

# Lower School Family Handbook

2019-20

asc<sup>e</sup>nd  
PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS

Dear Families:

On behalf of the founders, board of trustees, faculty, and staff of Ascend Charter Schools ("Ascend Public Charter Schools" or "APCS"), I extend a warm welcome! We recognize that you had a choice in where to enroll your student – one of the most important decisions you will make as a parent or guardian – and we are honored that you have selected Ascend Public Charter Schools. Your choice represents your faith in us, and we are firmly committed to maintaining your trust.

We look forward to working with you to fulfill our vision of educational excellence for every student, understanding that your support is crucial to our success. Research has revealed a clear link between family involvement and students' academic performance, and we seek to leverage that power to realize each child's full potential.

As a first step to building a strong community of students, we have prepared this Family Handbook, which details our expectations, policies, and procedures. Herein you will find important information about school rules and routines, our discipline and behavior management policies, and our academic cycles.



Holding all families and Ascend accountable to the high expectations outlined in this Handbook is essential to creating a safe and orderly learning environment, conducive to the highest academic standards. We ask you to read the Family Handbook carefully and contact us with any questions you might have about our expectations for families, students, and Ascend Public Charter Schools staff.

Again, thank you for choosing Ascend Public Charter Schools. We have an exciting and productive year ahead of us!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "B. Sorlie".

Brandon Sorlie  
Chief Schools Officer

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## Our mission

The mission of Ascend Public Charter Schools is to equip every student with the knowledge, confidence, and character to succeed in college and beyond. By offering a rich liberal arts education in a supportive environment, we animate children's natural sense of curiosity and prepare students to think on their own, thrive on their own, and engage the world as informed, responsible citizens.

## About Ascend Public Charter Schools

Ascend Public Charter Schools strive to develop a scalable solution to the underachievement of economically disadvantaged children – a system of urban, college-preparatory charter schools that use widely available resources to post achievement levels equal or superior to those of suburban students from middle-class families.

## The learning contract

Ascend Public Charter Schools' Learning Contract details some of the most important responsibilities of being a member of the Ascend community. For students, the contract provides an overview of what it means to be an Ascend student. For families, the contract outlines some of the specific expectations the school has for you to support students' growth. The contract also details each teacher's commitment to work tirelessly to provide students with a safe and orderly learning environment in which they can achieve academic success.

### Parent/guardian commitment

1. Attendance. I will make sure my student is at school every day.
2. Punctuality. I accept responsibility for getting my child to school no later than 8:00 a.m. every day. I will make sure that if my student takes the bus that he or she is at the bus stop on time.
3. Dismissal. If my child is picked up from school, I will ensure that a responsible designated adult is there to pick him or her up promptly at dismissal. If my child needs to stay afterschool for tutoring or detention or to go to school on a Saturday, it will be my responsibility to arrange transportation for my child to and from school.
4. Preparation. I will help my child demonstrate readiness to learn and respect for him or herself and the school community by sending my child to school in an Ascend uniform that is clean, complete, and in proper repair. If my child arrives at school without parts of his or her uniform, I understand that I will be expected to bring my child's uniform to school. I will make sure my child is properly rested for school by seeking to ensure nine full hours of sleep for my child every night.
5. Homework and quiet space. I understand that my child will have homework every night. I will check that my child has completed his or her homework to the best of his or her ability. I will provide a quiet, dedicated space for my child to study every night, with no television, video games, or distractions.
6. Daily reading. Every night, including weekends, I will insist that my child reads, or I will read to him

or her, for at least 30 minutes.

7. Communication. I will return phone calls from the school as soon as possible. I will provide the school with a working phone number and email address and will inform the school immediately if my phone number, email address, or mailing address has changed. If I am asked to attend a meeting at the school regarding my child, I will be there. I will read all notices sent to me from the school and act on them promptly. I will make myself available to my child and to his or her teachers and school leaders.
8. Parent meetings. I will attend all parent meetings at the school or, in the event of a scheduling conflict, notify the school and make arrangements to acquire the information through alternate means.
9. The school's values and rules. I understand the school's values and will ensure my child upholds them. I know that my child must follow the rules to protect the safety, interests, and rights of all members of the school community. I will always support the school in its efforts to enforce high standards for behavior, citizenship, and academic learning. I know that my child will lose privileges or face disciplinary consequences, including suspension or expulsion, if he or she violates the school's rules or fails to uphold its values.
10. Respect and support. I will appreciate, respect, and support all students and faculty at Ascend Public Charter Schools. I will be a model for my child by respecting and supporting each individual in the school community at all times.
11. Best effort. I will do whatever it takes for my child to learn, and I will help him or her, in the best way I know, to succeed in school. I will not make excuses for my child's academic work or behavior.
12. Responsibility. I will share responsibility for the success of my child with the school.

#### Teacher's commitment

13. Attendance and punctuality. I will come to school every day on time. Every minute of instruction is precious.
14. Mission. I subscribe to the mission of the school and will work tirelessly to realize it. I am committed to preparing every student for admission to and success at a selective college or university.
15. Best effort. I will always offer my students the best I have as a teacher and will do whatever it takes for them to learn. I will not make excuses for myself, my students, or my colleagues.
16. Preparation. I will always submit lesson plans and other documents on time and will be fully prepared every day for my students and colleagues.
17. Respect and support. I will appreciate, respect, and support every student. I will be a model for my students by respecting and supporting each individual in the school community at all times.
18. Communication. I will communicate regularly with parents or guardians about their children's

progress and make myself available to my students and their parents or guardians in person, by email, and by telephone.

19. The school's values and rules. I will uphold the school's values and will enforce its rules consistently and fairly.
20. I will always protect the safety, interests, and rights of all students and members of the staff.
21. Responsibility. I will work toward the success of all my students.

### Student's commitment

22. Attendance and punctuality. I will come to school on time every day. If I must be tardy or absent, I will make- up all missed assignments. I will attend summer school, if provided and if requested by my teacher.
23. Best effort. My education is important to me. Learning is my job. I will always work, think, and behave in the best way I know. I will do whatever it takes to achieve. I will be the best "me" I can be at all times and will not make excuses for myself or my classmates.
24. Homework. I will finish all of my homework and reading every night to the best of my ability. I will not make excuses for failing to do so. I will not watch television or play video games until all of my homework is completed each night.
25. Uniform. I will wear my school uniform every day and make sure it is clean, complete, and in good repair.
26. Communication. I will participate in class discussions and communicate with my teachers, classmates, and school leaders clearly and appropriately, being sure to make eye contact. I will listen carefully and follow all directions the first time they are given. I will raise my hand to ask for help when I do not understand something or seek the help of my peers as appropriate.
27. The school's values and rules. I will follow the school's rules and respect the school's values. I will protect the safety, interests, and rights of all of my classmates. If I fail to honor these commitments, including if I break the school's rules, I understand that I will lose privileges at the school and face disciplinary consequences.
28. Respect and support. I will respect every student and adult in the school community by treating them the way I want to be treated.
29. Responsibility. I alone am responsible for my own behavior. If I make a mistake, I will take responsibility for my actions and tell the truth. I am responsible for my success.

# The Ascend Public Charter Schools education

## A path to college

At Ascend Public Charter Schools, your student is on a path to a selective-admission college from the moment he or she first walks into the building, for we recognize college as a critical milestone to successful adulthood. While success may be achieved via other pathways, for most, college is a necessary precursor to a rewarding career and active citizenship. A college degree provides the firm foundation needed to thrive in today's dynamic and global marketplace.

College is not the exclusive province of the privileged. No special gifts or unusual ability are required, only diligence and self-discipline. Getting to college is hard work, and gaining admission at a selective institution will require your child's full commitment, your constant support, and the expertise and guidance of his or her teachers. Our program is designed specifically to prepare children for college, and we expect every student to achieve this goal.

## Communication

Frequent and open communication between the home and school helps bind the student, parents/guardians, teachers, and school leaders into an effective and strongly united team.

Family conferences with teachers are scheduled in the winter and spring. Parents and/or guardians are expected to attend all family conferences. Additional conferences may be held as needed at the request of the parent or guardian or the school.

Report cards are distributed two times a year at the end of each term, and progress reports are distributed two times a year in the middle of each term. The report card includes the student's numerical grades for each subject, attendance records, and teacher comments. In addition, it includes a summative comment regarding the student's attitude, progress, and behavior.

## School visits

At Ascend, our hope is that family members feel welcome and at ease in the school building and we encourage families to participate actively in the life of the school. To that end, we gladly open our doors to visits by parents and guardians.

As we strive for openness and partnership with families, we must balance these priorities with our need to aggressively protect instructional time, making every effort to ensure that teachers and students benefit from a learning environment that is free from distraction or interruption. So, while we welcome visits to the school at any time, we require advance scheduling if family members wish to visit a classroom while instruction is occurring, which can be done by contacting the school director or lower school dean. Prior to the classroom visit, a member of the school's leadership team will review a classroom observation protocol with the parent or guardian.

## School hours for academic year

Instruction begins promptly at 8:00 a.m., Monday through Friday. Please refer to the table below for specific site-based arrival and dismissal times.

	Monday-Thursday		Friday	
	Arrival time	Dismissal time	Arrival time	Dismissal time
Brooklyn Ascend Lower School	7:30 AM	4:00 PM	7:30 AM	1:00 PM
Brownsville Ascend Lower School	7:30 AM	4:00 PM	7:30 AM	1:00 PM
Bushwick Ascend Lower School	7:30 AM	4:10 PM	7:30 AM	1:10 PM
Canarsie Ascend Lower School	7:30 AM	4:00 PM	7:30 AM	1:00 PM
Central Brooklyn Ascend Lower School	7:30 AM	4:10 PM	7:30 AM	1:10 PM
Cypress Hills Ascend Lower School	7:30 AM	4:00 PM	7:30 AM	1:00 PM
East Brooklyn Ascend Lower School	7:30 AM	4:00 PM	7:30 AM	1:00 PM
East Flatbush Ascend Lower School	7:30 AM	4:00 PM	7:30 AM	1:00 PM
Lefferts Gardens Ascend Lower School	7:30 AM	4:00 PM	7:30 AM	1:00 PM

## Arrival

The school day begins with a brief morning meeting, during which homeroom teachers communicate vital information about the day ahead. It is critically important that all students are in their seats and ready to learn no later than the arrival time listed above as tardiness not only impacts their own preparedness but disrupts the classroom as well.

