



LEVEL UP ACADEMY

Personalized Learning for All

**2024-25 School Year
Revised 10-30-2024**

**2600 County Road E. East
White Bear Lake, MN 55110**

**Phone: 651-408-5559
Fax: 651-447-2005**

Our Vision

All children have limitless joyful curiosity and capacity to reach their potential.

Our Mission

By tapping the intrinsic motivation and curiosity of every child, we deliver higher than usual growth.

Our Charter with Innovative Quality School of Minnesota is a five-year contract approved by the Minnesota Department of Education.

This means every time our charter is up for renewal, we will be evaluated on our financial, administrative, and academic performance. For this reason, we don't just assess your child and move on; we take to heart the progress of each and every student. We value family support toward these goals through volunteering, regular attendance, and homework support.

Our Community includes students, staff, families and community members. While we stress personalized learning, we also want Level Up Academy to be a place your child enjoys. Teachers work hard to build community within the classroom and we plan activities that build our larger school community such as assemblies, concerts, field trips, after-school activities, and other events.

We know families are an integral part of this community. We hope when you visit us at Level Up Academy you will always feel welcome to assist and be part of our community. Our first priority, however, is tending to the students and the work that has to be done for them. If we are not able to chat with you as long as you'd like, it's only because we're working as hard as we can to provide the best educational experience possible for your child. Please feel free to join us in this endeavor!

Equal Opportunity**Rights:**

Equal opportunity to participate in all eligible school activities and school education programs.

Responsibilities:

All students & Families are expected to follow the rules and regulations of school sponsored activities. They may not discourage the participation of others.

Important Contact Information for Level Up Academy and Level Up Virtual Academy Staff
Office 651-408-5559 x300
Fax 651-447-2005 Attendance – email attendance@levelupacademy.org

Administration and Office Staff

Director of Operations & Dean	Daniel Juhlke	juhlke@levelupacademy.org
Director of Mission and Vision	Amber Espinosa	espinosa@levelupacademy.org
Office Manager	Leslie Sieleni	sieleni@levelupacademy.org
Special Education Coordinator	Lisa Jaroslowski	jaroslowski@levelupacademy.org
Office Assistant	Cassie Hernandez	hernandez@levelupacademy.org

Teachers and Professional Support

K-8 Teacher	Katy Jermann	jermann@levelupacademy.org
K-8 Virtual Coach	Destiny Contreras	contreras@levelupacademy.org
Special Education Teacher & Behavior Specialist	Emily Dietrich	dietrich@levelupacademy.org

Outside Providers

Occupational Therapy	Alaina Tolzmann
Advance Therapy	Marjorie Carlson
Indigo Education	Carina Abate Wright
DHH Provider	Jenny Smith

LUA Student Handbook Topics are listed alphabetically

ACADEMIC CONCERNS PROCESS

If a student is struggling in the Virtual Program, we utilize the following process to provide support and interventions, and to recommend a change of program placement if necessary.

Level Up Virtual Academy | Academic Concern Process

Rationale: Online learning can be a difficult adjustment for students. Simply put, online learning isn't for everyone. It places a high degree of self-directedness and self-motivation on the student. The following framework is in place to help identify, communicate, and resolve academic concerns and to ensure that students are appropriately placed in an environment in which they can succeed.

Step 1 | Disclosures at Intake

Families are made aware of potential difficulties that come with online learning, such as higher degrees of responsibility placed on students to be self-directed and self-motivated learners. Families need to take on a higher degree of ownership of student progress due to the autonomy provided with online learning.

Step 2 | At-Risk Conferences

Students falling or significantly behind in multiple classes at roughly 2-4 weeks into their online enrollment are required to attend an at-risk conference. The goal of this conference is for school staff, students, and parents to collaborate and search for ways to help the student find success.

Step 3 | Family Support Contract

If student progress has not improved after another 2-4 weeks beyond the at-risk conference, families are required to attend Step 3 with school administration. A Family Support Contract will be developed with the family at this meeting. Families may use their discretion to remain with Level Up Virtual Academy or transfer elsewhere.

