



# HOPE COMMUNITY PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL

## 2022-2023 Student/Family Policies

**Discipline Policy** must align with state law and policy cannot conflict with the Student Fair Access to School Amendment Act of 2018 (DC's most recent discipline bill) and must include:

The faculty and staff of Hope Community PCS are dedicated to providing scholars with the skills necessary to reason, communicate, and live with dignity in a civil society. Central to this mission is the creation of a school community characterized by caring, discipline, order, and respect. It is the goal of a sound and fair discipline plan coupled with our Scholar Code of Conduct that supports our mission. If scholars are causing minor disciplinary problems in the classroom, the teacher should follow the school-wide consequence structure as listed below:

- ✚ **1st Infraction – Disrupting the Learning Environment**
  - Redirect scholar and remind them of the expected behavior.
- ✚ **2nd Infraction – Discrimination, and disrupting the learning environment**
  - 5-minute time out in designated area of the classroom.
- ✚ **3rd Infraction – Inappropriate disruption of class either physically or verbally**
  - Behavior Write Up in Educator’s Handbook and disciplinary measure appropriate for the offense as noted below.
- ✚ **4th Infraction – All of the above**
  - Call front office and the appropriate administrator/dean of scholars will be notified.

### PROCESS FOR SUSPENSIONS AND EXPULSIONS

Most misbehavior is handled with discussion or the use of age-appropriate consequences. However, severe misbehavior must be addressed for the social, emotional and academic well-being of our learning community. Such behavior is defined as belonging to at least one of the following categories:

- ✚ Physically dangerous behavior toward another person (scholars or staff)
- ✚ Threats to do bodily harm to another scholar or staff/Person
- ✚ Causing intentional emotional distress to another scholar

In cases of physically dangerous behavior such as fights, assault, and physical intimidation, staff will firmly instruct the scholar to stop. If the scholar does not respond, staff trained in Therapeutic Restraint will use professional judgment to determine whether to intervene, utilizing non-violent **crisis** intervention techniques. Staff will not be required to take action that could be physically dangerous; in

1

such cases, another scholar will be immediately sent for assistance. The Principal will notify parents and make all decisions regarding whether to contact the appropriate law enforcement authorities.

If a staff member is aware that a scholar has been or is involved in illegal activity, the staff member will refer the case to the Principal's office. The Principal will notify the scholar's parent or guardian and make all decisions regarding whether to contact the appropriate law enforcement authorities.

### **RE-ENTRY MEETING**

It is highly recommended that a re-entry meeting occurs the morning on which the student returns to Hope Community PCS from out of school suspension. The student, parent/guardian, and a school leader will participate in the meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to ensure that the student has reflected on the significance of a suspension, what the student has learned, and most importantly to set the stage for successful reintegration.

### **DUE PROCESS AND APPEAL PROCEDURES**

A parent/guardian may make a written request to the School Leader within one (1) school day of receiving the notification. The School Leader will then schedule the Appeal Hearing within three (3) days of the request. In general witnesses are not part of the hearing, parents/guardians and one additional adult, who may be a social worker, legal counsel, etc., may represent the student. If the suspension or expulsion is overturned, school records will reflect the decision. If the parent/guardian fails to appear for a scheduled appeal hearing, the right to appeal is waived and the original decision will stand.

If the suspension or expulsion is upheld, the parent/guardian may make a written request to the Hope Community PCS Board of Trustees, stating why the suspension/expulsion should be reversed or modified within two days of the School Leader's decision. In general witnesses are not part of the hearing, parents/guardians and one additional adult, who may be a social worker, legal counsel, etc., may represent the student. The hearing will be closed to the public and may include the presentation of evidence, testimony, and questioning of those present. The Hope Community PCS Board of Trustees will notify the parent/guardian within one school day of the decision. If the suspension or expulsion is overturned, school records will reflect the decision. If the Board of Trustees upholds the decision, the suspension or expulsion decision is final. If the parent/guardian fails to appear for a scheduled appeal hearing, the right to appeal is waived and the original decision will stand.

### **THE SCHOLAR CODE OF CONDUCT**

The faculty and staff of Hope Community PCS are dedicated to providing scholars with the skills necessary to reason, communicate, and live with dignity in a civil society. Central to this mission is the creation of a school community characterized by caring, discipline, order and respect. It is the goal of a sound and fair discipline plan to support this mission. One of the keys to an excellent learning environment is discipline, and the most effective discipline is self-discipline. Scholars must be in control of their work habits and behavior. In the wise words of Dr. Seuss, "You can steer yourself in any direction you choose." We are a community of learners. The scholars must work together to create an excellent school. Exercising self-control and respecting the rights of others can help make scholars good citizens of the school, the community and the world. We believe in our scholars and their ability to steer themselves towards success and we will be here to support them along the way.

