

WASHINGTON LATIN PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL



Student and Family Policies ACADEMIC YEAR 2020-2021 Abridged from Family Handbook for PCSB

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STUDENT LIFE: CULTURE AND DISCIPLINE AT LATIN

Discipline Philosophy

Washington Latin's unofficial motto, "Words Matter," is a guiding principle in our approach to discipline. As a school, we believe in and rely heavily on the power of words to both encourage positive behavior and discourage negative or harmful actions. We award merits to students throughout the school year, generally at student assemblies, to honor and publicly acclaim those students who follow the rules steadfastly and those who are making an effort to improve their behavior. Teachers and administrators may also issue demerits, as described below, in order to ensure that missteps are addressed immediately, consistently and in a way that is fair and emphasizes the learning moment.

As with all things at Washington Latin, discipline is an individualized process. While there are certain infractions that, once properly investigated, result in immediate, consistent responses, we also take an individualized and situation-specific approach to all disciplinary actions. Our approach focuses on helping students develop a compassionate understanding of how their words and actions affect others, both immediately and directly and over the longer term, and through the extended community. To achieve this, our disciplinary actions are tailored to each student, taking into consideration his/her background, history, and current pertinent circumstances. We remain committed to reduce the minutes that students may be removed from class or school and to mitigate any loss by providing them with access to their teachers during all in-school suspensions. We also assign tutors to work with students during out-of-school suspensions beyond two school days.

Trauma-Informed Classroom

Consistent with our commitment to understanding the individual, Washington Latin trains all faculty in the tenets of the trauma-informed classroom. Our goal for 2019-20 is that all members of the faculty will be trained in this approach by the end of the school year and that it will be an essential component of our approach to discipline through which student behavior and needs are understood. While the school will continue to utilize conventional responses to disciplinary infractions, such as in- or out-of-school suspension or detention, we are committed to not making this our sole approach. In training faculty, both new and returning, we emphasize the need for consistency balanced with consideration, particularly for students who have experienced trauma. We will identify issues that affect students' misbehavior and craft a response where they can build positive relationships with peers and caring adults in order to support their emotional and academic growth while also taking into account our concomitant responsibility to our entire community.

Restorative Justice and Peer Mediation

Behavioral expectations and consequences also reflect our overarching objective of helping our students become thoughtful people who will contribute to the public good and continue a lifelong quest towards a fuller humanity. We strive to incorporate the restorative approach in every disciplinary action to address students' actions and also repair relationships. This includes a robust and growing peer mediation program. Peer Mediation now exists as a credited (elective) course in our Upper School and is an elective in the Middle School, giving our younger students the opportunity to join and grow in the program. Students are encouraged to use this program for conflicts with both students and teachers.

CONDUCT AND BEHAVIOR

Code of Conduct

The purpose of our Code of Conduct is to create and maintain an environment consistent with the above principles that is conducive to learning, personal growth and development, individual health and safety, and the preservation of good order, property and belongings. Students have the right and responsibility to help maintain this environment.

The Code of Conduct applies to all Washington Latin students whenever their conduct is reasonably related to school or school activities. This includes:

1. On school grounds before, during, and after school hours
2. At any other time when the school is being used by another school group
3. Off school grounds at a school activity, function or event
4. Traveling to or from the school, a school activity, or a school-related function
5. On a school-sponsored bus or public transportation traveling to and from school
6. When a Washington Latin student is in a capacity representing the school on or off campus
7. When using any electronic device on campus, whether school owned or not, through social media, chatting, texting or any other means of communication through these devices.

POLICIES AND CONSEQUENCES

Our discipline policy is guided by the belief that missteps and mistakes are frequently a part of personal growth, and the school implements a system of graduated incentives and responses in order to move students toward more acceptable behavior and increased accountability and maturity. The school understands that students come from myriad sets of circumstances and backgrounds, and we are eager and equipped to support students at every step of their academic career and experience at Washington Latin.

Usually, the school staff carries out such actions in an informal way using dialogue and mediation strategies. However, more serious and chronic behaviors may require corrective and disciplinary measures in the form of issuing demerits, conducting conferences, hosting detention, and occasionally, suspending or expelling students. In certain circumstances, the school may also require the student and family to enter into a specific behavior agreement that will determine the student's ability to remain enrolled in school. In situations where behavior is not improving, the school's foremost objective is to craft a solution that minimizes the loss of academic time and maximizes the opportunity to provide the student with the necessary support to manage challenges in their personal lives. To this end, the school is committed to making individualized disciplinary decisions that serve the best interests of the student and the community.

While it is expected that all Washington Latin students comply with school rules and regulations at all times, it is important to outline the consequences of violating those rules. The following section must not be considered an exhaustive list, but rather a guide to help families understand how seriously the school takes our Code of Conduct.

