

Keystone Academy Charter School 2017-2018 Parent/Student Handbook

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KEYSTONE ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL

At A Glance

SITE ADDRESS	4521 Longshore Avenue Philadelphia, PA 19135 215-332-2111 215-332-2840 (Fax)
SCHOOL CLOSING NUMBER	1173- Philadelphia County
SCHOOL HOURS	8:00 AM – 4:00 PM
PRINCIPAL	Dr. Kathryn Makar
VICE PRINCIPAL	Mrs. Ariselys Rolon-Cruz
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER	Dr. Claudia Lyles

NON - DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

Keystone Academy Charter School does not discriminate in employment or educational programs, services or activities, based on race, color, national origin, sex, handicap or age in accordance with State and Federal laws including Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 594 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title VI of The Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975.

KEYSTONE ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL

Board of Trustees

KEYSTONE ACADEMY BOARD MEETINGS 2017-2018

The Board of Trustees of Keystone Academy Charter School will meet on the dates listed below. Unless otherwise indicated, the Board meets at 7:00 PM at Keystone Academy Charter School, 4521 Longshore Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19135.

August 17, 2017

September 14, 2017 - (September 21 – holiday)

October 19, 2017

November 16, 2017

December 21, 2017

January 18, 2018

February 15, 2018

March 15, 2018

April 19, 2018

May 17, 2018

June 21, 2018

KEYSTONE ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL

Board of Trustees

Gretchen Alston, President

Fred Phelps, Vice President/Secretary

Alma Diggs, Treasurer

Christine Godfrey

Tina Peterson

Marie McCarthy

Howard Randolph

Board members may be reached through Keystone Academy Charter School, 4521 Longshore Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19135. Telephone: 215-332-2111; Fax: 215-332-2840.

1. ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

Dr. Claudia Lyles is the Chief Executive Officer of Keystone Academy Charter School. Day to day operations, instruction, staff and students are overseen by the Principal, Dr. Kathryn Makar, as well as the Vice-Principal, Mrs. Ariselys Rolon-Cruz

Keystone Academy Charter School
4521 Longshore Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19135

2. PHILOSOPHY, MISSION AND GOALS

Mission: Keystone Academy Charter School aims to provide Philadelphia students with a rigorous academic program using a concentrated science and mathematics curriculum that employs the use of integrated technology. The mission of the charter school is to embrace strategies that support its elementary science program. These approaches can be divided into four major areas: 1) science curriculum development; 2) staff development and empowerment; 3) assessment development; and 4) materials and resource management and coordination.

Special Characteristics are its: 1) distinctive mission, 2) student uniforms, 3) compulsory service project, 4) high academic and behavioral expectations, 5) parent participation, 6) consistent discipline policy, 7) structured homework policy, and 8) extensive in-service training.

The **School Environment** will: 1) involve teachers and other educators in the lives of the students, 2) support, nurture and encourage all students, 3) foster excellence in both academic and non-academic student performance, 4) inspire an appreciation of the arts, 5) promote a healthy life style, 6) make parents partners in the educational process, 7) provide extensive training opportunities for staff and parents, 8) empower students and parents by encouraging them to assume responsibility for future successes, 9) support innovative teaching methodologies, 10) utilize community groups, including local businesses, in planning and implementing policies and programs, and 11) foster a sense of responsibility for improving conditions in both the local community and the “global village.”

Upon successful completion of the program, a graduate of the school will have attained a well-rounded education that will enable him/her to compete successfully with students from other public, as well as private schools. He/she will be distinguished by his/her: 1) skill in the application of their knowledge of science and mathematics 2) proficiency in written and oral communication, and 3) expertise in the use of integrated technology. S/he will also exhibit a superior understanding of the diverse cultures that comprise both western and non-western civilizations and show a commitment to improve conditions in his/her own community and in the world at large.

3. EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PROGRAM FOR SCHOOL AND CLASSROOM PRACTICES

- 1.1 It is the policy of this school to provide an equal opportunity to all students to achieve their maximum potential through the programs offered regardless of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, ancestry, national origin, or handicap.

- 2.1 It is the duty of the Administrators to:
 - 2.11 Review current and proposed curriculum guides and textbooks to detect any bias regarding race, sex, religion, national origin, ancestry or culture; ascertain whether instructional or supplemental materials fairly depict the contribution of both sexes, various races, ethnic groups, and other contributing factors pertinent to the development of human society.
 - 2.12 Develop an ongoing program of in-service education for school personnel designed to identify and to solve problems of racial, sexual, sexual orientation, religious, national or cultural bias in all aspects of the school program.
 - 2.13 Review current and proposed programs, activities and practices to ensure that all students have equal access thereto and are not segregated on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, religion, or national origin in any duty, work, play, classroom or school practice, except as permitted under State regulations.
 - 2.14 Ensure that like aspects of the school program receive like support relevant to staffing, compensation, purchase and maintenance of facilities and equipment, access to such facilities and equipment, and related matters.
 - 2.15 Ensure that tests, procedures or guidance, and counseling materials which are designed to evaluate student progress or to rate aptitudes or to analyze personality or in any manner to establish a category by which a student may be judged are not differentiated or stereotyped on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, religion, or national origin.

- 3.1 It shall be the duty of all school administrators to ensure that:
 - 3.11 All employees, students, and parents deal fairly and courteously with one another to ensure an educational environment free of intimidation and harassment. Ethnic, racist, or sexist slurs or other personal derogation are offensive and unacceptable behavior. Sexual harassment is also a form of unlawful and unacceptable sex discrimination and includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

- 3.12 Any employee, student, or parent who violates the policy against student harassment commits misconduct for which appropriate discipline may be imposed, up to and including termination for employees and expulsion for students.
- 3.13 Any student who believes that he/she is subject to a racially or sexually hostile environment should make a complaint to his/her Principal.

4. ADMISSIONS PROCESS

Parents who wish to enroll their children in Keystone Academy Charter School should begin the admissions process by completing and returning the application to the school office by the deadline. The parent can then attend one of the Open Houses to learn more about the school program (i.e. about the curriculum, methodology, school climate, and general expectations of the school and its staff). Once the scheduled lottery is held, each applicant will be notified of their lottery status. Those that have been assigned a seat must complete the full application and provide the necessary documents (ex. the child's birth certificate, the child's immunization record, proof that the child has been promoted to the grade for which he/she is applying (report card, letter from a former teacher or principal, etc.), and a driver's license, bill, or other document proving the family lives at the address on the application. If a parent cannot supply all necessary documents at the time of application, he/she may mail or bring the documents to the School Office (4521 Longshore Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19135).

Parents of all students newly selected in the lottery for Kindergarten may attend parent training sessions during the summer prior to the start of school. These parenting sessions are designed to help parents prepare their children for school. We have found that if parents understand the requirements of the school and the rules that govern student behavior, attendance and punctuality, as well as student performance, are more satisfactory. Also, there are fewer withdrawals if parents know that kindergarten is a time for serious social and cognitive development. During these sessions, parents work in cooperative groups, reviewing the year's curriculum and learning methods of working with their child at home, including developing social, cognitive, and both gross and fine motor skills. Failure of a parent or a guardian to attend these sessions will impact negatively on the child's matriculation in the school. (If a parent is disabled or has unusual circumstances that prohibit him/her from participating, a surrogate can be assigned.)

No child is tested prior to admission. However, once admitted, children may be tested to determine their correct grade placement. Children who are found to be more than one year behind will be referred to the Student Assistance Team which will determine if the student should be placed in a remediation program or, in the event of a serious lack of skill development, if the student should be placed in the previous grade in addition to being offered remedial assistance.

Annual Readmission: In order to give parents an opportunity to reacquaint themselves with the policies of the charter school, parents who want their children to return to Keystone

Academy Charter School for the next grade must submit the provided Intent to Return form at the end of each school year. Please note, Keystone Academy will follow the federal mandate, the McKinney Vento Act, which states that any student currently enrolled at the school who may become homeless is still eligible to retain enrollment at Keystone Academy.

5. PARENT RESPONSIBILITY REGARDING INFORMATION GATHERING

The efficient operation of the school, as well as compliance with federal, state, and local statutes, requires that the school gather information from parents concerning their children and their intentions with regard to school enrollment. This information includes but is not limited to: the name, address, and telephone number of the child and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s), the location of the child's emergency contacts, the child's immunization and health records, his/her school registration data, the parent's intention to return the child to the school for another academic year, the child's eligibility for free or reduced lunch, etc.

If a parent/guardian does not provide the necessary information by the date stipulated by the school, the administration will have the right to take such action as may be required by law, (e.g. exclusion of the child in the case of immunizations) or by the efficient operation of the school, (e.g. removing children from the roll who do not supply enrollment or re-registration information). Admission materials (copies of birth certificates, immunization records, etc.) must be brought or mailed to the school office.

Social Security Number Disclosure Statement: Disclosure of your child's Social Security Number (SSN) is voluntary. If you provide the number, the school will use it for record keeping, research, and reporting purposes only. The school will not use your child's SSN to make any decision directly affecting your child or any other person. Your child's SSN will not be given, without your permission, to any persons, groups, organizations or agencies within the general population. If you refuse to provide your child's SSN, he/she will not be denied any rights, benefits, or privileges due to a student at Keystone Academy Charter School.

6. TESTING PROGRAM

Once a student is admitted to Keystone Academy Charter School, his/her academic progress is assessed periodically, using a variety of instruments and methods. These include, but are not limited to, portfolio assessments, standardized tests (PSSA, 4Sight Exams, KeyMath Inventory, Kaufman, Ohio Diagnostic, etc.), teacher made tests, teacher observations of student performance, informal reading inventories, running records, etc. The school uses standardized tests to determine the student's level of school development as well as to pre/post test to determine the student's level of annual academic growth.

7. SUPERVISION

Adult supervision of students at Keystone Academy Charter School begins each day at 7:55 AM. All children are dismissed at 4:00 PM. The school cannot assume responsibility for pupils who arrive early or who do not leave at dismissal. Therefore, children should not be on the school premises prior to 7:55 AM or after 4:00 PM. It is imperative that children come to school daily, that they are punctual, and that they are picked up promptly at the end of the school day.

Children who are not with their class precisely at 8:00 AM are considered late. We enforce this rule because: 1) students who are late endanger themselves physically by being on the streets after the majority of children are in school and 2) children who are late impugn the integrity of the academic program by depriving themselves and their classmates of valuable instructional time.

If family circumstances necessitate that a child cannot return home at dismissal time, arrangements must be made for after-school care through one of the neighboring child-care agencies.

Calls to school for social arrangements: After-school social arrangements for your child must be made at home. If your child plans to visit with another child or to have a classmate visit your home, the teacher **must** receive a **note** from you that morning. Phone calls to the office during the school day regarding after-school arrangements interfere with school business. Therefore, we strongly urge you to make after-school arrangements for your child at home. We appreciate your cooperation in this matter.

