Freire
Charter Middle School

STUDENT & FAMILY HANDBOOK
2019-20
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I. School Mission

Mission

The mission of Freire Charter School is to provide a college-preparatory learning experience with a focus on individual freedom, critical thinking, and problem solving in an environment that emphasizes the values of community, teamwork, and nonviolence.

Vision

Freire Charter School is the power to build your future.

We can offer your child all of the tools needed for a bright future, but ultimately this success depends on your child taking full advantage of these tools himself or herself.

Shared Values

Freire’s core values are: safety, love, professionalism, integrity, accountability and excellence. Our value statement reads as follows:

We, as a team of educational leaders, value the opportunity to serve as agents for effective change through collaborative efforts at providing quality education that empowers students with an expansive array of avenues and opportunities for success. We value a school in which all community members learn and feel safe – safe from physical harm and safe to take risks in education.

Our Core Rules

- All community members (students, staff, parents, board, and community) are learning.
- All community members are equals, but student success is at the center of everything we do and why we do it.
- All community members are safe and cared for.
- All students get to achieve their highest potential.
II. General Information

Ten Things You Need to Know About Freire Charter Middle School

1. Freire Charter Middle School serves any and all 5th – 8th grade students in the City of Philadelphia. When there are too many students and not enough spaces, Freire uses a random lottery system to determine enrollment. We do not discriminate based on race, gender, creed, sexual orientation, academic ability – or anything whatsoever.

2. The students who succeed at Freire are the ones who take action to help themselves. Students who see a bright future for themselves are willing to do whatever it takes (e.g. long nights of homework, studying on the weekends, going to the library on a sunny day) to get the best education available.

3. We mean what we say at Freire. Perhaps other schools tell you that if you break their code of conduct there will be consequences. Then, when it comes right down to it, many of these schools do not enforce their rules. At Freire, we enforce everything we say. Honestly. We do what we say we are going to do, and we expect you to do the same.

4. We are a 100% nonviolent school. Safety is our first priority. If a student acts violently – whether in words or in actions – to anyone at school, on the subway, OR ANYWHERE, he or she will be expelled. There are no second chances. Our second priority is helping students learn to resolve conflicts peacefully and without violence.

5. Freire Charter School is for students who plan to go to college. Do not send your child to Freire if college is not in the future plan. Your sons and daughters will not be happy at Freire if they want to do something other than college after high school.

6. Remaining a student at Freire takes hard work, courage, honesty, and constant determination every day. Getting into Freire means getting a space through our lottery. That’s the easy part. The hard part is staying at Freire. We guarantee there will be challenges at Freire, and we will ask community members to do things they think are beyond their abilities. Those who succeed at Freire are the ones who never stop trying, and who are willing to work as hard as it takes to achieve excellence. No excuses.

7. Freire teachers and staff are some of the most talented, dedicated, and caring in the country. These professionals come to Freire to serve students and families to the best extent ever imagined in a school.

8. Parents/Guardians must be involved and must participate in their child’s education with us as equal partners. We will expect and demand this of all our families. Freire students need support, family involvement and encouragement every step of the way through middle school.

9. Learning at Freire is painful and joyous, challenging and exciting. Learning happens everywhere – in classrooms, on school trips, at internships, on athletic fields, using the Internet, planning the school dance, eating healthy food before school, and doing homework at night.

10. Freire is a place to take risks, dream big, and then work hard every day to meet those dreams head on. We strive for excellence in our community every minute of every day. Freire is a school for those who want to do and be their best all the time.
Roles and Responsibilities

All Students Must:

1. Communicate honestly and openly with each other in order to build excellence into every part of Freire.
2. Support all other community members.
3. Act lawfully and responsibly and always with care for others.
5. Arrive to school on time.
6. Follow all policies and procedures of the school.
7. DO YOUR BEST AT ALL TIMES!
8. Strive at all times to solve conflict in a peaceful way that emphasizes respect for all parties.
9. Report any potential bullying, harassment, or violent activities that you have knowledge of.

