

# DEMOCRACY PREP PUBLIC SCHOOLS



## STUDENT & FAMILY HANDBOOK

**WELCOME TO THE DPPS TEAM AND FAMILY!**

**2016–17**

**Democracy Prep Congress Heights**

**Democracy Prep Public Schools**  
1767 Park Avenue, 3rd Floor  
New York, NY 10035

**[www.democracyprep.org](http://www.democracyprep.org)**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

MESSAGE TO OUR FAMILIES .....	3
OUR SCHOOLS .....	3
OUR MISSION, VISION, AND CORE VALUES .....	3
TEAM AND FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY CODE .....	5
BASIC OPERATIONAL EXPECTATIONS AT OUR SCHOOLS .....	7
SCHOLAR EXPECTATIONS AND RIGHTS .....	12
HEALTH POLICIES AND ATTENDANCE IMPLICATIONS .....	18
SCHOLAR LIFE .....	20
FAMILY ENGAGEMENT .....	23
DREAM PRIVILEGES .....	26
CODE OF CONDUCT .....	27
THE DREAM DOLLAR SYSTEM.....	30
PROCEDURES FOR DISCIPLINARY VIOLATIONS.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
VISITING OUR SCHOOLS .....	34
MISCELLANEOUS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES.....	35
BULLYING PREVENTION POLICY.....	40
COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE.....	47

## MESSAGE TO OUR FAMILIES

Welcome to Democracy Prep Public Schools! As a part of our team and family, you have joined a community of people who have dedicated their professional lives to helping all children reach their full potential.

The mission of Democracy Prep Public Schools is to educate responsible citizen-scholars for success in the college of their choice and a life of active citizenship.

The motto of Democracy Prep Public Schools is: *Work Hard. Go to College. Change the World!*

As is the case with any family, the Democracy Prep Public Schools network needs a set of rules and guidelines to help us understand and get along with each other. The purpose of this Handbook is to ensure that we have consistent expectations across our schools. The network Handbook may not answer all of your questions, but it should provide examples of Democracy Prep’s mission, procedures, expectations, and guiding principles.

This Handbook replaces any prior years’ Handbooks, including those for Democracy Prep middle schools. As Democracy Prep always seeks to improve, we reserve the right to amend, modify or change the provisions of this Handbook. We will of course provide all scholars and families notice of any significant changes in the policies reflected in the following pages.

Please note that where we refer to “parents” in this Handbook, that term is meant to include both parents and legal guardians even where we do not specifically refer to guardians.

## OUR SCHOOLS

### **Democracy Prep Charter School**

Grades 6–8: 2230 Fifth Avenue  
New York, NY 10037

Grades 9-12: 222 West 134<sup>th</sup> Street  
New York, NY 10030

### **Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School**

Grades K-3: 2005 Madison Avenue  
New York, NY 10035

Grades 6-8: 207 West 133<sup>rd</sup> Street  
New York, NY 10030

Grades 9-12: 212 West 120<sup>th</sup> Street  
New York, NY 10027

### **Democracy Prep Endurance Charter School**

Grades 6-8: 250 West 127<sup>th</sup> Street  
New York, NY 10027

Grades 9-10: 240 East 123<sup>rd</sup> Street  
New York, NY 10035

### **Freedom Prep Charter School**

Grades K-11: 1000 Atlantic Avenue  
Camden, NJ 08104

### **Democracy Prep Congress Heights PCS**

Grades Pre-K3-7: 3100 Martin Luther King Jr.  
Ave, SE  
Washington, DC 20032

### **Bronx Prep Charter School**

Grades 6-12: 3872 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue  
Bronx, NY 10457

### **Harlem Prep Charter School**

Grades K-5 & 9: 240 East 123<sup>rd</sup> Street  
New York, NY 10035

Grades 6-8: 232 East 103<sup>rd</sup> Street  
New York, NY 10029

### **Democracy Prep Baton Rouge Charter School**

Grades K-1, 5-7: 4055 Prescott Road  
Baton Rouge, LA 70805

## OUR MISSION, VISION, AND CORE VALUES

### Our Mission

The mission of Democracy Prep Public Schools is to educate responsible citizen-scholars for success in the college of their choice and a life of active citizenship.

We will achieve our mission through:

- Rigorous college-prep academics
- Frequent use of data and assessment
- More time to learn
- A respectful and structured school culture
- Exemplary teachers and staff members

### Our Vision

Democracy Prep will provide a rigorous academic program focused on the knowledge, skills, and character necessary to master core academic subjects in preparation for success in college. Scholars will receive highly structured civic and leadership education, preparing them to be active citizens in our democratic society.

### Our Core Values: D.R.E.A.M.

**Discipline.** *We do our best or we do it again!* Our scholars, teachers, and staff understand that discipline is the key to success. We have clear rules and high expectations. We expect all adults our scholars in our community to meet these expectations so that our scholars can learn in a safe and orderly environment. Our teachers and staff continuously reinforce these expectations in order to empower our scholars to do what's best for their education and for our community, supporting our scholars as they build the internal discipline necessary to do the hard work that it takes to get them to and through college. Discipline means staying focused, following rules and instructions the first time they are issued, studying and reading every night, and establishing and adhering to personal routines that will lead to success.

**Respect.** *I'm nice to you, be nice to me.* Our community is built on respect. Teachers respect scholars by expecting them to achieve great things and by treating them with dignity and fairness. Scholars respect all teachers and staff because they understand the importance of their education and the need to preserve precious learning time. Scholars respect each other because we are a team and family who work together to achieve our goals. Each member of our community treats every other member with respect in everything we do and say, creating a productive and supportive school environment that brings out the best in us all.

**Enthusiasm.** *Excited scholars, our school has them!* When you work hard, it is essential to find joy in your work. We believe in teaching children how to be joyful in their learning by approaching it with curiosity, gratitude, and spirit! We also believe in creating opportunities for children to earn the ability to play together as a team, as enthusiasm is created by working hard. Enthusiasm means actively participating in every moment of class, asking questions even when you are confused, adding juicy details in writing or solving a math problem with several different strategies, walking with urgency to and from classes, taking a risk to try something difficult, keeping your head up even when faced with a challenge, and finding ways to show that you love what you do.

**Accountability.** *We tell the truth and take responsibility.* Accountability is the conscious and public act of taking





responsibility for something you have done. In order to work in a community with high expectations, respectful conversations, and positive attitudes, scholars, teachers, and staff will hold each other accountable for our words, actions and decisions. Accountability means accepting the consequences of our decisions, accepting praise, being proud of accomplishments and hard work, acknowledging and apologizing for mistakes, changing hurtful behavior into supportive behavior, and letting an adult know if someone in our community is not upholding our values. Accountability shows that we are honest and responsible with ourselves and with each other and are therefore prepared to achieve our fullest potential.

**Maturity.** *When you act grown up, you'll be what you want to be.* Maturity is modeling compassion and perseverance in our school and our community. It is connecting our words and actions with positive or negative outcomes. To be mature means that you find ways to be kind to your team and family – even toward the people that you may not know or like. Maturity means that you work hard and put forth 100% effort because your future is important to you.

## TEAM AND FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY CODE

**Teachers:** We fully commit to Democracy Prep in the following ways:

- We will arrive at Democracy Prep each day at the time determined by our school leader and stay until our classrooms and lessons are prepared for our scholars' success on the following day.
- We will work harder and longer than others because we will do whatever it takes for our scholars to achieve excellence.
- We will make ourselves available to scholars and parents by phone, email, writing, and in person, and we will respond respectfully to any concerns they have.
- We will always protect the safety, interests, and rights of all individuals in the classroom.
- We will prepare engaging and rigorous lessons with meaningful homework assignments and frequent assessments.
- We will use data from assessments and assignments to make sure every scholar succeeds.
- We will provide individual and small group tutoring to ensure our scholars succeed.

*Failure to adhere to these commitments can lead to our removal from the DPPS Team and Family.*

**Scholars:** I fully commit to Democracy Prep in the following ways:

- I will arrive to school each day on time and ready to learn.
- I will remain at school until dismissal.
- I will attend required tutoring sessions after school as assigned and Saturday Academy when necessary.
- I will attend Summer Academy in July if it is necessary for promotion or success.
- I will share reports of my academic and behavioral progress with my family whenever I am asked.
- I will abide by the rules contained in this DPPS Handbook.
- I will ask appropriately for clarification if I am confused about why something is important. I will remember that my teachers and my school want what is best for me, even when I do not always understand how.
- I will use DISCIPLINE to complete my homework, prepare for assessments, arrive at school on time, and wear the proper uniform.
- I will act with RESPECT towards my peers, my teachers, all community members, and all school property.
- I will show ENTHUSIASM in all that I do – learning in class, participating in after-school activities, attending a field trip, or presenting in front of the school.
- I will show ACCOUNTABILITY by admitting when I have made a mistake and by not blaming other people for my actions.

- I will strive for MATURITY in my actions and thoughts, which means figuring out the right thing to do and doing it even when no one is watching.

*I am responsible for my own behavior and I will follow my teachers' directions. I understand that failure to adhere to these commitments can lead to the imposition of appropriate consequences, including the loss of privileges.*

**Families:** We fully commit to Democracy Prep in the following ways:

- Our family will ensure our scholar arrives at school on time or before the start of the scheduled school day Monday through Friday and for any required Saturday Academy.
- We will pick our scholar up on time each day.
- We will make arrangements so that our child can remain at Democracy Prep until he or she is dismissed.
- We will make arrangements so that our child can attend any and all required after school activities and provide documentation when necessary family affairs conflict with detention or school events.
- We will ensure our child attends Summer Academy if deemed necessary by the school.
- We will check homework logs nightly and always help our child learn in the best way we know how.
- We will review all communication from the school and the teachers, check and assist with homework and review planners nightly, allow our children to call his or her teachers for help when necessary, and make sure that they read every night.
- We will call our child's teachers when we have a concern about our child's academic or behavioral performance or progress.
- We will support the school's civic initiatives by being a registered voter and attending advocacy events, including civic field trips.
- We will make ourselves available to the school, attend as many school events as we are able, and be in close contact with our child's teachers.
- We will volunteer and contribute to and support the school in every way possible.
- We will provide the school with our most up-to-date contact information.
- We will allow our child to participate in field trips if he or she has earned them.
- We will ensure our child understands and follows the school's attendance, tardiness, and uniform policies.
- We will do whatever it takes if our scholar is struggling socially, emotionally, or academically, including, but not limited to, sitting in our child's classroom, picking up our child in an emergency, and getting outside medical care or evaluations.
- We will support Democracy Prep in enforcing the school rules so as to protect the safety, interest, and rights of all individuals in the classroom. We, not the school, are responsible for the behavior and actions of our child.

*By working with Democracy Prep, I am building a partnership that prepares my child for success in scholarship and citizenship. Failure to adhere to these commitments can cause our child to lose various privileges at Democracy Prep.*

## BASIC OPERATIONAL EXPECTATIONS AT OUR SCHOOLS

### Arrival and Dismissal

An on-time arrival is crucial to laying the foundation for academic success. Being on time also communicates important values. We expect all of our scholars to prioritize punctuality and adopt the belief that being on time shows accountability, discipline, and respect. Scholars are always expected to arrive on time for school and for school events. Tardiness will not be tolerated. A scholar will receive an appropriate consequence each time he or she is tardy. Repeated infractions will result in further consequences.

Weekday	ARRIVAL	DISMISSAL	Consequence for Tardiness
<b>M,T,Th,F</b>	In the building by 8:00 a.m.	4:15 p.m.	Loss of DREAM Dollars
<b>Wednesday</b>	In the building by 8:00 a.m.	2:00 p.m.	Loss of instructional time (which may result in Summer Academy or being retained)

*Please note that scholars arriving after 8:00 will not have time to eat a full breakfast.*

### Transportation

Democracy Prep will help to ensure safe transportation as per state and/or city regulations. All requests or concerns regarding transportation must be submitted in writing to our Registrar or Operations Manager.

