

# **Student/Family Policies**

## **2020-21**

[Safety, Order, and Student Discipline](#)

[Annual Notification of FERPA Rights](#)

[Notice of Non-Discrimination](#)

[Attendance](#)

[Grievance Policy](#)

[Open Meeting Policy](#)

[Admission Preference Policy](#)

## **Safety, Order, and Student Discipline**

DCI has adopted policies, procedures and plans to ensure a safe and supportive school environment that:

- Emphasizes care, effective communication and quality relationships based on mutual respect;
- Values effort, presents achievable but challenging expectations, builds self esteem and encourages students to be responsible and independent learners; and
- Promotes the development of knowledgeable, morally and socially responsible citizens who are self-determined.

DCI students are expected to demonstrate the attributes of the Learner Profile and follow our school wide expectations:

- Follow directions of all staff the first time
- All communication should be positive and constructive
- Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself
- Respect self, others, and property
- Remain actively engaged in learning at all times

Parents and guardians also play an integral role in creating a Safe and Supportive School Environment. Parents/guardians have the right to:

- Be a partner in a supportive and safe school environment that fosters quality relationships, mutual respect and effective communication;
- See their child experiencing success through meaningful and relevant curriculum;
- Feel safe;
- Be treated with care, cooperation, courtesy and respect.

Parents/guardians have a responsibility to:

- Actively support and contribute to the development of a safe and supportive school environment;
- Support and encourage their children to participate to the best of their ability in all aspects of the curriculum;
- Behave in a way that respects and supports the safety and well being of self and others;
- Treat others with care, cooperation, courtesy and respect.

Parents and Guardians are encouraged to:

- Inform the school of any situation or information that is relevant and concerns their children's behavior;
- Encourage their children to follow the school Rules and Learner Profile;
- Support their children in taking responsibility for their behavior by using problem solving strategies;
- Attend any meetings arranged by the school to discuss their children's behavior; and
- Work in partnership with DCI to develop a safe and supportive school environment.

## **Dress Code**

The purpose of our dress code is to encourage a focus on academics, rather than fashion, and to emphasize a scholarly atmosphere while at school. Families have received the complete dress code separately, and it is also available in the appendix and [here](#).

Students have detention and other consequences if they are not dressed according to the dress code.

## **Suspension and Expulsion**

DCI will only consider student suspension or expulsion for serious or repeated conduct that violates the rights of others in the school community by causing, attempting to cause, or threatening to cause bodily injury or emotional distress. DCI aims to be a low-suspension/no expulsion school. Suspension is defined as the denial of the right of a student to attend DCI, including all classes and school activities, for a defined period of time, not exceeding ten school days. Expulsion is the denial of a student's rights to attend DCI, including all classes and school activities, for at least one school year or longer. DCI may request parents/guardians to spend days at school with their children in lieu of suspension.

We believe in consequences that allow students to make restitution rather than excluding students from learning. DCI will observe the tenets of restorative justice as much as possible because DCI believes that students belong in school, and that punishment does not change behavior, but positive intervention does. DCI will utilize restorative justice practices such as logical consequences, restorative conferences, peace circles, family conferences, and peer juries in order to be proactive about preventing suspension or expulsion. The discipline provisions of IDEA and Section 504 are observed regarding consequences for students with disabilities.

For short-term suspensions (5 days or less) the decision to suspend a student shall be made by the Dean of Students or Administrative Designee with or without the recommendation of the student's teacher or other school employee. The Dean of Students or Administrative Designee will determine the number of days for suspension based on the severity of the infraction, the age of the student, and previous infractions. The suspension shall become effective immediately unless otherwise stated by the Dean of Students or Administrative Designee.

Upon the Dean of Students or Administrative Designee making their decision, they will attempt to contact the parent/guardian via telephone or in-person. They will, in addition, send a notice of disciplinary action that includes the length of the suspension and when the student may return to school. DCI requests that a parent/guardian attend

a meeting with the Dean of Students or Administrative Designee before a student may return to school.