Step 4 | Notification of Family Support Contract Breach

If student progress has not improved 2-4 weeks after step 3, families will review the Family Support Contract with stated expectations of the program. Families may use their discretion to remain with Level Up Virtual Academy or transfer elsewhere.

Intervention Supports (to be offered at steps 1-4):

- Virtual Study Hall Work Block | Scheduled times to be online and receive academic support and accountability.
- Virtual Coach Sessions | Scheduled meets that foster social connection and goals / structure for success.
- Virtual Tutor Sessions | Scheduled meets with specific teacher(s) to offer academic support.

ATTENDANCE POLICIES and PROCEDURES

We know that student attendance and engagement are very important factors in student achievement in school. We follow the following attendance policies in accordance with Minnesota State Law, which requires compulsory school attendance. See also [Policy 516](#).

COMMUNICATING ABSENCES

If your child will miss Zoom Sessions or Asynchronous Work Expectations, for any reason, parents **must** contact the school. You may email us at attendance@levelupacademy.org or leave a message at 651-408-5559. Please include your name, your child's name, your child's grade, your child's teacher's name, and reason for absence.

LUA VIRTUAL PROGRAM ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

- The Virtual Program includes the following components:
 - Daily Zoom Community Circle and Mini Lesson
 - Daily 30-60 Minutes Asynchronous Work Per Course
 - Mentor Meetings to monitor progress and provide support
 - Student support sessions with teachers and/or virtual coach
 - Students who receive special education services receive direct instruction via Zoom according to the child's IEP (Individual Education Plan)
- Students are marked absent the day if they do NOT attend Zoom sessions OR complete asynchronous work.

EXCUSED and UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

Families of students who have unexcused absences or tardies, exceeding those of your resident county regulations, will be contacted by the Director of Operations to put an attendance plan in place as per Level Up Academy [School Board Policy 516](#).

EXCUSED ABSENCES:

Excused absences include any parent/doctor verified illness, (up to 10 absences due to illness), family emergencies, scheduled appointments, religious holidays as approved by the school board, Prearranged family vacations, suspension, court appearances, exceptional circumstances (school's discretion).

Students who miss school for a doctor, dentist, or orthodontic appointment must provide a doctor's note upon their return in order to excuse the absence.

If a student misses 7-10 days of school due to illness, the school staff will make efforts to communicate with you to better understand the illnesses and help you make a plan to address any ongoing physical and/or mental health concerns.

UNEXCUSED ABSENCES:

Absences are marked unexcused when no valid reason is given. If your child is absent and you do not call in, send a note, within 24 hours, the absence will be marked as unexcused.

Examples of unexcused absences include, but not limited to: technology trouble, oversleeping, shopping, needed at home (i.e. babysitting), family vacation (i.e. not prearranged), alarm clock didn't work, and no call or note from parent regarding absence within 24 hours.

If the student has documented unexcused absences, the school will implement consequences and interventions to improve attendance. However, if your child has multiple unexcused absences, Level Up Academy is obligated to refer the student to the County Truancy Office to schedule an Attendance Intervention Meeting (AIM).

Extended vacations (unexcused absences) may require that we withdraw your child from our school and give your child's spot to the next family on the waitlist. If you plan to be absent for a vacation, families must speak to the Director of Operations about MN attendance laws and the rules governing mandatory withdrawals.

CELEBRATIONS

At Level Up Academy, we align our celebrations with our #weCODE value, "Everyone Matters." We know that our students come from a variety of cultural backgrounds, and that not all children would be able to participate if we celebrated holidays like Valentine's Day and Halloween, which were traditionally celebrated at school in Minnesota. We don't ever want a child to be left out of a classroom celebration or

for a child to have to make the difficult choice between honoring their family values and joining their classmates for a celebration or accepting a treat or a gift from a friend.

Instead, all celebrations at Level Up Academy are designed to include all students and to show our #weCODE value, "Everyone Matters." We celebrate with special events and family nights like Strengths Celebration and Flannel Fest. When students earn PBIS points, we have classroom and whole school celebrations. We celebrate in ways that are inclusive to all students.