Recess

Keystone Academy Charter School has a strong Physical Education program that provides ample time for physical exercise. Additionally, students enjoy a recess period each day. This provides an opportunity for students to take a break from their academic activities, take care of their physical needs, enjoy a snack, move about their classroom, and socialize with their friends.

8. EARLY DISMISSAL

Whenever parents need to have their child dismissed early, they are required to send a **note** to the classroom teacher detailing the date, time, and reason for the request and the name of the person to whom the child is to be discharged. Classroom teachers must send the note to the office for approval. No student will be released during school hours without being accompanied by a responsible adult. If a note is not received, the child will not be released to anyone except a parent or guardian. Parents are urged not to interrupt their child's school day unless there is an urgent need. Photo ID will be required of persons who are not known to staff members.

9. SIGN-OUT BOOK FOR PARENTS

When parents pick up their child before regular dismissal, they are required to come to the school office to sign out the child. An early dismissal log requiring date, time, reason for dismissal and parent signature is located in the office.

10. TRANSPORTATION POLICY

Bus transportation is not available from either Keystone Academy Charter School or from the School District of Philadelphia. The School District of Philadelphia will provide Septa Transpasses (through Keystone Academy Charter School) for children who meet the following criteria: 1) are residents of the City of Philadelphia, 2) live one mile and a half, or further from the attended school site, and 3) are in grades 1 through 8.

Transpasses are distributed on Friday for the following week. Any lost transpasses are the responsibility of the student and his/her parents. Keystone Academy Charter School is not obligated to replace lost transpasses.

Parents and guardians of students, who reside in school districts other than Philadelphia, must contact the school district in which they live to arrange for bus transportation to Keystone Academy Charter School.

11. TRANSPORTATION SAFETY RULES

Each parent is responsible for maintaining a safe environment for our students as they arrive at and leave the school grounds.

If you drive your child to school:

Be on time. The school program begins at 8:00 AM. Children should arrive at their lines at 7:55, no earlier. If they arrive in cars earlier than 7:55 AM, the cars should be legally parked on a nearby street and the occupants should remain inside the cars until 7:50 AM. At that time the adults should walk the children to the assembly area.

The school program ends at 4:00 PM. Parents who arrive before that time should legally park their cars on a nearby street and remain in the cars until 3:55 PM. At that time they should gather on the sidewalk outside the school and wait for dismissal.

Be considerate. Parents should not block traffic by double parking on any of the streets surrounding the site. Parents should not allow their children to enter or leave a car that is double parked, especially when the child must then cross a lane of traffic in order to get to the school. Further, once a parent has dropped off his/her child, that parent should leave the school grounds immediately. Parents who congregate on

the sidewalk create a hazard for children who are trying to squeeze past them to get to and from their lines.

Be prepared. There is not enough room inside any of the buildings to offer parents a place to stay in the event of rain. Please dress yourselves and your children for the weather.

Be calm. For the sake of the children, please remain calm and avoid unpleasant confrontations. **ABOVE ALL, RETAIN A RESPECTFUL ATTITUDE TOWARD THE STAFF.** Our staff members are attempting to create safe conditions for your children. If a staff member asks you to move your car please do so immediately. Also, please discuss street safety with your child, e.g. crossing the street at the corner, waiting for the green light, etc.

12. SCHOOL CLOSING AND EMERGENCY DISMISSAL

Our school emergency closing number is **1173 (Philadelphia County)**. If it should be necessary to close school during the school day due to inclement weather, children will be sent home in their usual manner. The announcement will be made on KYW, CBS3, CWPhilly, NBC10, Class Dojo, and it will be posted on the school website.

IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PARENT TO ESTABLISH AN EMERGENCY LOCATION FOR HIS/HER CHILD TO GO TO IF NO ONE IS AT HOME WHEN THE CHILD ARRIVES.

It is very important that an emergency procedure is planned with your child at the beginning of the school year and that it is reviewed frequently during the year.

An unforeseeable emergency such as a power failure, heating problems, etc. may also necessitate an emergency closing. Children who are not picked up on such occasions will walk or be bussed to the nearest safe environment and will be held until picked up or until the end of the regular school day. At that time, they will be sent home in the usual manner.

13. PARENT COMMUNICATION AND VISITATION GUIDELINES

Change of Address, Phone Number, or Employment

Parents are required to complete an Emergency Contact Form giving the name, address and telephone numbers of all places of employment, plus the names, addresses and telephone numbers of alternate persons to contact in case of an emergency. In the event of illness, or an emergency, this information is invaluable. Parents are required to notify the school office, in writing, if any data on this form changes at any time during the school year.

Lost and Found

Lost jewelry, glasses and purses are brought to the school lobby and stored there. Lost garments, shoes, hats, and mittens will also be available in the school lobby.

School and Classroom Visitation

Parents are always welcome at Keystone Academy Charter School. However in the interest of our children's safety and to avoid disruption to the learning environment, no one, including parents, may walk up the stairs, through the halls or into the classrooms without receiving permission from the Principal. Parents are most welcome to visit any classroom, provided that permission is requested in advance from the Principal. **Any parent or visitor accessing any area within the school is required to sign in at the office and to wear a visitor's badge.** Parents working as volunteers in the building must sign the **Parent Volunteer Book** in the office. Parents are urged to follow this procedure. Messages to the teachers may be sent via notes left in the office.

Notifying Children During School Hours

We request that parents and visitors refrain from interrupting classes during school hours. If you find it necessary to deliver a message, lunch money, clothing, etc. to your child while school is in progress, go directly to the office. The secretary or class messenger will gladly assist you. Social arrangements should be addressed with your child at home so that you will not need to disturb the class.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Keystone Academy Charter School encourages communication between parents and teachers. Parents who wish to set up a conference should feel free to call a teacher and arrange for a conference at their earliest mutual convenience. Teachers will contact parents if there is a problem with an individual student's work, attitude, health, or behavior at school. At that time, either the teacher or the parent may request a conference. Teachers may not discuss individual students with parents in the classroom, hallway, schoolyard, etc. during school time. Such "informal conversations" can distract from the educational program.

Parent Complaints/Due Process Policy

Any parent/guardian has the right to make a request, suggestion or complaint concerning school personnel, the program, or the operations of the school. However, the school also has an obligation to protect its personnel from unnecessary harassment. It is the intent of this policy to provide an impartial means of seeking appropriate remedies. The information that follows is a synopsis of the school's due process policy, the unedited version of which may be found in the Board's Policy Manual.

In general, all complaints should be resolved in a similar fashion. If, after a sincere effort, the complainant cannot resolve the issue with the individual with whom he/she has a

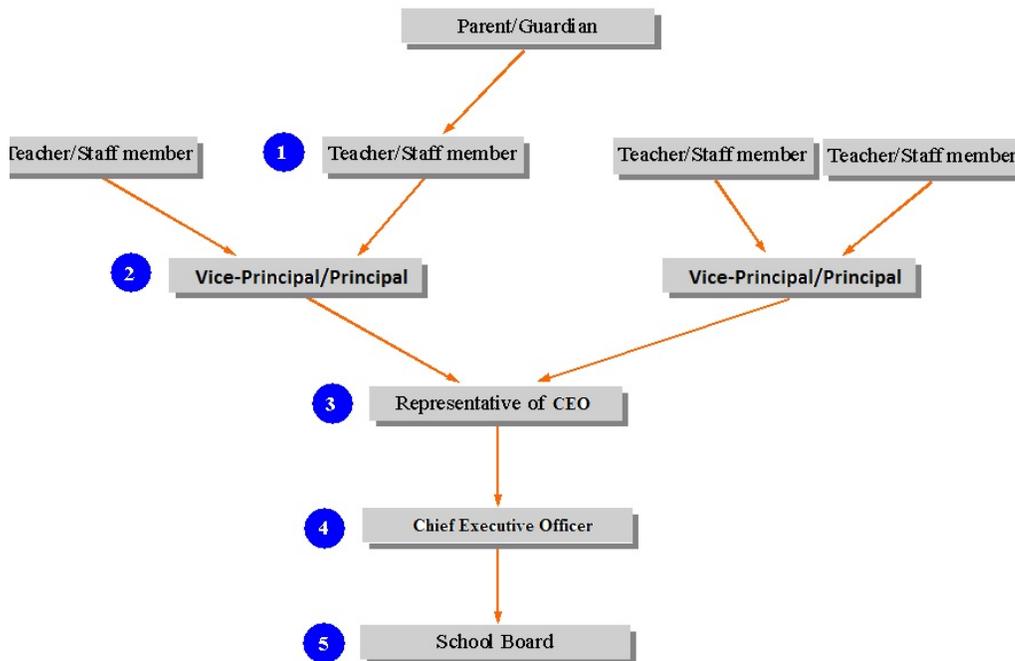
dispute, the matter should be brought to the attention of the Vice-Principal, then the Principal, and then to a representative of the CEO, the CEO herself, and finally to the Board of Trustees.

If, for example, the matter concerns a member of the teaching staff and the parent and teacher cannot resolve the issue that is in dispute, the parent or teacher may bring the matter to the attention of the Vice-Principal. If that individual cannot propose a satisfactory solution, he/she will schedule a conference with the Principal and then the CEO's representative if needed. The Principal will furnish the CEO's representative with a written report that will include the nature of the original complaint, a statement of the facts giving rise to it, the manner in which the complainant allegedly has been affected adversely, the action the complainant wants taken, and the reasons why the Principal feels that such action should not be taken. Should the CEO's representative not resolve the matter, the CEO will take it under consideration. If the CEO determines that the issue requires the attention of the school's Board of Trustees, she will furnish the Board with a complete report.

At this juncture the complainant is free to present the Board with an account of his/her grievances. All complaints to the Board must be made in writing and should be addressed to the Secretary of the Board of Trustees, Keystone Academy Charter School, 4521 Longshore Avenue Philadelphia, PA 19135. Should the complainant wish to address the Board in person, s/he must follow the procedures that may be obtained from the School Office. If a parent or member of the school community wishes to openly criticize a member of the staff, a closed meeting will be convened.

Please note that neither the central administration nor the Board will address complaints until the complete due process procedure has been followed.

Flowchart of Appeals Process



14. ACADEMIC CONTENT STANDARDS

Until recently, traditional public schools graded children according to their place on a Bell Curve (a graph showing a child’s individual performance in relation to that of other children in the class) and not according to how well they had mastered the academic work designated by federal guidelines and state standards for their grade.

With the introduction of the federal law known as “No Child Left Behind,” the federal government put its weight behind a movement to raise children’s academic achievement to a level that is consistent with their age and grade. Children are now **required** to achieve at least an academic level of mastery considered to be proficient based on state standards.