## **PART 1: A GUIDE TO BEHAVIORAL AND DISCIPLINARY OPTIONS**

Hope Community PCS celebrates and rewards respectful, responsible and safe behavior in our school. We believe that when scholars are aware of what is expected of them, are given chances to excel academically and behaviorally and the consequences of misbehavior are made clear, that scholars will rise to meet our expectations. However, when a scholar fails to meet expected standards of behavior, the scholar will be held accountable for his or her behavior. This Scholar Code of Conduct enables a scholar to learn about expectations for good behavior and the intervention and disciplinary actions that may be taken following misbehavior. The examples of offenses listed in the Scholar Code of Conduct are not the only acts that may result in disciplinary action. Any act that disrupts learning and threatens the order and safety of scholars and the school environment will be considered for disciplinary action.

**WHEN THE CODE OF CONDUCT APPLIES** The Scholar Code of Conduct applies to all Hope Community Charter School scholars whenever the scholar's conduct is reasonably related to school or school activities. This includes:

- On school grounds before, during and after school hours
- At any other time when the school is being used by a school group
- Off school grounds at a school activity, function or event
- Traveling to or from the school, a school activity, or a school-related function
- When a scholar is in a capacity representing the school
- On a school-sponsored bus or public transportation traveling to and from school.

## **HOPE TOLSON LEVEL OF OFFENSE/STRATEGIES AND DISCIPLINARY MEASURES**

### **LEVEL 1 OFFENSES**

- Possession of cellular phones that are turned on;
- Possession of objects such as laser pointers (non- use);
- Failure to wear school uniform and/or abide by school's dress code;
- Misconduct: Level 1 (other Level 1 incidents not specifically listed such as running in the hall or throwing a pencil)

### **LEVEL 1 INTERVENTION STRATEGIES AND DISCIPLINARY MEASURES**

- ✓ Classroom and school-wide intervention strategies
- ✓ Confiscation of item and/or loss of privilege. Item returned within 72 hours to the parent during a conference.
- ✓ In-school suspension
- ✓ Parent conference with teacher and/or administrator

### **LEVEL 2 OFFENSES**

- Continuing to engage in Level 1 offenses
- Defiance of school personnel's authority, disrespect, insubordination, or refusing disciplinary action
- Misuse of locker
- Obscene material, behavior, language, gestures, pictures, writing, or propositions
- Profanity, provocative and/or abusive language directed at a scholar or staff member
- Possession/use of matches, lighters or fireworks.
- False accusations against a scholar
- Cheating/plagiarism or forgery

- False fire alarm
- Possession/ use of a tobacco product (scholar must be issued a citation and have parent conference)
- Possession/use of over-the counter medications (e.g. aspirin, cough medicine) without school permission (See medicine policy in Parent Handbook)
- Misconduct: Level 2 (other Level 2 incidents not specifically listed such as shoving a scholar in line- no injury, or throwing a football in the hall-no injury)

### **LEVEL 2 INTERVENTION STRATEGIES AND DISCIPLINARY MEASURES**

- ✓ Classroom and school-wide intervention strategies
- ✓ Confiscation of item and/or loss of privilege. Item returned within 72 hours to the parent during a conference.
- ✓ In-school suspension
  - ✓ 1-3 day suspension (session that focus on ending the scholar’s negative behavior may replace suspension)

### **LEVEL 3 OFFENSES**

- Continuing to engage in Level 2 offenses
- Leaving campus without permission
- Gambling
- Theft (< \$100)
- Trespassing or loitering
- Truancy
- Fighting (minor injury and non-gang related)
- Unauthorized or inappropriate use of the internet, computers, or computer software (see Computer Use Policy in Parent Handbook)
- Disruptive or unsafe behaviors (other Level 3 incidents not specifically listed, such as throwing a chair or a food fight)

### **LEVEL 3 INTERVENTION STRATEGIES AND DISCIPLINARY MEASURES**

- ✓ Confiscation of item and/or loss of privilege. Item returned within 72 hours to the parent during a conference.
- ✓ Parent and Scholar conference with Principal or Assistant Principal
- ✓ In-school suspension
- ✓ 1-5 day out-of-school suspension

### **LEVEL 4 OFFENSES**

- Continuing to engage in Level 3 offenses
- Hazing/initiation
- Theft (> \$100)
- Vandalism/ graffiti
- Possession of drug paraphernalia
- Under the influence of an unauthorized substance at school (no actual possession or use at school)
  - Mandatory referral to Alcohol and Drug Counseling
- Possession/use of alcohol

