



2019-2020

STUDENT POLICIES

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NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY

In accordance with the D.C. Human Rights Act of 1977, as amended, D.C. Code § 2-1402.41, et sec. (Act), and other applicable local and federal law, Academy of Hope Adult Public Charter School, in providing educational programs and services, does not discriminate on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, familial status, family responsibilities, political affiliation, disability, source of income, or other status protected by applicable law. Harassment is a form of discrimination, which is prohibited by the Act. Discrimination in violation of the Act will not be tolerated. Violators will be subject to disciplinary action. Anyone who experiences or observes discriminated or harassed should immediately report the matter to Leicester Johnson, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), 2315 18th Place, NE, Washington, DC 20018, 202-269-6623.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

ABSENCES

Learners are expected to attend school every day. It is important to attend and participate in all classes to learn what is needed to pass the GED test, complete the National External Diploma Program (NEDP) or move on to college classes. If you miss class, you miss learning the new concepts taught, reviewing necessary skills, and participating in class discussions. It is also hard to catch up after missing more than a couple of days of classes. No absence is considered “excused” or “unexcused.” Any absence from the class counts toward a learner’s total, no matter the reason for the absence. Our most successful learners make educational gains after 100 hours of instruction. If you miss class, you will miss instruction. **Those who have an attendance rate less than 75% will be un-enrolled.**

Academy of Hope also understands that lives of adult learners are filled with responsibilities and issues that can be difficult to manage in a balanced way. For instance, you may get sick or your child might get sick; job or housing situations may change. As you begin or continue on your educational journey, it is important to remember these things may happen and to save absences for days when they are truly necessary.

These expectations begin the first day of school. All learners are expected to begin attending school at the start of each term in which they are enrolled, including each term’s seminar. **Any learner who does not begin attending school during the first week of a term will be unenrolled for that term.** If you don’t show up for the start of classes, we will understand that you are no longer able to or interested in attending classes that term and will give your spot to someone on the waiting list. Students may re-apply to be enrolled in the next term.

Learners are expected to contact and leave a message on the Attendance Hotline (x555 at Ward 5 and x888 at Ward 8) when they are going to miss class.

If a learner misses 3 class days, the learner will be required to meet with the student support specialist to discuss any barriers to attendance. Learners with frequent absences from particular classes may also be asked to develop an Attendance Plan. Learners with an attendance rate less than 75% within a term will be unenrolled from classes.

Attendance meetings are designed to support learners who struggle with attendance. They are designed to help a learner with any attendance challenges that may occur during a term by identifying the barriers to attendance and developing strategies to overcome those barriers. The Student Support staff is here for all learners to help with attendance challenges before un-enrollment becomes necessary.

Coming to class on time is an important part of good attendance. Learners who are late miss information and directions. When several people arrive late to class, they disrupt the class. For these reasons, Academy of Hope’s policy is that students are expected to arrive to class on time and ready to learn by the time that the class is scheduled to begin. This often requires arriving at least 5 minutes early in order to give yourself the time that you need to get materials organized, use the restroom, etc. If you do arrive late, understand that you may not be allowed to enter your classroom, as it will be up to the teacher to decide whether you can enter class late. If your entry will be disruptive, your teacher likely will not allow you to attend class that day. Please know that if you develop a pattern of missing certain class periods, you may be asked to meet with a Student Support Specialist or Associate Principal.

UNENROLLMENT

If a learner is unenrolled, they will have to re-register for classes and may be put on a waiting list to re-enter the program the following session.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

AoH believes that every learner should have the opportunity to learn the skills and values necessary for personal development. Every learner also has the right to learn and be safe, and no one has the right to interrupt learning or make others feel unsafe. During the first week of class, learners receive their schedules and all learners participate in a formal seminar. The seminar provides learners an opportunity to get to know other learners and the AoH faculty and staff. The orientation also provides an overview of AoH's programs, policies and procedures, including a thorough introduction to our disciplinary policy: the AoH Student Code of Conduct.

The Student Code of Conduct includes clear rules about the treatment of others (learners, staff and volunteers), attendance, late arrival, banned substances, and attire. The Student Code of Conduct clearly describes the potential consequences of violating these rules. There is also a process if they have complaints about peers, staff, school policies or disciplinary actions. In accordance with District of Columbia law (DCMR Title 25), serious violations of school policy and/or the Student Code of Conduct may lead to the suspension or expulsion of a learner. Every learner will be asked to sign a learner contract containing the Student Code of Conduct, indicating his or her willingness to abide by all school rules and policies.

STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

The staff of Academy of Hope Adult Public Charter School encourages learning and personal growth. We expect all learners, teachers, staff and volunteers to respect one another at all times. We encourage and support one another as we learn and grow together in order to meet our goals.

