
ST. COLETTA ATTENDANCE & TRUANCY POLICY**Rev: July 2019****Attendance:**

All students are expected to attend school daily and each student's attendance is taken each day and a records maintained by the school. It is required that parents/guardians call the school if their child is absent. You must report your child's absence by dialing the school number (202) 350-8680 and accessing the student absence extension #1101. The teachers take attendance each and every day and the homes of absent students are called by office personnel if a parent/guardian does not report their child's absence; however, it is the expectation that the parent inform the school of their child's absence. The reason for each absence or tardiness is documented. Excessive absence and tardiness are causes for concern. Lawful reasons for absences and tardiness include: illness of a student (a doctor's note may be required); death in the student's immediate family; medical appointments; required court appearances; observance of religious holy days; lawful exclusion or expulsion from school by school authorities; temporary closing of school; and other absences approved in advance by the principal upon the written request of a parent or guardian. Vacation time is considered an unexcused absence, and as required by the jurisdiction will be reported as such. If no information is received from the parent/guardian regarding the student's absence, it is marked as unexcused.

Truancy:

St. Coletta must follow the attendance policies of the governing jurisdiction/school district.

District of Columbia Students

DC's Compulsory Education and School Attendance law requires youth ages 5 to 17 to be in school. Per DC regulations, for a student to be marked present for the school day, he or she must be present for at least 80% of the day. Students who are tardy or leave early for more than 20% of the day will be counted as absent.

The following steps should be followed if a student is to be absent.

- Parents are responsible for communicating their child's absence to the school. Place a call to our student absence line at: (202)350-8680ext. 1101 or select option #3 when prompted
- If the school does not receive a call from a parent/guardian, our attendance manager will call home to inquire as to the reason for the student's absence from school.
- A written note by the parent/guardian must be received by the school within 5 days upon the student's return to school, as per DC regulations.
- If a student is absent for 3 consecutive days or 10 cumulative days, further documentation, from a doctor or other staff from an agency or organization, may be requested in order to excuse the absence(s).
- At 4 unexcused absences, the school social worker calls the home to discuss attendance regulations and inform parent of accrued absences.

The following steps will be taken to address truancy as required per DC regulations:

- If a student reaches 3 unexcused absences, a letter is sent home alerting the parent of attendance concerns.
- If a student accrues 5 unexcused absences an attendance conference will be scheduled with the parent and school social worker. The purpose of the conference will be to review educational and attendance concerns, develop attendance intervention strategies, and identify local community resources to improve school attendance.
- If a student accrues 10 unexcused absences, a report of educational neglect will be made to CFSA.
- When a student ages 14-17 accrues 15 unexcused absences, a referral will be made to Court Services Division of the Family Court and to the Juvenile Student Division of OAG.

Valid Reasons for Excused Absences:

- Illness of the student (a doctor's note is required for a student absent 3 or more consecutive days or 10 cumulative days in a school year)
- Illness of a child for parenting students (a doctor's note is required for a student absent 3 or more days or 10 cumulative absences in a school year);
- Medical or dental appointments for the student;
- Death in the student's immediate family;
- Exclusion by direction of the authorities of the District of Columbia, due to quarantine, contagious disease, infection, infestation, or other condition requiring separation from other students for medical or health reasons;
- Necessity for a student to attend a judicial proceeding, or court-ordered activity, as a party to the action or under subpoena;
- Observance of a religious holiday;
- Absences to allow students to visit their parent who is in the military, immediately before, during, or after deployment;
- College visits for students in 9th- 12th grades (up to three cumulative days);
- School visits for students in K through 8th grades (one day);
- Absences of expectant or parenting students for a time period specified by their doctor and any accommodations mandated by law;
- Take Our Daughters & Sons to Work Day;
- Religious event or celebration outside of a religious holiday (up to five cumulative days);and
- An emergency or other circumstance approved by DCPS or the Principal or St. Coletta School.