All Parents Must:

1. Communicate honestly and openly with each other in order to build excellence into every part of Freire.
2. Support other parents and community members.
3. Act lawfully and responsibly and always with care for others.
5. Make sure your child arrives to school on time.
6. Help your child follow all policies and procedures of the school.
7. Maintain accurate contact information with the school.
8. Help your child DO HIS/HER BEST AT ALL TIMES!
9. Assume an active role in furthering the success of all students.
10. Strive at all times to solve conflict in a peaceful way that emphasizes respect for all parties.
11. Report any potential bullying, harassment, or violent activities that you have knowledge of.

Parent Code of Conduct:

1. All parents must sign in with the receptionist upon entering the building.
2. Parents will be given a visitor’s pass which must be displayed at all times.
3. Parents are expected to model adherence to all rules of the student Code of Conduct.
4. All parents must strive to work in a mutually respectful, collaborative effort with Freire staff and constituents.
5. Parents must check out with the receptionist upon leaving the building.

School Policies and Procedures

This Family & Student Handbook does not contain all School policies applicable to students in full. The School has additional policies that create rights and protections for students that can be found on the school website. These include but are not limited to transgender and non-conforming students, homeless students, married pregnant and parenting students, homebound students, students in foster care, etc.
School Contact Information

Mailing Address:
1026 Market Street
Philadelphia PA 19107

Phone Number: 267-670-7499

Fax Number: 267-670-7740

Website: www.freirecharterschool.org

School Hours:
School hours are 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. The regular school day runs from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Staff List & Contact Information:
A complete list of staff and accompanying emails can be found on our website.

Administration Contact Information:
Christopher Zagacki, Head of School, 267-815-1412, chrisz@freirecharterschool.org
Andrea Zep, Head of Academic Supports, ext. 2901, andreaz@freirecharterschool.org
Darryl Miller, Dean of Students, ext. 2931, darryl@freirecharterschool.org
Erin Thomas, Director of Student Services, ext. 2915, erin.thomas@freirecharterschool.org
Organizational Chart

Build the Future
Executive Director and central staff provide administrative services to all Freire schools

Board of Directors

Head of School
Daily oversight, monitoring, accountability, leadership; leader of all things related to teaching and learning

Head of Academic Supports
Leader of all that has to do with maintaining positive school culture and safety

Deans Team

Academic Advisors

IT Coordinator

Nurse

Assistant Head of Academics

Director of Teacher Development and Instruction

General Education Teachers

Director of Student Services

School Psychologist

Student Services Teachers

Paraprofessionals

Administrative Assistants
2019-2020 Calendar at a Glance

Quarter 1

August 26  
5th and 6th Grade First Day of School
August 27  
7th and 8th Grade First Day of School
August 28  
All Students Report to School
August 30  
SCHOOL CLOSED – Labor Day
September 2  
SCHOOL CLOSED – Labor Day
September 12  
12:00 p.m. Dismissal – Back to School Night
September 16-19  
ELA / Math Benchmarking #1
September 27  
SCHOOL CLOSED – Professional Development
September 30  
SCHOOL CLOSED – Rosh Hashanah
October 9  
SCHOOL CLOSED – Yom Kippur
October 25  
SCHOOL CLOSED – Professional Development
November 1  
Quarter 1 Ends

Quarter 2

November 4  
Quarter 2 Begins
November 4-7  
ELA / Math Benchmarking #2
November 8  
SCHOOL CLOSED – Q1 Parent-Student-Teacher Conferences
November 11  
SCHOOL CLOSED – Veterans Day
November 25-29  
SCHOOL CLOSED – Fall Break
December 13  
SCHOOL CLOSED – Professional Development
Dec. 23-Jan. 1  
SCHOOL CLOSED – Winter Break
January 13-16  
ELA / Math Benchmarking #3
January 17  
SCHOOL CLOSED – Professional Development
January 20  
SCHOOL CLOSED – Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
January 24  
Quarter 2 Ends

