



## 1. Discipline Policy

**Suspension and Expulsion Policy:** AppleTree prohibits the suspension or expulsion of students, unless AppleTree determines that the student has willfully caused or attempted to cause bodily injury, or threatened serious bodily injury to another person, except in self-defense. No student may be suspended for longer than 3 days for any individual incident. The Chief of Schools approves all student suspension or expulsion requests.

**Manifestation Determination Process:** All students are expected to adhere to the behavioral expectations outlined in the AppleTree Early Learning Public Charter School Code of Conduct. Should a student with a disability engage in behaviors that result in out of school suspension, our LEA adheres to the following procedural guidelines as described in federal regulations governing the discipline of students with disabilities. Should a student be removed from school for more than 10 days, this immediately constitutes a change of placement which requires a manifestation determination review meeting. Parents and guardians will thus be immediately notified of the change in placement, provided a copy of the procedural safeguards and invited to attend the Manifestation Determination Review:

If the team determines that the behavior IS a manifestation of the child's disability, AELPCS will follow these steps:

1. Complete a Functional Behavior Assessment (unless one was completed prior to the incident) and develop a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP).
  - a. If a BIP is already in place, the team should review and change the plan as necessary in order to address the behavior.
2. Return the student to the previous placement unless a change of placement is required by the team as a modification to the BIP.

If the team determines that the behavior IS a manifestation of the student's disability, resulting from a failure to implement the student's IEP as written, AELPCS will follow these steps:

1. Determine that the behavior is a manifestation of the child's disability;
2. Take steps to immediately remedy the identified deficiencies
3. Return the student to the previous placement.

If the team determines that the behavior is NOT a manifestation of the child's disability, AELPCS will follow these steps:

1. School personnel continue with disciplinary action as would be equivalent for non-disabled peers.
2. Continue to provide the student with services in another setting (this may be an interim alternative educational setting) as to allow the child to work on achieving their IEP goals.

Special Circumstances: School personnel may remove a student to an alternative educational setting for no more than 45 school days without regard to whether the behavior is determined to be a manifestation of the child’s disability, if the child:

- a. Carries a weapon to or possesses a weapon at school, on school premises, or to or at a school function under the jurisdiction of a State Education Agency or Local Education agency
- b. Knowingly possesses or uses illegal drugs, or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance, while at school, on school premises, or at a school function under the jurisdiction of a State Education Agency or Local Education agency
- c. Has inflicted serious bodily injury upon another person while at school, on school premises, or at a school function under the jurisdiction of a State Education Agency or Local Education agency

Please see Chapter 25 Section 5 of the DC Municipal Regulations which are tightly aligned with the regulations governing the discipline of students with disabilities as outlined in IDEA 2004.A

**Appeals Process:** All expulsion and suspension decisions can be appealed by the primary caregiver. There is no limit on the number of expulsions and suspensions a caregiver can appeal. Appeals must be submitted via email to the Chief of Schools within two business days of the notice. The Chief of Schools will schedule and hold a hearing within two business days of receiving an appeal. The Chief of Schools will render a decision within two business days of the conclusion of the hearing.

## 2. Attendance Policy

### Attendance Policy and Communication Protocol

Absence	Home-School Communication
Student is absent for 1-2 days, regardless of parent contact	Robo text/call to parent/guardian
Student misses 3 days with no contact from parent	OC calls parent and logs conversation/reason for absence

Student misses 5 days (nonconsecutive or consecutive)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. OC calls parent if no prior contact</li> <li>b. OC sends attendance letter (generated through Power School) home if not able to contact</li> <li>c. OC does not send letter if able to speak with parent</li> <li>d. OC informs principal weekly of students with 5 or more absences (using Power School Attendance Counts Report with that week's date range)</li> </ul>
Student misses 5 consecutive days and no parent contact	OC sends attendance letter home (generated through Power School)
Student misses 5-8 days (nonconsecutive or consecutive)	<p>Principal and/or SW schedule attendance plan meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*SW facilitates meetings where resources are pre-identified as a barrier to attending</li> <li>*Principal facilitates all other attendance meetings</li> </ul>
Student misses 10 consecutive days	SW and an additional staff member do home visit; a letter is sent home.
Student misses more than 10 consecutive days and the child has NOT been seen by school staff during a home visit (note: child must be seen, a parent saying the child is okay still requires a report)	SW makes a safety and welfare call to CFSA/MPD
Student misses more than 10 nonconsecutive days and an attendance contract meeting has already been held	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. OC makes daily phone call for each day absent</li> <li>b. SW and Principal ensure attendance plan interventions are followed</li> <li>c. Principal or SW schedule a meeting for each subsequent 5 days missed (meetings should be assigned evenly). Revise attendance plan.</li> </ul>
If a student continues to accumulate excessive absences (20 or more consecutive, unexcused absences), the Principal and CAO may make decision together about unenrolling the student. A student may not be withdrawn without approval from the CAO.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. SW or Principal conducts home visit; document on Attendance Dashboard if no contact with the parent was made.</li> <li>b. OC submits a request via the Enrollment/Disenrollment Forms after decision made by the Principal and CAO; a certified letter is sent home indicating the decision.</li> </ul>
<b>Note: Special Education Coordinator should be invited to all meetings involving special education students</b>	
<b>Note:</b> OCs must file excused absences notes in student file and log the absence as excused into PowerSchool; Phone call, email, typed, or handwritten note is acceptable. Beyond three consecutive absences, request a doctor's note.	