### **Procedure for Requesting an Independent Hearing**

It is the hope of the school that all disputes can be solved by mutual cooperation without recourse to a formal complaint, and to that end, every effort should be made to resolve any dispute informally first.

In the case of suspensions or expulsions, families who choose to submit a formal complaint must do so in writing to the appropriate Principal.

1. A written request for a due process hearing signed by a parent or guardian must be submitted to the Principal within five business days of the incident.
2. The Principal will contact the School's Hearing Officer within three school days of receiving the request.
3. The Hearing Officer will schedule a hearing at the earliest mutually convenient time.
4. After hearing the case and deliberating, the Hearing Officer will submit a written recommendation to the Chair of the Board of Trustees.
5. The Board Chair will provide the parent or guardian with a written decision on the case within one week of receiving the recommendation of the Hearing Officer.

### **DCI Expulsion Process**

Any student involved in a very serious discipline incident (outlined in the DCI Discipline Chart below) may be a candidate for long-term suspension (more than 6 days, maximum of 10 days) or expulsion. IDEA discipline provisions are observed in cases regarding students with disabilities.

Prior to the Judiciary Hearing to decide on expulsion procedures, DCI affords the rights of students with disabilities, as outlined under the Individual with Disabilities Education Act, to a manifestation determination review (MDR). In the MDR, the IEP team for the student in question will be convened. The team will review documents related to the student's disability, which includes, but is not limited to the student's IEP, psychoeducational evaluation, intervention plans, and anecdotal reports for staff / parents / and the student. The team will then decide, following the review of the relevant documents, the team will decide whether or not the conduct in question has a direct and substantial relationship to the student's disability. Following that decision, the team will also decide whether the conduct in question was a result of DCI's failure to implement the IEP. If the answer to either question is 'yes', then the behavior is considered a manifestation of the student's disability and the judiciary hearing is not to proceed. Only if the answer to both questions is 'no', can DCI proceed to the next step which is a school judiciary hearing.

A School Judiciary Committee meeting will be held prior to a long-term suspension or expulsion determination. The School Judiciary Committee consists of the Dean of Students, Grade Level Principal, relevant staff members, the student, and the student's

family. If the student or the student's parent/guardian cannot understand English, the school shall provide an interpreter. The student may be represented by counsel or other persons. If the student has a 504 Plan or IEP, the Director of Student Support Services and/or the student's Case Manager will also be in attendance. The student and the student's family is invited to share all pertinent information about the student's behavior and experience at DCI.

All School Judiciary Committee meetings will follow the same process, including the following:

- A clear outline of the meeting's agenda
- A presentation of statements and evidence concerning the behavioral incident by DCI staff
- An opportunity for the student and family to share evidence
- An opportunity for DCI staff, the student, and family to share statements of support on behalf of the student

All School Judiciary Committee meetings will be led by the Grade Level Principal. Only the Principal or Executive Director may make the decision for suspensions exceeding ten days or expulsion. The decision to long-term-suspend or expel a student shall be made in writing and given to the parent/guardian within twenty-four hours of the School Judiciary Committee meeting. The student's parents/guardians have five school days to challenge the suspension or expulsion by submitting an appeal of the decision, in writing, to the Chair of the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees will issue a decision in writing to the parents/guardians and the school administration within five school days after receiving the appeal. The Chair of the Board of Trustees shall convene a special meeting of a committee of the Board of Trustees to consider the appeal of the suspension or expulsion. The student and his or her parents/guardians, the student's teachers, a Principal or Administrative Designee, and other school staff may be invited to participate in this special meeting as the Board sees fit. The decision of the Board of Trustees in affirming or reversing a Principal's or Administrative Designee's decision is final.

The basis for disciplining, suspending or expelling students with disabilities shall be no different than the basis for such actions taken against students without disabilities. Reasonable accommodation of a student's disabilities shall not prevent DCI from disciplining, suspending or expelling students when behavior not related to the disability threatens the health, safety or welfare of a student, teacher or staff member or repeatedly impairs instruction for the student's classmates. However, under IDEA and Section 504, students with disabilities are entitled to certain additional procedural protections during the discipline process. These protections include, but are not limited to, requirements for a meeting to determine if behaviors resulting in expulsion or suspension longer than ten (10) days are a manifestation of a student's disability (i.e., a manifestation determination review).