The following absences may be excused without written documentation from the parent, as verified by the school:

- Lawful out of school suspension or exclusion by school authorities;
- Temporary closing of facilities or suspension of classes due to severe weather, official activities, holidays, malfunctioning equipment, unsafe or unsanitary conditions, or other condition(s) or emergency requiring a school closing or suspension of classes;
- Failure of the District of Columbia to provide transportation in cases where the District of Columbia has a legal responsibility for the transportation of the student; and
- An emergency or other circumstance approved by DCPS.

Any absence that does not meet the criteria of an excused absence or fails to satisfy the documentation requirement of an excused absence within the allowable timeframe will be classified as an unexcused absence. If a student or parent anticipates an absence not covered by the excused absences listed above, they may submit a request for an excused absence due to a special circumstance to the school principal.

Maryland Students

The *Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR)* requires students ages 5 to 16 to attend school. If a student has 3 unexcused absences, a letter will be sent home alerting the parent of attendance concerns. If a student accrues 5 unexcused absences, an attendance conference will be scheduled with the parent and school social worker. Students who are habitually truant, or miss more than 20% of days within a school year, will be referred to the Department of Juvenile Services.

Virginia Students

The Commonwealth of Virginia's Compulsory Attendance Law, Code of Virginia, 22.1-254 requires students ages 5 to 18 to attend school. If a student has 3 unexcused absences, a letter will be sent home alerting the parent of attendance concerns. If a student accrues 5 unexcused absences, an attendance conference will be scheduled with the parent and school social worker. If attendance does not improve, the family will be referred to Juvenile Court.

St. Coletta School serves students with significant disabilities, which may include students that present with behavior challenges. All students are managed on an individual basis to determine the level of supports and/or consequences required to address severe behaviors that may disrupt the classroom environment or put themselves and/or others at risk of harm. While a majority of behaviors are able to be addressed through the use of positive behavior supports, there are instances when alternate consequences, such as suspension, are deemed necessary.

PROCEDURE

Positive Behavior Supports

It is the philosophy of St. Coletta School to foster productive student behavior. Toward this goal, staff are expected to provide: clear rules for student conduct; collegiality among staff members; a pervasive caring for students; effective instruction; and a focus on providing positive reinforcement and options for students.

Effective methods for responding to disruptive student behavior include:

- *Using positive redirection and reinforcement whenever appropriate.
- *Developing positive personal relationships with students that indicate high teacher expectations and respect for students.
- *Closely monitoring performance and behavior.
- *Using brief, non-disruptive interventions.
- *Handling conflicts calmly and avoiding engaging in power struggles.
- *Clarifying students' choices so that options are clear and students are responsible for the consequences of their choices.
- *Using effective listening skills to help students identify problems and gain insight.

When students exhibit serious behavioral difficulties such as aggression, self-injury, significant property destruction and elopement (running away), a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) and Positive Behavior Support Plan (PBSP) may need to be developed. The development process should include the multidisciplinary team involved with the student and the following six steps:

- *Attempt to determine the function(s) of the behavior through an FBA;
- *Focus on one or two specific student behaviors that need to change in order for the student to have a successful school experience;
- *Determine specific interventions to bring about these changes;
- *Assign responsibility to staff for implementing each intervention;
- *Determine the data to be collected to test the effectiveness of the intervention; and,
- *Review the program at a minimum annually, or as determined by the IEP team.

Copies of the FBA and BIP are discussed with and given to parents/guardians and affected staff. A copy is placed in the student's record.

St. Coletta staff members are trained in the Mandt System. All staff receive training in the Relational Section (Building Healthy Relationships, Communication, and Conflict Resolution). Depending on the specific needs of the school program, selected staff members receive training in the Conceptual and Technical Sections (Medical Risks of Restraint, Assisting and Supporting, Separating and Restraining.) Only staff members trained in the Conceptual and Technical level are allowed to intervene using this system. The Mandt System teaches a graded system of interventions, beginning with non-physical options and gradually moving towards physical options.. Physical intervention is used only as a matter of last resort when someone is a danger to themselves or others and the attempted non-physical interventions have not been successful. Parents must be notified if a restraint is utilized and a behavior plan must be developed.