- Assault/battery against a scholar (minor injury and no weapon used)
- Threats against a scholar (non-serious)
- Profanity, proactive and/or abusive language directed at school personnel
- Bullying, intimidation and harassment, including bullying or harassment based on sex, race, religion, ethnicity, national origin, disability, or sexual orientation (includes indecent exposure)
- Distribution of over-the-counter medications
- Disruptive behavior with prior unsuccessful interventions
- Making a threat with a destructive device or a false report concerning any bomb, dynamite, or any other deadly explosive such as chemical weapons on school property or at a school sponsored event
- Elementary scholars engaging in activities implying gang affiliation

#### **LEVEL 4 INTERVENTION STRATEGIES AND DISCIPLINARY MEASURES**

- ✓ Generally, 5-10-day suspension with of administrator proceeding with expulsion process
- ✓ Mandatory parent and scholar conference with Principal NOTE: Administrator may contact local authorities, such as the police, in cases involving illegal activities and/or substances

#### **LEVEL 5 OFFENSES**

- Arson
- Possession/sale/distribution of illegal drugs or unauthorized prescription drugs
- Battery against school personnel
- Fighting (serious injury, weapon used, or gang related)
- Possession of dangerous weapons (including knives or weapon of like kind including false firearms)
- Sexual battery
- Serious threats against scholars and staff.
- Threats (serious and non-serious), assault (excluding battery) or false accusations against school personnel
- Middle School scholars engaging in activities implying gang affiliation/membership
- Other major incidents and behaviors which have high potential for causing serious injury and/or death

#### **LEVEL 5 INTERVENTION STRATEGIES AND DISCIPLINARY MEASURES**

- ✓ 10-day suspension and administrator will proceed with expulsion process NOTE: School Administrators may contact local authorities, such as the police, in cases involving illegal activities and/or substances.

#### **DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION SCHOLARS**

Scholars with disabilities have the same responsibilities and rights as other scholars and may be disciplined for the same behavioral offenses in accordance with federal and state regulations.

## **CHANGE OF PLACEMENT FOR DISCIPLINARY REMOVALS**

For purposes of removals of a child with a disability from the child's current educational placement, a manifestation meeting will be conducted. A change of placement occurs if:

- ✦ The removal is for more than ten cumulative school days; or
- ✦ The child is subjected to a series of removals that constitute a pattern because they cumulate to more than ten school days in a school year and because of factors such as the length of each removal, the total amount of time the child is removed, and the proximity of the removals to one another.

## **AUTHORITY OF SCHOOL PERSONNEL**

To the extent removal would be applied to children without disabilities, the removal of a child with a disability from the child's current placement may occur. However, this removal should not be more than five (5) consecutive school days for any violation of school rules. Additional removals should not exceed more than ten (10) consecutive school days in the same school year for separate incidents of misconduct.

## **LIMITS ON DAYS OF SUSPENSION**

The school can suspend a scholar for a maximum of five (5) consecutive days for scholars in grades K-5 and a maximum of ten (10) consecutive days for scholars in grades 6-8. There is no requirement for the school to provide the scholar with Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) during these ten days as long as nondisabled scholars do not receive educational services.

## **SUSPENSIONS THAT EXCEED TEN SCHOOL DAYS (CUMULATIVE)**

Before the eleventh day of suspension (and before each subsequent series of suspensions) the IEP Team must reconvene to determine if the behavior is a manifestation of the disability. Parents must be notified of the disciplinary action and be provided the procedural safeguards notice. Parents or guardians are a valuable part of any IEP-related process.

Either before or not later than ten business days after either first removing the child for more than ten school days in a school year or commencing a removal that constitutes a change in placement (including removals for drugs and weapons misconduct), the agency shall convene an IEP meeting to develop a functional assessment plan (if the school did not already conduct a functional behavioral assessment and had not implemented a behavioral intervention plan).

Beginning with the eleventh day of suspension and for subsequent removals, the scholar must continue to receive FAPE as determined by the IEP team.

## **MANIFESTATION DETERMINATION REVIEW**

First, the IEP team must consider, in terms of the behavior subject to disciplinary action, relevant Information, including:

- ✦ If a student with an IEP (or a student who is in the evaluation process) faces suspension beyond 10 days in a school year, manifestation determination review meeting will take place.
- ✦ Evaluation and diagnostic results, including the results or other relevant information supplied by the parents of the child;
- ✦ Observations of the child; and the child's IEP and placement.