#### **DROP-OFF at Democracy Prep:**

Doors open for scholars at 7:45 a.m. After 8:00 a.m., scholars will be considered late. Do not leave your child unattended outside the school prior to 7:45.

#### **PICK-UP at Democracy Prep:**

Regular dismissal is at 4:15 p.m. on all weekdays, except Wednesday. Wednesday dismissal is at 2:00 p.m.. Aftercare services will be provided until 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday All escorts picking up scholars must be on the approved escort list provided by the family prior to the school year, and ID will be checked the first time any escort picks up a scholar. If you are picking up a scholar who is not yours, please make sure you are authorized to pick up that scholar. Siblings of scholars must be at least 14 years of age to pick up siblings in Grades K-2.

### School Closings

Democracy Prep generally follows the same calendar for holidays and weather-related emergencies as DCPS. Families should check the school's website and Facebook group page for further details on school closings. In addition, families will receive an automated call from the school notifying them of any weather-related closings.

### Food and Meals

Democracy Prep participates in the National School Lunch Program, which provides free or reduced-price lunches to eligible scholars. Applications and eligibility criteria are provided to all parents, and applications are required to be completed by all families every year.

A healthy breakfast and snack is available each day for DPPS scholars. Scholars must adhere to the school rules regarding appropriate time and place to eat any food items not provided by the school. All breakfast items must meet guidelines for a healthy breakfast. The school reserves the right to confiscate any items not meeting these guidelines (e.g. fast food) and to replace them with DPPS-approved items.

Lunch is available for scholars on all full-length school days. Lunch choices and cost may vary by school. Scholars whose families meet the eligibility requirements and complete the requisite paperwork will receive free or reduced-price lunch. As above, scholars must follow the guidelines provided by the school regarding food items brought from home. The school reserves the right to confiscate any items not meeting these guidelines and replace them with DPPS-approved items. Lunches brought from home must be healthy. Fast food, soda, and candy are never acceptable items for lunch. Pastries, sugary snacks, and other calorie-rich items should not be sent. Families who send scholars to school with questionable lunches may be asked to meet with the School Nurse. Scholars may bring their lunch from home in a closed lunch bag with a zipper and a clear label of the scholar's name. Scholars may NOT bring lunch in a plastic bag. Each scholar may bring an unfrozen transparent water bottle with him or her each day. If a scholar brings a lunch from home, the lunch must meet the following requirements:

1. A beverage that is milk, water, or at least 15% juice
2. A main item (sandwich, yogurt, or leftovers)
3. ONE snack item
4. ONE dessert item
5. Unlimited fresh fruits and vegetables

The school reserves the right to confiscate any items not conforming to these guidelines and, if it so chooses, to replace them with DPPS-approved items.

The following items will be immediately confiscated and not replaced if brought onto school grounds:

1. Gum
2. Candy
3. Soda and other high-fructose corn syrup products
4. Fast food

Parents are responsible for informing the school of any allergies that their scholars may have prior to the school year.

#### Attendance and Punctuality

Attendance is vital for the educational well-being of individual scholars and the school community.

Parents and guardians are expected to ensure that their child attends school every day and are strongly discouraged from scheduling appointments for their children during the school hours. **If your child must be absent due to illness or an emergency, please contact the school with as much advance notice as possible, and no later than 7:30 a.m. on the day of the absence.** Arrangements should be made to pick up homework. In order for the absence to be verified, you must both afford the school as much advance notice as possible and also provide documentation following the absence explaining the nature of the sickness or emergency (e.g. a doctor's note or a detailed letter including the date(s) and reason for the absence).

Undocumented absences are never acceptable. Parents must provide a valid absence excuse within five days after a scholar returns to school — undocumented absences will be categorized as unexcused absences. Excessive undocumented absences in a year may lead to mandatory Summer Academy or retention. A record of all absences and absence notes will be maintained by the school and consulted if retention becomes a possibility.

Excessive absences, even when documented and verified, will result in parents and guardians being asked to meet with school officials. Democracy Prep may contact appropriate authorities if a scholar is repeatedly

absent from school. Democracy Prep also reserves the right to require scholars who have accumulated in excess of nine absences during the school year to make up all lost instructional time during Summer Academy irrespective of whether the absences are documented. Scholars who are absent will not receive DREAM Dollars for missed days.

#### Attendance – Consequences for Absences

While scholars with superlative attendance records receive recognition for their discipline, accountability, and maturity, those who fail to meet expectations receive appropriate consequences.

***No Absences in a Trimester:*** The scholar and family are congratulated and recognized for exceptional attendance and commitment to education.

***Three Absences in a Trimester:*** Democracy Prep considers three absences in a single trimester a serious issue. When this occurs, the school reserves the right to notify the scholar's parent/guardian, and further steps such as requiring families to attend formal meetings and create attendance "action plans" may be required.

***Six Absences in a Year:*** Democracy Prep considers six absences over the course of a school year a serious issue. When this occurs, the school reserves the right to call the scholar's parent/guardian to the school to meet with the social worker and/or school leader. At such a meeting, the problem will be discussed and an attendance plan will be developed.

***More than Nine Absences in a Year:*** If a scholar is absent more than nine times in a year, the scholar may be considered a truant. When this occurs, the scholar is at risk of not being promoted to the next grade. The parent/guardian will be called to the school to meet with the social worker and school leader. Any scholar with more than nine absences will be required to recover any lost instructional time in excess of nine days during Summer Academy. Additionally, the school leader reserves the right to retain any scholar who misses more than nine days of school.

***Twenty Absences in a Year:*** If a scholar is absent twenty times in a year, the scholar may be considered a habitual truant. At this point, the school administration may file a written complaint with a relevant court or child services agency alleging the belief that the acts or omissions of the child are such that his/her family has service needs.

***Democracy Prep Congress Heights Policy on Absenteeism and Truancy:*** If a scholar is absent for 20 consecutive full days, he or she may be unenrolled from Democracy Prep. If a scholar is unenrolled for attendance, his or her space at Democracy Prep is forfeited, and he or she will not be eligible to apply or enroll in future school years.

#### Attendance – Tardiness

Getting to school on time is key to each scholar's success — at school and in life. Late scholars miss academics, and tardiness in general is a bad habit. At Democracy Prep, learning begins the moment scholars walk in the door. Scholars who are late miss essential reading instruction, disrupt the learning of other scholars, and risk falling behind on our ambitious curriculum.

#### Definition of Tardiness

Our doors open at 7:45 a.m. each morning. Scholars must arrive between 7:45 and 8:00 a.m. Scholars arriving after 7:45 a.m. are considered tardy.

### Consequences for Tardiness

The following is an outline of consequences for tardiness:

***No Tardies in a Trimester*** – The scholar and family are congratulated and recognized for being “on time” and for their true commitment to education.

***Three Tardies in a Trimester*** – If a scholar is late three times in a Trimester, it is considered a serious issue. Should this occur, the school reserves the right to call the parent/guardian to discuss the problem and develop an “On Time” plan.

***Seven or More Tardies in a Year*** – Should excessive tardiness occur, the school reserves the right to call the parent/guardian to the school to meet with the social worker and/or school leader. At such a meeting, the problem will be discussed and an “On Time” plan will be developed, or — if such a plan is already in place — will be modified or reinforced.

As excessive tardiness is also a truancy problem, excessive tardiness may place a scholar at risk of not being promoted to the next grade. Scholars with excessive tardy arrivals may also be considered habitual truants. In such cases, the school administration may file a written complaint with a relevant court or child services agency alleging the belief that the acts or omissions of the child are such that his/her family has service needs.

### Educational Neglect

Habitual absence significantly harms a scholar’s educational progress. Democracy Prep is required to file a report with the District of Columbia Child and Family Services Agency when a parent or guardian fails to ensure his or her scholar’s prompt and regular, full-day attendance in school or keeps a scholar out of school for impermissible reasons to the detriment of the scholar’s education.

### Scholar Uniform

All Democracy Prep scholars must come to school every day, including required Saturdays and field trips, wearing the required uniform. They must also wear the required uniform on all school field trips. Uniforms create a sense of unity, professionalism, and discipline for the scholars and for the school.

The Democracy Prep uniform always includes required shirt/pants/belt or jumper and socks/shoes. Shoes must be black. Belts must be solid black. Glasses must be worn for scholars who need glasses. Jewelry is limited to simple earrings and watches. Necklaces must be worn underneath the shirt. No bracelets or rings of any kind may be worn. We strongly advise not having fake fingernails or colored nail polish, and reserve the right to not allow scholars to enter class if such items cause a distraction to learning.

#### **The Democracy Prep Middle School Uniform**

1. Button down Oxford shirt with DPPS logo—shirt neatly tucked into pants.
2. Gray slacks with belt loops.
  - a) Slacks may not have pockets anywhere on the leg (no carpenter or cargo pants).
  - b) Slacks may not have any visible logos.
  - c) Slacks may not be made of jean or corduroy material.
  - d) Slacks may not be too loose or too tight.
  - e) Slacks must be worn at or above the hip line.
3. All black belt — no studs, designs, or extra notches.
4. All black or all navy socks.
5. All black shoes — no logos or markings of any other color are permitted.
6. Official DPPS sweater during cold months, if desired.

7. All hair styling and coloring must not be distracting to the learning environment.
8. No jewelry, with the exception of one small earring per ear (not larger than a dime), may be worn.

### **The Democracy Prep Middle School Gym Uniform**

The DPPS gym uniform, which is not required, consists of:

1. Navy gym shirts with DPPS logo on front
2. Gray gym sweatpants or shorts with DPPS logo
3. Black sports socks
4. All black sneakers — no logos or markings of any other color are permitted.

The Democracy Prep uniform NEVER includes tattoos, fake tattoos, any sort of visible writing on the skin, hats, kerchiefs, bandanas, other head coverings which do not have a religious purpose, or outer garments such as hoodies or sweatshirts.

### **Scholar Supplies**

Democracy Prep makes every effort to equip scholars with the supplies they need for the start of the year. In order to prepare scholars to complete nightly homework, **families should provide a non-distracting place to study and have the following supplies at home:**

- paper
- pencils
- pencil sharpener
- eraser
- ruler
- crayons, markers and colored pencils
- highlighter
- glue sticks
- scissors
- protractor (grades 4 and 5)

Scholars may be asked to replace any supplies that become worn down or depleted throughout the year. Scholars must also maintain their binders, folders and other organizational supplies with high standards of neatness and cleanliness. Democracy Prep expects its scholars to show respect for their belongings, whether they were purchased by their family or by the school. Scholars are allowed to have rolling book bags, but for safety concerns, book bags may not be rolled inside the building.

Scholars must be prepared each day with the required supplies including homework and handouts, appropriate writing utensils, and independent reading books. Failure to be prepared with materials will result in appropriate consequences.





## SCHOLAR EXPECTATIONS AND RIGHTS

### Personal Belongings

Democracy Prep Public Schools are rigorous instructional settings. Therefore, personal belongings that distract from the safe, respectful, and fast-paced instructional environment are not permitted.

Examples of items not allowed in Democracy Prep schools include:

- gum and candy of any kind;
- permanent markers of any kind;
- real, toy, or model weapons including pocket knives, exacto knives, box cutters, water guns;
- excessive amounts of cash;
- any illegal substance;
- stuffed animals or dolls;
- materials (e.g. songs, papers, lyrics, art, or notes) that contain inappropriate or offensive language, images or suggestions; and
- fireworks, sparklers, poppers, snappers, fountains, bottle rockets, and any other explosive devices.