There are Quiet Rooms at St. Coletta that are available for students to use if they need to calm themselves. These rooms are unlocked and students are never left alone. Use of the Quiet Room requires that an administrator be notified, an incident report be written and the parent notified and provided a copy of the incident report. St. Coletta policy prohibits the use of mechanical and chemical restraints.

The St. Coletta School Behavior Management Plan **strictly prohibits:**

- Deprivation of drinking water or food necessary to meet daily nutritional needs.
- Denial of the use of toilet facilities.
- Any action humiliating, degrading or abusive.
- Deprivation of health care including counseling.
- Intrusive aversive therapy.
- Use of mechanical restraints, chemical restraints, or seclusion.

Corporal punishment will never be administered by any staff person. If abuse or neglect is suspected, the school will contact Child Protective Services (CPS). Before CPS comes, a parent/guardian must be notified. If the parent/guardian objects, the child will not be interviewed. This does not apply if the parent/guardian is the suspect. In such a case, CPS may interview the child without consent from the parent or guardian.

Student Suspension/Disciplinary Unenrollment/Emergency Removal

While St. Coletta School is dedicated to serving students with challenging behaviors by providing intensive behavior supports, there may be incidents where suspension is deemed necessary. All cases are determined on a student by student basis and take into consideration their specific circumstances such as cognitive skill level and social awareness. In some situations suspension/disciplinary unenrollment is deemed necessary if the safety of others or the student involved is put at risk. Dependent on the seriousness of the offense and/or danger to others, outside authorities may also be contacted and the Public Charter School Board notified.

St. Coletta School employs the following levels of suspension:

Level I:

In School Disciplinary Action: disciplinary actions to include exclusion from school common areas and required participation in conflict resolution or peer mediation sessions, or similar actions of short duration that do not result in the student's loss of academic instruction time.

OR

In-House suspension: When a student continues to attend school with provisions made to their program that includes 1:1 supervision and suspension of all community outings. Instruction and related services will be conducted in a designated environment separate from the student's classroom.

Level II:

Short Term Out of school suspension: When a student is to remain home for the duration of the suspension to exceed no more than 5 school days. Students in KG through grade 5 cannot be suspended for a period greater than 5 days.

Level III:

Long Term Suspension/ Disciplinary Unenrollment/Emergency Removal: When a student is suspended out of school for a minimum of 6 days and up to 10 school days (for students in grades 6 through 12 only).

This level of suspension is reported to appropriate school jurisdictions and, by the 10th day of suspension or if a disciplinary unenrollment has been recommended, a manifestation determination meeting must be held to determine the relationship of the behavior to the disability

of the student, update or create behavior plans/functional behavior assessments and possibly determine an alternate placement.

Behaviors Resulting in Suspension include but are not limited to:

Level I:

- *Fighting
- *Stealing
- *Smoking
- *Intentionally destroying school property
- *Threatening others with bodily harm
- *Running away from staff in the community

Level II:

- *Drugs on premises
- *Alcohol on premises
- *Possession of a dangerous object
- *Causing bodily harm to others

Level III:

- *Possession of weapons
- *Significant aggressive/destructive behavior posing an immediate threat of severe injury to others and/or self

In accordance with the Student Fair Access to School Amendment Act of 2018, no student in grades kindergarten through 5 shall be subject to an out-of school suspension or disciplinary unenrollment, unless a school administrator determines that the student has willfully caused, attempted to cause, or threatened to cause bodily injury or emotional distress, to another person.

Notification of Suspension:

Once an infraction has been reported, the student(s) will meet with a school administrator to discuss their side of the incident. Incident reports will be written and submitted to the school administrator by witnesses of the incident.