Behaviors Contrary to Washington Latin's Culture

The following behaviors are inconsistent with the values of our community and therefore not allowed:

- Behavior that is physically hurtful: e.g., fighting, pushing, shoving, running in the halls, throwing objects, carrying dangerous objects, using school materials inappropriately.
- Behavior that hurts the feelings of others: e.g., name calling, racial slurs, calling attention to one's personal characteristics in a derogatory manner, intimidation, group isolation or ostracism, sexual harassment, and other behaviors designed to devalue or hurt another person.
- Behavior that damages, destroys, or causes the loss of personal or school property: e.g., irresponsible use of materials, theft, malicious destruction or defacement, manipulating locks or lockers other than one's own.
- Behavior that interrupts the school program for self or the group: e.g., class cutting, profanity, obscenity, insubordination, flagrant tardiness, remaining in areas of the school where one does not belong.

Glossary of Unacceptable Behaviors

Alcohol & Drugs: Includes possession, use, sale, distribution, or being under any influence of illegal substances or misuse of legal substances, or items purported to be such, at school or school-related activities.

Bullying: Any intentional behavior by a student or group of students that cause the distress, hurt, humiliation, or anxiety of another student or group of students. Bullying includes all forms of abuse, harassment or intimidation. Please see below for our complete policy against bullying.

Cheating includes, but is not limited to:

- Giving or receiving information during tests and quizzes either verbally, visually or electronically
- Bringing prepared materials to the test, e.g., notes on cheat sheets, hands, arms
- Copying homework or having someone else complete the homework assignment for the student
 - Allowing another student to copy all or part of homework assignment

Disruptive Behavior: This includes any behavior that disrupts the flow and routine of the class, including tardiness, talking out of turn, inappropriate comments or any behavior that absorbs the time of the teacher in ways that detract from the learning of others.

Fighting: Any attempt to injure any other person at the School represents an extremely serious violation of both the regulations and community norms of the Washington Latin PCS. As such, there is to be no fighting at any time. Fighting consists of excessive roughness, tripping, pushing, punching, and any other attempt to cause bodily harm to another student, even in jest.

Gambling: Gambling involves an exchange of items, including, but not limited to money, from prior arrangement based upon the outcome of an event.

Harassment: Any verbal or physical contact where the conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance, academic performance or educational experience, or of creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating or offensive working, educational or living environment. All forms of harassment, including bullying and sexual harassment, fall under this definition.

Inappropriate Language: Swearing, cursing, name calling, or other inappropriate, derogatory or mean-spirited language – in written or spoken form. Email correspondence is no exception to this rule. Students are expected to address all members of the community with kindness and respect at all times.

Illegal Substances: A drug whose production or use is prohibited or strictly controlled via prescription.

Insubordination: Any student who fails to obey direct instructions or requests from their teachers, the staff or a guest is considered insubordinate.

Plagiarism: Copying published material and submitting it without indicating the source of information so as to make it appear as if it were one's own work or words. Both images and text are considered plagiarized if not cited. In addition to the demerits issued, a student will have a conference with the teacher and a grade of zero will be given on the test, quiz or assignment.

Tobacco: Smoking or otherwise consuming substances that include any tobacco or tobacco-based products.

Theft: The taking of someone else's property without the owner's knowledge or prior approval.

Uniform Violations include improper shoes, wearing a coat or jacket in school, improper wearing of the uniform (e.g., inappropriate sizes), etc. as outlined in the uniform policy.

Vandalism: Any intentional misuse or damage to school supplies, equipment, furniture, classroom space, common space, or the property of others in the school.

Weapons: Guns, knives or any other dangerous or potentially harmful items are considered weapons and therefore banned. This ban also applies to replicas of dangerous or potentially harmful items.

Prohibition Against Bullying

Washington Latin defines bullying as behavior - whether physical, electronic, or verbal - which is designed to devalue or hurt another person. This generally includes name calling, racial slurs, calling attention to one's personal characteristics in a derogatory manner, intimidation, group isolation or ostracism, sexual harassment or any other such behavior that interferes with the person's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges of Washington Latin. Bullying is specifically defined meeting the following criteria:

1. Includes harassment based on a student's actual or perceived race, color, ethnicity, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, intellectual ability, familial status, family responsibilities, matriculation, political

affiliation, genetic information, disability, source of income, status as a victim of an intrafamily offense, place or residence or business, or any other distinguishing characteristic, or on a student's association with a person, or group with any person, with one or more of the actual or perceived foregoing characteristics; and

2. Can reasonably be predicted to:
 - a. Place the student in reasonable fear of physical harm to his or her person or property;
 - b. Cause a substantial detrimental effect on the student's physical or mental health;
 - c. Substantially interfere with the student's academic performance or attendance; or
 - d. Substantially interfere with the student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities or privileges provided by an agency or educational institution.

Retaliation for reporting, providing information or witnessing bullying against any student, family or faculty/staff member, including the victim, is also prohibited.

