have what it takes to go to college. We are fiercely committed to cultivating the intellectual curiosity and grit that will spur their success in the classroom and in their communities.

We value the collaboration between our families and our schools, and know that family involvement and contribution is key to student success.

Finally, we want to redefine expectations for the quality of education possible at an urban public school and for what our graduates can achieve.

## RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

---

*Students, Parents, and Teachers*

### PHILOSOPHY

The choice to send your child to an Uncommon New York City school was an important one that demonstrates your high hopes for and expectations of your child, yourselves, and us. We share these high hopes and expectations with you, and we are committed to making them a reality as we work together to prepare your child for college.

Uncommon New York City is based on shared responsibility and accountability. As students, families, and staff, we each must fulfill our responsibilities, and we each must be held accountable for doing so.

For students, it means that a lot is expected of you because preparing for college is hard work! Just like your responsibilities at home—cleaning your room or doing the dishes—and just like the responsibilities you'll have as an adult—voting in an election or serving on a jury—you are expected to accept certain responsibilities and behave in certain ways as an Uncommon New York City student. You are expected to always put forth your best academic effort. This means arriving at school on time every day, ready to actively participate in all classes, completing all homework assignments fully and well, staying afterschool for tutoring or Homework Center when needed, and attending Saturday School when required. You are also expected to put forth your best professional behavior. We will need you to act respectfully towards all fellow students and all staff and to make positive contributions to the school community. We will be crystal clear in our expectations of you, and in return, you will need to accept responsibility for your behavior and for all consequences of your behavior.

For families, along with the countless and seemingly endless responsibilities you carry as parents or guardians, we also expect a lot from you as an Uncommon New York City family. Our children watch every move that the adults in their lives make. For this reason, all adults in our building, family members and staff alike, are expected to act respectfully to all members of our school community. You are expected to ensure that your child arrives daily and punctually, ready to actively participate in all classes. You are expected to oversee your child's completion of all homework assignments, support mandatory afterschool tutoring and Saturday School, and honor the requirement of Homework Center. Finally, you are expected to require your child to fully accept all consequences of his or her behavior, by discussing school-based consequences such as demerits, detentions, and suspensions at home and by supporting school-based consequences with home-based consequences or losses of privileges when appropriate.

For staff, it means we continue to expect a lot from ourselves. Along with the daily responsibilities we carry as educators, we also expect ourselves to do certain things and behave in certain ways as Uncommon New York City teachers and administrators. As adults, we are expected to act respectfully to all members of our school community. Our teachers are expected to prepare engaging, academically rigorous lessons for all of our classes every day, to assign and evaluate appropriate homework assignments each night, to provide regular tutoring during or after school, and to assign students to Homework Center and Saturday School when required.

Finally, we expect to be held accountable for our behavior as staff members dedicated to the mission of preparing each student for college.

For all of us, the Uncommon New York City School-Student-Family Accountability Action Steps, reprinted on the next two pages, represents some of the most important responsibilities for being a member of the Uncommon New York City community. We all have responsibilities to meet. For students, these action steps make you aware of what being an Uncommon New York City student is all about. For families, these action steps identify your important role in the life of your child and that of the school. For staff, these action steps remind us of our promise to prepare students for college within a safe and orderly environment. Although this is not a complete list of what needs to be done—we are sure we will all have more to do—it does give a clear idea of your vital role as families and what it will take from all of us to make this year a successful one for your child.

# UNCOMMON NEW YORK CITY CHARTER SCHOOLS

## STUDENT-FAMILY-SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY ACTION STEPS

### ATTENDANCE

- I will ensure that my child comes to school every day on time to begin school promptly at starting time.
- I understand that if my child is absent more than 10 days of the school year, he or she may have to repeat his or her current grade.
- I understand that if my child is absent 20 or more days of the school year, the School may call the New York City Administration for Children's Services.
- I will make sure that my child promptly makes up missed work following absences.
- I understand that an absence is excused if I have contacted the school and written a detailed note regarding student illness, family emergency, or religious observance, but that it will count towards the 10 day absence limit.
- I understand that my child will not earn credit for work missed after unexcused absences, including but not limited to: family vacations, participation at sports tournaments, and attendance at entertainment events.
- I understand that my child will not be permitted to enter the building before the designated breakfast time.

### HOMEWORK

- I agree to check my child's homework daily to ensure that it is complete.
- I understand that my child will be required to complete incomplete homework during the end of the day, during Choice Time, instead of participating in structured play.

### CODE OF CONDUCT

- I agree to promote and support the rules of behavior as outlined in the Student and Family Handbook, and accept responsibility as a partner in my child's learning.
- I understand that while my child is in school, he/she is not permitted to use, or have out in plain sight, cell phones, iPods, music players, video game players, or other electronic devices. These will be confiscated by staff members and returned at the end of the day on the first offense and then held in the main office to be returned only to the child's parents after repeated offense.
- I understand that I will be held to the same standards of conduct as all members of the School community while on School property or at a School-sponsored event, whether such event takes place on or off the School's property. I understand that these standards include treating all members of the community with respect and acting with professionalism that maintains an orderly, non-threatening, and safe learning environment for all members of the School community. I understand that if I do not conduct myself appropriately while on School property or at a School-sponsored event, the School may place restrictions on me entering on to the School's property or attending future events.

### PROMOTION POLICIES

- I understand that my child needs to pass all core academic subjects in order to be promoted to the next grade.
- I understand that my child may not be promoted if he or she fails 1 or more core academic subject.

- I understand that my child may not be promoted if he or she is absent with or without excuse for more than 10 days during the school year.
- I understand that my child may need to pass a minimum competency exam in order to be promoted.

### **STUDENT DRESS POLICY**

- I will ensure that my child comes to school in the school uniform purchased through the school uniform vendor, according to the guidelines listed in the Student and Family Handbook.
- I understand that if my child comes to school out of uniform, he or she may not be permitted to attend class and may need to wait for the appropriate dress to be brought in from home.

### **FAMILY SUPPORT**

- I agree to support my child's academic work by communicating regularly with my child's teachers and advisor, by scheduling appointments to talk with them as needed, and by attending all Family Teacher Conferences.
- I agree to pick up my child's report card at Family Teacher Conferences.
- I agree to attend family meetings and other school-sponsored events on a regular basis.
- I agree not to send soda to school with my child, since students are not allowed to drink soda at school.
- I agree to respond to phone calls from any school staff member promptly.

## **BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

---

The school is governed by a Board of Trustees that brings educational and professional perspectives to maintaining a viable and thriving school. Members of the Board of Trustees include:

<b>Name</b>
<b>Linton Mann III, Chair</b>
<b>Tony Pasquariello, Vice Chair</b>
<b>Ekwutozia Nwabuzor, Secretary</b>
<b>Joseph Wayland, Treasurer</b>
St. Claire Gerald
John Greenstein
Michael Hall
Shakima Jones
John Kim
Brett Peiser, ( <i>ex-officio</i> )
Chrystal Stokes Williams

## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

---

*High Standards for Academics, High Standards for Behavior*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Uncommon New York City Charter Schools is unequivocally committed to providing a safe and orderly environment in which students can improve their academic achievement. Students whose behavior does not meet the School community's clearly defined standards for reasonable and acceptable behavior will not be permitted to disrupt the education of others.

Without a firm and consistent discipline policy, none of what we envision for the School can happen. We cannot overemphasize the importance of providing a strong discipline policy that every student and family knows and understands. Students and families have a right to attend a safe and orderly school. Therefore, for every infraction, there will be a consequence. This is the basis of our student Code of Conduct. The School reserves the right to amend, supplement, or rescind provisions of this Code of Conduct at any time as it deems appropriate, in its sole and absolute discretion, consistent with applicable law and regulations.

Most terms which appear with initial capitalization are defined in the "Definitions" section at the end of the Code of Conduct.

### **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Students can only be successful if they are present and prepared in school every day. At the School, excessive absences will not be tolerated. If a student is absent **with or without excuse** for more than 10 days of the school year, it may affect your child's promotion to the next grade. After 10 absences, a student may lose their ability to participate in the School's activities and trips. After 20 absences, the School may call the New York City Administration for Children's Services to report the student's excessive absenteeism.

Parents and guardians are expected to call the school as early as possible if their child will not be attending school for any reason. Earlier, written notice of an expected absence is both welcome and appreciated. Calls should be made as far in advance as possible and can be left on the school's main voice mail if necessary. If a student is not in homeroom and the school has not been notified that he or she will be absent, his or her parent or guardian will be called at home and/or work. In phone calls, voice mails, and notes, please leave or list your child's name, your relationship to the child, and the reason for and date(s) of the child's absence.

All questions regarding student attendance and attendance records should be directed to the school's Office Manager.

A student is considered absent with excuse when the student's family has contacted the school regarding student illness, family emergency, or religious observance. All other absences will be considered unexcused, including but not limited to, family vacation, participation at sports tournaments, attendance at entertainment events, or when the family has not contacted the school with a satisfactory reason.

Class work will not be provided in advance of unexcused absences, and may not be provided in advance of excused absences. It is the responsibility of the student to make up any class work, homework, projects, quizzes, or exams missed during any unexcused or excused absences.

If prior notification had not already been provided, upon the student's return to school from an absence, whether it is the next day or on some day after, the student is required to bring a signed note from his or her parent or guardian explaining in detail the reason for the absence. If a student had a medical visit while absent from school, a note from his or her doctor is required in lieu of the parent note.

Since repeated absences means missing class, and missing class affects academic achievement, excessive absences will result in lower class grades since part of a student's grade is based on his or her performance in class. Therefore, it is imperative that students are at school, on time, every day.

Students who are absent from school cannot attend school sporting events, dances, or any other school-sponsored activities occurring on the day of the absence, unless the school has given advance permission.