Then determine that:

- ✚ The IEP and placement were appropriate;
- ✚ The special education services, supplementary aids, and services were provided;
- ✚ Behavior intervention strategies were provided consistent with the child's IEP and placement;
- ✚ The child's disability did not impair the ability of the child to understand the impact and consequences of the behavior subject to disciplinary action; and
- ✚ The child's disability did not impair the ability of the child to control the behavior subject to disciplinary action.

### ***RESULT: NO MANIFESTATION***

If the result of the review is a determination that the behavior of the child with a disability was not a manifestation of the child's disability, the relevant disciplinary procedures applicable to children without disabilities may be applied to the child in the same manner in which they would be applied to children without disabilities; the child will continue to receive FAPE. If the child's parent disagrees with a determination that the child's behavior was not a manifestation of the child's disability or with any decision regarding placement, the parent may request a hearing.

### ***IS A MANIFESTATION, THEN:***

The child's placement cannot be changed except through an IEP. The scholar can be placed in an Interim Alternative Setting if weapons/ illegal drugs are involved or by order of a Hearing Officer if the scholar is "dangerous."

### **Hope Community PCS will follow the amended DC law, which prohibits suspensions and expulsion of Pre-K students:**

**Attendance Policy** must align with state law (i.e., truancy mandatory reporting to CFSA, Court Social Services, School Attendance Clarification Amendment Act of 2016) and must include:

School attendance is required for all scholars who reach five years of age on or before September 30 of the current school year. Scholars must attend school until their 18th birthday. Scholars who reside in the District of Columbia must be enrolled in a public, independent, private, parochial or home school each year during the period that schools are in session. Scholars should miss no more than nine days of school each year to stay engaged, successful, and on track. Students can become chronically absent **even if they only miss a day or two every few weeks.**

### ***WHEN IS SCHOOL ATTENDANCE NOT REQUIRED?***

School attendance is not required during regularly scheduled holiday events and staff professional development according to the schools' calendar.

### ***WHAT ARE EXCUSED ABSENCES?***

- ✚ Death in the scholar's immediate family
- ✚ Illness of the scholar (A doctor's certificate is required for a scholar absent more than three (3) days.)
- ✚ Observance of a religious holiday
- ✚ Medical reasons such as a doctor's appointment
- ✚ Lawful suspension or exclusion from school by school authorities
- ✚ Failure of DC to provide transportation in cases where there is a legal responsibility for transportation of the student.

### ***HOW LONG DOES A PARENT HAVE TO PROVIDE THE SCHOOL WITH A VALID EXCUSE?***

Valid excuses for absences must be provided within **five** school days. Schools are **required** to mark all absences as unexcused unless a valid excuse is provided by the parent/guardian within **five (5)** school days of the student returning.

### ***WHAT ARE UNEXCUSED ABSENCES?***

When school-aged scholars are absent from school with or without parental approval for reasons such as:

- ✚ Babysitting
- ✚ Shopping
- ✚ Running errands
- ✚ Oversleeping
- ✚ Cutting classes
- ✚ Vacations
- ✚ Job Hunting

### ***WHAT ARE POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES OF POOR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE?***

Missing school may result in:

- ✚ Poor work habits
- ✚ Retention/Inability to promote to next grade level
- ✚ Lower grades/loss of credit
- ✚ Frustration in learning
- ✚ Dropping out of school
- ✚ Lower self-esteem
- ✚ Lack of self-discipline
- ✚ Unsupervised activities
- ✚ Delinquency
- ✚ Reduced learning potential
- ✚ Contacting the Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA)



## **TARDIES (LATE ARRIVALS)**

Hope Community PCS starts promptly at 8:00 a.m. Any scholar arriving after 8:05 a.m. must have acceptable documentation to have a tardy excused. **Parents of scholars entering the building with scholars at or after 9:30am must have a valid excuse or a doctor's note.** *Before reporting to class, all tardy scholars must obtain a tardy slip from the receptionist at the front desk.* Tardy scholars must be escorted to the main office by a parent/guardian. They may not be dropped off or unescorted.

Scholars who have excessive tardies that lead up to or exceed a total of 8 unexcused tardies, may be subject to a loss in participation in extracurricular activities and/or school events. Scholars whose tardies are deemed excessive, as determined by the administration of Hope Community PCS may also be subject to referral to Child and Family Services due to Educational Neglect (see section on Educational Neglect for more information). We recognize that scholars transported to school by their parents are not personally responsible for getting to school on time. Due to that, we hold parents/guardians responsible for their child's tardiness.