Students eating breakfast at school may arrive as early as 7:30 a.m., but no later than 7:50 a.m. The school doors are locked and staff members are not available before 7:30 a.m. Dropping off your child before that time is strictly prohibited.

## Dismissal

The following dismissal procedures have been designed to transition students safely and efficiently. Students are not allowed to talk during the dismissal period.

Monday through Friday, students who are not enrolled in the afterschool tutoring or enrichment program will be dismissed at dismissal time.

### Picking-up students at dismissal

For the safety of your child, the school releases students only to those people identified on the students' designated pick-up list as authorized for pick-up or to those otherwise authorized in writing by the parent/guardian prior to pick-up time. There are no exceptions to this rule.

If you would like to add to the list of individuals approved to pick-up your child, please complete the Authorized Pick-up Form, sign it and return it to the main office. Please note that students are not permitted to depart campus with an individual who does not meet the minimum age requirement of 13. Individuals may be required to show identification or proof of age.

### Students walking home alone

Students in grades kindergarten through fourth grade are not allowed to walk home alone. If a student has an older sibling that attends an upper school, parents are still asked to submit a note granting permission for lower school students to be released to the sibling.

### Late pick-ups

At the conclusion of each school day, 15 minutes after dismissal time, the teacher records the names of students who have not been picked up in the Late Pick-up Log. These students are escorted to the late pick-up holding area. Parents are required to sign the Late Pick-up Log in recognition of their tardiness.

Late pick-ups are unacceptable. Three late pick-ups will require a conference with the parent/guardian to address the issue.

## Early pick-ups

Early pick-ups are disruptive to the learning environment and are therefore strongly discouraged. To ensure necessary order at the end of the school day, early pick-ups are not permitted during times specified by the school.

## Attendance and consequences for absences and tardiness

To remain firmly on the path to college, your student must maximize his or her opportunities to learn. Our academic program pushes students to master new material each day. Missing one day of school puts a student behind his or her peers. Families must work with the school to ensure that students attend school every day and arrive on time, except in the most extraordinary circumstances. Truancy (missing school without providing a proper excuse) or chronic absenteeism jeopardize your child's progress.

### Expectations

- All families and students agree to strive for an attendance rate of 100 percent and to never be late.
- Parents and guardians will contact the school as early as possible but no later than 8:30 a.m., if their student will be late or absent.
- Absent students will return to school with documentation, which includes:
  - The date of the absence
  - The reason for the absence
  - A phone number where a parent or guardian can be reached
  - The parent's or guardian's name, relationship to the student, and signature

### Reasons for being absent

The following are the five valid reasons for missing school. Please note that these absences are not "excused," and will show up on a student's attendance record.

- Death in the family (parents, guardians, grandparents, siblings).
- Illness or injury. For a medically-related absence longer than 2 days, the parents or guardians should provide a doctor's note within 24 hours of diagnosis.
- Medical appointments. Parents should schedule medical appointments outside of school time. The best times are on Friday (half-day dismissal), vacation days, and weekends. If an appointment must be scheduled during the school day, the student should not be absent for the entire day. It is expected that the student will come to school before and/or after the appointment.
- Religious observance.
- Educational opportunities with prior approval from the school director.

Please note that no student should ever be absent for the following reasons:

- Family vacations.
- Transportation delays or failures to make connections.

- Instances where parents or guardians share custody and the student is in the custody of the parent not normally responsible for ensuring the student attends school. It is the responsibility of parents and or guardians to ensure the student is in attendance each school day regardless of custody arrangements.

Students serving an out-of-school suspension will be marked absent only if they do not report to school or other assigned locations for at least two hours of alternative instruction.

## Attendance communication protocol

To help ensure that students do not accrue absences, the school has certain support policies in place, as detailed below. Please note:

- In cases of truancy (missing school without providing a proper excuse), school staff may follow the guidelines below for reporting the student and/or family to the appropriate public agencies or filing an official complaint with the court.
- Students who are absent from school may not attend or participate in any school-sponsored activities occurring on the day of the absence.

Instance	Action and Purpose
Each absence	<p>Communication between the family and the school</p> <p>The parent/guardian must report any absence via a phone call to the school by 8:30 a.m. on the day of the absence. If a student is absent without explanation, the school will contact the parent/guardian via phone by 10:00 a.m.</p>
Third absence	<p>Letter home</p> <p>After three absences, the school will send a letter home detailing the student's attendance record and the consequences of lost instructional time.</p>
Sixth consecutive undocumented absence	<p>Report to the Administration for Children's Services (ACS)</p> <p>If the school is unable to make contact with the family after five days of consecutive, undocumented absences, the school director in conjunction with the school's social worker will report excessive absences and the possibility of a missing child to the Administration for Children Services (ACS).</p>
Sixth absence	<p>Letter home/parent conference</p> <p>School will schedule a meeting with the parent or guardian to discuss excessive absences and the school's mandated reporting policy.</p>
Ninth absence	<p>Parent or guardian conference or certified letter home (<i>signature required</i>)</p> <p>School will schedule a family meeting to discuss excessive absences and the school's mandated reporting policy. During this meeting, a member of the school leadership team will ask the parent or guardian to sign a statement acknowledging the purpose and date of the meeting, and confirming comprehension of the law regarding school attendance as well as the consequences of school absences for the student.</p>

Fifteenth absence	<p><b>Evaluation of readiness for promotion</b></p> <p>The school reserves the right to retain any student who exceeds 15 absences. The school will also schedule a family meeting as above to discuss excessive absences and the school’s mandated reporting policy. In the event that the school is unable to make contact with the parent or guardian, the school will send a certified letter to the last known address.</p>
Twentieth absence	<p><b>Report to the Administration for Children’s Services (ACS)</b></p> <p>The school director in conjunction with the school’s social worker will report excessive absences to the Administration for Children’s Services (ACS) and file a case of educational neglect.</p>

### Tardiness

Students are expected to be punctual, mindful of their responsibility to learn, and respectful of other people’s time and their own learning time. Tardiness not only impacts the child’s preparedness, but it also disrupts and infringes upon the rights of the whole class. Habitual tardiness is not permitted.

Our doors open at 7:30 a.m. each morning; any student who eats breakfast at school should be in school by 7:50 a.m. By 8:00 a.m. each student should have arrived at his or her homeroom, unpacked, and taken a seat, prepared for instruction.

Students who enter the building after 8:00 a.m. are considered tardy.

Please note: different clocks and watches vary. The determination of student lateness will be based on the clocks at the school to ensure consistency and fairness.

- The parent/guardian of any student who arrives after 8:00 a.m. must escort the student to the security guard at the front desk. The parent/guardian must sign-in and retrieve a guest pass from the security guard, escort the student to the main office and provide an explanation for the tardiness, including any necessary doctor’s notes.
- The parent/guardian should not accompany the student to his or her classroom. Students who arrive late may not be left unaccompanied at the school entrance or with the security guard.
- The school records the student’s name in the Late Arrival Log. At the time of late drop-off, the parent/guardian signs the log indicating that he or she has read and understands the school’s attendance and tardiness policy, which includes the consequences of future infractions.
- The school will schedule a parent/guardian meeting for any student who is tardy more than five times in a term.

### School closings/late starts

In case of severe weather, a power outage, or other problems requiring school closure or a late start, the school announces the closing or delay through a robocall system. Announcements typically start by 6 a.m. As a general rule, but not always, if the NYCDOE decides to close schools because of

weather, Ascend Public Charter Schools will close as well. In extreme circumstances, school may be closed once students have arrived for the day. Please call the school if you are in doubt.

## Homework policy

Homework is an independent activity designed for practice or maintaining mastery. Homework does not take the place of classroom instruction, but rather serves as a valuable extension of each student's efforts in the classroom. All homework must be fully completed. If a student is having difficulty with a concept, please note it for the teacher.

The parent's or guardian's responsibility regarding homework is to ensure that the student has a quiet workspace to complete his or her homework and that the student completes all assigned work. It is critical that family and friends refrain from helping a student complete homework assignments as such assistance makes it difficult for teachers to determine a student's true mastery of skills and concepts.

## Daily reading and reading log

Students are accountable for reading or listening to books read aloud for 30 minutes every night, including weekends. Using the form provided by their teachers, students must maintain a daily log of their reading, and parents and guardians must sign the log as requested.

## Uniform policy

Student uniforms are an important aspect of our school culture. Uniforms help create balance in the school and allow students to focus on what is most important – their learning. Students must be in uniform while on school grounds and may not change out of their uniforms before dismissal.

Faculty or staff call the parents or guardians of students who arrive to school out of uniform and ask them to bring to school the missing uniform item(s) before admitting the students to class. At the discretion of the school leadership team, disciplinary action may be taken in response to any inappropriate dress.

Shirts must be tucked-in, shoelaces must be tied, and velcro must be fastened at all times. If students cannot tie their shoes, please focus on developing this skill at home and try to provide shoes with velcro or other non-lace fasteners for school while they are learning.

Please label all clothing with your child's name, especially items that might be removed during the day. Labels ensure that lost items are returned to their owners.

## Uniforms

All uniforms are required to have the appropriate Ascend logo.

School	Main uniform	Physical education	Optional
Brooklyn Ascend Lower School	White polo Navy jumper Navy pants	BACS gym t-shirt White t- shirt Navy t-shirt Navy sweatpants	Navy cardigan
Brownsville Ascend Lower School	White polo Gray pants Gray jumper	None	Maroon sweater
Bushwick Ascend Lower School	White polo Gray pants Gray jumper	Navy sweatsuit	Navy cardigan
Canarsie Ascend Lower School	White polo Navy jumper/ skirt Navy pants	None	Navy cardigan
Central Brooklyn Ascend Charter School	White polo Navy jumper Navy pants	CBACS navy gym t-shirt CBACS navy gym sweatpants	Navy cardigan
Cypress Hills Ascend Lower School	White polo Gray pants Gray jumper	None	Navy cardigan
East Brooklyn Ascend Lower School	White polo Navy jumper Navy pants	None	Navy cardigan
East Flatbush Ascend Lower School	White polo Navy jumper Navy pants	None	Navy cardigan
Lefferts Gardens Ascend Lower School	White polo Navy pants Navy jumper	None	Navy cardigan

## Shoes

- Black sneakers (all black only – no stripes, patterns, designs, or colored laces)
- Black dress shoes (flats only; no high heels, princess heels, or wedges)

During inclement weather (snow or rain), students may wear boots but they must change into their uniform shoes upon entering class.