As part of its effort to meet the requirements of “No Child Left Behind,” the Board of Directors of Keystone Academy Charter School revised the grading system so that passing would correspond to the level of achievement designated by the state as “proficient” performance. Under the new grading system, children must have a grasp of the standards that can be described as “proficient” for their grade before they can be promoted to the next level. The Board determined that this level of understanding corresponds to a “C.” In our review of the Pennsylvania state standards, we also discovered that our rubrics needed to be revised if we were to meet the spirit of the law and provide parents with a more accurate picture of their child’s performance.

Grades and their Relationship to Standardized Test Scores

Many parents maintain that PSSA scores do not give an accurate picture of their child's ability. Unfortunately, individualized school assessments are often too subjective to give a true indication of a child's grasp of the standards. Standardized assessments are the most efficient means states can use to determine whether schools and children are meeting state goals. Similarly, special admission schools such as Central, Girl's High, Masterman, GAMP, etc. rely on standardized tests, as well as other criteria, to determine a student's eligibility for admission.

At Keystone Academy Charter School, the scores children achieve on the standardized tests required by the School District of Philadelphia and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania are taken into consideration when decisions are made regarding promotion and retention.

To further support our students, we have developed assessments to be administered weekly and monthly. No test items will be included that have not been taught during the week/month. Further, if a child scores less than 82 on any weekly/monthly test, the child will be given the test to redo as a take home test. (No credit will be given for the take home test.) This procedure will provide additional remediation in the skills the school and the state see as necessary for the child to master in order to meet the standards and it should enable the child to score higher on the monthly tests and ultimately on standardized tests.

Since its initiation, the school has required that children work on grade level. Teachers teach to the standards designated for their grade by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Books and materials are purchased at the same level as the grade for which they are intended.

A variety of interventions will be used to offer remediation for children who are having difficulty meeting the basic standards for their grade. Early in the school year, teachers will be required to identify students who could use additional support and will be asked to identify the level of support they need. Some children will be assigned to the Title I program; others will receive Remediation Packets to complete at home. Periodically, parents will be invited to attend meetings at which they will learn how to assist their children with their schoolwork. The school will make every effort to assure that no child is left behind.

The Grading Scale is:

A= Excellent (95-100)

B = Good (89-94)

C = Average (82-88)

D = Noticeably weak (76-81)

F = Below requirements (75 and below)

Reporting Student Progress

Student progress is reported in several ways:

1. An Interim Report is issued monthly beginning in October. Parents are asked to pay close

attention to report card grades and teacher comments. Areas of strength and weakness are indicated as well as lateness and absence.

2. Trimester Reports are issued in December, March, and June. In order to receive the December and March Trimester Reports, parents must attend a conference with their child's homeroom teacher. Students are dismissed at noon on Trimester Report card day so that teachers will be available for these parent/teacher conferences.

3. While time is provided for parent /teacher conferences in December and March, parents or teachers may request a conference at any time during the school year. Conferences are scheduled at the mutual convenience of the parents and teachers.

4. Parents and teachers may also communicate through notes, email, and telephone calls. Portfolios, where much of the children's written work is stored, are kept in the classroom. Parents may make appointments to review these portfolios. Children are encouraged to take responsibility for the contents of the portfolios and for selecting items to be included in a special "showcase portfolio" for special recognition.

If you have questions or comments regarding your child's progress, please do not hesitate to contact the classroom teacher. We are always pleased to hear from you, therefore, we encourage parents to contact us promptly with their concerns rather than wait for a small problem to become a large one.

15. PROMOTION AND RETENTION

The Board of Trustees is cognizant of the fact that decisions concerning pupil grade placement upon admission, promotion, and retention are often difficult. Lay people, educators, and researchers, frequently disagree about policies and criteria related to these topics. Educators, in particular, question the appropriateness of allowing children to be assigned to grade levels at which they become frustrated because of their immaturity or a level of preparedness that is below or beyond their current grade placement.

The Board of Trustees of Keystone Academy Charter School recognizes the natural, fundamental right of parents and legal guardians to direct the care, teaching, and education of their children and is committed to cooperate with parents and legal guardians to develop the intellectual capabilities of these children in a safe and positive manner. However, despite the problems inherent in making these decisions, it is clear that educators and Boards of Trustees have the authority to adopt policies that are based on objective criteria. Therefore it is the policy of Keystone Academy Charter School that the determination as to the grade level at which a child is placed is the responsibility of the teacher and other educators that plan and implement the curriculum.

Parents can be assured that Keystone Academy Charter School staff is dedicated to the continuous academic progress of every student. The professional staff will place students at an age appropriate grade level based on their academic, social and emotional development.

At Keystone Academy Charter School students will generally progress annually from grade to grade, except in cases where they have not demonstrated the required competencies for advancement. Decisions regarding retention will be made through a Team process. Members of the Team will include the student's teacher and the Principal and other specialists having insight or expertise in the learning process.

If a teacher has concerns about a student's progress, he/she will convey those concerns to the child's parents on the monthly report card. Early intervention in the form of additional support will be the course of action for all students who display signs of struggling. An accommodation program will be developed for each child. It will include small group instruction and a home/school program so parents may support their child at home. In extenuating circumstances (e.g. if a child were placed in a foster home, and that child is failing in spite of doing all assigned remedial work) individualized tutoring may occur. Retention of students will be recommended only when efforts at remediation of academic and social deficiencies have proven to be unsuccessful.

To be promoted a student must:

1. Have a "C" (82%) or above in: Reading, Mathematics, Writing and Science

And

Have a "D" (76) or above in: Computers, Social Studies

It is highly recommended that parents and guardians carefully review the monthly report card to make sure that their child's grades do not place the child at "high risk" for failure. If the student receives failing grades on the report card, or has comments indicating that he/she is not meeting grade level standards, the parents should immediately call the school office and request a meeting with the teacher responsible for the subject that the student is failing. During the meeting, the school staff will outline remediation techniques to assist the student. Such techniques are likely to include, but not be limited to: small group instruction during the school day, computer enhanced instruction, meetings with the parent to provide information and instructions on how to assist the child, and specially prepared academic packages and audio tapes to assist the child at home.

Title I Students

National and state guidelines require that students attain the "proficient" level in reading and mathematics. In order to assist students who are not meeting the standards, Keystone Academy Charter School provides Saturday classes, at no cost to our students' parents. Based on last year's achievement levels, students will be assigned to Saturday classes if they received a report card grade of "C" or below in reading or mathematics, scored below proficient on the PSSA, or were retained for any reason. Further, if the reading or mathematics grades on the monthly/trimester report cards for the current school year indicate that a student is performing below the "C" standard, he or she will be automatically placed in this program. (At the discretion of the Board, classes may also be held after school

hours.) **In addition to the sessions that meet outside of school hours, students will be scheduled into Title I remedial classes.**

The Title I Program is designed to correct diagnosed reading and/or mathematics skill deficiencies that are causing students to perform below grade level standards. Students who must participate in the Title I Program will be notified in writing.

Parents should be assured that poor grades alone will never result in a student losing his/her position in Keystone Academy Charter School. However, the refusal to accept help, i.e. 1) not attending the skill development classes that meet outside of school hours, 2) not replacing one hour per cycle of Physical Education or another non-academic subject with mathematics, reading or writing, or 3) failing to complete at home remediation packets, may result in serious consequences. Children must demonstrate their ability to meet the standards of their assigned grade before they move to a higher grade.

It is not ethical for teachers who are employed by our Charter School to privately tutor children who are enrolled in the school.

Exceptions

Students with disabilities (Special Education), Limited English Proficient (LEP) students, and 504 students, as defined by state and federal laws, may be exempt from all of the above requirements based on the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP) or their score on the Limited English Proficient survey. In such cases, the school, based on the recommendation of the IEP team, will use alternate assessments to determine whether or not the student shall be promoted to the next grade level.

Parent Notification

Beginning with the first day of the school year and prior to November 15th of each year, the administration will notify parents, through its Parent/Student Handbook of the school's promotion and retention policy. Copies of the Handbook are available at the school.

Parent Participation Policy

Parents are required to honor the school policies regarding discipline, uniforms, homework, etc., that are outlined in the memorandum of understanding that they signed when they enrolled their children. In the event that a parent/guardian is unable to fulfill some of his/her obligations as defined in the memorandum of understanding, the parent/guardian may appoint another person to act as his/her surrogate. If parents or surrogates have concerns related to a child's program, or feel that they are unable to support important school policies, the staff will meet with them and will strive to arrive at a mutually agreeable resolution to the problem.

16. SCHOOL CALENDAR

As noted on the School Calendar, class is conducted daily from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM. Students will not be supervised before 7:55 AM, the time they are expected to be in line. All students must leave at the dismissal time. Students, who attend day care centers that are contracted to pick up the students from school, will be supervised by Keystone Academy Charter School teachers until the arrival of day care personnel. Please inform your after school care provider of your child's dismissal time, holidays, and half days as well as the importance of picking your child up on time.

17. TEXTBOOKS AND HOMEWORK

Textbooks

All students will receive a textbook in every major subject in which a textbook is used. Since textbooks are a crucial part of the educational program and also represent a significant expenditure for the school, students are expected to take excellent care of them. Each year some parents request an additional set of books for their children to keep at home (in order to avoid the children having to carry the books to and from school). The school cannot provide two sets of books for its students. We will, however, assist parents in obtaining books at the same price the school pays. **Unauthorized removal of textbooks from the school premises or damage to a book will result in a financial penalty or a loss of certain privileges. Parents are expected to pay for textbooks that are damaged or are not returned at the end of the semester/school year.**

Homework

Homework is defined as “any work planned or approved by the teacher to be completed by the student outside of the regular classroom without the immediate and direct supervision of the teacher”. Homework has been identified in almost all national and state reports on education as a vital factor in increasing student achievement.

Keystone Academy Charter School has a structured homework program. Homework is assigned to all students in grades K – 8. Students receive a package every Thursday that lists the teachers' goals for their classes for the following week and states the homework activities that the students should complete to support these goals. The assignments relate directly to the goals and are developed to provide reinforcement for skills taught in school. Skills are introduced in school by the teacher, but they must be reinforced at home. Failure to complete homework may lead to a student failing to meet the standards for the grade and therefore, to retention.

Homework must be meaningful to the student. The type and amount of homework assigned will vary with the grade level and individual needs of each child. Parents will be informed of their children's weekly study plan in September. This plan will be followed on a regular basis for the balance of the school year. Parents should check and sign all homework. A teacher will check all work for completion. Parents or teachers should be contacted if problems arise.

Parents and students should note that, in each subject, one point is subtracted from the monthly report card grade for every two homework assignments that are not submitted.

Summer Program: In order to counteract the loss of academic skills that often occurs over the summer months, all students will receive packets and reading assignments to complete during vacation. Failure to complete these assignments will have an adverse affect on the child's grade.