## **EXCESSIVE TARDIES**

- ✚ We will consider any child who enters school after 8:35 a.m. excessively tardy. They will require documentation for their tardiness. After five such occurrences, the parent will be required to attend a mandatory conference and the child will not be permitted to class until this conference has occurred.
- ✚ We will also consider any child excessively tardy if they report to school tardy more than three (3) times in any given month or three (3) consecutive times. A mandatory conference will be required if a child falls into this category.

## **ATTENDANCE CONFERENCE REQUESTS**

All mandatory conference requests should be complied with in a 2-day time frame. If families fail to respond or comply with these conference requests, then serious infractions may occur.

## **TRUANCY**

Children who miss school, weather excused or unexcused, quickly fall behind. Chronic absenteeism can drastically affect a child's academic success. Truancy means being absent from school without a permission or a valid reason (unexcused absences).

All uniformed police officers in the District of Columbia are responsible for truancy enforcement. MPD is required to deliver children suspected of being truant to the school in which they are enrolled. The school is required to receive the student from the MPD officer.

## **IF A TRUANT SCHOLAR IS PICKED UP BY THE POLICE:**

- ✚ Parents will be provided with consultation and follow-up support.
- ✚ Parents and scholars will attend a truancy conference at the school.
- ✚ The truant scholar will be placed on an attendance action plan.
- ✚ The truant scholar will face a reprimand according to the Scholar Code of Conduct.
- ✚ If a chronic pattern of truant behavior continues, Child and Family Services will be contacted.

Anyone can report a suspected truant scholar, including: relatives, neighbors, friends, parents, scholars, concerned citizens, business representatives, and community representatives. Missing school may result in poor work habits, lower grades, frustration in learning, dropping out of school, lower self-esteem, lack of self-discipline, unsupervised activities, delinquency, and/or potential criminal activity. Truancy reporting is important because keeping scholars in schools helps to keep them safe. Citizens may report a truant scholar by calling the Attendance Intervention Center at (202) 576-6985.

It is imperative that the staff at Hope PCS becomes aware of DC's truancy law to prevent continuous absences amongst scholars. We believe that preventing truancy is a shared responsibility between the state education agency, local school districts, parents, scholars and community members. It is the LEAs responsibility to notify OSSE within two business days of a scholar's 10th unexcused absence. Below are a few reminders concerning scholar attendance with the D.C. Truancy and Accountability Act.

1. The absence of a minor without a valid excuse shall be unlawful. An absence of a minor enrolled at Hope Community PCS shall be deemed unexcused unless the minor's parent/guardian provides the school with a valid excuse for the minor's absence within five school days upon the minor's return.
2. Hope Community PCS shall refer a minor student ages 5 through 13 years of age to the Child and Family Services Agency no later than 2 business days after the accrual of 10 unexcused full day absences within a school year.
3. Scholars may only be marked "present" if they attend for 80% of the day;
4. Scholar support team meetings must be held after a scholar reaches five unexcused absences.

### **WHAT CAN PARENTS DO?**

1. Let your child know that you think that school is important.
2. Set a regular bedtime schedule; age should not be a factor.
3. Provide your child with plenty of time to get ready for school.
4. Provide an alternate plan of transportation for getting your child to school on time.
5. Schedule medical, dental, and other appointments before and after school hours when possible.
6. Plan scheduled appointments around the school day; allow him or her to miss only that time necessary for the appointment.
7. View tardiness as unacceptable behavior.
8. Refuse to write an excuse for anything other than a legitimate absence.
9. Make sure your child arrives at school on time each day.

### **ADMISSION PREFERENCE POLICY**

Hope Community PCS gives enrollment preference to siblings of current students. In the case of a conversion of a school, priority should be given to the students enrolled at the school at the time of the conversion, siblings of those students, and students who reside within the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) attendance boundaries in which the school is located.

Our LEA provides an admission preference to a student who is currently enrolled at another campus within the LEA. We also provide admission preference to the sibling of a transferring student from another campus within the same LEA so long as both siblings will be enrolled at the same school facility at the same time. Because we participate in My School DC, all transfers, including those that happen after the lottery and throughout the year, must be facilitated through My School DC. If a campus does not have any open seats to receive a transferring student, the student will be placed on the waitlist in accordance with the LEA's order of preferences and My School DC policy.

Hope Community PCS does not offer staff or founder preference.

## **ATTENDANCE ACTION PLAN**

Parents shall receive frequent communications on the importance of regular attendance at school. In addition, Hope Community PCS will develop school-wide programs and activities to promote and reward both regular and outstanding school attendance and improved attendance. Examples of such programs and activities include certificates of recognition for scholars who achieve perfect attendance or 95% attendance; a school awards ceremony to celebrate a school-wide attendance goal of 95%.

