

Dear Families:

On behalf of the founders, board of trustees, faculty, and staff of Brownsville Ascend Lower School, I extend a warm welcome! We recognize that you had a choice in where to enroll your scholar - one of the most important decisions you will make as a parent or guardian - and we are honored that you have selected Brownsville Ascend Lower. Your choice represents your faith in us, and we are firmly committed to maintaining your trust.

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

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

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

Again, thank you for choosing Brownsville Ascend Lower School. We have an exciting and productive year ahead of us!

Sincerely,

Erica Murphy
School Director



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Our mission

The mission of Brownsville Ascend Lower is to equip every scholar with the knowledge, confidence, and character to succeed in college and beyond. Our scholars will, from the earliest grades, steadily build a strong foundation of learning habits, critical-thinking skills, and knowledge; excel academically in the middle and high schools; and graduate as confident young adults, prepared to succeed as college scholars, citizens, and leaders in their chosen fields.

About Ascend Learning

Ascend Learning, a non-profit organization based in Brooklyn, manages Brownsville Ascend Lower. Ascend Learning's mission is to develop a scalable solution to the underachievement of economically disadvantaged children - a system of urban, college-preparatory charter schools that use widely available resources to post achievement levels equal or superior to those of suburban scholars from middle-class families.

The Learning Contract

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

Parent/guardian commitment

1. Attendance. I will make sure my scholar is at school every day.
2. Punctuality. I accept responsibility for getting my child to school no later than 8:00 a.m. every day. I will make sure that if my scholar takes the bus that he or she is at the bus stop on time.
3. Dismissal. If my child is picked up from school, I will ensure that a responsible designated adult is there to pick him or her up promptly at dismissal. If my child needs to stay after school for tutoring or detention or to go to school on a Saturday, it will be my responsibility to arrange transportation for my child to and from school.
4. Preparation. I will help my child demonstrate readiness to learn and respect for him or herself and the school community by sending my child to school in an Ascend uniform that is clean, complete, and in proper repair. If my child arrives at school without parts of his or her uniform, I understand that I will be expected to bring my child's uniform to school. I will make sure my child is properly rested for school by seeking to ensure nine full hours of sleep for my child every night.
5. Homework and quiet space. I understand that my child will have homework every night. I will check that my child has completed his or her homework to the best of his or her ability. I will provide a quiet, dedicated space for my child to study every night, with no television, video games, or distractions.
6. Daily reading. Every night, including weekends, I will insist that my child reads, or I will read to him or her, for at least 30 minutes.

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

Teacher's commitment

1. Attendance and punctuality. I will come to school every day on time. Every minute of instruction is precious.
2. Mission. I subscribe to the mission of the school and will work tirelessly to realize it. I am committed to preparing every scholar for admission to and success at a selective college or university.
3. Best effort. I will always offer my scholars the best I have as a teacher and will do whatever it takes for them to learn. I will not make excuses for myself, my scholars, or my colleagues.
4. Preparation. I will always submit lesson plans and other documents on time and will be fully prepared every day for my scholars and colleagues.
5. Respect and support. I will appreciate, respect, and support every scholar. I will be a model for my scholars by respecting and supporting each individual in the school community at all times.
6. Communication. I will communicate regularly with parents or guardians about their children's progress and make myself available to my scholars and their parents or guardians in person, by email, and by telephone.
7. The school's values and rules. I will uphold the school's values and will enforce its rules consistently and fairly. I will always protect the safety, interests, and rights of all scholars and members of the staff.
8. Responsibility. I am responsible for the success of all my scholars.

Scholar's commitment

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

The Ascend Learning education

A path to college

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

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

Communication

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

Interim academic reports are sent to all families approximately six weeks into every term. These reports provide useful and timely information about scholars' progress. It is crucial that scholars who are failing to meet our standards and those on the borderline exert extra effort to catch up so they can do well for the remainder of the term. Interim academic reports are especially valuable in alerting families to any areas in which scholars are falling short of the school's academic standards - before problems take root. The interim reports also provide an excellent opportunity to acknowledge scholars who are doing outstanding work, such as a scholar who maintains an A average or a scholar who is demonstrating exceptional effort and making significant progress.

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

Report cards are published three times a year at the end of each term. Starting in grade 1, the report card includes the scholar's numerical grades for each subject, attendance records, and an accounting of the scholar's behavior in school. In addition, it includes a summative comment regarding the scholar's attitude, progress, and behavior. The kindergarten report card reflects the scholar's academic growth and developmental progress.

School visits

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

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

School calendar and hours for academic year 2016-2017

Instruction begins promptly at 8:00 am Monday through Friday. Monday through Thursday, dismissal for students starts at 4:05 p.m. On Fridays, dismissal for students starts at 1:00 p.m.

The school divides the academic year into two terms. For the 2016 - 2017 school year, Term 1 is September 8th through January 27th. Term 2 is January 30th through June 29th.