Washington Latin recognizes that for sanctions to be an effective component of a bullying prevention plan, they must be implemented consistently, fairly and equitably. To this end, Washington Latin ensures that staff members follow these guidelines as closely as possible while allowing for flexibility to adapt sanctions to individual contexts. Furthermore, to ensure equitability in applying sanctions, measures will be employed on a graduated basis determined by the nature of the offense, the disciplinary history of the students involved and the age and developmental status of the students involved.

Responses to incidents of bullying may include, but are not limited to:

- Reprimand
- Suspension of Washington Latin privileges
- Suspension of participating in optional Washington Latin activities
- Suspension from Washington Latin facilities

Washington Latin does not endorse the use of punitive strategies associated with “zero-tolerance” policies when applying sanctions to an incident of bullying.

Levels of Infractions

Although it is not possible to list all of the ways in which students may violate the school's code of conduct, we list below several instances of very serious to less serious infractions. In all cases, a student's previous record and standing at the school will be considered before the administration will make a disciplinary decision.

Very Serious Infractions

While the school works with students so that they can learn from their mistakes, the following violations of the school's code of conduct are grounds for **immediate suspension out of school and possible expulsion**.

- Possession or use of illegal substances on school property or at school-sponsored events
- Use of a weapon in a threatening and dangerous manner
- Extreme sexual harassment

Serious Infractions

Listed below are examples of serious infractions, whether occurring at school or at school-related activities, which could result in **out-of-school suspension (OSS)**.

- Violence, force or threats of violence or force
- Coercion, intimidation, bullying, or any other similar behavior that may interfere with another's well-being, safety, rights, or daily activity
- Being under the influence of an illegal substance, i.e. drugs, alcohol or medicine not prescribed by a physician

Serious Violations

Listed below are examples of serious violations, whether occurring at school or at school-related activities, which **could result in an in-school suspension (ISS)**.

- Open defiance, disrespect or disruptive behavior
- Destruction or defacement of school property or others' personal property
- Trespassing or being in an unauthorized part of the school
- Leaving the school building or campus without permission
- Verbal or written profanity or obscenity or any inappropriate gestures or actions
- Failure to attend assigned detention
- Inappropriate bus behavior
- Behavior which disrupts the learning process for others, whether occurring in the classroom, hallways or other areas of the school grounds
- Consistent or repeated failure to meet the Code of Conduct or "Classroom Responsibilities and Expectations" described in the student planner (APPENDIX J).

Major and Minor Infractions

Generally speaking, all other disciplinary infractions fall into two major categories: minor and major.

- **Minor infractions** are those violations of classroom rules that are dealt with by an individual teacher. Classroom teachers have the right and responsibility to assign penalties for infractions of the rules that they set for their classrooms. Teachers may give demerits and assign detentions; they will report more serious infractions to the Assistant Principal of Student Life and the Deans of Students.
- **Major infractions** are cases in which a more serious violation has taken place. The student will be summoned to a discussion with the Assistant Principal of Student Life. The Assistant Principal of Student Life will then speak with the student and parent(s)/guardians(s), and will determine the appropriate course of action, including the assignment of penalties.

DISCIPLINARY CONSEQUENCES

The following are the types of disciplinary actions or consequences for violations of the Code of Conduct, listed in order of severity.

Demerit

The purpose of demerits is to inform parents/guardians about student infractions and provide a record of conduct.

- Demerits are recorded on a daily basis
- Excessive accumulation of demerits may result in detention and/or suspension.
- Demerits do not accumulate from one quarter to the next.
- The accumulation of 7 demerits in one marking period will result in detention.
- The accumulation of 14 demerits in one marking period may result in an in-school suspension. • Parents will be notified in advance of detention times and dates.

Removal from Class

Any student whose behavior disrupts the learning environment will be asked to leave class temporarily at the direction of the teacher. This can occur on two levels:

- The student is asked to take a brief break outside the classroom door with the purpose of redirecting behavior to allow the student to rejoin the class.
- The student must report directly to the Assistant Principal of Student Life or a Dean of Students, who will then decide upon a way forward.

Detention

Students may be required to serve detention as a consequence for the violation of a school rule. This is a designated amount of time, in addition to that in the classroom, under the supervision and direction of a teacher and/or administrator, which may occur during school hours and/or after school, or on a Saturday from 8 am to 11am. Please note that the administration reserves the right to change the time and days for detention based on scheduling needs to ensure adult supervision.

- Parents/guardians will be notified in advance of detention times and dates.
- In the Middle School, regular detentions will be held on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 3:45 to 4:45 pm and on Saturday from 8:00 am to 11:00 am.
- There will be no regular detention for the Upper School, but a school administrator reserves the right to assign a Saturday detention from 8:00 am to 11:00 am.
- Students must attend and be on time to the detention to which they are assigned. If students do not attend or arrive late, they will be subject to additional disciplinary action.
- An accumulation of detention may result in suspension.

