

# Scholar & Family Handbook

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# Mission and Vision Statements

## **Vision Statement**

DC Scholars exists to close the achievement gap in Washington, DC and to contribute to national efforts to eradicate educational inequity.

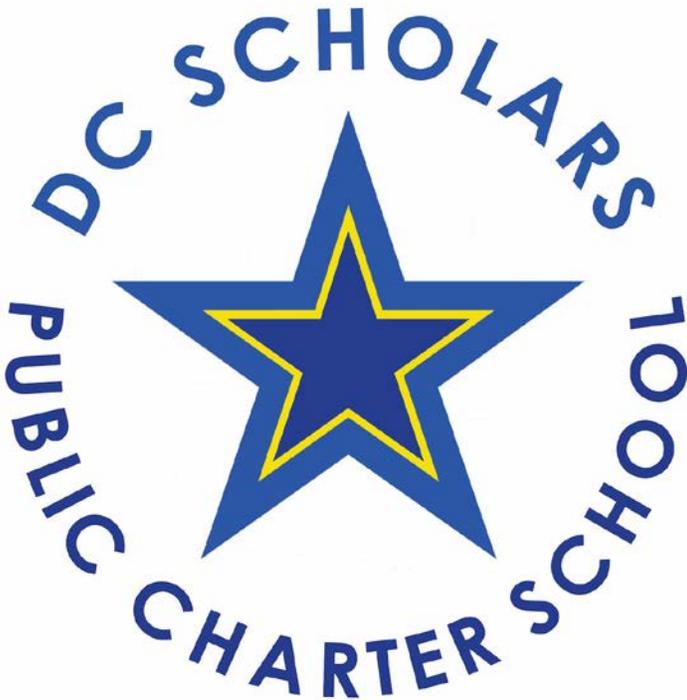
## **Mission Statement**

DC Scholars prepares students for the PATH to college and provides them with the foundation of life skills required to become productive members of their community.

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# SCHOOL DAY



## School Day

8:00 am - 8:25 am	Breakfast	Breakfast is served in the classroom from 8:00 am to 8:30 am. <b>Breakfast is not served after 8:30 am.</b> Students will receive breakfast bars at the front office if they arrive after 8:30 am.
8:25 - 8:30 am	Class Begins	Class starts at 8:25 am for 5th-8 <sup>th</sup> grade students, and 8:30 am for all other scholars. Scholars who have not entered the building by 8:30 am will be marked tardy. After 8:30 am, parents will not be able to walk scholars to class. Pre-School through K will be escorted to class.
10:00am		Students entering the building after 10:00 am must have a letter from a doctor excusing their tardiness or a school pre-approved request from the parent to the school before the student is out explaining why the student will be tardy. Students without documentation are not allowed to enter the building after 10:00 am.
2:45 pm – 3:30 pm	Dismissal preparation and Dismissal	The window for early dismissals ends at 2:45 pm. After this time, no one will be allowed into the building to check out a student until formal dismissal at 3:15pm.
3:30 pm	Late Pickup begins	Scholars must be either off school property or in an approved adult supervised activity up by 3:30 pm. <b>Child Protective Services may be contacted for scholars who have not been picked up by 3:30pm</b> (see below for details).
3:00 pm	Aftercare	Aftercare is a separate program that parents must opt into. Please see program directors for further information.

## Morning Arrival for Scholars

Parents and families of all DC Scholars Public Charter School (DCSPCS) scholars are responsible for making sure scholars arrive to school each day on time. In order to ensure that scholars have a positive start to the school day, scholars are asked to arrive to school at 8:00 am. At 8:00 am, we will greet each scholar at the door. From there, scholars will report to their classroom for a free, healthy breakfast. Preschool thru Kindergarten parents are permitted to walk scholars to class before the 8:30 am bell rings, which indicates instruction has begun. 1<sup>st</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade parents are permitted to walk scholars to the Main Entrance/Atrium, and those scholars will then walk themselves to class. After 8:30 am, all parents must first report to the Main Office if they need to speak with teachers or staff. For information on scheduling a meeting with a teacher during arrival time, please see the Parent Meetings section of this handbook. Any preschool through Kindergarten scholar who arrives after 8:30 am will be escorted by an adult staff member to class.

## Dismissal for Scholars

### Regular Dismissal

DC Scholars Public Charter School dismisses at 3:15 pm. Students must be picked up no later than 3:30 pm. If your child has not been picked up by 3:30 pm and we are unable to reach you or an emergency contact, we may notify Child and Family Services. **Please make sure that you call the Main Office (202-559-6138) in the event of an emergency.** Parents will be asked to meet with the School Director if a scholar is repeatedly picked up late. All parents picking up students after 3:30 pm will need to sign out scholars from the late classroom. Families who pick up scholars more than three times a month from the late room may be subject to fines, revocation of field trip or school event privileges for the student, and other penalties.

### Parent Communications with Student Regarding Dismissal

The Main Office will not be able to communicate information or instructions from parents to students regarding what they should do at dismissal unless there is an emergency. For example, if a parent calls the Main Office during the school day to request that their scholar walk home instead of going to after care, the Main Office cannot guarantee that the information will reach the scholar in time. Parents must communicate all information regarding what their scholars should do at dismissal either directly to the teacher during morning arrival, provide a written note, or a Dojo message. No exceptions.

## Early Dismissal

**We strongly discourage early dismissal, as it cuts into the time we have to instruct your scholar.** Please note that early dismissal is not allowed under the following circumstances:

- After 2:45 pm on a normal dismissal day;
- When scholars are transitioning in hallways;
- Preparing for dismissal;
- During Community Meeting;
- During school-wide weekly assembly;

If a scholar needs to be dismissed early, a parent or guardian must call ahead and state the time and reason for the early dismissal, come to the Main Office to pick up their child, and sign them out with a member of our Main Office staff.

## Aftercare

Afterschool programs at DCSPCS reflect our mission to prepare scholars to attend and succeed academically in middle school, high school, and college. We strive to provide scholars with a foundation of life skills required to become productive members of their communities. Aftercare allows scholars to receive additional academic support if needed, and/or extracurricular experiences that will contribute to their positive growth and development.

## School Closures and Delays

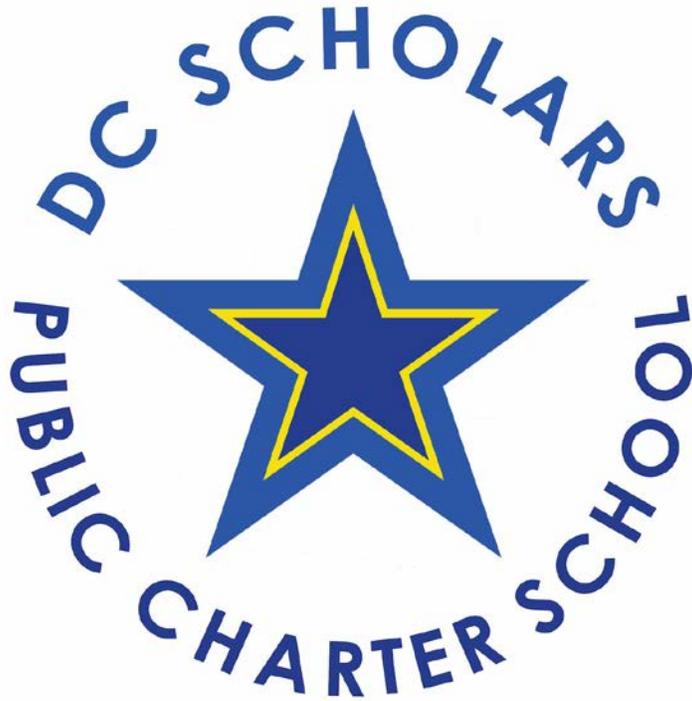
### Delays

- If District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) opens 2 hours late, DCSPCS will open at 10:00 am.

### Emergency School Closings

- If DCPS is closed, DCSPCS will be closed.
- If DCPS is open, DCSPCS is most likely open.
- DCSPCS reserves the right to open, close, delay an opening, or close early **when DCPS does not**. Parents/Guardians will be notified of any such changes via robocall, email, and our social media pages.

# UNIFORM POLICY



## School Uniforms

In order to maintain a focus on learning and build a sense of “team and family,” scholars are required to be in full uniform during the entire time they are in the school building. The DCSPCS uniform consists of khaki bottoms (see table below for options), belt (for 3<sup>rd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> graders), and uniform top (color determine by grade-level).

**Uniform shirts are not sold in the Main Office.** They can only be purchased online at the following link: [bit.ly/DCSPCSUniforms](http://bit.ly/DCSPCSUniforms)

The uniforms can be shipped directly to your home.

*Costs of the uniform shirts are as follows:*

Grades	Shirt Type	Cost
PS – 2 <sup>nd</sup> 	Short Sleeve T-shirt	\$7.00 each or 5 for \$20
PS – 2 <sup>nd</sup> 	Long Sleeve T-shirt	\$10.00 each
3 <sup>rd</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup> 	Short Sleeve Polo Shirt	\$9.50
3 <sup>rd</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup> 	Long Sleeve Polo Shirt	\$18.50
All Grades 	Sweatshirt	\$18.50

Families should contact Customer Service regarding returns or exchanges. They can be reached at [sales@theincredibledesigns.com](mailto:sales@theincredibledesigns.com), or by phone at (202) 669-4867.

If a scholar arrives to school out of uniform, appropriate disciplinary actions will be taken at the school level and parents will be notified by phone call and a letter home.

Middle school scholars will receive separate information about purchasing PE uniforms.

## DC Scholars Public Charter School Uniform Policy

Articles of Clothing (PS – 2)
<p>At DC Scholars Public Charter School, students in grades PS – 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must ARRIVE TO SCHOOL in uniform and remain in uniform during school hours and while attending school field trips or other school-sponsored events.</li> <li>• Who come to school improperly attired will face disciplinary consequences and/or be sent home.</li> </ul>
Shirts
<p>Shirts must be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long or short-sleeve t-shirts with the official DCSPCS logo.</li> </ul>
Sweaters/Sweatshirts
<p>Sweaters/Sweatshirts must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be plain, solid with the official DCSPCS logo.</li> <li>• Completely cover undershirts worn beneath.</li> </ul> <p>The following are NOT PERMITTED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vests, shrugs, sweaters that completely cover DCSPCS uniform T-shirts.</li> </ul>
Pants
<p>Pants must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be plain, solid tan/ khaki uniform-style only. Tan/khaki Shorts and Capri pants are also allowable for our Pre-k – 4<sup>th</sup> grade scholars only.</li> </ul> <p>The following are NOT PERMITTED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cropped/ capri pants or shorts (after summer), cargos with large pockets, any color of denim pants/ jeans, corduroy pants, sweatpants/ yoga pants, skinny-legged or tapered-leg pants, skin tight or excessively large pants.</li> <li>• Any pants with stripes/ patterns/ designs/ writing of any type and excessively worn/ torn/ frayed pants.</li> </ul>
Skirts/ Jumpers
<p>Skirts/ Jumpers must be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plain, solid tan/ khaki uniform-style skirts or jumpers.</li> <li>• With a hem that is no shorter than 3 inches above the knee <u>on all sides when standing</u>.</li> </ul> <p>The following are NOT PERMITTED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skirts or dresses with designs/ stripes/ ruffles/ lace or other trim that is distracting.</li> <li>• Skirts that are skin tight or excessively large, free-flowing, or layered.</li> <li>• Other pants worn under skirts or jumpers.</li> </ul>
Shoes/ Boots/ Sneakers
<p>Shoes/ Boots/ Sneakers must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cover the heel and the toes.</li> <li>• Be covered by pant legs (when applicable).</li> <li>• Boots higher than the ankle can only be worn under pants.</li> </ul>

The following are NOT PERMITTED:

- Flip flops, Croc-style shoes, slides or sling-backs, sandals of any kind, clogs or slippers.
- Any shoe that reveals the heel or toe.

#### Jewelry

Jewelry must be:

- Modest in design.

The following is NOT PERMITTED:

- Jewelry that is distracting from the learning environment.

#### Purses, Bags, and Hats

Students are NOT permitted to carry purses, handbags, and hats during the school day. Do-rags and scarves may not be worn in the building.

#### Coats, Jackets, and Hoodies

Coats, Jackets, and Hoodies are NOT to be worn in the building at any time unless entering or exiting the building. Students may be required to remove coats prior to entering the building for uniform inspection.

### Articles of Clothing (3 – 8)

At DC Scholars Public Charter School, students:

- Must ARRIVE TO SCHOOL in uniform and remain in uniform during school hours and while attending school field trips or other school-sponsored events.
- Who come to school improperly attired will face disciplinary consequences as determined by school leadership and/or be sent home.

#### Shirts

Shirts must be:

- Long or short-sleeved, plain, collared polos with the official DCSPCS logo.
- Tucked in at ALL times while in the building and while representing DCSPCS on a trip or school event.
- Long enough to extend below the belt when tucked in so they remain tucked when sitting and throughout the day.
- Buttoned all the way, save the top button. Only one button should be left open.

#### Sweaters/Sweatshirts

Sweaters/Sweatshirts must:

- Be plain, solid with the official DCSPCS logo.
- Completely cover tucked undershirts worn beneath.

The following are NOT PERMITTED:

- Vests, shrugs, sweaters that do not extend to the waist and sweaters that extend below the hips.

#### Undershirts/ Undergarments

If an undershirt is worn, it must be:

- Solid white or solid black.
- Free of any designs, writing, or other colors.
- Completely tucked in at all times.

The following are NOT PERMITTED:

- Undershirts that are untucked.

#### Pants

Pants must:

- Be plain, solid tan/ khaki uniform-style with flat pockets only.
- Tan/khaki Shorts and Capri pants are allowable in the summer and spring months (August, September, April, May, June) for our Pre-k – 4<sup>th</sup> grade scholars only.
- Extend from the waist to the middle of the top of the foot and be worn at the waist.
- Be worn over boots.
- Be worn with a belt.

The following are NOT PERMITTED:

- Cargos with large pockets, any color of denim pants/ jeans, corduroy pants, sweatpants/ yoga pants, skinny-legged or tapered-leg pants, skin tight or excessively large pants.
- Any pants with stripes/ patterns/ designs/ writing of any type and excessively worn/ torn/ frayed pants.

#### Skirts/ Jumpers

Skirts/ Jumpers must be:

- Plain, solid tan/ khaki uniform-style skirts or jumpers.
- With a hem that is no shorter than 3 inches above the knee on all sides when standing.

The following are NOT PERMITTED:

- Skirts or dresses with designs/ stripes/ ruffles/ lace or other trim.
- Skirts that are skin tight or excessively large, free-flowing, or layered.
- Leggings and other pants worn under skirts or jumpers.

#### Shoes/ Boots/ Sneakers

Shoes/ Boots/ Sneakers must:

- Cover the heel and the toes.
- Be covered by pant legs (when applicable).

The following are NOT PERMITTED:

- Flip flops, Croc-style shoes, slides or sling-backs, sandals of any kind, clogs or slippers.
- Any shoe that reveals the heel or toe, shoes with any logo, design, or other part that is any color other than black or navy blue.

#### Belts

Belts must:

- Be plain black or brown
- Be free of designs, color, and other embellishments.
- Have a buckle that is no larger than a credit card and plain in design.
- Be worn with pants at all times.

#### Jewelry

Jewelry must be:

- Modest in design.

The following is NOT PERMITTED:

- Jewelry that is distracting from the learning environment.

#### Purses, Bags, and Hats

Students are NOT permitted to carry large purses/bags, and hats during the school day. Do-rags and scarves may not be worn in the building. The only EXCEPTION is as follows:

- Scholars may carry a small handbag that is no larger than half a sheet of paper.

#### Coats, Jackets, and Hoodies

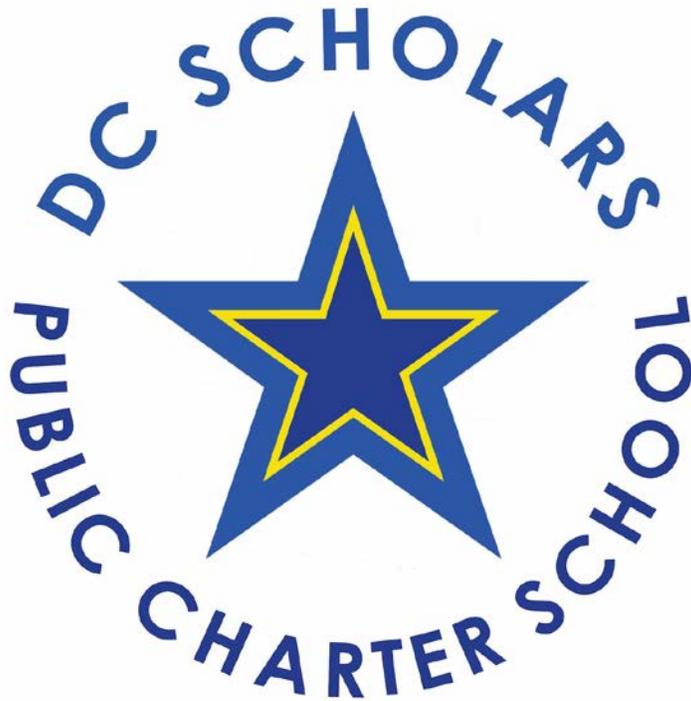
Coats, Jackets, and Hoodies are NOT to be worn in the building at any time unless entering or exiting the building. Students may be required to remove coats prior to entering the building for uniform inspection.