School Year Calendar 2016-2017

September 6-7	Scholar Orientation; KG (1:00 pm dismissal; no buses)
September 8-9	All scholars in attendance (1:00 pm dismissal; no buses)
September 12	Full-length school day begins; no busing
September 19	Busing begins
October 3-4	No school; Rosh Hashanah
October 10	No school; Columbus Day

October 12	No school; Yom Kippur
October 28	No scholars; Professional Development #1
November 7	No scholars; Professional Development #2
November 11	No school; Veterans Day
November 17-18	Progress Report Conferences (1:00 pm dismissal for scholars)
November 23	1:00pm dismissal for scholars
November 24-25	No school; Thanksgiving Recess
December 26-Jan 2	No school; Winter Recess
January 16	No school; Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day
January 20	No scholars; Professional Development #3
January 27	End of Term 1
February 3	No scholars; Professional Development #4
February 16	1:00 pm dismissal for scholars
February 20-24	No school; Midwinter Recess
March 17	No scholars; Professional Development #5
March 27-31	Grades 03-05 English State Exam
April 14	No school; Spring Recess 1
May 1-5	Grades 03-05 Math State Exam
May 11-12	Progress Report Conferences (1:00 pm dismissal for scholars)
May 15-19	No school; Spring Recess 2
May 24-June 2	Grade 04 State Science Exam (various days)
May 29	No school; Memorial Day
June 29	Last day for scholars (1:00 pm dismissal for scholars)
June 29	End of Term 2
June 30	Last day for teachers

Arrival

The school day begins with a brief morning meeting, during which homeroom teachers communicate vital information about the day ahead. It is critically important that all scholars are in their seats and ready to learn no later than 8:00 a.m. as tardiness not only impacts their own preparedness but disrupts the classroom as well.

Scholars eating breakfast at school may arrive as early as 7:30 a.m., but no later than 7:50 a.m. The school doors are locked and staff members are not available before 7:30 a.m., so dropping your child before that time poses a serious safety risk and is strictly prohibited.

Attendance and consequences for absences

To remain firmly on the path to college, your scholar must maximize his or her opportunities to learn. Our academic program pushes scholars to master new material each day. Missing one day of school puts a scholar behind his or her peers. Families must work with the school to ensure that scholars attend school every day and arrive on time, except in the most extraordinary circumstances. Truancy (missing school without providing a proper excuse or excessive absenteeism) not only jeopardizes your child's progress, it is against the law.

Expectations

- All families and scholars agree to strive for an attendance rate of 100 percent and to never be late.
- Parents and guardians will contact the school as early as possible but no later than 8:30 a.m., if their scholar will be late or absent.
- Absent scholars will return to school with a note or document including:
 - o The date of the absence
 - o The reason for the absence
 - o A phone number where a parent or guardian can be reached
 - o The parent's or guardian's name, relationship to the scholar, and signature
- Documentation should be provided within 48 hours of a scholar's return to school.

Reasons for being absent

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

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

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

- Family vacations.
- Transportation delays or failures to make connections.
- Instances where parents or guardians share custody and the scholar is in the custody of the parent not normally responsible for ensuring the scholar attends school. It is the responsibility of parents and or guardians to ensure the scholar is in attendance each school day regardless of custody arrangements.

Suspensions

Scholars absent as a result of an out-of-school suspension are still considered absent if they do not report to school or other assigned location for at least two hours of alternative instruction.

Attendance communication protocol

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

- In cases of truancy, school staff may report the scholar and/or family to the appropriate public agencies or file an official complaint with the court.
- Scholars who are absent from school may not attend or participate in any school-sponsored activities occurring on the day of the absence.

Instance	Action and Purpose
Each absence	<p>Communication between the family and the school The parent/guardian must report any absence via a phone call to the school by 8:30 a.m. on the day of the absence. If a student is absent without explanation, the school will contact the parent/guardian via phone by 10:00 a.m.</p>
Sixth consecutive undocumented absence	<p>Report to the Administration of Children Services (ACS) If the school is unable to make contact with the family after five days of undocumented absences, the school director in conjunction with the school's social worker will report excessive absences and the possibility of a missing child to the Administration of Children Services (ACS).</p>
Third absence	<p>Letter home After three absences, the school will send a letter home detailing the scholar's attendance record and the consequences of lost instructional time.</p>
Sixth absence	<p>Letter home/parent conference Brownsville Ascend Lower will schedule a meeting with the parent or guardian to discuss excessive absences and the school's mandated reporting policy.</p>
Ninth absence	<p>Parent or guardian conference or certified letter home (<i>signature required</i>) Brownsville Ascend Lower will schedule a family meeting to discuss excessive absences and the school's mandated reporting policy. During this meeting, a member of the school leadership team will ask the parent or guardian to sign a statement acknowledging the purpose and date of the meeting, and confirming comprehension of the law regarding school attendance as well as the consequences of school absences for the scholar.</p>
Fifteenth absence	<p>Evaluation of readiness for promotion The school reserves the right to retain any scholar who exceeds 15 absences. The school will also schedule a family meeting as above to discuss excessive absences and the school's mandated reporting policy. In the event that the school is unable to make contact with the parent or guardian, the school will send a certified letter to the last known address.</p>
Twentieth absence	<p>Report to the Administration of Children Services (ACS) The school director in conjunction with the school's social worker will report excessive absences to the Administration for Children Services (ACS) and file a case of educational neglect.</p>

Consequences for tardiness

Scholars are expected to be punctual, mindful of their responsibility to learn, and respectful of other people's time and their own learning time. Tardiness not only impacts the child's preparedness, it also disrupts and infringes upon the rights of the whole class. Habitual tardiness is not permitted. Habitual tardiness is not permitted; if a scholar has been tardy more than three times in a term, the school will schedule a family conference to address the issue.