Community Service as a Behavioral Consequence

Community service in the Upper School for behavior reasons will be in addition to the required 100 community service hours needed to graduate from Washington Latin. Please note that the administration reserves the right to change the time and days for community service based on scheduling needs to ensure adult supervision.

- Students must attend and be on time to the community service to which they are assigned. If students do not attend or arrive late, they will be subject to additional disciplinary action.
- An accumulation of community service assignments may result in suspension.

Suspension

- **In-school suspension (ISS):** A temporary removal from one or all classes and school activities. Students will be assigned to a room where their teachers, dean and counselor (if applicable) will work with them to reflect on their actions and assist them with their work. Students are expected to complete their class assignments during their suspension. Also, students serving suspension must complete a corrective action assignment associated with the infraction committed.
- **Out-of-school suspension (OSS):** If school administrators determine that a student has willfully caused, attempted to cause, or threatened to cause bodily injury or emotional distress to another person at Washington Latin, he or she will be suspended out of school. A student who is suspended is excluded from all classes, school activities and from WLPCS property for the duration of the suspension. The number of days a student is suspended will most often increase with each additional suspension for that student.
- In the case of either ISS or OSS, Latin will establish a plan for the student to continue his or her studies during the period of suspension. Students will be expected to complete assignments during the suspension. The OSS student will be responsible for submitting any work that could not be completed during the suspension immediately upon returning to school.
- Parents/Guardians are essential partners in addressing the behavior issues that have led to the suspension, and Latin will *strongly urge* their participation, particularly at key points during the process. This includes:
 - If the parent or guardian of a suspended student cannot be notified in person or by telephone, the student must remain at school until the end of the school day. A parent/guardian *or* responsible adult designee **MUST** pick up the suspended student from school.
 - The school will arrange a return-to-school conference for the student (attendance is required) and a parent/guardian (attendance is very strongly urged) with an administrator before the student's return to class.

When a student with a disability is suspended (in-school or out-of-school) for more than ten school days cumulative within the school year:

- The school will conduct a Manifestation Determination Review Meeting within 10 school days from the date that the decision to suspend the student is made. At the Manifestation Determination Review Meeting, relevant members of the IEP/Section 504 team will determine if the behaviors resulting in the suspension are a manifestation of the student's disability. Washington Latin will then take appropriate action based on the determinations made by the team and according to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.
- School personnel may consider any unique circumstances on a case-by-case basis when determining whether a suspension, change of placement or other disciplinary action is appropriate for a child with a disability who violates the school's Code of Conduct.

Disciplinary Probation

A student may be placed on disciplinary probation either because of a pattern of misbehavior or whenever the Assistant Principal determines that a student's behavior warrants special monitoring. Probation is a period during which the School observes whether a student is respectful of the guidelines for community behavior (when a student is on probation, he or she is expected to maintain an exemplary behavioral record). Violation of a major school rule while a student is on disciplinary probation may result in expulsion from the school.

Expulsion

A student may be expelled from the School either for a chronic pattern of substantial violations that have not been corrected through any of the above methods, or for an extremely serious violation, such as possession of weapons or drugs, or the intent to harm another individual. Parents' or guardians' falsification of records or non-compliance with school policies or support of the child's non-compliance with school policies may also result in expulsion.

Students who are expelled may not re-enter the School.

The School has School Resource Officers (SROs) from the Metropolitan Police Department who visit the school almost daily to offer their support as needed. If the school determines that a student's behavior in any way jeopardizes the safety of the community, the School sees fit to involve the police. If a student is found in possession of an illegal substance or a weapon, the School will notify the police.

Searches of Students, Personal Property in Students' Immediate Possession

School administrators are authorized to search students and/or personal property in students' immediate possession, when, in their judgment, there are reasonable grounds to suspect that a student has violated or is violating Board policies, school rules, federal/state laws, or is interfering with the operations, discipline or general welfare of the school.

All searches of students and/or their personal property will be authorized and conducted by a school administrator in the presence of a witness, except where the circumstances render the presence of a

witness impractical. A reasonable effort will be made to conduct searches out of the sight and hearing of other students.

Procedure for Requesting an Independent Hearing

It is the sincere 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 Head of School.

1. A written request for a due process hearing signed by a parent or guardian must be submitted to the Head of School within five business days of the incident.
2. The Head of School 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 President of the Washington Latin Board of Governors.
5. The Board President will provide the parent or guardian with a written decision on the case within one week of receiving the recommendation of the Hearing Officer.

Attendance Policies

Attendance Matters!

Consistent attendance in school plays a vital role in every student's academic success and contribution to our community. We want all students at school as much as possible, so they can make the most of the educational opportunities offered in middle and upper school. Benefits for the students include:

- Better academic results (immediately and over the long-term)
- More positive attitude about school
- Higher self-confidence
- Good habits that serve students throughout their education and beyond

We miss our students when they are gone, because we value their contributions to our school. Regular and timely attendance is important for students to succeed academically; it also helps children feel better about school—and themselves.