## **UNEXCUSED ABSENCE PROCEDURES**

1. If a scholar is absent without an excuse, Hope Community PCS must use school-based procedures as well as appropriate interventions to encourage regular school attendance. The following attendance procedures shall be used:

- ✚ **First Two Consecutive Unexcused Absences** – The teacher will contact the parent/guardian by telephone or email.
- ✚ **Third Unexcused Absence** – The teacher will contact the parent/guardian by telephone or email, and the scholar will be referred.
- ✚ **Fourth Unexcused Absence** – Site Attendance Specialist will contact the parent to request a conference.

2. After the scholar's **fifth consecutive unexcused absence**, the school Social Worker and personnel from the administrative team will refer scholar to Show Up Stand Out and make a home visit.

3. Scholars who are habitually absent will be referred to the Scholar Support Team. The SST will help to identify the cause(s) of the unexcused absences in order to bring the parent/guardian in compliance with attendance laws. The SST must design a Parent/Scholar Attendance Contract to address the cause(s) of the unexcused absences and identify interventions that eliminate the underlying problem and enable the scholar to attend school on a regular basis. The SST team will review all consecutive and non-consecutive absences after 5 occurrences within one marking period.

4. After the scholar's **tenth consecutive unexcused absence**, *Child and Family Services* will be contacted.

## **Interventions**

It is expected that meetings with parents/guardians and scholars will focus on the reasons for the scholar's unexcused absences and ways the school can intervene to support regular attendance.

Interventions can include the following:

- a. A school-based individual intervention modification program
- b. Purchasing school uniforms
- c. Assigning a mentor to the scholar
- d. Providing the scholar with a tutor
- e. Parent Counseling
- f. Parenting classes
- g. Referring the family to Catholic Charities (Show Up Stand Out)
- h. Referring the family to Child and Family Services

## **Grievance Procedures**

It is the policy of Hope Community PCS that all employees, parents, students, and visitors have the right to voice their complaints, grievances or concerns about matters pertaining to its operations. The Company recognizes the significant value and importance of full discussion in resolving

misunderstandings and in preserving good relations among management, employees, parents, students, and visitors.

The Company's Grievance Policy and Procedure (found in the Appendix) describes the process for submitting complaints, for investigating them, and for arriving at resolution. A Notice of Grievance Procedures for Employees shall be posted at each worksite. Also, a Notice of Procedural Safeguards and Grievance Procedures for Parents and Students shall be posted at each school.

Individuals who have questions or concerns about the Grievance Policy should contact their worksite management or the Phalen Leadership Academies Legal Department.

Rebecca Doherty, Board Chair, [hopepcsd.board@gmail.com](mailto:hopepcsd.board@gmail.com), is the contact person for Hope Community Public Charter School – Tolson.

It is the policy of Hope Community PCS that all employees have the right to voice their complaints.

Hope recognizes the meaningful value and importance of full discussion in resolving misunderstandings and in preserving good relations between management and employees. Accordingly, the following grievance procedure should be employed to ensure that complaints receive full consideration.

### **What May Be Grieved**

Hope Community PCS grievance process should be used as follows: (1) to deal with complaints and concerns pertaining to educational environment, employment arrangements, or interpersonal conflicts; and (2) to resolve complaints of discrimination and harassment based upon race, color, religion, creed, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status or sexual orientation, or otherwise.

### **Who May Grieve**

The procedures set forth below may be used by the grievant who are students, teachers, other employees, parents, or visitors.

### **Other Remedies**

The existence of this procedure does not bar the grievant from also filing claims in other forums to the extent permitted by state or federal law.

### **Informal Grievance**

Because most difficulties can be resolved by communicating a concern to someone, the grievant are encouraged to discuss their concern or harassment complaint promptly and candidly with the school Principal or with the Hope Community's Regional Director.

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.

### **Formal Grievance**

Within ninety (90) days of learning of the harassment, discrimination, or complaint that is the subject of the grievance, a grievant shall file a written notice with the school principal or with the Regional Director. The Grievant may use the Grievance Form, is also available online from the school website, or the Hope Community's intranet (for employees only) or from the school principal or the Regional Director. 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 a

grievance is being filed by the legal guardian or parent of a student, the student and the legal guardian and/or parent shall sign and date the grievance. The principal and the Regional Director can be reached at the contact information provided below.

The Principal or Regional Director 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 individuals. Each investigation will 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, with its investigation, or with the decision making process. This provision does not include discussions with governmental authorities.

Within thirty (30) business days of receiving the written notice, the Principal or Regional Director shall respond in writing to the grievant (the "Response"). The Response shall summarize the course of the investigation, determine the validity of the grievance 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 Phalen Leadership Academies Legal Department (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: Phalen Leadership Academies Legal Department, 1005 N. Glebe Road, Arlington, Virginia 22201. Within fifteen (15) days from receiving the written appeal, the Legal Department (or designee) will respond in writing to the appellant as to the action to be taken and the reasons therefor.