Attendance FAQ

**When do we require a doctor's notes for students with excused absences due to illness?**

If parent states that student is out sick, a doctor's note is required after 3 consecutive absences to account for excused absences.

**May we automatically dis-enroll students for non-attendance?**

No

**What should I do if a parent says that they wish to withdraw their student?**

In order to withdraw from AppleTree, parents must complete a withdrawal form and submit it to the front office. The parent or guardian who is withdrawing a student must also be listed as Parent 1 or Parent 2 on the student's enrollment form. No other person, including extended family members and emergency contacts, will be allowed to withdraw a student for any reason, unless given written permission by the child's parent or guardian.

**What should I do if a parent says they wish to withdraw their student, they refuse to come into school and you have no notification from another school?**

Inform the school Social Worker. The Social Worker will conduct a home visit with another AppleTree staff member in an attempt to "see" the student and to get the parent to complete the paperwork. If the Social Worker is unable to make contact with the parent and/or see the student. The Social Worker will make a report to CFSA. After 20 consecutive days of non attendance, you may withdraw the student, as long as all previous steps have been completed and documented.

**What should I do if I have notification from another school that student is enrolled but no contact from parent?**

If AppleTree is unable to establish contact with the guardian(s) of an absent student, and another LEA communicates in writing that the student has indeed enrolled in its LEA, AppleTree may disenroll the student. The written communication (preferably an email) should be printed and attached to the student's file. The campus principal or operations coordinator of the student to be disenrolled should complete the withdrawal form.

**What should I do if a child is being picked-up after 3:30 when they are not signed up for extended day?**

Have parent sign the late pick-up log, collect payment and remind them of the expectations. After 4:00 PM this considered child abandonment and CFSA can be called. However, approval is needed from the school principal.

**What happens if a parent refuses to pay the late pick-up fee and continues to arrive after 3:30 to pick up their student?**

Support family in connecting to get a voucher for extended day (if appropriate). Principal should have conversation with the parent about supports.

**If a parent withdraws their student during the re-enrollment period, may the parent re-enroll?**

Parent must follow MySchoolDC policies and submit a new application if student withdraws mid year and would like to re-enroll the following year. If a student withdraws and would like to return in the same year they do not need to complete a new application if there is no waitlist.

**What steps should I take if a student/family is taking extended leave?**

Keep students enrolled for extended absences as long as the parent states, in writing, the date by which the student will return.

**Excused Absences**

The following absences may be classified as an **Excused Absence**:

- Illness of the student (a doctor's note is required for a student who accumulates five or more absences per semester due to illness. **(Semester 1 ends December 31, Semester 2 concludes on the last day of school)**;
- Illness of a sibling (a doctor's note is required for a student absent five or more days in a semester);
- 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 parent of the 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;
- School visits for students in PK4 (one day);
- 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 AppleTree.

**The following absences may also 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 AppleTree.

### **Special Requests for Excused Absences**

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. The principal shall consult with his or her manager before determining whether to grant the excused absence request.

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 time frame will be classified as an unexcused absence.

**If a student is absent for a total of up to four (4) cumulative days** in each semester, a parent's written excuse is sufficient for explaining the absence. Such absence will be excused if it falls under one of the excused absence reasons noted above.