A high number of absences or tardies can be an indication of underlying problems, which we want to address with students and their families. For these reasons, it is crucial that parents/guardians and students alike are committed to on-time and regular attendance at school.

POLICIES

- ***Excused and Unexcused*** - Not all absences are the same. Some can be excused with a parent/guardian note/email, and some require a doctor's note. Other reasons for an absence or tardiness are NOT excusable, even with a parent/guardian note. Please see the description that follows for details on each type.
- ***Consequences*** - The consequences reflect how important this issue is, beginning with actions the Latin administration will take. Serious cases are **required** to be reported to city officials. Please read the details below.

PROCEDURES

The most important procedure is that parents/guardians **COMMUNICATE** with Latin regarding any absence, whatever the reason, as early as possible.

- It is important that we know where your child is, no matter the reason for an absence.
- Attendance is taken each day during advisory and recorded no later than 10:00 am, so please let us know ASAP if your child will be absent, late or leave early.
- Parents can send an email (attendance@latinpcs.org) or leave a voicemail (x418) explaining the absence. ***Note that we can no longer accept handwritten notes.*** We must receive communication within 3 days of the student's return to campus to excuse the absence/tardy.
- ***Please note that all school absences and tardies are part of the student's permanent academic record.***

What are excused and unexcused absences/tardies?

Excused absences are when students are absent all day, arrive late (see below for details), or leave early with a valid excuse and parent/guardian approval. Examples include:

- Student **illness** (a doctor's note is required upon return if a student is absent for more than five days)
- **Medical appointments/procedures** (a doctor's note is required upon return to school). *We encourage families to schedule appointments so that students miss as little class time as possible.*
- **Serious illness or death** in the student's immediate family
- Necessity for a student to attend a **judicial proceeding** as a plaintiff, defendant, witness or juror
- Observance of a **religious holiday** (please notify us in advance)
- Temporary **school closings** due to weather, unsafe conditions or other emergencies
- **Lawful suspension or exclusion** from school by school authorities
- For **military families**, student visits with the parent or legal guardian who is the military member immediately before, during or after his or her deployment.
- **College visits** (please notify us in advance)

Unexcused absences are when students are absent from, arrive late to or leave early from school without a valid excuse, *whether or not they have parent/guardian approval.* Examples include:

- Babysitting or other such family obligations
- Work obligations
- Oversleeping
- Traffic
- Cutting classes

How do parents/guardians report an absence or tardy as excused?

1. Review whether an absence is considered excusable. If not, please send your child to school!
2. Communicate with us about the absence:
 - a. Email attendance@latinpcs.org or
 - b. Leave a voicemail on the attendance line at 202.223.1111 x418
 - c. Include the student's name and grade, reason for the absence/late arrival or early departure, your name and contact phone number for any questions.
 - d. If necessary, please send a doctor's note (see above) on the doctor's letterhead.
3. To have an absence/tardy excused, we must receive one of these forms of communication by the third day that your child is back at school. For example, if s/he is out all-day Monday, we must receive a communication from the parent/guardian no later than end-of-day Thursday of the same week.
4. If the parent/guardian communication with a valid excuse is not received within the three-day period, the absence will be recorded as **UNEXCUSED**.
5. Any student who attempts to falsify an attendance excuse will be subject to disciplinary action.

CONSEQUENCES FOR TARDIES AND ABSENCES

Parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring their children attend school regularly and on time, and we ask that you take this responsibility seriously. We also expect our students to make attendance and timeliness priorities. The consequences outlined below reflect how seriously we take the issue.

Tardiness to school

- If a student arrives to advisory after 8:10 am, s/he will be marked tardy to school.
- If a student arrives at school after 8:20 am (Upper School) or after 8:30 am (Middle School), s/he MUST check in at the front desk for a late pass and will be marked tardy.
- If a student arrives at school after 8:45 am without a valid parent excuse communication (in person, email, call, etc. as outlined above), s/he will be directed to the administrator on tardy duty, who will call the parent or guardian for an explanation.
- If the tardy is unexcused, the student will be required to attend Saturday detention equivalent to the cumulative amount of time that s/he was late during the course of the week. ***Any student who does not attend the required Saturday detention will be subject o disciplinary action.***

Tardiness to class

Students have five minutes to get from one class to the next. Middle School students who receive 5 class tardies in one week will serve a detention from 3:45-4:45 one day during the following week. Upper School students who are late to any one class without a valid excuse as determined by the teacher 4 times will automatically lose 5% from their quarter grades. Students will also automatically lose another 5% on their quarter grades on the 8th tardy, and so forth.

How many is “too many” absences or tardies?

Chronic absenteeism is the term for a student missing more than 10 days in a school year (both excused and unexcused absences), because this is the point at which we see academic and/or behavioral struggles. Note that when a student misses 20% or more of a school day, it is counted as an absence, so we also watch for students who are chronically tardy.