Purpose of Homework

Grades K – 3

1. To reinforce basic skills
2. To enrich school subjects
3. To develop good study and time management habits
4. To learn to accept responsibility

Grades 4 – 8

1. To develop good study habits and disciplined use of time
2. To continue classroom work.
3. To make up schoolwork assigned during the student's absence
4. To review content previously studied
5. To foster individual study motivated by a particular interest
6. To do research related to classroom activities (interviews, projects, maps, etc.)
7. To promote recreational reading
8. To use community resources, such as libraries or museums
9. To encourage creative writing
10. To use radio, television, motion pictures or the internet selectively

We carefully describe our homework policy during the Open House that parents attend when enrolling their child at Keystone Academy Charter School. While most families find the homework system to be extremely helpful and are satisfied with its quantity and quality, we occasionally receive complaints about the amount of homework that is assigned to students. Therefore to assure ourselves (and the parents of our students) that our homework is reasonable and appropriate, we periodically conduct trial homework runs. Neither the teachers nor the children are notified in advance. During a trial homework run, the students are given time during the school day to do the night's homework independently of the teacher. We usually allot up to one hour for the primary grades and up to two hours for grades 4 – 8. In a recent homework run, no child in the primary grades required over 30 minutes to complete his/her homework and no child in grades 4 – 8 required over 50 minutes to complete the work. How did they do it? The teacher put a schedule on the chalkboard. Each subject was given a designated amount of time, e.g. spelling – 10 minutes, math – 15 minutes, etc. The students were kept on task and, as noted above, finished in a timely fashion. Reading was not included in the trial homework run. The

American Association of Teachers of Reading recommends that parents read to their children a minimum of 20 minutes a day. We support their recommendation.

Remember, all homework assignments are a review of skills taught in school. Remediation enhances skill development and results in more effective learning and higher test scores. Children who take a businesslike approach to homework and who avoid distractions do not need to spend an unusual amount of time completing their assignments.

Studies have shown students should spend the following average amounts of time on homework:

Kindergarten	20 to 25 minutes
Grades 1 and 2	30 minutes
Third Grade	30 – 40 minutes
Fourth Grade	40 – 60 minutes
Fifth Grade	60 – 90 minutes
Sixth Grade – Eighth	60-120 minutes

School Policy Regarding Reading

All students in grades 3 – 8 are expected to read 15 to 20 minutes a night. This reading should be in addition to regular homework assignments. However, the reading may be from books identified on the required reading list that has been developed for each grade level.

Homework Tips for Parents

Use these tips to ensure homework success for your child this year.

Set up a quiet, well-lit study area.

Designate a special area just for homework. Keep the area free from distractions.

Create a Homework Survival Kit.

Stock necessary school supplies (pencils, paper, ruler, glue, etc.) in a container. Replace supplies as needed and do not use them for other family needs.

Schedule Daily Homework Time.

Each week, determine what time homework will be done each day of the week. Post the schedule and see that you and your child stick to it!

Encourage your child to work independently.

Make sure homework is started and completed on time. Clarify assignments if you can or have your child call a friend if help is needed. Give help only if a real effort has been made. Maintain a listening ear.

Give your child a brief rest between segments of homework.

Motivate your child with praise.

Build your child's self-confidence and motivation by praising him or her for:

- beginning homework on time
- working independently
- staying on task
- doing his or her best work
- making improvements

Student’s Responsibility for Homework

1. Have homework packet (including pages and due dates).
2. Have proper materials (pencils, pens, paper, books, etc.)
3. Complete assignments neatly and legibly. Sloppy homework is not acceptable.
4. Do your best work and give your best effort with each assignment and project.
5. Submit homework on time.
6. Grades 5 through 8 to complete assignments in pen unless directed otherwise.

18. LUNCH PROGRAM

The school offers a lunch program that provides students with a nutritious mid-day meal. Keystone Academy Charter School contracts with The Nutrition Group for the school lunch program. Students who are eligible may apply for free or reduced price lunches. Other students may order meals for a very modest cost. Naturally, participation in the school lunch program is voluntary.

In addition to providing a nutritious lunch through The Nutrition Group, the school attempts to provide students with a pleasant atmosphere in which to eat and enjoy their food. Cleanliness, space, noise level, décor, and student behavior are all taken into account when planning a location where children eat. Celebrations (ex. birthdays) are restricted to the end of the school day or during the scheduled lunch period. You must make arrangements with your child’s teacher in advance if you choose to send in any treats. No balloons, decorations, or party favors may be sent. Birthday celebrations will last no longer than ten minutes. Visits from friends and/or family members are prohibited.

We ask parents to plan special lunches with their children for the weekend or other non-school days. This will provide opportunities for parents and their children to enjoy their time together without causing distractions, additional noise, or overcrowding during the school’s scheduled lunch periods.

19. IMMUNIZATION OF PUPILS

All pupils must be completely immunized or exempted before admission to any public, private, or parochial school in Pennsylvania. The Pennsylvania Department of Health, the Philadelphia County Board of Health, and Keystone Academy Charter School require this.

The purpose of requiring immunization is to protect pupils from preventable communicable diseases and medical and educational complications.

Immunization Requirements for School Entry

<u>Disease</u>	<u>Required Number of Doses/Notes</u>	
Tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis (DTP/Dtap/DT/Td, or Tdap*)	4*	1st dose at/after age 4
Polio (OPV/IPV)	4	4th dose at/after age 4, at least 6 months after previous dose
Measles, mumps, rubella (MMR/MMRV)	2	At/after age 1
Hepatitis B (HBV)	3	
Chickenpox (Varicella/MMRV)	2	At/after age 1*
6th and 7th grade		
Meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MCV4)	1	At/after age 2
Tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis (Tdap)	1	At/after age 7

**Only 3 doses of Td-containing vaccine are necessary if series is started at or after age 7, and at least one dose is Tdap*

***Or documentation of immunity by lab test or written statement from parent, guardian, or physician*

There are two exemptions:

1. Religious Exemption - Pupils need not be immunized if the parent or guardian objects in writing to the immunization on religious/ethical grounds.
2. Medical Exemption - Pupils need not be immunized if a physician or his designee provides a written statement that immunization may be detrimental to the health of the child. When the physician determines that immunization is no longer detrimental to the health of the child, the medical exemption ceases to be valid and the child must be immunized.

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

Disposition of Immunization Records

When transferring from one school to another, the parent should request the Certificate of Immunization from the current school and take it to the new school. The Certificate of Immunization will go with the pupil when s/he transfers, graduates, withdraws, or otherwise, leaves Keystone Academy Charter School.

20. EXCLUSION FOR COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

Children who have contracted a communicable disease or who are infected with lice or ring worm must remain at home until a medical professional has certified that their condition is no longer contagious. A note from the medical professional, on letterhead and with an original signature, must accompany the child on his/her first day back to school.

21. PRESCRIPTION AND NON-PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS IN SCHOOL

Parents who wish to have prescription medications given to their child during school hours should ask the designated school staff member for a "Request for Administration of Medication" (Form MED-I). The form must be filled out and signed by the child's doctor and the parent. The parent, not the child, should bring the medication to the school.

Medication will be retained by the school only if it has been packaged and labeled by a Registered Pharmacist according to accepted pharmaceutical standards. The medication label must include: patient's name, pharmacy name, pharmacy address and phone, prescription number, prescription date (current), name of medication, dosage, form, and expiration date, instructions for administration, and name of prescribing health care provider. Medication must be packaged with a safety cap.

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

Over the counter (non-prescription) medications must also be brought to school by the child's parent or guardian. It must be accompanied by a written confirmation by a qualified health care provider on a prescription blank or letterhead. This confirmation must contain the proper dosage and the time the medication is to be taken. Written parental approval is also required. If there is no note from a parent, supplying the necessary information, the child will not be permitted to take the medication. Over the counter medications must be in the original manufacturer's container with directions for use intact on the label or box.

22. PUPIL ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

1. Policy and Purpose

- 1.1 The Board of Trustees of Keystone Academy Charter School ("KACS") recognizes that regular school attendance is vital for student achievement and successful school experience. These are predicated upon instructional continuity, classroom participation and peer interaction, and are adversely affected when students are frequently absent, tardy or dismissed early from school. **Therefore, the Board wishes to reinforce the policy of KACS that all students are required to attend school during all hours and days that school is in session.**

The Board also reinforces that KACS continues to follow state and local laws, which compel every parent or guardian to send his or her student to school -- from age 6 or earlier if election is made to enroll the student in kindergarten -- in which case the student must attend school continuously until age 17, has graduated from a senior high school or has secured legal employment at age 16.

2. Responsibility

- 2.1 The Board of Trustees directs the Chief Executive Officer, through any designee(s) including, but not limited to, the Principal and/or School Attendance Committee, to implement this policy and to communicate its importance and respective responsibilities for daily school attendance to all parents, guardians, students and staff. Implementation includes accurate maintenance of student attendance records and copies thereof including, but not limited to, any specific correspondence pertaining to attendance and/or truancy to/from parents or guardians, excuse notes, attendance plans and contracts, telephone call records, and any and all documentation of efforts to engage parents or guardians and/or students in the process of developing and implementing interventions intended to eliminate or reduce barriers to school attendance on a regular basis. Confidentiality also must be maintained.

3. Definitions

- 3.1 **"Truancy"** means 3 or more unexcused absences in the current school year.
- 3.2 **"Habitual truancy"** means 6 or more unexcused absences in the current school year.
- 3.3 **"Excessive truancy"** means 10 or more unexcused absences in the current school year.
- 3.4 **"School attendance improvement conference"** means a conference where a student's absences and reasons for the absences are examined by school administrators and the parent or guardian in a joint effort to improve attendance.
- 3.5 **"School attendance improvement plan"** means the documented collaborative effort of school administrators and parent or guardian and/or student, resulting from their conference, to examine and remove barriers to the student's improvement of his or her school attendance.

- 3.6 **"School-based or community-based attendance improvement program"** means a program designed to improve school attendance by seeking to identify and address the underlying reasons for a student's repeated absences.

4. Excused Absences and Procedures

- 4.1 Every parent or guardian of a student enrolled at KACS is responsible for ensuring that his or her student attends school for all days and hours that school is in session.
- 4.2 If a student will be absent, his or her parent or guardian must notify the school of the student's absence by 8:30 AM. This does not obviate an excuse note which must be brought to school the day following each absence. The excuse note must include the student's name, the dates of the absence, the reason for the absence, and be signed by the parent or guardian. If a student is absent for three (3) or more consecutive days, he or she must return to school with a note from a doctor, as well as the excuse note from his or her parent or guardian, on the first day back to school.
- 4.3 A statement from a doctor stating that due to a medical condition, a student will have absences with greater frequency than a student without such medical condition still must submit a written excuse from his or her parent or guardian. Students will not be excused more than 15 days, unless there is verification of a hospital stay. Long-term absences for legitimate reasons will be handled on a case-by-case basis.
- 4.4 The Board of Trustees considers the following to constitute reasonable cause for absence from school:
- a. Illness or recovery from accident
 - b. Death in the immediate family
 - c. Quarantine
 - d. Required court attendance
 - e. Religious observances (with written prior request to, and approval from, the Principal)
 - f. Educational trips (not to exceed 4 days in a school year, with written prior request to, and approval from the Principal; special permission for an extended trip 5 days or longer must be requested at least 30 days in advance from the Board of Trustees). If approved, because determined to have educational significance to the student, the student will be required to submit a written report and presentation regarding the educational value of the trip to him or her. It is not the intent of this policy to grant excused absences for tours or trips to local places of interest, attendance at sports or entertainment events, family functions, or solely to accompany the family on vacation.