### **Prohibition Against Retaliation**

Hope Community PCS pledges that it will not retaliate against any person who files a complaint in accordance with this policy, or any person who participates in proceedings related to this policy. In addition, Hope Community PCS 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**

Hope Community PCS may approve modification of the foregoing procedures in a particular case if the modification (a) is for good cause, and (b) does not violate due process rights or policies of Phalen Leadership Academies.

### **Non-Discrimination Policy**

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, scholars, parents, employees, sources of referral of applicants for admission and employment, and all unions or professional organizations holding collective bargaining or professional agreements with Hope Community PCS are hereby notified that Hope Community PCS does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability in admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its programs and activities. Scholars, parents and/or guardians having inquiries concerning Hope Community Public Charter School's compliance with Section 504, ADA, Title VI, Title IX, and/or the Age Act as they apply to **scholars** or who wish to file a complaint regarding such compliance should contact Alexis Giles ([agiles@phalenacademies.org](mailto:agiles@phalenacademies.org)) who has been designated by Hope Community PCS to coordinate its efforts to comply with the regulations implementing Section 504, ADA, Title VI, Title IX, and the Age Act as they relate to scholars. For inquiries or to file a complaint regarding Hope Community PCS's compliance with ADA, Section 504, Title VI, Title IX, and/or the Age Act as they relate to **employees or third parties**, contact Alexis Giles ([agiles@phalenacademies.org](mailto:agiles@phalenacademies.org).)

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

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and scholars who are 18 years of age or older ("eligible scholars") certain rights with respect to the scholar's education records. These rights are:

1. The right to inspect and review the scholar's education records within 45 days after the day Hope Community PCS receives a request for access.
2. Parents or eligible scholars should submit to the school principal [or appropriate school official] 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 scholar of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
3. The right to request the amendment of the scholar's education records that the parent or eligible scholar believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the scholar's privacy rights under FERPA.
4. Parents or eligible scholars who wish to ask the school to amend a record should write the school 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 scholar, the school will notify the parent or eligible scholar 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 scholar when notified of the right to a hearing.
5. The right to provide written consent before the school discloses personally identifiable information (PII) from the scholar's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.
6. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the school as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel) or a person serving on the school board. A school official also may include a volunteer or contractor outside of the school who performs an institutional service of function for which the school would otherwise use its own employees and who is under the direct control of the school with respect to the use and maintenance of PII from education records, such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist; a parent or scholar volunteering to serve on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee; or a parent, scholar, or other volunteer 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.

7. Upon request, the school discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a scholar seeks or intends to enroll, or is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes of the scholar's enrollment or transfer. [NOTE: FERPA requires a school district to make a reasonable attempt to notify the parent or scholar of the records request unless it states in its annual notification that it intends to forward records on request.]
8. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the [School] to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

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

9. See the list below of the disclosures that elementary and secondary schools may make without consent.
10. FERPA permits the disclosure of PII from scholars' education records, without consent of the parent or eligible scholar, if the disclosure meets certain conditions found in §99.31 of the FERPA regulations. Except for disclosures to school officials, disclosures related to some judicial orders or lawfully issued subpoenas, disclosures of directory information, and disclosures to the parent or eligible scholar, §99.32 of the FERPA regulations requires the school to record the disclosure. Parents and eligible scholars have a right to inspect and review the record of disclosures. A school may disclose PII from the education records of a scholar without obtaining prior written consent of the parents or the eligible scholar –
11. To other school officials, including teachers, within the educational agency or institution whom the school has determined to have legitimate educational interests. This includes contractors, consultants, volunteers, or other parties to whom the school has outsourced institutional services or functions, provided that the conditions listed in §99.31(a)(1)(i)(B)(1) - (a)(1)(i)(B)(2) are met. (§99.31(a)(1))
12. To officials of another school, school system, or institution of postsecondary education where the scholar seeks or intends to enroll, or where the scholar is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes related to the scholar's enrollment or transfer, subject to the requirements of §99.34. (§99.31(a)(2))
13. To authorized representatives of the U. S. Comptroller General, the U. S. Attorney General, the U.S. Secretary of Education, or State and local educational authorities, such as the State educational agency in the parent or eligible scholar's State (SEA). Disclosures under this provision may be made, subject to the requirements of §99.35, in connection with an audit or evaluation of Federal- or State-supported education programs, or for the enforcement of or compliance with Federal legal requirements that relate to those programs. These entities may make further disclosures of PII to outside entities that are designated by them as their authorized representatives to conduct any audit, evaluation, or enforcement or compliance activity on their behalf. (§§99.31(a)(3) and 99.35)
14. In connection with financial aid for which the scholar has applied or which the scholar has received, if the information is necessary to determine eligibility for the aid, determine the amount of the aid, determine the conditions of the aid, or enforce the terms and conditions of the aid. (§99.31(a)(4))
15. To State and local officials or authorities to whom information is specifically allowed to be reported or disclosed by a State statute that concerns the juvenile justice system and the system's ability to effectively serve, prior to adjudication, the scholar whose records were released, subject to §99.38. (§99.31(a)(5))