### **LATENESS POLICY**

Students who arrive late to school should report to the Main Office to check in with the Office Manager to be marked present and drop off their homework in the homework bins before proceeding to their classroom. Lateness due to NYC Department of Education busing delays will not be held against the student.

Excessive lateness will not be tolerated. Students who are late will be issued a detention upon arrival. Every three (3) incidents of lateness per semester (the first two quarters or last two quarters) will be counted as one (1) absence. Additional mandatory family meetings with the Principal or Director of Operations will also be scheduled.

### **EARLY DISMISSAL POLICY**

Unless a parent or guardian has contacted the school in advance and provided a written note to the school explaining the situation, and the school has granted permission, no student will be dismissed early from school. In addition, the parent or guardian must sign the student out with the Main Office before removing the student from school grounds. Students will not be dismissed unless the parent or guardian has physically come to the Main Office.

In order to minimize disruptions to class, we ask that notification regarding early dismissals be made as far in advance as possible. We also ask that doctor and dentist appointments be limited to non-school hours to avoid students missing class time.

Families are encouraged to consider the class period start and ending times when determining early dismissal requests. In order to minimize disruptions, students cannot be dismissed in the middle of a class period.

Students who repeatedly miss the same classes as a result of early dismissals may be required to make up missed class time and may incur full-day absences as a result. Additional mandatory family meetings with the Principal or Director of Operations will also be scheduled.

## **DIGNITY FOR ALL STUDENTS ACT POLICY**

In accordance with New York State's Dignity for All Students Act ("DASA"), the School is committed to providing its students, Employees, volunteers and visitors with an educational and working environment that is safe and secure, promotes respect, dignity and equality, and is free from bullying, discrimination or other forms of harassment or intimidation.

### ***Bullying***

Bullying is strictly prohibited on School Property and at any School Function, as well as any other place or time when the effects of such conduct would reasonably be expected to impact the educational process or create a risk disruption within the School environment.

"Bullying" for the purpose of this policy is defined as harassment, aggressive behavior or other intentional action, whether verbal or physical, which is intended, or could reasonably be expected, to cause Emotional Harm, distress, fear, ridicule, humiliation and/or intimidation. Bullying can be face-to-face, or carried out by phone, over the internet and other ways directed at another person through the "posting" of sensitive and/or private information, including Cyberbullying: "Cyberbullying" means Bullying through any form of electronic communication, such as email, text, and social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, and Instagram). Bullying can take many forms, such as slurs, jokes, innuendos, demeaning comments, cartoons, pranks, gestures, and physical attacks. ("Intentional action" refers to the individual's choice to engage in the act rather than the ultimate impact of the action(s).)

This policy includes Bullying of students (by other students, Employees, volunteers and visitors) and by students (of Employees, volunteers and visitors).

Bullying by students will result in discipline, up to and including expulsion. Bullying by Employees will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

### ***Harassment and Discrimination***

All students are entitled to a learning environment free from harassment and Discrimination. No student or Employee shall be subjected to Discrimination or harassment by other students, Employees or visitors on the basis of physical, cultural or even social differences, including, without limitation based on his or her actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, sex, gender identity, or gender. "Harassment" includes any action (verbal or physical) which tends to create a hostile environment (including Bullying and Cyberbullying) and has substantially interfered with a student's educational opportunities or benefits or the terms and conditions of an Employee's employment, reasonably causes a student or Employee to fear for his or her physical safety, or reasonably poses a risk to a student's or Employee's physical or emotional well-being. Just like Bullying, Harassment that occurs off School Property may be prohibited when the effects of such

conduct would reasonably be expected to impact the educational process or create risk of disruption within the School environment.

Harassment by students will result in discipline, up to and including expulsion. Harassment by Employees will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Uncommon values and embraces its inclusive and diverse school communities and strives to provide a welcoming, safe and supportive environment for all students and families regardless of their race, color, ethnicity, religion, gender, disability, sexual orientation and gender identity. If a student or his or her family would like to explore a particular accommodation based upon cultural or religious practices, or due to one's disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity, the student or the student's parents or guardian should contact a School Leader or adult the student feels comfortable with to schedule a meeting to discuss a plan to address the student's particular circumstances and needs.

## **REPORTING AND INVESTIGATION OF COMPLAINTS OF HARASSMENT/ DISCRIMINATION AND BULLYING**

Any staff member who witnesses, receives an oral or written account of, or otherwise reasonably suspects the occurrence of, any act constituting Harassment, Discrimination or Bullying *must* promptly notify the principal, superintendent, or the Dignity for All Students Act (DASA) Coordinator of such occurrence as soon as reasonably practicable, but no later than one school day of witnessing or receiving a report of Harassment, Discrimination or Bullying. Such staff member is required to file a written report with the principal, superintendent or the DASA Coordinator no later than two school days after such oral report or notification. Reporting forms shall be made available in the school's main office.

The DASA Coordinator's name and contact information for each school can be found in the Appendix of this handbook. The DASA Coordinator is trained to handle human relations in the areas of race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender and gender identity. The DASA Coordinator will be accessible to students and staff members for consultation and advice.

All students, Parents, visitors and others are *strongly encouraged* to report any such conduct. Retaliation or reprisal by any staff member, student or Parent against any individual who, in good faith, reports or assists in the investigation of Harassment, Discrimination or Bullying is strictly prohibited (and, for students and staff members, will result in severe discipline). All complaints will be treated in a confidential manner. Please note that anonymous reports may limit the School's ability to effectively and efficiently respond to the complaint.

The principal, superintendent or the DASA Coordinator will lead or supervise the prompt and thorough investigation of all such reports. If such investigation results in a finding of a violation of the School's anti-Harassment/Discrimination/Bullying policies, the School will take prompt action, reasonably calculated to end the Harassment/Discrimination or Bullying, eliminate any hostile environment, prevent recurrence of the behavior, and ensure the safety and educational opportunities of the student(s) or staff member(s) against whom such behavior was directed.

The School reserves the right to notify an appropriate law enforcement agency when it is believed that any Harassment/Discrimination/Bullying constitutes criminal conduct.

Material incidents of discrimination and harassment will be reported to the State Education Department as required by law.

## **INTERNET SECURITY AND USE OF TECHNOLOGY POLICY**

**Undesirable Materials:** Accessing, downloading, or transmitting inappropriate content that otherwise would present a violation of the School's Code of Conduct is itself a violation of the Code. The School will take all possible precautions to restrict access to undesirable materials including, but not limited to, installing content filtering software/hardware solutions on its network or using an Internet provider which uses content filtering software on its equipment to screen all Internet web sites by URL and/or by keyword search. However, students must also accept responsibility for restricting access to these materials. Students who gain access to undesirable Internet materials must report this material to their teacher.

The following rules apply to students' use of school-owned or operated technology, equipment, and systems:

**Security:** Students must not allow others to use their network accounts (both Internet and School accounts). Users of school file servers to store files should have no expectation of privacy in such files. Network storage areas may be treated like school lockers. Designated school personnel may review files and communications stored on the school file server or other systems to maintain system integrity, ensure compliance with school policies, and ensure that users are using the system responsibly. Users should not expect that files stored on school file servers will always be private.

**E-Mail:** Student use of email is not allowed during school or on the school's network without the approval from the supervising teacher.

**Social Networking, Blogging, Chat and Other User Groups:** Student use of social networking, blogging, chat and other user groups is not allowed without approval from the supervising teacher.

**Copyright and Citations:** Any copyrighted materials are subject to the Fair Use provision of copyrighted materials as it relates to education. Internet materials used in reports or other documents must be cited. If there is no direct citation, the Uniform Resource Location (URL) must be cited. The use of internet sources without proper citation constitutes plagiarism.

**Downloading:** Downloading from the Internet without approval from the supervising teacher is not allowed.

**Private Internet Providers:** Students may not use school computers to access private Internet providers.

**Acceptable Internet Usage:** The School will ensure age-appropriate internet usage among students who use its internet facilities. This will enforce the School's commitment to student safety with regard to:

- i. safety on the Internet; and
- ii. appropriate behavior while online, while accessing Web sites, and while engaging in any internet based communication, including but not limited to:
  - a. Unauthorized access including "hacking" and other unlawful activities undertaken online by minors;
  - b. Unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal information regarding minors;
  - c. Cyberbullying awareness and response; and
  - d. Other behavior determined to be threatening, intimidating or otherwise inappropriate in any way.

**Telephones:** Students are prohibited from using school telephones, except in the event of an emergency, and in such instance, only at the discretion of school staff members.

**Cell phones:** Students are prohibited from carrying cell phones during the school day except when otherwise explicitly communicated by school staff. Cell phones taken out at school will be confiscated per the school's code of conduct. The school is not responsible for any lost or damaged phones. We encourage families not to send their children with any valuables, including cell phones. Students are only allowed to use the school phone in the event of an emergency with permission from a school staff member.

## **STUDENT DRESS CODE POLICY**

In order to improve the school's educational environment, promote a more effective climate for learning, foster school unity and pride, and allow students to focus solely on learning and not on attire, the school has a dress policy for students that applies to school days and school-sponsored events. Please see the Appendix for details of the uniform requirements for your child's Uncommon New York City School.

When students enter the school building, they must be in the proper uniform. They cannot change into the school uniform upon arrival or tuck their shirts in only after getting to class. Students also may not change out of their uniform before dismissal. Doing so may result in a consequence or detention. Students who attend school events at night – on school grounds or otherwise – are expected to be properly dressed, either in the school uniform or as young professionals. This includes never wearing hats inside.

At all times during the school day – including afterschool – shirts must be tucked in. Students who do not have their shirts tucked in will receive a consequence.