If a scholar is seen with any of the items in the list above, the item may be confiscated and not returned until a parent or guardian meets with the school leadership.

**Note:** Cell phones, radios, iPods, portable gaming systems, and other non-instructional electronic devices must be turned off and put away before entering the school property, unless explicit permission has been given by the school leader. Any electronic equipment used without permission may be confiscated.

Scholars may bring cell phones to school for safety reasons, however scholars must keep phones in their backpacks and may not have them on their persons without having received explicit permission from a DREAM team member. Failure to comply with this expectation may result in confiscation or another consequence.

### Scholar-Family Contact During the Day

Except in the case of an emergency, scholars will be not able to receive messages from parents or to transmit messages to parents during the school day. Scholars will only be given permission to use the school phone in cases of emergency or at the school's discretion.

### Search of Scholar Belongings

Democracy Prep must maintain a safe and orderly environment for all our scholars and staff. In order to do so, the school reserves the right to search any and all persons or belongings on school property for illicit material. Such searches can be either random or with reasonable suspicion and may include a scholar's person, backpack pockets, lockers, cell phones, other belongings, etc.

### Book Borrowing at Democracy Prep Public Schools

Democracy Prep is extremely proud of how much our scholars love books. We are also proud of our book collections. In order for the collections to be maintained, they must be respected. Scholars must be accountable for any books they have borrowed and must return them in a timely manner and in the same condition as when borrowed. Damage to books may result in loss of book borrowing privileges, financial responsibility for the book, or community service.

### Computer/Internet/Email Acceptable Use Policy

This policy outlines guidelines for responsible use of Democracy Prep's Information Technology, and is designed to protect Democracy Prep's information and scholars from the possible consequences of



inappropriate use of Democracy Prep Information Technology. The term “Democracy Prep Information Technology” as used herein includes, but is not limited to, Democracy Prep computers (desktop and laptop), networks (wired and wireless), telecommunications devices (fixed and wireless), facsimile machines, photocopiers, printers, software, storage media (disks, CDs, USB drives), and other technologies that may be provided to Users by the Democracy Prep for use in the course of Democracy Prep business. The guidelines provided in this policy apply to all Democracy Prep employees, or any other persons who are provided with access to Democracy Prep Information Technology in the course of providing services of any kind to Democracy Prep (“Users”).

Democracy Prep Information Technology provides critical support to Democracy Prep and its scholars in the achievement of the Democracy Prep’s mission, and all Users of Democracy Prep Information Technology are expected to use it responsibly and in compliance with Democracy Prep policies and applicable law.

### **Privacy and Monitoring**

Users should have no expectation of privacy while using Democracy Prep Information Technology. All communications sent, received, transmitted or stored on Democracy Prep Information Technology are the property of Democracy Prep. In order to implement the Democracy Prep information security program effectively and enforce Democracy Prep policies, Democracy Prep must have the ability to monitor the use of Democracy Prep Information Technology. Democracy Prep may monitor any activity on Democracy Prep Information Technology and Users should use Democracy Prep Information Technology accordingly. Authorized Democracy Prep staff may disclose, monitor, access, review, copy, store, move, edit, delete, or otherwise manipulate any electronic information residing on Democracy Prep Information Technology as is necessary to allow for the proper functioning of Democracy Prep Information Technology, compliance with Democracy Prep policies and applicable law, or for any other appropriate purpose.

### **Prohibited Activity**

Democracy Prep Information Technology shall not be used to engage in illegal, threatening, discriminatory, defamatory, slanderous, obscene, or harassing activity, including cyberbullying. “Cyberbullying” means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, including, but not limited to, a transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted by the use of any electronic device, including, but not limited to, a computer, telephone, cellular telephone, text messaging device and personal digital assistant. Democracy Prep Information Technology may not be used to solicit for any reason, or for sending mass emails (“spamming”).



### **Intellectual Property and Licensing**

Users of Democracy Prep Information Technology must not infringe on intellectual property rights, copyrights, trademarks, or other licensing restrictions. Users must not illegally copy software, data, or other information without the express permission of its owner. Users who have questions about the licensing arrangement for any Democracy Prep Information Technology should direct questions to the Information Technology department.

## **Software Installation**

Only software approved by Democracy Prep may be installed on Democracy Prep Information Technology. Users who wish to have software installed on Democracy Prep Information Technology should direct requests to the Information Technology department and should not install any software on Democracy Prep Information Technology without express permission.

## **Malicious Code and Viruses**

Users may not knowingly create, execute, forward, or introduce any malicious computer code (e.g., viruses, Trojans, worms) into Democracy Prep Information Technology. Democracy Prep provides software tools that are designed to assist in the protection of Democracy Prep Information Technology from malicious code, but Users still must be alert and take appropriate steps to limit the risk of malicious code attacks. Users may not disable any anti-virus or any other security software. If a User suspects a malicious code attack, he or she should contact the Information Technology team immediately.

## **Use of E-mail and Instant Messaging Technology and Electronic Communications**

Electronic communications such as e-mail and instant messages (collectively, “Electronic Messaging”) must be treated carefully. These electronic messages can be misdirected or misinterpreted causing damage to Democracy Prep, its employees, students, and others. Democracy Prep e-mail and instant messaging technology do not provide data privacy while in transit over other, non- Democracy Prep networks. Users are not to use Electronic Messaging, other than those that are internal to Democracy Prep, to send or receive sensitive information that requires privacy protections.

Users should consider the following guidance when using Electronic Messaging:

- demonstrate the same respect when using Electronic Messaging as you use communicating verbally or in a more formal written document such as a memorandum or letter;
- do not forward chain or “spam” messages;
- keep personal messages to a minimum, and be mindful of the fact that even personal messages from Democracy Prep accounts may be viewed as statements authorized or made by or on behalf of Democracy Prep, particularly when Democracy Prep’s name or a User’s title appears in the message’s return address or in its closing; and
- do not send hateful, angry, or otherwise inappropriate messages.

## **Protection of Credentials**

Users should exercise their best efforts to protect their Democracy Prep passwords from disclosure and prevent unauthorized access to Democracy Prep Information Technology. Accounts and passwords are for individual use only.

## **Enforcement**

Appropriate action may be taken against a User if it is found that the User violated this policy. Discipline may range in severity as provided elsewhere in this Student & Family Handbook. Further, if appropriate, a User’s privileges regarding and access to Democracy Prep Information Technology may be revoked or limited without notice at the sole discretion of Democracy Prep.

## Internet Content Filtering Policy

### *Undesirable Materials*

Democracy Prep 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 that uses content filtering software on its equipment to screen all Internet websites by URL and/or by keyword search. However, scholars must also accept responsibility for restricting their own access to

these materials. Scholars who gain access to undesirable Internet materials must report these materials to their teacher immediately.

### *Security*

Scholars must not allow others to use their network accounts. Designated school officials may review files and communications to maintain system integrity and ensure that users are using the system responsibly. Users should not expect files stored on school servers to be private. Democracy Prep has the right, but not the duty, to inspect, review, or retain electronic communication created, sent, displayed, received or stored on and over Democracy Prep's Computer Information Systems (CIS) and to monitor, record, check, track, log, access or otherwise inspect its CIS. Passwords and message delete functions do not restrict Democracy Prep's ability or right to access such communications or information. Democracy Prep further reserves the right to allocate filespace as it deems appropriate.

SCHOLARS SHOULD HAVE NO EXPECTATION OF PRIVACY IN ANYTHING THEY CREATE, STORE, SEND, RECEIVE, OR DISPLAY ON OR OVER DEMOCRACY PREP'S CIS, INCLUDING THEIR PERSONAL FILES OR ANY OF THEIR USE OF THESE SYSTEMS, OR WHILE PRESENT ON DEMOCRACY PREP GROUNDS.

Democracy Prep reserves the right to access, view, record, check, receive, monitor, track, log, store, and otherwise inspect and utilize any or all Democracy Prep CIS, and to monitor and allocate filespace. Users of Democracy Prep's CIS who transmit or receive communications and information shall be deemed to have consented to having the content of any such communications accessed, viewed, recorded, checked, received, monitored, tracked, logged, stored, and otherwise inspected or utilized by Democracy Prep.

### *Email*

Only school-approved email will be allowed on school premises. Scholars must receive explicit permission from their teacher to engage in any other email activity.

### *Downloading*

Downloading from the Internet without approval from a member of the DREAM Team is not allowed.

### Social Media Policy

When used inappropriately, social media can transform from a powerful educational tool that allows scholars to connect, communicate, and access a wealth of informational resources into the source of serious long-term consequences. College admissions officers and prospective employers will not hesitate to use any social media missteps — even those made when a scholar is quite young — when considering an individual's candidacy for admission or employment. For Democracy Prep scholars to succeed in the college of their choice and a life of active citizenship in a hypercompetitive environment, it is imperative that they maintain digital footprints as impressive as their academic records of achievement.

In recognition of both the educational purpose that social media can serve and the necessity of certain restrictions, this policy is designed to foster the responsible and appropriate use of social media at Democracy Prep Public Schools. DPPS defines "social media" as "any method of communication in cyberspace." For the purposes of this policy, this includes, but is not limited to, any website, program or application that involves Internet forums, weblogs, social blogs, microblogging, wikis, podcasts, and the sharing or posting of photographs, pictures or videos and the rating or tagging of the same. This includes, but is certainly not limited to, the following examples: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Wikipedia, Skype, MySpace, LinkedIn, Flickr, YouTube, Vimeo, Google-Plus, Bebo, Friendster, Snapchat, and other platforms not explicitly listed or yet to be invented.

This social media policy applies any time scholars are on school grounds, using school property, under the supervision of school authority, or using social media anywhere in a manner that endangers a scholar's or staff member's physical or emotional safety, security, or well-being and materially and substantially interferes with the requirements of appropriate discipline in the operation of the school. . Such activity may include, but is not limited to, threats, ethnic slurs, personal insults, obscenity, drug or alcohol related content, content of a sexual nature, and content involving violence. Scholars are responsible for their own behavior when communicating with social media and will be held accountable for the content of the communications that they transmit or post. Scholars may not disrupt the school's learning atmosphere, educational programs, or activities, and may not violate the rights of others. What would be considered inappropriate in the school or classroom is inappropriate online. This policy does not apply to a scholar's private use of social media that in no way involves or impacts upon Democracy Prep, staff, or other scholars, though Democracy Prep strongly encourages all scholars to make intelligent and safe choices when using social media.

Democracy Prep expressly reserves the right both to monitor scholar use of social media while present on Democracy Prep grounds, regardless of whether such use is done using Democracy Prep resources or the scholars own personal resources, and to monitor and inspect any device brought onto school grounds for compliance with this policy.

Social media may only be used with the explicit permission of a DREAM Team member and for educationally related purposes while on Democracy Prep grounds. Social media is not to be used, at any time when on school grounds or when participating in a school activity, to fraternize with any other individual or to communicate non-educational messages or information. Scholars are prohibited from posting or publishing any insensitive or inappropriate information or content on any social media and from viewing any insensitive or inappropriate social media content. Should a scholar at any time post, publish, or view such social media content, he or she must notify a teacher or administrator immediately. Immediately reporting the posting, publishing or viewing of such inappropriate content will be given significant weight in considering the level of discipline issued.

Scholars are prohibited from communicating with teachers or administrators via social media. The only permissible electronic method of email communication with a teacher is through emailing the teacher or administrator at their Democracy Prep email account.

Scholars are prohibited from impersonating or assuming the identity of any other individual while using social media. Scholars are prohibited from posting or publishing any information about themselves or another individual that is confidential or of a private nature. This includes posting information such as last names, school names, addresses, email addresses, phone numbers, other contact information, or any other information a scholar might reasonably expect another individual to want to keep private.