16. To organizations conducting studies for, or on behalf of, the school, in order to: (a) develop, validate, or administer predictive tests; (b) administer scholar aid programs; or (c) improve instruction. (§99.31(a)(6))
17. To accrediting organizations to carry out their accrediting functions. (§99.31(a)(7))
18. To parents of an eligible scholar if the scholar is a dependent for IRS tax purposes. (§99.31(a)(8))
19. To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena. (§99.31(a)(9))
20. To appropriate officials in connection with a health or safety emergency, subject to §99.36. (§99.31(a)(10))
21. Information the school has designated as “directory information” under §99.37. (§99.31(a)(11))
22. The Federal *No Child Left Behind* Act of 2001 requires school districts that receive federal Title I funding to notify parents of their right to know the professional qualifications of the classroom teachers and paraprofessionals who instruct their child.
23. As a recipient of these funds, Hope Community Public Charter School will provide you with this information in a timely manner upon request. Specifically, you have the right to request the following information about each of your child's classroom teachers and/or paraprofessionals:
24. Whether the teacher has met State qualification and licensing criteria (charter school teachers are exempt from state licensure requirements) for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction.
25. Whether the teacher is teaching under an emergency license.
26. The teacher's college major, whether the teacher has any advanced degrees, and the field of discipline of the certification or degree.
27. Whether paraprofessionals provide services to your child and, if so, their qualifications.
28. Hope Community Public Charter School is committed to providing quality instruction for all scholars and does so by employing the most qualified individuals to teach and support each scholar in the classroom. If you would like to receive any of the information listed above for your child's teacher, Tolson's families should contact 202-832-7370.
29. Establishing an open door policy with every family in each class by communicating with parents our approach to teaching, scholar expectations, and grading system.
30. Allowing parents to have the appropriate opportunity to voice any concerns they may have.
31. Ensuring that all scholars have access to the proper resources necessary and receive help as soon as it is needed.
32. Sending home weekly reading and math materials that relate to the topics being discussed in the classroom.
33. Attending workshops to learn new strategies in order to successfully teach all children.
34. Assigning work that will prove to be relevant and interesting to the topics being learned.
35. Coordinating events within my classroom and school that will allow parents to volunteer and aide in the success of his/her child.
36. Ensuring that scholars completely understand all assignments and learning expectations.  
Grading all assignments promptly and inform scholars of their success or ability to improve.
37. Providing a nurturing and safe learning environment for all scholars at all times.



## Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

### Directory Information

**[Note: Per 34 C.F.R. § 99.37(d), a school or school district may adopt a limited directory information policy. If a school or school district does so, the directory information notice to parents and eligible students must specify the parties who may receive directory information and/or the purposes for which directory information may be disclosed.]**

The *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act* (FERPA), a Federal law, requires that Hope Community Public Charter School, with certain exceptions, obtain your written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from your child's education records. However, Hope Community Public Charter School may disclose appropriately designated "directory information" without written consent, unless you have advised the **Hope Community Public Charter School** to the contrary in accordance with Hope Community Public Charter School procedures. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow the Hope Community Public Charter School to include information from your child's education records in certain school publications. Examples include:

- A playbill, showing your student's role in a drama production;
- The annual yearbook;
- Honor roll or other recognition lists;
- Graduation programs; and
- Sports activity sheets, such as for wrestling, showing weight and height of team members.

Directory information, which is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released, can also be disclosed to outside organizations without a parent's prior written consent. Outside organizations include, but are not limited to, companies that manufacture class rings or publish yearbooks. In addition, two federal laws require local educational agencies (LEAs) receiving assistance under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (ESEA) to provide military recruiters, upon request, with the following information – names, addresses and telephone listings – unless parents have advised the LEA that they do not want their student's information disclosed without their prior written consent. **[Note: These laws are Section 9528 of the ESEA (20 U.S.C. § 7908) and 10 U.S.C. § 503(c).]**