Students whose uniform does not adhere to any of the above guidelines will receive a consequence and will have to change to meet the school's requirements. Repeated disregard of the dress policy will involve the Principal or his/her designee and the student's family.

Once students enter the school building, the wearing of hats, headwraps, bandanas, or kerchiefs is not permitted unless it is in accordance with religious observation. Hats worn in the school building will be confiscated.

Attire that is disruptive to the school's learning environment – as deemed by the school's leaders – will not be permitted.

## **BEHAVIOR AND DISCIPLINE**

The School recognizes that it enrolls students with different backgrounds and a range of educational and emotional issues. The following is a non-exhaustive listing of disciplinary violations, and the procedures for disciplining students. The School reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to amend or discontinue any of the policies, procedures, practices or general descriptions set forth in this policy, including to take immediate action when required, and to create alternatives to disciplinary protocols when in the best interests of our students, staff members and/or the School. Nothing in this policy is to be viewed as creating a contract by the School.

The standards set forth in this policy apply when such behavior can reasonably be expected to impact the educational process and/or create a risk of substantial disruption within the School environment (except where noted) and where such behavior occurs on School Property (at any time, including before/after School hours), during a School Function, on a School Bus, outside any of the foregoing locations, or, under certain specific circumstances, while a student is traveling to or from School.

### **Disciplinary Penalties and Procedures**

Students who are found to have violated the School's Code of Conduct may be subject to various methods of discipline (which may be combined) in the School's administrative and educational discretion. The type and severity of discipline will be contingent upon many factors, including, without limitation (and in no particular order): (i) the type and severity of the conduct; (ii) the harm or potential harm of the conduct (including the disruption of educational processes, physical harm or Emotional Harm to others, damage to property, etc.); (iii) the student's prior disciplinary and academic record; (iv) the student's age; (v) deterrence; (vi) the student's honesty and cooperation when confronted with the violation; and (vii) the future protection of persons and property. The following is a non-exhaustive list of possible penalties that may be issued to a student who is determined to have violated the School's Code of Conduct:

- 1) Oral warning
- 2) Written warning
- 3) Loss of school privileges
- 4) Written notification to parent/guardian
- 5) Conference with parent(s)/guardian(s)
- 6) Confiscation of property
- 7) After-school detention
- 8) Saturday detention
- 9) Suspension, exclusion and/or removal from a particular class or School Function

- 10) Suspension or revocation of School privileges related to the violation (e.g., revocation of computer use privileges);
- 11) Suspension from transportation
- 12) Suspension from cafeteria, commons, library, social, athletic, after-school, field trip, extracurricular, or other School Functions
- 13) In-school suspension
- 14) Short-term suspension (ten days or less) from school
- 15) Long-term suspension (more than ten days) from school\*
- 16) Expulsion from school\*

\* Certain violations, such as bringing a firearm to School, may legally require suspension for a time certain (one year) and require reporting to law enforcement agencies.

### Prohibited Student Conduct

Students may be subject to disciplinary actions, up to and including suspension and/or expulsion from school, for:

*Engaging in Insubordinate and/or Disorderly Conduct. Examples of insubordinate and/or disorderly conduct include, but are not limited to:*

- **Violating the Dress Code.** In addition to the imposition of discipline against a student who fails to abide by the Dress Code, Parent(s)/guardian(s) may be required to pick up children, bring the missing Dress Code items to the school, or authorize the student to return home to retrieve the necessary items as students may not be permitted to attend class.
- **Arriving to Class Unprepared or without Completed Homework.** When class begins, students must be prepared and have all necessary materials (books, organized binder, paper, pen, pencil, etc.) and assignments completed on time.
- **Cutting School, Class, Detention, Homework Center, Saturday School, Summer School, or Mandatory School Events.** Students are not permitted to have unexcused absences or to leave the school building without permission.
- Failing to be in one's assigned place on School Property.
- **Disrupting Class and/or Preventing Teaching.** Students may not interfere with or disrupt class or the educational process, whether by misbehaving or otherwise.
- **Being Disrespectful toward a staff member:** The School cannot function properly if students are permitted to be disrespectful toward adults. For that reason, students may not be disrespectful toward any staff member, visitor or any other adult associated with the School. Behaviors that are considered disrespectful include, but are not limited to: rolling of the eyes, smacking lips or sucking teeth, making inappropriate remarks or sounds in response to a request, walking away from a staff member before a conversation is over, talking back to a staff member, or

ignoring/disrespecting a staff member's action or authority. Disrespectful actions in response to the imposition of discipline (or a warning/counseling) will almost always increase the severity of a discipline.

- **Acts of Dishonesty.** Honesty is an essential element of personal character and is needed to build a community based on trust and respect. Students are not permitted to lie, give false information, or attempt to conceal the truth when dealing with any staff member, commit acts of forgery, or use or possess false identification. Students also may not tamper with or alter any School record or document.
- **Scholastic Dishonesty.** Academic integrity is paramount. Scholastic dishonesty is strictly prohibited, is likely to result in severe discipline for a first-time offense (including expulsion), and includes the following (without limitation):
  - copying the work of another student;
  - plagiarizing materials;
  - using unauthorized help sheets or materials;
  - obtaining or possessing tests in advance;
  - substituting for a test-taker or having someone substitute for you in a test;
  - altering records;
  - other forms of authorized collusion; or
  - assisting another student in any of the above actions.
- **Failing to Comply with Directive(s):** Students shall not fail to comply with the lawful directives of staff members.
- Being Disrespectful of Other Students.
- **Profane Language or Gestures.** Students may not use or direct toward others lewd, vulgar, coarse, or degrading language or gestures.
- **Failing to Submit a Required Signature.** Students are required to secure the signature of a Parent on homework assignments or School forms when requested.
- **Submitting a Forged Signature.** Students may not represent to the School that a signature is that of a parent or staff member that they know to be that of another person.
- **Gum, Food, and Beverages:** Students may not chew gum, nor eat or drink at unauthorized times or places.
- Spitting or Littering.
- **Obstructing Vehicular or Pedestrian Traffic:** Students are not permitted to obstruct vehicular or pedestrian traffic on or adjacent to School Property.
- **Blocking Access to any Part of the School Building:** Students are not permitted to block access to School Property (including any individual classroom).
- Creating a Hazardous Condition for Others.
- **Trespassing.** Students may not trespass or enter into a private or restricted area without permission.

- **Possession of Inappropriate or Prohibited Property/Material.** Students may not possess iPods, MP3 players, cell-phones, cameras, laser pointers, entertainment devices, unauthorized electronic equipment of any kind, or any other items inappropriate for School. Students also may not possess any material (including printed text or lyrics) that is obscene, vulgar, profane, sexually explicit, or may create a hostile or offensive learning environment for other students. In addition to discipline imposed upon the student, such items will be confiscated until an adult family member comes to the school to retrieve it at a time designated by the school administration. Items which are repeatedly brought to school in violation of this policy may be confiscated for the remainder of the year irrespective of any costs or fees students and/or their families may incur as a result. A Parent may retrieve an inappropriate item which has been confiscated from their child at a mutually convenient time agreed to by the Dean of Students and/or the Instructional Leader.
- **Defamation:** Students may not make false or unprivileged statements or representations about an individual or identifiable group of individuals that harm the reputation of the person or the identifiable group by demeaning them through any medium, whether on or off School Property, including by electronic means (text, email, social media, etc.).
- **Gambling.** All gambling is strictly prohibited, including card games, dice games, sports bets, and fantasy sports bets. Students are reminded that gambling which occurs outside of School Property, School Functions or School Busses may result in discipline if the effects of such conduct would reasonably be expected to impact the educational process or create risk of disruption within the School environment.
- **Failing to Comply with School-Imposed Consequences.** Students must comply with School-imposed consequences, including but not limited to detention, Homework Center, Saturday School, Summer School, school service, suspension from school and/or temporary or permanent denial of school-provided transportation.
- **Solicitation/Distribution.** Students may not distribute or post any written material, pamphlets or posters at the School or at a School Function without the prior written approval of the Instructional Leader or the Instructional Leader's Designee, or as specifically approved by the Board of Trustees. Students may also not sell any items or services at the School or at a School Function unless they are participating in a School-approved fundraiser for a School-approved event, club, or student council.

Students found engaging in the below actions may be subject to suspension or expulsion

***Engaging in Conduct that Endangers the Safety, Morals, Health, or Welfare of Self or Others.***  
*Examples of conduct that endangers the safety, morals, health or welfare or oneself of others include, but are not limited to:*

- Presence on School Property or at a School Function without permission of a staff member.