## Religious Consideration

At DC Scholars Public Charter Schools, we:

- Believe that students may dress in headgear or other garments for religious purposes.
- Require the parent/ guardian to submit a written request to the Chief of Staff preferably at the beginning of the year, to obtain written consent for this religious consideration.

# GENERAL SCHOOL POLICIES



## Scholar Attendance

Attending school is a critical part of your child's development. Although we have amazing teachers and awesome instruction, none of it can make a difference in your scholar's education if he or she is absent from school.

DC Scholars Public Charter Schools considers unexcused absences from school to be a serious matter. Not only does it impede the progress of your child, it wastes valuable resources allocated for your child's education. *We will strictly enforce our attendance policies this year so that we can be in the best position to raise our scholars' achievement.*

### Tardies and Absences

Tardies (arriving after 8:30 am) and absences are only excused for illness, medical and dental appointments, family emergencies, or religious reasons. In order for the absence to be excused, families must provide written documentation (described below).

Parents and families will receive a weekly letter or report on Fridays indicating the number of tardies, excused, and unexcused absences that their scholar has accrued. Families are expected to carefully review this report and to submit any corrections the Main Office **within 5 business days. This is required by DC Law – no exceptions.**

Scholars who are absent, whether excused or unexcused, cannot attend or participate in any school-sponsored activities occurring on the day of the absence.

### Extended Absences

Please inform the school and your child's teachers of any extended absences as soon as you are aware of them. If a long-term absence from school due to medical or other valid reasons is required, please contact the appropriate School Director. Every effort will be made to resolve the situation in a manner suitable to all.

### Excessive Absences/Truancy

Once your child has reached 10 unexcused absences (or 15 if your scholar is over 14 years old), **DCSPCS is required by law to automatically report the scholar as truant to D.C. Child and Family Services (CFSA).** At 15-20 unexcused absences, we must report the scholar to CFSA again.

DC Scholars Public Charter School reserves the right to unenroll or retain any student with **20 or more full-day, consecutive, unexcused** absences, as per the School Attendance Clarification Amendment Act of 2015, which can be found at <http://lims.dccouncil.us/Legislation/B21-0508?FromSearchResults=true>. If unenrolled, the scholar's family will have to find a new school in which to enroll the scholar, and the scholar will lose his/her seat at DCSPCS for the following school year.

Attendance home visits can be conducted at the discretion of the school when a situation warrants. At the home visit, a meeting will be scheduled to address attendance.

## Excused Absences Documentation

All tardies, absences, and early dismissals will be reported as unexcused unless the school receives the following official documentation:

- Doctor's note specifying the excused day(s)
- School-approved activity
- Parent note indicating a religious holiday
- Parent note indicating there is a family funeral – the child will be excused only for the day of the funeral unless extenuating circumstances apply
- Parent note indicating there is a family emergency – emergencies include house fires, house floods, or incidents of violence in the home
- Court documents mandating a court appearance
- An official, approved notice signed by DCSPCS' Chief Of Staff

Documentation must be provided within 5 days of the absence – **no exceptions**. Please see the front office if you have any questions.

## Early Dismissal & Appointments

Early dismissals (dismissal before the end of the school day) are unexcused, unless one of the reasons above applies.

All early dismissals are made from the office. Please try to arrange appointments for after-school or on days when school is closed. Early dismissals, whether excused or unexcused will count towards a scholar's unexcused absence total.

## Make-Up work Upon Return to School

Upon returning to school, scholars must provide the main office official documentation (i.e. doctor's letter) for the absence. The office will then provide a pass, to be signed by the scholar's teachers, excusing or accepting any made-up work. At the end of the day the pass must be turned into the attendance counselor and kept in a file with the excuse notes.

## School Visitors

### Visitors, Meetings & Volunteers

All visitors between 8:30 am and 2:45 pm, including parents, **must** sign in at the Security Desk and be given a visitor pass before going elsewhere in the building. Due to our focus on academic and behavioral excellence, we ask that parents and other visitors not congregate in hallways, or do anything that may disrupt instruction or discipline.

## DCSPCS Staff, Family, and Visitors Code of Conduct

A shared sense of responsibility toward our community helps to ensure that the highest level of learning takes place for our scholars. The following guidelines have been established to help maximize academic growth, minimize distractions while at school, protect scholars and staff, and maintain the highest level of safety at all times. Careful attention to these DC Scholars Family and Guest norms allows us to accomplish our educational mission together.

All DCSPCS Community Members – scholars, family members, staff, and guests – are expected to act in a civil manner at all times, both on school property and at any time they are participating in a DCSPCS event. This expectation extends to appropriate language (no cursing or inappropriate content), positive demeanor, and respectable attire.

By upholding and maintaining a civil manner at all times, scholars are given a prime example of what positive and appropriate behavior looks like from productive citizens in the community, as well as the opportunity to attend a place of knowledge that is safe and secure. Rude or disruptive behavior and unsafe or irresponsible activity are directly contradictory to the values of our community and provide a poor example for our scholars.

Any visitors, including parents or guardians, who engage in disruptive, threatening, or inappropriate behavior towards any scholar or staff member while on school property can be removed or permanently barred from the building. We also reserve the right to call the police or file a restraining order. Disruptive, threatening, or inappropriate behavior includes:

- Endangering the physical safety of another by the use or threat of force
- Engaging in behavior that disrupts classroom activity or endangers or threatens to endanger the health, safety, or welfare of others
- Intoxication
- Failure to model and support DCSPCS values
- Interrupting a class while in session
- Refusing to leave a classroom when asked to do so by the teacher
- Cursing, screaming, or being rude to any DCSPCS staff member or scholar
- Speaking disrespectfully
- Using profanity or raising of one's voice
- Making threats of bodily harm, violence, or any type of terrorism, bombing, shooting, or murder
- Refusing to identify oneself to DCSPCS staff members
- Failure to comply with staff instructions
- Trespassing on school property while school is not in session

## School Security

DCSPCS has contracted security services for the 2018-19 school year. The security team is responsible for:

- checking in guests at our main entrance;
- monitoring visitors and incidents via our security cameras;
- acting as support with arrival and dismissal; and
- providing logistical support in the case of a school-based emergency.

Security services last for the duration of the school day, until the end of our Afterschool/Aftercare program at 6:00 pm.

**Guards are not armed and do NOT interact with scholars;** school-based leaders or their designees are the sole interventionists for our scholars.

## Parent Meetings

We encourage our parents and families to have frequent contact with their scholars' teachers. To minimize interruptions to classroom instruction, parents will not be allowed to meet with teachers during instructional times. Teachers are happy to schedule, in advance, times to meet before or after school, where possible. Feel free to email teachers as necessary to schedule an appointment. Teachers and administrators need at least 24 hours notice before a meeting can be scheduled. Your teacher or administrator will confirm your appointment with a response.

## Volunteers

DC Scholars Public Charter School welcomes parents as visitors as well as partners. We are always grateful for volunteers who can spend time with us during the day. This can be rewarding not only for the children, but for you as well. We recognize that not all parents have the time to spend helping out during the day. We are grateful for any time you can give us. Please call the office in advance to plan volunteering days. Volunteers may be required to undergo fingerprinting and other security measures prior to starting volunteer activities.

## Electronic Devices

Scholars are permitted to carry a cell phone to school for emergency use only. Phones must be turned OFF prior to entering the building and turned in to the front office or a designated adult. Any other electronic devices must also be OFF while in the building. If any electronic device is not turned in and is visible or making noise during school hours, it will be taken and held in the Main Office until a parent/guardian picks it up.

Whether turned in or not, the school assumes NO responsibility for any electronic devices brought into the building. Any devices that are lost, stolen, broken, or otherwise damaged or abused while on school property or during school-sponsored events are the sole responsibility of the scholar and his/her family. No exceptions.

## School Field Trips

As a part of enrollment, all families complete a universal field trip permission slip. We will provide notifications in advance when and where field trips are scheduled. Family chaperones are permitted, but all chaperones have to be cleared through a background check by the Main Office, and they must sign a behavior agreement before being permitted to accompany scholars on trips.

DC Scholars Public Charter School reserves the right to exclude scholars and their parent/guardian from any field trip based on student behavior and/or attendance. In addition, there may be other requirements for your scholar to be eligible for a field trip. This specific information will be communicated by the teacher or administrator proctoring the trip. You will be notified in advance of the day of the field trip if your scholar is not eligible to participate. Once a scholar has paid for a field trip, refunds will only be given if DCSPCS does not allow the scholar or parent/guardian to participate.

## Drug Free Environment

Scholars and families who attend DCSPCS, participate in DCSPCS programs and events, and/or visit DCSPCS while under the influence of drugs or alcohol present a safety hazard to themselves and the DCSPCS community. Moreover, the presence of drugs or alcohol in the school limits our ability to perform at the highest levels and provide the best possible educational service. Accordingly, DCSPCS is committed to maintaining a drug free environment. The following conduct is prohibited and may result in disciplinary actions up to and including suspension/expulsion/removal from premises:

- Possession, transfer, sale, distribution, use or solicitation of illegal drugs on DCSPCS property (including the parking lot and adjacent areas);
- Possession (in unopened containers) or use of alcohol on DCSPCS property (including adjacent areas) or during working hours;
- Visiting the school or participating in any school related programs under the influence of alcohol or drugs;
- Visiting the school or participating in any school related programs with a detectable amount of any illegal drug or its metabolites in the scholar or parent's body;
- Abuse of prescribed drugs: Prescribed drugs will be allowed only when taken in accordance with a physician's prescription, and where such use will not adversely affect the ability of an individual to properly and safely perform his or her duties. Any scholar or parent who is taking prescription drugs that may affect his/her ability to behave properly and safely should inform the School Leader before or immediately upon entering the school. Abuse of prescribed drugs will not be tolerated and will be treated in the same fashion as use of illegal drugs.

DC Scholars Public Charter School further reserves the right to take any and all appropriate and lawful actions necessary to enforce this drug- and alcohol-free environment policy including, but not limited to, the inspection of DCSPCS-issued lockers, desks or other suspected areas of concealment, as well as a scholar's or parent's personal items. DCSPCS reserves the right to alter, eliminate, or otherwise change any policy, without notice, at any time.

## **School Emergencies**

Please notify the Chief of Staff immediately if an emergency occurs. Emergencies include, but are not limited to, all accidents, medical situations, bomb threats, other threats of violence, or the smell of smoke. If the Chief of Staff is unavailable, contact the nearest DCSPCS Leadership Team member. In the event of an emergency, parents and families will be notified via text, phone call, and/or e-mail. Please make sure you have accurate contact information on file with the Main Office at all times to ensure we are able to reach you.

## **School Computer and Internet Acceptable Use Policy**

DC Scholars Public Charter School provides its employees and scholars ("users") with access to computing equipment, systems, and local network functions such as e-mail and the Internet. Through this policy, DCSPCS intends to: (a) prevent user access over its computer network to, or transmission of, inappropriate material via Internet, electronic mail or other forms of direct electronic communications; (b) prevent unauthorized access and other unlawful online activity; (c) prevent unauthorized online disclosure, use, or dissemination of personal identification information of minors; and (d) comply with the Children's Internet Protection Act [Pub. L. No. 106-554 and 47 USC 254(h)].

For the full description, see Appendix A.

## **Harassment Policy Statement**

DC Scholars Public Charter School strives to provide a safe, positive learning environment for scholars. Therefore, harassment in any form is not tolerated. DCSPCS prohibits all forms of unlawful harassment of scholars and third parties by all scholars and staff members, contracted individuals, vendors, volunteers, and third parties in the school. DCSPCS encourages scholars and third parties who have been harassed to promptly report such incidents to the designated employees. For the full description, see Appendix B.

## **Complaint Resolution Policy**

If a scholar or parent believes that he/she has been subjected to conduct that violates the Policy Prohibiting Harassment and Discrimination or any misconduct by any DCSPCS scholar, employee, vendor, parent, or other business contact, the individual is encouraged to immediately report the incident using the complaint process.

For purposes of this policy, a scholar can be represented by him/herself and/or his/her legal parent or guardian. Parents are defined as the legal guardian of a DCSPCS Scholar.

For the full description of both the Grievance Policy and the Policy Prohibiting Harassment, including the complaint process, see Appendix B.

## Scholar Records Retention Policy

In Accordance with section 2606.1 of the DCMR, a scholar's cumulative record folder must be maintained, and it may only be destroyed 80 years following the scholar's graduation, transfer, or withdrawal from DCSPCS. Additionally, records that meet the above-mentioned criteria can be made available, upon written request from a parent (or the scholar after his/her 18<sup>th</sup> birthday), within a reasonable amount of time.

While scholars are enrolled in DCSPCS, the School Leader or his or her designee periodically reviews and destroys misleading, outdated or irrelevant information contained in the cumulative record folder, provided that the adult scholar and his or her parent are notified in writing and are given an opportunity to receive the information or a copy of it prior to its destruction. A copy of the notice is then placed in the cumulative record folder.

Documents other than those in the cumulative record folder are scheduled to be destroyed five years after the scholar transfers, graduates, or withdraws from the school system. However, documents related to suspensions must be destroyed at the end of the school year immediately following the conclusion of the suspension period, as required by § 2504.7 of the DCMR.

In cases of scholar transfers from one school to another (even to a private school), the DCSPCS practice is to transfer the original hard copy to the new school and retain a copy of the file for DCSPCS' own records.

### Withdrawal

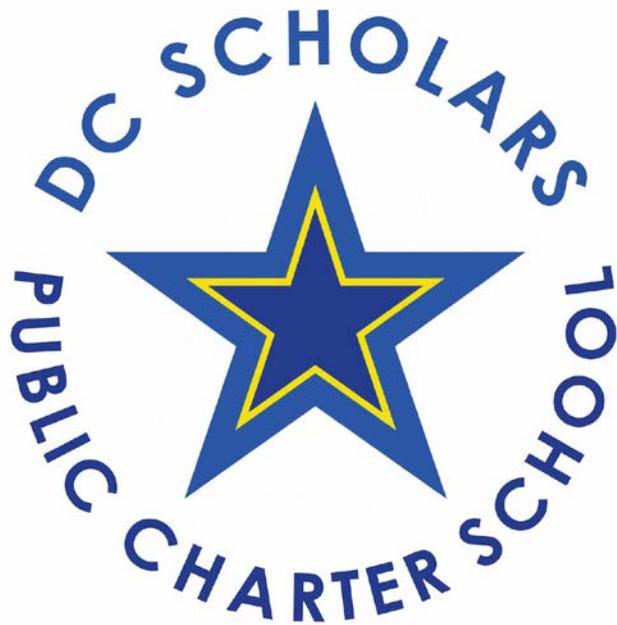
If a parent/guardian decides to withdraw a scholar from DCSPCS, he/she must go to the Main Office to complete a withdrawal form. Then, the parent/guardian must visit the new school and complete a records request. Records request should be sent to DCSPCS using the contact information below.

Email: [info@dcscholars.org](mailto:info@dcscholars.org)

Fax: 202-618-9396

Phone: 202-559-6138

# EARLY CHILDHOOD SPECIFIC POLICIES



## Early Childhood School Readiness Policy

We believe our early childhood scholars are getting a head start on their path to college by joining our school community at such a young age. DCSPCS defines school readiness as a child's ability to function in an age-appropriate manner in a school setting in the following ways:

- Expresses necessary needs and feelings;
- Follows directions given within a reasonable amount of time;
- Performs all necessary toileting needs independently (i.e. fully potty trained and does not require adult assistance in the restroom);
- Feeds themselves in an age appropriate manner;
- Dresses themselves in an age appropriate manner;
- Separates from parent with minimum levels of anxiety;
- Acts and reacts safely with peers and adults. Unsafe behavior in a classroom setting includes acts of physical harm to themselves, their peers, and their teachers; running away from school staff; and tantrums that exceed a reasonable duration of time and intensity; and
- Self-regulates by using age appropriate coping mechanisms (i.e. the ability to soothe self when angry, tired, or emotional).