## Head coverings and hair

Hats, caps or other head coverings may not be worn unless they are worn in observance of one's faith.

## Prohibited clothing and accessories

- Boots (except to and from school; students will be allowed to change at the beginning and end of each day)
- Hooded sweatshirts, zippered jackets, or non-sweater vests
- Makeup (including nail polish, lip gloss, and glitter)
- Cologne/perfume
- Jewelry (bracelets, necklaces, rings, hoop/large earrings, etc.); conservative religious jewelry (such as a necklace with a religious symbol) may be worn under clothing; stud earrings are permitted

## Uniform specifics

Clothing must be sized appropriately to fit the student. Clothes may not be too big or too small. Students should not wear clothing with significant stains (e.g., large inkblots, food stains, etc.) or in poor condition (e.g., frayed pant cuffs).

During inclement weather, students who wish to layer clothing underneath their uniforms must wear only a white shirt under the uniform shirt. Clothing worn under the uniform may not hang out or be visible. If a student comes to school with a non-uniform shirt showing under his/her uniform, it will be treated as a uniform violation and the student would be asked to remove the non-uniform item.

Students may not alter their uniforms in any way (e.g., by writing/drawing, cutting, etc.). Items that are in disrepair will be treated as a uniform violation and the student will be asked to remove the item.

## Cell phones and personal electronics

No cell phones or other personal electronics should be used during the school day. Any electronic items should be placed in the backpack in a student's cubby at the beginning of each day. If a student uses a cell phone or other personal electronic during the school day, or if the item is discovered on his/her person, the item may be confiscated and returned at the end of the day. If a student repeatedly violates this policy, he or she will have to check the cell phone or other electronic devices at the beginning of the school day with the dean of students and retrieve it from the dean of students at the end of the day. Please note that the school is not responsible for the loss, theft or damage to any electronic items brought to school.

## Transportation

At the beginning of the school year, it is critical that you tell the school of your child's transportation plans; specifically, whether your student will be picked up or take the bus. If your child's transportation plans change, please communicate these changes to the school in advance and in writing.

### Yellow bus service – general education students

Yellow bus service is provided by the NYCDOE Office of Pupil Transportation. Eligibility is determined by several factors, including the student's grade and the distance between the student's home and the school. Yellow busing service is only available up to grade six.

Please note:

- There are no adults on the bus except for the bus driver.
- Students who misbehave on the bus receive the same consequences as students who misbehave at school and may lose bus privileges for up to a year.
- It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that there is a designated adult at the bus stop to receive the child -- not the bus driver's or the school's.
- If no responsible adult is at the stop, multiple attempts will be made to contact a parent or authorized contact to meet the bus at its intended stop. If an authorized contact cannot be reached, the matter may result in support from the local precinct.

### Yellow bus service – special education students

Yellow bus service is provided by the NYCDOE Office of Pupil Transportation. Eligibility is determined by the student's Individualized Education Plan.

Please note:

- Students are expected to behave appropriately on the bus.
- It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that there is a designated adult at the bus stop to receive the child -- not the bus driver's or the school's.
- If no responsible adult is at the stop, multiple attempts will be made to contact a parent or authorized contact to meet the bus at its intended stop. If an authorized contact cannot be reached, the matter may result in support from the local precinct.

### Behavior on the bus

The school's expectation that students live the core values applies to school bus transportation. Students who take the school bus are expected to act responsibly and respectfully at all times.

Certain additional rules apply to the bus. These are enumerated in the busing contract that families riding the yellow bus must sign. Students must sit in assigned seats. An administrator meets the bus at arrival every morning, and no student may exit the bus before the administrator checks with the driver regarding behavior. Behavior infractions include failing to be in the assigned seat, putting hands out of the bus, throwing things, using inappropriate language, yelling, and disobeying the bus driver. More serious misbehavior (e.g., fighting) shall be investigated and consequences applied as if such behavior happened on school grounds.

One infraction results in the loss of bus privileges for a week; two infractions result in the loss of bus privileges for a month; and three infractions result in the loss of bus privileges for the year. If an infraction is sufficiently serious, it could warrant the immediate loss of bus privileges for the year.

Families are strongly encouraged to reinforce the importance of proper bus behavior and the potential consequences of inappropriate behavior. Consequences for misconduct by special education students who are required by their Individualized Education Plans to ride transportation other than the general school bus will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

## Breakfast, lunch, and snack

Breakfast and lunch are served daily. Students who bring lunch from home may sign-up to receive milk at school. To protect the health of students with allergies, some of which are life-threatening, Ascend Public Charter Schools are nut-free schools, which means that no nut products are permitted in any of our schools at any time. When packing lunches for your child, please be aware that many processed foods contain nut products; read the labels of such foods carefully to ensure that your choices do not endanger a student with an acute allergy. If your student has a food allergy, please contact the school director and your child's teacher immediately so they can take the necessary precautions.

### Foods not permitted at school

Students are not permitted to bring the following foods to school, and any such items if found will be confiscated and possibly discarded:

- Fast food (e.g., McDonald's, Burger King, Wendy's)
- Chewing gum, candy, marshmallows
- Nuts/nut products (including processed foods that contain nuts)
- Potato chips or cheese popcorn
- Soda, energy drinks, hot chocolate, beverages in glass bottles
- Cookies, donuts, cakes
- Artificial fruit snacks
- Other snacks with a high sugar content

### Healthy lunch or snack suggestions

- Yogurt
- Dried fruit
- Breakfast bars
- Baked potato chips
- Whole-grain chips (e.g., Sun Chips)
- Vegetable chips
- Plain or buttered popcorn
- Pretzels
- Apples, sliced oranges, grapes, and other fruit
- Carrots, celery sticks, other vegetables
- Rice cakes

Please do not send your student with food that requires warming.

## Enrollment, withdrawals, and repeating a grade

### Withdrawal and re-enrollment

Students may withdraw from an Ascend charter school at any time based on a written request by the student's parent or guardian. Such notice will typically take the form of a records request transfer

from the student's new school, or a withdrawal form. Absent a records request or withdrawal form, the school will require evidence of arrangements to enroll the student in a new school to process the withdrawal. After a student has withdrawn, the seat is offered to another student on the waitlist. To re-enter the school, students must apply as a new student.

If the family of a student believes that the withdrawal was in error, or was involuntary, or believes another special circumstance exists, the family may make a request to the school director to re-enroll the student. He or she will make a final determination in conjunction with the network enrollment team.

## Repeating a grade

Schools make decisions about retaining students in grade for the following year by the month of June. The school makes every effort to communicate these decisions in person prior to the last day of school. Decisions about retention in grade are not based on State test scores or on any single data point. Students are retained only when the preponderance of student data indicates that the child is not ready for the next grade's academic program. Parents may appeal retention decisions in writing to the school director. If families still wish to appeal the decision of a child's retention, they may do so in writing to Ascend Public Charter School's chief schools officer.

## Health policies and procedures

### Requirements

Ascend Public Charter Schools comply with New York State laws governing students' health, immunization, and health records. New York State law requires every student to be vaccinated against certain diseases unless such student has a valid medical exemption in accordance with New York State law. Please note that as of June 2019, religious exemptions from school vaccination requirements have been removed from New York State law and are no longer allowed.

Each school must have on file a completed and signed Child & Adolescent Health Examination Form (CH205) completed by a New York State licensed physician, for each student, by the fourteenth (14th) day from the first day of school, unless such student has a valid medical exemption to such immunization requirements in accordance with New York State law. The school director may extend this 14-day period to thirty (30) days under limited circumstances. A student whose medical forms are not in compliance with these legal requirements will be excluded from school by the school director until such requirements are met.

Families will be asked to provide a new physical examination form (CH 205) every (1) year for elementary aged children and every two (2) years for middle and high school, even if no new immunizations are required, to ensure that schools have current information on their students' health.

### Illness and exclusion policy

If a student shows any symptoms of illness, such as a high temperature, nausea, diarrhea, sore throat, or rashes, he or she should not come to school until the seriousness of the condition has been determined or the symptoms have disappeared. Such precaution hastens the student's recovery and helps reduce the spread of infections at school.

The nurse removes any student who shows such symptoms from the regular program, and contacts the parent or guardian to make arrangements for the student to be picked-up as soon as possible. If

the parent or guardian cannot be reached, the school will call the person(s) designated as the emergency contact(s). An ill or injured student must be picked up within one hour of our call.

If a student's condition warrants immediate medical attention, the school would contact the student's healthcare provider or call 911.

### Communicable diseases

The parent or guardian must notify the school immediately if a student has contracted a communicable disease (i.e., strep throat, or pink eye) so that the school may take action to protect other students by notifying families of those potentially at risk. If more than one case of a communicable disease occurs in a single homeroom, the school would contact our consultant from the local health department to seek advice and ensure that appropriate actions are taken. In the event of an epidemic, special precautions or exclusion policies may be necessary.

Contact your doctor about when it is appropriate to return to school if your student has a communicable disease. The doctor's note returning the student to school should identify when the student is allowed to come back.

### Administration of medication

Students are not permitted to self-medicate, and Ascend Public Charter Schools do not issue any form of medication to students, including over-the-counter drugs such as aspirin or Tylenol, except at the direction of a doctor. As a singular exception, parents or guardians may sign a permission slip giving a school the right to administer Syrup of Ipecac to induce vomiting in case of accidental poisoning.