Quarter 3

January 27  
Quarter 3 Begins
February 7  
SCHOOL CLOSED – Q2 Parent-Student-Teacher Conferences
February 17  
SCHOOL CLOSED – Presidents’ Day
February 24-27  
ELA / Math Benchmarking #4
February 28  
SCHOOL CLOSED – Professional Development
March 16-20  
SCHOOL CLOSED – Spring Break
March 23  
SCHOOL CLOSED – Professional Development
April 3  
Quarter 3 Ends
Quarter 4

April 6  Quarter 4 Begins
April 10  SCHOOL CLOSED – Good Friday
April 13  SCHOOL CLOSED – Easter Monday
April 22-24  ELA PSSA Days; 12:00 pm Dismissal
April 28-29  Math PSSA Days; 12:00 pm Dismissal
April 30  Science PSSA – 8th Grade only – 12:00 pm Dismissal
May 22  12:00 pm. Dismissal – Breathing Fire Day
May 25  SCHOOL CLOSED – Memorial Day
June 5  12:00 p.m. Dismissal – Last Day of School
June 8-9  Teacher Check Out
III. Code of Conduct

Overview

Basic Principles

The basic principles of Freire Charter School are as follows:

- Dress like a scholar
- Think and act like a scholar
- Treat others like a scholar
- Study like a scholar

Purpose of the Code of Conduct

We believe that it is important for Freire to set forth the expectations of all community members. This Code of Conduct is designed to support Freire’s mission to provide a college-preparatory learning environment with a focus on the individual avenues of problem solving, freedom, and critical thinking, as well as the collective values of nonviolence, safety, community, and teamwork.

Code of Conduct Guiding Principle

As an educational institution, we recognize that it is our responsibility to educate students regarding nonviolence and the Code in general. Our practice is based upon the belief that as students progress from one grade to the next, they become more responsible for the rules and gain a greater capacity for independent decision-making.

Expectations of Students

Freire Charter School will provide our students with skills that they need for the future. The teachers, counselors, administrators, and custodial staff at Freire are dedicated to the education and well-being of our students. In turn, Freire expects and requires all students to show respect and care for the staff, volunteers, visitors, the building, each other, and people of all cultures represented in the school. Freire also expects students to take care of the property within the school and in the community as defined below.

Definitions

**Student**

A person enrolled in Freire Charter School.

**Parent/Guardian**

The official caregiver of a minor child, including, but not limited to mother, father, stepparent, grandparent, or court-appointed guardian, including DHS workers and/or group home employees as identified at time of admission or amended in writing thereafter; or an emancipated minor (of which proof is required).

**Staff**

Any person employed by, or volunteering at, Freire Charter School.
Community Member

Any Freire Charter School student, parent, staff member, mentor, board member, volunteer, neighbor, or any other person a student may encounter while on school grounds (defined below). These integral parts join together to create a special community.

School Grounds

Freire’s surroundings are unique in that we share building space with other organizations and we frequently use outside community resources during the day (restaurants, nearby parks, nearby public buildings, public transportation, school buses, etc.). Freire defines the school grounds as starting outside of the student’s home when they leave in the morning, continuing to include anywhere the student travels on the way to school and during the school day (including field trips), and ending at the student’s door when they return home at the conclusion of all school-related activities. Community members will be held accountable for their behavior at any time or location in which the behavior has an impact on the school as defined above.

Intervention

A consequence assigned by the School as a result of a violation of the Code of Conduct. The purpose of the intervention is so that the student understands that their behavior was unacceptable. Repeated violations of the Code of Conduct will result in more severe interventions. Students who do not respond to repeated interventions and continue to behave in ways that violate the Code of Conduct and challenge the expectations of the community may be asked to leave the community.

Mediation Program

A conflict resolution program where trained students and staff guide individuals who are in conflict toward a peaceful resolution. Every student has the opportunity to participate in mediation when there is a conflict with another community member so that the conflict can be resolved in a constructive, nonviolent manner. Mediation is to be used in a proactive manner to prevent infractions of the Code of Conduct, not as a result of an infraction of the Code of Conduct.