In cases of chronic absenteeism or tardiness from Latin, the student’s teacher, advisor, or a member of the administration will reach out to the family for a meeting to understand the causes of the absences and establish a plan to improve the student’s on-time attendance. If there are health reasons for the absences, the school nurse will also work with the family and administration to establish an attendance plan. Parents/guardians and students, who have questions about the policy, a special need in terms of scheduling or some help resolving an issue, please contact us.

What are the legal requirements for school attendance?

According to DC law, parents/guardians are considered legally responsible for ensuring their children’s attendance at school. **Truancy** is defined as any absence from school by a school-aged child without a valid excuse. Interventions begin at Latin after the first unexcused absence, but ***we are also legally obligated to report excessive absences to the authorities:***

- For our students up to age 13, the school is required to report to the Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) if a student accumulates 10+ unexcused absences within a single school year.

- For our students over age 13, the school is required to report to the Family Court Social Services Division if a student has 10 or more unexcused absences within a single school year.
- The law also outlines particular consequences for both the student and parents, including both support (counseling, for example) and legal action. This information can be found in [the attendance report](#) by the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) at osse.dc.gov.

Our hope at Latin is that we can work together with our students and their families to avoid an attendance problem requiring outside agency involvement. We are committed to early intervention and working to help overcome barriers and underlying problems in partnership with our families.

If you have questions about our policy, please contact Ms. Carenda Nunn, School Registrar.

This information is also posted on the **Parents' home page** as a stand-alone document.

Grievance Procedures

Grievance Policy

Washington Latin strives to build strong, trusting relationships with all members of the community, including parents, students and faculty. When disagreements arise, we aim to resolve them through civil discussion. We encourage parents and guardians to address concerns or disagreements with members of the Latin faculty or administration directly to resolve the issue through informal conversation.

Informal Grievance

If direct conversation with the involved individual(s) does not resolve the issue, grievants are encouraged to take their concern for prompt and candid discussion with a supervisor, the Principal or Head of School.

If the situation is still not adequately resolved through these informal means, the following grievance procedures should be employed to ensure that complaints receive full consideration. Individuals are encouraged, but not required, to discuss their concerns with appropriate school officials before resorting to a formal complaint.

Formal Grievance

The grievance procedures outlined below establish how formal complaints will be investigated and resolved. These grievance procedures are intended to provide for a prompt and equitable resolution of complaints. These grievance procedures do not bar individuals from filing claims in other forums to the extent permitted by state or federal law.

What May Be Grieved

The Washington Latin grievance process should be used as follows:

- To deal with complaints and concerns pertaining to educational environment, employment arrangements, or interpersonal conflicts
- To resolve complaints of discrimination and harassment based upon race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, religion, personal appearance, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, etc.

Who May Grieve

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

Any person who believes that Washington Latin has violated the regulations of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act, Title VI, Title IX, and/or the Age Act may submit a complaint to the designated individuals below.

- Complaints involving *students* who attend Washington Latin may be submitted to Aryn Davis, Director of Student Support, ardavis@latinpcs.org, 5200 2nd Street NW, Washington, DC 20011, 202-223.1111.
- Complaints involving Washington Latin *employees or third parties* may be submitted to Yinnie Tse, Director of Finance, ytse@latinpcs.org, 5200 2nd Street NW, Washington, DC 20011, 202-223.1111.

The grievant is not required to discuss his or her complaint with the alleged harasser or perpetrator in any manner or for any reason prior to initiating a formal grievance. Washington Latin prohibits retaliation against individuals who file a complaint or participate in a complaint investigation.

Grievance Procedure

A formal grievance may be filed by following the steps outlined below.

Initial Grievance Submission

- Within 90 days of the alleged incident (discrimination, harassment, etc.), written notice of the complaint must be filed with the individual designated above. Complainants may use the grievance form attached to the grievance procedure. The written notice must include the nature of the complaint, the date(s) of the occurrence, the desired result, and must be signed and dated by the person making the complaint.
- Upon receipt of the written notice of the complaint, the designated individual to whom the complaint was submitted will immediately initiate an adequate, reliable and impartial investigation of the complaint. Each investigation will include, as necessary, interviewing witnesses, obtaining documents and allowing parties to present evidence. All documentation related to the investigation is confidential.
- Within thirty (30) business days of receiving the written notice of the complaint, the individual investigating the complaint will respond in writing to the complainant. The response will summarize the course and outcome of the investigation and identify an appropriate resolution. If, as a result of the investigation, it is determined that discrimination or harassment have occurred, appropriate corrective and remedial action will be taken.