### Transition to DCSPCS

Prior to making a decision regarding school readiness, the school will identify any specific area(s) of concern for scholars during the first four weeks of school. For scholars with persistent transition concerns, teachers and parents will meet to discuss these areas of concern and develop a School Readiness Action Plan (SRAP) to address them. The SRAP will include the following items:

- Readiness concern(s);
- Readiness goal(s);
- Specific teacher and family actions to address concerns; and
- Dates and times for progress report meeting and final decision meeting.

Once the SRAP is underway, teachers and families will meet weekly to check in on the scholar's progress towards his/her readiness goal(s). If a child is not making progress or his/her behaviors intensify despite the plan, the child will be deemed not prepared to function appropriately within a DCSPCS early childhood classroom. A final parent meeting will be held at which point the school will recommend that the parent(s) continue to work on school readiness at home or at a childcare setting, rather than a school setting, for the remainder of the school year. Parent(s) will be encouraged to reapply for the following year when the child is prepared to function in an age-appropriate manner in a school setting. *Please note that school readiness decision is determined by the school director and is dependent upon the severity of the concern(s).*

## Morning Arrival Policy

Parents and families of all DC Scholars Public Charter School scholars are responsible for making sure scholars arrive to school each day on time and are picked up on time. To ensure that scholars have a positive start to the school day, scholars are asked to arrive to school at 8:00am. At 8:00am, we will greet each scholar at the door. From there, scholars will report to their classroom for a free, healthy breakfast. Preschool through Kindergarten parents are permitted to walk scholars to class before the 8:30 am bell rings, which indicates that instruction has begun. Scholars that arrive after instruction has begun will receive a breakfast bar and walk with a staff member to their classroom. After 8:30am, all parents must report to the Main Office if they would like to speak with teachers or school staff.

## Early Childhood Toileting Policy

Scholars must be potty trained before beginning at DCSPCS. While we recognize that young scholars have accidents, we cannot spend valuable learning time changing clothes and attending to the individual bathroom needs of all scholars in a classroom. All preschool and prekindergarten classes take several bathroom breaks each day and have frequent opportunities to use the restroom at will during the day. However, as our scholars continue to grow and develop they may occasionally have an accident. For this reason, we require that all families send 2 changes of uniform clothes in a labeled Ziploc bag to school. One change of clothes will remain in your child's cubby and the other in his/her book bag. We do not provide extra clothes for scholars at school. If she has an accident and does not have a change of clothes, a family member will be called to bring the appropriate items.

Accidents should be a rare occurrence. Our scholars are given frequent bathroom breaks, and most classrooms have built-in bathrooms. Families of scholars with frequent accident challenges will be asked to meet with the school director to address the issue. **Scholars with several accidents (5 or more) in a month will be required to have additional assistance from a family member during a school day or stay at home to address those potty-training issues.**

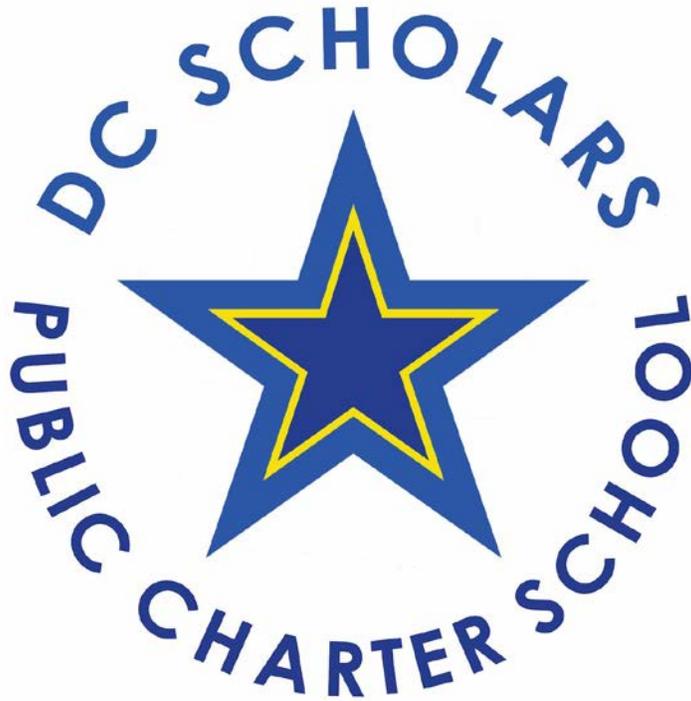
In the event of an accident, teachers will provide students with a change of clothes from their cubby/backpack and provide a bag for soiled clothes, body wipes and paper towels (if needed) and will direct students to put on their clean clothes and put bag of soiled clothes in their backpacks.

In the event that teachers need to help the youngest students change, it will be done in the following manner: while wearing gloves, teachers will help unbutton/button pants, remove shoes and socks, and pull down pants from the feet. **Teachers will not, at any time, touch any area of a student's body that would be covered by a bathing suit or close the bathroom stall door with a teacher and student inside.**

## **Appletree Partnership**

DCSPCS is in partnership with AppleTree Institute. As part of the regular program, your child's teachers will assess your child's academic and social skills. AppleTree Institute reviews the data internally and with your child's teacher to improve instruction. De-identified data are also shared with staff, consultants, educators, and in educational reports. Within this partnership, AppleTree Institute reserves the right to photograph/videotape students, faculty, staff and facilities in connection with the activities of the school and to reproduce such images to promote, publicize, or explain the school or its activities. These images may appear in any of a variety of formats and media now available or that may be available in the future, including but not limited to print, broadcast, videotape, and electronic/on-line media. Parents who do not wish to have their child included in the above coverage should inform the principal in writing.

# ACADEMIC STRUCTURES & SUPPORTS



## Our Teaching Philosophy

At DC Scholars Public Charter School we believe that all children are capable of achieving at high levels. In order to ensure all students achieve, we hold ourselves and our students to the highest expectations and tailor our instruction to meet each student's individual needs. Our program is strongly shaped by the belief that frequent assessment drives instruction and allows teachers to target scholars' instructional needs, leading to development of effective interventions and accelerated mastery of requisite skills. Our primary measure of success is scholar performance on the ANet and MAP assessments, F&P, and curriculum aligned, standards based assessments. The specific content of our courses varies by subject area and grade. Each course is designed by our teachers around the summative assessments.

### School-Wide Achievement Goals

At DC Scholars Public Charter School, our school-wide goals, which drive scholar achievement, are the following:

- **Grades PS-1:** All scholars will move at least 1.5 years of growth in Reading and Math.
- **Grades 2-8:** All scholars demonstrate more than a year of growth in Reading and Math as measured by F&P, Lexile, and MAP assessments

### Assessments and Data

There are a number of assessments that scholars will take throughout the year. Scholar growth and achievement data will be communicated with parents at multiple times throughout the year via report cards and conferences and at the conclusion of summative assessments. For detailed information on the grading and retention policy, see Appendix D.

### Homework

Class time alone is not sufficient for scholars to master our content and skill objectives. It is essential that scholars continue their learning at home by reading independently and completing a reading log, and by completing written, standards-based homework. Assignments help scholars efficiently apply and reinforce their knowledge. Homework will be collected daily (MS) or weekly (ES). The teacher may keep a visual homework tracker in the room so scholars are aware of their homework completion rate.

#### Effective Homework Strategies to Help Your Scholar at Home

- Set aside a specific time each night to do homework.
- Make sure there is a quiet space for scholars to complete their homework.
- Make sure there are pens, pencils and paper available for your child to complete their homework.
- Help your child get started by asking them what they have for homework and read the directions for their assignments with them.
- Check your child's agenda book to make sure they have done all of their homework and that they have fully attempted every assignment to the best of their ability.
- Help your child organize their homework binder so that it is neat and they know where to find their homework the next day.
- Contact your child's teacher if you feel that your child is having difficulty on his/her homework assignments.

## Promotion/Retention Policy

Scholar progress is continually shared with parents using Class Dojo, informal check-ins, SLCs, progress reports, and assessment score reports. Formal family teacher conferences are held twice a year at the end of the first and second trimesters. We encourage all parents to communicate with teachers frequently about their scholar’s progress. Scholars who do not meet grade level expectations may be recommended for retention based upon the following criteria:

### Attendance

- Scholars who are absent from school 20 days or more automatically qualify for retention.
- Because preschool is not mandatory, scholars who are absent from school 20 days or more may be unenrolled from the school.

### Course Grades

- PreS-PreK: Non-applicable
- K-2: Scholars who receive a grade of 2 or below in math or literacy may be considered for retention.
- 3-8: Scholars who receive a final grade of D or below in math or literacy may be considered for retention.

### Assessment and Growth

- PreK: Students are assessed 5 times a year using the Every Child Ready Assessment for literacy and math. Scholars are evaluated on a 4-tier color-coded system.



- Students who are not “On Track” (Green) by progress monitoring 3 in the following categories may be considered for retention.
  - Math: Rational counting, Quantification, Number symbols
  - Literacy: Rhyming, Name writing, Letter identification and sound
- K-8: Scholars are assessed using a variety of formal assessments. Baseline scores are established in the beginning of the fall semester and progress is measured at 2-3 additional points throughout the year.
  - Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark (F&P) – 1:1 assessment of scholars’ instructional and independent reading levels
  - Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) – assessment that compares scholars’ academic progress and growth compared to other students their age

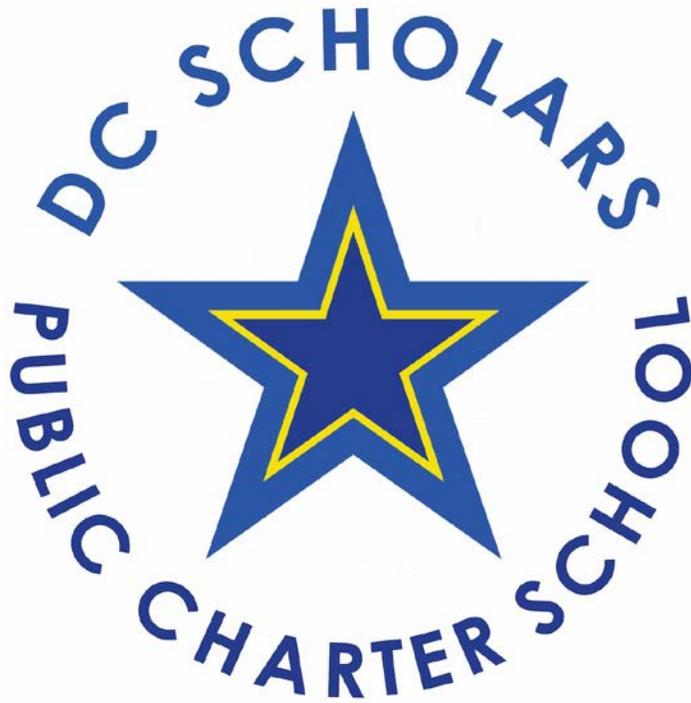
F&P – At the end of 4 <sup>th</sup> grade, scholars are expected to read on a level S. Scholars reading on or below the level listed below will be considered for retention		MAP – Scholars who are in the bottom 25 <sup>th</sup> percentile will be considered for retention
K	A	
1 <sup>st</sup>	C	

2 <sup>nd</sup>	G	
3 <sup>rd</sup>	K	
4 <sup>th</sup>	N	

### **Absent Work Policy: Making Up Work When Absent**

Absences are highly discouraged at DCSPCS as missing instructional time seriously impacts scholar achievement. When a scholar is absent, they are required to complete the classwork and homework that they missed for the day. In the event that a scholar needs instruction in order to complete the work, that scholar should be encouraged to work out a time with his/her teacher individually to receive instruction. If a scholar is absent, parents are encouraged to ensure the scholar receives all of his/her missed work within 1 school day. A scholar will be given 1 day to complete missed assignments. In the event of an extended absence, parents are asked to speak with the School Director to discuss the absence. The School Director will then collaborate with the instructors to develop an appropriate plan for making up missed work and receiving missed instruction.

# SPECIAL EDUCATION POLICIES & STRUCTURES



## **Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)**

DC Scholars Public Charter School ensures that all children with disabilities who enroll in the school have the right to a free appropriate public education (FAPE). This includes children with disabilities who are advancing from grade to grade. FAPE shall also be provided to children who have been suspended or expelled from school in accordance with Title 34 of Federal Regulations (34 CFR) 300.300 (a) and 300.121 (e). Special education and related services are provided at public expense, under public supervision and direction, and without charge. They meet the standards for the District of Columbia and are provided in conformity with an individualized education program (IEP) that meets IDEA requirements of 34 CFR300.340-300.350.

Regulations also require that students with disabilities have opportunities to participate with other students in nonacademic settings such as meals, recess, and extracurricular activities, to the maximum extent appropriate. These students must also be considered for inclusion in extracurricular activities and school-sponsored events, such as student government, school sports events, and after-school clubs.

## **Child Find**

### **Introduction**

Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), DC Scholars Public Charter School (DC Scholars) is responsible for conducting continuous efforts intended to identify, locate, and evaluate all children with disabilities enrolled in DC Scholars, including children with disabilities who are homeless, children who are in the custody of the District of Columbia Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) or committed to the District of Columbia Youth Rehabilitation Services Agency (DYRS), children who are making progress grade to grade, and highly mobile children, who are in need of special education and related services. These duties are called Child Find responsibilities. This policy establishes procedures for fulfilling Child Find responsibilities at DC Scholars and applies to all children enrolled in DC Scholars and all staff employed by DC Scholars. DC Scholars staff members are expected to know and act in accordance with the requirements and procedures established by this policy. DC Scholars trains staff on an annual basis to ensure staff understand and execute Child Find responsibilities. Staff receive training and support from the Student Support Team as-needed based on revisions to this policy and relevant changes to local or federal regulations.

### **Points of Contact**

Parents are encouraged to speak with any members of the DC Scholars staff if they have concerns about their child. Parents and other stakeholders may choose to contact one of the following DC Scholars leadership team members to discuss Child Find, the referral process, and the availability of special education programming at DC Scholars:

Nicole Bryan Interim Head of School <a href="mailto:nbryan@dcscholars.org">nbryan@dcscholars.org</a>	
Jessica Hiltabidel Elementary School Director <a href="mailto:jhiltabidel@dcscholars.org">jhiltabidel@dcscholars.org</a>	Tanesha Dixon Middle School Director <a href="mailto:tdixon@dcscholars.org">tdixon@dcscholars.org</a>
Special Education Coordinator Elementary School Program	Dr. Kenneth Wright Director of Student Support Middle School Program <a href="mailto:kwright@dcscholars.org">kwright@dcscholars.org</a>

Parents and other stakeholders may also choose to contact their child’s teacher(s) to discuss Child Find, the referral process, and the availability of special education programming at DC Scholars.

### **Target Populations**

This policy and DC Scholars Child Find efforts apply to children who are enrolled in DC Scholars, including children who are:

- Homeless;
- In the custody of the District of Columbia Child and Family Services Agency;
- Committed to the District of Columbia Youth Rehabilitation Services Agency;
- Making progress grade to grade; and
- Highly mobile children.

DC Scholars only serves students in grades Pre-School through 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Although the Child Find Policy extends to students age 22 and younger, students in 8<sup>th</sup> grade are typically between 13 and 15 years old at the time of graduation. This policy extends to any student enrolled at DC Scholars regardless of age.

### **Outreach Efforts**

To ensure the local and school communities are aware of the availability of special education and related services for eligible children with disabilities and the methods for requesting such services, DC Scholars provides public notice through a variety of methods:

- DC Scholars provides information to parents and the school community at school events such as parent-teacher conferences, back-to-school events, summer enrollment events. Information about the Child Find Policy is also located in the annual Scholar and Family Handbook, released in August.
- DC Scholars publishes information and relevant dates in school manuals, calendars, and on its website at [www.dcscholars.org/dcspcs](http://www.dcscholars.org/dcspcs)
- DC Scholars staff provides information to parents during quarterly parent-teacher conferences and upon request during any parent meeting.
- Brochures regarding special education services are available for parents and the public in at the main office. The Director of Student Support, Special Education

Coordinator, and School Counselor also have copies of these materials available upon request.

- Members of the Special Education Team (including leaders, teachers, and related service providers) engage in weekly and monthly check-in meetings with staff members during which reminders about the special education Child Find process are provided.

## **Coordination With Non-Educational District Agencies**

To ensure coordination with appropriate District agencies to facilitate the identification, location, and evaluation of children with disabilities enrolled in DC Scholars, DC Scholars maintains contacts with the following District agencies:

- District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) Early Stages program;
- The Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA);
- Department of Behavioral Health (DBH);

DC Scholars conducts meetings with representatives of the above agencies on an as-needed basis to ensure open and cooperative lines of communication regarding DC Scholars Child Find, referral, and initial evaluation processes and procedures, as well as continuously updating agencies of changes in appropriate points of contact.