- g. Health care (to obtain professional health care or therapy service, upon written parental request, though it is urged that scheduling occur outside of the school day unless unavoidable).
- h. Dismissal from school during school hours for health-related reasons by a certified school nurse, licensed practical nurse or a school administrator or designee
- i. Out-of-school suspension
- j. Impassable roads

Any absence that can be anticipated should be brought to the attention of the Principal well in advance of the absence.

5. Unexcused or Illegal Absences

- 5.1 KACS considers all absences for reasons other than those above to be unexcused, and will be recorded as such. Other unacceptable excuses include, but are not limited to, oversleeping, missing the bus, car problems, traffic, personal business (work/hair appointment/shopping), or general excuses. When an excuse is submitted with a general reason such as “out of town”, “an appointment”, “family emergency”, etc., the parent/guardian will be contacted to gain further explanation and information.
- 5.2 If an absence is not explained satisfactorily in a note from a parent or guardian, or if a student does not submit an excuse the day of his or her return, the student will be presented with a reminder notice by the teacher, which the student is responsible for taking home to his or her parent or guardian. If an excuse note is not received within three (3) days of an absence, it will be recorded as an unexcused or illegal absence.
- 5.3 The Board authorizes the school's administration to retain the right to determine the validity of all excuse notes.

6. Procedures for All Unexcused Absences and Truant Students (3+ Unexcused Absences)

- 6.1 KACS will report unexcused absences directly to the Pennsylvania Department of Education through the Pennsylvania Information Management System (PIMS) system.
- 6.2 At the **3rd unexcused absence**, KACS will send the parent or guardian an official notice of the student's truancy, containing a description of the potential consequences that may ensue if the student becomes habitually truant (i.e. fines ranging from \$300 for the first offense up to \$750 for a third offense, community service, attendance at a course or program designed to improve school attendance, referral to county children and youth services, up to 3 days in jail for contempt of court, etc.).

- 6.3 When the official truancy notice is transmitted to a person in parental relation to a truant student, who is not the biological or adoptive parent, the notice also will be provided to the student's biological or adoptive parent, if the parent's mailing address is on file with KACS and the parent is not precluded from receiving the information by court order.
- 6.4 From the **4th unexcused absence**, KACS will offer, in advance and in writing, a School Attendance Improvement Conference to the parent or guardian of a truant student in grades K-5 and, to the student to participate as well, if he or she is in grades 6-8. At the School Attendance Improvement Conference, the student's absences and reasons for absences will be examined. For student in all grade levels, an individualized School Attendance Improvement Plan will be developed using the same, or substantially similar, form prescribed by PDE, for the purpose of documenting the outcome of the conference. A Truancy Elimination Contract also will be developed for a truant student in 6th grade and above. Additionally, during the conference, a City of Philadelphia Department of Human Services Parent/Guardian Consent to Disclose Educational Information form will be sought from the parent or guardian, should the student become habitually truant.
- 6.5 From the **4th unexcused absence of a student with an IEP**, KACS will convene, in addition to the School Attendance Improvement Conference, an IEP meeting for revisiting the student's IEP so that goals for attendance may be established.
- 6.6 If the parent or guardian of a truant student decides not to participate or fails to attend the School Attendance Improvement Conference then, after attempts to contact the parent or guardian in writing and by telephone, KACS must still hold such conference and develop a written School Attendance Improvement Plan.

7. Procedures for Habitually Truant Students (6+ Unexcused Absences)

- 7.1 For a **habitually truant student under age 15, who has accumulated 6 or more unexcused absences**, KACS either will refer the student to (1) a school-based or community-based attendance program or (2) to the county children and youth agency (DHS) for services or for possible disposition as a dependent child under the Juvenile Act. KACS will verify that official truancy notice was sent and that a School Attendance Improvement Conference was held.

8. Procedures for Excessively Truant Students (10+ Unexcused Absences)

- 8.1 **After accumulation of 10 days of absence per school year, whether excused or otherwise**, a physician's excuse will be required for any additional

absences. Absences not covered by the appropriate documentation will be considered illegal.

- 8.2 For an **excessively truant student under age 15, who has accumulated 10 or more unexcused absences**, KACS will refer the student to the county children and youth agency (DHS) for services or for possible disposition as a dependent child. KACS will verify that official truancy notice was sent and that a School Attendance Improvement Conference was held.
- 8.3 In addition, KACS may bring to court the parent or guardian of an **excessively truant student under age 15 who has accumulated 10 unexcused absences**, by filing a citation in Truancy Court. KACS will verify that that official truancy notice was sent and a School Attendance Improvement Conference was held.
- 8.4 KACS will follow the Charter School Truancy Intervention Protocol (TIP) of the School District of Philadelphia including, but not limited to, designation of an Attendance Designee and Court Representative, when referring habitually truant students of KACS, who reside in Philadelphia, to DHS and/or to Truancy Court.
- 8.5 For an **excessively truant student who has accumulated more than 10 unexcused absences**, KACS will conduct additional administrative review which may include any or all of the following:
 - formal notice to a parent or guardian that his or her student's absences are affecting school performance;
 - meeting with a parent or guardian to further investigate the reasons for the excessive absences and to work together to develop interventions for improving student attendance; and/or
 - requiring the student's parent or guardian to appear before the Board of Trustees.

9. Referral of Excessively Truant Students to the Disciplinary Committee (18+ Unexcused Absences)

- 9.1 For an **excessively truant student who has accumulated 18 or more unexcused absences (10% of the school year)**, KACS will notify the Board of Trustees which, through its Disciplinary Committee, will hold a formal hearing and which has the following options:
 - placing the student on probation; and/or
 - retaining the student for failure to comply with the "90% Attendance" rule and consequent failure to achieve academic standards for promotion to the next grade.

- refer the student’s case to the Department of Human Services (DHS)

10. 90% Attendance and Appeal Procedures

- 10.1 All students, in order to receive credit for class work, must be in attendance for 90% of the instructional time during each trimester grading period. The teacher’s class roll book serves as the official class attendance record. Students who are not in attendance for 90% of the instructional time during each trimester and who have not submitted a medical excuse will receive a grade of no higher than a 60% for each class. A medical excuse must be provided prior to the report card being issued in order to prevent academic failure. Medical excuses will not be accepted for the trimester after the issuance of report cards. For example, medical excuses will not be accepted during the second trimester for the first trimester to retroactively change grades.
- 10.2 Disagreements regarding Notification of Truancy or Excessive Absence and/or 90% attendance may be appealed, in writing, to the School Attendance Committee. The attendance committee is comprised of two teachers, a counselor and the Principal. Students who are absent for more than 10% of the instructional day and/or periods in a subject matter area may file a written appeal to the School Attendance Committee for credit and/or exemption from the 90% attendance rule due to extraordinary circumstances. If the initial appeal is denied, the parent, guardian or student has the right to appeal the decision to the Chief Executive Officer, who will place the appeal on the agenda for the next meeting of the Board of Trustees. The Board's decision will be final.

11. Consecutive Absences

- 11.1 Whenever a student has **10 consecutive absences** and there is no evidence that these absences are “excused”, KACS will remove the student from its active membership roll.

12. Early Dismissal

- 12.1 Dismissal for part of a school day for valid reasons requires pre-approval by the Principal. Requests for early dismissal must be in writing, and should be confined to emergency medical, dental and other urgent appointments. Early dismissal will not be granted for private instruction of students in extracurricular activities such as music, dancing, etc.
- 12.2 Whenever early dismissal of a student is sought, his or her parent or guardian is required to send a note to the classroom teacher detailing the date, time, reason for the request, and the name of the person to whom the student should be released. Classroom teachers must send the note to the office for approval. No

student will be released during school hours without accompaniment by a responsible adult. If a note is not received, the student will not be released to anyone except a parent or guardian. Photo ID may be required of persons who are not known to staff members.

- 12.3 Parents or guardians who are picking up students before regular dismissal are required to come to the office to sign out the student. An early dismissal log requiring date, time, reason for dismissal, and parent signature is located in the office.

13. Tardiness

- 13.1 The Board recognizes that arriving to school on time is as important as regular daily attendance, and therefore considers chronic tardiness as a form of truancy.
- 13.2 A parent or guardian should immediately contact the school if his or her student is unavoidably late. Students who arrive late are required to obtain a late pass from the office in order to be admitted to class.
- 13.3 A student who is late must present a note from his or her parent or guardian to be submitted to the teacher, explaining the reason for the lateness on the day of the lateness. The note must be dated and signed by the student's parent or guardian. If a note is not forthcoming on the next school day, the lateness will be considered unexcused and the "unexcused" notation will remain on the student's attendance record.
- 13.4 Excused lateness includes urgent medical and dental appointments, illness, family tragedy or death. Unexcused lateness includes car trouble, missing the bus, oversleeping, assuming the responsibility for siblings getting to school, running family errands, etc.
- 13.5 Parents are urged to pick their student up promptly at the end of each school day, as teachers have in-service sessions, graduate classes, and other activities scheduled at the end of the day and cannot provide day care. **Late pickups will be categorized as unexcused lateness and added to the child's bank of unexcused lateness.**

14. Make Up Work

- 14.1 Students are responsible for making up missed assignments caused by absence, regardless of the reason for the absence, and whether or not excused. Teachers are not required to provide learning materials prior to the absence, but materials can be made available to be sent home or picked up at the end of the day if requests are made by noon. Need for assistance in trying to make

up missed work should be discussed with a student's teacher and/or the Principal.

23. DRESS CODE

APPROVED UNIFORMS MAY BE PURCHASED FROM CRAMERS KIDS.

Uniforms may be purchased from Cramer’s Kids in order to maintain consistency and to avoid extreme styles. If a student is wearing the correct colors, but not the correct style, his/her parents will be asked to come to school with the proper uniform or they will be asked to remove their child from school until he/she is wearing the correct uniform.