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

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

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

Homework policy

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

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

Daily reading and reading log

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

School closings/late starts

In case of severe weather, a power outage, or other problems requiring school closure or a late start, the school announces the closing or delay through the "one-call" system. Announcements typically start by 6:00 a.m. As a general rule, but not always, if the NYC DOE decides to close schools because of weather, Brownsville Ascend Lower will close as well. In extreme circumstances school may be closed once scholars have arrived for the day. Please call the school if you are in doubt.

Uniforms

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

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

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

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

Boys' uniform

Top

- White polo shirt (long-sleeve or short-sleeve)
- Burgundy sweater, optional (cardigan, sweater vest, or v-neck long-sleeve pullover)
- Boys do not wear ties in the lower school

Bottom

- Grey pants (no extra pockets, snaps, or zippers; no wide-leg or baggy pants; no denim, corduroy or cargo pants)
- Black belt (required)
- White, black, or burgundy socks

Shoes

- Black sneakers (all black only—no stripes, patterns, designs, or colored laces)
- Black dress shoes

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

Girls' uniform

Top

- White polo shirt (long-sleeve or short-sleeve)
- Burgundy sweater, optional (cardigan, sweater vest, or v-neck long-sleeve pullover)

Bottom

- Grey pants (no extra pockets, snaps, or zippers; no wide-leg or baggy pants; no denim, corduroy or cargo pants)
- Grey jumper (no extra pockets or extra buckles)
- Grey pleated skirt (no miniskirts)
- Black belt (required if there are belt loops)

- White, black, or burgundy socks (no lace, no stripes, no designs)
- White, black, or burgundy tights (no lace, no stripes, no designs)

Please note: Girls may not wear jumpers or skirts on days when they have physical education (gym). We strongly recommend that girls always wear tights under their skirts or jumpers.

Shoes

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

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

Head coverings and hair

Hats, caps or other head coverings may not be worn unless they are worn in observance of one's faith. Dyed hair or a hairstyle that serves as a distraction - as determined by the school - is not permitted.

Prohibited clothing and accessories

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

Uniform specifics

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

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

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

Transportation

At the beginning of the school year it is critical that you tell the school of your child's transportation plans; specifically, whether your scholar will be picked up or take the bus.

If your child's transportation plans change, please communicate these changes to the school in advance and in writing.

Yellow bus service - general education students

Yellow bus service is provided by NYC DOE Office of Pupil Transportation. Eligibility is determined by the student's grade and the distance between the scholar's home and the school. Busing is only available up to grade six. Please note:

- **There are no adults on the bus except for the bus driver.**
- Scholars who misbehave on the bus receive the same consequences as scholars who misbehave at school, and may lose bus privileges for up to a year.
- **Scholars will be permitted to get off the bus at their stop unless they notify the driver that the designated adult is not present.** It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that there is a designated adult at the bus stop to receive the child -- not the bus driver's or the school's.
- **If the designated adult is not at the bus stop,** the bus driver may call the Office of Pupil Transportation, the school or the police. Parents or guardians who fail to pick-up their child from the bus stop are putting their child in danger and such failure is considered neglect. The first offense will result in a written warning, the second offense will require a conference with the parent/guardian to problem-solve, and the third offense will result in referral to the appropriate authorities and loss of bus privileges for up to a year.

Yellow bus service - special education students

Yellow bus service is provided by NYC DOE Office of Pupil Transportation. Eligibility is determined by the scholar's Individualized Education Plan. Please note:

- **Scholars are expected to behave appropriately on the bus.**
- **Scholars will not be permitted to get off the bus at their stop unless the designated adult is present.** If the designated adult is not at the bus stop, the bus driver may call the Office of Pupil Transportation, the school, or the police. If the child is returned to the school, it would be counted as a late pick-up and require a meeting with the parent guardian.

Behavior on the bus

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

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

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

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

Dismissal

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

Monday through Thursday, scholars will be dismissed at 4:05 p.m. to parents. On Friday, scholars are dismissed to parents at 1:00 p.m.

Picking-up scholars at dismissal

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

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

Scholars walking home alone

Scholars in grades kindergarten to fifth grade are not allowed to walk home alone. If a scholar has an older sibling that attends BVMS or BAHS, parents are still asked to submit a note granting permission for lower school scholars to be released to sibling.

Late pick-ups

At 4:15 p.m. Monday through Thursday or at 1:15 p.m. on Friday, the teacher records the names of scholars who have not been picked-up in the Late Pick-up Log. These students are escorted to the late pick-up holding area. Parents are required to sign the Late Pick-up Log in recognition of their tardiness.

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

Early pick-ups

Early pick-ups are disruptive to the learning environment and are therefore strongly discouraged.

To ensure necessary order at the end of the school day, early pick-ups are not permitted during the hour before dismissal. Monday to Thursday the cut-off is at 3:00 p.m.; Friday the cut-off is at 12:00 p.m.

Breakfast, lunch, and snack

Breakfast and lunch are served daily. Scholars who bring lunch from home may sign-up to receive milk at school.

To protect the health of scholars with allergies, some of which are life-threatening, Brownsville Ascend Lower is a **nut-free school**, which means that we permit no nut products in school at any time. When packing lunches for your child, please be aware that many processed foods contain nut products; read the labels of such foods carefully to ensure that your choices do not endanger a scholar with an acute allergy. If your scholar has a food allergy, please contact the school director and your child's teacher immediately so they can take the necessary precautions.