DC Scholars may engage with other entities responsible for administering various education, health, and social service programs to children from birth through age 22. Those agencies include but are not limited to: District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS), Department of Human Services (DHS), Department of Healthcare Finance (DHCF), Department of Health (DOH), Department of Behavioral Health (DBH), Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA), and the Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services (DYRS). Coordination with these programs and agencies occur on an as-needed basis

## **Parent Engagement**

Parents may obtain information about the availability of special education and related services through this policy, information posted on our website ([www.dcscholars.org/dcspcs](http://www.dcscholars.org/dcspcs)), or by contacting members of the DC Scholars leadership team.

DC Scholars also maintains written materials for parents, which can be found at the Main Office. DC Scholars staff is required to provide information to parents upon request. Parents may also obtain information from the school during parent-teacher conferences.

## **Special Education Eligibility Process**

The following section describes the Special Education Eligibility Process at DC Scholars. The stages of the eligibility process include referral, data review, consent for evaluations, and eligibility determination. The following section includes DC Scholars policies on the referral, data review, and consent phases of this process. This section also includes an overview of the timeline for this process.

## *Referral*

A referral is documentation provided by the child's parent, or other referral source, which clearly states a request to initiate the Special Education Eligibility Process due to concerns about whether or not a child has a disability and may require special education services.

DC Scholars accepts referrals for initial evaluation from the following persons:

- A student's parent or legal guardian;
- The student, provided that educational rights have transferred to the student; and
- Employees of DC Scholars who have knowledge of the student.

For children under the age of six, DC Scholars also accepts referrals from:

- Pediatricians or other medical professionals, including physicians, hospitals, and other health providers;
- Child development facilities, including day care centers, child care centers, and early childhood programs;
- District agencies and programs, including IDEA Part C programs;
- Community and civic organizations; and
- Advocacy organizations.

Referrals should be made writing; however, oral referrals will also be accepted. Upon receiving an oral referral, a DC Scholars staff member must assist the referral source in documenting the oral referral in writing. Written documentation of an oral referral must be provided within three (3) business days of receipt.

Any DC Scholars staff member may be the recipient of a referral from a parent, a guardian with educational rights, or an external agency. All DC Scholars staff members must accept referrals. Should a staff member receive a referral, he or she must alert the Director of Student Support and/or Special Education Coordinator assigned to their program within 1 business day.

To assist with the referral process, DC Scholars maintains a standard referral form (see appendix A and B) to assist parents and other referral sources in documenting their referral. This form can be obtained from any member of the DC Scholars Student Support Team. The Director of Student Support also maintains a digital file of this referral form.

## *Data Review*

Upon receipt of a referral, DC Scholars shall conduct an analysis of existing data on the student to determine if additional assessments are necessary. Existing data that may be considered may include but is not limited to teacher observations, classroom assessments, schoolwide screenings and assessments, state assessments, student grades and records, parent reports, health records, or data from other interventions. The review of data will be input into the EasyIEP ("SEDS").

## *Consent for Evaluation*

After DC Scholars has received a referral and conducted a data review, DC Scholars must make reasonable efforts to obtain parental consent for an initial evaluation, which includes

attempting to contact the parent at least three (3) times on three (3) different dates using at least two (2) modalities. DC Scholars will provide the parent of a child suspected of having a disability with information about the nature of any additionally required assessment.

*Timeline*

DC Scholars is required to obtain consent for initial evaluation within 30 days of receipt of a referral. DC Scholars is required to complete an initial evaluation and determine if a child is a child with a disability eligible for special education and related services under IDEA within 60 days of receipt of a consent for evaluation.

The 60-day requirement for completing evaluations does not apply if:

- The parent fails or refuses to respond to a request for consent for the evaluation;
- The parent of the child repeatedly fails or refuses to produce the child for the evaluation; or
- The child enrolls in another LEA prior to the determination of eligibility.

### Screenings

DC Scholars implements a comprehensive screening process to determine if a child should be referred for an evaluation, the result of which is provided to the child’s parent. Screenings utilize assessments and tools that are generally applied across the entire student population. Parent consent is not required for DC Scholars to conduct a uniform, schoolwide screening. A screening conducted by a DC Scholars teacher or specialist to determine appropriate instructional strategies for curriculum implementation does not constitute an evaluation for eligibility for special education and related services and does not require parent consent.

DC Scholars screenings must not delay the initial evaluation of a student who may be a child with a disability in need of special education and related services.

Screenings at DC Scholars include but are not limited to the following assessments:

	Literacy	Math
PS-PK	Every Child Ready: Language and Literacy	Every Child Ready: Math
K-1	NWEA MAP: Reading Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment AIMSWEB	NWEA MAP: Math
2-4	NWEA MAP: Reading Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment	NWEA MAP: Math
5-8	NWEA MAP: Reading	NWEA MAP: Math

## Response To Intervention

Response to Intervention programs at DC Scholars include the following steps: student data review, referral for additional support, ongoing progress monitoring, and parent engagement. This process is facilitated by teachers and school leaders at each grade level.

Response to Intervention programming for students may include but is not limited to the following strategies:

### *Academics*

- Small Group instruction on grade level or below grade level topics
- A “double dose” of instruction using the grade level curriculum
- Increase in time and frequency on blended learning programs
- The use of research or evidence-based curricula
- After school tutoring

### *Social, Emotional, and Behavior*

- Preferential Seating within the classroom
- Check-in/Check-Out system with staff member
- Student behavior contract
- Behavior Intervention Plans

### *Developmental (Speech, Fine Motor, etc.)*

- Determined based on needs of student

Response to Intervention supports may be delivered to a student by a general education teacher, an instructional aide, an intervention teacher, a student support teacher, a member of the leadership team, or a member of the support staff. All programming for students receiving intervention is determined by the student’s team, which includes the parent, general education teacher, and a member of the grade level RTI team (leadership team member, grade level lead, school counselor, etc).

DC Scholars Response to Intervention (Rti) efforts must not delay the initial evaluation of a student who may be a child with a disability in need of special education and related services. Students may be in the RTI process while in the Special Education Eligibility process concurrently.

## Transition From Part C

Under IDEA, DC Scholars must ensure a smooth and effective transition for children transitioning from Part C early intervention services to Part B special education and related services. In furtherance of this responsibility, DC Scholars:

- Identifies incoming children that were served by Strong Start DC Early Intervention Program (DC EIP) prior to enrollment at DC Scholars, and participates in transition activities as appropriate at the request of DC EIP; and
- As applicable, regularly coordinates with DCPS Early Stages to ensure a smooth and transition for students served by DCPS Early Stages prior to enrollment in the DC

Scholars.

When a child is transitioning from Part C to Part B services, DC Scholars participates in transition planning conferences as appropriate and ensures each child with a disability has an IEP developed and implemented by the child's third birthday.

## **Parent Procedural Safeguards And Rights**

Parents' legal rights during the Child Find process are defined by IDEA and District of Columbia law. In the event of a disagreement, parents may pursue dispute resolution and due process rights, including mediation, due process complaints, or state complaints. Parents can learn more about their rights under IDEA by referring to the Part B Procedural Safeguards located on OSSE's website <https://osse.dc.gov/publication/rights-parents-students-disabilities-idea-part-b-notice-procedural-safeguards> or by contacting the Director of Student Support or Special Education Coordinator to obtain a copy of their procedural safeguards.

## **Data Reporting**

In accordance with District of Columbia law, DC Scholars counts and reports the number of children with disabilities receiving special education and related services count annually on October 5 or the date set for the annual pupil count required by D.C. Official Code § 38-2906.

## **English Language Learners (ELL) Support**

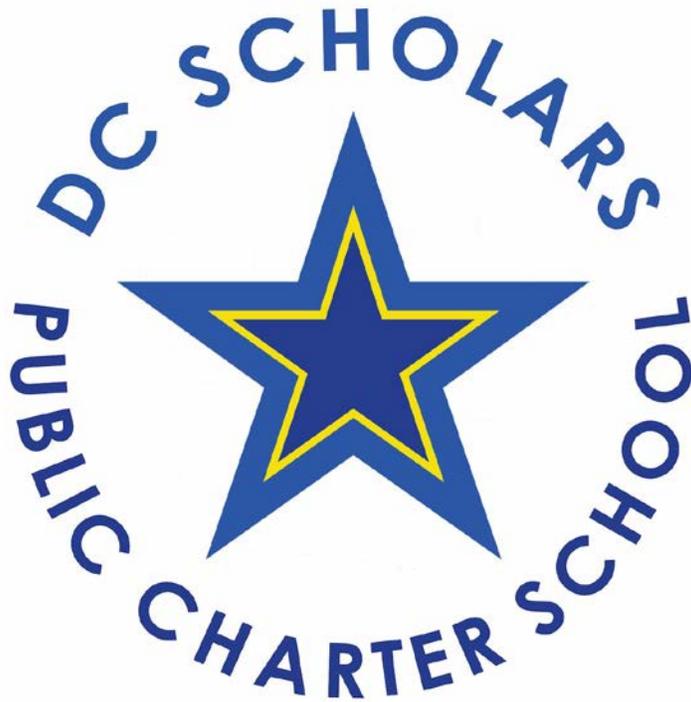
DC Scholars Public Charter School has developed its English Language Learning (ELL) program in accordance with the school's philosophy to provide a quality educational program for all scholars enrolled in DC Scholars, including providing for the education of scholars whose dominant language is not English. The purpose of this ELL plan is to increase the English language proficiency of eligible scholars so that they can attain the statewide academic standards and achieve academic success.

The purpose of our ELL program is to:

- Develop the language and literacy skills of non-native English speakers.
- Ensure access to the general education curriculum for scholars who are still developing cognitive academic language proficiency.

Our ELL team achieves these goals through identification of all scholars who speak a language other than English to see if they would benefit from ELL services, direct instruction, consultation with general education teachers, professional development for staff, and/or participation in the DC Scholars Student Support Team (SST).

# BEHAVIORAL STRUCTURES & SUPPORTS



## A Framework for Approaching School Discipline

At DC Scholars Public Charter School, we believe that a strong school and classroom culture is at the core of student achievement. Our goal is to help our scholars develop the skills they need to regulate their own behavior.

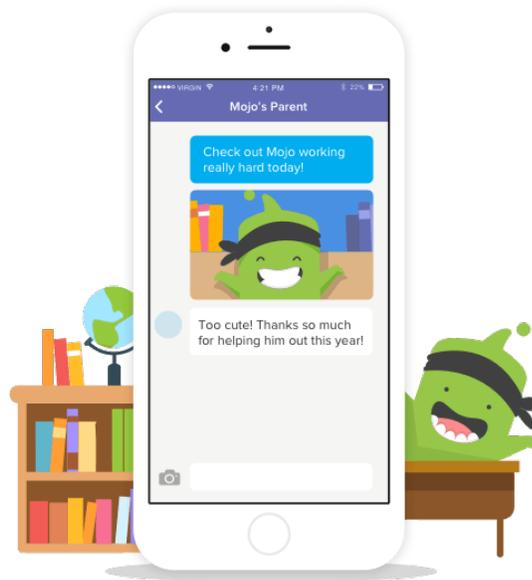
### P.A.T.H. Values

The acronym PATH represents the four core values that we use to motivate and remind scholars of their PATH to college. The four values are **P**repared, **A**ttentive, **T**houghtful and **H**ardworking.

### Community Circle and Community Meeting (grade-level and school-wide meetings)

Scholars will participate in weekly grade-level community circles where scholars are acknowledged for their accomplishments in the classroom. DCSPCS will also hold monthly assemblies where the entire school will gather to celebrate.

### Rewards and Consequences



**Class Dojo** is the tool that teachers use to reinforce skills and habits in scholars as a demonstration of PATH values necessary for success. This is a great resource for parents as well because it comes with parent codes that allow you to log in and check on how your scholar's day went with the click of a button. Once you set up an account you can check on your child through the Class Dojo website ([www.classdojo.com](http://www.classdojo.com)) or the app for parents. You can also communicate with your child's teacher directly. **All parents are required to be connected to Dojo.**

# Discipline Policy

## Policy Statement

Academic excellence can only be achieved when there is a positive school and classroom culture that creates a positive learning environment. Safety, order, and scholar discipline are fundamental to learning at DCSPCS. While scholars need a challenging curriculum, dedicated teachers, and proper materials, they must also have a secure environment in which to learn. Any time spent addressing scholar misbehavior is lost instructional time.

To help support clear expectations and school community, DCSPCS teachers and scholars are required to follow whole school routines and procedures. It is our responsibility to maximize every second of our school day to provide our scholars with the knowledge and skills required to grant them access to limitless opportunity. We can achieve this by creating an environment that serves as the strongest platform for scholar achievement. This platform is built and maintained through structure, attention to detail, systematized rewards and consequences, and a deep commitment and care for each and every scholar and our collective community.

At DC Scholars Public Charter School, we have high expectations for the kind of people our scholars will grow to be. We believe that scholars who demonstrate our PATH (Prepared/Professional, Attentive, Thoughtful, and Hardworking) core values will be empowered and prepared to enter and be successful in high school and on the path to college or career. We believe that each scholar can reach high academic standards, enjoy learning, achieve success and contribute actively to his or her community.

In order to maintain a school culture that nurtures scholars to develop in such a manner, our school-wide behavior system is a prevention-based model, focused on modeling our core values, helping scholars reflect upon their behaviors (both positive and negative), and teaching them to make positive choices.

DC Scholars Public Charter School sets high expectations for scholar behavior and reinforces positive choices in the classroom and school-wide. Scholars are provided with multiple opportunities to demonstrate our core values and to learn to embody those with which they may be struggling. We do this by explicitly teaching scholars what we expect and providing appropriate reinforcement. Every adult in the school models the core values for our scholars through his/her work habits, professionalism, and positive interactions. Our expectations for scholars are evident in the relationships we build with scholars, our partnerships with families, and the quality of instruction in our classrooms.

The DC Scholars Public Charter School behavior system uses a ladder of consequences to delineate the appropriate response to deter poor behavior. Scholars will progress through the ladder of consequences as their behavior persists. Serious consequences such as suspension and expulsion are only reached after the ladder of consequences has been exhausted, except for some Tier 3 and all Tier 4 offenses. In the event of either a suspension or expulsion, DCSPCS follows PCSB requirements with respect to due process and reporting.

Details of the tiered behavioral system are presented below:

Level 1	
Talking out of turn	<i>Sample teacher-issued consequences:</i> Make up work during recess Note home Phone call home Separate work location Loss of privileges (i.e. choice time) You break it, you fix it Time away from group
Minor and/or infrequent defiance	
Incorrect posture	
Getting out of seat without permission	
Minor disruption	
Throwing non-injurious items	
Minor disrespect	
Passive profanity (not directed at person)	
Not following directions (without disruption)	
Level 2	
Repeat level one offenses	Dean Referral
Repeated refusal of level one consequences	<i>Sample dean-issued consequences:</i> Public apology Accountability writing Community service Parent contact Parent conference Mandatory early pickup
Repeated disruptive defiance	
Leaving class without permission	
High levels of verbal aggression	
Destruction of property	
Disrespect of staff or other scholars	
Active profanity (directed at a person)	
Computer abuse	
Failure to comply with Uniform Policy	
Level 3	
Repeat level two offenses	Dean referral
Refusal to serve level two consequences	<i>Sample dean-issued consequences:</i> Parent conference In-school suspension Out-of-school suspension (up to 5 days for K-5; up to 10 days for 6-8) Community service Public apology
Battery on another individual (staff member or scholar)	
Throwing injurious items with an intent to harm others	
Burglary of school, staff, or student property	
Sexual misconduct	
Gross defiance/disrespect	

Theft of goods or money from school property valued at less than \$200	
Bullying/Harassment	
Elopement (from School)	
Academic Dishonesty	
Gambling or possession of items related to gambling	
Destruction of school property (up to \$200)	
<b>Level 4</b>	
Repeat level three offenses	Recommendation for expulsion
Possessing, distributing, selling, giving or loaning any controlled dangerous substance	
Possession of dangerous item (weapon, drugs, fire source)	
Theft of goods or money from school property valued at \$200 or more	
Bullying/Harassment (on the basis of race, sex, gender, or sexual orientation)	
Destruction of school property (above \$200)	

**The following Dean’s Office procedures begin once a scholar reaches the end of the classroom-based ladder of consequences (Tiers 1 and 2 above):**

1. Teacher completes Office Referral, indicating if the behavior was Tier II or III (see above for examples).
  - a. For Tier II and III referrals, the teacher must provide details about the behavior/incident, including any other scholars who were involved or witnessed the incident.