Scholars are prohibited from using any device capable of capturing video, pictures, or audio to record or take pictures of any other individual without their express consent and permission. Scholars are not allowed to "tag" an individual in a picture or recording without their express consent and permission. Scholars must immediately comply with any request that infringing materials be removed from any social media platform.

The use of social media is a privilege, not a right, and the violation of any provision of this policy will result in the restriction of a scholar's social media access at Democracy Prep and/or the imposition of additional appropriate consequences, and in some cases, subject to state and/or federal law.

Scholars should always be mindful of the fact that material posted or published online will be public for a very long time and may perhaps become a permanent part of their record. Scholars should be sensitive of

others, should avoid posting or publishing anything distasteful, and should not post or publish anything they would not be willing to say to an individual in person.

### Education Records

Federal and state laws provide parents or guardians and eligible scholars (those who are age 18 or older) with rights of confidentiality, access, and amendment relating to their education records. Copies of the regulations detailing these rights are available from the Scholar Registrar. The following is a general overview:

*Review and Amendment:* A parent or eligible scholar has the right to inspect and review his or child's or the eligible scholar's own educational records and to seek amendment if the parent or eligible scholar believes them to be inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the scholar's privacy rights.

*Confidentiality:* Confidential Records include grades, evaluations, disciplinary actions, and health records. Release of scholar records generally requires written consent of the parent or eligible scholar. However, the regulations provide certain exceptions. For example, staff members and employees of the district have access to records as needed to perform their duties. Scholar records will also be sent to schools as required by Washington D.C. law and regulation. *Please note that at Democracy Prep scholar work and results are prominently displayed in classrooms and in the community as part of our educational program.*



## HEALTH POLICIES AND ATTENDANCE IMPLICATIONS

Scholars must be in attendance in order to achieve academic success. To that end, DPPS has strict policies regarding absences, late arrivals and early dismissals for appointments. Democracy Prep strongly encourages all doctors' appointments to be scheduled outside of school hours, as every late arrival, early dismissal, and absence will have a detrimental effect on a scholar's academic grade. If a scholar has a doctor's appointment for which he or she must leave the school early, the parent or guardian must notify the school with as much advance notice as possible (no less than 24 hours) and provide proper and adequate documentation to the school upon the scholar's return.

Scholars may not miss a full day of school for a doctor's appointment. **In the event that a doctor's appointment cannot be scheduled after school or on an early dismissal day, scholars must come to school prior to and following all appointments.** Excessive absences will be considered a violation of the Commitment to Excellence.

### Medication While at School

If a scholar requires medication of any kind, including both prescription and over-the-counter medication (such as, but not limited to: asthma inhalers, prescription drugs, insulin, Sudafed, Benadryl and generic equivalents, Tylenol and generic equivalents, Advil and generic equivalents, aspirin, stomach remedies):

- Parents must submit a Medication Administration form; and
- The medication must be given to the nurse or to the receptionist by a parent/guardian in the original container.

(Over the-counter medications can have adverse effects and are therefore subject to the same restrictions as prescription medications.)

Without written approval on the Medication Administration form, scholars are not permitted to self-administer medication. Parents must ensure that all medications are transferred into the custody of either the school nurse or the receptionist along with an Authorization to Dispense Medication form. If school personnel find any scholar in possession of medication, such medication shall be promptly delivered to the school nurse or receptionist, and the scholar's parent will be contacted to complete an Authorization to Dispense Medication Form before such medication can be administered.

Any student who is required to carry an emergency asthma inhaler, an epinephrine injector ("injector"), or insulin, glucagon or other diabetes supplies with him/her must provide:

- A Medication Administration form stating that the student needs to carry the inhaler, injector, or diabetes supplies with him or her and is permitted to self-administer if applicable; and
- A second inhaler, injector, or diabetes supplies that is/are to be kept in the nurse's office or with the receptionist.

Whenever a scholar has missed a school day or a single class due to a doctor's appointment or required family affair, the school requires advance notice before the absence and official documentation after the absence. Democracy Prep does not have excused or unexcused absences. Missing school for illness or for a family event has the same effect: missed instruction. Families must always provide documentation for any absence. Frequent absences may result in required Summer Academy or may result in retention.

### Immunization

State law where applicable requires that all children entering school must provide proof of immunization against DTaP (diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis), IPV/OPV, MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella), Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, Meningococcal Disease, Varicella (chicken pox), and the annual Influenza vaccine. These



requirements can be waived only if a properly signed health or religious exemption is filed with the school. All scholars must have on file proof of the required immunizations before they can be enrolled at a DPPS school. Failure to comply with immunization requirements may result in exclusion from school and missed school days.



## SCHOLAR LIFE

### Academic Program

The Democracy Prep Public Schools Core Curriculum includes:

- **READING:** A robust reading program that includes both small group differentiated instruction and whole-class instruction using an on-grade-level text.
- **MATH:** More than an hour of Math each day focused on fluency and automaticity with math facts, problem solving, logic, and critical thinking.
- **WRITING:** Scholars practice writing throughout the curriculum and benefit from a dedicated time each day during shared writing, independent writing, and handwriting practice.
- **SCIENCE:** Scholars will engage in a variety of hands-on, inquiry-based lessons that explore such topics as earth sciences, life sciences, physical sciences, and technology.
- **CIVICS:** Every scholar at Democracy Prep will study geography, government, and history.
- **SPECIALS:** Every DPPS Middle Scholar participates in electives such as Music, Dance, Performing Arts, and Physical Education on a regular basis.

### Our Instructional Model

Our success as a network of schools lies partially in our clear and structured routines found in every Democracy Prep classroom. Our instructional model consists of measurable aims, direct instruction, guided practice, and independent practice. Additionally, each class has regular and frequent assessments that measure each scholar's level of mastery with the content and skills.

### Homework

Homework is an important element of our model and is essential for academic success. In addition to completing daily homework assignments, scholars must have an opportunity each night to practice the skills and content learned in class. Democracy Prep staff holds scholars to high levels of accountability with regards to homework, evaluates homework based on neatness and accuracy, and checks homework completion each day. Homework is evaluated and contributes to a scholar's final evaluation or report card. Parents must sign their scholars' homework logs and reading logs on a nightly basis.

At home, scholars must have a quiet place to complete homework and review class work. Democracy Prep staff members are available in person during regular school hours and via email and cell phone up until 9 p.m. each evening to answer homework questions.

*Democracy Prep believes that the reward for hard work is an opportunity to be challenged even more. Scholars who show they are capable of excelling in one area will be challenged to excel in other areas.*

Scholars are accountable for completing all assigned work. A scholar's ability to make up work and receive credit may be conditioned on the documentation surrounding an absence.

### Academic Assessment

At the middle and high school level, Democracy Prep issues numeric grades that correlate to the listing below:

#### Grading Scale:

A+ = 97-100	B = 83-86	C- = 70-72
A = 93-96	B- = 80-82	F = Below 70
A- = 90-92	C+ = 77-79	
B + = 87-89	C = 73-76	



NOTE: Democracy Prep does not give Ds. We are aware that the lowest grade most colleges and universities will accept for entry is a C-. Because our mission is to send every DPPS student to the best colleges and universities, we align our grading practices with these standards.

#### External Assessments and Standardized Tests

Democracy Prep prepares students to succeed on standardized tests required for promotion, high school graduation (State Tests), and college (SAT/ACT). As other measures of student progress, DPPS also administers the MAP examination at the regular intervals. Standardized test scores are used to help DPPS teachers develop strategies to improve the academic achievement of each student.

#### Internal Assessments

<b>Internal Assessments</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
Midterm exams in each subject	To assess mastery and growth of subject specific skills and content as aligned with the state and national standards for that subject
Unit tests (may double as midterm in some cases)	
Regular quizzes and/or exit tickets	
Trimester exams in each subject	
MAP Assessment – Nationally-normed Computer-based adaptive exam in core academic subjects	

#### Town Hall

Once each week, Democracy Prep's school community comes together as a Team and Family to celebrate its accomplishments for the week. The purposes of Town Hall are to

- celebrate scholars' academic achievement;
- recognize individual scholar accomplishment;
- build community through performances, skits, songs and chants;
- bring parents, families, and members of the Democracy Prep community together to see what our scholars are learning and mastering each week; and
- build school identity and cohesiveness.

Parents are often welcome to attend Town Hall. Invitations and open dates will be provided to families.

#### Promotion to the Next Grade

Democracy Prep has tough standards for promotion. It is not automatically assumed that a scholar will pass from one grade to the next: the scholar must earn promotion by demonstrating mastery of the essential knowledge and skills. Scholars may not be promoted if they are performing significantly below grade-level standards. Promotion decisions will be based on a scholar's grades, standardized test scores (when available), attendance, homework completion record, adherence to DREAM values, and other measures including teacher observations. Lastly, a scholar may be retained if he or she misses more than 9 days in a school year, has significant behavior problems that result in significant amounts of missed instructional time, or if the scholar has persistent trouble completing assignments.

#### Consequences for Not Meeting Promotional Criteria

Scholars who do not meet the criteria for promotion may be retained or required to attend Democracy Prep Summer Academy. At the conclusion of Summer Academy, a final decision for promotion will be made and communicated to the family by the school leader.

### Academic Support and Enrichment

Democracy Prep Public Schools is committed to seeing substantial growth and achievement in every scholar. Therefore, Democracy Prep schools provide many opportunities for academic support and enrichment. These opportunities may include:

*Opportunity Days.* To improve their academic performance, any scholar may be required to attend tutoring or study sessions on Opportunity Days (non-school days including Saturdays and holidays) at the discretion of the school leader and the classroom teachers. Opportunity Day sessions may be mandatory and allow for individualized, targeted instruction. All absences require prior notification and documentation. Failure to provide documentation will result in an appropriate consequence.

*Saturday Field Trips.* In order to maximize instructional time during the week, scholars may take field trips on Saturdays. Field trips improve academic performance and prepare scholars for college schedules. The purpose of these trips is academic enrichment and/or exposure to colleges and universities, which they will attend in their future.

*Summer Academy.* Summer Academy is offered to scholars for additional academic support. To improve their academic performance, some scholars may be required to attend Summer Academy in order to be considered for promotion. Summer Academy will provide support in basic skills and may also address content area gaps. All Summer Academy classes have the goal of closing the achievement gap and have the purpose of ensuring that scholars are performing at or above the expected level.

### Special Needs & English Language Learners

Democracy Prep provides special education services and services for English Language Learners in accordance with state and federal special education laws, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and the regulations implementing those laws. The Academic Collaborative Team (ACT) Program staff:

- Maintain all special education records in accordance with state and federal laws;
- Schedule all annual IEP reviews;
- Organize professional development for teaching staff; and
- Support teachers in making appropriate curriculum and instruction modifications



## FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Democracy Prep is committed to having families contribute to the academic success of their scholars. As such, we use a variety of methods of communication. The principal mode of communication is the school's website (**[dpch.democracyprep.org](http://dpch.democracyprep.org)**), which includes pertinent announcements, an updated school calendar, and electronic versions of important policies. Additional forms of communication may include:

- Regular Progress Reports: A progress report that includes academic and behavioral updates as well as a brief overview of important school events.
- Automated Phone System: Parents may receive a pre-recorded message from DPPS for the following reasons:
  - to issue school-wide reminders and updates to alert families to weather-related school closings,
  - to remind families of important documents requiring signatures, or
  - to inform families of meetings for parents or scholars.

### Phone Calls

Every member of the Democracy Prep DREAM team publishes his or her cell phone number at the beginning of the year. Scholars and parents are encouraged to call teachers. If a teacher does not return a message within 24 hours, the school leader may be informed. Abuse of the phone numbers of the DREAM team will result in serious disciplinary action.