- **Theft, Loss, or Destruction of Personal or School Property:** Students may not steal, negligently lose, vandalize, or damage the property of the School, other students, staff members, or any other person lawfully on School Property, attending a School Function, or while traveling to or from School. In addition to facing other consequences for violation of this rule, students are expected to return property to its rightful owner in its original condition or to reimburse the owner and/or the School for lost, damaged, or stolen property.
- **Mistreatment or Inappropriate Use of Technology or Other School Property:** Students must treat computers, printers, and other School technology with care, and in accordance with School computer and network policies. Students are prohibited from using School telephones, except at the discretion of a staff member in an emergency situation. Students must not vandalize, damage or otherwise mistreat School property.
- **Harassment, Discrimination and Bullying.** Any violation of the above anti-harassment, anti-discrimination and anti-bullying policies, whether on or off School Property, is strictly prohibited.
- **Engaging in Sexual Activity, Inappropriate Touching or Lewd Behavior.** A student may not engage in sexual activity of any kind, touch himself/herself or others inappropriately, or otherwise engage in non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature on School Property, at a School Function or on a School Bus. Students also are prohibited from making sexually suggestive comments or jokes, or sexually propositioning any other student (or Employee) on School Property, at a School Function or on a School Bus. Students are reminded that sexual activity/conduct with or directed at others outside of School Property, a School Function or a School Bus may violate the School's anti-discrimination/harassment/bullying policy, and/or otherwise impact the educational environment such that disciplinary or remedial/preventive action may be taken.
- **Hazing.** Hazing is strictly prohibited, whether on or off School Property. Hazing is defined as any intentional or reckless act directed against another for the purpose of initiation into, affiliating with, or maintaining membership in any group, activity, organization, club, or team.
- **Gang Activity.** Students may not engage in gang-related behavior (e.g. wearing or displaying gang apparel, writing graffiti, making gestures or signs), including when off School Property and such behavior can reasonably be expected to impact the educational process and/or create a risk of substantial disruption within the School environment. In determining whether the behavior is gang-related (which is in the reasonable discretion of the School), School officials may consult with the Office of School and Youth Development's Gang Unit as well as law enforcement.
- **Physical Harm/Violence on Self or Directed At Others:** Students may not cause or threaten to cause physical injury upon themselves, other students, staff members, visitors or any other person on School Property, at a School Function, on a School Bus, or while traveling to or from School. Any conduct that has the potential of resulting in physical harm/violence also will result in discipline, including, without limitation, fighting,

play-fighting, horseplay, unwanted physical contact, Bullying and Harassment. Students are reminded that violent conduct outside of School Property, a School Function, a School Bus, or while traveling to or from School may violate the School's anti-discrimination/harassment/bullying policy, and/or otherwise impact the educational environment such that disciplinary or remedial/preventive action may be taken.

- **Engaging In Coercion**, by persuading someone by using force or threats.
- Posting Material Which Threatens Violence, or Depicts Violent Actions Against Students or Staff Members.
- Making a Bomb Threat.
- Conduct Tending to Incite or Cause a Riot.
- Selling, Using, Possessing, or Distributing a Weapon.
- **Open Flame/Arson**. Students may not create an unauthorized open flame on School Property or at a School Function, or otherwise set fire to anything.
- **Setting Off a False Alarm or Making a Threat**: Students may not intentionally set off a false alarm, call 911, or discharge a fire extinguisher without valid cause,

## Procedure for Certain Discipline

### *Suspension from Transportation*

Students who do not conduct themselves properly on School transportation may have their riding privileges suspended by the Principal or the Principal's designee(s). In such cases, the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) will become responsible for ensuring that his or her child gets to and from School safely.

### *Short Term In-School Suspension or Short Term Suspension from School (ten days or less)*

When the Principal and/or Director of Operations or their designee (referred to as the "Suspending Authority"), such as a Dean of Students, determines that a student charged with misconduct should be assigned in-school suspension or should be suspended on a short-term basis for ten days or less, the Suspending Authority will provide notice (by telephone or in writing) of such suspension decision to, in the first instance, the student in terms of the charges against the student and allow the student an opportunity to give the student's side of the story, and then to the student's parent or guardian, and afford the parent or guardian an opportunity for an informal conference.

The student also may be removed from class and/or School immediately if, in the sole discretion of the suspending authority, it is determined that the student's presence in class or School poses a continuing danger to persons or property or risks disruption of the academic process. In the event that your child is suspended from School, you or a trusted designee, are expected to pick up your child within the timeframe stated by the Principal, Director of Operations, or Dean of Students. Students not picked up will serve in-school suspension. Proper authorities will be notified if students who are suspended out of School return to school during a period of suspension.

The purpose of the informal conference, if the parent or guardian chooses one, is to discuss with the parent or guardian the circumstances that led to the suspension decision and to explore proactive steps to ensure the student's misconduct that led to the suspension does not reoccur. The informal conference may be held in person or by telephone. Any written notice and informal conference shall be in the dominant language or mode of communication used by the parent(s) or guardian(s). The opportunity for an informal conference shall take place as soon as possible after the suspension as is reasonably practicable. If the parent(s)/guardian(s) choose to contest the suspension decision, they may file a written appeal to the Board of Trustees via the Principal and/or Director of Operations within five business days of the date of the Suspending Authority's decision, or if an informal conference has been held, within five days of such informal conference. The suspension will take place while such a challenge is made. The appeal to the Board will be handled by the Board's designee, currently the School's Associate Chief Operating Officer from Uncommon Schools. If the Board's designee upholds the challenge to the suspension, any portion of the suspension already served will be expunged from the student's records and any portion of the suspension not yet served will be nullified and cancelled. The Board's designee will promptly communicate his or her decision in writing to the parent(s)/guardian(s).

#### *Long Term In-School Suspension, Long Term Suspension from School (more than ten days) and Expulsion*

When the Instructional Leader and/or Operations Leader or their designee determines that a suspension for more than ten days or expulsion may be warranted, the student may be removed from class and/or school immediately if the student's presence in school poses a continuing danger to persons or property or is an ongoing threat of disruption to the academic process. The Instructional Leader and/or Operations Leader or their designee shall give reasonable written notice to the student and the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) of the charges against the student, the proposed penalty and the right to a fair hearing within ten days unless the parent(s) or guardian(s) consent to an adjournment. Where possible, notification also shall be provided by telephone if the school has been provided with a contact telephone number for the parent(s) or guardian(s). The notification provided shall be in the dominant language used by the parent(s) or guardian(s). The student or parent(s) or guardian(s) shall also have an opportunity to tell the student's side of the story. A short-term suspension will be imposed until the hearing on the long term suspension or expulsion. Every effort will be made to ensure that the hearing is held as soon as practicable in order to limit the amount of time the student spends outside the classroom, but not so soon as prevent the parent/guardian from seeking counsel and making arrangements to attend the hearing.

At the hearing, the student shall have the right to be represented by counsel or advocate (at the student's/parent's expense), the right to question witnesses against him/her, confront evidence against him/her and the right to present witnesses and other evidence on his/her behalf. The Board's designee, currently the School's Associate Chief Operating Officer from Uncommon Schools, shall personally serve as hearing officer or may, in his/her discretion, designate a hearing officer to conduct the hearing. The hearing officer shall be authorized to administer oaths and make determinations on evidentiary issues. A record of the hearing shall be maintained, but no stenographic transcript shall be required. An audio recording shall be deemed a satisfactory record. The hearing officer shall make written findings of fact and recommendations as to the appropriate measure of discipline. The report of the hearing officer

will be final, and the Board's designee may accept all or any part within three days. A written statement will be provided to the student and parent(s) and guardian(s) stating the decision. This statement will also be placed in the student's permanent record.

If the parent(s)/guardian(s) fail to attend the hearing and fail to notify a school official of the need to reschedule the hearing prior to its start, or if the student withdraws from the School prior to occurrence of the hearing, the School may conduct the hearing in the parent(s)/guardian(s)' absence. In such an event, the School shall notify the parent(s) /guardian(s) in writing of the School's determination, the student's placement (if applicable) and their appeal rights, if any.

In the event a student is expelled from the School, he or she is not eligible to transfer to or enroll in any other charter school operated by the School's education corporation, Uncommon New York City Charter Schools.

If the parent(s)/guardian(s) are not satisfied with the decision of the Board's designee, they may file a written appeal to the Board of Trustees via the Instructional Leader or Operations Leader within five business days of the date of the decision of the Board's designee. The Board may adopt in whole or in part the decision of its designee and will make its decision based solely upon the record before it. Final decisions of the Board alleging a violation of the school's charter or of applicable law may be appealed to the school's authorizer, the State University of New York. The Charter Schools Institute, acting on behalf of the Board of Trustees of the State University of New York, shall investigate and respond. If the parent(s) / guardian(s) are not satisfied with the decision of the authorizer, the matter may be further appealed to the New York State Board of Regents. The State Education Department, acting on behalf of the New York State Board of Regents, shall investigate and respond.

#### *Alternative Instruction*

For any suspension (in-school or out of school) of one day or more, or any suspension of less than one day when the student has not yet received 60 minutes of instruction in grades K-6 or 120 minutes of instruction in grades 7-12, student has a right to live alternative instruction by qualified staff of at least 60 minutes (grades K-6) or 120 minutes (grades 7-12). The character of the instruction shall be such that the student receives all homework, takes all tests and quizzes and is able to keep pace with the student's class toward promotion in grade or graduation. The instruction shall be provided as soon as feasible after the suspension. The School may provide alternative instruction in-school or out-of-school at the School's discretion. If the student does not attend alternative instruction, the student shall be marked absent. If the School does not offer alternative instruction the student may not be recorded as absent.

In the case of an expulsion, alternative instruction will be provided for a reasonable period of time or until the student is enrolled at another accredited school, or otherwise participating in an accredited program to the extent the provision of such services is required by law. If the expulsion is in close proximity with the end of the school year, then the School will provide alternative instruction until the end of the school year.

## *Physical Restraints*

In an emergency, a school administrator, teacher, school staff member, or volunteer may use a physical restraint or time-out room as necessary to prevent a student from harming him/herself, other students, school staff or property or other persons or to maintain order if the student has refused to comply with a request to refrain from further disruptive acts. Parents will receive notification if your child is physically restrained or accesses the time out room.

### *Gun Free Schools Act*

Federal law (20 USC §7961) requires suspension from school for a period of not less than one year for a student who the School determines to have brought a firearm to school, or to have possessed a firearm at school, except that the School's Chief Operating Officer from Uncommon Schools may modify in writing such suspension requirement for a student on a case-by-case basis with the consent of the Board of Trustees. "Firearm" as used in this law means a "firearm," or "destructive device" as defined by 18 USC § 921(a), and includes firearms and explosives (New York Education Law § 3214 effectuates this federal law).