Note: Tier I infractions may result in a referral if they are persistent and causing severe disruption to the learning time of other scholars.

  - b. If necessary, the teacher can send the scholar to the Dean’s office without the referral slip but must then send the referral slip to the Dean’s office within 15 minutes in order for administrators to process the office referral.
2. Teacher contacts the Culture Team or Main Office to request the removal of the scholar.
3. Scholar arrives in the Dean’s office and the following may occur:
  - a. Written reflection (scholar must write about why he/she made the choice he/she did)

- b. Problem solving session (scholar engages in a structured conversation around the poor action with an opportunity for the scholar to outline the future choice he/she would make if faced with the same decision)
  - c. Relationship repair - apologize to teacher or other students (verbal and written)
  - d. Fresh start in class
4. Notification to parents
- a. **Tier I** offenses, **the teacher** will notify the parent/guardian of infractions and referrals to the Dean's office (by 8PM that same day)
  - b. **Tier II** offenses, **the teacher or a Culture team member** will notify the parent/guardian of infractions and referrals to the Dean's office
  - c. **Tier III** offenses, **a Culture team member or an Administrator** will contact the parent/guardian to notify the adult of the referral and the consequence.
5. Scholar serves consequence. When consequence is served, scholar receives a Permit to Return to Class slip signed by the administrator.
6. Scholars serving a suspension will be required to attend a reinstatement meeting the day they return to school. The scholar's parent(s)/guardian(s) will also be invited to attend. This will ensure a scholar's preparedness to re-enter the school community.

**Please note if a scholar has repeated (at least 3 times) Level 3 and 4 offenses, DCSPCS will recommend the student for expulsion.**

Note: Scholars with behavior plans as part of their IEPs will follow their IEP Behavior Plan in conjunction with the school-wide plan.

## Suspension and Expulsion Process

### Introduction

The decision to recommend a student for suspension or expulsion will be made by a school administrator (e.g. School Director, Head of School, Executive Director, Dean or any other school administrator) independent of the student's teacher or other staff. **In recommending suspension or expulsion, the administrator will consider Code of Conduct violations, the severity of the infraction(s), the scholar's previous infractions (if any), any existing or prior student Discipline contracts, and the scholar's age.** A scholar recommended for long-term suspension or expulsion will (subject to certain conditions) have a Disciplinary Hearing to review the recommendation. The Discipline Review Panel (DRP) will make a final decision on the scholar's long-term suspension or expulsion, with the scholar having an opportunity to appeal.

### Process

When the school receives a report that a scholar has committed an offense eligible for suspension or expulsion, an investigation into the offense will be conducted by a Dean or another school administrator. Scholars for whom suspension or expulsion is being considered

after the investigation will be given notice and an opportunity to be heard before a final decision regarding suspension or expulsion is made. Investigation and hearing procedures are as follows:

## **Suspension**

For scholars facing a short-term out-of-school suspension of 5 days or less, prior to issuing the suspension, the Dean, or other administrator, will meet with the scholar and notify him/her of what he/she is accused of doing to warrant possible suspension, including the information that the school has to believe that the scholar engaged in such behavior. The scholar will be given an opportunity to present his/her side of the story or explanation for his/her behavior. After this meeting, if the Dean or other administrator determines that suspension is appropriate, s/he will issue written notice to the parent or legal guardian detailing the length of, and reason for, the suspension. The Dean or other school administrator may notify the parent/guardian of the suspension via phone or email in addition to providing written notification. Written notification may also be given to the scholar.

For purposes of due process, a suspension of 6 days or more is considered a long-term suspension. For scholars in grades 6 – 8 facing a long-term out-of-school suspension of 6 -10 days, prior to issuing the suspension, the Middle School Dean, or other administrator, will meet with the scholar and notify him/her of what he/she is accused of doing to warrant possible suspension, including the information that the school has to believe that the scholar engaged in such behavior. As with short-term suspensions, the scholar will be given an opportunity to present his/her side of the story or explanation for his/her behavior. After this meeting, if the Dean or other administrator determines that suspension is appropriate, s/he will issue written notice to the parent or legal guardian detailing the length of, and reason for, the suspension. The Dean or other school administrator may notify the parent/guardian of the suspension via phone or email in addition to providing written notification. Written notification may also be given to the scholar.

## **Expulsion**

For scholars facing expulsion, a Dean or another school administrator will meet with the scholar and notify him/her of the infraction he/she is accused of, the information that the school has to believe that the scholar engaged in such behavior, and the disciplinary action being considered. The administrator will give the scholar an opportunity to present his/her side of the story or explanation for his/her behavior.

If disciplinary action is still under consideration after the scholar provides his/her explanation, the Dean or other administrator will conduct an investigation as appropriate into the circumstances of the scholar's behavior and any explanation provided by the scholar. At the Dean's or other administrator's discretion, the scholar may be suspended pending the results of this investigation and possible recommendation for further disciplinary action from the Dean or other administrator. This investigation will be completed within 3 business days of notifying the scholar of his/her infraction(s).

After the meeting with the scholar and completion of the investigation, the Dean or other administrator will issue written notice to the parent/guardian if a recommendation for expulsion is made and the reason for this recommendation. This notice will explain the information that is being relied on as the basis for the recommendation. The Dean or other

school administrator may notify the parent/guardian of the expulsion via phone or email in addition to providing written notification. Any parent/ guardian meetings may occur by phone.

Within 10 school days of the recommendation for expulsion, a Discipline Hearing will be held if requested by a scholar's parent/guardian to make a final determination about the disciplinary action proposed.

## Discipline Hearing

A scholar will have a Discipline Hearing at the request of a parent/guardian when:

### **S/he has been recommended for expulsion or violated and expellable offense.**

The Discipline Review Panel (DRP) will be appointed by the Chair of the Board and will consist of three faculty/staff and/or Board members who do not have a direct conflict of interest with the scholar and are not involved in the incident being reviewed. The Board Chair may appoint any non-affiliated faculty/staff member to be on the DRP. The DRP serves as an impartial decision maker. DRP hearings are closed to the public. In making its decision, the Discipline Review Panel will review evidence presented at the hearing, any statements made on behalf of the school or scholar, the DCSPCS Code of Conduct, and records of the scholar's prior conduct and/or academic performance, if applicable. The decision of the DPR shall be made by a majority vote of the DRP.

During the hearing, the school administrator(s) will carry out the following procedures:

- A statement of the Code of Conduct violation and summary of the Discipline Hearing procedures.
- An explanation and review of the evidence or facts for which potential long-term suspension/expulsion is being considered. If video footage is available of the incident, the panel will view the footage.
- The scholar may be represented by his/her parent/guardian and one additional advocate.
- The scholar may present any information that he/she wants the Discipline Review Panel to consider. The panel may ask questions regarding the matter to anyone present at the hearing. An advocate may speak on the scholar's behalf. The scholar has the right not to speak on his/her own behalf. Neither the school's representative at the hearing nor the scholar nor his/her representative(s) will be given the opportunity for cross-examination during the hearing.

Within 24 hours of the conclusion of the hearing, the panel will make a recommendation regarding the consequence. The panel's recommendation will be effective immediately.

The scholar/family will be informed of the decision via phone within two (2) school days of the conclusion of the hearing and written notification will be mailed within three (3) school days of the decision. This notice will contain information regarding appeal procedures.

If a parent/guardian does not request a hearing or fails to attend the hearing at the scheduled date, time, and place, the right to a hearing will be waived.

If a parent/guardian does not request a hearing or fails to attend the hearing at the scheduled date, time and place, the student's right to a hearing will be waived. In such cases, the DRP will make a determination based on the evidence before it without a hearing.

Following the DRP's determination, the school will proceed to implement the ruling of the Disciplinary Review Panel. The findings from the hearing will be approved and take effect immediately. Appeals will not **be accepted from scholars who do not appear at the initial hearing.**

## Discipline Panel Hearing Appeal

Any scholar who is expelled has the right to appeal the decision in writing to the Chairperson of DCSPCS' Board of Trustees within five (5) school days of the written notice of expulsion, provided the student participated in the DRP hearing. The following process shall be implemented for all appeals.

1. An appeal hearing date will be set within seven (7) school days of the receipt of the scholar's Appeal request.
2. The appeal hearing date will occur within thirty (30) calendar days from the date of the hearing being set.
3. Appeal hearings will be heard by three members of the Board of Trustees appointed by the Chair of the Board and constituted as the "Appeal Panel." A disinterested faculty/staff member or volunteer familiar with the school may replace one member of the Board of Trustees on the "Appeal Panel" at the discretion of the Board Chair.
4. The scholar may be represented by his/her parent/guardian and one additional adult advocate.
5. The scholar has the right to speak on his/her behalf at the Appeal Hearing. The scholar may choose not to speak at the Appeal Hearing.
6. The scholar may not return to DCSPCS and participate in school activities while an appeal is pending.
7. Appeal hearings are closed to the public.
8. If a parent/guardian fails to appear at the Appeal Hearing the right to appeal is waived, and the original disciplinary decision will stand.

In making its decision, the three-member Appeal Panel will:

1. Review all evidence and documentation from the DPR and any supporting documentation;
2. Review any statements heard at the DPR on behalf of the school or scholar;
3. Review the DCSPCS Code of Conduct;
4. Review the scholar's prior conduct and/or academic performance;

5. The panel may ask questions regarding the matter to anyone present at the hearing. One advocate may speak on the scholar's behalf. The scholar has the right not to speak on his/her own behalf. Neither the school's representative at the hearing nor the scholar nor his/her representative(s) will be given the opportunity for cross-examination during the appeal.

If the expulsion is overturned, the cumulative record of the student and any other school-maintained records will reflect that conclusion. If the Appeal Panel upholds the expulsion, the expulsion shall be imposed, and such decision will be final. **All decisions made by the Appeal Panel will be final and not subject to further appeal.**

### **Special Notes Regarding Audio/Video Recording of Discipline Review Panels (DRP) and Appeal Hearings**

All disciplinary hearings are closed to the public. They may not be recorded using a video or audio recording device under any circumstances, except as may be required to provide accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. A written request to audio-record the hearing pursuant to these laws must be made to the student's Dean no less than 48 hours prior to the hearing.

### **Participation at School and School Related Activities and Re-Enrollment**

Scholars who have been expelled from DCSPCS shall not be eligible to participate or attend any school functions. Scholars will not be eligible to re-enroll for subsequent school years. Expulsion is permanent.

### **Procedures for Suspending and Expelling Scholars with Disabilities**

Subject to all applicable guidelines and requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the basis for disciplining, suspending or expelling scholars with disabilities shall be no different than the basis for such actions taken against scholars without disabilities. Reasonable accommodation of a scholar's disabilities shall not prevent the school from applying its discipline policy to scholars with disability when their behavior is not related to the disability.

A set of specific procedural requirements must be followed in the event a scholar requiring special education services engages in a behavior that warrants a disciplinary intervention, such as a suspension or expulsion. A scholar with a disability who violates a code of school conduct may be removed from his/her current placement to another appropriate interim alternative educational setting, another setting or suspension for up to 10 consecutive or cumulative days (to the extent that those alternatives are applied to nondisabled scholars) without the need to conduct a manifestation determination.

At the point in time when a scholar will be excluded from school for more than 10 (cumulative) school days in a school year, a change in placement may occur. Where the scholar is excluded for 10 or more consecutive school days, a change in placement does occur and DC Scholars engages in several activities designed to address the behavior subject to the disciplinary action, including a review of the scholar's IEP to determine if the misconduct is related to the child's disability.

When the disciplinary removal of a scholar leads to a change in placement, DC Scholars will:

- Immediately notify the parent of the decision to remove the scholar and provide the parent with a copy of the procedural safeguards notice.
- Within ten (10) school days of the disciplinary decision to remove a scholar with a disability from his or her current placement, DC Scholars, the parent, and relevant members of the child's IEP Team must review all relevant information in the scholar's file, including the child's IEP, any teacher observations, and any relevant information provided by the parents to determine:
  - (a) If the conduct in question was caused by, or had a direct and substantial relationship to, the child's disability; or
  - (b) If the conduct in question was the direct result of DC Scholars' failure to implement the IEP.

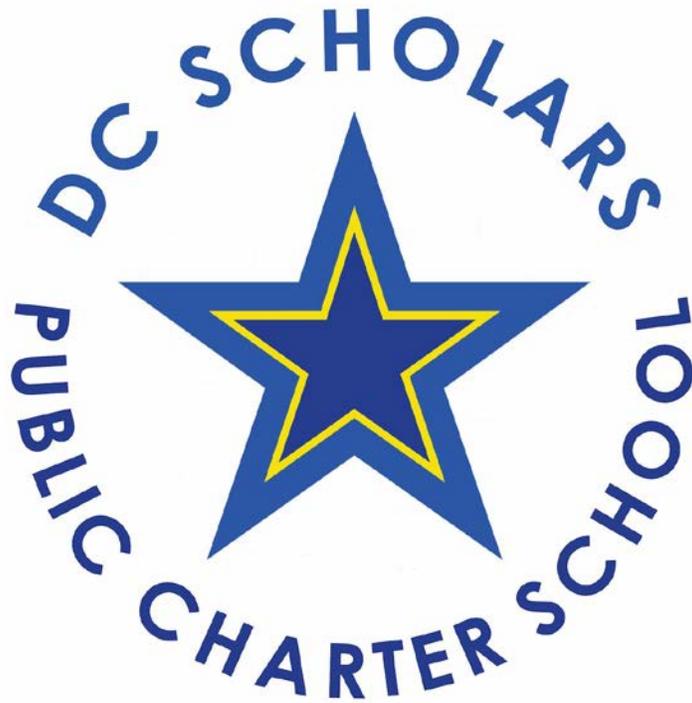
If the IEP team finds that the behavior was a manifestation of the scholar's disability, the team must either: (a) Conduct a functional behavior assessment (FBA), unless DC Scholars had conducted an FBA prior to the disciplinary action, and develop and implement a behavior intervention plan (BIP); (b) If there's a BIP in place, review the BIP and modify it, as necessary, to address the behavior, and immediately return the scholar to their educational placement, unless the parent and the IEP team agree to a change in placement as part of the modification of the BIP.

Parents can request more information about this process and a copy of the procedural safeguards by contacting the Director of Student Support or Special Education Coordinator at any time during the school year.

## **Scholar Rights**

1. This policy sets forth guidelines by which scholar rights are to be determined consistent with applicable law.
2. The Board of Trustees has the authority and responsibility to establish reasonable rules and regulations for the conduct and deportment of scholars of this school. At the same time, no scholar shall be deprived of equal treatment and equal access to the educational program, due process, a presumption of innocence, and free expression and association in accordance with these guidelines.
3. Attendant upon the rights established for each scholar are certain responsibilities, which include respect for the rights of others, obedience to properly constituted school authority and compliance with the rules and regulations of this school.
4. A scholar who has reached the age of 18 years possesses the full rights of an adult and may authorize those school matters previously handled by his/her parents.
5. The School Director / Dean of Scholars shall observe the disciplinary procedures consistent with law and Board policy to ensure that scholar rights under varying conditions are properly respected.

# HEALTH AND WELLNESS



## School Nurse

Scholars who need emergency medical attention during school hours will be examined by the School Nurse. Scholars must have a pass from a teacher to be seen by the Nurse. If necessary, a parent/guardian will be contacted to pick up the scholar from school. It is extremely important to keep each scholar's Emergency Contact Form updated with the correct information. Any scholar dismissed early because of a medical emergency must be signed out in the Main Office. Upon return to the school, the scholar must visit the nurse.

The nurse's office is strictly used for first-aid. It is not a clinic or physician's station; no scholar will be diagnosed or treated for illness. The school nurse is not responsible for treating accidents, injuries, burns, infections, etc. Such care and treatment is the responsibility of the parent. Parents are invited to call the school nurse to discuss any health-related issues they may have concerning their child.

## Other Health Services

Through trained certified staff and outside agencies, services are provided free of charge for mandated state screenings, vision and hearing screenings, height and weight checks and dental clinic services. Referrals can be made by these services to provide further care.

## Illness and Preventative Care

Since the health of a child will affect his/her learning, it is very important the scholars get adequate sleep and a good breakfast. To protect your scholar and prevent the spread of illness to other classmates, please do not send your scholar to school if he/she has any of the following symptoms within 12 hours of the start of school:

- Vomiting and/or diarrhea
- Temperature of 100 degrees or greater
- Continuous coughing and sneezing
- Unexplained and/or contagious rash
- Thick dark yellow-greenish drainage from the nose
- Yellowish drainage from eye, crusted area (contagious conjunctivitis – Pink Eye)

Students with ringworm may return to school after 24 hours of treatment by a doctor.