### Opportunities for Family Involvement

Democracy Prep is a partnership made up of the school leadership, teachers, scholars, and families. Although the job of making decisions about school policy belongs to the school leaders, the superintendent, and the CEO, family involvement is not only welcome but also absolutely necessary for the success of the school. The Family Leadership Council (FLC) is the family involvement organization at each Democracy Prep school. The mission of the Family Leadership Council is to promote family involvement, to advocate politically for our community, and to support the school, our scholars, and their families. The FLC organizes volunteer opportunities and creates ways to support our scholars in their achievements. There are regular meetings of the Family Leadership Council; all families are welcome and encouraged to get involved. Additionally, we rely on our families, under the leadership of the FLC, to support our efforts for civic engagement through:

- Registering to vote (if eligible)
- Assisting with voter registration drives
- Joining scholars and the DREAM Team for primary and election day activities

### Expectations for Families

Teachers may request mandatory family conferences with families of scholars who are in need of academic and behavioral support. All other families are invited to schedule appointments or to stop by to connect with their scholars' teachers. As teachers and leaders are extremely busy during the school day, family members who stop by without having scheduled an appointment are not guaranteed an opportunity to speak with a DREAM Team member immediately upon their arrival.

Democracy Prep families must:

- reinforce Democracy Prep academic and behavior standards at home
- check homework nightly for completion
- help with homework
- call teachers with concerns
- read and sign all notices sent home by the school

- read and respond to family communications when necessary.
- respond promptly to disciplinary calls
- attend school-wide events
- pick up report cards and attend trimester conferences

### Gift Giving

Outside of Teacher Appreciation Week, which occurs in early May, Democracy Prep discourages parents from giving gifts to individual teachers. In lieu of a gift, a handwritten note from a scholar is a more appropriate and powerful way to show appreciation and gratitude. Parents wishing to give to the school should review our donation list, visit [www.donorschoose.org](http://www.donorschoose.org), or see the Family Leadership Council for creative ways to show appreciation.

### Birthdays

The Democracy Prep community celebrates birthdays enthusiastically at Town Hall. Out of fairness to all of our scholars and our desire to ensure an academic environment free of distraction, we ask that parents refrain from visiting scholars on their birthdays and from bringing gifts, food for the class, and balloons. Likewise, we suggest that parents wishing to invite scholars to birthday parties invite the entire homeroom (invitations may be sent to the homeroom teacher to be distributed via the homework folder). Scholars are required to be in uniform on their birthday.

### Procedures for Resolution of Parent/Guardian Concerns

Democracy Prep Public Schools is committed to maintaining a strong partnership and ongoing dialogue between its teachers, staff, scholars, and families. If you have a concern about a school policy, academic grade, discipline decision, or anything else, we welcome your input and encourage you to contact the appropriate staff member at the school. We are committed to addressing the concerns of our families and seeking a resolution that first and foremost benefits the academic development of your child toward success in the college of his or her choice.

*Informal Complaint Process.* If a parent or guardian has a concern or disagreement about a classroom event, curricular or disciplinary decision or other academic issue, he or she should first contact the teacher to attempt to resolve the disagreement through *informal* discussion. If the concern is not adequately resolved, the parent or guardian should request a further meeting. The teacher will contact the school leader and schedule the follow-up conversation. All Democracy Prep staff members are expected to respond to a parent/guardian complaint. Every effort will be made to respond to a parent/guardian complaint as quickly as possible.

*Formal Complaint Process.* If the informal complaint process fails to produce a satisfactory resolution, a parent or guardian may initiate a *formal* complaint by submitting a letter in writing to the school leader outlining, in detail, the events, policies, or decisions at issue. The school leader will promptly conduct a thorough investigation into the matter and issue a response in writing detailing his or her findings and recommendations. If the parent or guardian is still not satisfied, he or she may appeal the school leader's determination to the superintendent of Democracy Prep Public Schools.

*Board of Trustees.* If the matter still remains unresolved, the parent or guardian may write to the Board of Trustees to request a review. A designated Board committee will schedule a meeting, at which time the parent will have an opportunity to address his or her concerns. The committee will issue a report on its findings to the Board prior to the next regular meeting, and the Board may take action as appropriate based on the committee's recommendations. The Board has the power and duty to take action as appropriate.

*Authorizer.* If, after presentation of the complaint to the Board of Trustees, the parent or guardian believes that the Board has not adequately addressed the complaint, the parent or guardian may present the complaint to the school's authorizer, which may investigate and respond. The authorizer has the power and duty to take remedial action as appropriate.

Contact Information for Authorizers:

District of Columbia Public Charter School Board  
3333 14<sup>th</sup> Street NW, Suite 210  
Washington, DC 20010  
dcpublic@dcpsb.org  
202.328.2660





## DREAM PRIVILEGES

Although everyone at Democracy Prep works hard for the sake of going to college and changing the world, we also believe that hard work should pay off in opportunities to have fun and enjoy life! Scholars who exhibit the DREAM values every day and who have earned DREAM dollars will have the opportunity to redeem those dollars through amazing celebrations, trips, college visits, and other fun experiences.

In-school privileges may include:

- Participation in Town Hall
- Lunch privileges
- Special DREAM activities

Extended opportunities may include:

- College Tours
- Civic Expeditions and Field Trips
- End-of-Year Trips

These opportunities work as positive motivators for our scholars to continue working hard, both on their academics and their behavior. Scholars who regularly live the DREAM values will earn these great opportunities. More importantly, scholars who regularly show DREAM values are learning and practicing the behaviors that will lead to college and life success.



## CODE OF CONDUCT

Democracy Prep is committed to providing a safe and orderly school culture in which scholars can improve their academic achievement. Scholars whose conduct 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. Therefore, every misbehavior will result in an appropriate consequence. This is the basis of our scholar Code of Conduct. Consequences may vary based on the age and grade level of the scholar, the severity of the incident and the frequency with which the incident takes place.

### DEMOCRACY PREP CODE OF CONDUCT:

#### 1. Disrupting the School Environment

**1.1 Arriving late to school or class:** Scholar tardiness disrupts class, inconveniences others, and often results in academic difficulties. Scholars may not be late to school or class.

**1.2 Choosing NOT to attend required school, school functions or school support:** Scholars are required to attend all academic and enrichment classes, assigned consequences, and assigned support opportunities. Scholars are not permitted to leave the building without permission.

**1.3 Misbehaving on the way to or from school:** Our scholars, while in uniform, are our ambassadors to the community and should embody the DREAM values of Democracy Prep. Scholars may not misbehave while traveling to or from school or while engaged in school-sponsored activities, such as field trips or after-school activities. Misbehavior includes, but is not limited to, using inappropriate language, making excessive noise, touching other scholars, being disrespectful to others, and instigating, encouraging, recording, or promoting others to fight and/or engage in criminal or otherwise inappropriate behavior. Scholars who misbehave on the way to or from school may have to be escorted by a parent or guardian, in addition to other consequences.

**1.4 Access to the Building:** Scholars are not permitted to block access to any room or part of the school building. Scholars may not leave the building through any exits except those officially marked.

**1.5 Leaving the Building Without Permission:** Once a scholar has arrived on campus, he/she may not leave campus without permission.

**1.6 Violating the Dress Code:** Scholars will not be permitted to attend class when not in proper uniform. Parents may be required to pick up children who are not properly dressed for school or to bring the missing Dress Code item to the school. Scholars will not be permitted to return home to retrieve the necessary items.

**1.7 Gum, Food, and Beverages:** Scholars may not chew or carry gum at any time at Democracy Prep. Scholars may not eat or drink at unauthorized times or places at Democracy Prep.

**1.8 Hallway Behavior:** Scholars may not disrupt the instructional environment while in the hallway. As a result, hallways at Democracy Prep schools are silent.

**1.9 Disrupting Class and Preventing Teaching:** Democracy Prep can fulfill its mission only if classrooms are safe and teaching is uninterrupted. Scholars may not disrupt class.

**1.10 Arriving to Class Unprepared:** When class begins, scholars must be prepared and have all necessary materials (books, pencils, portfolio, paper etc.).

**1.11 Entering or Leaving Classrooms Without Permission:** Scholars may not enter a classroom without permission, nor may they leave a classroom without having obtained a pass.

**1.12 Failing to Complete Homework:** Completing homework is essential to the success of individual scholars and the classroom community. Scholars are expected to complete all of their homework assignments on time.

**1.13 Cheating, Plagiarism, and Copying Others' Work:** Cheating or copying the work of others (or allowing other scholars to copy work) is unacceptable. This includes any and all talking during exams irrespective of whether the chatter is in reference to the exam. In addition to other disciplinary

consequences, both the scholar who copied and the scholar who allowed the copying will receive zeros on the assignment. This offense may result in long-term suspension or expulsion.

**1.14 Failing to Submit a Required Signature:** Scholars are required to secure the signature of a parent/guardian on homework, class assignments and forms when requested by any school staff member.

**1.15 Forgery:** Scholars may not forge a signature.

**1.16 Lying to a Staff Member:** Honesty is an essential element of personal character and is necessary for the school to support the DREAM values. Scholars are not permitted to lie or attempt to conceal the truth.

**1.17 Being Disrespectful to a Staff Member:** A school cannot function properly if scholars are permitted to be disrespectful towards adults. For that reason, scholars may not be disrespectful towards a staff member or any other adult associated with the school. Scholars may not purposely disobey or ignore a staff member's directions.

**1.18 Ignoring or Refusing to Follow a Staff Member's Directions:** Scholars are expected to follow the directions of any staff member the first time and respond in a respectful manner. Ignoring, delaying, or refusing to respond to a staff member's directive is considered defiant and disrespectful.

**1.19 Being Disrespectful to a Scholar:** If scholars do not feel physically and emotionally safe in school, teaching and learning are made more difficult. Therefore, scholars may not be disrespectful toward other scholars.

**1.20 Possession of Inappropriate Property:** Scholars cannot possess any electronic music or game devices in school. Scholars may not possess any printed images, text, or lyrics that are vulgar, profane, or sexually explicit, or any other items inappropriate for school.

**1.21 Gambling:** Scholars may not bet money or wager anything on the outcome of a game, contest, or other event.

**1.22 Filming and Distribution of Media Depicting Code of Conduct Violations:** Scholars may not take, share, or post photographs, pictures, or videos depicting a violation of this Code of Conduct.

**1.23 Violation of the Computer/Email/Internet Acceptable Use Policy:** Scholars may not violate the terms of the Acceptable Use Policy set forth in this Handbook.

## 2. Assault, Battery, Bodily Harm, Inappropriate Touching, and/or Threats

**2.1 Causing Bodily Harm:** Scholars may not cause physical injury to a scholar, school employee, or another person. Scholars are not permitted to harm or attempt to harm a scholar, school employee, or another person with a weapon or dangerous object.

**2.2 Committing Assault or Assault and Battery:** Scholars may not commit assault, including sexual assault, or assault and battery on a scholar, school employee, or another person. Assault is an attempt to physically harm another person and does not require physical contact. Battery is any unlawful touching of another person.

**2.3 Fighting, Unwanted Physical Contact, or Verbal Altercation:** Scholars may not fight with other scholars from Democracy Prep or from any other school. Harassing, pushing, touching, or any form of unwanted physical contact is not tolerated regardless of the cause of the disturbance. Scholars may not engage in verbal altercations, including but not limited to insults, yelling, or words that are reasonably likely to incite a verbal or physical confrontation.

**2.4 Play-fighting and Threatening:** Play-fighting and/or the use of threats harm the safety of the community. Scholars may not play-fight and/or threaten others.