A nurse must administer all medication and only when the following requirements are met:

- The school has received written authorization from the parent or legal guardian for each medication in the form of a completed and signed Medical Administration Form (MAF).
- The school has received a doctor's written permission to administer prescribed medication. (For prescription medication, the pharmacy label serves as the doctor's permission.)
- The medication label states all of the following: the student's name, directions for use, the name of the drug, the physician's name, the prescribed dosage, and the expiration date.
- Medication is stored in its original container in the nurse's office and is accompanied by the signed Medical Administration Form (MAF).
- Epinephrine auto-injectors or emergency asthma medication may be stored in other locations within the school to facilitate the most effective emergency response, by prior arrangement with the director of operations and the school nurse.
- The school does its best to follow the medication instructions provided, but cannot be held responsible for forgetting or delaying the provision of medicine.

### Reporting suspected child abuse

If any employee of the school has reasonable cause to suspect on the basis of his/her professional or other training and experience that a student enrolled at the school is being abused, the employee is required by law to call and file an oral report with state authorities. Our obligation to report includes instances of educational neglect. All members of the faculty take this responsibility seriously and are committed to executing their legal obligations accordingly.

## Emergency procedures

### Emergency contacts

Parents or guardians of all students are required to complete an emergency form that contains a medical release statement giving the school permission to seek medical attention for the student in case of an emergency. This information is kept in the main office, with the school nurse, and the homeroom teacher.

In the event of a school-wide emergency, the school uses a "one-call" system to notify families of any emergencies via phone or text. It is essential that parents or guardians notify the school immediately if their addresses or phone numbers change.

### Accidents

The school notifies parents or guardians immediately of any accidents involving more than minor bruises or scrapes. Such accidents are recorded in an accident report form and filed in the school office for future reference. For minor injuries, a certified staff member administers first aid on site as appropriate. If it appears the accident is more serious, first aid would be administered immediately; and a school official would contact the student's parent, guardian, or designated emergency contact to pick-up the student for medical care. In cases where the parents or guardians or the designated emergency persons cannot be reached and immediate medical attention is needed, a school official would call 911 for treatment and/or transportation to a hospital. A staff person would accompany the student and stay until the parent or guardian arrives. In some emergency situations, the staff may contact 911 before calling the parent or guardian.

## Discipline code

We expect every member of the Ascend community, whether staff member, student, or parent/guardian, to treat every other person in the school with dignity and respect.

We are dedicated to creating secure school environments in which each student's behavior supports high-level academic achievement.

### Code of conduct

Every student has the right to learn in a safe, orderly, and nurturing environment. The actions of one student must never be permitted to undermine the intellectual, emotional, and social development of his or her peers. Ascend Public Charter Schools' Code of Conduct offers students and their parents or guardians a guide to the consequences of unacceptable behaviors. Ascend school leaders, faculty, and staff rigorously enforce the Code in the interest of the entire school community.

The Code of Conduct establishes reasonable boundaries for students and provides clear, fair, and predictable consequences for breaking the rules. We expect students to avoid transgressions in the first instance, and in cases when they make mistakes, we expect them to accept responsibility and learn from the experience.

Student disciplinary offenses are those actions or inactions that violate the school's Code of Conduct or interfere with the delivery of educational services; jeopardize the health, safety, and well-being of any member of the school community; or threaten the integrity and stability of the school itself.

- A disciplinary offense may occur while the student is: at school and/or on school grounds; participating in a school-sponsored activity; walking to or from school or a school-sponsored event; walking to or from, waiting for, or riding on school-provided transportation or a yellow school bus; or walking to or from, waiting for, or riding on public transportation to and from school or a school-sponsored activity conducted off school grounds. School-related disciplinary offenses may also include misconduct outside the school, such as activity on social media or other cyber activities that reasonably could affect the school or impact the learning environment.

School leaders and faculty will use their professional judgment in determining which disciplinary action(s) will be most effective in dealing with the student's misconduct, taking into account the following factors and other relevant issues:

- The student's age and maturity level
- The nature and seriousness of the infraction and the circumstances that led to the infraction
- The student's previous disciplinary record
- The effectiveness of other forms of discipline
- Information from parents or guardians, teachers and/or others, as appropriate
- The student's attitude

When a student does not meet behavioral expectations and a violation of the school's Code of Conduct has occurred, clear and consistent disciplinary action will ensue, and other consequences as further described below.

Progressively more serious disciplinary consequences shall be imposed upon any student who repeatedly commits one or more disciplinary offenses.

The school reserves the right to consult with law enforcement when appropriate.

## Disciplinary actions

The following list is not exhaustive but provides examples of violations of the Code that may result in disciplinary consequences. The school may modify the list of behavior violations and consequences from time to time with notice to students and families.

### Category I behavior violations

The following behaviors may result in consequences determined by the child's teacher or additional afterschool support. Repeated Category I violations, based on severity, may be treated as Category II violations. Category I behaviors can lead to consequences up to and including suspension.

- 1.1. Failure to comply: Each student must obey every adult in the school, including administrators, teachers, educational assistants, secretaries, custodians, lunchroom workers, and security guards. It is unacceptable for students to talk back to adults, be rude or disrespectful, or show nonverbal signs of defiance.
- 1.2. Behaving in a manner which disrupts the education process: Classroom and school rules are established to protect the integrity of the learning environment, and students must follow them at all times. Students who cause a disruption by talking, making noises, throwing objects, inappropriate displays of affection, or otherwise distracting classmates or the teacher are disrupting the education process.
- 1.3. Uniform violation: Students must wear the school uniform to school every day.
- 1.4. Scholastic dishonesty: Students must not engage in academic cheating. Cheating includes, but is not limited to, the giving or receiving of any unauthorized aid or the giving or receiving of unfair advantage on any form of academic work. Students must not engage in plagiarism, which includes the copying of language, structures, ideas and/or thoughts of another person and representing it as one's own original work. A student must not unlawfully duplicate, reproduce, retain, or use copyrighted material.
- 1.5. Electronic media and communication devices: Students may not use electronic media and/or communications devices at school. Should a student use such a device at school, in addition to other consequences deemed appropriate by school staff, the item may be confiscated and held until an adult picks it up.
- 1.6. Engaging in or causing disruptive behavior on the school bus: Students must obey the bus rules, and not engage in disruptive behavior or language. Serious behavior violations may be categorized as a category II or III violations and treated as such.
- 1.7. Failing to be in one's assigned place: Students should only be in the rooms and other areas of the school to which they have been specifically given permission.

## Category II behavior violations

The following behaviors may result in suspension or other disciplinary consequences, depending on the circumstances. Repeated Category II violations may be treated as Category III violations. Students who repeatedly engage in Category II behaviors or have serious offenses in Category II behaviors may also be subject to long-term suspension or expulsion.

- 2.1 Truancy and cutting: Any full-day or part-day absence from school that is not excused by a parent or legal guardian is considered truancy. Being absent from one or more classes during the school day without the permission of school staff is "cutting" and is not allowed.
- 2.2 Profanity or obscenity: Students must not say or write inappropriate words or make obscene gestures. Students must not draw or show sexually explicit pictures to anyone at school. Cursing or swearing is also strictly prohibited.
- 2.3 Play fighting and threatening: Students may not play fight and/or threaten others as such behavior compromises the safety of the community.
- 2.4 Smoking: Smoking and possession of any kind of tobacco at school, on school grounds, or at any school-related activity are prohibited.
- 2.5 Alcohol, drugs, and drug paraphernalia: Students must not bring alcohol, drugs, or any drug paraphernalia to school. They must not manufacture, sell, handle, possess, use, deliver, or be under any degree of influence of any alcoholic beverage, intoxicant, or drug (legal intoxication is not a requirement). Students must not inhale any substance for the purpose of becoming intoxicated or under the influence. Prescribed medication must be delivered to the school by the parent or guardian with the written authorization of a physician. All prescribed medication must be administered at school by the school nurse. As described below, the possession of narcotics with the intent to sell or distribute is a Category III violation and may lead to immediate suspension, a recommendation for expulsion, and a police referral.
- 2.6 Pornographic material: The possession or creation of pornographic material is not tolerated.
- 2.7 Stealing: Students must not take without permission anything that does not belong to them or have in their possession anything that has been stolen.
- 2.8 Aggressive disorderly conduct: Students must not, by any type of conduct (including but not limited to violence, force, noise, coercion, threat, intimidation, fear, or passive resistance), cause the disruption, disturbance, or obstruction of any school function, activity, or event. Students may not urge other students to engage in such conduct for the purpose of causing such disruption or obstruction.
- 2.9 Gang activity: Gang activity is defined as an assembly of individuals who gather on a continuing basis, whose purpose the school reasonably believes is to violate school policy. Students must not wear or display any clothing, jewelry, colors, or insignia that a teacher or administrator may reasonably perceive as evidence of membership in or affiliation with a gang or that otherwise symbolizes support of a gang. Students must not use any word, phrase, written symbol, or gesture that intentionally identifies them as members of a gang or otherwise symbolizes support of a gang,

nor try to recruit others to gangs.

2.10 Defacement or destruction of property: Students must not mark, damage, break, or destroy school property or anything that belongs to someone else. Students who destroy or vandalize school property are required to pay for losses or damages, in addition to other consequences deemed appropriate by school staff.

2.11 Sexual misconduct or inappropriate touching: Students must not engage in sexual activity of any kind or touch themselves or others in an unacceptable way. "Unacceptable" is defined using the "reasonable person" standard, i.e., if a reasonable person in our community would find a given action to be rude or offensive, then it is unacceptable.

2.12 Teasing: Students must not make fun of, provoke, or disturb others playfully or maliciously.

2.13 Lookalike weapons: The possession, handling, or transmission of any object or instrument that is a "look-alike" weapon or instrument (e.g., rubber knife, or toy gun) is strictly prohibited.

2.14 Abusive or profane language or treatment: Students may not use abusive, threatening, vulgar, coarse, or degrading language (including racial epithets or sexist or homophobic remarks).

2.15 Engaging in inappropriate use of social media: Students may not engage in online conduct or communication that may harass or intimidate any members of the school community, or reasonably lead to a disruption of the educational environment.

### Category III behavior violations

Any student who engages in any of the behaviors in this category may be suspended or expelled from the school.