**If a student is absent for five (5) or more cumulative days per semester**, further documentation is required beyond communication by the parent for the absence to be excused. Written explanation of the student's absence must be submitted by a doctor or staff of a relevant agency, on official doctor's office/agency letterhead and signed by a relevant official. Note:

- Medical or dental absences must be submitted on official doctor/dentist office stationery or form; and
- Student's required presence at judicial proceedings must be documented by a document from the court stating the need for the student's presence on all the relevant dates.
- Funeral programs may be accepted as appropriate documentation.

### **Prohibited Actions Related to Absenteeism DC law prohibits specific actions related to student truancy and absenteeism as follows:**

- No minor may be expelled or receive an out-of-school suspension due to an unexcused absence or due to a late arrival to school.
- No minor may be un-enrolled due to unexcused absences or due to late arrival to school unless the student has accumulated 20 or more full-school-day consecutive unexcused absences.
- At the beginning of the school year, no student should be withdrawn unless they fail to attend at least one (1) day of school in the first three (3) weeks of school without notification for such absence; or transfers to another educational institution.

Student Withdrawal Policy and Protocols (SOP)

### **Student Withdrawal Form**

### **Immunizations Non-compliance**

The following process should be followed and performed when managing immunizations non-compliance:

- The Immunizations Non-compliance Warning Letter must be provided to the parent, and the parent must be given 10 business days to comply.
- The Immunizations No School Letter must be provided when removing a student from school for non-compliance. The family must receive 10 business days to comply once student is removed. This may be an excused absence.
- Principal is allowed to suspend any student for up to 10 business days if student is non-compliant, and does not comply with immunizations requirements;
- Principal is allowed to disenroll a student who does not comply with immunizations requirements within 10 business days; and
- If space is available, the principal is allowed to perform mid-year re-enrollment of the disenrolled student once the student complies.

### **Chronic Absenteeism**

The following circumstances allow the principal to immediately disenroll a student:

- Student receives 20 or more consecutive unexcused absences and approval of Chief Academic Officer.

### **3. Grievance Procedures**

**Complaint Procedures:** AppleTree makes every effort to make children's and families' association with our school a very positive one. Every staff member shares the mission and goals of this organization and will strive daily to live out our mission and reach each of our school goals. However, in the event that family members have a complaint about any of the policies, practices or procedures at AppleTree, families are encouraged to communicate them to the Principal Instructional Leader and/or the Operations Coordinator. Parents should address the Principal with any issues concerning the instructional program, interactions with teachers, or family engagement. Parents should address the Operations Coordinator with any concerns related to the operations of the school including meal service, the physical plant, and health and safety. The administrative team takes parental feedback seriously and will work to find solutions.

If after talking with school leadership, the matter is unresolved, please forward your concerns to the Chief Academic Officer. All contact information is available on the last page of this handbook located on AppleTree's website. If the matter is unresolved, please contact the Chief of Schools and/or Board Chair.

Attempts to encourage unrest or disrupt the school day without problem solving through the appropriate administrative channels may undermine the sound operation of the school. Behavior that is abusive or undermining the sound operation of the school may result in banning from school grounds.

### **4. Non-Discrimination Policy**

**Admissions Policy:** AppleTree offers educational programming for three- and four-year old children who reside in the District of Columbia. Students must turn three or four by September 30th of the year they will begin school. Children who are five years of age by September 30th are kindergarten-age and therefore not eligible for admission to AppleTree. No child will be discriminated against based on race, color, ethnicity, national origin, age, sex, ability, disability or any other bias prohibited by law. Non-residents of the District of Columbia who wish to attend AppleTree will be required to pay tuition at the rate established by The Office of the State Superintendent of Education. Non-residents must also follow the same enrollment process as residents and complete additional documentation as required by The Office of the State Superintendent of Education, District of Columbia government and The District of Columbia Public Charter School Board.

## **5. Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) Notice**

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 funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education.

FERPA gives parents 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."

1. Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible students to review the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies.
2. Parents or eligible students have the right to request that a school correct records that they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information.
3. Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR § 99.31):
  - 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.

Schools 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. However, schools must tell parents and eligible students about directory information and allow parents and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them. Schools must notify parents and eligible students annually of their rights under FERPA. The actual means of notification (special letter, inclusion in a PTA bulletin, student handbook, or newspaper article) is left to the discretion of each school.

## **6. Open Meetings Policy**

Our charter school board meetings are held in a manner consistent with the District of Columbia School Reform Act. AppleTree has not scheduled a public meeting for the 2019-2020 school year. Should AppleTree decide to hold a public meeting, information regarding the meeting date/time and agenda will be published on its website. AppleTree will also share the information about the scheduled public meeting with parents via email and via letter (distributed direct in the school).