**2.5 Setting off False Alarms or Making a Threat:** Scholars may not intentionally set off a false alarm or make a destructive threat.

**2.6 Engaging in Sexual Activity or Inappropriate Touching:** A scholar may not engage in sexual activity of any kind or touch himself/herself or others inappropriately.

## 3. Possession or Use of Firearms, Weapons, and/or Dangerous Objects

**3.1 Possession or Use of a Firearm:** Scholars may not possess or use a firearm.



- 3.2 Possession or Use of a Mock Firearm:** Scholars may not possess or use mock firearms
- 3.3 Using or Possessing a Weapon or Dangerous Object:** Scholars are not allowed to bring a weapon of any sort to school, use any object in a dangerous or threatening manner, or have a weapon on him/her or his/her property.
- 3.4 Arson:** Scholars may not set a fire or possess any form of fire-making material, including lighters, matches etc.

4. Possession, Use or Distribution of Controlled Substances, Alcohol, or Tobacco

- 4.1 Using or Possessing Drugs or Alcohol:** Scholars may not use or possess any non-prescribed controlled substance, narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, marijuana, alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant of any kind. Prescribed and over-the-counter drugs must be delivered to the Nurse or Receptionist by a parent or guardian with a doctor-signed Authorization to Dispense Medication Form. Scholars may not be in possession of prescribed or over-the-counter drugs.
- 4.2 Selling, Possessing, or Transferring Drugs or Alcohol:** Scholars may not sell, distribute, or possess with intent to sell or distribute prescribed or non-prescribed controlled substances.
- 4.3 Selling, Possessing, or Transferring Tobacco Products:** Scholars may not sell, distribute, or possess with intent to sell or distribute cigarettes, chewing tobacco, or other tobacco products.
- 4.4 Selling or Possessing Mock Controlled Substances, Alcohol or Tobacco:** Scholars may not sell, distribute or possess mock controlled substances, alcohol or tobacco.

5. Harassment and Violation of Civil Rights

- 5.1 Violating the Civil Rights of Others:** Scholars may not violate the civil rights of others—the fundamental rights of freedom and equality that belong to everyone.
- 5.2 Harassment:** Scholars may not make unwanted sexual advances towards or commit sexual harassment of any member of the school community. Harassment or intimidation of any members of the school community on the basis of their racial or ethnic background, gender, age, sexual orientation, or disability is not permitted.
- 5.3 Abusive or Profane Language or Treatment:** Scholars may not use abusive, threatening, vulgar, coarse, or degrading language (including racial epithets or sexist or homophobic remarks) in speech or in writing.
- 5.4 Bullying and Intimidation:** Scholars may not physically, verbally (through speech or writing), or use technology and/or social media in order to intimidate or bully any member of the school community.

6. Theft or Vandalism

- 6.1 Theft, Loss or Destruction of Personal or School Property:** Scholars may not steal, lose, or damage property belonging to someone else or to the school.
- 6.2 Mistreatment or Inappropriate Use of School Technology or School Property:** Scholars must treat computers, printers, and other technology with care. Democracy Prep does not tolerate attempts to access the school's files or other inappropriate uses of technology or the Internet. Scholars do not have the right to use school computers to access chat rooms or emails or to access web sites or files that contain profanity, sexually explicit language or pictures, excessively violent themes, and/or other material inappropriate for minors. Scholars are prohibited from using school telephones. In the event of an emergency, scholars may be allowed to use the school telephones, but only at the discretion of school staff members. Scholars must not mistreat other school property including but not limited to text and reading books. Writing or marking on any desks or school property is strictly prohibited.

7. Gang-Related Activity: Scholars may not engage in any gang-related activity, which shall be defined as any act(s) that promotes gangs or gang-related activities including, but not limited to, (1) communicating either verbally or non-verbally (hand signs, gestures, handshakes, drawings, etc.), to convey membership or affiliation with a gang; (2) defacing school or personal property with gang-related graffiti, symbols or

slogans; (3) requiring payment of protection, insurance, or otherwise intimidating or threatening any person related to gang-related activity; and (4) soliciting others for gang membership

8. Failure to Comply with School-Imposed Consequences: Scholars must comply with school-imposed consequences. In order for the school to maintain high expectations and a safe and respectful school environment — two vital parts of our school culture — scholars must comply with all consequences assigned including any suspension or disciplinary action.

9. Repeated Violations of the Code of Conduct: As outlined below, repeated violations may result in consequences of greater severity or length at the discretion of the school leader. Repeated inability to adhere to the school's rules may result in the scholar's removal from the Democracy Prep community.

## THE DREAM DOLLAR SYSTEM

Democracy Prep establishes and maintains a scholar and teacher community that is efficient and orderly, warm and productive. The DREAM Dollar system is one way that our staff, families and scholars can measure their success in internalizing the school's DREAM values. The DREAM Dollar system is a merit-based system in which scholars are "paid" DREAM Dollars each day they arrive to school on-time, in uniform, in possession of the necessary materials, and prepared to demonstrate DREAM values. Scholars who go above and beyond the school's expectations may also earn additional positive DREAM Dollars. When scholars fall short of the expectations established through the DREAM Dollar system (the Code of Conduct), they lose a certain amount of DREAM Dollars as a consequence.

The DREAM Dollar system is adapted appropriately based on the emotional and intellectual development of the child. The expectation is that our scholars are participating appropriately in our community and contributing to our efficient, orderly, warm, and productive environment. DREAM Dollars are introduced in Kindergarten; each year thereafter, the concept of DREAM Dollars as a measure of behavioral success adapts to the grade-level abilities and needs of our scholars. For example, as scholars develop the ability to manage their own engagement in a classroom setting, scholars are held accountable for remaining engaged in a lesson through eye contact, and asking and answering questions. As scholars grow older, expectations for engagement may change. What remains constant is our expectation that scholars show the DREAM values; what changes is the specific indicator of that value. Below is a list of specific behaviors that may be expected from Democracy Prep scholars, depending on their grade level.

DREAM Value	Expectations
Discipline	Follow specific directions the first time given.
	Remain focused during instructional and independent work time.
	Adhere to a consistent study schedule at home.
Respect	Be respectful with your body language and attitude.
	Be verbally polite to those around you even when you are given a direction you do not like.
Enthusiasm	Use STAR posture. (Sit straight up and tucked in behind your desk, Track the speaker, Ask and answer questions, and Raise your hand throughout the school day)
	Move with purpose from place to place and from task to task.
Accountability	Apologize and take responsibility for mistakes that you might make.
	Come prepared and organized to school each day.
Maturity	When no one is looking still behave as if all of your teachers and family were in the room watching and listening to you.
	Be a responsible role model and leader for yourself and your classmates.

## PROCEDURES FOR DISCIPLINARY VIOLATIONS

At Democracy Prep Public Schools, we are committed to serving all scholars, especially those who need us the most, while simultaneously protecting the strong culture that makes our academic gains possible. All scholars are taught the DREAM values and are held accountable to them throughout the year. As stated above in the general Code of Conduct, misbehaviors at Democracy Prep result in consequences. If negative behaviors persist, or if scholars have not adequately fulfilled the given consequence, more serious consequences may be put in place. Consequences vary based on the grade level of the scholar, the severity of the action, and the frequency of the incident. Such consequences may include

- Scholar reflection on community violation (may be written, private or public);
- Removal of school privileges (including school trips, in-school privileges, etc.);
- Detention;
- School/community service;
- In-school suspension;
- Short-term out-of-school suspension;
- Long-term out-of-school suspension; and
- Removal from the school community.

To preserve valuable instructional time, Democracy Prep strives to keep its scholars in school and in classrooms. However, allowing the same scholars to commit the same infractions in the same situations can have a deleterious effect on the culture of our schools. Therefore, when a scholar's actions are detracting from the ability of other scholars to learn in a safe, value-added environment, it may be necessary to remove the offending scholar from the classroom and eventually from the school. If a scholar's consequence involves being sent home or suspended for any period of time, a parent or guardian may be asked to meet with an administrator regarding the scholar's behavior prior to his or her return to school.

Please note that suspended scholars who are sent to school notwithstanding the consequences outlined in their suspension letters will serve an in-school suspension equal in length to twice the number of days stipulated on the original suspension letter.

### Tiered Behavior Responses

While Democracy Prep aims to remain consistent in the way we execute our behavior system, we do customize behavior plans in an attempt to help scholars succeed should they need that flexibility. We also seek to tailor consequences to the severity and frequency of the unacceptable behavior and the scholar's individual circumstances. Both the severity of consequences and the scope and depth of structured, proactive support provided by the DREAM Team to troubled scholars will increase commensurate with the severity and frequency of the violations. As the consequences become more severe, we will notify and seek the involvement of families to help design and implement response plans. Democracy Prep's response to behaviors will escalate as negative behaviors escalate, with the most serious infractions of the Code of Conduct receiving the most serious consequences. Violence directed to other scholars or staff will lead to the most serious consequences.

All scholars facing out of school suspension are entitled to due process. For a short-term out of school suspension (i.e., a suspension for less than ten days), the scholar will, prior to the suspension, be told by the principal or school leader the basis for the suspension, the evidence supporting the consequence, and will be able to give his or her side of the story. For a suspension longer than ten days, a scholar will have the opportunity to present evidence to the school leader in a more formal proceeding, is entitled to be represented by counsel, will be provided the evidence supporting the suspension, and will be given the

opportunity to confront the evidence against the scholar and to present evidence as well. The scholar can be removed from the school immediately if a danger to others and the school environment. In appropriate circumstances the scholar may also be referred to law enforcement authorities.

The most serious consequence, if all else fails and in extraordinary circumstances, will be expulsion of the scholar from the Democracy Prep school. A scholar facing expulsion and his or her parents or guardians will be afforded all due process protections required under applicable laws and regulations including a full and fair hearing.

### Being Proactive

It is the school's job to connect the dots for scholars and families on exactly why we work so hard and why we hold high expectations for every scholar. This messaging must come through

- New scholar enrollment;
- Family Orientations;
- Prep Academy;
- Coffee and Conversations;
- Official school notifications; and
- Ongoing informal communication and meetings with staff, scholars, and families.

### Alternative Instruction

DPSP provides scholars with alternative instruction if they are suspended or expelled (until enrolled in another school, or until the end of the school year, whichever comes first). During the period of their removal or suspension, scholars must be provided with alternative instruction, which includes, but is not limited to, classwork and homework assignments. Additionally, scholars will be permitted to take any citywide or state examinations that are administered during the suspension period for which no make up examination is permitted by the testing authority, as well as to make up school examinations that may affect their academic records. Arrangements will be made between the school and each individual family for the delivery of services, pick up/delivery of work, and the making-up of any missed assignments and classroom instructional support. All alternative instructional materials will permit the scholar to make adequate academic progress and must be completed satisfactorily for the scholar to return to school. Nonetheless, alternative instruction cannot replicate all the benefits of full classroom instruction and participation by the scholar.

Alternative instruction will provide the scholar with an opportunity to continue to earn academic credit and must be appropriate to the individual needs of the scholar. All IDEA mandates must be followed for scholars with disabilities. In determining the alternative instruction for a scholar with a disability and for a scholar who has a 504 Accommodation Plan, consideration will be given to the scholar's IEP and behavioral intervention plan, or 504 Accommodation Plan. In addition, if an IEP scholar has already been suspended for more than an aggregate of (10) school days during the school year due to disciplinary actions that create a pattern of removals as determined by Democracy Prep, the scholar must either be reinstated or assigned to an appropriate setting until a Manifestation Determination Review (MDR) takes place.

### Due Process Protections

At no point will Democracy Prep's expectations be lowered. Scholars on behavioral IEPs will need accommodations, especially if the scholar's behavior is a manifestation of his/her disability. These accommodations must directly address the specific challenge area of the scholar while also balancing the school's need for a fair and effective learning environment.