In the event of a suspension/disciplinary unenrollment recommendation, parents/guardians will be informed immediately via telephone call (see also **Long Term Suspension Due Process Procedures** below). If parents/guardians are unable to be contacted, the student will be sent home with a letter of suspension/disciplinary unenrollment to be signed with a request that the letter be signed and returned. Parents/guardians and/or students, if they are 18 and their own guardian, will also be notified via certified mail and phone of this decision (preferably immediately as noted above), but no later than within 24 hours of the suspension/disciplinary unenrollment. In the case of a short term suspension, parents/guardians or students who are their own guardians will be extended the opportunity to meet with school administrators and can request to appeal the short-term suspension decision. This appeal will be reviewed by the school's discipline committee.

Long Term Suspension Due Process Procedure

If a suspension equaling more than ten consecutive or cumulative days over the school year occurs, or an disciplinary unenrollment is recommended, then, according to the *Individuals with Disabilities Improvement Act (IDEIA)*, a Manifest Determination and placement review IEP meeting must be held. In addition, all disciplinary unenrollment recommendations must be made by the Principal or in their absence, appropriate designee (Assistant Principal) and communicated as required to the St. Coletta Public Charter School Board. A Manifest Determination Meeting, per DCPS and other jurisdictional regulations, will be scheduled within ten days. Further steps taken will be determined by the IEP team at the Manifestation Determination meeting. Parents and/or students also have the right to have an advocate or attorney present at any Disciplinary

Unenrollment/Emergency Removal hearing or meeting.

The St. Coletta Public Charter School Board reviews all suspensions at each board meeting and can make recommendations regarding policy. Suspensions extending beyond 5 school days and disciplinary unenrollments are also required to be reported to the DC Public Charter School Board. Parents and/or students have the right to appeal any decision to the school's discipline committee or the St. Coletta Public Charter School Board. Disciplinary Unenrollment/Emergency Removal recommendations will be reported immediately to the St. Coletta Special Education Public Charter School Board chairperson and the CEO of St. Coletta of Greater Washington.



St. Coletta Special Education Public Charter School

Seeing possibilities beyond disabilities

May 6, 2019

Dear Parent/Guardian:

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is the federal law designed to protect the privacy of a student's education records. Schools are required to notify parents and eligible students annually of their rights under FERPA. Upon request, St. Coletta discloses education records without consent to officials of another school or school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll, or is already enrolled if the disclosure is for the purposes of the student's enrollment or transfer.

FERPA grants five rights to parents with respect to their children's scholastic records. These rights transfer to the student, or former student, upon reaching the age of 18. These rights are as follows:

- **The right to inspect and review the student's scholastic records** within a reasonable period but not to exceed 45 days after the day the school receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the school principal or assistant principal a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The school principal or other appropriate school official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where records may be inspected.
- **The right to request the amendment of a student's scholastic records** that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate or misleading. Parents or eligible students may write the school principal, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it should be changed. If St. Coletta decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the school will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment.
- **The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in a student's scholastic records**, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. For example, FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent to school official whom St. Coletta has determined to have legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by St. Coletta as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member; an official of another school system where a student seeks or intends to enroll, or where the student is already enrolled. A school official has a legitimate education interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.
- **The right to withhold disclosure of directory information.** At its discretion, St. Coletta may disclose basic "directory information" that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy without the consent of parents or eligible students in accordance with the provisions of District law and FERPA. Directory information includes:
 - A. Student Name
 - B. Student Address
 - C. Student Telephone Listing
 - D. Name of Attending School
 - E. Participation in Officially Recognized Activities and Sports
 - F. Student's Date and Place of Birth
 - G. Names of Schools Previously Attended
 - H. Dates of Attendance

If you do not want St. Coletta School to disclose directory information from your child's education records without your prior written consent, you must notify the LEA within two months of your child's enrollment in the school.



- **The right to file a complaint with the U. S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the school to comply with the requirements of FERPA.** The name and address of the office that administers FERPA are: Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave, SW, Washington, DC 20202.