## **DCI Discipline Chart**

The following are categories of inappropriate behaviors and the attending consequences to support behavior change and ensure school safety:

<p><b>Tier 1</b></p> <p>Tier 1 behaviors are those behaviors that are insubordinate or cause minor disruption to the academic environment but do not involve damage to school property or cause bodily or emotional harm. Tier 1 behaviors result in classroom-level disciplinary responses that <i>may</i> be elevated to administrative response if they are not successfully abated by the teacher.</p>	
<b>Example Behaviors</b>	<b>Possible Consequences</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Off task behaviors</li> <li>•Not finishing work or homework</li> <li>•Non compliance</li> <li>•Chewing gum</li> <li>•Littering</li> <li>•Tardiness</li> <li>•Being in an inappropriate area in the classroom</li> <li>•Inappropriate displays of affection</li> <li>•Communication with staff and peers that is not polite, courteous, or respectful</li> <li>•Unauthorized use of portable electronic devices (i.e. cell phones) during school hours</li> <li>•Leaving classroom without permission</li> <li>•Any behavior or other conduct not specifically enumerated in any other tier that is insubordinate or causes minor disruption to the academic environment but does not cause bodily or emotional harm to self or others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Classroom based restorative consequence (it may be appropriate for this to take place during lunch, brunch, or after school)</li> <li>•Verbal redirection</li> <li>•Teacher/student conference</li> <li>•Family contact</li> <li>•Loss of classroom privilege</li> <li>•Other school-based consequences as approved by the Dean of Students</li> </ul>
	<b>Possible Supportive Interventions</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Classroom-based behavior contract</li> <li>•Organized relationship building with peers or staff</li> <li>•Restorative circle or conference</li> <li>•Seat change and/or teacher proximity</li> </ul>

<b>Example Behaviors</b>	<b>Possible Consequences</b>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documented pattern of persistent Tier 1 behaviors</li> <li>• Noncompliance with an approved dress code</li> <li>• Unexcused absence from class</li> <li>• Unauthorized presence in hallway during class time</li> <li>• Unexcused absence from school</li> <li>• Inappropriate or disruptive physical contact between students (including unsafe play) that does not cause bodily harm</li> <li>• Directing profanity or obscene/offensive gestures toward students or staff</li> <li>• Throwing objects that could cause injury or damage property</li> <li>• Any behavior or other conduct not specifically enumerated in any other tier that causes disruption to the academic environment, involves damage to school property, or may cause minor bodily or emotional harm to self or others</li> <li>• Intentional misuse of school equipment or facilities</li> <li>• Inappropriate use of DCI technology or network (restricted websites, offensive emails)</li> <li>• Acts of vandalism, destruction of property, or graffiti (tagging)</li> <li>• Sale or distribution of any item without authorization</li> <li>• Gambling</li> <li>• Academic dishonesty, forgery, lying to or giving misleading information to school staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restorative consequence (it may be appropriate for this to take place during lunch, brunch, or after school)</li> <li>• Verbal redirection</li> <li>• Teacher/student conference</li> <li>• Family contact</li> <li>• Loss of school privileges (including, but not limited to the use of school technology or participation in extracurricular activities)</li> <li>• Referral to DCI Discipline Team for temporary removal from classroom</li> <li>• Other school-based interventions as approved by the Dean of Students</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Possible Supportive Interventions</b></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual behavior chart with individualized incentives and/or consequences</li> <li>• Organized relationship building with peers or staff</li> <li>• Restorative circle or conference</li> <li>• Temporary removal from class to reflect about incident and set goals with a staff member</li> <li>• Referral for counseling</li> <li>• Organized environmental supports (fidgets, seating alternatives, etc.)</li> <li>• Teaching and tracking student use of new coping strategies</li> </ul>