The School may also permanently expel a student for bringing a firearm to school.

It is the policy of the School that in the event a student brings a firearm to school or possesses one at school, the Associate Chief Operating Officer will refer the student to local law enforcement or to the NYS Office of Children and Family Services or NYC Administration for Children's Services or other presentment agency as a juvenile delinquent. In addition, the NYPD should be contacted to take possession of any firearm.

The provisions of the Gun Free Schools Act shall be construed in a manner consistent with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Therefore, the CSE will be consulted, even after a manifestation determination that the student's behavior was not a manifestation of the student's disability, regarding placement and services for such student.

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

In addition to the discipline procedures applicable to all students, the following procedures are applicable to students with disabilities. If a student is not specifically identified as having a disability but the School, prior to the behavior which is the subject of the disciplinary action, has a basis of knowledge—in accordance with 34 CFR 300.534—that a disability exists, the student may request to be disciplined in accordance with these provisions. The School shall comply with sections 300.530-300.536 of the Code of Federal Regulations and the following procedures, except that in the event that the following procedures are inconsistent with federal law and regulations, such federal law and regulations shall govern.

The School shall maintain written records of all suspensions and expulsions of students with a disability including the name of the student, a description of the behavior engaged in, the disciplinary action taken, and a record of the number of days a student has been suspended or removed for disciplinary reasons.

If a student identified as having a disability is suspended during the course of the school year for a total of eight (8) days, such student will immediately be referred to the CSE of the student's

district of residence for reconsideration of the student's educational placement. Such a student shall not be suspended for a total of more than ten (10) days during the school year without the specific involvement of the CSE of the student's district of residence prior to the eleventh day of suspension, because such suspensions may be considered to be a change in placement.

In considering the placement of students referred because of disciplinary problems, the CSE of the student's district of residence is expected to follow its ordinary policies with respect to parental notification and involvement.

#### *Due Process*

If discipline which would constitute a change in placement is contemplated for any student with an IEP, the following steps shall be taken: (1) not later than the date on which the decision to take such action is made, the parents of the student with a disability shall be notified by the school of that decision and provided the procedural safeguards notice described in 34 CFR §300.504; and (2) the CSE of the student's district of residence and other qualified personnel shall meet and review the relationship between the child's disability and the behavior subject to the disciplinary action (subject to CSE's availability).

If, upon CSE review, it is determined that the child's behavior was not a manifestation of his or her disability, then the child may be disciplined in the same manner as a child without a disability, except as provided in 34 CFR §300.530(d), which relates to the provision of services to students with disabilities during periods of removal.

Parents may request a hearing to challenge the manifestation determination. Except as provided below, the child will remain in his or her current educational placement pending the determination of the hearing.

If a parent requests a hearing or an appeal to challenge the interim alternative educational setting or the manifestation determination resulting from a disciplinary action relating to weapons or drugs, the child shall remain in the interim alternative educational setting pending the decision of the hearing officer or until the expiration of the time period provided for in the disciplinary action, whichever occurs first, unless the parent and School agree otherwise.

#### *Provision of Services During Removal*

Those students with special needs removed for a period of fewer than ten days will receive all classroom assignments and a schedule to complete such assignments during the time of their suspension. Provisions will be made to permit a suspended student to make up assignments or tests missed as a result of such suspension. The school also shall provide additional alternative instruction within the ten (10) days and by appropriate means to assist the student, so that the student is given full opportunity to complete assignments and master curriculum, including additional instructions, phone assistance, computer instruction and/or home visits and one-on-one tutoring.

During any subsequent removal that, combined with previous removals equals ten (10) or more school days during the School year, but does not constitute a change in placement, services must be provided to the extent determined necessary to enable the child to appropriately

progress in the general curriculum and in achieving the goals of his or her IEP. In these cases, school personnel, in consultation with the child's special education teacher, shall make the service determination.

During any removal to an interim alternative educational setting not to exceed 45 days for weapon, drug or infliction of serious bodily injury-related offenses pursuant to 34 CFR §300.530(g) services will be provided to the extent necessary to enable the child to appropriately progress in the general curriculum and in achieving the goals of his or her IEP. These service determinations will be made by the CSE of the student's district of residence. The School will, in consultation with the CSE, place students in interim alternative educational settings as appropriate per 34 CFR §300.520(g). The student should receive, as appropriate, a functional behavioral assessment, and behavioral intervention services and modifications that are designed to address the behavior violation so that it does not recur.

During any subsequent removal that does constitute a change in placement, but where the behavior is not a manifestation of the disability, the services must be provided to the extent necessary to enable the student to appropriately progress in the general curriculum and in achieving the goals of his or her IEP. The CSE of the student's district of residence will make the service determination. The student should receive, as appropriate, a functional behavioral assessment, and behavioral intervention services and modifications that are designed to address the behavior violation so that it does not recur.

#### *Compliance with the Child Find Requirements of IDEA*

The School will comply with the federal Child Find requirements (34 CFR §300.111), which require schools to have in place a process for identifying, locating and evaluating students with disabilities. Students enrolling for the first time in a New York public school will be screened by a team of teachers (including both regular and special education teachers) to identify any possible indication that the child may need a specialized or Individualized Education Program, or referral to the CSE of the student's district of residence. Other students will be brought to the attention of the team if they are demonstrating any problems within the regular classroom environment. Strategies will then be implemented to address any identified special needs of the student. Should the problems persist and a disability is suspected, the student will be referred to the CSE of the student's district of residence for an evaluation.

### **Student Interview and Searches**

#### *Student Interviews*

School staff may question or interview students and/or take statements from students regarding violations or potential violations of the Code of Conduct without the consent or presence of parents or legal guardians unless otherwise required by law.

#### *Searches of Property*

Students have no reasonable expectation of privacy rights in school lockers, cubbies, desks, or other school storage places. The School exercises overriding control over such school property, which may be opened and subjected to inspection at any time by school officials.

## *Searches of the Person*

The School authorizes the Instructional Leader and/or Operations Leader or their designee to conduct searches of students and their belongings if the authorized school official has reasonable suspicion to believe that the search will result in evidence that the student violated the law or the School's Code of Conduct or otherwise constituted a threat to the health, safety, welfare, or morals of the School, other students, school personnel, or any other person lawfully on school property or attending a School Function. An authorized school official, with minimal suspicion, may also conduct a search of a student's belongings that is minimally intrusive, such as touching the outside of a book bag for a security check so long as the school official has a legitimate reason for the very limited search, including investigative purposes.

An authorized school official may search a student or the student's belongings based upon information received from an informant who is deemed reliable, in the official's sole discretion. Individuals, other than the School's staff members, will be considered reliable informants if they have previously supplied information that was accurate and verified, they make an admission against their own interest, they provide the same information that is received independently from other sources, or they appear to be credible and the information they are communicating relates to an immediate threat to safety. School staff members will be considered reliable informants unless they have knowingly supplied information in the past that was not accurate.

Before searching a student or the student's belongings, the authorized school official should seek an admission from the student that he or she possesses physical evidence that they violated the law or the school code, or request the student to voluntarily consent to the search. Searches will be limited in scope to that which is necessary to locate the evidence sought.

Whenever practicable, searches will be conducted in the privacy of administrative offices with more than one witness present, and students will be present when their possessions are being searched.

## **DEFINITIONS**

For purposes of the code, the following definitions apply:

- 1) "Parent" means the parent, guardian, or person in a parental relationship to a student.
- 2) "School Property" means on or within any building, structure, athletic playing field, playground, parking lot or land contained within the real property boundary line of a public school, or in or on a School Bus.
- 3) "School Bus" means every motor vehicle owned by a public or governmental agency or private school and operated for the transportation of pupils, children of pupils, teachers and other persons acting in a supervisory capacity, to or from school or school activities, or, privately owned and operated for compensation for the transportation of pupils, children of pupils, teachers and other persons acting in a supervisory capacity to or from school or school activities..

- 4) "School Function" means any school-sponsored curricular or extra-curricular event or activity, whether on School Property or elsewhere.
- 5) "Discrimination" means taking any unwanted or adverse action, or denial of any educational opportunity, on the basis of a person's actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender, sex, or other characteristic protected by law. Discrimination may result from actions (or inaction) taken against a student by a fellow student or School staff member, or against a School staff member by a student.
- 6) "Emotional harm" that takes place in the context of "harassment or bullying" means harm to a student's emotional well-being through creation of a hostile school environment that has or would reasonably expect to have the effect of unreasonably and substantially interfering with a student's education.
- 7) "Gender" means a person's actual or perceived sex and includes a person's gender identity or expression.
- 8) "Sexual Orientation" means actual or perceived heterosexuality, homosexuality, or bisexuality.

## ADDITIONAL POLICIES

---

### HOMEWORK/LIFE'S WORK

Homework (or Life's Work at some schools) is an essential part of the Uncommon New York City educational program. It is designed to reinforce skills taught in the classroom, to help students develop a deeper understanding of concepts, and to promote good study habits. **Homework will be assigned EVERY night at the School.** This means that families must help students with their homework in ways that include reading instructions out loud, monitoring reading time, creating routines at home for students to follow each day, and providing a quiet, organized place to work. Family assistance is expected; however, the student must complete his or her homework independently in order to benefit from the additional practice. Please do not do your child's homework for him or her. Adult writing identified in a child's homework will be considered incomplete.

Homework includes 20-30 minutes of required reading every night, including weekends and holidays, for which a parent/guardian signature is required on the reading log. Homework must be completed in full and in accordance with Uncommon New York City's high standards for hard work and professional presentation.

All students are provided with homework folders that include a nightly reading log. Homework folders are designed to teach students essential organizational skills. **The reading log must be filled out properly with a parent/guardian signature, and all assigned homework must be completed and in the folder.** There are high standards for homework. All homework must be neat, clean, and thorough. Homework folders are turned in to teachers each morning as soon as students arrive at school.