## Communicable Diseases

Please notify the school office IMMEDIATELY, if your child is diagnosed with any of the following illnesses:

Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)	Pediculosis (lice)	Measles	Tetanus
Ringworm	Impetigo	Mumps	Encephalitis
Strep Throat	Fifth Disease (rash)	Rubella	Food Poisoning
Diarrhea Type Diseases	Influenza	Pertussis	Meningitis
Chicken Pox	Pneumonia	Hepatitis	Tuberculosis

## Medications in School

DC Scholars Public Charter School shall not be responsible for diagnoses and treatment of a scholar's illness. The practice of taking medication in the school is discouraged. Nevertheless, the administration of prescribed medication in accordance with the direction of a parent and/or family physician to a scholar during school hours will be permitted when failure to take such medicine would jeopardize the health of the scholar or the scholar would not be able to attend school if the medicine were not made available during school hours. At the end of the school year, all medications must be picked up by parents/guardians from the Nurse's Office. Any medicine not picked up by the last day of school will be discarded.

Parents who wish to have prescription medications given to their child during school hours must have on file a "Request for Administration of Medication" (Form MED-I). This form is available from both the nurse's office as well as the Main Office. The form must be filled out and signed by the child's doctor and the parent. The parent, not the child, should bring the medication to the school. Medication shall include, but not be limited to, all medicines prescribed by a physician, any patent drug, and non-prescription medications (OTC) (i.e. aspirin, Tylenol, Benadryl, Sudafed, decongestants, antihistamines, etc.).

Medication will be retained by the school only if it has been packaged and labeled by a Registered Pharmacist according to accepted pharmaceutical standards. The medication label must include: patient's name, pharmacy name, pharmacy address and phone, prescription number, prescription date (current), name of medication, dosage, form, and expiration date, instructions for administration, and name of prescribing health care provider. Medication must be packaged with a safety cap. Over the counter (non-prescription) medications must be in the original manufacturer's container with directions for use intact on the label or box.

If your child has any health problems or is taking prescription medication for any reason, even though it does not have to be given in school, it is important for you to inform the school. Many medications have side effects that the school staff can help you look for.

## Scholar Immunizations

### Immunization of Scholars

All scholars must be completely immunized or exempted before admission to any public, private, or parochial school in Washington, DC. The purpose of requiring immunization is to protect scholars from preventable communicable diseases and their medical and educational complications.

### Immunization, Disease and Required Number of Doses

1. Diphtheria - 4 doses
2. Tetanus - 4 doses
3. Poliomyelitis - (Oral 3 doses / Inactivated 4 doses)

4. Measles (Rubella) - Two doses of live attenuated measles vaccine at twelve months of age or older and a second dose no sooner than 30 days after the first dose, or serological (blood test) evidence of immunity to measles.
5. Mumps - 1 dose (administered on or after the first birthday, or Physician's Verification of Disease)
6. German Measles (Rubella) – 1 dose (administered on or after the first birthday, or a history of rubella confirmed by blood test)
7. Hepatitis B – 3 doses
8. Varicella (Chicken Pox) - 1 dose on or after first birthday or history of disease.
9. HPV – dose requirements vary

*There are two immunization exemptions:*

Religious Exemption - Scholars need not be immunized if the parent or guardian objects in writing to the immunization on religious/ethical grounds.

Medical Exemption - Scholars need not be immunized if a physician or their designee provides a written statement that immunization may be detrimental to the health of the child. When the physician determines that immunization is no longer detrimental to the health of the child, the medical exemption ceases to be valid and the child must be immunized.

In the event of an outbreak of a disease for which the scholar is exempt from the requirement to be immunized, that scholar will be excluded from school until a competent medical authority determines that the scholar may return.

## **Disposition of Immunization Records**

When transferring from one school to another, the parent should request the Certificate of Immunization from the current school and take it to the new school. The Certificate of Immunization will go with the scholar when he/she transfers, graduates, withdraws, or otherwise leaves DCSPCS.

## **Wellness Policy**

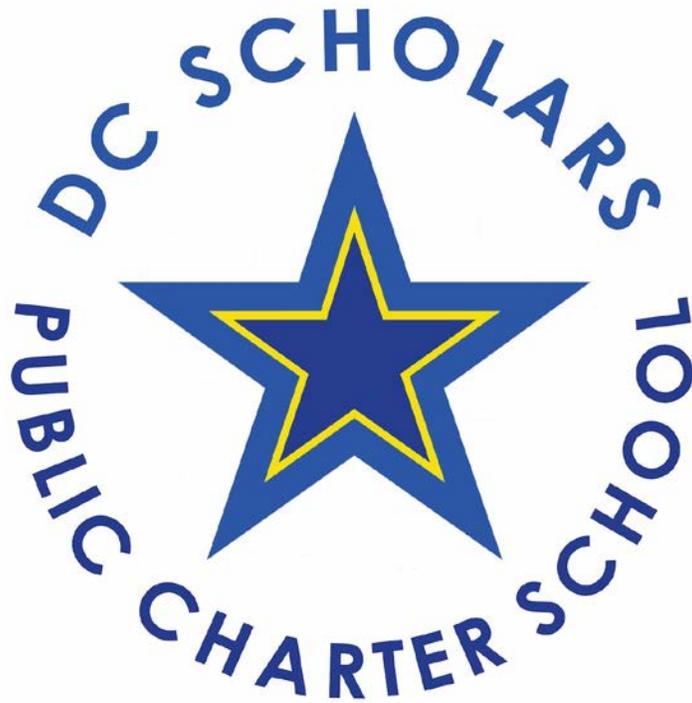
DC Scholars Public Charter School strives to develop scholars to become thoughtful decision makers. We implement a comprehensive health and wellness policy to engage scholars in health education, nutrition education, physical education, and healthy food choices so that our scholars become as healthy and well-rounded as possible.

## **Birthday Policy**

- 1 store bought cupcake per child
  - (no peanut ingredients)
- Balloons, candy, juice, table cloths, etc. are not allowed.
- You must provide your classroom teacher and the Main Office 24 hour notice in order to plan for your arrival.

For the full policy, see Appendix C.

# COMMUNICATION



# Communication with Families

## School Communication to Families

We have several methods of communicating information to our families. First, we send home written letters as well as flyers about school events through your scholar's homework folder. Therefore, it is very important that your scholar maintains his or her folder throughout the year and that you check it every night. Failing to do so will result in missing important information from the school.

We also send out e-mails, texts, and robocalls to communicate pertinent information.

### Emergency Alert

You must join our alert group by texting @dcspcs1819 to #81010. Standard messaging rates may apply.

### Class Dojo

[www.classdojo.com](http://www.classdojo.com) (available in the iOS and Google app stores)

### Website

[www.dcscholarspcs.org](http://www.dcscholarspcs.org)

### Social Media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter)

Follow us @DCScholarsPCS

### Receive our emails/phone calls

Please make sure you have accurate, up-to-date contact information (home and cell phone numbers and email addresses) on file with the Main Office at all times.

## Parent Representation on the Charter School Board

At least two parents will serve as members of DCSPCS Board of Trustees. The parents must have a scholar currently enrolled in the school and will be asked to meet attendance requirements of all board members. Please contact the school if you are interested in becoming a board member.

## Contacting the School

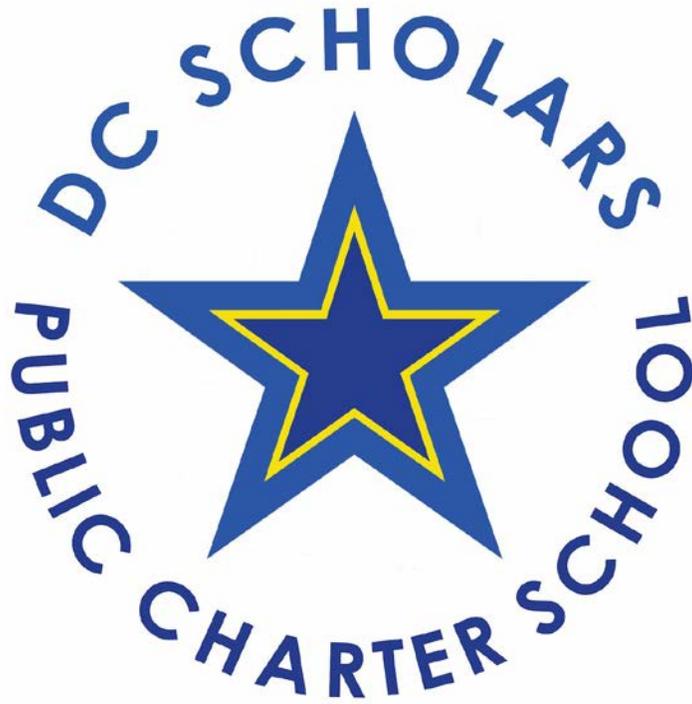
Main Office

Email: [info@dcscholars.org](mailto:info@dcscholars.org)

Phone: 202.559.6138

Fax: 202.618.9396

# APPENDICES



# DC Scholars Public Charter School Computing and Internet Acceptable Use Policy

## Purpose

DC Scholars Public Charter School is providing its employees and scholars (“users”) with access to computing equipment, systems and local network functions such as e-mail and the Internet. Through this policy, DCSPCS intends to: (a) prevent user access over its computer network to, or transmission of inappropriate material via Internet, electronic mail or other forms of direct electronic communications; (b) prevent unauthorized access and other unlawful online activity; (c) prevent unauthorized online disclosure, use, or dissemination of personal identification information of minors; and (d) comply with the Children’s Internet Protection Act [Pub. L. No. 106-554 and 47 USC 254(h)].

## Definitions

A. Technology Protection Measure: The term “technology protection measure” means a specific technology that blocks or filters Internet access to visual depictions that are:

1. Obscene: as that term is defined in section 1460 of title 18, United States Code;
2. Child Pornography: as that term is defined in section 2256 of title 18, United States Code; or
3. Harmful to minors

B. Harmful to minors: The term “harmful to minors” means any picture, image, graphic image file, or other visual depiction that:

1. Taken as a whole and with respect to minors, appeals to prurient interests including, but not limited to, nudity, sex, or excretion;
2. Depicts, describes, or represents, in a patently offensive way with respect to what is suitable for minors, an actual or simulated sexual act or sexual contact, actual or simulated normal or perverted sexual acts, or a lewd exhibition of the genitals; and
3. Taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value as to minors.

C. Sexual Act; Sexual Contact: the terms “sexual act” and “sexual contact” have the meanings given such terms in section 2246 of title 18, United States Code.

D. Cyber bullying: is bullying through email, instant messaging (IMing), chat room exchanges, Web site posts, or digital messages or images sent to a cellular phone or personal digital assistant (PDA) (Kowalski et al. 2008).

## Access Rights and Privileges

1. DC Scholars Public Charter School has the right to place reasonable restrictions on the use of equipment, resources, and materials that scholars and employee may access or post through the DCSPCS IT network. Scholars and employees are also expected to follow the rules set forth in DC Scholars’ rules and regulations governing conduct, disciplinary code, and the law in their use of DC Scholars’ equipment and network. This access has not been established as a public access service or a public forum. All access and rights are privileges granted by DCSPCS, and users should expect no privacy rights.
2. All DCSPCS employees and scholars will have access to the Internet through DCSPCS’ private network. Parents may specifically request that their children not be provided such access by notifying DCSPCS in writing.
3. Scholars may be permitted to access an external Internet e-mail service or their personal e-mail account for the purpose of legitimate instructional or school-based needs at the discretion of school staff.

## **Responsibilities**

1. DC Scholars Public Charter School makes no warranties of any kind, either expressed or implied, for the technology access it is providing.
2. DC Scholars Public Charter School will not be responsible for any damages users suffer including but not limited to, loss of data resulting from delays or interruptions in services.
3. DC Scholars Public Charter School will not be responsible for the accuracy, nature or quality of information stored on district diskettes, hard drives, or servers; nor for the accuracy, nature or quality of information gathered through DC Scholars -provided technology access.
4. DC Scholars Public Charter School will not be responsible for personal property used to access district computers or networks.
5. DC Scholars Public Charter School will not be responsible for unauthorized financial obligations resulting from DC Scholars -provided access to the internet.

## **Unacceptable Uses of the DCSPCS Private Network**

1. Users may not use the DCSPCS private network to access material that is profane or obscene (pornography of any kind), that advocates illegal acts, or that advocates violence or discrimination towards other people (hate literature).
2. Users may not post personal information on the Internet about themselves or other people. Personal contact information includes address, telephone, school address, work address, pictures or video bites, clips, etc.
3. Scholars may not agree to meet with someone they have met on the Internet without their parent's approval and participation.
4. Users may not attempt to gain unauthorized access to any other computer system. This includes attempting to log in through another person's account or access another person's files. These actions are illegal, even if only for the purposes of "browsing", "snooping", or "electronic discovery".
5. Users may not deliberately disrupt or harm hardware or systems, interfere with computer or network performance, interfere with another's ability to use equipment and systems, or destroy data.
6. Users may not use the DC Scholars' private network to engage in illegal acts, such as arranging for a drug sale or the purchase of alcohol, engaging in criminal gang activity, threatening the safety of person, accessing or sharing unauthorized copyrighted music, movies, and other intellectual property, etc.
7. Users may not utilize peer-to-peer file-sharing applications or execute programs to facilitate the downloading or exchange of copyrighted or unauthorized music, movies, and other materials.
8. Users may not use the DC Scholar's private network to solicit information with the intent of using such information to cause personal harm or bodily injury to another or others.
9. Users may not post information that could endanger an individual, cause personal damage or a danger of service disruption.
10. Users may not knowingly or recklessly post false or defamatory information about a person or organization.
11. Users may not intentionally seek information on, obtain copies of, or modify files, other data, or passwords belonging to other users.

12. Users may not indirectly or directly make connections that create "backdoors" to DCSPCS, other organizations, community groups, etc. that allow unauthorized access to DC Scholar's network.
13. Users may not use obscene, profane, lewd, vulgar, rude, inflammatory, hateful, threatening, or disrespectful language.
14. Users may not engage in personal attacks, including prejudicial or discriminatory attacks.
15. Users may not harass another person. Harassment is persistently acting in a manner that distresses or annoys another person.
16. Users may not re-post a message that was sent to them privately without permission of the person who sent them the message.
17. Users may not forward or post chain letters or engage in "spamming". Spamming is sending an annoying or unnecessary message to a large number of people. Users will not install or reproduce unauthorized or unlicensed software on District resources.
18. Users may not plagiarize works that they find on the Internet or other resources.
19. Users may not use technology resources and Internet for private business activities or unreasonable personal use.
20. Users may not use DC Scholars' private network for political lobbying.
21. Scholars will not download files unless approved by their teacher.

### **System Security Obligations**

1. Users are responsible for the use of their individual access account(s) and should take all reasonable precautions to prevent others from being able to use their account(s), including coworkers, friends, or family. Under no conditions should a user provide his/her password to another person.
2. Attempts to log on to DCSPCS' private network or any other network as a system administrator are prohibited.
3. Any user identified as a security risk or having a history of violating this or any other Acceptable Use Policy may be denied access to DCSPCS' private network.
4. Users will avoid the inadvertent spread of computer viruses by following DCSPCS' virus protection procedures if they download software or share common file directory.
5. Users should immediately notify a teacher or system administrator of any possible security problem.
6. Scholars will promptly disclose to their teacher or other appropriate school employee any message received that is inappropriate.

### **Filtering**

As required by law and in recognition of the need to establish a safe and appropriate computing environment, DCSPCS will use filtering technology to prohibit access, to the degree possible, to objectionable or unsuitable content that might otherwise be accessible via the Internet.

### **Due Process**

1. DC Scholars Public Charter School will cooperate fully with local, state, or federal officials in any investigation concerning or relating to any illegal activities conducted through DCSPCS' private network.

2. In the event there is an allegation that a scholar has violated the Computing and Acceptable Use Policy, the scholar will be provided with a written notice of the alleged violation and will be provided with notice and opportunity to be heard in the manner set forth in the Scholar Hearing Process Policy. Disciplinary actions may be taken.
3. Employee violations of the Computing and Acceptable Use Policy will be handled in accord with law, and DCSPCS' policies, as applicable.