Foods not permitted at school

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

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

Healthy lunch or snack suggestions

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

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

Discipline Code

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

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

Code of Conduct

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

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

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

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

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

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

As described below, the Code defines three categories of disciplinary offenses: (1) those that lead to pre-suspension consequences (Category I behavior violations), (2) those that could lead to suspension (Category II behavior violations), and (3) those that could lead to expulsion (Category III behavior violations). In addition, the school reserves the right to contact law enforcement when appropriate.

Disciplinary actions

The following list is not all-inclusive, but provides examples of violations of the Code that may result in disciplinary consequences. The list does not limit the authority of school authorities to impose appropriate penalties and consequences for violations of school rules or conduct that interfere with the school's order, the educational process, or the health and safety of any member of the school community. The school may modify the list of behavior violations and consequences from time to time with notice to scholars.

Category I behavior violations

The following behaviors generally lead to classroom consequences determined by the child's teacher or additional after school support. Repeated Category I violations may be treated as Category II violations.

1.01 Failure to comply: Each scholar must obey every adult in the school, including administrators, teachers, educational assistants, secretaries, custodians, lunchroom workers, and security guards. It is

unacceptable for scholars to talk back to adults, be rude or disrespectful, or show nonverbal signs of defiance.

1.02 Behaving in a manner which disrupts the education process: Classroom and school rules are established to protect the integrity of the learning environment, and scholars must follow them at all times. Scholars who cause a disruption by talking, making noises, throwing objects, inappropriate displays of affection, or otherwise distracting classmates or the teacher are disrupting the education process.

1.03 Uniform violation: Scholars must wear the school uniform to school every day.

1.04 Scholastic dishonesty: Scholars must not engage in academic cheating. Cheating includes, but is not limited to, the giving or receiving of any unauthorized aid or the giving or receiving of unfair advantage on any form of academic work. Scholars must not engage in plagiarism, which includes the copying of language, structures, ideas and/or thoughts of another person and representing it as one's own original work. A scholar must not unlawfully duplicate, reproduce, retain, or use copyrighted material.

1.05 Electronic media and communication devices: Scholars may not use electronic media and/or communications devices at school. Should a scholar use such a device at school, in addition to other consequences deemed appropriate by school staff, the item may be confiscated and held until an adult picks it up.

1.06 Engaging in or causing disruptive behavior on the school bus: Scholars must obey the bus rules, and not engage in disruptive behavior or language. Serious behavior violations may be categorized as a category II or III violations and treated as such.

1.07 Failing to be in one's assigned place: Scholars should only be in the rooms and other areas of the school to which they have been specifically given permission.

Category II behavior violations

The following behaviors may lead to suspension, the length of which is determined based on the scholar's disciplinary record and the seriousness of the offense(s). Repeated Category II violations may be treated as Category III violations.

2.01 Truancy and cutting: Any full-day or part-day absence from school that is not excused by a parent or legal guardian is considered truancy. Being absent from one or more classes during the school day without the permission of school staff is "cutting" and is not allowed.

2.02 Profanity or obscenity: Scholars must not say or write inappropriate words or make obscene gestures. Scholars must not draw or show sexually explicit pictures to anyone at school. Cursing or swearing is also strictly prohibited.

2.03 Play fighting and threatening: Scholars may not play fight and/or threaten others as such behavior compromises the safety of the community.

2.04 Smoking: Smoking and possession of any kind of tobacco at school, on school grounds, or at any school-related activity are prohibited.

2.05 Alcohol, drugs, and drug paraphernalia: Scholars must not bring alcohol, drugs, or any drug paraphernalia to school. They must not manufacture, sell, handle, possess, use, deliver, or be under any degree of influence of any alcoholic beverage, intoxicant, or drug (legal intoxication is not a requirement). Scholars must not inhale any substance for the purpose of becoming intoxicated or under the influence. Prescribed medication must be delivered to the school by the parent or guardian with the written authorization of a physician. All prescribed medication must be administered at school by

the school nurse. As described below, the possession of narcotics with the intent to sell or distribute is a Category III violation and may lead to immediate suspension, recommendation for expulsion, and police referral.

2.06 Pornographic material: The possession or creation of pornographic material is not tolerated.

2.07 Stealing: Scholars must not take without permission anything that does not belong to them or have in their possession anything that has been stolen.

2.08 Aggressive disorderly conduct: Scholars must not, by any type of conduct (including but not limited to violence, force, noise, coercion, threat, intimidation, fear, or passive resistance), cause the disruption, disturbance, or obstruction of any school function, activity, or event. Scholars may not urge other scholars to engage in such conduct for the purpose of causing such disruption or obstruction.

2.09 Gang activity: Gang activity is defined as any assembly of three or more individuals who gather on a continuing basis, whose purpose the school reasonably believes is to behave in an antisocial fashion and/or to violate school policy. Scholars must not wear or display any clothing, jewelry, colors, or insignia that a teacher or administrator may reasonably perceive as evidence of membership in or affiliation with a gang or that otherwise symbolizes support of a gang. Scholars must not use any word, phrase, written symbol, or gesture that intentionally identifies them as members of a gang or otherwise symbolizes support of a gang, nor try to recruit others to gangs.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Category III behavior violations

Any scholar who engages in any of the behaviors in this category may be suspended or expelled from the school. Scholars who repeatedly engage in Category II behaviors or have serious offenses in Category II behaviors may also be subject to long-term suspension or expulsion.