In the fall (through October 31) and spring (after March 31) the students wear the following uniform:

Boys - Gray pants, monogrammed burgundy golf shirts, burgundy, white, or black socks, and regulation shoes*

Girls - Gray skirts, monogrammed burgundy golf shirt, burgundy or white knee socks, and regulation shoes*

*Regulation shoes are black or burgundy oxfords, Mary Janes, and black or burgundy penny loafers

All students of Keystone Academy Charter School wear the following uniform from November 1 through March 31:

Boys - Long gray pants, white turtleneck shirt, burgundy school sweater, burgundy white, or black socks, and regulation shoes*

Girls - Gray skirt, white turtleneck shirt, burgundy school sweater, burgundy or white knee socks or tights and regulation shoes.* Leggings or any kind of gym sweat pants may not be worn under the uniform skirt during the school day.

*Regulation shoes are black or burgundy oxfords, Mary Janes, and black or burgundy penny loafers

Please label all student outerwear especially the school sweaters, jackets, coats, hats and gloves.

Gym Uniforms

Gym uniforms should be worn only on the days students are assigned to gym. Students may wear sneakers with their gym uniform. **Gym uniforms may be purchased from Cramers Kids.**

In the fall (through October 31) and spring (after March 31) the students wear burgundy tee

shirts and shorts that are embroidered with the name of the school.

From November 1 through March 31 students wear burgundy sweat shirts and sweat pants embroidered with the name of the school.

Earrings

In the interest of preventing painful and/or disfiguring injuries, students are forbidden to wear hoop or dangling earrings in school. This type of jewelry is easily grabbed by another person or tangled with another object, sometimes resulting in serious damage to the wearer's ear lobe. Additionally, the administration believes hoop and dangling earrings are inappropriate for elementary school age girls.

24. BEEPERS/CELLULAR PHONES/ELECTRONIC GAMES

Because beepers and other telephonic or paging devices are being used to assist drug transactions, the Pennsylvania Legislature has banned the possession of such devices in schools and school programs. Furthermore, these instruments can be distracting in a classroom setting. Electronic games (e.g. GameBoy) can also be distracting and, like beepers and cell phones, may become a cause of friction among students. For these reasons, **paging devices, cellular phones, electronic games, etc. are not permitted in school.** If a child brings such a device to school, it will be confiscated by an appropriate authority and kept in a safe place until the child's parents are notified and they come to school to remove it. If a child brings a device to school and it gets lost or taken, the school is not responsible for replacing the item.

25. ACCESS AND RELEASE OF STUDENT RECORDS

Keystone Academy Charter School provides parents with access to the academic records of their children. The access right of parents consists of:

- a. The right to inspect and review the contents of educational records.
- b. The right to obtain one copy of the education records at no charge, and additional copies, if requested, at a charge. These will be stamped as "unofficial."
- c. The right to receive from school personnel an explanation and interpretation of the educational records.
- d. The right to a hearing to challenge the contents of the educational records.
- e. The right to bring an attorney or parent advocate to review educational records. A parent seeking access to the educational records may make a request by telephone or in person to the Chief Executive Officer or designee. However, prior to reviewing and inspecting the educational records, a parent must sign an official request form. Access to educational records is granted within forty-five days of the receipt of the written request.

After examining their child's educational record, parents may request a hearing to challenge the contents of the record. The purpose of the hearing is to establish the accuracy of the record. At an informal meeting between the parents and the Principal or designee, an attempt is made to answer any questions raised by the parents. If the questions are not resolved, a formal hearing is conducted in the office of the Chief Executive Officer.

In general, the school may not permit access to, nor release of, educational records to third parties without the consent of the parents, including requests from family members, other than the parents, and private schools. However, educational records may be released without the consent of parents to another public school system to which a pupil transfers.

Pupil directory information, which includes: the pupil's name; address; date and place of birth; photographic likeness; major field of study; dates of attendance; degrees and awards received; and participation in officially recognized activities and sports may be released without the consent of the parents unless the school is notified annually by the parents not to release the information without their prior written consent.

State law provides that the following additional conditions will apply regarding the educational records of special needs students.

If you have asked to see your child's records, you must be allowed to do so prior to a conference regarding an individualized education program and prior to a hearing regarding the identification, evaluation, or placement of your child.

You may designate another person to examine your child's records, if you wish to have further advice. You may ask for a list of the types and locations of the records kept about your child.

Keystone Academy Charter School has a schedule for the destruction of Special Education records of students who have been out of the program for at least five years. You will be sent a notice by mail at a time shortly before the student's records would be destroyed and advised of your right to obtain them for your own or the student's use. It is your responsibility to provide the school with your current address so that you will receive the notification. You should do so by sending your address, the student's name, and birth date to Keystone Academy Charter School site attended by the student.

26. SCHOOL TRIPS

The educational value of a school trip and the safety of pupils are overriding considerations in approving a school trip.

The Principal must approve all school trips. A permission slip for a pupil to take the trip must be signed by the parent and returned to the school prior to the trip. In most instances, parents pay transportation and admission costs for school trips. School personnel may not

use their private vehicles to transport students on trips.

To assist in supervision, one adult for every six pupils is required on school trips. Parents and other adults may volunteer to assist school personnel on school trips when needed. If a parent agrees to accompany the children on a trip, it is understood that he/she will remain with the group until it returns to school. Parents may not remove their children from the trip unless there is an emergency. Parents may not smoke on the bus or in the presence of the children. The selection of parents for assistance on trips is at the discretion of the Principal.

27. PARENT LOCATION CARDS/PARENTAL CUSTODY

Emergency Contact Forms are distributed at the beginning of the school year. These forms are a source of emergency information about the pupils. For the well being of the pupils, it is important that the form be completed and returned promptly to the school.

In addition, a copy of any Court Order or agreement affecting the custodial rights of a parent should be filed with the school.

Failure to keep the school informed of your current address and phone number may endanger your child and may prevent you from receiving notice of important academic, disciplinary, and/or health information. This may result in the loss of your right to participate in important decisions. **Should your home or work telephone numbers change, please notify the school immediately!**

28. STUDENT CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE

School Goal:

Students at Keystone Academy Charter School will *Learn and Lead with P.R.I.D.E.* throughout the school day by following the five behavioral expectations.

Keystone Academy Behavioral Expectations:

- P** **Passion** – demonstrating a love for learning
- R** **Respect-** respecting oneself, respecting others, respecting property
- I** **Integrity-** being honest and having strong moral principles
- D** **Determination-** putting forth full effort to accomplish goals
- E** **Excellence-** demonstrating outstanding behavior

Acknowledgment System

The acknowledgement system is a feature of the P.R.I.D.E. behavioral expectation system. The behavioral expectation system focuses on acknowledging students who demonstrate Keystone Academy behavioral expectations. This program works in conjunction with school-wide and classroom goals.

Specific verbal feedback

- ✓ When you observe students displaying P.R.I.D.E., acknowledge them by giving specific positive verbal feedback such as:
 - “That was so helpful the way you held the door open for your classmates.”
 - “Thank you for walking with your hands and feet to yourself.”

P.R.I.D.E. Tickets

- ✓ Acknowledge students who are exhibiting P.R.I.D.E. behaviors by giving them specific positive feedback along with a *P.R.I.D.E. Ticket*.
- ✓ Each grade level team will establish a guideline for the number of P.R.I.D.E. tickets needed to earn specific incentives. Incentives could include extra recess time, eating lunch with a staff member of choice, extra computer time, etc.

Monthly Raffle

- ✓ For every five (5) P.R.I.D.E. tickets earned by a student in one month, the student will be entered into a monthly raffle. Students from each class who win the monthly raffle will earn a special dress down day pass along with a prize.

Expectations for areas other than the classroom

Cafeteria Expectations:

- Hands, feet & objects to self
- Eat your own food
- Raise hand for permission to get up
- Walk
- Use inside voices
- Be polite and use good manners
- Do not bring glass bottles or sharp items into the cafeteria
- Do not bring any nut products or soda
- Do not bring food that needs to be heated or refrigerated
- Clean up your area before leaving

Hallway Expectations:

- If in a group, make a boy’s line and a girl’s line
- Walk and go directly to your destination
- Hands, feet & objects to self
- Respect other’s personal space

- No talking
- Do not touch items displayed on hallway walls
- Help keep trash off the floors
- Get a hall pass from the teacher (unless you are being escorted by an adult)

Restroom Expectations:

- Use restroom facility appropriately
- Keep water in the sink
- Walk in the restroom
- Tell an adult if restroom needs attention
- Use water, soap and paper towels sparingly and appropriately
- Flush toilet after use
- Keep restrooms clean
- Return directly to class or designated area when finished
- Observe personal space
- Respect privacy

Recess Expectations:

- Remain on school grounds
- Walk on sidewalk when exiting the building to playground area
- Wait for an adult to cross you at the street corner
- Follow game rules
- Inform adult of unsafe behavior or incidents
- Stay away from unfamiliar adults or animals
- Line up quickly when called
- Listen for instructions
- Be responsible for jackets and other belongings
- Respect school property
- Share equipment
- Use positive talk
- Take turns
- Use good sportsmanship

Teachers and staff will implement I–HUM strategies.

- I – interact with students
- HU – heads up, always looking around at students
- M – moving constantly in and around students

Morning Arrival Expectations:

- Do not arrive before 7:45 AM (yard is not supervised by staff until that time)
- Remain in the school yard
- Keep hands, feet, and objects to self
- Respect others' personal space

- Use soft voice
- Respond appropriately to adult directions
- Line up in your designated spot when you see the signal
- When an adult's hand is raised, raise your hand and stop all talking
- All phones and electronics are turned off before entering the building
- Walk into the building
- Remove hat and/or hood when entering building
- Arrivals after 8:05 am, report to office for a late slip

Dismissal Expectations:

- Be packed and ready to go
- Keep materials in backpack until arrival at home
- Follow hallway expectations as teacher walks you out
- Keep hands, feet, and objects to self
- Use soft voice
- Respect others' personal space
- Respond appropriately to adult directions

Teachers and staff will implement I–HUM strategies.

- I – interact with students
- HU – heads up, always looking around at students
- M – moving constantly in and around students

Handling Infractions of Behavioral Expectations

The goal of discipline is to help the child to become a successful student and a good citizen. Learning respect for self and others, understanding how to function effectively in groups, and how to support others are the hallmarks of an effective discipline plan. At Keystone Academy Charter School, we present these lessons in a positive manner, but there are times when punishment is needed to provide an equally important lesson. The knowledge that every action has a consequence is important for all students to learn. In addition to the school-wide rules, each teacher has his/her own standards and expectations, rewards, and punishments.

In general, all classrooms in the school follow a colored card system. Each day a student begins his/her day on green. With the first warning, the student's card is flipped to blue; a second problem flips the card to yellow and consequences may include one or more of the following: silent lunch, note home, loss of privileges. A third problem results in the card being flipped to red and the consequences may include one or more of the following: phone call home, Principal's office, two or more days of silent lunch, loss of privileges. Students also have the opportunity to earn a purple card when "caught being good".