Scholars with disabilities have the same rights and responsibilities as other scholars, and they may be disciplined for committing any of the behavioral offenses listed in the Code of Conduct. If a scholar with

disabilities has an IEP that includes disciplinary guidelines, then, as required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, that scholar must be disciplined according to those guidelines. Scholars for whom an IEP does not include specific disciplinary guidelines may be disciplined in accordance with the standard school policy.

In determining the alternate instruction for a scholar with a disability and for a scholar who has a 504 Accommodation Plan, consideration will be given to the scholar's IEP and behavioral intervention plan, or 504 Accommodation Plan.

When a scholar with an IEP has been removed from school for either 10 consecutive days or for more than 10 cumulative school days in a school year based on conduct that forms a pattern of removal and results in a change in placement as determined by the school, he or she is entitled to a prompt review of the causal relationship between his or her disability and the behavior that precipitated the school's disciplinary action. The MDR is designed to determine whether (1) the conduct in question was caused by or had a direct and substantial relationship to the scholar's disability; or (2) the conduct in question was the direct result of the school's failure to implement the IEP. The manifestation team will consist of school officials, the scholar's parent or guardian, and relevant members of the Committee on Special Education (CSE). Parents or guardians will receive written notification prior to any manifestation team meeting. This notification will inform the parent or guardian of (1) the purpose of the meeting, (2) the names of the individuals expected to attend, and (3) his or her right to have relevant members of the CSE participate at the parent or guardian's request.



The MDR will include a review of all relevant information in the scholar's file including his or her IEP, any teacher observations, and any relevant information provided by the parent or guardian. If the manifestation team determines that the scholar's conduct was a manifestation of his or her disability, the CSE will (1) conduct a functional behavioral assessment and implement a behavioral intervention plan; and (2) return the scholar to the placement from which the scholar was removed, unless the parent or guardian and the school

agree to a change of placement as part of the modification of the behavioral intervention plan. If the manifestation team determines the conduct in question was the direct result of the school's failure to implement the IEP, the school will take immediate steps to remedy those deficiencies. Lastly, if the scholar's conduct is ruled not to have been a manifestation of his or her disability, school personnel may apply the relevant disciplinary procedures to scholars with disabilities in the same manner and for the same duration as the procedures would be applied to scholars without disabilities.



## VISITING OUR SCHOOLS

Democracy Prep always welcomes and encourages visitors, both from within and outside of our school community, to observe our scholars and DREAM Team members in action. However, in order to assure the safety and well-being of all scholars and staff, all visitors — including parents and guardians — are required to report to the receptionist. Visitors may be required to have a visitor's pass once they have checked in with the Receptionist. Any visitor who does not report to the receptionist, or is found in the building without authorization and a visitor's pass, will be asked to leave immediately, and the authorities will be called if the request is not heeded.

Democracy Prep maintains an open door policy with our parents and families, provided they are not a distraction to the learning environment. Family members who are over 18 are welcome to come and observe classes and school operation on non-testing days. Parents and family members are also welcome to request meetings with any member of the DREAM team. Meetings will be scheduled at the DREAM Team member's earliest possible convenience. If requests for a meeting are not met, family members should report the concern to the school leader.

In case of an emergency, parents or guardians should contact the receptionist either by phone or in person. Under no circumstances should parents or guardians contact scholars in their classrooms, or attempt to withdraw scholars from the building without notifying and receiving permission from the school.

Please note that while families may visit the school at any time, family visitations to their own child's classroom is generally not permitted during the first six weeks of school. This allows teachers to establish a strong classroom culture that is focused on academic learning and is distraction-free.

### Disruptive Visitors & Restricted Access

Democracy Prep works hard to maintain a safe and orderly environment for teachers and scholars. To that end, the school reserves the right to restrict visitors (including family members of scholars and staff) who do not display the DREAM values of the larger community while on school grounds, including during drop-off and pick-up. Examples of disruptive visitors include those who raise their voice, use profanity, threaten scholars or staff, or are physically or verbally aggressive in any way.

If a visitor's access must be restricted due to inappropriate behavior of any kind, they will receive a letter outlining the offenses that led the restricted access and will be notified as to proper procedures for contact and communication with both staff and their scholar while on Democracy Prep property. If after a visitor has received a restricted access letter, they continue to disrupt the Democracy Prep learning environment greater steps may be taken including notification of the proper authorities and/or expulsion for the DPPS scholar.



## MISCELLANEOUS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### Nondiscrimination

Democracy Prep 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 Democracy Prep on the basis of race, color, creed, gender, 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 Democracy Prep on the basis of race, gender, color, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation. Finally, pregnant scholars are allowed to remain in regular education classes and participate in extracurricular activities with non-pregnant scholars throughout their pregnancy, and after giving birth are permitted to return to the same academic and extracurricular program as before the leave (Title IX).

### Harassment

Democracy Prep is committed to maintaining a school environment free of harassment based on race, color, religion, national origin, age, gender, sexual orientation, or disability. Harassment by administrators, certified and support personnel, scholars, vendors and other individuals at school or at school-sponsored events is unlawful and is strictly prohibited. Democracy Prep requires all employees and scholars to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner with respect to their fellow employees, scholars and all members of the school community.

### Public Documents / Freedom of Information Law (FOIL)

Democracy Prep fully complies with all the Freedom of Information Law (FOIL). Any requests for school records or information from the school must be in writing and submitted to the school leader. Within five business days of receipt of a written request, the school, depending on the requested information, will respond by:

- Making the information available at the school itself during normal business hours to the person requesting it;
- 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.

If the person requesting information is denied access to a record, s/he may, within 30 days, appeal such denial to the school leader. Upon timely receipt of such an appeal, the school, within 10 business days of the receipt of the appeal, will fully explain the reasons for further denial or provide access to the record(s) sought. The school will also forward a copy of the appeal, as well as its ultimate determination, to the Committee on Open Government. If further denied, the person requesting information may further appeal through an 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 may charge a copying fee for each page requested to be copied. The fee can be no more than the fee allowed by state law. Types of records held by the school may include:

- Student Health Records
- Student Immunization Records
- Student Medical Records
- Safety Records
- School SAVE Plan
- Reports of Fire Department Inspections
- School Contracts
- Management Contract Records
- Outside Contract Records
- Personnel Files
- Fingerprint Clearance Records
- Certification Records

#### Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funding under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. FERPA gives parents and guardians certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are “eligible students.”

In accordance with FERPA law, parents, guardians, or students over 18 years of age have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school. Parents or students over 18 years of age have the right to request that the school correct records that they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent, guardian, or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. The issue will first be heard by the CEO of Democracy Prep Public Schools or the CEO's designee. If the parent, guardian, or eligible student is still not satisfied with the decision of the CEO or the CEO's designee, a hearing with the board of directors or a designated subcommittee of the board may be requested. The decision of the board of directors or its designated subcommittee is final.

The school may disclose, without consent, “directory” information such as a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. Any parent who does not want such directory information included should contact the school's Operations Manager.

This listing in the DPPS Middle School Handbook serves as the school's annual notification of parents and eligible students of their rights under FERPA.



Generally, the school must have written permission from the parent, guardian, or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record. However, the school may disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR § 99.31):

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



## BULLYING PREVENTION POLICY

### I. Definition

Democracy Prep Congress Heights Public Charter School takes issues related to harassment, intimidation, and bullying very seriously. Due to the seriousness of these topics, the school works to deal with reports of harassment, intimidation, or bullying as quickly as possible and in a manner consistent with existing case law, federal and state statutes and regulations and district policies and procedures.

Democracy Prep Congress Heights Public Charter School defines bullying as stated in the Youth Bullying Prevention Act of 2012 (“YBPA”):

- (1) “Bullying” means any severe, pervasive, or persistent act or conduct, whether physical, electronic, or verbal that:
  - (A) May be based on a youth’s actual or perceived race, color, ethnicity, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, intellectual ability, familial status, family responsibilities, matriculation, political affiliation, genetic information, disability, source of income, status as a victim of an intrafamily offense, place of residence or business, or any other distinguishing characteristic, or on a youth’s association with a person, or group with any person, with one or more of the actual or perceived foregoing characteristics; and
  - (B) Shall be reasonably predicted to:
    - (i) Place the youth in reasonable fear of physical harm to his or her person or property;
    - (ii) Cause a substantial detrimental effect on the youth’s physical or mental health;
    - (iii) Substantially interfere with the youth’s academic performance or attendance; or
    - (iv) Substantially interfere with the youth’s ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by an agency, educational institution, or grantee.

Democracy Prep Congress Heights Public Charter School prohibits acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying of a student. A safe and civil environment in school is necessary for students to learn and achieve high academic standards; harassment, intimidation or bullying, like other disruptive or violent behaviors, is conduct that disrupts both a student’s ability to learn and a school’s ability to educate its students in a safe and disciplined environment. Since students learn by example, school administrators, faculty, staff and volunteers should be commended for demonstrating appropriate behavior, treating others with civility and respect, and refusing to tolerate harassment, intimidation or bullying.

“Electronic communication” means a communication transmitted by means of an electronic device, including, but not limited to, a telephone, cellular phone, computer, or pager.

### II. Code of Conduct

Not all acts of bullying against students, however, are motivated by characteristics such as the target’s race, color, religion, gender or sexual orientation. Some acts of bullying are simply one child exercising power and control over another either in isolated incidents (e.g., intimidation, harassment) or as patterns of harassing or to intimidating behavior (e.g., bullying). Such acts of bullying, while not considered “harassment, intimidation or bullying” as defined by State law, will be subject to discipline pursuant to the Democracy Prep Congress Heights Public Charter School Code of Conduct.

In all instances of harassment, intimidation or bullying behavior occurring off school grounds, consequences may be exercised when it is reasonably necessary for the offending student's physical or emotional safety and well-being or for reasons relating to the safety and well-being of other students, staff or school grounds, and when the conduct which is the subject of a proposed consequence materially and substantially interferes with the requirements of appropriate discipline in the operation of Democracy Prep Congress Heights Public Charter School. Consequences are designed to: (a) appropriately correct the bullying behavior; (b) prevent another occurrence of bullying or retaliation, and (c) protect the target of bullying.

All acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying that include the use of school property (e.g., school computers or other electronic or wireless communication devices) are prohibited, whether the subject or recipient of the bullying is on or off school property.

Democracy Prep Congress Heights Public Charter School expects students to conduct themselves in keeping with their levels of development, maturity and demonstrated capabilities, with a proper regard for the rights and welfare of other students and school staff, the educational purpose underlying all school activities and the care of school facilities and equipment, consistent with the code of student conduct.

Democracy Prep Congress Heights Public Charter School believes that standards for student behavior must be set cooperatively through interaction among the students, parents, staff and community members of the School, producing an atmosphere that encourages students to grow in self-discipline. The development of this atmosphere requires respect for self and others, as well as for School and community property on the part of students, staff and community members.

Democracy Prep Congress Heights Public Charter School believes that the best discipline is self-imposed, and that it is the responsibility of staff to use instances of violations of the code of student conduct as opportunities for helping students learn to assume and accept responsibility for their behavior and the consequences of their behavior. Staff members who interact with students shall apply best practices designed to prevent student conduct problems and foster students' abilities to grow in self-discipline.

Democracy Prep Congress Heights Public Charter School requires its school leader or designee to implement procedures that ensure both the appropriate consequences and remedial responses for students who commit one or more acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying, consistent with the code of student conduct, and the consequences and remedial responses for staff members who commit one or more acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying. Appropriate consequences and remedial actions are those that are graded according to the severity of the offenses, consider the developmental ages of the student offenders and students' histories of inappropriate behaviors, per the code of student conduct. The following factors, at a minimum, shall be given full consideration by the School Leader or designee in the implementation of appropriate consequences and remedial measures for each act of harassment, intimidation or bullying by students.