Emotional Support Team

A team of trained mental health professionals, which may include social workers and master’s degree level interns, that the School uses to provide services to students and families. Any student/family referred by Freire to participate in family therapy is encouraged to do so. Family therapy is provided free of charge and is a very important part of building and strengthening our community. In certain cases, mandatory meetings with a member of the emotional support team may be assigned by the School as a behavioral intervention.

Nonviolence Policy Origin

Nonviolence has come to be a way of life inside Freire Charter School, driven in large part by the students themselves. In 1999 when the school first opened, students entered Freire’s space each telling stories of horror, fear, and attack from fellow students and teachers alike at their previous schools. What these students talked about was raw and emotionally felt, and each and every one of them hoped that Freire would be a place where students and teachers felt safe and secure to do the learning, they knew colleges would demand of them later in their education. During that first year, the Freire students worked weekly with the School leadership, striving to build the core elements of what Freire would one day become. Nonviolence was by far the students’ first priority, followed by high-quality academics. At the end of that school year, Freire students
and School leadership had written and ratified Freire’s Nonviolence Policy, which is still in effect today. Now, years later, students, staff, and parents count on the Nonviolence Policy to keep everyone safe and to bind the Freire community together in trust and mutual respect for each other’s safety, one and all.

This nonviolent and safe atmosphere is critical to high academic achievement. Students cannot learn in an environment where they do not sense physical safety. So, we are not a school with high academic achievement and a rigid nonviolence policy; we are a school with high academic achievement because we have a rigid nonviolence policy. You cannot have one without the other.

Nonviolence and Commitment to Peace Policy

Freire is a nonviolent community. This policy, approved by the Freire Charter School Board, mandates recommendation of expulsion for all acts of violence, including acts committed in self-defense or retaliation. The recommendation will be made by the designated School personnel and will be carried out regardless of the circumstances surrounding any specific event or the disciplinary history or academic standing of any student involved. This policy extends to actions that occur through digital media such as texting, mobile applications, social media, and email.

Students are expected to adhere to the policy at all times and in all places including:

- During school hours
- Before and after school
- On school grounds and in the surrounding community
- During school-sponsored activities
- During field trips, sports events (both at and away from the school) and at any event where students are representing Freire Charter School
- Traveling to and from school on public transportation and on school buses (5th and 6th grades)

The above list serves only as examples of places and is not to be considered an exhaustive list.

Acts of violence toward another person include, but are in no way limited to, the following:

**Physical Violence**

- Punching
- Hitting
- Slapping
- Kicking
- Biting
- Hair-pulling
- Throwing things at another person
- Any other type of striking of grabbing
- Physically invading another individual’s personal space in order to intimidate them

**Verbal Violence**

- Bullying (as described in the Freire Anti-Bullying Policy)
- Threatening another person’s life
- Threatening the safety of another person
• Threatening to bring another person to school to hurt someone
• Yelling
• Taunting/teasing
• Screaming
• Cursing

NOTE: Verbal violence may result in recommendation for expulsion depending upon the severity of the incident. Repeated incidents of verbal violence may also be grounds for recommendation for expulsion.

Other Actions Prohibited Under the Nonviolence Policy:

• Using violence to defend yourself
• Harassment of a community member by outside family or friends initiated by a Freire student – this includes threats made in person, by text, by video, or using any type of social networking site (Twitter, Facebook, etc.)
• Possession of weapons – “including but not limited to, any knife, cutting instruments, cutting tools, nunchaku, firearm, shotgun, rifle, and any other tool or instrument capable of inflicting serious bodily injury” (ACT 26 of the 1995 Safe Schools Act)*
• Destruction of property
• Possession of, or attempt to distribute, any illegal substance*
• Threatening another community member (in any way including social media) with physical harm
• Stealing

*In these instances, Freire must follow the law. The law requires the School to report any of these violations to the authorities, which will then determine whether criminal charges will be filed. The School will continue its internal disciplinary processes separately from the authorities.

If there is a suspected violation of the Nonviolence and Commitment to Peace Policy, the School will follow the disciplinary policies and procedures listed below. If it is determined that a student violated the Nonviolence and Commitment to Peace Policy, this will result in a recommendation for expulsion. Please note that a student is not formal expelled, however, unless and until the hearing process has been completed and the Board of Directors votes to expel the student as described below.