Each classroom has a climate for learning. Rules, consequences and rewards are posted and/or discussed in each classroom so that children know what is expected. Children are

required to follow classroom and school rules at all times. If a child repeatedly violates established rules and disrupts the learning environment, parents will be required to meet with the teacher or Principal to find an effective way to assist the child in behavior management. Your cooperation and support of the school's educational program is essential in providing a successful learning experience for your child.

Keystone Academy will maintain a level system for handling infractions of behavioral expectations. Outlined below is the level system along with the instructions for handling such behaviors:

Level 1 behaviors include:

- Inappropriate language (including cursing)
- Defiance, disrespect, insubordination, non-compliance
- Lying (and lying to incriminate others)
- Harassment, intimidation, extortion, teasing, taunting (physical and/or verbal)
- Disruption, excessive talking
- Dress code violation
- Not prepared for class

Step 1: Level 1 behaviors are to be handled by the classroom teacher or staff member witnessing such behaviors. The behaviors should be noted on the daily behavior chart.

Step 2: If behaviors persist (beyond two weeks), the classroom teacher should call the parent to advise them that the teacher will meet with the student for the purpose of goal setting. One of the following staff members may be a resource for this process: school counselor, school climate personnel, academic coach, Principal. The classroom teacher should conference with the parent(s) to inform them of the goal(s) sheet.

Additional consequences at the discretion of the school may include a parent/teacher/principal conference, loss of privileges, in-school suspension, or out-of-school suspension. After two weeks, parent(s) should be contacted regarding the student's response to the set goals. Each parent contact should be documented on the phone log.

Step 3: If Level 1 behaviors have not improved after 4 weeks, the Student in Need Follow-up form will be completed and reviewed at the monthly RTII meeting and recommendations from the Instructional Support team will be suggested.

Level 2 behaviors include:

- Abusive language (threat of physical harm, offensive racial/sexual comments)
- Using obscene gestures (including drawing/having obscene pictures)
- Physical aggression (pushing, shoving, hitting)
- Academic dishonesty; Plagiarism
- Forgery, theft
- Skipping class
- Leaving school grounds without proper authorization
- Vandalism (defacing/destruction of school property)

- Violation of district technology guidelines
- Use of personal cell phone or electronic devices during school hours.
- Repeated violations of attendance/truancy policies

Level 2 behaviors should be referred to the Principal or School Climate Personnel. The teacher will complete an Office Discipline Referral form to be sent to the office. Students unable to remain in the classroom may be put in isolated instruction. On the same day the student is sent to the office, the teacher or staff member witnessing the incident should communicate the details to the parent(s) by phone. After meeting with the student, an administrator will give a copy of the Discipline Referral form to the student for parent signature. The student should return the signed copy to the office. Additional consequences at the discretion of the school will include one or more of the following: a parent/teacher/principal conference, loss of privileges, parent required to pick student up from school, in-school suspension, or out-of-school suspension.

Students that demonstrate continuous violations of the behavioral expectations of Keystone Academy will be referred to the School Climate Committee and could be placed on discipline probation to last a minimum of thirty (30) school days.

Level 3 behaviors include:

- Possession, delivery, use, or being under the influence of alcohol or drugs (including prescription or non-prescription drugs)
- Possession, delivery or use of weapons (including but not limited to firearms, knives, fireworks, explosives of any kind, matches, lighters, cutting instrument, etc.)
- Arson or attempted arson
- Bomb threat, false alarm
- Assault (including sexual assault)

Level 3 behaviors should be referred to the Principal immediately. The teacher will complete an Office Discipline Referral form to accompany the student. The proper authorities will be notified while the student is being detained. Students who carry out level 3 behaviors will be referred to the Disciplinary Committee of the Board of Trustees. Additional consequences for students who engage in level 3 behaviors may include one or more of the following: a parent/teacher/principal conference, loss of privileges, parent required to pick student up from school, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, or permanent removal from school.

Discipline for Students with Disabilities/Use of Manifestation Determination

Students with disabilities and students suspected of having disabilities have the same rights and responsibilities as other students in the school, and will be expected to adhere to the same standards of conduct. Discipline for students designated as needing special education will be carried out responsibly and according to the guidelines provided in their IEP's, and consistent with applicable laws and regulations.

In the event that a disciplinary action would constitute a change in educational placement and/or a pattern of behavior, a student with disabilities' IEP team, which includes the parent, shall meet to hold a manifestation determination review in order to determine whether the student's conduct is a manifestation of his/her disability. The manifestation determination questions are as follows:

1. Was the behavior caused by, or directly and substantially related to, the student's disability?
2. Was the behavior a direct result of LEA's failure to implement the Individualized Education Program (IEP)?

Generally, a change in educational placement occurs in the following instances:

1. The removal is for more than 10 consecutive school days; or
2. The child has been subjected to a series of removals that constitute a pattern.

Definitions/Procedures:

Disciplinary Probation: Students that demonstrate continuous violations of the behavioral expectations of Keystone Academy will be referred to the School Climate Committee and could be placed on discipline probation to last a minimum of thirty (30) school days. In such a case, the parent will be required to meet with the School Climate Committee to discuss the reasons for the probation. Any infraction of the Keystone Academy Behavioral Expectations by the student during his/her probation period will result in the student being referred to the Disciplinary Committee of the Board of Trustees for possible expulsion from the school. A letter regarding the probation as well as a copy of the Parent Handbook will be provided to the parent at the meeting.

In-School Suspension: The student will be separated from the group for the entire school day and barred from all classroom and extra-curricular activities. The student may not participate in any reward activities during the suspension period and will be given assignments to complete while serving out the suspension.

Out-of-School Suspension: The student will not be permitted to attend school for a period of time determined by the Principal (between 1-10 consecutive school days). The student will be expected to make up all assignments and tests missed during the suspension period.

The primary reasons for Out-of-School Suspension are to: 1) involve the parents and seek their help with the disciplinary issue, 2) offer immediate relief to the staff and students by removing the offending student from the school, and 3) display the dissatisfaction of the school with the student's behavior.

Before a student is suspended the Principal will investigate the situation and collect written statements from the alleged offender and the teachers and students who witnessed or were involved in the event. If the Principal, as a result of his/her investigation, determines that a

student has committed an offence that requires suspension, he/she will meet with the student and inform him/her of the reasons for the suspension and its duration.

The Principal will then call the student's parents and arrange for them to come to school to remove the child. If the parents cannot come, the child will remain in the school office (if he/she can be supervised there) or in some other safe place until the regular dismissal time. Before the student leaves for the day, the Principal will provide him/her with a note addressed to his/her parents explaining the reasons for the suspension, the number of days of suspension, the date on which the child may return to school, and the date, time, and place for the reinstatement meeting which must follow all suspensions. A copy of that letter should also be mailed to the parents.

Due Process: Pursuant to the Pennsylvania Code, a suspension is exclusion from school for a period of 1 to 10 consecutive school days. When the suspension exceeds 3 school days, the Student and Parent/Guardian are given the opportunity for an informal hearing. The purpose of the informal hearing is an opportunity to meet with the appropriate school official regarding the circumstances for which the Student is being suspended or why the Student should not be suspended.

Pursuant to the Pennsylvania Code, the school hereby observes the following procedures with respect to the informal hearing:

- (1) Notification of the reason(s) for the suspension shall have been given in writing to the Parent or Guardian and to the Student;
- (2) Sufficient notice of the time and place of the informal hearing shall be given;
- (3) A Student has the right to question any witnesses present at the hearing;
- (4) A Student has the right to speak and produce witnesses on his or her behalf; and
- (5) The school shall offer to hold the informal hearing within the first 5 days of the suspension.

Only a Parent/Legal Guardian and the Student may attend the informal hearing.

Expulsion: Education is a statutory right, and students shall be afforded due process if they are to be excluded from school. Expulsion is exclusion from school by the governing board for a period exceeding ten (10) school days and may be permanent expulsion from the school rolls.

Due Process: Pursuant to Title 22 of the Pennsylvania Code, a formal hearing is required in all expulsion actions. This hearing may be held before the governing Board or an authorized committee of the Board, or a qualified hearing examiner appointed by the Board. When a committee of the Board, or a hearing examiner conducts the hearing, a majority vote of the entire governing Board is required to expel a student, via resolution.

The following due process requirement shall be observed with regard to the formal hearing:

- Notification of the charges shall be sent to the student's parents or guardians by certified mail.
- A copy of the expulsion policy, notice that legal counsel may represent the student and hearing procedures shall be included with the hearing notice. A student may request the rescheduling of the hearing when the student demonstrates good cause for an extension.
- The hearing shall be in private unless the student or the student's parents requests a public hearing.
- The student may be represented by counsel, at the expense of the parents or guardians, and may have a parent or guardian attend the hearing.
- The student has the right to be presented with the names of witnesses against the student, and copies of the statements and affidavits of those witnesses. Administration may supplement the potential witness list.
- The student has the right to request that the witnesses appear in person and answer questions or be cross-examined.
- The student has the right to testify and present witnesses on his own behalf.
- A written or audio record shall be kept of the hearing. The student is entitled, at the student's expense, to a copy. A copy shall be provided at no cost to a student who is indigent.
- A proceeding shall be held within 15 school days of the notification of charges, unless mutually agreed to by both parties. A hearing may be delayed for any of the following reasons, in which case the hearing shall be held as soon as reasonably possible:
 - (i) Laboratory reports are needed from law enforcement agencies.
 - (ii) Evaluations or other court or administrative proceedings are pending due to a student invoking his rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C.A. §§ 1400-1482).
 - (iii) In cases in juvenile or criminal court involving sexual assault or serious bodily injury, delay is necessary due to the condition or best interests of the victim.
- Notice of a right to appeal the results of the hearing shall be provided to the student with the expulsion decision.
- While this matter is pending, the student may not visit the school or be on school property at any time for any reason, except in order to attend the informal hearing and/or expulsion hearing.

- The student is responsible for completing school assignments during the period of his/her suspension. School assignments can be obtained by calling the main office.

Note: In-School and Out-of-School Suspensions will be recorded on the student's permanent record. Continuous violation of the rules will place a child's status at Keystone Academy Charter School in jeopardy. However, the staff at Keystone Academy Charter School will consider variables that may influence a child's conduct, e.g. the presence of a disability, or the effect of medication. Unless the mitigating circumstances are extremely grave, a child who has been suspended three times will be referred to the Disciplinary Committee of the Board of Trustees for expulsion.

29. SEARCH AND SEIZURE POLICY

Desks, lockers and storage spaces, which are provided to students without charge, are the property of the school. The CEO or designee may have general inspections on a periodic basis and may open desks, lockers or storage spaces in the presence of a witness and examine the contents, including personal belongings of students, when there are reasonable grounds to believe that they contain illegal drugs, contraband, weapons or stolen property, or that the student has violated or is violating state or federal laws, township codes or Board of Trustees policies or regulations, provided the search is conducted primarily for enforcing order and discipline in the school and not for criminal prosecution. In the case of individualized student searches, reasonable efforts to locate the student shall be made prior to the search. If the student is present, the school official shall advise him/her of the circumstances justifying the search and seizure of the objects that the official believes the search may disclose. If the student is not present, he/she shall be informed of the search. Stolen items and items that are specifically prohibited by law, Board of Trustees regulations, township or school regulations may be impounded, and the proper authorities called.