Appealing Initial Outcome

- If the complainant wishes to appeal the decision from Step 1, he/she may submit a signed statement of appeal to the Head of School, Peter Anderson, panderson@latinpcs.org or by mail to 5200 2nd Street, NW Washington, DC 20011 within ten (10) business days after receipt of the response.
- The Head of School will review all relevant information and meet with the parties involved, as necessary. Within twenty-one (21) business days of receiving the statement of appeal, the Head of School will respond in writing to the complainant summarizing the outcome of the appeal and any corrective or remedial action to be taken.

Appealing Second Outcome

- If the complainant is not satisfied with the decision of the Head of School, he/she may appeal through a signed written statement to the school Board of Governors, (Chris Wilkinson, President, [chriswilkinson@gmail](mailto:chriswilkinson@gmail.com)) within ten (10) business days of the receipt of the Head of School’s response.
- In an attempt to resolve the grievance, the Board shall review all relevant information and meet with the concerned parties and their representatives within thirty (30) days of the receipt of such an appeal. A copy of the Board's disposition of the appeal shall be sent to each concerned party within fifteen (15) business days of this meeting.

Filing a Complaint with the Office for Civil Rights

- Grievants also have the right to file a complaint with the Office for Civil Rights by:
 - Mailing the complaint to Director, District of Columbia Office, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202-1475
 - Faxing it to (202) 453-6021
 - Filing it electronically at: www.ed.gov/ocr/complaintprocess.html.
- For more information, you can contact OCR at (202) 453-6020 (voice), (877) 521-2172 (TDD), or ocr.dc@ed.gov.

WASHINGTON LATIN PCS - GRIEVANCE FORM

Date: _____

Name of Person on Whose Behalf Complaint is Being Brought:

Name of Person Bringing Complaint: _____

Relationship/Title: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Alternate Phone: _____ Email Address: _____

SUMMARY OF COMPLAINT

Name & Signature of Person Receiving Complaint

Date

Non-Discrimination Policy

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, employees, sources of referral of applicants for admission and employment, and all professional organizations holding professional agreements with Washington Latin Public Charter School (“Latin”) are hereby notified that Washington Latin Public Charter School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, familial status, family responsibilities, political affiliation, source of income, or disability in admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its programs and activities.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) Notice

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. Schools must notify parents/guardians and eligible students annually of their rights under FERPA.

FERPA gives parents/guardians certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students." FERPA ensures parents or eligible students have the following rights:

1. ***The right to inspect and review the student's education records*** within 45 days after the day Washington Latin receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students who wish to inspect their child's or their education records should submit a written request that identifies the records they wish to inspect. The 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. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents/guardians or eligible students to review the records.
2. ***The right to request the 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 who wish to ask Washington Latin to amend their child's or their education record should write the Principal, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it should be changed. If the school 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 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. After the hearing, if Latin still decides not to amend the record, the parent/guardian or eligible student has the right to place a written statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information.
3. ***The right to provide written consent before the school discloses personally identifiable information (PII) from the student's education records***, except to the extent that FERPA

authorizes disclosure without consent. There are several exceptions that allow Washington Latin school officials with legitimate educational interests to disclose student information. A school official typically has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility. (See below for more detail on these exceptions.)

4. ***The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by Washington Latin to comply with the requirements of FERPA.*** A parent or student (if over the age of 18) may file a [written complaint](#) with the US Department of Education’s Student Privacy Policy Office (SPPO) within 180 days of the alleged violation of a school’s failure to comply with his or her rights under FERPA. The complaint may be filed on their site, by email or USPS mail at the address below. More information on this process is available on the [US Department of Education’s SPPO page](#).

Student Privacy Policy Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202

Permitted Disclosures of Student Information Without Consent

Schools must have written permission from the parent/guardian or eligible student to release any information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allows Washington Latin to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR § 99.31):

- School officials with a legitimate educational interest
 - “School officials” includes teachers; administrators, board members, and support staff; nurse and health staff; contracted support staff such as counselors, psychologists, tutors, occupational therapists, and any others to whom Latin has outsourced institutional services or functions.
 - “Legitimate educational interest” includes any purpose that is directly related to and necessary in order for that school official to perform his or her professional duties, such as the registrar maintaining or auditing school records, a data analyst reviewing individual student records to compile and analyze group datasets, an advisor or college counselor accessing a student’s grades in order to provide him or her with counseling or support, a special educator reviewing student attendance and academic performance in the review or adjustment of the Individual Education Plan, etc.
- Other schools to which a student is transferring
- Specified DC or US government officials for audit or evaluation purposes
- Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid for a student
- Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school
- Accrediting organizations
- Law enforcement or court-related officials to comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena

- Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies
- State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, under specific State law

Read more about these exceptions in this [US Department of Education overview for parents](#).

Directory Information and Parent Right to Opt Out

Washington Latin 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/guardians and eligible students about directory information and allow parents/guardians and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them.

Washington Latin parents have two specific opportunities to opt out of the sharing of this information: during the enrollment/re-enrollment process (it is a required question, and the process will not advance until the parent either opts in or out), and when the family directory information is updated each year (usually in September). In addition, parents may contact the Communications team at the school at any time to request a change in what directory information is shared.