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

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

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

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

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

3.06 Dangerous weapons: Scholars must not possess, handle, transmit, or use as a dangerous weapon any instrument that can be used to harm another person. Dangerous weapons include, but are not limited to:

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

The federal Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994 requires that a scholar determined to have brought a weapon to school be suspended for at least one calendar year. However, school administrators may modify this requirement on a case-by-case basis. “Weapons” as used in this law means a “firearm,” as defined by 18 USC §8921, and includes firearms and explosives. Ascend rigorously adheres to this requirement, and

the decision to modify or consider modification of the one-year suspension is at the sole and absolute discretion of the school. The possession of a gun leads to immediate expulsion and referral to law enforcement officials.

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

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

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

Definitions

- "Short-term suspension" is suspension for ten days or fewer.
- "Long-term suspension" is suspension for more than ten days.
- "Expulsion" is the permanent removal of a scholar from school for disciplinary reasons.

Classroom consequences

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

Removal from the classroom

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

Additional after school support

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

1. Excessive tardiness
2. Excessive uniform violations
3. Excessive incomplete or missing homework
4. Category I or II behavior violations

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

Half day suspension

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

Short-term suspensions

The school director has the authority to impose short-term suspensions (ten days or fewer). If a scholar commits an offense that calls for short-term suspension, s/he is subject to the following:

- If necessary, the scholar is immediately removed from class and/or school.
- The scholar is informed of the charges against him or her and is entitled to respond to the charges against him or her.
- The parent/guardian is notified of the imposition of short-term suspension by Ascend in writing. Written notice shall be provided by personal delivery or mail to the last known address(es) of the parents or guardians. Where possible, notification shall also be provided by telephone. Such notice shall provide a description of the incident(s) for which suspension is proposed and shall inform the parents or guardians of their right to request an immediate informal conference with the principal. Such notice and informal conference shall be in the dominant language of the mode of communication used by the parents or guardians if known by Ascend to be other than English. A school administrator's decision to impose a short-term suspension may be challenged by the parent(s) or guardian in accordance with the school's complaint process.

The school shall follow due process procedures consistent with *Goss v. Lopez*, 419 U.S. 565 (1975) relating to short-term suspensions.

Long-term suspensions and expulsions

The chief academic officer has the authority to impose long-term suspension; the board of trustee has the authority to impose expulsion. If a scholar commits an offense that calls for long-term suspension or expulsion:

- If necessary, the scholar is immediately removed from class and/or school.
- Upon determining that a scholar's action warrants a possible long-term suspension or expulsion, the school director shall verbally inform the scholar that he or she is being suspended and is being considered for a long-term suspension or expulsion and state the reasons for such actions. The scholar is informed of the charges against him or her.
- The parent/guardian is notified in writing by the school. Written notice shall be provided by personal delivery or express mail delivery to the scholar's last known address. Where possible, notification also shall be provided by telephone if the school has been provided with a contact telephone number for the parent(s) or guardian(s). Such notice shall provide a description of the incident or incidents which resulted in the suspension and shall indicate that a formal hearing will be held on the matter which may result in a long-term suspension or expulsion. The notification provided shall be in the dominant language used by the parent(s) or guardian(s) if it is known by Ascend to be other than English.
- The school sets a hearing date. The scholar and/or his/her parent/guardian are notified in writing of the charges and a description of the circumstances that gave rise to the hearing; the date, time, and place of a hearing; and notice of the right at the hearing to be represented by legal counsel (at the scholar's/parent's own expense) and present evidence and question witnesses.

At the hearing, the school shall make the case for suspension or expulsion, introducing evidence and calling witnesses on its behalf. The scholar is entitled to counsel and shall have an opportunity to defend him or herself against the alleged violations of the school's disciplinary code. The scholar may introduce evidence and call witnesses on his or her behalf. Both parties may cross-examine witnesses called by the other party. The hearing shall not exceed two hours in length, unless the hearing officer elects to extend that limit. An audio transcript shall be made of the proceedings and a copy of that recording shall be made available to the scholar upon request. The hearing officer shall provide to the scholar a decision in writing within four school days. For a long-term suspension, the chief academic

officer or his or her designee shall serve as hearing officer. For an expulsion, a member of the school's board of trustees or a designee shall serve as the hearing officer.

Should the scholar and parent/guardian seek to appeal the ruling, he or she may do so by submitting a request for an appeal. A request for an appeal must be received by the chair of the board of trustees within two weeks of the hearing officer's written decision.

Upon receipt of such a request, a committee composed of no fewer than three trustees who were not involved in the initial hearing will hear the appeal. Each party will have 20 minutes in which to make a statement. The scope of the appeal will be limited to positions and the record established during the first disciplinary hearing. In rendering its decision, the committee may consult the transcript or recording of the disciplinary hearing and any evidence submitted in connection with it. The committee will provide a written ruling within five school days.

Provision of services during removal

The school will ensure that alternative educational services are provided to a child who has been suspended or removed to help that child progress in the general curriculum of the school. Alternative instruction for suspended scholars will be of sufficient duration to enable a scholar to cover all class material, take all tests and quizzes, keep pace with other scholars, and progress to the next grade level. For a scholar who has been expelled, alternative instruction will be provided in like manner as a suspended scholar until the scholar enrolls in another school or until the end of the school year, whichever comes first.