<p><b>Tier 3</b></p> <p>Tier 3 behaviors are those behaviors not specifically enumerated in any other tier that cause significant disruption to the academic environment and/or threatens to, attempts to cause, or does cause bodily harm or emotional distress to self or others. In addition to lesser consequences, Tier 3 behaviors may result in either on or off-site Suspension (except in response to unexcused tardiness or absence).</p>	
<p><b>Example Behaviors</b></p>	<p><b>Possible Consequences</b></p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documented pattern of persistent Tier 2 behaviors</li> <li>• Possession or distribution of obscene or pornographic material on school premises</li> <li>• Possession or use of tobacco, alcohol,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restorative consequences</li> <li>• Family Conference with School Staff</li> <li>• Loss of school privileges (including, but not limited to the use of school technology or participation in extracurricular activities)</li> </ul>
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<p>marijuana, controlled dangerous substances, imitation controlled substances, inhalants, other intoxicants, or drug paraphernalia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unauthorized possession, use, or distribution of over-the-counter medication</li> <li>• Verbal, written, or physical threat to person or property (including intimidating postures)</li> <li>• Obscene, seriously offensive, or abusive language or gestures</li> <li>• Communicating slurs based on actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, familial status, family responsibilities, matriculation, political affiliation, genetic information, disability, source of income, status as a victim of an intrafamily offense, or place of residence or business, including derogatory sexual language</li> <li>• Engaging in sexual acts on school premises or at school-related functions</li> <li>• Leaving school without permission</li> <li>• Posting or distributing material or literature that is disrespectful, demeaning, humiliating, or damaging to students and/or staff. This includes posting material on internet or sending material electronically (via email or cell phone)</li> <li>• Engaging in behavior that demonstrates gang/neighborhood crew affiliation (displaying clothing or gestures associated with gangs)</li> <li>• Hazing</li> <li>• Documented theft of school or personal property without force</li> <li>• Bullying, or using humiliating, or intimidating language or behavior including Internet bullying</li> <li>• Possession of tools or instruments which school administrators deem could be used as weapons</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Referral to Dean of Students for removal from classroom</li> <li>• On-site Short-Term Suspension with provision of appropriate special education services</li> <li>• Off-site Short-Term Suspension</li> </ul>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Possible Supportive Interventions</b></p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Engaging in reckless behavior that may cause harm to self or others</li> <li>•Extortion</li> <li>•Fighting where there is no injury and no weapon</li> <li>•Trespassing or inappropriate/unauthorized movement on campus</li> <li>•Acts of exceptional misconduct at other schools</li> <li>•Vandalism/destruction of property over</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual behavior chart with individualized incentives and/or consequences</li> <li>• Restorative circle or conference</li> <li>• Temporary removal from class to reflect about incident and set goals with a staff member</li> <li>• Organized environmental supports (fidgets, seating alternatives, etc.)</li> <li>• Teaching and tracking student use of new coping strategies</li> <li>• Scheduled check-in's or conferences with staff</li> <li>• Referral to mental health and community resources (including DCI based and/or off-campus counseling)</li> <li>• Modified schedule</li> </ul>
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<p>\$500</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Any behavior or other conduct not specifically enumerated in any other tier in this chapter that causes significant disruption to the academic environment or causes harm to self or others</li> </ul>	
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## Tier 4

Tier 4 behaviors are those behaviors not specifically enumerated in any other tier that disrupt the safety of school operations and/or threatens, attempts to cause, or does cause significant bodily harm or emotional distress to others. In addition to lesser consequences, Tier 4 behaviors may result in off-site Suspension or Expulsion.