COMMUNICATION

Communication is an essential part of supporting every student. Please direct your communication in the following manner:

1. Communicating with teachers

- a. You may contact your child's teacher via phone or email. Please note that because teachers are with students most of their day, phone calls and emails should not be expected to be answered during the school day. Instead, most communication will be answered before or after school. If you need immediate assistance please contact the front office.

2. Communicating with administrators

- a. Contact the front office for issues related to transportation changes, JMC our student information portal, payment issues, and school forms and applications.
- b. Contact the Director of Operations for issues related to student behavior of your child or another child during school hours or during transportation via school bus.
- c. Contact the Director of Vision and Mission for issues related to the school board and/or school personnel OR if you feel you haven't been able to resolve issues with teachers and/or administrative staff in the above situations.

PROBLEM SOLVING COMMUNICATIONS

We expect all communications to start with the teachers. Teachers can help give answers and bring solutions to many issues that arise. Teachers will also refer you to the appropriate staff member if he/she cannot assist you. If you feel a teacher has not been able to help you resolve an issue, please contact the appropriate administrators listed above.

1. Whole-School Communications from LUA

Level Up Academy will communicate with you in a variety of ways. If you feel you are missing communication, please reach out to the classroom teacher as soon as possible, so we may correct communication errors or guide you to the appropriate communication avenue.

- d. **Powerschool** - Our student information system is Powerschool, our primary method of email communication. It is imperative that your contact information is updated annually (and as information changes throughout the year) to ensure you are informed. Powerschool will be used for all office email communication and for recorded messages via phone throughout the year.
- e. **LEVEL UPdate** is our Monthly Newsletter to keep families informed about upcoming events and opportunities. Please read all newsletters to make sure you are informed.
- f. **Weekly Highlight** is a brief weekly update highlighting important programs and events.
- g. **Social Media** - LUA communicates through social media platforms to help inform families on the go. Please join our **Facebook** <https://www.facebook.com/LevelUpAcadMN/> and **Instagram** www.instagram.com/levelupacademy_wecode/ sites to stay informed. Many of our classroom teachers use social media as well! Ask them which classroom platforms you should connect with!
- h. **JMC Family App** - This is a custom-branded app (iOS + Android) that allows families to stay up-to-date with the latest happenings at school, check meal balances, read classroom news, submit attendance and receive school-wide notifications and alerts.

2. Teacher Communications with families -

- i. Our teachers know that families depend on up-to-date and regular communication.
- j. Each teacher will communicate weekly with families.
- k. Classroom teachers who will work with you to provide the communication that meets your family needs.

- I. Teachers will use telephone, email, and text messaging for 1:1 connections with families and according to family preference.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Please subscribe to our [LUA Community Calendar](#) on our website in order to stay up to date on school activities.

COMMUNITY EDUCATION/CLUBS

We believe that having a broad range of after-school activities that appeal to a variety of interests is important to student engagement. As we create these programs, we will communicate opportunities to families, and post them on the school website and calendar.

COMPLAINT POLICY

Level Up Academy and its staff are devoted to resolving complaints when they arise. To this end, Level Up Academy has provided opportunities for students and families to express their concerns through processes established in the Level Up Academy Complaints [Policy 100](#). This policy identifies processes for resolving complaints.

CONFERENCES and LEARNING CELEBRATIONS

At Level Up Academy, we partner with families through student-centered conferences and learning celebrations to support and celebrate learning throughout the year.

Conferences at Level Up Academy are student-centered. During student-centered conferences, students, teachers and parents meet to celebrate learning and growth, to set personalized goals and to make plans for providing each student with the right support.

Students of all ages are involved in their conferences and as they get older, students take a bigger role in directing their learning and leading the conference, progressing toward being fully student-led at the middle school level.

Because conferences are student-centered, if teachers and parents have concerns that need to be addressed without the student present, they should schedule a meeting separate from the conference time.