Gun-Free Schools Act

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

"Weapon" as used in this law means a "firearm," as defined by 18 USC §8921, and includes firearms and explosives. (New York Education Law §3214(3)(d) effectuates this federal law.)

The following are included within this definition:

- Any device, instrument, material, or substance that is used for or is readily capable of causing death or serious bodily injury (knives with a blade of two and half inches or more in length fall within this definition)
- Any weapon (including a starter gun) which will or is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive
- The frame or receiver of any weapon described above
- Any firearm muffler or firearm silencer
- Any destructible device, which is defined as any explosive, incendiary, or poison gas, such as a bomb, grenade, rocket having a propellant charge of more than four ounces, a missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than one-quarter ounce, a mine, or other similar device
- Any weapon which will, or may readily be converted to, expel a projectile by the action of an explosive or other propellant, and that has any barrel with a bore of more than one-half inch in diameter

- Any combination of parts either designed or intended for use in converting any device into any destructive device in the two immediately preceding examples, and from which a destructive device may be readily assembled

The school director shall refer a scholar under the age of 16 who has been determined to have brought a weapon or firearm to school to a presentment agency for a juvenile delinquency proceeding consistent with Article 3 of the Family Court Act except a scholar 14 or 15 years of age who qualifies for juvenile offender status under Criminal Procedure Law §1.20(42). The school director shall refer any pupil 16 years of age or older or a scholar 14 or 15 years of age who qualifies for juvenile offender status under Criminal Procedure Law §1.20(42), who has been determined to have brought a weapon or firearm to school to the appropriate law enforcement officials.

Scholars with disabilities

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

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

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

In considering the placement of scholars referred because of disciplinary problems, the CSE of the scholar's district of residence is expected to follow its ordinary policies with respect to parental notification and involvement.

Provision of services during removal

Those scholars removed for a period of fewer than 10 days will receive all classroom assignments and a schedule to complete such assignments during the time of their suspension. Provisions will be made to permit a suspended scholar to make-up assignments or tests missed as a result of such suspension. The school also shall provide additional alternative instruction within the ten days and by appropriate means to assist the scholar, so that the scholar is given full opportunity to complete assignments and master curriculum, including additional instructions, phone assistance, computer instruction, and/or home visits and one-on-one tutoring.

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

During any removal for drug or weapon offenses pursuant to 34 CFR §300.530(g) services will be provided to the extent necessary to enable the child to progress appropriately in the general curriculum and achieve the goals of his or her IEP. These service determinations will be made by the CSE of the scholar's district of residence. The school will, in consultation with the CSE, place scholars in interim alternative educational settings as appropriate per 34 CFR §300.520(g).

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

Due process

If discipline that would constitute a change in placement is contemplated for any scholar with an IEP, the following steps shall be taken: (1) not later than the date on which the decision to take such action is made, the parents or guardians of the scholar with a disability shall be notified by the school of that decision and provided the procedural safeguards notice described in 34 CFR §300.504; and (2) the CSE of the scholar's district of residence and other qualified personnel shall meet and review the relationship between the child's disability and the behavior subject to the disciplinary action (subject to CSE's availability).

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

Parents or guardians may request a hearing to challenge the manifestation determination. Except as provided below, the child will remain in his or her current educational placement pending the determination of the hearing.

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

Corporal punishment

No employee or agent of the school shall inflict corporal punishment upon a scholar as a penalty for unacceptable conduct. The term "corporal punishment" means any act of physical force upon a scholar for the purpose of punishing that scholar. The term does not mean the use of reasonable physical force by a teacher to protect himself or herself from physical injury; to protect another person from physical injury; to protect property; or to restrain or remove a scholar whose behavior is interfering with school functions, provided that alternative methods not involving the use of physical force cannot reasonably be employed.

Searches

The school reserves the right to conduct occasional searches of school property (including desks), and scholars' personal possessions to protect the safety of scholars and staff and to enforce school rules and all applicable laws and regulations.

The school director or a designee may conduct searches of scholars and their belongings if there is a reasonable suspicion that the search will result in evidence that the scholar violated school policy or the Code of Conduct. Before conducting a search the school would question the scholar regarding whether he/she possesses physical evidence indicating that he/she violated school policy or the Code;

and attempt to obtain voluntary consent to the search from the scholar. If consent is not obtained, but reasonable suspicion exists, the search may proceed. Searches would be limited to the extent necessary to locate the evidence sought.

Given the intrusive nature of a search that requires a scholar to remove any clothing other than outer clothing, the school director would notify law enforcement if such a search were necessary, unless the school had evidence that failure to conduct an immediate search would pose an imminent danger to health or safety.

Scholars would be present when their possessions are searched, if possible.

Complaints

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

Informal complaints

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

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

If the concern is unresolved after these points of contact, the complainant should contact the school director. If the concern remains unresolved, the complainant should contact the chief academic officer of Ascend Learning. If the complainant is still concerned after speaking to the chief academic officer, he or she may issue a written appeal addressed to the Chair of the Board of Trustees, 205 Rockaway Parkway, Brooklyn, NY 11212. The complainant may also attend a board meeting and speak during the public comment period. Board meeting times and locations are posted on the school's website at www.ascendlearning.org.