### **Administration**

1. The Head of School has the responsibility and authority for the development, publication, implementation and ongoing administration and enforcement of the processes and techniques required to protect DCSPCS' technology systems and services from unauthorized access, loss or misuse.
2. The Head of School has the responsibility to establish a plan to ensure adequate supervision of scholars.
3. The Head of School has the responsibility to interpret and enforce this policy.
4. The Head of School will ensure that all scholars are educated about appropriate online behavior, including interacting with other individuals on social networking websites and its chat rooms and cyber-bullying awareness and response.
  - A. The School will provide yearly instruction to scholars about online behavior. The curriculum will utilize resources from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children

## Grievance Policy

DC Scholars is committed to providing the best possible conditions for all members of the school community including scholars, families, visitors, teachers and administrators. Part of this commitment is encouraging an open and frank atmosphere in which any problem, complaint, suggestion or question receives a timely response from school supervisors and administrators. DCSPCS strives to ensure fair and honest treatment of all scholars, families, visitors and employees. Everyone is expected to treat each other with mutual respect. If a scholar, parent/guardian, or visitor disagrees with established rules of conduct, policies or practices, or their treatment, he or she may express his or her concerns through the following problem resolution procedure. No person will be retaliated against or penalized formally or informally, for voicing a complaint with DCSPCS in a reasonable, business-like manner or for participating in the investigation of a complaint pursuant to the grievance procedure.

A scholar, parent or guardian may initiate the grievance procedure to appeal any final decision of school personnel except as provided in section 1 below. Any person may initiate the grievance procedure to resolve complaints of discrimination based upon race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability. This grievance procedure does not bar individuals from filing claims in other forums to the extent permitted by state or federal law.

1. This policy does not apply in the case of suspension or expulsion or in the case of alleged sexual harassment where the provisions of the Policy Prohibiting Harassment apply.
2. Step I – Head of School Conference – A parent or guardian wishing to invoke the grievance procedure shall make a written request for a conference with the Head of School to discuss the grievance and seek resolution. If a complaint of discrimination is being made against the Head of School, the written request can be submitted to the Executive Director of DC Scholars Community Schools, who will designate an appropriate individual to investigate the complaint. The request shall state in detail the basis for the grievance, name the specific policy, rule or law believed to have been violated, and specify the relief being sought. The written complaint can be sent or delivered to 5601 E Capitol St. SE, Washington, DC 20019. The following additional guidelines shall be observed in Step I:
  - a. No grievance will be heard unless it has been filed in writing within thirty (30) calendar days after the act or condition giving rise to the grievance and such filing must state with particularity the basis for the grievance, the policy regulation and/or procedure, rule or law believed to have been violated, and the remedy sought.
  - b. The Head of School or designee shall initiate an adequate, reliable and impartial investigation and grant a conference within five (5) school days following receipt of the written complaint.
  - c. The person making the complaint will be permitted to present any information, documents, or witnesses that he/she would like to be considered as part of this conference and investigation. All information related to the conference and investigation will remain confidential.
  - d. Within ten (10) school days of the conference, the Head of School or designee will respond to the complaint in writing summarizing the outcome of the investigation and any corrective or remedial action necessary.
3. Step II – Appeal to Executive Director – If the grievance is not resolved at Step I, the grievant may appeal the decision in writing to the Executive Director of DC Scholars Community Schools. The written appeal can be sent or delivered to 5601 E Capitol St. SE, Washington, DC

20019. The appeal must be made within five (5) school days following receipt of the Head of School's written response. The Executive Director or designee shall review the complaint, Head of School's response, and all information presented as part of the investigation, and meet with the individuals involved if necessary. Within 15 school days of receiving the appeal, the Executive Director or designee will respond in writing summarizing the outcome of the appeal and any corrective or remedial action necessary.

4. Step III – Appeal to the Board of Directors – If the grievance is not resolved at Step II, the grievant may appeal the decision in writing to the Board Chair of DC Scholars PCS. The written appeal can be sent to Bob Weinberg at [rweinberg@bredhoff.com](mailto:rweinberg@bredhoff.com). Please direct all correspondence to the Board Chair of DC Scholars Public Charter School.

# Policy Prohibiting Harassment

## Policy Statement

DC Public Charter School strives to provide a safe, positive learning environment for scholars. Therefore, harassment in any form is not tolerated. DCSPCS prohibits all forms of unlawful harassment of scholars and third parties by all scholars and staff members, contracted individuals, vendors, volunteers, and third parties in the school. DCSPCS encourages scholars and third parties who have been harassed to promptly report such incidents to the designated employees.

## General Harassment and Discrimination

For purposes of this policy, harassment and discrimination shall consist of verbal, written, graphic or physical conduct relating to an individual's race, color, national origin/ethnicity, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion when such conduct:

- is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive that it affects an individual's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity or creates an intimidating, threatening or abusive educational environment;
- Has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with an individual's academic performance; or
- Otherwise adversely affects an individual's learning opportunities.

For purposes of this policy, sexual harassment shall consist of unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other inappropriate verbal, written, graphic or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

1. Submission to such conduct is made explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of a scholar's academic status;
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for academic or work decisions affecting the individual;
3. Such conduct deprives a scholar or educational aid, benefits, services or treatment; or
4. Such conduct is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive that it has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with the scholar's school performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive educational environment.

Examples of conduct that may constitute sexual harassment include but are not limited to sexual flirtations, advances, touching or propositions; verbal abuse of a sexual nature; graphic or suggestive comments about an individual's dress or body; sexually degrading words to describe an individual; jokes; pin-ups; calendars; objects; graffiti; vulgar statements; abusive language; innuendoes; references to sexual activities; overt sexual conduct; or any conduct that has the effect of unreasonably interfering with a scholar's ability to work or learn or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive learning or working environment.

DC Scholars Public Charter School directs that complaints of harassment shall be investigated promptly as described in the complaint process, and corrective action be taken when allegations are substantiated. Confidentiality of all parties shall be maintained, consistent with the school's legal and investigative obligations.

Neither reprisals nor retaliation shall occur as a result of good faith charges of harassment.

## **Complaint Resolution Policy**

### **Step 1—Reporting**

A scholar or parent is encouraged to immediately report the incident in writing to the Chief of Staff. If the Chief of Staff is the subject of a complaint, the employee shall report the incident directly to the Head of School.

If either of these individuals are involved in the reported conduct, or, for some reason the scholar/parent feels uncomfortable about making a report to school Chief of Staff and/or the Head of School, the scholar/parent should make a report to the Board of Trustees.

DC Scholars Public Charter School will not retaliate, nor will it tolerate retaliation, against scholars/parents who complain in good faith about harassment or discrimination in the school. DCSPCS will investigate any such report as appropriate, and will provide a prompt, thorough, and objective investigation of any unlawful or prohibited discrimination. DCSPCS will take whatever corrective action is deemed necessary, including disciplining or discharging any individual who is believed to have violated these prohibitions against harassment, discrimination, misconduct, and retaliation.

### **Step 2 —Investigation**

Upon receiving a complaint, the Chief of Staff shall immediately notify the Head of School. The Head of School or designee shall investigate the complaint.

The investigation may consist of individual interviews with the complainant, the accused, and others with knowledge relative to the incident. The investigator may also evaluate any other information and materials relevant to the investigation.

The obligation to conduct this investigation shall not be negated by the fact that a criminal investigation of the incident is pending or has been concluded.

### **Step 3—Investigative Report**

The Head of School, or another member of the school leadership team identified by the Head of School, shall prepare a written report within fifteen (15) days, unless additional time to complete the investigation is required. The report shall include a summary of the investigation, a determination of whether the complaint has been substantiated as factual and whether it is a violation of this policy, and a recommended disposition of the complaint. The findings of the investigation shall be provided to the complainant, the accused, and the Chief of Staff.

### **Step 4 —School Action**

If the investigation results in a finding that the complaint is factual and constitutes a violation of this policy, the Head of School shall take prompt, corrective action to ensure that such conduct ceases and will not recur. Disciplinary actions shall be consistent with the Scholar and Family Handbook, school procedures, PCSB policies, as well as state and federal laws.

If it is concluded that an employee has knowingly made a false complaint under this policy, such employee shall be subject to disciplinary action.

## DC Scholars Public Charter School Local Wellness Policy

DC Scholars Public Charter School strives to develop scholars to become thoughtful decision makers. We will use the requirements above to develop and implement a comprehensive wellness policy to engage scholars in health education, nutrition education, physical education, and healthy food choices so that our scholars become as healthy and well-rounded as possible.

**The U.S. Congress established a requirement in the Child Nutrition and Women, Infant, and Children (WIC) Reauthorization Act of 2004, that all school districts with a federally funded school meal program draft a local school wellness policy. This requirement was re-established in the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, a reauthorization of the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004, and amended in 2011.**

The law requires that the wellness policy must, at a minimum, include (1) goals for nutrition education, nutrition promotion, physical activity, and other school-based activities that promote student wellness; (2) establish nutrition guidelines for all foods available on each school campus during the school day with the objectives of promoting student health and reducing childhood obesity; (3) provide assurance that those guidelines for reimbursable school meals shall not be less restrictive than regulations and guidance issued by the Secretary of Agriculture; (4) establish a plan for measuring the implementation of the local wellness policy, including designation of one or more persons within the local education agency or at each school, with operational responsibility for ensuring that each school fulfills the local wellness policy; (5) involve parents, students, teachers of physical education, school health professionals, and representatives of the school food authority, school administrators, and school community, in the development, implementation, and periodic review and update of the local wellness policy; and (6) inform and update the public (including parents, students, and others in the community) about the periodic measurement and assessment of the local wellness policy, including the extent to which the school is in compliance with the local wellness policy, the extent to which the local wellness policy compares to model local wellness policies, and to describe the progress made in attaining the goals of the local wellness policy.

### **Section 1: Ensuring Quality Health Education, Nutrition Education, Physical Education, and Opportunities for Physical Activity**

#### ***Health and Nutrition Education***

DC Scholars Public Charter School will provide health education at every grade level (K-8) that is sequential, comprehensive, and standards-based. Health education includes a strong nutrition education component. Health is taught at least 75 minutes each week and is integrated into other content areas such as math, science, language arts, and elective subjects. Classes also include developmentally appropriate and engaging participatory activities.

#### ***Physical Education***

DC Scholars Public Charter School will provide physical education at every grade level (K-8th) that includes a variety of both individual and cooperative kinesthetic activities, as well as aesthetic movement forms, integrates topics in health and nutrition when relevant, and is taught at least 30 minutes per week. Physical education ensures that scholars are participating in moderate to vigorous physical activity at least 50% of the class time and provides appropriate alternative activities for scholars with physical disabilities when necessary. Physical education takes into account environmental conditions and limits the amount or type of physical exercise required of scholars during air pollution episodes and excessively hot or cold weather. DCSPCS prohibits the

requiring or withholding of physical activity as punishment.

### ***Physical Activity***

DC Scholars Public Charter School will provide daily opportunities for physical activity by ensuring that recess and/or physical education blocks occur for 20 minutes each day. Physical activities that provide Kinesthetic “brain breaks” are incorporated into the academic schedule. Physical activity is incorporated into the DCSPCS afterschool program.

## **Section 2: Establishing Nutritional Guidelines for All Foods Served and Sold on Campus During the School Day**

### ***Free Lunch***

All scholars at DCSPCS receive “free lunch” since we have been identified as a part of the “Community Eligibility” program.

### ***Free Breakfast***

DC Scholars Public Charter School will operate a Universal “Free for All” School Breakfast Program providing free breakfast to all scholars.

### ***Meal Times and Scheduling***

Scholars will have a minimum of 20 minutes to eat lunch once they are seated, as well as sufficient time to pass through the lunch line. Lunch will be scheduled after recess whenever possible.

### ***Nutritional Quality of School Meals***

All meals served at DCSPCS will meet the serving requirements of the USDA’s Healthier U.S. Schools Challenge (HUSSC) Gold Award Level for fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. School meals will meet the following requirements as required by the USDA through participation in the National School Lunch Program:

- School meals will limit saturated fat to fewer than 10% of total calories and 0 grams of trans fat.
- School meals will see gradual reductions in sodium until reaching the following levels by 2020: Less than 430 mg in a breakfast meal for grades K-5 and less than 640 mg in a breakfast meal for grades K-5 all school
- Meals will provide only non-flavored reduced fat (1%), fat-free milk, or nutritionally-equivalent non-dairy alternatives.
- No school meals will contain high-fructose corn syrup.
- All cereals will have six grams or less per serving of sugar.
- A vegetarian option will be offered every day.

DC Scholars Public Charter School will provide meals that meet the dietary needs of children with diagnosed medical conditions as specified by a physician. DCSPCS will post breakfast and lunch menus, the nutritional content of each menu item, the ingredients of each menu item, information regarding the origin of foods, and whether farmers are engaged in sustainable agriculture practices(if known) in the front office and on the school’s website. Meals will include locally grown ingredients from farms engaged in sustainable practices whenever possible and this will be highlighted during at least one special celebration each year. Meals will include whole and minimally-processed foods whenever possible. Staff will be encouraged to model healthy eating habits for students and refrain from consuming foods in front of students that do not meet the Healthier U.S. School Challenge at the Gold Award for Competitive Foods.

### ***After School Snacks and Suppers***

All snacks served during the school day and after school will comply with the nutritional requirements of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and the HUSSC with an emphasis on serving fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. Snacks will be served during the day to scholars based on the timing of school meals, children’s nutritional needs, children’s ages, and other

considerations.

### **Competitive Food Guidelines**

Competitive foods are defined as foods and beverages available or sold outside of the federally-reimbursable child nutrition programs in vending machines, a la carte lines, and fundraisers.

All food offered and sold at the school, including foods used for classroom and school celebrations, and fundraisers, will meet the Healthier U.S. School Challenge at the Gold Award Level for Competitive Foods, which include:

- Portion Size: equal to or smaller than items served in the school lunch program, or in packages of 200 calories or less.
- 35% or less of calories from total fat (excludes nuts and reduced-fat cheese).
- Trans-fat free meals.
- Less than 10% of calories from saturated fat (excludes reduced-fat cheese).
- 35% or less sugar by weight (excludes fruits, vegetables, and milk).
- Sodium: 480 mg or less per side dish and 600 mg or less per entrée.
- Beverages will be limited to low fat or skim milk, 100% fruit/vegetable juice, or water.

At DC Scholars Public Charter School there will not be any vending machines in the building. DCSPCS will limit celebrations that involve food during the school day to no more than one party per class per month. DCSPCS shall develop a "Healthy Snacks" and "Healthy Parties" policy and provide parents and teachers with a list of healthy, affordable food choices for snacks and parties. Scholars will not be permitted to bring foods for lunch or snack that are high in sugar content (e.g. soda, fruit juice that contains added sugar, candy, and other dessert items).

DC Scholars Public Charter School will not use food or beverages as incentives, prizes, or awards for good behavior. DCSPCS will limit food and beverage marketing to promotion of foods and beverages that meet the nutritional standards above and prohibit the marketing and promotion of foods and beverages of minimal nutritional value. DCSPCS will prohibit third-party vendors from selling foods or beverages of any kind to scholars on campus from 90 minutes before the school begins to 90 minutes after the school day ends.

### **Section 3: Assurance Guidelines for School Meals are Not Less Restrictive than Those Issued by the Secretary of Agriculture**

The Chief of Staff, or their designee, will periodically review this policy and ensure that the standards in this policy are not less restrictive than those issued by the Secretary of Agriculture.

### **Section 4: Improving Environmental Sustainability**

DC Scholars Public Charter School will seek to improve its environmental sustainability and engage in sustainable agriculture practices through contracting with food service vendors that utilize locally grown and locally unprocessed foods from growers engaged in sustainable agriculture practices and establishing a school-wide recycling program.

### **Section 5: Community Engagement**

DC Scholars Public Charter School will solicit input from school staff, scholars, and families regarding nutritious and appealing meals. DCSPCS will solicit input from school staff (including teachers of physical education and school health professionals), scholars, and families to inform decisions and revisions regarding this Local Wellness Policy. DCSPCS will keep the community informed about the Local Wellness Policy by posting it in the front office and on the school's website and sharing it with food service staff and parent organizations. DCSPCS will work with teachers and parents to establish a Wellness Committee that will take the lead on providing feedback on and promoting the Local Wellness Policy. This committee will also be responsible for monitoring the implementation of the policy and measuring its impact. DCSPCS will notify and update the public regarding the

implementation and periodic assessment of the Local Wellness Policy.

**Section 6: Establish a Plan for Measuring the Impact and Implementation of the Local Wellness Policy**

DCSPCS will establish a School Wellness Committee comprised of parents, scholars, school staff (including teachers of physical education and school health professionals) and representatives from the school community. The DCSPCS Wellness Committee will be in charge of creating a plan to monitor the implementation and measure the impact of the Local Wellness Policy. The Office of the State Superintendent of Education will also monitor the implementation of the Local Wellness Policy while conducting reviews and site visits. DCSPCS will review and update the Local Wellness Policy every three years with the input of staff, students, and families.