The student shall be given a receipt for any items impounded by school authorities and parents shall be notified of any items impounded.

30. BULLYING POLICY

Pursuant to Act 61 of 2008 each school entity must adopt a policy or amend its existing policy relating to bullying and incorporate the policy into the school entity's Code of Student Conduct required under 22 Pa Code Section 12.3(c). Keystone Academy Charter School strives to provide a safe, positive learning experience for its students. Therefore, it shall be the policy of Keystone Academy to maintain an educational environment in which bullying and cyber bullying in any form are not tolerated.

I. Definitions:

A. “**Bullying**” means intentionally, systematically and chronically inflicting physical hurt or psychological distress on one or more students or employees. It is further defined as: unwanted purposeful written, verbal, nonverbal, or physical behavior, including but not limited to any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture, by an adult or student, that has the potential to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment or cause long term damage; cause discomfort or humiliation; or unreasonably interfere with the individual’s school performance or participation, is carried out repeatedly and is often characterized by an imbalance of power. Bullying may involve, but is not limited to:

1. unwanted teasing
2. threatening
3. intimidating
4. stalking
5. cyberstalking
6. cyberbullying
7. physical violence
8. theft
9. sexual, religious, or racial harassment
10. public humiliation
11. destruction of school or personal property
12. social exclusion, including incitement and/or coercion
13. rumor or spreading of falsehoods

B. “**Harassment**” means any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture, use of technology, computer software, or written, verbal or physical conduct directed against a student or school employee that:

1. places a student or school employee in reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property
2. has the effect of substantially interfering with a student’s educational performance, or employee’s work performance, or either’s opportunities, or benefits
3. has the effect of substantially negatively impacting a student’s or employee’s emotional or mental well-being; or
4. has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of a school

C. “**Cyberstalking**” means to engage in a course of conduct to communicate, or to cause to be communicated, words, images, or language by or through the use of electronic mail or electronic communication, directed at or about a specific person, causing substantial emotional distress to that person and serving no legitimate purpose.

D. “**Cyberbullying**” is defined as the willful and repeated harassment and intimidation of a person through the use of digital technologies, including, but not limited to, email, blogs, social websites (e.g., MySpace, Facebook), chat rooms, and instant messaging.

E. “**Bullying**”, “**Cyberbullying**”, and/or “**Harassment**” also encompass:

1. retaliation against a student or school employee by another student or school employee for asserting or alleging an act of bullying, harassment, or discrimination
2. retaliation also includes reporting a baseless act of bullying, harassment, or discrimination that is not made in good faith
3. perpetuation of conduct listed in the definition of bullying, harassment, and/or discrimination by an individual or group with intent to demean, dehumanize, embarrass, or cause emotional or physical harm to a student or school employee by:
 - a. incitement or coercion
 - b. accessing or knowingly and willingly causing or providing access to data or computer software through a computer, computer system, or computer network within the scope of the school system; or
 - c. acting in a manner that has an effect substantially similar to the effect of bullying, harassment, or discrimination

F. **“Bullying,” “Cyberbullying,” “Harassment,” and “Discrimination”** (hereinafter referred to as bullying, as defined in Section A, for the purpose of this Policy) also encompass, but are not limited to, unwanted harm towards a student or employee in regard to their real or perceived: sex, race, color, religion, national origin, age, disability (physical, mental, or educational), marital status, socio-economic background, ancestry, ethnicity, gender, gender identity or expression, linguistic preference, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or social/family background or being viewed as different in its education programs or admissions to education programs and therefore prohibits bullying of any student or employee by any Board member, school employee, consultant, contractor, agent, visitor, volunteer, student, or other person in the school or outside the school at school-sponsored events, on school chartered buses, and at training facilities or training programs sponsored by the school.

Consequences:

Keystone Academy Charter School does not tolerate any type of bullying whether it is conveyed verbally or physically, electronically or written. A student who violates this code will be subject to severe consequences to include: Parental conference, loss of school privileges, exclusion from school sponsored activities, suspension from school, expulsion, counseling; therapy outside of school, and referral to law enforcement officials.

1. Consequences and appropriate interventions for students who commit acts of bullying may range from positive behavioral interventions up to, but not limited to, suspension or expulsion. If possible, the pupils will be reconciled. After the incident/incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place
2. Consequences and appropriate interventions for a school employee found to have committed an act of bullying will be instituted in accordance with school policies and procedures
3. Consequences and appropriate intervention for a visitor or volunteer, found to have committed an act of bullying shall be determined by the school administrator after

consideration of the nature and circumstances of the act, including reports to appropriate law enforcement officials

4. These same actions will apply to persons, whether they be students, school employees, or visitors/volunteers/independent contractors, who are found to have made wrongful and intentional accusations of another as a means of bullying

A curriculum that promotes and reinforces kindness, communication, cooperation, friendship and respect is the most effective anti-bullying plan. All students, staff and parents should be involved in positive behavior support and should share the responsibility for bullying prevention and intervention, if necessary.

Prevention Strategies:

- Clearly communicate policy for bullying behaviors to all staff, students and parents
- Discussion and presentations about bullying and kind behaviors are continuous
- Empower and encourage bystanders to promote and take responsibility for creating a safe and welcoming environment
- Provide a means for safely reporting bullying behaviors
- Staff are observant and responsive to reports of bullying
- Students are recognized for kind behaviors
- Adjust bullying prevention program based on analysis of school data and best practices in the field of bullying prevention

Bystander Interventions:

Encouraging and empowering the bystanders through education about bullying and practice (role-plays) in intervening is the most impactful intervention. Determining specific bystander interventions depends on analyzing the level of risk of a particular bullying situation.

School/Classroom Strategies for Bystanders:

- Talk about it with the class
- Emphasize strength in numbers
- Explain the expectation to take action
- Teach and practice skills and strategies to take a stand
- Empower witnesses to take leadership roles in making the school safe for everyone
- Acknowledge and reinforce caring and kind behaviors
- Clarify the difference between tattling and telling (reporting).

Individual Strategies for Bystanders:

- Make a safe choice; consider the level of risk in choosing an action for intervening.
- Teach options for intervening:
 - Choose to not participate
 - Report to an adult

- Encourage the peer group to take a stand
- Take an individual stand
- Be friendly toward the target

Target Interventions:

Targets need support from a third party and have their reports taken seriously. Target interventions typically include teaching social skills such as friendship, assertiveness and anger management skills. Interventions for targets may be done one-on-one or in a support group.

School/Classroom Strategies for Targets:

- Provide a safe place to report; take all reports seriously
- Assign new or needy students to a buddy
- Assign a caring staff member to "connect" regularly with the students who are potential targets
- Get a caring majority in the classroom; use class meetings/discussion to teach expected behaviors and model value of each person
- Consider how students are grouped so that the targets are not left out and are not paired with someone who bullies them.
- Teach friendship and assertiveness skills.

Individual Strategies for Targets:

- Provide options for preventing bullying incidents
 - Avoid the bully
 - Stay in safe areas
 - Share your feelings with someone you trust
- Provide options for responding to bullying incidents
 - Walk away
 - Make an assertive statement, then walk away
 - Tell an adult

Bullying Behavior Interventions:

Bullying behavior interventions may include teaching social skills such as friendship, empathy and anger management in one-on-one settings. Discipline is to be addressed privately and should be consistent. Challenge distorted thinking. Interventions focus on identifying the expected positive behaviors.

31. VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

The Importance of Volunteers

Adult volunteers are important resources in our school. We welcome a high level of parent participation. When parents are involved in children's schooling, their children often do better in school. The volunteer program also provides parents with an opportunity to increase their knowledge of the educational process. Parents will receive satisfaction for doing an important job. Also, they will have many opportunities to meet other members of the school community. Volunteering may help parents to acquire new skills and work experience for future jobs. Volunteers enable teachers to maximize their time. Our children benefit from more individualized attention and an enriched curriculum. If you would like to help in any of the following areas, please contact your Principal. State law requires all adults who work or volunteer in a school to obtain a Criminal Record Check and a Child Abuse Check. Forms are available in the school office.

Reasons Volunteers Have a Positive Effect on Our School

- instructors have more time to teach and plan
- children get more individualized attention
- the curriculum is enriched
- community appreciation of school and the educational process is increased
- parenting knowledge is increased
- discipline problems are reduced
- children learn how to interact with different adults
- motivation of children is increased
- children's respect for adults is increased

What Will the Volunteer Program Do for You?

- provide an opportunity to practice and to improve skills
- increase your understanding of the educational process
- help you to meet other members of the school community
- provide involvement and information about the school
- provide satisfaction for doing an important job
- help you to acquire new skills

You Can Help in Many Ways

In the Classroom

When parents volunteer in the classroom, teachers have more time to teach and to plan. Parents can assist with details such as setting up displays of children's work, writing dictated stories (K – 1), assisting with word processing or typing stories, paper correction, as well as tutoring individual and small groups of children. Other volunteer opportunities include assisting with activities like career talks, field trips, cooking, and the arts.

* Remember as a volunteer you also accept the professional responsibility of confidentiality.

As a Resource

Parents can serve as community resource speakers for career and multi-cultural topics. Parents who have special interests or hobbies are fascinating speakers for classrooms or small groups of students. The students' curriculum is enriched by such presentations. As children see their parents volunteering in some aspect of school life, their motivation increases. Volunteers offer to all students an opportunity to learn and to relate to and to gain respect from a variety of adults.

Other

During the school year, volunteers are needed to accompany field trips, to assist with plays, assemblies, and other performances, to type, telephone, sew, make posters, make instructional games, and collect various science, arts and crafts supplies. Many of these jobs can be done at home.

32. ESL Program (English as a Second Language)

English as a Second Language (ESL) is an instructional program for students whose dominant language is not English. The purpose of the program is to increase the English language proficiency of eligible students so they can attain academic standards and achieve success in the classroom. All incoming students at Keystone Academy are screened for the ESL program according to the information provided by the parent/guardian on the Home Language Survey. Students who qualify and are enrolled in the ESL program participate in one-to-one or small group sessions several times a week with a certified ESL instructor. The instructor may also push-in to the student's classroom throughout the day to assist with instruction.

The primary focus of the instructional program is to enhance the understanding and use of the English language. A specific focus is placed upon content vocabulary, conversational skills, comprehension, phonics, and daily assignments. This is accomplished using a variety of techniques such as shared reading, paired reading, sheltered instruction, decoding skills, chunking, close reads, close activities, and using context clues. The Harcourt Trophies ESL kit and additional supplemental materials are utilized in these sessions.