Formal complaints

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

The written complaint to the board of trustees must include: (1) a detailed statement of the complaint or grievance, including the law or regulation allegedly violated, names of individuals at the school who allegedly took the actions at issue, and the time, date, and place of occurrence; (2) relevant

correspondence; (3) what action complainant is seeking from the board of trustees; and (4) complainant's name, address, and telephone number. The complainant may leave the complaint or grievance at the school's main office to the attention of the chair of the board of trustees.

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

Prior to the board meeting, the chair of the board of trustees will attempt to collect evidence needed to assess the merits of the complaint or grievance. At the board meeting, the chair will summarize the issue to the other board members, either during the public meeting or during executive session, if appropriate. In some instances a decision may be rendered at the meeting, and in other instances additional fact-finding and due diligence will be required. The chair will conclude the discussion on the complaint or grievance by either: (a) issuing a decision; or (b) requiring specific further investigation, including a timeline, and assigning specific individuals to carry out the next steps. The chair will follow through by either writing a decision letter and sending it to complainant and entering it into the board's minutes at the next meeting, or continuing and concluding the investigation as per the plan, and then issuing a decision letter.

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

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

If, after the board of trustees' final resolution has been transmitted to the complainant, the complainant determines that the board has not adequately addressed the complaint, he or she may appeal to the authorizer, which shall investigate and respond. The department has the right to issue remedial orders when appropriate and necessary.

Authorizer contact information

Charter Schools Institute
State University of New York
41 State Street, Suite 700
Albany, NY 12207
charters@suny.edu

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

Contact information

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

Internet usage

Ascend charter schools are not liable for the actions of anyone connecting to the Internet; all users shall assume full liability, legal, financial or otherwise, for their actions. Further, each school takes no responsibility for any information or materials transferred through the Internet and makes no

guarantees, implied or otherwise, regarding the reliability of the data connection. The school is not liable for any loss or corruption of data while users are on the Internet. The school reserves the right to examine all data stored in the computers with Internet capability to ensure that all users are in compliance with all applicable rules and regulations.

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

Inappropriate Internet use

The following uses of the Internet are unacceptable:

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

E-mail

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

Social media

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

- Be a friend not a bully, and keep things positive
- Be honest
- Accept responsibility for mistakes and try to make them right
- Remember that quality matters and it is difficult if not impossible to erase an online footprint fully
- Think about the consequences of your actions, including your posts

All members of the Ascend community are asked to abide by the following guidelines in the use of social media:

- Be clear that you are speaking for yourself, and not on behalf of Ascend or the school
- Respect copyright, fair use, and other disclosure laws
- Use respectful language, and be careful to avoid language that could be viewed as insulting by readers
- Do not share confidential or proprietary information of Ascend or the school
- Do not share any information about scholars, including photographs, contact information, names of family members, or anything else specific to any scholar enrolled in the network
- Do not disparage Ascend or the school community

General protections

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

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

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

Dignity for all Students Policy

Ascend charter schools and their board of trustees are committed to providing a safe and productive learning environment within the schools and at school-sponsored events. In accordance with New York State’s Dignity for All Students Act, the school is committed to promptly addressing incidents of harassment of and/or discrimination against students that impede students’ ability to learn. These include bullying, taunting, or intimidation in all their myriad forms.

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

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

Dignity Act Coordinator (DAC). Each school will designate a staff member to be the Dignity Act Coordinator (DAC). The DAC is trained to handle human relations in the areas of race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender, and sex. The DAC will be accessible to students and employees for consultation and advice.

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

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

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

Any student who believes that s/he is being subjected to harassment, as well as any other person who has knowledge of or witnesses harassment, shall report the harassment to the school director.

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

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

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

Enrollment, withdrawals, and repeating a grade

Withdrawal and re-enrollment

Scholars may withdraw from an Ascend charter school at any time based on a written request by the scholar's parent or guardian. Such notice will typically take the form of a records request transfer from the scholar's new school. Absent a records request, the school will require evidence of arrangements to enroll the scholar in a new school to process the withdrawal. After a scholar has withdrawn, the seat is offered to another student on the waitlist. To re-enter the school, scholars must apply as a new student, except in the case of Brooklyn Ascend Lower, Middle, or High School.

If the family of a scholar at Brooklyn Ascend Lower, Middle or High School believes that the withdrawal was in error, or was involuntary, or believes another special circumstance exists, the family may make a request to the school director to re-enroll the student. The school director must first obtain approval from the board of trustees prior to re-enrolling any student.

Repeating a grade

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

Health policies and procedures

Requirements

Ascend charter schools comply with state laws governing scholars' health, immunization, and health records. The law requires that a scholar's immunization records are obtained before permitting him or her to attend school, and that these records are updated every year.

Illness and exclusion policy

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

The school removes any scholar who shows such symptoms from the regular program, and contacts the parent or guardian to make arrangements for the scholar to be picked-up as soon as possible. If the parent or guardian cannot be reached, the school would call the person(s) designated as the emergency contact(s). It is essential that you list people as emergency contacts who are able to pick-up your scholar if we cannot reach you. It is also critically important that we have accurate phone numbers of parents and guardians and all secondary contacts. **An ill or injured scholar must be picked up within one hour of our call.**

If a scholar's condition warrants immediate medical attention, the school would contact the scholar's healthcare provider or our local emergency resource.