Teachers will communicate regularly with families and at the end of each semester, families will receive a progress report for each student. Student-centered conferences are scheduled for all families in November. In April, teachers and families will have the opportunity to schedule another conference.

At Learning Celebrations, students share their work with fellow students, families, and community members.

DISCIPLINE

Please see [Policy 503](#). You may find this electronically on our school website, or in hard copy at the school office.

DRESS CODE

When students are attending synchronous sessions via Zoom, they are expected to wear clothing that is appropriate for school.

Appropriate Attire:

- Students must wear clothing including both a shirt with pants or skirt, or the equivalent (for example dresses, leggings, or shorts) and shoes.
- Hats and other headwear must allow the face to be visible to staff, and not interfere with the line of sight of any student or staff. Hoodies must allow the face and ears to be visible to school staff.
- Clothing must be suitable for all scheduled classroom activities including physical education and other activities where unique conditions or hazards exist.
- Shirts and dresses must have fabric in the front and on the sides (under the arms), and fabric to cover the midsection of the torso.
- Clothing must cover undergarments.
- Clothing should provide coverage from armpit to armpit and down to thigh. The student should be able to hold their arms straight down their side with a clenched fist. The bottom of the shorts or skirt should be below (longer than) the extended arm with a clenched fist.

Inappropriate Attire

- Images or language depicting drugs or alcohol (or any illegal item or activity) or the use of the same.
- Hate speech, profanity, pornography.
- Images or language that creates a hostile or intimidating environment based on any protected class.
- Accessories that will distract others

Dress Code Implementation

- LUA staff will address any concerns regarding appropriateness of clothing respectfully and as privately as possible.
- Students who are wearing clothing that does not follow the dress code will be removed from the Zoom session until they are appropriately dressed.

EMERGENCY CLOSING

Virtual classes will not be canceled in the event of inclement weather regardless of the LIVE and FUSION program cancellations.

FIELD TRIPS

We encourage all students' to participate in field trips. Signed parental permission slips are required for all field trips. They will be sent home with the children before each planned field trip informing you in advance of the educational purpose, date, time, destination, cost and other information. Students who do not return parental permission slips will not be permitted to go on the field trip and should continue their asynchronous work. Although we ask for families to pay for these activities, students will not be denied the opportunity to participate if they cannot afford to pay. If you have a need to use funds from the Scholarship Fund, please contact the Director of Vision and Mission.

Due to the safety and liability that is encountered from leaving the school premises, we ask that younger siblings not accompany chaperones on field trips, and that all chaperones have a current background check on file.

HEALTH INFORMATION***ILLNESS***

Students with the following symptoms may be marked as an excused absence due to illness:

- Temperature of 100 degrees or higher
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Multiple flu or COVID symptoms

Please contact attendance@levelupacademy.org if your child will be absent due to illness.

[FAMILY RESOURCES FOR MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH & HEALTH INSURANCE](#)

IMMUNIZATION LAW

Level Up Academy complies with the State of Minnesota Immunization Laws which requires the following immunizations for each grade level. Immunizations are required for measles, mumps, rubella, polio, diphtheria, tetanus, hepatitis B, and Chickenpox vaccine or evidence of disease. Please plan to have your child properly immunized before they start school. Each student must supply written evidence (month, day and year) of the minimum required doses of immunizations or have properly signed/notarized medical or conscientious exemptions on file with the school.

MEDICATIONS WHILE ONSITE

It is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to administer any medications necessary for the student while onsite at Level Up Academy. These instances may include, but are not limited to:

- Testing
- Field trips
- School events

All medications require yearly written authorization form authorizing permission to administer these medications. ***CHILDREN CANNOT BE IN POSSESSION OF ANY MEDICATION AT SCHOOL EVENTS.*** Medications will be kept under lock and key in the health office.

FAMILY EVENTS

Family events are FREE for ALL LUA families. The purpose of family events is simply FUN and CONNECTION. We truly want our LUA families to feel like they belong here. Family events are designed to foster LUA connections with other families, staff, and children. The dates for family events are indicated in advance on the yearly school calendar. Communication about these events as the dates grow near will be on LUA's social media platforms, in the LEVEL UPdate, and through email correspondence. Please join us!