- AoH does not allow alcohol or drug use on our grounds. Learners who come to school under the influence of substances will be asked to leave. AoH is a safe place for all learners and staff.
- AoH does not tolerate violence of any kind. Learners who become violent with other classmates or staff will be suspended for a period determined by the Director of Student Services in consultation with the appropriate Campus Principal. Violence includes physically striking someone or using strong abusive or threatening language toward someone.
- AoH forbids all of its learners from harassing any other learner, volunteer or staff member because of race, color, religion, sex, age, marital status, disability, national origin, personal appearance, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, familial status, family responsibilities, political affiliation, source of income or any other reason prohibited by law.
- AoH prohibits harassment at AoH itself and in social or educational activities (for example, celebrations and field trips) conducted or sponsored by AoH. If you believe a classmate, volunteer or staff member has harassed you, please speak with an AoH staff member, the Chief Operations Officer or the Chief Executive Officer.

STANDARDS OF CONDUCT – MINOR INFRACTIONS CONSEQUENCES

Minor Infractions	
Specifics and Examples	Potential Consequences
Disruptive Behavior	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any action that halts learning and leads to negative changes in the educational environment including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outbursts or verbal interactions Using profanity Purposefully misdirecting the class Defiant/Confrontational behavior 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher can ask learner to leave at any time during class Learner meets with Case Manager and Program Manager and develops behavioral plan
Cell phone or electronic device use	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cell phones or electronic devices are visible and/or in use during class time or not turned off or on 'silent mode' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Verbal warning from teacher Teacher may ask learner to leave class Meeting with AoH management staff
Inappropriate technology use	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accessing, transmitting, or otherwise making use of pornographic materials of any kind available over the Internet is not permitted. Any form of harassment activity from AoH computers including but not limited to email transmissions or social media platforms is not permitted. Accessing, transmitting, or otherwise making use of "hate-group" or materials of any kind available over the Internet that may cause discomfort to any gender, race, age, religion or belief, disability or sexual orientation is not permitted Illegal duplication or transmission of protected software is not permitted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Immediate forfeiture of AoH computer access privileges for personal use, up to one week (Does not include in class technology use) Meeting with AoH management staff
Dress Code	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learners should not wear shorts or skirts more than 3 inches above the knee Casual dresses, shorts and skirts Clothing should not reveal underwear, inappropriate body parts (including back, chest, feet, stomach, and excessive cleavage) or offensive words, terms or pictures. Female learners should not wear halter tops and men should not wear tank tops Hats, both for men and for women (unless for religious or ethnic reasons) are not permitted Tight revealing clothing, spandex tights, and torn clothing are prohibited 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asked to correct violation or asked to leave school for the day Meeting with AoH management staff
Unapproved Solicitation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The sale or promotion of non-AoH approved goods or services is not permitted (To receive approval, learners should speak with a program manager) The sale of stolen items or illegal items/ services is not permitted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Verbal warning AoH staff may ask learner to leave Learner required to meet with AoH management staff (see the Handbook section on Theft and Drugs violations for consequences involving those infractions)

STANDARDS OF CONDUCT – MAJOR INFRACTIONS CONSEQUENCES

Major Infractions	
Specifics and Examples	Potential Consequences
Drugs	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use/Under the Influence, determined by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suspicion of use (smell or physical/mental appearance) • Credible information of use (sight) • Drug paraphernalia or actual drugs/alcohol • Selling, determined by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Credible information of selling • Drug paraphernalia or actual drugs/alcohol 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suspension of up to 5 days • Expulsion for selling drugs on campus
Violence	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physically striking someone • Using strong abusive or threatening language • Use of weapons (Including but not limited to: knives, brass knuckles, nun-chucks, TAZER, stun gun, pepper spray, mace or use of everyday items as a weapon) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expulsion for brandishing, showing or threatening to use weapons; physically assaulting someone • Suspension of up to 5 days for using abusive or threatening language
Harassment	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of language, written or spoken, that exhibits discrimination or disrespect towards another person based on the person’s race, skin color, religion, sex, age, marital status, disability, home country national origin, personal appearance, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, familial status, family responsibilities, political affiliation, source of income, or any other reason prohibited by law • Sexual harassment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Unwelcome sexual advances ○ Unwelcome verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature ○ Graphic verbal comments about an individual’s body ○ Sexually or otherwise degrading comments, jokes, gestures or sounds ○ Unwelcome touching ○ Unwanted pressure for dates ○ Sexually suggestive objects or materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting with AoH management staff • Suspension of up to 5 days • Expulsion for ongoing harassment
Theft	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theft of office equipment or others’ (staff or learner) personal belongings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suspension of up to 5 days • Expulsion

*Police may be contacted for major infractions

STUDENT RIGHTS WITH RESPECT TO SUSPENSIONS

Students have the right to receive an appropriate education. Listed below are the student rights that are relevant to school discipline:

- Students have the right to enjoy peaceful and meaningful freedom of speech, press, assembly, and religion on school property and at school-sponsored events.
- Students may not be excluded from their regular school program or denied instructional time in the absence of a documented, official, disciplinary intervention (i.e. suspension or expulsion).
- Students must be given an opportunity to tell their side of the story before a decision is made to place them on in-school, short-term, long-term, or extended suspension or expulsion.
- Students will be returned to their regular educational program once the conditions of a suspension or expulsion are met. Behaviors that should not result in suspension include, but are not limited to, cutting class, or unexcused absences.
- Students are entitled to receive written notification of why they are being removed from the classroom or school for disciplinary reasons.
- Students are entitled to a conference with the associate principal at the time when a decision is made to remove them from the classroom or school for disciplinary reasons.
- Students are entitled to make up classwork and assignments without penalty when they are excluded from school for any period of time. Teachers are required to provide students all daily classwork and assignments, and will correct and return all completed work to students on a weekly basis. Students are responsible for completing classwork and assignments in a timely manner.
- Students cannot be suspended for more than three consecutive school days without the CEO's approval.

Academy of Hope recognizes the effectiveness of restorative practice methods and other progressive disciplinary measures that build positive relationships. These interventions are a shift away from overly harsh and punitive disciplinary responses. Instead, they educate students about the harm caused by their actions, while seeking to reunite them with the school community.

OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSION GUIDELINES

Out-of-school suspensions of up to 5 days are used when learners severely violate the expectations of the community of Academy of Hope. This step is never taken lightly, and is a decision made based on input from the school administration staff, student support staff, and faculty.

The following categories are examples of behaviors that may result in a learner being suspended:

- Disruptive behavior that is on-going and uncontrollable, including harassment
- Behavior that is a danger to the learner or to others, including the use of threatening language and the possession or use of drugs or alcohol while at school
- Other extreme behaviors that may deserve suspension based on the frequency of the behavior, the riskiness of behavior, and the learner's openness to following instructions
- Theft

At least one day prior to returning to classes at Academy of Hope from an out-of-school suspension, the learner is required to have a meeting with school administration and student support staff. Prior to the meeting, the learner is expected to prepare a written statement to take responsibility for his/her actions that led to the suspension and propose a plan to avoid similar actions in the future. During the meeting, a behavior intervention plan is created and implemented in order to help the learner to avoid the problem behavior in the future.

EXPULSION GUIDELINES

In rare instances, learner behavior may be so severe that expulsion is appropriate. Expelling a learner is never considered lightly and requires the consensus of the Campus Principal and Managing Director of Student Services. Typically, student support staff and faculty also participate in the decision process.

As a school, one of our most important responsibilities is to create an environment that is safe for everyone. We take that seriously and act accordingly. As a result, expulsion is considered when we believe that a learner may be a danger to self or others. Except in extreme instances when a learner's behavior might warrant immediate expulsion, we first try to create a plan that meets both the community's need for safety and the needs of the learner. If the plan fails, then we may move to expel the student.

Grounds for immediate expulsion may include, but are not limited to:

- Physical violence or assault
- Brandishing, use, or threat of a weapon
- The sale of drugs on campus
- Theft

Except in cases of extreme behavior, a learner is expelled only after the learner's team has worked closely with the learner to change the problem behaviors. After expulsion, learners are not permitted to attend classes for the current session or to be present on either campus for the duration of the expulsion. If the current session is near its end, the expulsion may carry over to the next session. At the end of the expulsion, a student may complete the application and registration process to return to Academy of Hope, and must also complete a more extensive appeal to return that includes a restorative justice process.

DUE PROCESS AND APPEALS PROCESS FOR SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION DECISIONS

In accordance with school policy, students have a right to appeal a suspension or expulsion within 10 days after receiving the final decision on the disciplinary action. The **Campus Principals** will render a written decision within 10 days from receiving the appeal. If this decision is not made within 10 days, the student will be allowed to return to school unless there is a finding that the student's return would pose an imminent threat of serious harm to other students or staff.

In the event a student disagrees with the outcome of a disciplinary decision, they may appeal the determination to the **Chief Executive Officer, Leicester Johnson**. This appeal should be submitted no later than 5 days after the decision to uphold the suspension or expulsion. The Chief Executive Officer, will render a final decision no later than 5 days from receipt of the appeal.

In the event a student disagrees with the outcome of a disciplinary decision made by the Chief Executive Officer, they may appeal the determination to the **Board Chair**.

GRIEVANCE OR COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

- A learner who has a complaint or grievance against another learner in a class should first discuss the issue or concern with the class teacher. If the learner is not satisfied, the learner should discuss the situation with either the **Student Support Specialist**.