Open Meetings Policy

Washington Latin PCS will hold at least one public meeting this year. The public will be informed of the holding of this meeting by the posting of announcements on the school website, Facebook page, and Instagram account at least 30 days in advance.

ADMISSIONS & ENROLLMENT POLICIES

New Student Admissions Process

Any student who is a resident of the District of Columbia is eligible to apply to Washington Latin. As an open enrollment public charter school, there are no admissions requirements except DC residency. We are not allowed to – and do not – look at test scores, past grades, or other academic background.

Washington Latin participates in **MySchoolDC**, the District-wide common lottery for K-12 education for all DC residents.

Washington Latin currently accepts new students in grades 5-9 ONLY; we do not accept new students after 9th grade due to the Latin language requirement for graduation. The largest number of openings is generally for 5th grade (90 slots).

Enrollment Preference Policies

Washington Latin grants enrollment preference in this order: 1. Siblings of current students; 2. Children of current full-time

employees who are DC residents; 3. Siblings of newly-admitted students. Details of the Washington Latin sibling policy are as follows:

- To enroll a **sibling of a current Latin student**, the parent or guardian must complete and submit an enrollment application through MySchoolDC by the designated deadline. If an enrollment application for a sibling is not received by the application deadline, he/she will not qualify for enrollment under the Sibling Preference Policy. 
- A sibling is defined as a biological, adopted, foster, or step-brother or sister with the same primary residence as the current Washington Latin student. Cousins, nieces, nephews, and unrelated children sharing an address with a Washington Latin student are not considered siblings.
- If, for any reason, the current Washington Latin student on whom the sibling preference was based withdraws from Latin before the start of the school year, the newly-enrolled sibling may be removed from enrollment and placed on the waiting list.
- Washington Latin also provides a **sibling-offered** preference. This preference is provided to students whose siblings are matched to our school through the MySchoolDC lottery. Once a student receives a space and is enrolled, all qualified siblings are moved up to the next available position for their grade. Note that the sibling-offered preference does not always result in the sibling securing a seat at Latin. 
- Children of our full-time employees who are DC residents at the time of the lottery are eligible for our **staff preference**. Admission is limited to Grades 5-9. This preference is applied after the sibling-enrolled preference and before the sibling-offered preference. Employees' children may not exceed 10 percent of the school's total student body.
- Enrollment preferences are not a mandated policy for DC public charter schools. If Washington Latin does not offer any of these enrollment preferences during an enrollment period, siblings and employee children will be treated like all other applicants through the MySchoolDC lottery.

Re-Enrollment of Current Students

Re-enrollment for the next school year is not automatic for current students. Please note the following:

- Parent(s) and/or guardian(s) must return the *Re-Enrollment Intent Form* in the spring to the Enrollment Team by the deadline set by the school administrators (generally in early May) to reserve their place at Washington Latin. *Re-Enrollment Intent Forms* received after the deadline may not be accepted, and that student may be dropped from enrollment at the school for the next academic year.
- Submission of the form only holds a space for a student. Enrollment is not complete until the school receives the residency verification documents and immunization information, as required by law.
- Students who do not re-enroll for the next academic year are NOT eligible for summer opportunities funded totally or in part by Washington Latin or afforded through a partnership with our school. If a student participates in a summer program funded by Latin and does not re-enroll for the next academic year, his/her family will be responsible for reimbursing the school for the cost of the summer program(s) and any other related costs.
- Parents/Guardians of currently enrolled students can expect an email with information on re-enrollment in the spring with details on completing the necessary requirements. If you have questions, please contact our Registrar, Ms. Carenda Nunn (cnunn@latinpcs.org).

Withdrawing a Student

As a charter school, we value the ability of parents/guardians to make choices regarding their child's educational placement. We recognize that for a variety of life situations a parent may choose to withdraw their child from Washington Latin Public Charter School. Although we regret seeing any member of the Washington Latin community leave, we will assist parents in the transition.

To withdraw a student, parents must complete and sign a *Withdrawal and Exit Interview Form* and *Student Withdrawal Form* with the Enrollment Team. Once a decision on the student's next school has been finalized, the *Student Withdrawal Form* or *Verification of Enrollment* form must be completed by the receiving (new) school and returned to the Office of Enrollment Management before the official educational records will be released. Washington Latin will send the academic files to the receiving school within two business days after receipt of the *Student Withdrawal Form* or *Verification of Enrollment Form*. However, official educational records will not be released until all outstanding materials, and other obligations have been settled.

Once a student has formally withdrawn, the student forfeits her/his assigned enrollment space at Washington Latin Public Charter School and may not be eligible to re-enroll. Students who are withdrawn are NOT eligible for summer opportunities afforded through Washington Latin. The parents or guardians who withdraw a student before graduation will be asked to participate in an exit interview with a member of our Senior Leadership Team.