**If the homework is late, missing, incomplete, or of poor quality, or if the reading log is not completed properly, then the parent/guardian will be notified and the student may face in-school consequences.** If the problem continues to exist then the parent/guardian will have to attend a meeting with the classroom teacher or a member of the School Leadership Team. During this meeting, an improvement plan will be developed.

### INDEPENDENT READING

Research shows that the #1 way to improve a student's reading skills is to have them READ, READ, READ. Students who read every day outside of school become strong readers and score highest on reading tests. **Supporting your child's independent reading at home is the best way to help them improve the speed, accuracy, vocabulary, and comprehension of their reading.** Although Uncommon New York City students have high-quality reading time during school, they must READ, READ, READ at home every night, each weekend and during any vacations from school. Parents/guardians should make sure to supervise their child in reading at least 20 minutes every night and every day on the weekends. It is also essential that children read out loud to parents/guardians, stop occasionally to summarize what they have just read and answer simple comprehension questions. **Please do not sign your child's independent reading log if you have not actually seen him or her read.** Students may be tempted to cut corners; skipping this

important reading requirement will only hurt your child in the long run. READ, READ, READ. There are no short cuts.

## **SCHOOL SUPPLIES**

Uncommon New York City will purchase all of the school supplies needed for the classroom. The only thing your scholar will need from home is a book bag that can fit a full-sized folder and books. He/she will use this to transport his/her homework folder to and from school to home daily. Your student needs to be able to carry this bag on his/her back. Other supplies to purchase for your student are those supplies that will be used at home. This includes: pencils, glue, scissors, and crayons.

## **STUDENT RECORDS**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records.

These rights are:

- The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the School receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the School Principal or appropriate school official a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The School official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected. Copies of records will be made available if requested by a parent or guardian.
- The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate or misleading. Parents or eligible students may ask the School to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write the School Principal or appropriate official, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. If the School decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the School will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.
- The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the School as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the School Board; a person or company with whom the School has contracted

to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility. Upon request, the School discloses education records without consent to officials of another school in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.

- The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the School to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20202-8520

The right to the policy applicable to the release of student directory information, which includes the student's name, address, telephone listing, date and place of birth, major field of study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of degrees and awards received, and the most recent educational agency or institution attended by the student, applies equally to military recruiters, the media, colleges and universities, and prospective employers. The School shall arrange to provide translations of this notice to non-English speaking parents in their dominant language.

## **HEALTH POLICIES**

The School provides the health services required by law. Students with serious injuries are taken to the hospital for emergency medical care and the parent(s) or guardian(s) are notified immediately.

### *Administration of Medication*

**Non-self-directed student:** The School nurse may administer medication to a non-self-directed student when a parent or guardian submits a written request from a physician indicating the frequency and dosage of prescribed medication. In the event of an emergency or the unavailability of the school nurse, a school administrator will administer the medication per the written instructions provided by the physician.

**Self-directed student:** Any self-directed student may take medication during school hours if he/she keeps the medication in the nurse's office and whose parent or guardian submits a written verification from a physician indicating the frequency and dosage of the prescribed medication.

The parent or guardian must assume responsibility to have the medication delivered directly to the nurse's office in a properly labeled original container.

Procedures will be developed for students taking medications off School grounds or after School hours while participating in a school-sponsored activity in accordance with State Education Department Guidelines.

Before any medication may be administered to or by any student during school hours, the Board requires:

- 1) The written request of the parent(s) or guardian(s), which will give permission for such administration and relieve the Board and its employees of liability for administration of medication
- 2) The written order of the prescribing physician, which will include the purpose of the medication, the dosage, the time at which or the special circumstances under which medication will be administered, the period for which medication is prescribed, and the possible side effects of the medication

Both documents will be kept on file in the office of the School nurse. Standardized request forms will be available from the School nurse.

The School abides by all New York State immunization requirements. Each new student must have a certificate of immunization at the time of registration or not later than the 14<sup>th</sup> day of school. Parents/guardians must present documentation that their children have received all required doses of vaccines or are waiting to receive the subsequent doses at the appropriate time intervals. Parents seeking to waive the immunization requirement should submit their request to the School nurse or Office Manager. The nurse will review the request and will advise the Instructional Leader, who will make the final decision on whether to grant the waiver request.

### *Mental Health Policy*

If a School staff member receives any indication that a student is contemplating harm to themselves and/or suicide the School staff member shall immediately notify the School social worker and the School staff may notify the student's parent or guardian and request that the parent/guardian come to the school immediately for a conference. If appropriate, the student will be kept under adult supervision by at least one staff member until the parent/guardian is contacted. At the conference, School staff may encourage the family to agree on an intervention plan, which may include immediate emergency psychiatric screening. Emergency personnel (911) shall be called if deemed necessary or appropriate by the School. The parent/guardian may be required to notify the School of the results of the screening and provide written psychiatric medical clearance prior to the pupil's return to School. In the event a student is prepared to return to School but does not yet have the required medical clearance, the School shall offer alternative instruction to the student pending receipt of such clearance.

## ADDRESSING CONCERNS

### Informal Complaint Procedures

An informal complaint is a complaint that does not concern the alleged violation of law or charter (examples include, but are not limited to, the following: a concern about an academic grade, the school's uniform policy, the school's cell phone policy, or the bus schedule, etc.). If you have an informal complaint, you are encouraged to contact the appropriate staff member at the School by telephone. All staff members are committed to responding promptly to informal complaints, either in person, by telephone, or in writing.

If an informal complaint is not responded to and resolved promptly or satisfactorily, you may contact the Principal or Director of Operations to discuss the matter; the Principal or Director of Operations shall respond in person, by telephone, or in writing.

### Formal Complaint Procedures

If you are not satisfied with the outcome or decision pertaining to the informal complaint, and if your complaint alleges a violation of the school's charter or law, you may file a formal complaint in writing to the Chair of the School's Board of Trustees. The contact information for the School's Board of Trustees designee can be obtained in person at the School's main office.

Upon receipt of a formal complaint, the Chair of the Board of Trustees shall appoint the School's Associate Chief Operating Officer from Uncommon Schools or another designee to review the complaint. If the substance of the complaint directly involves the School's Associate Chief Operating Officer, the Associate Chief Operating Officer shall not be appointed as the designee. After reviewing the complaint, the designee(s) will respond in writing to the complainant within a reasonable amount of time (within forty-five (45) days from the date of receipt of the complaint by the Board of Trustees).

If you are not satisfied with the response from the Chair of the Board of Trustees and/or the Chair's designee, you may submit a formal complaint to the School's authorizer, the SUNY Charter Schools Institute. Instructions on how to submit a complaint to the SUNY Charter Schools Institute can be found in the Institute's grievance guidelines available at [www.newyorkcharters.org/contact/](http://www.newyorkcharters.org/contact/). The Charter Schools Institute, acting on behalf of the Board of Trustees of the State University of New York, will investigate and respond.

If, after presentation of the complaint to the Charter Schools Institute, you determine that the Charter Schools Institute has not adequately addressed the complaint, you may present the case to the State Education Department, acting on behalf of the Board of Regents, which shall investigate and respond. The Charter Schools Institute and the State Education Department each has the power and the duty to take remedial action to resolve the complaint, as appropriate.

If you elect to follow the informal complaint procedures to resolve a formal complaint, you shall be permitted at any time to stop the informal complaint procedures and initiate formal complaint procedures.

If an individual or group voices a complaint at a public meeting of the School's Board of Trustees or to individual trustees, trustees shall not respond to the substance of the complaint, but instead shall thank the individual or group for their time and direct them to the relevant complaint procedures.

## HIGH SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

Students who are promoted from 8<sup>th</sup> grade at an Uncommon New York City middle school will be offered a 9<sup>th</sup> grade seat at one, designated Uncommon New York City high school (their middle school's "Assigned High School"). The Assigned High School is the school where they and all the graduating 8<sup>th</sup> graders from their middle school who choose to attend an Uncommon New York City high school will be offered a seat.

Due to capacity constraints in our high schools, Uncommon New York City is not able to offer student transfers between high schools or to offer students a choice of enrolling at a high school other than their Assigned High School at this time, absent exigent circumstances. Every Uncommon New York City high school offers the same i) rigorous college preparatory curriculum, ii) opportunities for students to explore passions and interests, iii) individual support and planning on students' paths to college, iv) alumni support, and v) commitment to meeting student needs.

Parents and students should contact the Director of Operations at their school with additional questions about high school enrollment.

## ASSESSMENT

Uncommon New York City employs multiple assessments to monitor student progress, inform instruction, and ensure that all students succeed. Staff work to ensure that assessments are not stressful times for students; rather they are presented as opportunities to show off all that students have learned. The assessments, which include the TerraNova (a nationally normed standardize test), the STEP, internally developed assessments, and the New York State assessments (beginning in 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade), are administered throughout the year. Teachers analyze the results to inform their instruction, identify students in need of extra help, and assess the overall effectiveness of the school's curriculum. Results are shared with families through the report cards that are distributed four times each year.

## PROMOTION POLICIES

Uncommon New York City has high standards for promotion. It is not automatically assumed that students will pass from one grade to the next: the student must earn promotion by demonstrating mastery of the essential knowledge and skills. Students may not be promoted if they are performing significantly below grade-level standards. **Promotion decisions will be based on a student's grades, standardized test scores, attendance, Homework/Life's Work completion record, and other assessments. We will look thoughtfully at student test scores, examples of student work, teacher observations, and other measures to make these decisions.**

A student may be retained if he or she misses **more than 10 days** in a school year, has significant behavior problems that result in a lot of missed instruction time, or if the student has persistent trouble completing school assignments.