Nonviolence and Commitment to Peace Student Supports Policy

Because the Freire Nonviolence and Commitment to Peace Policy is unique and because Freire is an educational institution committed to supporting the growth and success of everyone in the community, Freire Charter School has created a comprehensive set of supports and structures to help students thrive within Freire’s culture. The School offers supports that may include orientation for new students, peer mediation, counseling, and other programs.

Bullying and Cyberbullying Policy

Pennsylvania law defines "bullying" as an intentional electronic, written, verbal or physical act, or a series of acts directed at another student or students that is severe, persistent or pervasive; and that has the effect of (i) substantially interfering with a student's education; (ii) creating a threatening environment; or (iii) substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

Freire’s Code of Conduct prohibits additional behaviors beyond the legal definition of bullying, which include:
• Verbal or physical taunting or intimidation against students or staff because of age, ancestry, citizenship, color, creed, disability, domestic or sexual violence victim status, ethnicity, familial status, gender expression, gender identity, genetic information, marital status, medical condition, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, veteran status, or any other protected status.
• Acts occurring over the Internet (Snapchat, Instagram, etc.), through cell phones, cameras, or video, or by any other means through which people can communicate or share information
• Any unwanted, aggressive behavior among individuals that instills fear or serves to demean an individual and are committed over a period of time, regardless of the intentions of the bully/bullies
• Taking a passive role as a bystander by encouraging a bully or willingly not taking action to prevent abuse from occurring

Freire takes a firm stance against bullying and is committed to address this negative behavior as it is detrimental to the well-being of an individual, is a major disruption to the learning environment, and is damaging to the community as a whole.

Depending upon the facts and circumstances, Freire may define bullying as an act of violence and therefore a violation of the Nonviolence Policy (See above). Please note that a student is not formally expelled, however, unless and until the hearing process has been completed and the Board of Directors votes to expel the student as described below.

If there is suspected violation of the Bullying and Cyberbullying Policy, the School will follow the disciplinary policies and procedures listed below.

**Sexual Harassment & Sexual Assault Policy**

Sexual harassment is prohibited anywhere in the Freire Charter School community. Sexual harassment consists of interaction between individuals of the same or opposite sex that is characterized by unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature (including but not limited to gestures, comments, sexual innuendos, or touching) when such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s work or academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or educational environment.

If any community member expresses that they have experienced undesired acts, then it will be treated as sexual harassment.

If there is a suspected violation of the Sexual Harassment Policy, the School will follow the disciplinary policies and procedures listed below.

Freire Charter School defines sexual assault as intentional sexual contact, characterized by use of force, threats, intimidation, abuse of authority or when the victim does not or cannot consent, or any sexual act prohibited by the law. Sexual assault includes rape and other unwanted indecent contact (e.g. kissing against another person’s will) that is aggravated, abusive, or wrongful (to include unwanted and inappropriate sexual contact) or attempts to commit these acts.

• In the event a student has made a claim of sexual assault, the appropriate law enforcement agencies will be notified.
• In the event a student has sexually assaulted a fellow member of the community, the student will be recommended for expulsion. Please note that a student is not formally expelled, however, unless and
until the hearing process has been completed and the Board of Directors votes to expel the student as described below.

Appropriate counseling will be provided for any individuals impacted by sexual harassment or sexual assault.

**Student Technology**

**Student Technology Policy**

Freire Charter School provides students with computer equipment, computer services, the system network, Internet access, and other technological equipment and resources. Freire has the right to place reasonable restrictions on this privilege.

All access and rights are privileges granted by Freire and students should expect only limited privacy in the contents of personal files and access. The situation is similar to the rights you have in the privacy of your locker. Network administrators may review files and communications to maintain system integrity and ensure that users are using the system responsibly. Users should not expect privacy with regard to any files stored on School or cloud servers. Routine maintenance and monitoring of the Freire system may lead to discovery that this policy, the Freire Code of Conduct, or the law has been violated. In these cases, students will be held accountable to the expectations of the School and the law.