# Grading Policy

## Grade Weighting (K – 2)

K-2 students receive a standards-based report card where mastery is determined through the use of the following rubric:

### Formative and Summative Assessments – 50%

- Interim Assessments (MAP/ANet Assessments)
- In class assessments

### Classwork - 35%

### Homework and Participation – 15%

Rating Scale	Support Needed	Developing	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
Grades	1	2	3	4
	44.4% and lower	44.5% - 72.4%	72.5% - 84.4%	84.5% and higher

## Grade Weighting (3 – 4)

### Summative Assessments – 35%

- Interim Assessments (MAP/ANet Assessments)

### Formative (In-class) Assessments – 15%

*Examples include:*

- Tests
- Projects
- Labs
- Essays

### Classwork - 40%

*Examples include:*

- Quizzes
- Assignments

### Homework and Participation – 10%

## Grade Weighting (5 – 8)

### Summative Assessments – 20%

- Interim Assessments (MAP/ANet Assessments)

### Formative (In-class) Assessments – 20%

*Examples include:*

- Tests
- Projects
- Labs
- Essays

### Classwork - 50%

*Examples include:*

- Assignments

### Homework – 10%

- This is homework that has been graded for achievement, not for completion.

### Grading Scale\* (3-8)

	Score	GPA Scale
A	93 - 100	4.0
A-	90 - 92	3.7
B+	87 - 89	3.3
B	83 - 86	3.0
B-	80 - 82	2.7
C	73 - 79	2.0
D	70 - 72	1.0
F	0 - 69	0.0

\*Note: K – 2 does not use this grading scale because they have a standards-based report card.

### Academic Honors

**Principal's List:** Scholar has received a grade of "A" or "A-" in every course.

**Honor Roll:** Scholar has received a grade of "A", "A-", "B+", "B", or "B-" in every course.

## Notification of Rights under FERPA

### General Information

FERPA is a Federal law that applies to educational agencies and institutions that receive funding under a program administered by the U. S. Department of Education. The statute is found at 20 U.S.C. § 1232g and the Department's regulations are found at 34 CFR Part 99.

Under FERPA, schools must generally afford students who are 18 years or over, or attending a postsecondary institution:

- access to their education records;
- an opportunity to seek to have the records amended;
- some control over the disclosure of information from the records.

### Access to Education Records

Schools are required by FERPA to:

- provide a student with an opportunity to inspect and review his or her education records within 45 days of the receipt of a request;
- provide a student with copies of education records or otherwise make the records available to the student if the student, for instance, lives outside of commuting distance of the school;
- redact the names and other personally identifiable information about other students that may be included in the student's education records.

Schools are not required by FERPA to:

- Create or maintain education records;
- Provide students with calendars, notices, or other information which does not generally contain information directly related to the student;
- Respond to questions about the student.

### Amendment of Education Records

Under FERPA, a school must:

- Consider a request from a student to amend inaccurate or misleading information in the student's education records;
- Offer the student a hearing on the matter if it decides not to amend the records in accordance with the request;
- Offer the student a right to place a statement to be kept and disclosed with the record if as a result of the hearing the school still decides not to amend the record.

A school is not required to consider requests for amendment under FERPA that:

- Seek to change a grade or disciplinary decision;
- Seek to change the opinions or reflections of a school official or other person reflected in an education record.

### Disclosure of Education Records

A school must:

- Have a student's consent prior to the disclosure of education records;
- Ensure that the consent is signed and dated and states the purpose of the disclosure.

A school MAY disclose education records without consent when:

- The disclosure is to school officials who have been determined to have legitimate educational interests as set forth in the institution's annual notification of rights to students;
- The student is seeking or intending to enroll in another school;
- The disclosure is to state or local educational authorities auditing or enforcing Federal or State supported education programs or enforcing Federal laws which relate to those programs;
- The disclosure is to the parents of a student who is a dependent for income tax purposes;

- The disclosure is in connection with determining eligibility, amounts, and terms for financial aid or enforcing the terms and conditions of financial aid;
- The disclosure is pursuant to a lawfully issued court order or subpoena; or
- The information disclosed has been appropriately designated as directory information by the school.

### **Annual Notification**

A school must annually notify students in attendance that they may:

- Inspect and review their education records;
- Seek amendment of inaccurate or misleading information in their education records;
- Consent to most disclosures of personally identifiable information from education records.

The annual notice must also include:

- Information for a student to file a complaint of an alleged violation with the FPCO;
- A description of who is considered to be a school official and what is considered to be a legitimate educational interest so that information may be shared with that individual; and
- Information about who to contact to seek access or amendment of education records.

### **Means of notification:**

- Can include student newspaper; calendar; student programs guide; rules handbook, or other means reasonable likely to inform students;
- Notification does not have to be made individually to students.

### **Complaints of Alleged Violations:**

Complaints of alleged violations may be addressed to:

Family Policy Compliance Office

US Department of Education

400 Maryland Avenue, SW

Washington, DC 20202-5920

### **Complaints must:**

- Be timely submitted, not later than 180 days from the date you learned of the circumstances of the alleged violation
- Contain specific allegations of fact giving reasonable cause to believe that a violation has occurred, including:
  - o Relevant dates, such as the date of a request or a disclosure and the date the student learned of the alleged violation;
  - o Names and titles of those school officials and other third parties involved;
  - o A specific description of the education record around which the alleged violation occurred;
  - o A description of any contact with school officials regarding the matter, including dates and estimated times of telephone calls and/or copies of any correspondence exchanged between the student and the school regarding the matter;
  - o The name and address of the school, school district, and superintendent of the district;
  - o Any additional evidence that would be helpful in the consideration of the complaint.

## Notification of Rights under Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment

Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) affords parents certain rights regarding our conduct of surveys, collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams.

These include the right to:

- **Consent, before scholars are required to submit to a survey that concerns one or more of the following protected areas (“protected information survey”) if the survey is funded in whole, or in part, by a program of the U.S. Department of Education (ED):**
  1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the scholar or scholar’s parent;
  2. Mental or psychological problems of the scholar or scholar’s family;
  3. Sex behavior or attitudes;
  4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
  5. Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships;
  6. Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers;
  7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the scholar or parents; or
  8. Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility.
- **Receive notice and an opportunity to opt a scholar out of:**
  1. Any other protected information survey, regardless of funding;
  2. Any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a scholar, except for hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under State law; and
  3. Activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information obtained from scholars for marketing or to sell or otherwise distribute the information to others.
- **Inspect, upon request and before administration or use:**
  1. Protected information surveys of scholars;
  2. Instruments used to collect personal information from scholars for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes; and
  3. Instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum.

These rights transfer from the parents to a scholar who is 18 years old or an emancipated minor under State law. DCSPCS has developed and adopted policies, in consultation with parents, regarding these rights, as well as arrangements to protect scholar privacy in the administration of protected information surveys and the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes. DCSPCS will directly notify parents of these policies at least annually at the start of each school year and after any substantive changes. DCSPCS will also directly notify, such as through U.S. Mail or email, parents of scholars who are scheduled to participate in the specific activities or surveys noted below and will provide an opportunity for the parent to opt his or her child out of participation of the specific activity or survey. DCSPCS will make this notification to parents at the beginning of the school year if the District has identified the specific or approximate dates of the activities or surveys at that time. For surveys and activities scheduled after the school year starts, parents will be provided reasonable notification of the planned activities and surveys listed below and be provided an opportunity to opt their child out of such activities and surveys.

Parents will also be provided an opportunity to review any pertinent surveys. Following is a list of the specific activities and surveys covered under this requirement:

- Collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales or other distribution.
- Administration of any protected information survey not funded in whole or in part by ED.
- Any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening as described above.

Parents who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with:

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

## Information on Title I

DC Scholars Public Charter School receives federal funding through Title I, Part A – Improving Basic Programs. This federal program provides financial assistance to schools with high percentages of economically disadvantaged scholars to ensure that children meet challenging state academic standards.

Since more than 40 percent of the DCSPCS scholar body are classified as economically disadvantaged (as determined by participation in the National School Lunch Program), DCSPCS uses Title I funding to operate a school wide program to upgrade the instructional program for the whole school. Our school wide Title I program is based on effective means of improving scholar achievement and includes strategies to support parental involvement.

### Annual Title I Meeting:

DC Scholars Public Charter School invites parents to attend our annual Title I information meeting, which will be announced in the fall. At this meeting we will describe our participation in Title I, Part A programs, explain the requirement of Title I, and explain parents' right to be involved (including developing our Title I Parent Involvement Policy and Parent Compact).

### Parent Rights under Title I:

Under Title I, Part A, DCSPCS parents have the right to:

- **Be involved in our Title I, Part A programs** – DCSPCS, with the help of its parents, will develop and implement a Title I Parent Involvement Policy and a School-Parent Compact.
- **Request regular meetings** – Requests for meetings to discuss Title I programs should be put in writing and submitted to Kyle Jones, [kjjones@dcscholars.org](mailto:kjjones@dcscholars.org).
- **Receive individual student report about performance on PARCC** – Parents will receive an individual student report about the performance of their child on the State assessment (PARCC) in at least math, language arts, and reading.

### Title I Complaint Procedures

A parent who feels that the school is not meeting its Title I or other responsibilities as outlined in this policy, should first discuss the problem with the Chief of Staff, Kyle Jones. Examples of violations would be such things as:

- An annual meeting was not convened by the Head of School to explain Title I offerings to parents.
- Parents were not provided an individual student report about the performance of their child on the State assessment (PARCC) in at least math, language arts, and reading.

If the concern was not resolved with the Chief of Staff, a parent should begin a formal grievance as outlined in [Appendix B "Grievance Policy"](#). A complaint is defined by the DCSPCS as a written, signed statement. It must include the following:

1. A statement that DCSPCS has violated a requirement of federal statute or regulations which apply to programs under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended by Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015.
2. The facts on which the statement is based.
3. Information on any discussions, meetings or correspondence regarding the complaint.

## Education of Homeless Children and Youth Program Educational Rights Public Notice

The mission of the Education of Homeless Children and Youth Program is to ensure free, appropriate, public educational opportunities for homeless children and youths; to provide technical assistance to schools, shelters and the community; and to heighten awareness of homeless issues. Homeless children and youth should have equal access to the same educational opportunities and services as non-homeless children and youth. In addition, homeless children and youth should have the opportunity to meet the same challenging academic achievement standards to which all scholars are held pursuant to Title X of No Child Left Behind; McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act federal law.

1. **What is the definition of homeless children and youths?** The term “homeless child and youth” means:
  - Children and youth who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; children and youth who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelter (including D.C. transitional housing); are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement;
  - Children and youth who have a primary nighttime residence that is a private or public place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
  - Children and youth who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned building, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings;
  - Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above; and
  - Unaccompanied youth, including youth who are not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian, who qualify as homeless because they live in circumstances described above.
  
2. **Can a homeless child enroll in school?** Yes. The child may continue enrollment in the school of origin for the duration of homelessness. The school is the one the child attended prior to becoming homeless or the school in which the child was last enrolled. The child may also enroll in the school for the attendance area where he or she is living temporarily. If a dispute arises over school selection or enrollment, the school must immediately enroll the homeless scholar in the school, pending resolution of the dispute. If the local school cannot resolve the dispute, the school must follow the Dispute Resolution Process, not to exceed fifteen (15) days. The local school must provide the parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth with a written statement of the school placement decision and the appeal rights.
  
3. **Who should be contacted if a dispute arises regarding enrolling a homeless child or youth in school or if other assistance is needed?** The Education of Homeless Children and Youth Program has been designed to assist children and youth who are experiencing homelessness and their families regarding educational issues. If a homeless child or youth is

experiencing difficulty enrolling in school, please contact the Education of Homeless Children and Youth Office at (202)741-0470.

4. **What services are provided by the Homeless Children and Youth Program?** The Homeless Children and Youth Program provides the following services: transportation assistance; dispute resolution; emergency school enrollment assistance; special projects; Homeless Awareness Month; staff development; and interagency collaboration.

## Non-Discrimination Notice

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, religious creed, disability, age, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: How to File a Complaint, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Also, the District of Columbia Human Rights Act, approved December 13, 1977 (DC Law 2-38; DC Official Code §2-1402.11(2006), as amended) states the following:

Pertinent section of DC Code § 2-1402.11: It shall be an unlawful discriminatory practice to do any of the following acts, wholly or partially for a discriminatory reason based upon the actual or perceived: race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, family responsibilities, genetic information, disability, matriculation, or political affiliation of any individual. To file a complaint alleging discrimination on one of these bases, please contact the District of Columbia's Office of Human Rights at (202)727-4559 or [ohr@dc.gov](mailto:ohr@dc.gov).

# DC Scholars Handbook Accountability Agreement

(To be signed and returned to Teacher)

## ATTENDANCE POLICY and DOCUMENTATION

- I will ensure that my scholar(s) comes to school every day on time to be in school and ready to go by 8:00am.
- I understand that if my scholar has 10 or more unexcused absences, DC Law requires DCSPCS to report it to Child and Family Services. At 15 or 20 unexcused absences, we report again.
- I understand that if my scholar has 20 or more consecutive unexcused absences, DCSPCS reserves the right to automatically unenroll him/her, which would require me to enroll him/her at another school.
- I understand that if my scholar has 20 or more excused or unexcused absences, he or she will likely be retained. DCSPCS does not distinguish between excused or unexcused absences when considering retention.
- I understand that scholars who are absent from school cannot attend or participate in any school-sponsored activities.
- I will review my scholar's attendance letter every Friday and notify the school within 5 days of any discrepancies.
- I understand that an absence is excused only if I have contacted the school and written a detailed note regarding student illness, family emergency (as defined in the Scholar and Family Handbook), required court appearances, or religious observance.
- I understand that all excuse notes must be provided within five (5) days of the absence or the note will not be accepted.

## ARRIVAL

- I understand that DCSPCS does not have a before care program at this time and, therefore, no scholars or parents will be permitted to enter the building or classrooms before 8:00 am, unless the leadership of DCSPCS deems conditions unsafe.
- I understand that I may walk my PS/PK scholar to class up until 8:30 am. At 8:30 am, my scholar must walk him or herself to class or be escorted by a school administrator
- I understand that I must exit my PS/PK scholar's classroom by 8:30am because instruction begins at that time.
- I understand that breakfast is served from 8:00am to 8:30am each day. I understand that if my scholar arrives close to 8:30am, he or she may not have time to finish his or her breakfast. Teachers stop serving breakfast at 8:30am.
- I understand that my scholar is tardy if he/she is not in the doors of the building at 8:30am.

## DISMISSAL

- I understand that I must be in the Main Office by 2:45 pm in order to pick up my student for early dismissal. If I enter the building after those times, I will have to wait until normal dismissal time to pick up my scholar (3:15 pm).
- I understand that the Main Office is not able to communicate dismissal information to students or teachers. Any instruction regarding when or how they are to be dismissed from school should be communicated to the teacher directly.
- I understand that if my scholar is not in aftercare, I must pick up my scholar by 3:15pm. I understand that at this time, the school will begin to reach out to emergency contacts and at 3:30pm the school will reach out to state authorities if contact has not been made with the family.

## HOMEWORK

- I agree to check my scholar's homework daily to ensure that it is complete.
- I agree to ensure my scholar reads independently for 30 minutes every day and to sign his or her reading log each evening.
- I understand that my scholar may be required to stay afterschool or arrive before school for extra help or tutoring, if necessary.

FAMILY COMMUNICATION

- I agree to sign-up for DCSPCS text notifications (Text @dcspcs1819 to 81010 – cell phone users only).
- I agree to check my student’s homework folder daily for information and communications and to return the folder to school each day.
- I agree to make sure my contact information is always up-to-date, and to notify the Main Office of any changes in phone numbers, e-mails, or addresses.

CODE OF CONDUCT

- I agree to promote and support the rules of behavior as outlined in the Family Handbook and accept responsibility as a partner in my scholar’s learning.
- I understand that cursing, screaming, threatening, or other inappropriate behavior directed towards staff or students will not be tolerated at DCSPCS. Upon the first incident, I understand that there will be an in-person meeting with the Leadership to review our communication expectations, and I will receive a follow-up warning letter. Upon the second incident, I understand that I will no longer be able to enter the building.

FAMILY SUPPORT

- I agree to support my scholar’s academic work by communicating regularly with my scholar’s teachers, by scheduling appointments to speak with them as needed, by attending all Parent-Teacher Conferences, and by sending my scholar to school each day with a backpack and his or her HW folder.
- I agree to attend family meetings and other school-sponsored events on a regular basis.
- I agree to respond to phone calls from any school staff member promptly.

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Parent/Guardian Name (Print Clearly)

Date

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Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

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Scholar Names & Homerooms

Date