3.1 Committing assault or assault and battery: Students may not commit assault, including sexual assault, or assault and battery on a student, school employee, or another person. Assault is an attempt or threat to physically harm another person; assault does not require physical contact. Battery is any unlawful touching of another person.

3.2 Intimidation or bullying (including cyber-bullying): Bullying is defined as a series of acts or a single negative act (depending on severity) that involves a real or perceived imbalance of power, i.e., where a more powerful (whether real or perceived) individual student harasses another student less powerful or perceived to be less powerful. Bullying can take many forms, including but not limited to: (1) physical, e.g., hitting, kicking, spitting, pushing, and taking personal belongings; (2) verbal, e.g., taunting, malicious teasing, name-calling, making threats; and (3) psychological, e.g., spreading rumors; manipulating social relationships; or engaging in social exclusion, extortion, or intimidation. Cyber-bullying involves the use of information technology, including e-mail, instant messaging, blogs, chat rooms, pagers, cell phones, and gaming systems in the deliberate harassment, threatening, or intimidation of students. Examples include sending mean, vulgar, or threatening messages or images; posting sensitive, private information about another person (including "sexting"); and impersonation.

3.3 Extortion: Students must not coerce a person – through intimidation, threat, or force – into doing anything that person does not wish to do. Students must not engage in the act of securing or attempting to secure money or other items of value from an unwilling person.

3.4 Harassment: Harassment of any type, including hazing and discriminatory harassment, is prohibited. Students must not make unwelcome sexual advances or requests for sexual favors; or engage in other verbal or physical conduct relating to a person's sex, race, color, national origin, sexual orientation, religion, height, weight, marital status, or disability (e.g., sexual or racial comments, threats or insults, or unwanted touching). Students may not engage in the harassment of students off school property under circumstances where such off-campus conduct: 1) affects the education process; 2) actually endangers the health and safety of our students; or 3) is reasonably believed to pose a danger to the health and safety of our students. This includes written and/or verbal harassment, including cyberbullying, which materially and substantially disrupts the work and discipline of the school and/or which school officials reasonably forecast as being likely to materially and substantially disrupt the academic work and culture of the school.

3.5 Actions against staff members: Harassing (verbal or written abuse or disrespect), intimidating, threatening, or physically abusing a staff member is not allowed.

3.6 Weapons: Students must not possess, handle, transmit, or use as a weapon any instrument that can be used to harm another person. Weapons include, but are not limited to:

- Firearms: Any weapon (including a starter gun) that is designed to, or may readily be converted to, expel a projectile by the action of an explosive
- Explosives: Any substance or prepared chemical that can explode or is capable of inflicting bodily injury or is reasonably likely to cause physical discomfort to another person, including fireworks and firecrackers
- Knives: Any knife or blade of any size
- Chemicals such as mace, pepper gas, or like substances
- Stun gun; brass knuckles; or blackjack
- Dangerous items: Prohibited items not designed as weapons that can be used or perceived as such, including but not limited to razors, box cutters, hammers, baseball bats, and metal combs of any length with a sharpened handle

3.7 Possession of narcotics with intent to distribute or sell: The possession of narcotics with the intent to distribute or sell may be cause for immediate suspension, a recommendation for expulsion to the school's board of trustees, and referral to law enforcement officials.

3.8 False fire alarms or bomb reports: Students must not break or pull the fire alarm at any time unless there is an emergency, nor make bomb threats.

3.9 Starting a fire: Starting a fire or conspiring to start a fire on school property is strictly prohibited.

#### Gun-free schools act

Federal and state laws require the expulsion from school for a period of not less than one year of a student who is determined to have brought a firearm to the school, or to have possessed a firearm at school, except that the school director may modify such expulsion requirement for a student on a case-by-case basis, if such modification is in writing, in accordance with the Federal Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994 (as amended).

Any such expulsion must be consistent with the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and its implementing regulations, for a student with or presumed to have disabilities.

“Firearm,” as used in this law is defined by 18 USC §921, and includes firearms and explosives.

The definition of “firearm” includes but is not limited to:

- Any weapon (including a starter gun) which will or is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive
- The frame or receiver of any weapon described above
- Any firearm muffler or firearm silencer
- Any destructive device, which is defined as any explosive, incendiary, or poison gas, such as a bomb, grenade, rocket having a propellant charge of more than four ounces, a missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than one-quarter ounce, a mine, or other similar devices

The school director shall refer to the criminal justice or juvenile delinquency system any student who brings a firearm or weapon to the school. “Weapon” as used in this context shall mean any device, instrument, material, or substance that is used for or is readily capable of causing death or serious bodily injury, except that such term does not include a pocket knife with a blade of less than two and a half inches in length.

### Classroom consequences

When students lapse and exhibit misbehavior, teachers respond with interventions to redirect them. Continued misbehavior results in more severe consequences, including referral to the dean of students or school director.

### Removal from the classroom

Egregious behaviors, including continual disruption, extreme disrespect to the teacher or others, or any physical altercation, result in removal from the class and referral to the dean of students or school director, followed by a phone call home and/or suspension.

### Additional afterschool support

At the discretion of the school, students may be assigned afterschool support to re-teach, practice or research expected behaviors. The afterschool support will take place following dismissal and will be assigned to students as the result of but not limited to the following:

- Excessive tardiness
- Excessive uniform violations
- Excessive incomplete or missing homework
- Category I or II behavior violations

Afterschool support may be assigned on the same day as the infraction, but the school will make every effort to notify parents prior to assigning this logical consequence when possible.

## Half-day suspension

If a student needs to go home because of a behavioral infraction, a parent/guardian must come to the school and remove the student from school grounds. Students sent home for behavioral infractions are not dismissed unless the parent, guardian, or authorized adult has personally arrived at the school.

## Procedures and due process for short-term suspensions

A short-term suspension refers to the removal of a student from the school for disciplinary reasons for a period of up to ten (10) days. This includes in-school suspension.

The school director may impose a short-term suspension and shall follow due process procedures consistent with applicable federal case law. Before imposing a short-term suspension, the school director shall notify the student orally of the charges against him or her. If the student denies the misconduct, the school director must provide an explanation of the evidence against the student. The student shall be given an opportunity to deny or explain the charges against him/her that led to the suspension.

The school director shall immediately notify the parent(s) or guardian(s) in writing that the student may be suspended from school. The written notice shall be provided by personal delivery or express mail delivery within 24 hours of the decision to impose suspension at the last known address(es) of the parent(s) or guardian(s). The notification shall also be provided by telephone if the school has been provided with a telephone number(s) for the purpose of contacting the parent(s) or guardian(s).

The notice shall provide a description of the incident(s) for which suspension is proposed and shall inform the parent(s) or guardian(s) of their right to request an immediate informal conference with the school director. Both the notice and informal conference shall be in the dominant language or mode of communication used by the parent(s) or guardian(s) if known by Ascend to be other than English. At the conference, the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the student and the student shall have the opportunity to present the student's version of the incident and to ask questions of complaining witnesses under such procedures as the school director may establish. The notice and opportunity for an informal conference shall take place before the student is suspended unless the student's presence in school poses a continuing danger to persons or property or an ongoing threat of disruption to the academic process, in which case the notice and opportunity for an informal conference shall take place as soon as possible after the suspension as is reasonably practicable.

An appeal of the decision of the school director may be made to the Board of Trustees, which will make its decision based solely upon the record before it. All appeals to the Board must be in writing and submitted to the Board within ten (10) calendar days of the date of the school director's decision unless the parent(s) or guardian(s) can show that extraordinary circumstances precluded them from doing so. The Board of Trustees will issue a written decision within ten (10) business days of receiving the appeal. The final decisions of the Board may be appealed to the school's authorizer (and thereafter to the board of regents).

## Procedures and due process for long-term suspensions or expulsion

A long-term suspension refers to the removal of a student from the school for disciplinary reasons for a period of more than ten (10) days. Expulsion refers to the permanent removal of a student for

disciplinary reasons. This is the final level of correction.

Upon determining that a student's action warrants a possible long-term suspension or expulsion, the following procedure, consistent with applicable federal case law, will be followed:

- If necessary, the student shall immediately be removed from class and/or school.
- The school director shall verbally inform the student of the charges and the evidence for those charges; where applicable, the student will have the opportunity to explain his or her side of the events.
- The chief schools officer shall immediately notify the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the student, in person or on the phone.
- The chief schools officer shall provide written notice that the school is going to commence a disciplinary hearing to the student and his or her parent(s) or guardian(s) by personal delivery or express mail delivery as soon as possible to the last known address of the parent(s) or guardian(s). Such notice shall provide a description of the incident or incidents and shall state that a formal hearing will be held on the matter which may result in a long-term suspension or expulsion. The notification provided shall be in the dominant language used by the parent(s) or guardian(s) if it is known by Ascend to be other than English. The notice will state that at the formal hearing, the student shall have the right to be represented by counsel (at the family's expense), present and question witnesses, and present evidence.
- The school will set a date, time, and place for the formal hearing, which shall be set forth in the written notice described above.
- An audio transcript of the formal hearing will be created and made available to all parties upon request.

The chief schools officer, or his/her designee, shall serve as the hearing officer and preside over the hearing. The hearing officer's report shall be advisory only and the chief schools officer may accept or reject all or part of it. A written decision will be issued within five (5) school days after the formal hearing to the student and his/her parent(s) or guardian(s).

An appeal from the written decision may be made to the Board of Trustees, which will make its decision based solely upon the record before it. All appeals to the Board must be in writing and submitted to the Board within ten (10) calendar days of the date of the written decision unless the parent(s) or guardian(s) can show that extraordinary circumstances precluded them from doing so. The Board of Trustees will issue a written decision within ten (10) business days of receiving the appeal. The final decisions of the Board of Trustees may be appealed to the school's authorizer.

### Provision of instruction during removal

The school will ensure that alternative educational services are provided to a student who has been suspended or removed to help that student progress in the general curriculum of the school. Alternative instruction for suspended students will be of sufficient duration to enable a student to cover all class material, take all tests and quizzes, keep pace with other students, and progress to the next grade level. All suspended students are entitled to receive alternative instruction commencing within 24 hours of the suspension or expulsion. Alternative instruction dates and times will be listed on the student's suspension letter. All students will be provided with a minimum of two hours per day of alternative instruction.