Communicable diseases

The parent or guardian must notify the school immediately if a scholar has contracted a communicable disease (i.e., strep throat, or pink eye) so the school may take action to protect other scholars by

notifying families of those potentially at risk. If more than one case of a communicable disease occurs in a single homeroom, the school would contact our consultant from the local health department to seek advice and ensure that appropriate actions are taken. In the event of an epidemic, special precautions or exclusion policies may be necessary.

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

Administration of medication

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

A designee of the school must administer all medication and only when the following requirements are met:

- The school has received written authorization from the parent or legal guardian for each medication in the form of a complete and signed Parental Request for Administration of Prescribed Medication form (available in the school office).
- The school has received a doctor's written permission to administer prescribed medication. (For prescription medication, the pharmacy label serves as the doctor's permission.)
- The medication label states all of the following: the scholar's name, directions for use, the name of the drug, the physician's name, the prescribed dosage, and the expiration date.
- Medication is stored in its original container in the nurse's office with the corresponding signed Parental Request for Administration of Prescribed Medication form.

The school does its best to follow the medication instructions provided, but cannot be held responsible for forgetting or delaying the provision of medicine.

Reporting suspected child abuse

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

Emergency procedures

Emergency contacts

Parents or guardians of all scholars are required to complete an emergency form that contains a medical release statement giving the school permission to seek medical attention for the scholar in case of an emergency. This information is kept with the school receptionist, the school nurse, and the homeroom teacher. In the event of an emergency, the school uses a "one-call" system to notify families of any emergencies via phone or text. It is essential that parents or guardians notify the school immediately if their addresses or phone numbers change.

Accidents

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

Distribution of materials unrelated to school

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

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

Solicitation on organization property

Staff members of Ascend Learning and our network schools and the families of our scholars should not feel compelled to donate money or participate in unwanted solicitation. Therefore, we do not allow solicitation on school property without the permission of the school director or an officer of Ascend Learning. Non-employees, including parents, guardians, and other family members, may not solicit on school property at any time.

Board meetings and the Open Meetings Law

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

Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) policy

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. §1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a federal law that protects the privacy of students' education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. FERPA gives parents or guardians certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students."

- Parents, guardians or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student’s education records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents, guardians or eligible students to review the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies.
- Parents, guardians or eligible students have the right to request that a school correct records that they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information.
- Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student to release any information from a student’s education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR §99.31):
 - o School officials with legitimate educational interest
 - o Other schools to which a student is transferring
 - o Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes
 - o Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student
 - o Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school
 - o Accrediting organizations
 - o To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena
 - o Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies
 - o State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific state law
- Schools may disclose, without consent, “directory” information such as a student’s name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However, schools must tell parents, guardians, and eligible students about directory information and allow parents, guardians, and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them. Schools must notify parents, guardians, and eligible students annually of their rights under FERPA. The actual means of notification (special letter, inclusion in a bulletin, student handbook, or newspaper article) is left to the discretion of each school.

For additional information, you may call 1-800-USA-LEARN (1-800-872-5327) (voice). Individuals who use TDD may call 1-800-437-0833. Or you may contact the following address:

Family Policy Compliance Office
 U.S. Department of Education
 400 Maryland Avenue, SW
 Washington, DC 20202-8520

Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) policy

Any requests for school records or information from the school must be in writing and submitted to the director of operations. Within five business days of receipt of a written request, the school, depending on the requested information, will respond by making the information available at the school itself

during normal business hours to the person requesting it; denying the request in writing; or providing a written acknowledgment of receipt of the request that supplies an approximate date for when the request will be granted or denied. If the person requesting information is denied access to a record, s/he may, within 30 days, appeal such denial to the school director.

Upon timely receipt of such an appeal, the school, within ten business days of the receipt of the appeal, will fully explain the reasons for further denial or provides access to the record(s) sought. The school will also forward a copy of the appeal, as well as its ultimate determination, to the Committee on Open Government. If further denied, the person requesting information may appeal through an Article 78 proceeding.

The school may deny access to requested records if any of the following conditions apply:

- Such records are specifically exempted from disclosure by state or federal statute
- Such access would constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy
- Such records, if disclosed, would impair present or imminent contract awards or collective bargaining negotiations
- Such records are trade secrets and which, if disclosed, would cause substantial injury to the competitive position of a commercial enterprise
- Such records are compiled for law enforcement purposes and which, if disclosed, would meet the conditions set forth in Public Officers Law §87(2)(e)
- Such records, if disclosed, would endanger the life or safety of any person
- Such records are computer access codes
- Such records are internal materials that are not statistical or factual tabulations of data, instructions to staff that affect the public, a final policy, nor external audits

The school may charge a copying fee for each page requested to be copied. The fee will be no more than the fee allowed by state law. Types of records held by the school may include student health records, student immunization records, student medical records, safety records, school SAVE plan, reports of fire department inspections, school contracts, management contract records, outside contract records, personnel files, fingerprint clearance records, and certification records.

Title I School Parent Involvement Policy

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

Parental policy involvement

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

- Each school will convene an annual hearing to inform parents of their school's participation in Title I and solicit comment. The administration will post this meeting on the school website and in public locations at the school; and
- All parents will be invited to school events where the school's Title I program will be discussed.

Each school will provide parents of participating children:

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

Policy's availability to parents and annual evaluation

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

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

Technical assistance and support

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

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

Title I school parent right to know

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

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

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