Name	Email	Phone Number
Shaquierra Baker Student Support Specialist – Ward 5 Campus	shaquierra@aohdc.org	202-269-6623 ext. 103
Shatyra Henry Student Support Specialist – Ward 5 Campus	hope@aohdc.org	202-269-6623 ext. 142
Marisabel Santiago Student Support Specialist – Ward 8 Campus	marisabel@aohdc.org	202-269-6632 ext. 234
Thomas Webb Student Support Specialist – Ward 8 Campus	thomas@aohdc.org	202-269-6623 ext. 231

- A learner who has a complaint or grievance against a teacher should discuss the problem with the teacher. If the learner does not feel comfortable approaching the teacher or the learner is not satisfied with the solution after approaching the teacher, the learner should present the problem to the **Campus Principal**.

Name	Email	Phone Number
Summer Ellis Principal – Ward 8 Campus	summer@aohdc.org	202-269-6623 ext. 216
Richmond Onokpite Principal – Ward 5 Campus	richmond@aohdc.org	202-269-6623 ext. 149

- A learner who has a complaint or grievance against a staff member should discuss the issue with the staff member. If the learner does not feel comfortable approaching the staff member or, if after discussing the problem with the staff member is still not feeling satisfied, the learner should take the grievance to the **Chief Operations Officer, Brian McNamee** at 202-269-6623 ext. 113 or by email: brian@aohdc.org
- A learner who has a complaint or grievance against a decision made during the implementation of a policy may appeal the decision by contacting the **Chief Executive Officer, Leicester Johnson** at 202-269-6623 or by email: leicester@aohdc.org
- A learner who cannot resolve a complaint or grievance through school leadership may contact the Academy of Hope Board Chair, Mr. Mark Kutner at boardchair@aohdc.org

NOTIFICATION OF FERPA RIGHTS

Learners will be notified of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) during the intake and admissions process, and a copy of their rights is provided and reviewed during orientation at the beginning of each term. Learners with further questions regarding the notification of Rights under FERPA should contact the Campus Principal at the school campus they attend or contact school officials as identified in the notification.

Notification of Rights under FERPA

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students age 18 or older (“eligible students”) certain rights with respect to the student’s education records. These rights are:

- (1) **The right to inspect and review** the student's education records within 45 days of the day Academy of Hope Adult Public Charter School (AoH) receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the Campus Principal a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The Campus Principal or other appropriate school official will make arrangements for access and notify the Parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
- (2) **The right to request amendment** of the student’s education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading or otherwise in violation of the student’s privacy rights under FERPA. Parents or eligible students may write the Campus Principal, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it should be changed. If AoH decides not to amend the record as requested by the Parent or eligible student, the school will notify the Parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the Parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.
- (3) **The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information** contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. For example, FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent to school officials whom AoH has determined to have legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by AoH as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person or company with whom AoH has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.
- (4) **The right to withhold disclosure of directory information.** At its discretion, AoH 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 School Attending
 - E. Participation in Officially Recognized Activities and Sports
 - F. Weight and Height of Members of Athletic Teams
 - G. Diplomas and Awards Received
 - H. Student’s Date and Place of Birth
 - I. Names of Schools Previously Attended
 - J. Dates of Attendance

Parents or eligible students may instruct AoH to withhold any or all of the information identified above (i) by completing the “Release of Student Directory Information” Form available at the school, or (ii) by notifying in writing to the **Enrollment and Registration Manager**, at Academy of Hope – Adult Public Charter School, 2315 18th Place, NE, Washington, DC 20018. The release or notification must be provided within 30 days of the issuance of this notice.

- (5) **The right to file a complaint** with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by AoH 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.

OPEN MEETINGS POLICY

Section 2.07. Regular Meetings. The Board shall hold at least five (5) board meetings per fiscal year; four regular meeting and one annual meeting. Between regular meetings, board members will receive monthly board updates via written report or conference call. The Chair and/or Executive Committee may call additional meetings as necessary. At least one of each of the regularly scheduled meetings of the Board shall be open to the public and shall be advertised by the Board within the community, in such manner as the Board shall determine, to promote attendance of the community.

Section 2.08. Annual Meeting. The annual meeting shall occur at such date, time, and location, as the Board shall determine. The annual meeting may be held with or in lieu of a regularly scheduled meeting.

2019 -2020 Board of Directors' Meeting Schedule

- Saturday, September 21, 2019
 - 9:00 am - 4:00 pm
- Saturday, November 2, 2019
 - 9:30 am - noon
- Saturday, January 11, 2020
 - 9:30 am - noon
- Saturday, March 7, 2020
 - 9:30 am - noon
- Saturday, May 16, 2020 **[OPEN MEETING]**
 - 9:30 am – noon

Board meetings are conducted at the Ward 5 Campus located at 2315 18th Place, NE, Washington, DC 20018 unless otherwise noted.