For a student who has been expelled, alternative instruction will be provided in like manner as a suspended student until the student enrolls in another school or until the end of the school year, whichever comes first.

Instruction will take place in one of the following locations: the student's home, a contracted facility or a suspension room at another Ascend school. One or more of the following individuals will provide instruction: teacher, teacher aide, or a tutor hired for this purpose. Please note that whoever administers this instruction will meet all certification requirements as stipulated in Section 2854(3)(a-1) of the New York State Education Law.

### Discipline for students with disabilities

In addition to the discipline procedures applicable to all students, the following procedures are applicable to students with disabilities. A student not specifically identified as having a disability but whose school district of residence or charter school, prior to the behavior which is the subject of the disciplinary action, has a basis of knowledge—in accordance with 34 CFR §300.534—that a disability exists shall also be disciplined in accordance with these provisions. The school shall comply with sections 300.530-300.536 of the Code of Federal Regulations and the following procedures, except that in the event that the following procedures are inconsistent with federal law and regulations, such federal law and regulations shall govern.

The school shall maintain written records of all suspensions and expulsions of students with a disability including the name of the student, a description of the behavior engaged in, the disciplinary action is taken, and a record of the number of days a student has been suspended or removed for disciplinary reasons.

Students whose IEP includes a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) will be disciplined in accordance with the BIP. If the BIP appears not to be effective or if there is a concern for the health and safety of the student or others if the BIP is followed with respect to the infraction, the matter will immediately be referred to the appropriate Committee on Special Education (CSE) for any consideration of changes.

If a student identified as having a disability is suspended during the course of the school year for a total of ten (10) days, such student will immediately be referred to the CSE of the student's district of residence for reconsideration of the student's educational placement. Such student shall not be suspended for a total of more than 10 days during the school year without the specific involvement of the CSE of the student's district of residence prior to the eleventh day of suspension, because such suspensions may be considered to be a change in placement.

In considering the placement of students referred because of disciplinary problems, the CSE of the student's district of residence is expected to follow its ordinary policies with respect to notification and involvement of the parent(s) or guardian(s).

Ascend will ensure that the special education coordinator or special education teachers and/or the general classroom teacher will attend all meetings regarding their students initiated by the CSE from the student's district of residence. These meetings could be relating to the development and implementation of behavioral intervention plans, initial referrals, change in service, or annual review, Manifestation Determination Reviews (MDRs), among other things.

### Provision of services during removal

The School will place students in an interim alternative educational setting as appropriate and mandated by 34 C.F.R. § 300. 531.

Students removed for a period of fewer than ten (10) cumulative days during the school year will receive all classroom assignments and a schedule to complete such assignments during the time of

their suspension. Provisions will be made to permit a suspended student to make-up assignments or tests missed as a result of his or her suspension. The school also shall provide additional alternative instruction to assist the student, so that the student is given full opportunity to complete assignments and master curriculum, including additional instructions, phone assistance, computer instruction, and/or home visits and one-on-one tutoring.

During any subsequent removal that, combined with previous removals equals ten (10) or more school days during the school year, but does not constitute a change in placement, services must be provided to the extent determined necessary to enable the child to progress appropriately in the general curriculum and achieve the goals of his or her Individualized Education Program (IEP). In these cases, school personnel, in consultation with the child's special education teacher, shall make the service determination.

During any subsequent removal that does constitute a change in placement, but where the behavior is not a manifestation of the disability, the services must be provided to the extent necessary to enable the student to progress appropriately in the general curriculum and in achieving the goals of his or her IEP. The CSE of the student's district of residence will make the service determination.

During any removal for drug, weapon, controlled substance and/or serious bodily injury offenses pursuant to 34 CFR §300.530(g), services will be provided to the extent necessary to enable the child to progress appropriately in the general curriculum and in achieving the goals of his or her IEP. These service determinations will be made by the CSE of the student's district of residence.

#### **Additional due process (manifestation determination review - MDR)**

If discipline that would constitute a change in placement is contemplated for any student with a disability, the following steps shall be taken: (1) not later than the date on which the decision to take such action is made, the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the student with a disability shall be notified by the school of that decision and provided the procedural safeguards notice described in 34 CFR §300.504; and (2) immediately, if possible, but in no case later than ten (1) school days after the date on which such decision is made, the CSE of the student's district of residence and other qualified personnel shall meet and review the relationship between the student's disability and the behavior subject to the disciplinary action.

If, upon review, it is determined that the student's behavior was not a manifestation of his or her disability, then the student may be disciplined in the same manner as a student without a disability, except as provided in 34 CFR §300.530(d), which relates to the provision of services to students with disabilities during periods of removal.

A student's parent(s) or guardian(s) may request a hearing to challenge the manifestation determination. Except as provided below, the student will remain in his or her current educational placement pending the determination of the hearing officer.

If a parent or guardian requests a hearing or an appeal to challenge the interim alternative educational setting or the manifestation determination resulting from a disciplinary action relating to weapons, drugs, or serious bodily injury, the student shall remain in the interim alternative educational setting pending the decision of the hearing officer or until the expiration of the time period provided for in the disciplinary action, whichever occurs first, unless the parent or guardian and school agree otherwise.

## Students with a 504 plan and “deemed to know” students

With regard to disciplinary actions, including suspension or expulsion, the Section 504 rights of charter school students with disabilities are the same as other students with disabilities.

When addressing discipline for students with disabilities, including students with 504 plans or those who are “presumed to have a disability,” Ascend will comply with applicable legal requirements governing the discipline of a student for misconduct.

## Compliance with the child find requirements of IDEA

Ascend will comply with the federal Child Find requirements (34 CFR §300.111), which require schools to have in place a process for identifying, locating and evaluating students with disabilities. Students enrolling for the first time in a New York public school will be screened by a team of teachers (including both regular and special education teachers) to identify any possible indication that the child may need a specialized or Individualized Education Program or referral to the CSE of the student’s district of residence. Other students will be brought to the attention of the team if they are demonstrating any problems within the regular classroom environment. Strategies will then be implemented to address any identified special needs of the student. Should the problems persist and a disability is suspected, the student will be referred to the CSE of the student’s district of residence for an evaluation.

## Corporal punishment

No employee or agent of the school shall inflict corporal punishment upon a student as a penalty for unacceptable conduct. The term “corporal punishment” means any act of physical force upon a student for the purpose of punishing that student. The term does not mean the use of reasonable physical force by a teacher to protect himself or herself from physical injury; to protect another person from physical injury; to protect property, or to restrain or remove a student whose behavior is interfering with the orderly exercise and performance of school functions, powers or duties, if that pupil has refused to comply with a request to refrain from further disruptive acts, and provided that alternative procedures and methods not involving the use of physical force cannot reasonably be employed to achieve these purposes.

## Search procedures

For the safety of students and everyone in the Ascend community, school property that is assigned to students, including lockers, coat racks, cubbies, and desks, remain the property of the school. Students, therefore, have no expectation of privacy in these areas. School safety will make an individual search of a student’s bag, desk, cubbies, lockers, and person only when there is reasonable suspicion to believe that a student is in the possession of an item which is prohibited on school property or which may be used to disrupt or interfere with the educational process. Searches will be conducted under the authorization of the school director or his/her designee. Items that are prohibited on school property, or which may be used to disrupt or interfere with the educational process, may be removed from students’ desks, bag, backpack, cubbies, lockers and person by school authorities.

Students may be subject to unannounced metal detection scanning searches from time to time in accordance with APCS’s search and seizure policy, which may be obtained by contacting the main office. This would include a metal detector scan or a scan by means of a hand-held detector.

## Complaints

Ascend charter schools are committed to resolving concerns and complaints in a manner in which all parties feel respectfully heard and understood. We encourage complainants to first contact the individual involved to give him/her an opportunity to respond or resolve the complaint informally. If the issue is not resolved, there are two procedures outlined below. The first procedure is for informal complaints regarding the instruction, operations or administration of the school. The second procedure is for formal complaints, i.e., if there is the belief that the school has violated a term of its charter or the law. In all cases, Ascend Public Charter Schools prohibits retaliation against complainants.

### Informal complaints

Informal complaints will be defined as any issues that arise not involving the belief that a school has violated a term of its charter or the law. An individual with an informal complaint about the school should communicate the issue as follows:

- Complaints regarding daily services, such as transportation, food, or facilities, should be addressed to the director of operations.
- Complaints regarding the treatment of students by staff or fellow students should be addressed to the relevant teacher first, and then to the dean of students for the relevant grade.
- Complaints about student grades or other instructional concerns should be addressed to the relevant teacher first, and then the dean of instruction for the relevant grade.

If the concern is unresolved after these points of contact, the complainant should contact the school director. If the concern remains unresolved, the complainant should contact the chief schools officer of Ascend Public Charter Schools. If the complainant is still concerned after speaking to the chief schools officer, he or she may appeal to the board of trustees, 205 Rockaway Parkway, Brooklyn, NY 11212. The complainant may also attend a board meeting and speak during the public comment period. Board meeting times and locations are posted on the school's website at [www.ascendlearning.org](http://www.ascendlearning.org).

### Formal complaints

New York Education Law provides that any individual or group who believes a charter school has violated its charter, the New York Charter Schools Act of 1998, or any other law relating to the management or operation of the charter school, can bring a complaint to the charter school's board of trustees.

The written complaint to the board of trustees must include: (1) a detailed statement of the complaint or grievance, including the law or regulation allegedly violated, names of individuals at the school who allegedly took the actions at issue, and the time, date, and place of occurrence; (2) relevant correspondence; (3) what action complainant is seeking from the board of trustees; and (4) complainant's name, address, and telephone number. The complainant may leave the complaint or grievance at the school's main office to the attention of the chair of the board of trustees.

The board of trustees must acknowledge receipt of the complaint or grievance within one week, and indicate what steps the board plans to take to investigate the allegations. Complaints and grievances will be addressed at the next board meeting unless the board chair determines that the issue is of such urgency that a special meeting needs to be called. This decision is made at the sole discretion of the chair of the board of trustees.