FREE OR REDUCED LUNCH

We encourage ALL families to apply for free/reduced lunch - even if they are doubtful they will qualify. As a charter school, our population of free/reduced students determines access to beneficial services like Title 1 interventions, grants, and other beneficial opportunities. This is how charter schools receive extra funding, because we do not benefit from property tax. Please fill out this form each year to ensure we are getting all of the funding we qualify for.

FRIENDS OF LEVEL UP ACADEMY

Friends of Level Up Academy (FoLUA) is our parent and community group. It has been slow to grow in our first few years, but is on the rise with participation this year! Please join our FoLUA group! The purpose of the group is creating fun opportunities for families and students, fundraising, and supporting our LUA students and staff! All are welcome. There are no fees to join! If you are interested in being a

part of this group, you may sign up at any time throughout the year. Please call the school office for questions or support.

INSURANCE

All school related injuries should be reported to the office immediately. All injuries requiring medical attention should go through the guardian's provider and insurance.

INTERNET USE

Use of the school's computer systems and the internet is for legitimate educational and business needs only. All other uses are strictly prohibited. Use must be in compliance with school policies. The school is not liable for use in violation of school policies. Any financial obligation incurred by a student through the internet is the sole responsibility of the student and/or the student's family. Users have no expectation of privacy when using school computer systems. While the school may use technical means to limit student internet access, these limits do not provide a fool-proof means for enforcing the provisions of this acceptable use policy.

Electronic communications are governed by Policy 524, Internet Use Policy and Policy 527 Protection and Privacy of Pupil Records. Hardcopies of these policies are located in the office. Should the user violate the school's acceptable use policy, the user's privileges may be revoked, school disciplinary action may be taken, and/or appropriate legal action may be taken. All provisions of the acceptable use policy are subordinate to local, state, and federal laws.

INTERRUPTIONS

Studies show that the amount of time a student is on task is a significant factor in student achievement. Please make every effort to keep students on task in their learning by providing a quiet environment and minimizing interruptions.

REPORT CARDS

Because Level Up Academy personalizes learning for each student, teachers will regularly update student progress in the Powerschool Parent Portal. At the end of the year, families will receive a printed report card summarizing the child's progress for the school year.