Eligible students and parents of minor students have the right to see their records. In general, parental consent is required for others to access information in a student's records. Below are some circumstances under which consent is not required (See 20 USC §1232g (b)-(j) and 34 C.F.R. §99.31):

- In an emergency " if knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health and safety of the student or other individuals (See 34 C.F.R §99.36(a));
- Instances of abuse or neglect;
- Mandatory reporting of communicable diseases as required by local and federal requirements;
- Disclosure to "school officials, including teachers, within the agency or institution whom the agency or institution has determined to have legitimate educational interests (§ 99.31.(1)(i)(A));
- Certain legal situations including subpoenas or investigations of criminal offenses.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me.

Sincerely,

Catherine Decker
Assistant Principal of Admissions



Can I learn about the qualifications of my child's teacher?

A parent/guardian may inquire about the qualifications of their child's teacher at any time. All inquiries may be directed to either Dave Knight/Assistant Principal or Jessica Sitcovsky/Assistant Principal.

How will the school inform the parents about the State Education Agency Complaint Resolution Policy?

St. Coletta will send a copy of the District of Columbia State Education Agency to families yearly as part of the Back-to-School packet. Families may also use the school's board as one avenue for conflict resolution if an issue cannot be resolved between the family and school-based leadership. Contact information for the school's board can be found in the "People of St. Coletta" portion of this handbook.

Is there a dress code?

St. Coletta students are not required to wear uniforms. Clothing should be safe, comfortable and not restrictive to learning activities. Open-toed shoes, high heels, and heavy work/hiking boots are not permitted. Clothing should be free of loose strings around the neck or other items that could cause injury during active play; this includes, but is not limited to, heavy chains (worn as necklaces, belts, or hanging from belt loops). Short skirts and dresses should be an appropriate length and blouses must have no less than a two inch strap. In the event your child needs a change of clothing, it is requested that you send an extra pair of clothing to school (labeled with your student's name), including underwear.

Can my child participate in Special Olympics?

Interested students, 8 years and older, may participate in Special Olympics, a very rewarding and enriching experience. Special Olympics provides opportunities for peer social interaction and exposure to life-long leisure and healthy lifestyles. A separate medical form and permissions are required to be completed, if you want your child to participate. See required forms and explanations within the Back-to-School packet. Students are transported via school bus or van.

CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS

Charitable Contributions are essential to sustain the quality of services at St. Coletta School because tuition and fees cover only a portion of the cost needed to meet the needs of each child in our care. Each year we must raise approximately \$500,000 to meet our general operating expenses. Achieving this goal requires the support of foundations, corporations, organizations and hundreds of individuals in the metropolitan area. Contributions allow us to bring special services such as community-based instruction, participation in Special Olympics, adaptive equipment in Assistive Technology, arts programs and field trips to our children and young adults. St Coletta invites and appreciates your support.

More Questions?

Please call 202-350-8680

St. Coletta of Greater Washington admits students and clients of any race, color, religion, nationality, ethnic origin, gender or age to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded to or made available to students and clients of St. Coletta. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, nationality, ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, age or veteran's status in educational programs or in other school-administered activities. St. Coletta does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, nationality, ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, veteran's status, or any other factor protected by local, state, or federal law with regard to employment.

School employees are required by law to report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect to Child Protective Services or Adult protective Services.

Important People of St. Coletta of Greater Washington

Main: (202) 350-8680

Fax: (202)350-8699

President, St. Coletta Board of Trustees

Sue Goodhart (ext. 1001)

Chief Executive Officer

Sharon B. Raimo (ext. 1001)

**President, St. Coletta Special Education PCS
Board of Trustees**

Peggy O'Brien (ext. 1001)

Charter Board Parent Representatives

Josh Lewis, Carla Ware-Easterling (ext. 1001)

Chief Financial Officer

Kathy Rowland (ext. 1001)

Chief Operating Officer

Kaiheem Mason (ext. 1001)

Chief Development Director

Rebecca Hill (ext. 1001)

Principal (ext. 1003)

Christie Mandeville

Assistant Principal- Houses 1 and 2 (ext. 1039)

H1 Administrative House Assistant

H2 Administrative House Assistant

Jessica Sitcovsky

Shanae Carter (ext. 1012)

April Adams Fowler (ext. 1017)

Assistant Principal- Houses 3, 4, and 5 (ext. 1031)