Prior to the board meeting, the chair of the board of trustees will attempt to collect the evidence needed to assess the merits of the complaint or grievance. At the board meeting, the chair will summarize the issue to the other board members, either during the public meeting or during the executive session, if appropriate. In some instances, a decision may be rendered at the meeting, and in other instances, additional fact-finding and due diligence will be required. The chair will conclude the discussion on the complaint or grievance by either:

- issuing a decision; or
- requiring specific further investigation, including a timeline, and assigning specific individuals to carry out the next steps. The chair will follow through by either writing a decision letter and sending it to the complainant and entering it into the board's minutes at the next meeting, or continuing and concluding the investigation as per the plan, and then issuing a decision letter.

Upon final resolution of a complaint, the board of trustees shall provide to the complainant:

- Its written determination and any remedial action.
- A written explanation of the complainant's right to appeal the determination to the school authorizer.

If, after the board of trustees' final resolution has been transmitted to the complainant, the complainant determines that the board has not adequately addressed the complaint, he or she may appeal to the authorizer, which shall investigate and respond.

Authorizer contact information

SUNY Charter Schools Institute  
SUNY Plaza  
353 Broadway  
Albany, NY 12246

If, after the presentation of the complaint to the authorizer, the complainant determines that the authorizer has not adequately addressed the complaint, they may present that complaint to the State Education Department's Board of Regents, which shall investigate and respond.

Contact information

New York State Education Department  
89 Washington Avenue  
Board of Regents, Room 110 EB  
Albany, New York 12234  
RegentsOffice@mail.nysed.gov

## Internet usage

Ascend charter schools are not liable for the actions of anyone connecting to the Internet; all users shall assume full liability, legal, financial or otherwise, for their actions. Further, each school takes no responsibility for any information or materials transferred through the Internet and makes no guarantees, implied or otherwise, regarding the reliability of the data connection. The school is not liable for any loss or corruption of data while users are on the Internet. The school reserves the right to examine all data stored in the computers with Internet capability to ensure that all users are in compliance with all applicable rules and regulations.

If you do not wish for your student to access the Internet as an educational resource, speak with your child's teacher directly.

### Inappropriate internet use

The following uses of the Internet are unacceptable:

- Use for activities unrelated to the school
- Use in violation of federal, state, or local laws, including sending or receiving copyrighted material without permission
- Commercial use
- Sending patently harassing, intimidating, abusive, or offensive material to or about others, in messages public or private
- Sending chain letters or pyramid schemes, "broadcasting" inappropriate messages to lists or individuals, and any other use that would congest the Internet or otherwise interfere with the work of others
- Sending or receiving pornographic material, inappropriate text files, or files dangerous to the integrity of the network
- Vandalizing, defined as any deliberate attempt to change files not belonging to the user or to harm or destroy the work, systems, or data of another user, including uploading or creating computer viruses
- Engaging in the illegal distribution of software ("pirating")
- Knowingly using another person's password, misrepresenting one's identity, or giving one's own password to others
- Failing, when downloading information, to comply with any associated terms or conditions specified by the supplier of that information
- Expressing personal views or opinions and failing to identify them as one's own and not those of the school
- Circumventing security measures on school or remote computers or networks

## E-mail

Over time, students may access their school's e-mail system through a universal school password; however, the system belongs to the school and all e-mail messages are school records. No student should have any expectation of privacy relative to his or her use of the Internet or e-mail. The school reserves the right, for legitimate school purposes, to access the contents of students' electronic communications without regard to content, and to conduct periodic, unannounced inspections of

e-mail communications.

## Social media

Social networking has become an integral part of many lives, and we recognize and respect the value of such outlets for receiving and sharing information and developing personal and professional connections. Whether to permit a child to access social media is a family decision, but most social media sites prohibit those younger than 13 from participating and students may not connect with any such sites at school. Should your student engage in social networking outside of school, he or she should espouse the same values and behaviors online as offline in the school building:

- Be a friend, not a bully, and keep things positive
- Be honest
- Accept responsibility for mistakes and try to make them right
- Remember that quality matters and it is difficult if not impossible to erase an online footprint fully
- Think about the consequences of your actions, including your posts
- All members of the Ascend community are asked to abide by the following guidelines in the use of social media:
  - Be clear that you are speaking for yourself, and not on behalf of Ascend or the school
  - Respect copyright, fair use, and other disclosure laws
  - Use respectful language, and be careful to avoid language that could be viewed as insulting by readers
  - Do not share confidential or proprietary information of Ascend or the school
  - Do not share any information about students, including photographs, contact information, names of family members, or anything else specific to any student enrolled in the network
  - Do not disparage Ascend or the school community

## General protections

Staff members are not permitted to “friend” or “follow” students via social media.

Students should bear in mind the risks of the online realm, never share secrets online, and keep passwords and all personal information private.

There are two important federal laws designed to protect children online. The Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) was enacted in 1998 to protect students under 13 from having their personal information collected without the consent of a parent or guardian. COPPA is the reason many social networking sites require participants to be 13 or older. The Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA) was enacted in 2000, and it requires that schools provide Internet filtering to prevent student access to offensive content. Ascend Public Charter Schools has installed such a filter and has adopted a CIPA-compliant Internet safety policy. For a copy of the policy, please contact the school office.

## Non-discrimination

Ascend Public Charter Schools welcome all students equally. All students will be treated as individuals and different treatment based on actual or perceived race, color, ethnicity, national origin, citizenship status, sex, sexual orientation, gender, disability, religion or any other characteristic protected by local, state, or federal law will not be tolerated. Anyone who feels that he or she has been treated differently on any such basis should speak with a counselor/social worker, who will apprise the school director of all reports. Anyone who raises any concerns of discrimination on any basis will be free from retaliation for raising such a concern.

## Dignity for all students policy

Ascend Public Charter Schools is committed to providing safe and productive learning environments in which all students are treated with respect and dignity. In accordance with New York State's Dignity for All Students Act, each school will promptly address all incidents of harassment and/or discrimination of or by any student enrolled at an Ascend school. This includes bullying, taunting, or intimidation in all their myriad forms.

**Students' Rights.** No student shall be subjected to harassment or bullying by employees or students on school property or at a school function. Additionally, no student shall be subject to discrimination based on the student's actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender, or sex, by school employees or students on school property or at a school function. Harassment may include, among other things, the use, both on and off school property, of information technology such as email, instant messaging, blogs, chat rooms, pagers, cell phones, gaming systems and social media websites to harass or threaten others. This type of harassment is referred to as cyber bullying, and it is considered a form of harassment, like bullying.

Further, each school reserves the right to discipline students, consistent with our Code of Conduct, who engage in the harassment of students off school property under circumstances where such off-campus conduct: 1) affects the educative process; 2) actually endangers the health and safety of Ascend students; or 3) is reasonably believed to pose a danger to the health and safety of our students within the educational system. This includes written and/or verbal harassment, including cyber bullying, which materially and substantially disrupts the work and discipline of the school and/or which school officials reasonably forecast as being likely to materially and substantially disrupt the academic work and culture of the school.

**Dignity Act Coordinator (DAC).** Each school has a designated Dignity Act Coordinator (DAC). The DAC is trained to handle human relations in the areas of race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender, and sex. The DAC will be accessible to students and employees for consultation and advice. Contact information for each school's DAC will be posted on the school's website.

**Curriculum.** The school shall conduct bullying and cyberbullying education as part of its character education curriculum in every grade. The instruction is age appropriate, and is intended to support maintenance of an environment that is free of bullying, harassment, and discrimination.

**Professional Development.** Each school shall provide annual professional development to all employees on the Dignity for all Students Act and this policy, which shall address the social patterns of harassment, bullying, and discrimination, including but not limited to those acts based on a person's actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender, or sex; the identification and mitigation of harassment,

bullying and discrimination; and strategies for effectively addressing problems of exclusion, bias, and aggression in educational settings.

**Reporting and Investigating.** All staff members are responsible for reporting harassment of which they have been made aware to their immediate supervisor or the school director within one school day, and must file a written report within two school days of the notification.

Any student who believes that s/he is being subjected to harassment, as well as any other person who has knowledge of or witnesses any possible occurrence of harassment, shall report the harassment to any staff member, the DAC, or to the school director. A staff member who witnesses harassment or who receives a report of harassment shall inform the school director.

The school director shall promptly investigate the complaint and take appropriate action which may include, if necessary, referral to the board of trustees or a board designee. Follow-up inquiries, discipline, and/or appropriate monitoring of the alleged harasser and victim shall be made to ensure that harassment has not resumed and that those involved in the investigation of allegations of harassment have not suffered retaliation.

Material incidents of discrimination and harassment on school grounds or at a school function will be reported to the State Education Department as required by law.

**No Retaliation.** Ascend Public Charter Schools prohibits retaliatory behavior directed against complainants, victims, witnesses, and/or any other individuals who participate in the reporting and investigation of allegations of harassment. All complainants and those who participate in the investigation of a complaint in conformity with state law and this policy, who have acted reasonably and in good faith, have the right to be free from retaliation of any kind.

## Distribution of materials unrelated to school

Ascend Public Charter Schools recognize that students have the right to express themselves on school property, which includes the right to distribute, at a reasonable time and place and in a reasonable manner, material that is not sponsored by the school. To protect these individual rights, while preserving the integrity of the educational objectives and responsibilities of the school, all parents and guardians, students, and employees must adhere to the following regulations and procedures regarding the distribution of non-school-sponsored material on school property and at school activities:

- The school administration reviews requests for distribution of materials that are not sponsored by the school on a case-by-case basis
- Distribution of materials deemed inappropriate by the school is prohibited
- The school administration determines the time, place, and manner of the distribution of materials not sponsored by the school, and such materials may not be distributed during a normal school activity

## Board meetings and the Open Meetings Law

All meetings of the schools' board of trustees and all committees of the boards are open to the general public. A calendar of all scheduled board meetings is posted at the school and on the website as soon as it is available.

## Family Educational Rights And Privacy Act (FERPA) - Notice for Directory Information

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), a Federal law, requires that APCS or the school, with certain exceptions, obtain your written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from your child's education records. However, APCS and/or the school may disclose appropriately designated "directory information" without written consent, unless you have advised APCS or the school to the contrary, in accordance with School procedures.