Students who have IEPs will be promoted to the next grade based on successful completion of the goals of the IEP. However, students with IEPs who have significant attendance or behavioral problems unrelated to their IEPs may be retained for these reasons.

## **WITHDRAWAL**

Uncommon New York City schools are schools of choice. As such, circumstances may arise in which a parent or guardian wishes to transfer their child to a different school. Parents may withdraw students verbally or in writing.

Students who miss five or more consecutive days of school without notifying the school are subject to being un-enrolled. A student who attends another school is subject to being un-enrolled from Uncommon New York City.

Uncommon New York City will ensure the timely transfer of any necessary school records to the student's new school. If a parent or guardian wishes to re-enroll in an Uncommon New York City school after un-enrolling, they must submit a new application, and will be placed at the end of the school's waitlist.

## **BUILDING SAFETY AND SECURITY**

---

There are a number of basic procedures the school has in order to ensure the safety and security of its students and staff. Cooperation on everyone's part will go a long way in guaranteeing that the business of the school – teaching and learning – can take place.

### **CLOSED CAMPUS**

Under no circumstances are students to leave their assigned floor of the building or use any exit other than the School's designated entrance/exit without permission. A student with permission to leave may only leave under the escort and supervision of an authorized adult – who has physically come to the Main Office to sign a student out – unless the School has been given prior written permission authorizing unaccompanied departure. Once students have entered in the morning, they may not leave the building unless a staff member escorts them.

### **VISITORS TO THE SCHOOL**

The School encourages parent(s)/guardian(s) and other citizens to visit the School's classrooms to observe the work of students, teachers and other staff. Schools are a place of work and learning, however, certain limits must be set for such visits. The Instructional Leader or Operations Leader is responsible for all persons in the building and on the grounds. For these reasons, the following rules apply to visitors to the School:

- 1) Anyone who is not a regular staff member or student of the School will be considered a "visitor."
- 2) All visitors to the School must sign in and report to the main office.
- 3) Teachers are expected not to take class time to discuss individual matters with visitors.
- 4) Any unauthorized person on school property will be reported to the Instructional Leader or Operations Leader. Unauthorized persons will be asked to leave. The police may be called if the situation warrants.
- 5) All visitors are required to abide by the rules for public conduct on school property contained in this Code of Conduct. By entering school property, visitors accept these rules.

The School is committed to providing an orderly, respectful environment; therefore, it is necessary to regulate public conduct on school property and at school functions.

### **PARENTAL CONDUCT**

The Principal has the authority and the responsibility for assuring that parents, guardians and other third parties conduct themselves appropriately while on School property and do not engage in disruptive or threatening conduct that disturbs the tranquility of the School. Accordingly, parents, guardians and other third parties shall be held to same standards of conduct as students while on School property or at a School-sponsored event, whether such event takes place on or off the School's property. In the event that a parent, guardian or other third party fails to conduct himself or herself appropriately while on School property or at a School-sponsored

event, the School may place restrictions on such person, including, without limitation, banning him or her from entering on to the School's property and/or attending future School-sponsored events.

## **SHARED SPACE**

Certain Uncommon New York City schools are extremely fortunate to share space with other schools, including NYC Department of Education schools. Therefore, all members of the Uncommon New York City community need to be thoughtful and respectful toward members of the school communities with which we share space.

- Uncommon New York City students should never be on other school's floors or rooms, without a staff member.
- Students will exhibit professional and courteous behavior whenever traveling to or walking in shared parts of the school building and on the school grounds.
- Uncommon New York City students must respect the authority of staff members from other schools.
- If an Uncommon New York City student has a negative interaction with any member of the other school communities, that student should immediately inform a school staff member and allow the Principal and/or Director of Operations or his/her designee to resolve the situation.
- Students traveling to and from school on foot or via subway need to conduct themselves as if they were in the school hallways: travel on the sidewalk in a safe and orderly fashion; dispose of waste appropriately; do not loiter outside or near the school building; and remember that they are representatives of Uncommon New York City and treat all neighborhood community members with respect.
- Families who drive their children to or from school must not block access to the main entrances to the school or cause other disruptions to traffic patterns.
- In general, all members of the Uncommon New York City community need to be sensitive to how their actions affect the school's neighbors in and around their school.

## **EMERGENCIES**

In case of an emergency, 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, including during tutoring, Homework Center and detention, or attempt to withdraw students from the building without notifying and receiving permission from staff members in the Main Offices.

## **FIRE SAFETY AND EVACUATION PROCEDURES**

*Please note, some procedures may change once the school year has officially begun. Students will be notified of and trained in any significant changes.*

The School follows the General Response Protocol for all building-related safety drills and emergency events, as required by the New York City Department of Education. In case of an emergency, if a student or staff member sees fire or smells smoke, he or she should close the door. Upon hearing an alarm, school staff will assemble students in their rooms and proceed out

of the building according to the fire evacuation plan posted in each room. Students should follow the direction of staff members who will verify the safety of the stairwells and lead students outside the building to the designated locations, where school staff will line up students by class and take attendance.

Frequently throughout the school year, students and staff will participate in a minimum of 12 emergency drills, including fire, lockdown, and shelter-in drills to ensure that the entire school community is familiar with the appropriate response in the event of each type of emergency. This handbook shall serve as notice that these drills will take place. The school will notify families by letter or auto-dialer in the event of an actual evacuation.

In case of a more serious emergency, should it be necessary to evacuate our school before, during, or after the school day—and it appears that we will be unable to return to the school for an extended period of time or for the rest of the day—school staff and students will evacuate according to the school’s evacuation plan. Staff will line up students in a safe and orderly fashion on the sidewalks outside of the evacuation site. After staff takes attendance, should conditions permit, all staff and students will return promptly to school.

## **TRANSPORTATION AND SAFETY**

### **Arrival and Dismissal**

Students should not arrive at school earlier than the arrival time specified in the Appendix for your child’s Uncommon New York City school. Students arriving at school before the designated time will need to wait outside the school doors. At dismissal, students should either leave the school building, or attend afterschool tutoring or Homework Center. Students are never allowed to wait in any other portion of the building. They must wait in the Main Office or in another designated afterschool location, under the supervision of a staff member. Students may not wait outside without staff supervision.

Student transportation will be provided by the New York City Department of Education. Students who live  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile – 1 mile from school are eligible for half-fare metro cards. Students in grades K-6 who live 1 mile or more from school may be eligible for yellow busing or metro cards. (Students in grades 7-12 are not eligible for yellow busing.) Buses will pick up and drop off students directly in front of the school building. As a result, we ask that parents who are dropping off and/or picking up students be mindful of the tight traffic situation and plan accordingly.

We also encourage families who drive who pick up their children in the afternoon to arrive no earlier than dismissal time. Announcements and a staggered dismissal sometimes delay students from leaving the building at exactly dismissal time.

We ask for families to please cooperate with this policy to guarantee a safe, timely, and orderly environment for all students and families at dismissal.

### **Bus Behavior**

It should be clear to all students and their families that a public school bus is a form of school-sponsored transportation. Therefore, appropriate behavior as laid out in the Code of Conduct is

expected at all times. No adult besides a school staff member may board the bus for any reason without the explicit permission of the bus driver. All parents are expected to conduct themselves with respectfulness and professionalism at all times. Violation of this policy may result in a suspension from transportation and/or other consequence.

### **MetroCards**

Full-fare Student MetroCards are provided to students who live more than one mile from the school and are not provided service by a public school bus. Half-fare metro cards are provided to students that live between one-half of a mile to a mile away from school. Both MetroCards provide three trips on both subway and surface bus lines. On most trips, students can use their cards freely to transfer from bus to subway, bus to bus, or subway to bus.

Full-fare MetroCards are good for use to and from school and school-related activities during the hours specified on the back of the card, in most cases 5:30 AM to 8:30 PM. The card is good for the entire school year, but only on days when school is in session.

### **Students Who Walk**

For students who walk to and from school, and for students who may be walking from the subway station or bus stops, a number of streets must be crossed. Families should instruct students to use all of the appropriate crossing lights at each intersection, and to cross each intersection only when it is safe to do so within the designated crosswalks. Parents are urged to call the local New York City Police Department for questions or concerns.

### **FIELD TRIPS/END-OF-YEAR EVENTS**

The School's curriculum may sometimes require outside learning experiences or special school events. During these activities – which are a privilege and not a right – 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 each school field trip or event will be sent home prior to the trip/event, and should be signed by a parent or guardian. Students who fail to return the signed slip – or who are not permitted to attend as a result of an earlier incident – will not be eligible to participate, and 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. The use of portable electronic devices is prohibited on field trips unless the staff chaperones indicate otherwise.

### **SNOW CLOSINGS**

In the event of poor weather conditions such as heavy snow, please listen to your local television or radio stations, or call 311, for relevant information regarding school cancellation. Uncommon New York City follows the exact same cancellation policies as New York City Public Schools so if New York City Public Schools are closed, so are Uncommon New York City schools.

## **GENERAL SCHOOL INFORMATION**

---

### **TO CONTACT US**

Please see the Appendix for your child's Uncommon New York City school's phone number and email address. We are committed to establishing and maintaining an open and respectful line of communication between families and School 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 24-48 hours in the event that a message is left. Families will also have an opportunity to meet with staff during the scheduled family-teacher conference days. In addition, meetings can be arranged at any time by appointment.

While we certainly welcome, encourage, and appreciate contact between families and teachers, we also ask that families be respectful of the enormous and constant demands made on all of our staff. For example, consistently contacting a faculty member several times per week, can impact his or her ability to provide the best learning experience for all students. We encourage families to use the school's Advisory system by treating a student's Advisor as the point person in order to coherently address or answer any questions.