### Example Behaviors

- Documented pattern of persistent Tier 3 behaviors
- Interfering with school authorities or participating in a major disruption of the school's operation
- Tampering with, changing, or altering an official school record or document
- Persistent harassment based on actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, familial status, family responsibilities, matriculation, political affiliation, genetic information, disability, source of income, status as a victim of an intrafamily offense, or place of residence or business
- Lewd or indecent public behavior or sexual misconduct
- Sexual harassment
- Retaliation for reporting harassment and sexual harassment
- Fighting which creates substantial risk of or results in bodily harm
- Inciting others to violence or disruption
- Activating false alarm (for example, fire alarm)
- Contaminating food
- Possession of a weapon or replica or imitation of a weapon (including toy guns)
- Possession of drug paraphernalia or controlled substance, irrespective of the amount or type, pursuant to the criminal statutes of the District of Columbia, codified at D.C. Official Code § 48-1101 et seq. (2001)
- Selling or distribution of marijuana, prescription drugs, controlled

### Possible Consequences

- Restorative consequence (may be appropriate for this to take place during lunch, brunch, or after school)
- Family Conference with School Staff
- Loss of privileges and participation in extracurricular activities
- On-site Long-Term Suspension
- Student Judiciary Committee Meeting to determine if Off-site Long-Term Suspension or Expulsion is appropriate

### Possible Supportive Interventions

- Student Judiciary Committee Meeting to determine next steps
- Scheduled check-in's or conferences with staff
- Referral to mental health and community resources
- Referral to alternate school placement

dangerous substances, imitation controlled substances, inhalants, other intoxicants, controlled or drug paraphernalia

- Causing serious disruption or damage to school's computer systems, electronic files, or network
- Possession of fireworks or explosives
- Theft or attempted theft using force, coercion, intimidation or threat of violence
- Assault/physical attack on student or staff
- Participating in group fight which has been planned, causes major disruption to school day or results in substantial bodily injury
- Using an article that is not normally considered a weapon to injure another individual
- Use, threatened use, or transfer of any weapon
- Use, possession, or bringing to school a loaded or unloaded firearm, as defined in 18 U.S.C. § 921 (2000), including but not limited to pistols, blank pistols, starter pistols, revolvers, rifles, and shotguns. Any behavior that violates the Gun Free School Act.
- Commission or attempted commission of any act of sexual assault or sexual aggression
- Arson
- Biohazard
- Bomb threat
- Any behavior or other conduct not specifically enumerated in any other tier in this chapter that is illegal, causes significant disruption to the school operation, or causes substantial bodily and/or emotional harm to self or others

## **Public Displays of Affection**

Students are not to engage in inappropriate public displays of affection while at school, on school grounds, or at school-sponsored activities. Inappropriate touching with hands or other parts of the body is not permitted.

## **Bullying**

A key responsibility of DC International School is to educate students in a respectful

and positive environment. Acts of bullying, harassment and intimidation are an attack on our core values. In keeping with our mission, DCI has established a comprehensive bullying prevention policy which can be found in the index. This policy protects the dignity and safety of the DCI community and describes DCI's prevention strategies to identify and prevent incidents by connecting youth to necessary services. DCI will promptly report and investigate all incidents of bullying, harassment and intimidation and provide appropriate remedies for victims of an incident. All members of the DCI community are encouraged to report instances of bullying or harassment promptly, using the [DCI Bullying Reporting form](#).

## **Personal Materials**

While we aim to provide a secure school, DCI is not responsible for loss or theft of student property. Please avoid bringing large or expensive equipment such as athletic gear to school.

Students are responsible for making sure they bring the materials they need for the learning to school each day. These include a fully charged chromebook, a pen/pencil, a notebook, earbuds, and a water bottle. Teachers are not expected to provide students with these items.

To ensure the safety of students and staff, DCI maintains the right to search students and their property if there is reason to believe a school rule or state law has been violated. To that end, school officials may search student coats, backpacks, or other personal belongings. Student lockers are subject to search by school officials. All of these policies are subject to applicable laws.

Rollerblades, skateboards, and scooters are not allowed to be used on school property. Any rollerblades, skateboards or scooters ridden on campus will be confiscated and returned at the end of the day after family contact. Students may not carry these items with them during school; they must be stored in the classroom or office of a faculty member.

The school's policy is that, in cases of accidents that happen in the normal course of the school day, we do not pay and do not try to facilitate parents/guardians paying for other students' materials. (For instance, if, in a basketball game, a student's glasses are accidentally knocked off and broken, the school will not take responsibility for the loss.)