PBIS

Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports

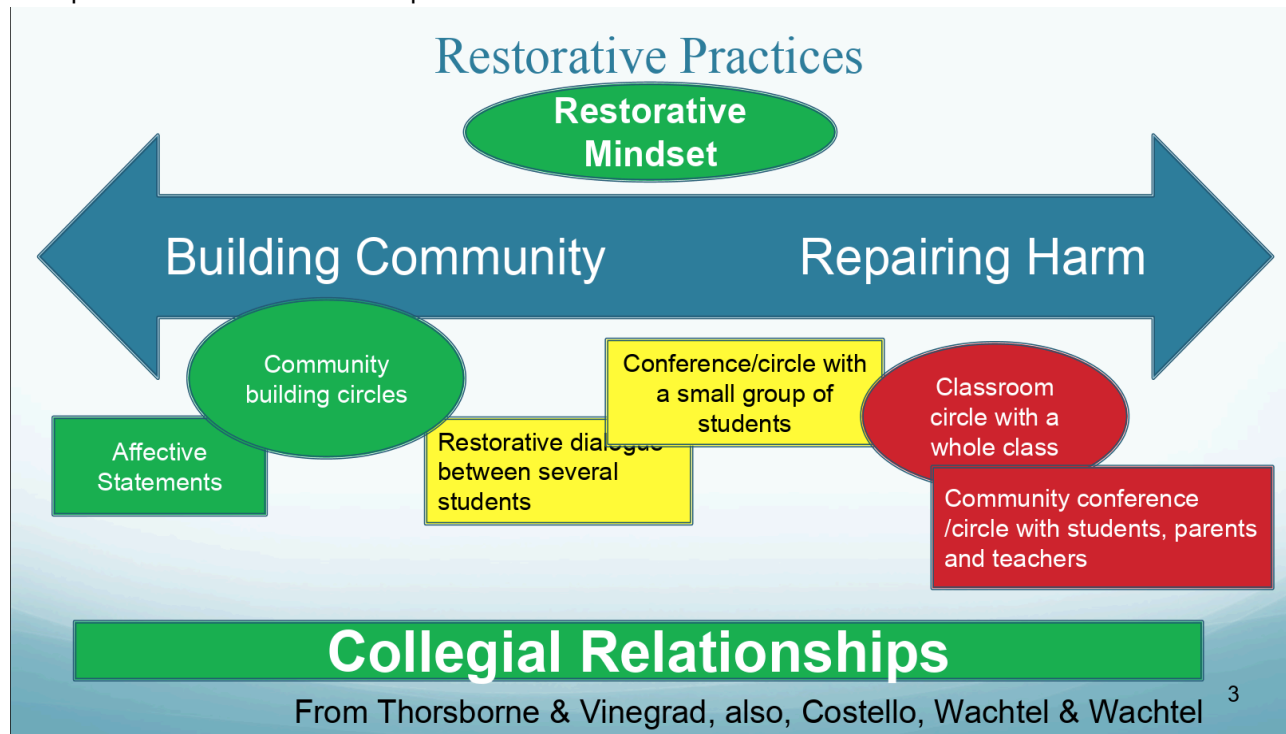
Level Up Academy teachers and support staff believe in creating a positive school culture for everyone who attends our school. PBIS is a research based system for behavior and expectations. We believe expectations for behavior should be consistent and positive with an emphasis on teaching lifelong behavioral skills. Our positive expectations are #weCODE - Cooperation, Ownership, Do your Best, Everyone Matters.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Classrooms will recite the Pledge of Allegiance at least once a week. Teachers will explain the symbolism of the flag, the pledge, and the traditional practices. When the pledge is recited, students may stand and recite the pledge with their hands over their hearts or opt out by standing or sitting quietly. Parents may notify their child's teacher if they would like their child to opt out of the Pledge of Allegiance for religious or personal reasons.

RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

Restorative Practices are a highly intentional approach utilizing various practices within the continuum of building community, sustaining community, or repairing community when harm is done. Below is a visual to help understand the restorative practice continuum.



Below is a list of questions the school uses to address/repair harm. Using these questions at home may be beneficial to your child as it creates a common language when processing behaviors.

Restorative Practice Questions

1. **Story Telling** - What happened? Anything else?
2. **Exploring The Impact**- Who has been affected by what has happened? How?
3. **Acknowledgement & Repair**- What do you think needs to happen to make things right?
4. **Agreement** - What can be done to make sure this does not happen again in the future?

SAFETY AND SECURITY

We encourage all families to have a fire and evacuation plan in place for emergency situations.

SCHOOL BOARD

The Level Up Academy School Board plays a critical role in our school's success. According to Minnesota law, "the care, management, and control of independent districts shall be vested in a board of directors, to be known as the school board." In partnership with teachers and staff, our school board determines school governance and policy, oversees our finances and monitors student success.

School Board meetings are held monthly. The public is encouraged to attend in person or to observe meetings via Zoom. The public is also invited to address the school board during the Public Comment section of each meeting.

Meeting dates, times, links and all related school board materials are posted on the [Level Up Academy Website](#).

Parents, community members, and teachers can serve on the school board and serve on committees. If you are interested in learning more about our school board, please contact the Director of Vision and Mission or the Board Chair.

Families interested in having input on school matters can do so at board *committee* meetings. This is where the discussion of ideas and policy takes place – much more so than at board meetings which is a summary of the committee meetings. Through the committee process the school board better understands the needs of the Level Up Academy community in order to make decisions. For more information about board committees and leadership, please contact our board chair.