### **NONDISCRIMINATION**

Uncommon New York City 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 II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA); or on the basis of age, in accordance with the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1974 (ADEA). In addition, no person shall be discriminated against in admission to Uncommon New York City Charter Schools on the basis of race, sex, color, creed, sex, ethnicity, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, age, ancestry, athletic performance, special need, proficiency in the English language or a foreign language, or prior academic achievement. No person shall be discriminated against in obtaining the advantages, privileges or access to the courses of study offered by Uncommon New York City on the basis of race, sex, color, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation. Finally, pregnant students are allowed to remain in regular education classes and participate in extracurricular activities with non-pregnant students throughout their pregnancy, and after giving birth are permitted to return to the same academic and extracurricular program as before the leave (Title IX). The contact information for the School's Title IX Coordinator to whom complaints may be directed can be found in the Appendix of this document.

### **TITLE I PARENT INVOLVEMENT POLICY**

As a Title I Schoolwide LEA and school, each Uncommon New York City charter school implements a Parent Involvement Policy in adherence to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, offering programs, activities and procedures for the involvement of parents in all of its schools with Title I, Part A programs, consistent with section 1118 of the Elementary and

Secondary Education Act (ESEA). These programs, activities and procedures are planned and operated annually by the School with the consultation of parents.

Parents are actively involved in the school community. Uncommon New York City parents are eligible to participate in the life of the School and attend its activities, events, and workshops. The School and parents meet regularly to organize events and coordinate school fundraisers, and annually develops, reviews, and the Parent Involvement Policy at the Title I Annual Meeting.

Uncommon New York City school staff works with school leaders to implement effective parent involvement activities, with the goal of improving student academic achievement and school performance. Uncommon Schools also offers ongoing technical assistance and support to each Uncommon New York City school to ensure ongoing compliance with Title I.

Uncommon New York City will conduct an annual evaluation of its Parent Involvement Policy. At the annual Title I Annual meeting (August Orientation), parent representatives participate actively in this evaluation of parent involvement events, communication, and policies. Parents are encouraged to becoming involved in the School, and are invited to meet regularly to implement ongoing, meaningful parent involvement at each Uncommon New York City school.

Each Uncommon New York City school will build the community's capacity for strong parental involvement, in order to ensure effective involvement of parents and to support a partnership among the school, parents, and the community to improve student academic achievement, through the following activities specifically described below:

- A. The School will provide assistance to parents of children, in understanding topics such as the State's academic content and achievement standards, and the State and local academic assessments including alternate assessments. A brief overview of these assessments can be found in the accompanying Student-Family Handbook, and these topics are also reviewed at the Annual Title I Meeting. In addition, the School will work with parents to help them monitor their child's progress and collaborate with educators to further their child's progress.
- B. The School will provide materials and training to help parents work with their children to improve their children's academic achievement, such as literacy training, and using technology, as appropriate, to foster parental involvement. This includes the periodic offering of family meetings and other school-sponsored events, which are open to all parents.
- C. Uncommon New York City will educate its teachers, principals and other staff, in how to reach out to, communicate with, and work with parents as equal partners, in the value and utility of contributions of parents, and in how to implement and coordinate parent programs and build ties between parents and schools. These trainings will focus on the school's ongoing parental involvement events, including Family Teacher Conferences, and will take place during August Professional Development each year.
- D. Uncommon New York City will ensure that information related at school and parent programs, meetings, and other activities, is shared in an understandable and uniform

format, including alternative formats upon request, and, to the extent practicable, in a language the parents can understand.

## **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION POLICY**

Uncommon New York City Charter Schools (the “School”) complies with the following in order to abide by the New York State Freedom of Information Law (Article 6 of the New York Public Officers Law):

Any requests for school records or information from the School must be in writing or via e-mail and submitted to the Records Access Officer, who will be the Director of Operations. Within five business days of receipt of a written request, the school, depending on the requested information, responds by:

- Making the information available at the school itself during normal business hours to the person requesting it or, if requested, sending existing electronic documents via e-mail;
- Denying the request in writing; or
- Providing a written acknowledgment of receipt of the request that supplies an approximate date for when the request will be granted or denied, which date will be reasonable under the circumstances of the request.
- If a request will be granted in whole or in part, but cannot be granted within 20 days of the date of the school’s acknowledgement of the request, the school shall state in writing the reason why it cannot be so granted and give a date certain when it will be granted in whole or in part, which date will be reasonable under the circumstances of the request.

If the person requesting information is denied access to a record, s/he may, within 30 days, appeal such denial to the Principal. (The records access officer and the appeals entity shall not be the same person.) Upon timely receipt of such an appeal, the School, within 10 business days of the receipt of the appeal, fully explains the reasons for further denial or provides access to the record(s) sought. The School also forwards a copy of the appeal, as well as its ultimate determination, to the Committee on Open Government immediately after receipt or determination, respectively. If further denied, the person requesting information may further appeal through an Article 78 proceeding. Likewise, if the School does not follow the FOIL appeal procedures, it will constitute a denial of the FOIL appeal for purposes of allowing the requester to bring as Article 78 proceeding.

The School may deny access to requested records if:

- Such records are specifically exempted from disclosure by state or federal statute;
- Such access would constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy;
- Such records, if disclosed, would impair present or imminent contract awards or collective bargaining negotiations;
- Such records are trade secrets and which, if disclosed, would cause substantial injury to the competitive position of a commercial enterprise;
- Such records are compiled for law enforcement purposes and which, if disclosed, would meet the conditions set forth in Public Officers Law §87(2)(e);

- Such records, if disclosed, would endanger the life or safety of any person;
- Such records are computer access codes; and/or
- Such records are internal materials which are not statistical or factual tabulations of data, instructions to staff that affect the public, a final policy, nor external audits.

The School maintains:

- A record of the final vote of each trustee in every proceeding in which the trustees vote;
- A record setting forth the name, public office address, title and salary of every officer or employee of the education corporation; and
- A reasonably detailed current list, by subject matter, of all records in the school's custody or possession.

There is no fee to inspect or search for records. Photocopies of records can be made on-site for 10 cents per page. By law, the fee for copying records shall not exceed 25 cents per page for photocopies not exceeding 9 by 14 inches. The fee for photocopies of records which are not an appropriate size for the School's photocopy equipment shall not exceed the actual reproduction cost, which is the average unit cost for copying a record, excluding fixed costs of the agency such as operator salaries.

The School will publicly post a notice setting forth the name and address of its records access officer, its records appeals officer, and the location where records will be made available. In addition to providing this policy in the family handbook, the school will make these regulations available in the office upon request.

## **OPEN MEETINGS POLICY**

All meetings of the Board of Trustees and all committees of the Board ("Board meetings") will be open to the general public.

- 1) A calendar of all scheduled Board meetings will be posted at the school as soon as it becomes available.
- 2) The Board will provide notice of the time and place of any Board meeting that is scheduled more than one week in advance to the news media and shall conspicuously post such notice in one or more public locations at least 72 hours in advance of the scheduled meeting.
- 3) The Board will provide the time and place of any Board meeting that is scheduled less than one week in advance to the news media (to the extent practicable) and will conspicuously post such notice in one or more public locations at a reasonable time in advance of the scheduled meeting. Public notices will be placed on the bulletin board in the reception area. Public notices will reflect the location of Board meetings or any location changes.
- 4) To the extent possible, the school will publicly post notices of Board meetings immediately after each meeting date is determined.

- 5) Upon request, public records that will be the subject of Board discussion or vote shall be made available at or before each Board meeting in the same manner as records subject to FOIL.
- 6) For the purposes of determining a quorum, Trustees must be physically present at the meeting or participate via video-conference from an accessible location listed in the meeting notice; members not physically present or present via video-conference may join discussions via electronic means but may not vote.
- 7) Written minutes will be recorded of all Board meetings. Minutes will include:
  - a. The date and time of the meeting
  - b. A summary of all motions, proposals, resolutions, and any other matters formally voted upon
  - c. A record of how each Trustee voted on each matter
  - d. In the case of an executive session, the minutes will include a record of the final determination of any action that was taken.
- 8) Minutes of open sessions will be available to the public upon request from the Director of Operations within two weeks of the date of the meeting; minutes of executive sessions will be available within one week of the meeting.
- 9) All executive sessions shall be conducted as part of an open meeting; they are not considered separate meetings per se. An executive session may be called via motion and majority vote of the entire number of Board members; the motion must specifically identify the general area or areas to be considered.
- 10) All Board members may participate in the executive session, and the Board may authorize others to be present as well.
- 11) No public funds may be appropriated during an executive session.
- 12) An executive session can only be conducted by the Board for consideration of one or more of the following matters:
  - a. Matters which imperil the public safety if disclosed;
  - b. Any matter which may disclose the identity of a law enforcement agent or informer;
  - c. Information relating to current or future investigation or prosecution of a criminal offense which would imperil effective law enforcement if disclosed;
  - d. Discussions regarding proposed or pending litigation;
  - e. Matters which apply to school employees or collective negotiations which are within the scope of Article 14 of the Civil Service Law;
  - f. The medical, financial, credit, or employment history of a particular person or corporation, or matters leading to the appointment, employment, promotion, demotion, discipline, suspension, dismissal, or removal of a particular person or corporation;
  - g. The preparation, grading, or administration of examinations; and
  - h. The proposed acquisition, sale, or lease of real property or the proposed acquisition of securities, or sale or exchange of securities held by such public body, but only when publicity would substantially affect the value.

Open Meetings Law policy is available in the School's Main Office.

*We thank you for your cooperation and wish you the best as a member of the Uncommon New York City community. Welcome!*