## **Annual Notification of FERPA Rights**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents/legal guardians and students over 18 years of age ("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 the School receives a request for access. Parents/legal guardians or eligible students should submit to DCI's FERPA Administrator using the following form ([English and Spanish](#)) to request the record(s) they wish to inspect. The FERPA Administrator will make arrangements for access and notify the parent/legal guardians or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

(2) The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate. Parents/legal guardians or eligible students may ask the School to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate. They should write the Principal, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed and specify why it is inaccurate. If the Principal decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent/legal guardians or eligible student, the Principal will notify the parent/legal guardians 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/legal guardians 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. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by DCI as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the School Board; a person or company with whom DCI has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent/legal guardians 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 file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by DCI to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education 400  
Maryland Avenue, SW Washington,  
DC 20202-5901

Although DCI does not publish a student directory for families, FERPA allows the school to release a student's directory information, such as name, address, telephone listing, date and place of birth, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, and dates of attendance.. Parent/guardian(s) can opt out of publishing directory information to be released through the annual enrollment paperwork.

Any questions, concerns or requests to inspect or review records should be sent to:

FERPA Administrator  
DC International School  
[info@dcinternationalschool.org](mailto:info@dcinternationalschool.org)

## **Notice of Non-Discrimination**

In accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 ("Title VI"), Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 ("Title IX"), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ("Section 504"), Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 ("ADA"), and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 ("The Age Act"), applicants for admission and employment, students, parents/guardians, employees, sources of referral of applicants for admission and employment, and all unions or professional organizations holding collective bargaining or professional agreements with DC International School are hereby notified that DC International School 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, family status, family responsibilities, matriculation, political affiliation, genetic information, disability, source of income, status as a victim of an interfamily offense, or place of residence or business.

For inquiries or to file a complaint regarding DC International School compliance with ADA, Section 504 as it relates to employees or third parties, and compliance with Title VI, Title IX, and the Age Act as it relates to students, employees and third parties contact the Director of Student Support Services, Title VI, Title IX, and Age Act Coordinator.

## **Attendance**

Students are expected to be in school on time and stay for the entire day, every day that school is in session.

## **Tardiness & Absences**

Attendance and tardiness will be recorded in each class throughout the school day. If a student must be absent, families should notify the school and provide a note/email containing the reason for the absence within five days of the absence in order to have it be excused. Families will be contacted if their child is absent without explanation. Excessive tardiness will result in tardy reflections and other disciplinary consequences.

Please contact the front office at (202) 808-9033 or email [reception@dcinternationalschool.org](mailto:reception@dcinternationalschool.org) by 8:30 am, should your child be absent or tardy. Please include the student's name, date of absence, reason for absence or tardiness, and contact number for parent/guardian. Upon your child's return to school from an absence, a written note, with your student's name, date of absence and reason of absence must be turned into the Front Office. All notes should be submitted to the front office in person or by email to [reception@dcinternationalschool.org](mailto:reception@dcinternationalschool.org). If your child is absent four or more consecutive days due to illness, you must submit a doctor's note to mark absences excused. If no documentation is submitted, the absence will be considered unexcused. Reporting the absence does not automatically excuse the absence.

Excused absences are granted in accordance with school policy. Valid reasons for absence from school include:

1. Illness of the student or doctor's appointment;
2. Exclusion due to quarantine, contagious disease, infection, infestation, or other condition requiring separation from other students for medical or health reasons;
3. Illness or other immediate family emergency which requires the presence of the student outside the school;
4. Death in the student's immediate family;
5. Necessity for a student to attend any judicial proceeding as a party or witness;
6. Observance of religious holy days;
7. Suspension or expulsion from school by an administrator;
8. Temporary closing of the school facility or suspension of classes due to severe weather, official activities, holidays, malfunctioning equipment, unsafe or unsanitary conditions, or other conditions requiring the closing of the school facility or suspension of classes; and
9. Other absences approved in advance by an administrator upon the written request of a parent/guardian.