SCHOOL BOARD ELECTIONS

School board elections are held annually at the end of each school year. Level Up Academy's school board consists of teachers, parents, and community members. We rely on your participation and partnership by either running for the school board or voting for school board members during annual elections.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Level Up Academy uses social media platforms to tell our school story. We encourage you to follow us on social media. Sharing our posts is a great way to spread the word about LUA. When using social media, please keep your stories positive and student information private.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

As a public school, Level Up Academy is required to provide services for students who meet defined criteria. The special education team at LUA consists of:

- Special Education Coordinator
- Special Education Director
- School Directors
- Licensed special education teachers
- Paraprofessionals
- Outside service providers

SUBSTANCE USE

Substance use includes tobacco, e-cigs, drugs, cannabis, or alcohol. Being in the possession or under the influence of these items on school property or while participating in any school related function (including virtual Zoom session, classes, etc.), will have serious consequences. This also includes the possession of related paraphernalia.

Tobacco, e-cigs, drugs and alcohol are not allowed on school property. This includes field trips and all school related activities. Please refer to school board policy 403 - DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE/DRUG-FREE SCHOOL.

Any adult who has information about student use of tobacco, e-cigs, alcohol, or drugs should inform the Director.

TECHNOLOGY

Level Up Academy utilizes technology as a tool for personalizing learning. LUA views technology as a privilege for student learning, not a right. If students misuse or abuse the school owned technology, it can be confiscated until reparations have been made. If students break technology owned by the school they, the parents, will be expected to pay for the replacement/repair of the technology.

Pricing chart for lost or damaged technology:

iPad Replacement	\$329.00
Laptop Replacement	\$260.00
Power Adapter Replacement (Ipad or Chromebook)	\$20.00
Hourly Rate for Tech repair	\$45.00

TWO HOUSEHOLD FAMILIES

We cannot deny a parent educational rights unless there are Court documents that prohibit this right.

The parent requesting or arranging for optional, fee-based services at Level Up Academy (e.g. hot lunch, Level Up Care, etc.) will be responsible for payment of the services provided to their child. Any arrangements beyond that are between the student's families/guardians. Our staff will not get involved or mediate to determine who is financially responsible. If payment is not made, your child may be removed from the optional program(s). If Court documents exist that we need to be aware of, please contact the office. We will otherwise assume the situation to be a family matter.

VISITOR CODE OF CONDUCT

Our entire LUA community shares the same weCODE values: Cooperation, Ownership, Do Your Best and Everyone Matters. Our weCODE expectations are posted throughout the building. Visitors are expected to follow these expectations.

VOLUNTEER GUIDELINES

We welcome volunteers at Level Up Academy. Prior to volunteering, a Volunteer Agreement, Confidentiality Agreement, and Background Check Agreement must be signed. Thank you for volunteering!

WEAPONS

No kind of weapon (real or pretend) is allowed while participating in any Level Up Academy function, including synchronous learning. It is a felony to possess, store or keep a weapon on school property. The definition of a weapon includes:

- Firearms
- Knives/Swords
- Explosives
- Any item which is utilized in such a manner so as to threaten, intimidate, or produce bodily harm or fear.

Students who find a weapon at school, or see another student with a weapon, must tell an adult immediately. Please refer to [Policy 501](#).

#weCODE

Our entire LUA community shares the same weCODE values: Cooperation, Ownership, Do Your Best and Everyone Matters. Our weCODE expectations are posted throughout the building. We know, when adults consistently model, explain and expect positive expectations, our students and staff participate in creating a positive and welcoming environment.

Cooperation - Working together toward a common goal.

Ownership - Do what is right. Take control of your words, actions, and your work.

Do Your Best - Give your greatest effort.

Everyone Matters - Treat others the way you want to be treated.

#weCODE TICKETS

When adults in the building see students who are following our weCODE expectations, they may acknowledge the student with a weCODE ticket. Students may use tickets to win or earn school coupons. Coupons are opportunities for experiences and center around positive relationship building.

All tickets count toward earning 2000 tickets school-wide. Each time our students earn 2000 tickets we have an all-school celebration!

Acknowledgment and Receipt

I have received the handbook, and I understand that it is my responsibility to read and comply with the policies contained in this handbook and any revisions made to it regardless if I sign and/or agree to this acknowledgement or not.