Behavior Department

H3 Administrative House Assistant

H4 Administrative House Assistant

H5 Administrative House Assistant

Dave Knight

Ann Marie Nataro, Ester Pline (ext. 1122)

Lera Johnson, Susan Kloha (ext. 1059)

Julian Dixon (ext. 1020)

Sharmarte Banks (ext. 1075)

Devin Watson (ext. 1079)

Director of Curriculum (ext. 1051)

Amy Warden

Director of Therapeutic Services (ext. 1038)

Therapy Leads

Loni Licuanan

Katie Short (ext. 1073)- Speech/OT/PT

Jessica Drake (ext. 1073)- Social Work

Candice Turner (ext. 1022)- Nursing

Vocational Coordinator (ext. 1074)

Lucas LaFaver

IEP and Assessment Coordinator (ext. 1004)

Special Education Coordinators

Shannon Ball

Megan Dumond (x1012)

Krista Dews (ext. 1017)

Robert Blessing (ext. 1020)

Lisa Lester (ext. 1075)

Lisa Melbourne-Smith (ext. 1079)

Assistant Principal of Admissions (ext. 1002)

Attendance Coordinator

Transportation Coordinator

Records Manager

Front Desk Manager

Catherine Decker

Judyvette Acevedo (ext. 1005)

Shandell Matthews (ext. 1024)

Nakia Pearson (ext. 1015)

Gwen Green (ext. 1000)



St. Coletta Special Education Public Charter School

Seeing possibilities beyond disabilities

Open Meeting Policy

The St. Coletta Special Education Public Charter School Board has not yet formulated an open meeting policy. This is an important item on our agenda at our next meeting which will take place in September, 2019. Our open meeting policy will be discussed and voted on at that meeting. (The St. Coletta Special Education Public School Board meets quarterly, in September, November, February, and May.)

The scenario to be presented, discussed, and voted on will include (a) one open board meeting per year and (b) a communication plan to inform parents.



Grievance and Complaint Procedures For Parents and Students

Dev. 8/19

St. Coletta School wants to ensure that there is open communication and a way for all parents and students to express their opinion, provide feedback, have input on the school program, and voice their concerns. We strive to resolve complaints through a collaborative process in order to meet the needs of our students and their families. These procedures will be provided to families annually within Back to School paperwork.

Procedure

1. *Contact the Classroom Teacher*- The first point of communication for students/parents/guardians is the classroom teacher as it relates to daily school activities and programming. If a student/parent/guardian wishes to discuss a concern with the classroom teacher, they should work with the teacher to schedule a meeting date/time.
2. *Contact the Assistant Principal*- A student/parent/guardian may contact the Assistant Principal for the age group and request a meeting to further discuss their concerns should they feel it was not addressed by the classroom teacher. Note: if the concern regards the immediate health and/or safety of a student, the Assistant Principal and/or Principal may be contacted prior to the classroom teacher.
3. *Contact the Principal*- Beyond the classroom teacher and Assistant Principal, students/parents/guardians may elect to schedule an appointment with the Principal if they are not satisfied with the response to their concern regarding student programming. In addition, the Principal should be contacted if an assistant principal cannot be reached regarding student's immediate health and/or safety. The Principal will serve as the first point of contact for concerns that relate to school policy and/or management.
4. *Contact the school's charter board (charter school students)*- A student/parent/guardian may elevate their concern to the chairman of the St. Coletta Charter Board if they feel the concern remains unresolved. Contact information for the board chairman is provided to families within the Parent Handbook.
5. *Contact the LEA Representative (non-public students)*- Non-public students and parents/guardians of non-public students may contact the representative from their local jurisdiction if they believe their concern remains unresolved or involves the health and/or safety of the student.

St. Coletta Special Education PCS holds quarterly Board Meetings with their Charter School Board. The meeting schedule is posted on our website along with contact information. The meeting schedule will indicate one (1) open board meeting. Letters informing parents of the open meeting will also be sent home and as well as being publicly posted on our social media platforms.