Extensive absences significantly diminish the ability of the student to learn. Families are expected to schedule recreational activities and vacations only during designated school breaks. Please note no more than 10 absences may be excused without a doctor's note or Principal's permission. Once a student reaches 10 unexcused absences in one school year, an educational neglect form with CFSA must be filed.

If a student is absent for a total of up to four (4) cumulative days in each quarter, 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 term, 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.*

Students with excused absences will be allowed to make up required work; however, they will typically need to make up the work within the same number of days as the length of the excused absence.

DCI will sometimes excuse absences for family trips or activities with an educational or student-centered purpose. The student must make up work **and** write a Learner Profile essay for the advisor. The Learner Profile (LP) essay consists of one paragraph on how the student used or learned about one Learner Profile attribute for each day of absence. For instance, if a student is absent for four days, the student must write four paragraphs, one each on four different LP attributes. The student should submit the essay to his/her/their advisor and parents/guardians should forward it to [exception@dcinternationalschool.org](mailto:exception@dcinternationalschool.org) to have the student's attendance updated. The student has one week upon his or her return to complete this assignment. Excusing absences for family trips or activities is at the discretion of the Principal or designee, and will not be excused for students with other excessive absences.

## **Unexcused Absences**

Unexcused absences are when school-aged students are absent from school without a valid excuse, with or without parental/guardian approval. Examples of unexcused absences include babysitting, doing errands, cutting classes, shopping, and oversleeping.

Students with unexcused absences may be required to make up work using out-of-school time such as after school.

## **Consequences of Unexcused Absences**

The District of Columbia Compulsory School Attendance Law 8-247 and DC Municipal Regulations Title V Ch. 21 govern mandatory school attendance and the ways schools must intervene when students are truant. Students who have an unexcused absence may be subject to the following: individual/group counseling to address attendance needs; participation in the creation of, and adherence to, an Attendance Intervention Plan; parents/guardians of students with five unexcused absences will be requested to participate in a truancy conference; middle school students with ten or more unexcused absences will be referred to the Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) for suspected educational neglect; twenty five or more unexcused absences will result in a student/parent /guardian referral to the Office of the Attorney General or Court Social Services. Course grades or year-end promotion may be affected.

The Compulsory School Attendance Law states that parents/guardians who fail to have their children attend school are subject to the following: truancy charges may be filed against the student or parent/guardian; neglect charges may be filed against the parent/guardian; parents/guardians may be fined or jailed; school-aged students may be picked up by law enforcement officers during school hours for suspected truancy; students may be referred to the Court Diversion and other community-based interventions; and parents/guardians and students may be assigned community service and placed under court supervision/probation.

Our grievance and appeals process, described at the end of this handbook, applies to attendance determinations and consequences.

High school students missing 45 day or more of a course (non-consecutively) will automatically fail the course.

High school students with absences extending past 10 days consecutively, will receive 0s for all summative assignments until documentation of extended medical issues including but not limited to hospitalization are provided to school.

High school students must receive prior approval from the High School Principal of any non-medical absences extending over 5 consecutive school days.

- Approved absences require the student and family to coordinate with IB Coordinators and all teachers to determine the method of completing/turning-in assignments and an extension of deadlines.
- These absences are subject to non-approval, and if not approved any missed work will receive zeros.

## **Grievance Policy**

It is the policy of DC International School that all employees, students, parents/guardians, and visitors, have the right to voice their complaints or grievances about matters pertaining to its schools. DCI recognizes the meaningful value and importance of full discussion in resolving misunderstandings and in preserving good relations between management and employees and between the School, its students and their families. Accordingly, the following grievance procedure should be employed to ensure that complaints receive full consideration.

### *What May Be Grieved*

DCI's grievance process should be used as follows: (1) to deal with complaints and concerns pertaining to educational environment, employment arrangements, or interpersonal conflicts, identification and placement of EL students; and (2) to resolve complaints of discrimination and harassment based upon race, color, religion, creed, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, or other protected status.

### *Who May Grieve*

The procedures set forth below may be used by grievants, who can be employees, students, parents/guardians, or visitors.