The primary purpose of directory information is to allow APCS and/or the school to include this type of 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), such as APCS, receiving assistance under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (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.

If you do not want ACS or the school to disclose any or all of the types of information designated below as directory information from your child's education records without your prior written consent, you must notify the School in writing by October 1 of each year. A form is available in the main office.

APCS has designated the following information as directory information:

- Student's name
- Address
- Telephone listing
- Electronic mail address
- Photograph
- Date and place of birth
- Major field of study
- Dates of attendance
- Grade level
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- Weight and height of member of athletic teams
- Degrees, honors, and awards received
- The most recent educational agency or institution attended
- Student ID number, user ID, or other unique personal identifier used to communicate in electronic systems but only if the identifier cannot be used to gain access to education

records except when used in conjunction with one or more factors that authenticate the user's identity, such as a PIN, password, or other factor known or possessed only by the authorized user

- A student ID number or other unique personal identifier that is displayed on a student ID badge, but only if the identifier cannot be used to gain access to education records except when used in conjunction with one or more factors that authenticate the user's identity, such as a PIN, password, or other factor known or possessed only by the authorized user.

## Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) - Notification of Rights

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

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days after the day APCS or the school 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 to the school Director that identifies the records they wish to inspect. School Director will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes to be inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA.

Parents or eligible students who wish to ask APCS or the school to amend their child's or their education record should submit a written request to the school Director, clearly identifying the part of the record they want to be changed, and specify why it should be changed. If APCS or the school decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, APCS or 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.

3. The right to provide written consent before APCS or the school discloses personally identifiable information ("PII") from the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to School officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by Ascend Public Charter Schools ("APCS") 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 APCS Board of Trustees. A School official also may include a volunteer, contractor or consultant who, while not employed by the school, performs an institutional service or 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 student volunteering to serve on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee; or a parent, student, 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.

Upon request, APCS or the school will disclose education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll, or is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes of the student's enrollment or transfer; however, APCS or the school will make a reasonable attempt to notify the parent or eligible student of the records request.

4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by APCS or 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

There are disclosures that APCS or the school may make without parental consent. FERPA permits the disclosure of PII from students' education records, without consent of the parent or eligible student, 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 student, §99.32 of the FERPA regulations requires APCS or the school to record the disclosure. Parents and eligible students have a right to inspect and review the record of disclosures.

APCS or the school may disclose PII from the education records of a student without obtaining the prior written consent of the parents or the eligible student –

- To other school officials, including teachers, whom APCS or the school determines to have legitimate educational interests. This includes contractors, consultants, volunteers, or other parties to whom the school has outsourced institutional services or functions;
- To officials of another school, school system, or institution of postsecondary education where the student seeks or intends to enroll, or where the student is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes related to the student's enrollment or transfer;
- 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, 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;
- In connection with financial aid for which the student has applied or which the student 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;
- 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 student whose records were released;
- To organizations conducting studies for or on behalf of APCS or the school, in order to develop, validate, or administer predictive tests; administer student aid programs; or improve

instruction;

- To accrediting organizations to carry out their accrediting functions;
- To parents of an eligible student if the student is a dependent for IRS tax purposes;
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
- To appropriate officials in connection with a health or safety emergency;
- Information APCS or the school has designated as "directory information";
- To an agency caseworker or other representatives of a State or local child welfare agency or tribal organization who is authorized to access a student's case plan when such agency or organization is legally responsible, in accordance with State or tribal law, for the care and protection of the student in foster care placement; and
- To the Secretary of Agriculture or authorized representatives of the Food and Nutrition Service for purposes of conducting program monitoring, evaluations, and performance measurements of programs authorized under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act or the Child Nutrition Act of 1966.

## Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) policy

APCS and each school complies with the Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) This policy is posted in the lobby of each school and on the website. For further information please contact the main office.

## Title I School Parent and Family Engagement Policy

The purpose of this policy is to encourage and facilitate involvement by parents of students participating in Ascend Title I programs in the educational programs and experiences of students. The policy shall provide the framework for organized, systematic, ongoing, informed, and timely parental involvement in relation to decisions about the Title I services within Ascend Public Charter Schools.

### Parent and Family Engagement Policy

Ascend Public Charter Schools invite parental participation in all aspects of Title I educational programming. Parents are involved in the following ways:

- Each school will convene an annual hearing to inform parents of their school's participation in Title I and solicit comment. The administration will post this meeting on the school website and in public locations at the school; and
- All parents will be invited to school events where the school's Title I program will be discussed. Each school will provide parents of participating children:
- Timely information about Title I programs including the types of services their children are being provided, the planned duration of service, and the goals of the services;
- The school performance profile required under section 1116(a)(3);
- The child's individual student assessment results, including an interpretation of such results. Teachers will provide these results and will go over the interpretation with the parent at parent-teacher meetings;
- Description and explanation of the curriculum in use at the school, the forms of assessment used to measure student progress, and the proficiency levels students are expected to meet. Parents will receive this information at the annual Title I hearing and the annual orientation for parents at the beginning of every school year; and
- Opportunities for a regular meeting. The school will be attentive to parents' needs, and will schedule parent meetings as requested and is feasible.

## Policy's availability to parents and annual evaluation

The policy will be translated into English and Spanish. Parents can access the policy at orientations and Title I meetings. The policy is also available on the school website and at the school office.

At least once each school year, a school team will meet to evaluate the content and effectiveness of the policy in increasing parent involvement. The school team will discuss ways to identify strategies for overcoming barriers to parent participation and to increase parent participation. As necessary, policy revisions will be based on the evaluation and will be incorporated into the Parent Involvement Policy.

## Technical assistance and support

Technical support to help parents plan and implement effective parent involvement activities is provided by the school director, deans, director of operations and teachers. Technical assistance will include:

- Assistance in parent outreach through mail and telephone;
- Joint planning of parent activities;
- Staff participation as presenters at Parents Association events;
- Support in preparing parent information such as reading lists, and other resources;
- Assistance in making space available for meetings and events;
- Individual teacher meetings with parents on homework, and other instructional support.

## Title I school parent right to know

All Ascend charter schools are Title I schools. All parents of Title I school students have the right to know the professional qualifications of the teacher(s) and instructional paraprofessional(s) providing services at their school.

In compliance with federal law, upon request, Title I schools are required to provide parents with the credentials of any educator at the school in a timely manner. Ascend charter schools maintain a file that lists all faculty members and their professional qualifications.

If you would like to know the professional qualification information regarding your child's teacher(s) or paraprofessional(s), please call the school to set up an appointment with the school director or school director's designee.

## Ascend Public Charter Schools Locations

### Lower Schools

<p>Brooklyn Ascend Lower School 205 Rockaway Parkway Brooklyn, New York 11212 347.464.7600</p> <p><u>School Director</u> Elena Strauss <a href="mailto:elena.strauss@ascendlearning.org">elena.strauss@ascendlearning.org</a></p>	<p>Brownsville Ascend Lower School 1501 Pitkin Avenue, 1st Floor Brooklyn, New York 11212 347.294.2600</p> <p><u>School Director</u> Billie Quigley <a href="mailto:billie.quigley@ascendlearning.org">billie.quigley@ascendlearning.org</a></p>	<p>Bushwick Ascend Lower School 751 Knickerbocker Avenue Brooklyn, New York 11221 347.294.2500</p> <p><u>School Director</u> Zelda Washington <a href="mailto:zelda.washington@ascendlearning.org">zelda.washington@ascendlearning.org</a></p>
<p>Canarsie Ascend Lower School 9719 Flatlands Avenue Brooklyn, New York 11236 347.713.0100</p> <p><u>School Director</u> Anastasia Michals <a href="mailto:anastasia.michalsr@ascendlearning.org">anastasia.michalsr@ascendlearning.org</a></p>	<p>Central Brooklyn Ascend Lower School 465 E 29th Street Brooklyn, New York 11226 917.246.4800</p> <p><u>School Director</u> Shani Foster <a href="mailto:shani.foster@ascendlearning.org">shani.foster@ascendlearning.org</a></p>	<p>Cypress Hills Ascend Lower School 396 Grant Avenue Brooklyn, New York 11208 929.331.3373</p> <p><u>School Director</u> Lissette Roman <a href="mailto:Lissette.roman@ascendlearning.org">Lissette.roman@ascendlearning.org</a></p>
<p>East Brooklyn Ascend Lower School 396 Grant Avenue Brooklyn, New York 11208 718.714.6025</p> <p><u>School Director</u> Meghan Daly <a href="mailto:meghan.daly@ascendlearning.org">meghan.daly@ascendlearning.org</a></p>	<p>East Flatbush Ascend Lower School 870 Albany Avenue Brooklyn, New York 11203 718.907.9155</p> <p><u>School Director</u> Shannon-re Ismael <a href="mailto:shannonre.ismael@ascendlearning.org">shannonre.ismael@ascendlearning.org</a></p>	<p>Lefferts Gardens Ascend Lower School 870 Albany Avenue Brooklyn, New York 11203 718.744.6099</p> <p><u>School Director</u> Nadine Rubinstein <a href="mailto:nadine.rubinstein@ascendlearning.org">nadine.rubinstein@ascendlearning.org</a></p>

## Middle Schools

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<p>Canarsie Ascend Middle School 744 E 87th Street Brooklyn, New York 11236 347.578.8400</p> <p><u>School Director</u> Tracy DeOliveira-Lewis <a href="mailto:tracy.deoliveiralewis@ascendlearning.org">tracy.deoliveiralewis@ascendlearning.org</a></p>	<p>Central Brooklyn Ascend Middle School 1886 Nostrand Avenue Brooklyn, New York 11226 347.692.8960</p> <p><u>School Director</u> Brittney Jean-Louis <a href="mailto:brittney.jeanlouis@ascendlearning.org">brittney.jeanlouis@ascendlearning.org</a></p>	

## High School

<p>Brooklyn Ascend High School 1501 Pitkin Avenue Brooklyn, New York 11212 347.294.2600</p> <p><u>School Director</u> Livia Angiolillo <a href="mailto:livia.angiolillo@ascendlearning.org">livia.angiolillo@ascendlearning.org</a></p>
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