#### Factors for Determining Consequences:

- Age, developmental and maturity levels of the parties involved;
- Degrees of harm;
- Surrounding circumstances;
- Nature and severity of the behaviors;
- Incidences of past or continuing patterns of behavior;
- Relationships between the parties involved; and
- Context in which the alleged incidents occurred.

#### Factors for Determining Remedial Measures:

- Personal;
- Life skill deficiencies;
- Social relationships;
- Strengths;
- Traits;
- Interests;
- Extra-curricular activities;
- Classroom participation;
- Academic performance;
- Environmental;
- School culture;
- Student-staff relationships and staff behavior toward the student;
- General staff management of classrooms or other educational environments;
- Social-emotional and behavioral supports;
- Community activities;
- Neighborhood situation; and
- Family situation.

Consequences and appropriate remedial actions for a student or staff member who commits one or more acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion of students, as set forth in the board of education's approved code of student conduct. Consequences for a student who commits an act of harassment, intimidation or bullying shall be varied and graded according to the nature of the behavior, the developmental age of the student and the student's history of problem behaviors and performance, and must be consistent with the Board of Trustees approved Code of Conduct. Remedial measures shall be designed to correct the problem behavior; prevent another occurrence of the problem; protect and provide support for the victim of the act; and take corrective action for documented systemic problems related to harassment, intimidation or bullying. The consequences and remedial measures may include, but are not limited to, the examples listed below:

#### Examples of Consequences:

- Admonishment;
- Temporary removal from the classroom;
- Deprivation of privileges;
- Classroom or administrative detention;
- Referral to disciplinarian;
- In-school suspension during the school week or the weekend;
- After-school programs;
- Out-of-school suspension (short-term or long-term);
- Legal action; and
- Expulsion.

#### Examples of Remedial Measures — Personal:

- Restitution and restoration;
- Mediation;
- Peer support group;
- Recommendations of a student behavior or ethics council;
- Corrective instruction or other relevant learning or service experience;
- Supportive student interventions, including participation of the Intervention and Referral Services team;
- Behavioral assessment or evaluation, including, but not limited to, a referral to the Child Study Team, as appropriate;

- Behavioral management plan, with benchmarks that are closely monitored;
- Assignment of leadership responsibilities (e.g., hallway or bus monitor);
- Involvement of DREAM Coach;
- Student counseling; and
- Parent conferences.

Examples of Remedial Measures--Environmental (Classroom, School Building, and School Bus):

- School and community surveys or other strategies for determining the conditions contributing to harassment, intimidation or bullying;
- School culture change;
- School climate improvement;
- Adoption of research-based, systemic bullying prevention programs;
- School policy and procedures revisions;
- Modifications of schedules;
- Adjustments in hallway traffic;
- Modifications in student routes or patterns traveling to and from school;
- Supervision of student before and after school, including school transportation;
- Targeted use of monitors (e.g., hallway, cafeteria, school perimeter, bus);
- Small or large group presentations for fully addressing the behaviors and the responses to the behaviors;
- General professional development programs for certificated and non-certificated staff;
- Disciplinary action for school staff who contributed to the problem;
- Supportive institutional interventions, including participation of the
- Intervention and Referral Services team;
- Parent conferences;
- Family counseling;
- Involvement of parent-teacher organizations;
- Involvement of community-based organizations;
- Development of a general bullying response plan;
- Recommendations of a student behavior or ethics council;
- Peer support groups; and
- Law enforcement involvement.

### III. Investigation

Democracy Prep Congress Heights Public Charter School prohibits any person from falsely accusing another as a means of harassment, intimidation or bullying.

Students – The consequences and appropriate remedial action for a student found to have falsely accused another as a means of harassment, intimidation or bullying may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion.

School Employees – Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a school employee found to have falsely accused another as a means of harassment, intimidation or bullying shall be disciplined in accordance with district policies, procedures and agreements. This includes but is not limited suspension without pay to termination.

Visitors or Volunteers – Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a visitor or volunteer, found to have falsely accused another as a means of harassment, intimidation or bullying shall be determined by the school leader after consideration of the nature, severity and circumstances of the act, including reports to appropriate law enforcement officials.

Democracy Prep Congress Heights requires Sean Reidy ([sreidy@democracyprep.org](mailto:sreidy@democracyprep.org) or 202-617-4667) and/or his designee to be responsible for receiving complaints alleging violations of this policy. All school employees as well as all other members of the school community, including students, parents, volunteers and visitors, are required to report alleged violations of this policy to Sean Reidy. While use of the report form is not required, the reporting party is encouraged to use the report form available from the school leader or at the school's main office. Oral reports also shall be considered official reports. Reports may be made anonymously, but formal action for violations of the code of student conduct may not be based solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

Democracy Prep Congress Heights requires Sean Reidy and/or his designee to be responsible for determining whether an alleged act constitutes a violation of this policy. In so doing, Sean Reidy and/or her designee shall conduct a prompt, thorough and complete investigation of each alleged incident.

All reported incidents of harassment, intimidation and bullying shall be investigated promptly and in accordance with law and the following procedures:

- A. All investigations shall be thorough and complete, and documented in writing, and shall include, but not be limited to:
  - 1. Taking of statements from victims, witnesses and accused;
  - 2. Careful examination of the facts;
  - 3. Support for the victim; and
  - 4. Determination if alleged act constitutes a violation of this policy.
- B. The investigation shall be initiated by Sean Reidy or his designee within one school day of the report of the incident and shall be conducted by a school anti-bullying specialist. The principal may appoint additional personnel who are not school anti-bullying specialists to assist in the investigation.
- C. The investigation shall be completed as soon as possible, but not later than 10 school days from the date of the written report of the incident of harassment, intimidation, or bullying. In the event that there is information relative to the investigation that is anticipated but not yet received by the end of the 10-day period, the school anti-bullying specialist may amend the original report of the results of the investigation to reflect the information.
- D. The results of the investigation shall be reported to the school leader within two school days of the completion of the investigation, and in accordance with law and board policy. The school leader may initiate intervention services, establish training programs to reduce harassment, intimidation, or bullying and enhance school climate, impose discipline, order counseling as a result of the findings of the investigation, or take or recommend other appropriate action.
- E. The results of each investigation shall be reported to the Board of Trustees no later than the date of the next Board meeting following the completion of the investigation, and include:
  - 1. Any services provided;
  - 2. Training established;



3. Discipline imposed; or
  4. Other action taken or recommended by the chief school administrator.
- F. Sean Reidy or his designee shall ensure that parents or guardians of the students who are parties to the investigation shall receive information about the investigation. This information shall be provided in writing within 5 school days after the results of the investigation are reported to the Board and include:
1. The nature of the investigation;
  2. Whether the district found evidence of harassment, intimidation, or bullying; or
  3. Whether discipline was imposed or services provided to address the incident of harassment, intimidation, or bullying.

Democracy Prep Congress Heights Charter School is reminded that the required Memorandum of Agreement between Education and Law Enforcement Officials defines the conditions under which school officials are required to report suspected hate crimes or bias-related acts to law enforcement authorities. Since some acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying may be bias-related acts and potentially hate or bias crimes, school officials must report to law enforcement officials either serious acts or those that may be part of a larger pattern. Democracy Prep will submit to the citywide coordinator a dataset of all incident and service measures designated in this policy. This data will not include any identifying information about the bully, victim, or witnesses. The school leader and/or her designee will be responsible for ensuring the citywide coordinator has accurate information on incident and service measures. Given the sensitive nature of information contained in this database, only the prevention specialist will have access to individualizing information in the database.

Additionally, all incidents of harassment, intimidation and bullying, including related offender and victim information, must be reported to citywide coordinator. Democracy Prep will provide a report of bullying prevention and incident metrics to the citywide coordinator every six months. The Democracy Prep report will include all service and incident measures included in this policy.

#### IV. Retaliation

Democracy Prep Congress Heights Charter School prohibits reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of harassment, intimidation or bullying. Retaliation must be prohibited also against the (a) victim of bullying, (b) a witness of the bullying, or (c) anyone else with reliable information that a person has been subject to bullying. The consequence and appropriate remedial action for a person who engages in reprisal or retaliation shall be determined by the administrator after consideration of the nature, severity and circumstances of the act, in accordance with case law, Federal and State statutes and regulations and Democracy Prep's policies and procedures.

Democracy Prep Congress Heights Charter School's Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying policy applies to participation in school-sponsored functions, is posted on the School website and distributed annually to parents and guardians who have children enrolled in Democracy Prep Congress Heights Charter School.

Sean Reidy of Democracy Prep Congress Heights Charter School annually distributes the policy to all school staff, students and parents, along with a statement explaining that it applies to all applicable acts of Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying that occur on school property, at school-sponsored functions or on a school bus. The school leader shall post the policy on the school's website as well as annually notify students and parents that the policy is available on the school's website. The name, school phone number,

school address and school email address of the school anti-bullying coordinator and anti-bullying specialist will also be listed on the home page of Democracy Prep Congress Heights's website. The school leader shall develop and implement a process for annually discussing the school's Policy on Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying with students.

The goal of this policy is to foster a safe and disciplined environment that is conducive to learning, where individuals treat one another with civility and respect. To accomplish this goal, the Policy must be widely disseminated to inform everyone in the school and community of its provisions. Democracy Prep Congress Heights requires all employees, students and parents to sign a written statement indicating that they have received and read the Policy and agree to abide by the provisions of the policy and reviewing the Policy at public meetings.

Democracy Prep Congress Heights is required to bi-annually review the extent and characteristics of harassment, intimidation and bullying behavior in the school building and implement determined programmatic or other responses, if determined appropriate by the Board of Trustees.

Democracy Prep Congress Heights Charter School is required to annually review the training needs of the staff for the effective implementation of the Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying policy, procedures, programs and initiatives of the Board of Trustees and implement staff training programs consistent with the annual review of training needs and the findings of the annual review and update of the code of student conduct, as determined appropriate by the Board of Trustees. Democracy Prep Congress Heights is required to develop a process for annually discussing the school's Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying Policy with students.

## V. Appeals

To comply under the YBPA, we will do the following in regards to appeals:

- Such party who is not satisfied with the outcome of the initial investigation may appeal to the designated higher-level authority.
- Appeals must be made within 30 days of the conclusion of the initial investigation.
- The secondary investigation shall be completed within 30 days of receipt of appeal, unless:
  - Circumstances require additional time to complete a thorough investigation.
  - The higher-level authority sets forth those circumstances in writing.
  - The additional time is not to exceed 15 days.
- Those filing an appeal shall be informed of the right to seek further redress under the Human Rights Act.

### References:

District of Columbia Code 2-1535.01.  
District of Columbia Code 2-1535.02  
District of Columbia Code 2-1535.03  
District of Columbia Code 2-1535.04  
District of Columbia Code 2-1535.05  
District of Columbia Code 2-1535.06  
District of Columbia Code 2-1535.07  
District of Columbia Code 2-1535.08  
District of Columbia Code 2-1535.09

## COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE

I fully understand the expectations, standards, and policies set forth in this Handbook and agree to demonstrate my commitment to my education by adhering to the DREAM values in the manner outlined above. I recognize that failure to abide by these standards and policies will result in the imposition of appropriate consequences as described throughout this Handbook. I acknowledge that I am responsible for my own behavior, and I pledge to follow directions issued by my teachers and school leaders. Democracy Prep Public Schools are schools of choice. I understand that my parents or guardians are free to remove me at any time.

Scholar: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

School Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_