### *Other Remedies*

The existence of this procedure does not bar grievants from also filing claims in other forums to the extent permitted by state or federal law. The filing of a grievance under this procedure does not toll or extend the time periods set by federal, state or local law to file external complaints or charges.

### *Informal Grievance*

Because most difficulties can be resolved by communicating a concern to someone, grievants are encouraged to discuss their concern or harassment complaint promptly and candidly with their immediate supervisor, the Business Manager or School Administration. The grievant is not required to discuss his or her complaint with any alleged harasser or perpetrator in any manner or for any reason prior to initiating a formal grievance.

### *Formal Grievance*

After encountering harassment, discrimination, or an incident that is the subject of a grievance, a grievant shall file a written notice with the Human Resource Department. The written notice shall identify the nature of the complaint, the date(s) of occurrence, and the desired result, and shall be signed and dated by the person filing the grievance. In the event of a grievance being filed on behalf of a student by the legal guardian or parent of the aggrieved student, both the student and the legal guardian and/or parent shall sign and date the grievance.

School Administration will immediately initiate an adequate, reliable impartial investigation of the grievance. Each formal complaint will be investigated, and depending on the facts involved in each situation, will be decided after receiving information from the appropriate sources. Each investigation may include interviewing witnesses, obtaining documents, and allowing parties to present evidence.

All documentation related to the investigation and discussions held in this process are considered EXTREMELY CONFIDENTIAL and are not to be revealed to or discussed by any participant with persons not directly involved with the complaint, its investigation or with the decision-making process. This provision does not include discussions with the governmental authorities.

Within thirty (30) business days of receiving the written notice, the School Administration shall respond in writing to the grievant (the "Response"). The Response shall summarize the course of the investigation, the relevant factual findings and the appropriate resolution. If, as a result of the investigation, harassment, or a valid grievance is established, appropriate corrective and remedial action will be taken.

### *Appeals*

If the grievant is not satisfied with the Response, the grievant may appeal in writing to the DC International School Board of Trustees (or designee) within thirty (30) days of the date of the Response summarizing the outcome of the investigation. The written appeal must contain all written documentation from the initial grievance and the grievant's reasons for not accepting the Response. The appeal, in letter form, may be sent to the Chair of the Board of Trustees. Within fifteen (15) days from receiving the written appeal, the Board of Trustees will respond in writing to the appellant as to the action to be taken and the reasons therefor. The Board may be contacted at [boardchair@dcinternationalschool.org](mailto:boardchair@dcinternationalschool.org).

### *Prohibition Against Retaliation*

DCI pledges that it will not retaliate against any person who files a grievance in accordance with this policy, or any person who participates in proceedings related to this policy. In addition, DCI will not tolerate any form of retaliation against any person who makes a good faith report or complaint about perceived acts of harassment, discrimination, or concern, or who cooperates in an investigation of harassment, discrimination, or a concern. Any person who is found to be engaging in any kind of retaliation will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

### *Modification*

DC International School may approve modification of the foregoing procedures in a particular case if the modification (a) is for the good cause, and (b) does not violate due process rights or policies of DC International School.



## Open Meeting Policy

DCI's Board of Trustees endeavors each year to have one open board meeting. In this meeting they invite the whole community to attend the meeting. They introduce board members, their role as trustees, invite questions and also feedback. The meeting is conducted in the open session and questions can be answered at any time. Notice is given through the school calendar and a special notification. The Board also often holds the meeting in conjunction with a PTO meeting.

# Admission Preference Policy

DCI participates in the My School DC Lottery. Families must apply through the common lottery to gain acceptance into DCI.

These are the preferences that DCI has opted to use in the order of preference:

1. Founders
2. Transfer (from member school)\*
3. Sibling attending
4. Children of staff
5. Sibling offered
6. Sibling attending cross campus\*\*
7. Sibling offered cross campus\*\*
8. Children of staff cross campus

\*Transfer preference can only be applied pre-lottery.

\*\*Cross campus is only for member school that have elected to have reciprocal preference

\*\*Cross campus grade level restrictions are applied per the PCSB Policy. Only students who will share a campus can be considered siblings.