All users agree to abide by applicable federal, state, and local laws and Freire rules when using Freire technology. Freire will not assume legal or other responsibility for any use deemed unacceptable or for any content students find online.

The use of Freire technology is a privilege, not a right, and the purpose of this agreement is to define acceptable and unacceptable use of computer equipment, computer services, the system network, the Internet, and other technological equipment and resources as defined by Freire. Unacceptable use, as defined by this agreement, or at the discretion of the School administration or staff, may result in restriction or cancellation of access (even for required coursework) as well as other disciplinary or legal action.

**Student Technology Procedure**

**Technology**

Technology resources are defined as any electronic tool, device, program, or system that aids the academic environment for a student. Technology includes:

- All computer software and hardware
- Cell phones, tablets, and smart watches
- Analog and digital networks (e.g., data, video, audio, voice, and multimedia)
- Email systems and communications technologies
- Servers, routers, hubs, switches, and Internet gateways
- Administrative systems, media systems, and learning information systems
- Smart Boards
- Related and forthcoming systems and new technologies
Acceptable Use

Acceptable use of Freire technology is any use that is consistent with the educational objectives of Freire and in accordance with the Freire Code of Conduct. This includes academic work, college exploration and research, and employment exploration and research. For further clarification on uses not listed here, please refer to the Head of Academic Supports. All use is subject to review by the School administration and staff.

Students are responsible for good behavior on School computer networks just as they are on school grounds or in the community. Communications on the network are often public in nature and general school rules apply. Students must respect the rights of others in both the School community and in the global community.

Unacceptable Use

These rules provide general guidelines and examples of prohibited uses for illustrative purposes but do not attempt to state all required or prohibited activities by students. General examples of unacceptable uses which are expressly prohibited include but are not limited to the following:

- **Illegal Activity** – It is unacceptable use to promote or engage in any activities which are deemed criminal under federal, state or local laws.
  - Copyright Laws – It is a violation of copyright laws to copy, distribute, display, exhibit, or perform copyrighted works without authority of the owner of the copyright. A copyright notice is not required.
  - Students may not utilize peer-to-peer file-sharing applications or execute programs to facilitate the downloading or exchange of copyrighted or unauthorized music, movies, and other intellectual property, etc.
  - Students may not use the Freire network to arrange for the purchase of illegal substances or alcohol, engage in criminal activity, or threaten the safety of any person(s).

- **Plagiarism** – Students may not plagiarize works that they find on the Internet or other resources.

- **Vandalism** – It is unacceptable use to harm or destroy the hardware, software or data of another user, whether at Freire or at any site connected to the Internet. This includes, but is not limited to, the creation or spreading of computer viruses. If a student breaks a piece of equipment while using it, the family of the student is responsible for replacing that equipment.

- **Security** – Under no conditions should you provide your password to another person. Users are responsible for the security of their account. Users may be held accountable for actions performed under their account name if it has been determined that their account was negligently left accessible. It is also unacceptable to change individual or system passwords. If a user suspects their account security has been compromised they are required to immediately contact an administrator. It is unacceptable to trespass in others’ folders, work, or files or to use or to attempt to use another’s account, including the System Administrators’ accounts. It is unacceptable to post information that could cause damage or a danger of disruption.

- **Offensive Behavior and Harassment** – It is unacceptable use to harass, insult, or attack others. It is unacceptable to send or receive any data that is offensive and/or obscene according to the Freire Code of Conduct. *Note that Freire may consider an action to be harassment regardless of whether it is considered harassment under the law.* Any repeated or unwanted communication may constitute harassment. Any communication with the direct intention of harassing, threatening, implying, or otherwise causing harm to individuals or classes of individuals is a violation of School policy. Be sure to save copies of all harassing material. Provide hard copies to the Head of Academic Supports, staff,
and/or administration. Harassment is taken very seriously at Freire, and anyone who makes false accusations will be penalized. Kinds of harassment include:

- Sending/forwarding unsolicited email or junk mail, or propagating chain letters.
- Email “bombing,” spamming, etc.
- Inappropriate images, text, audio, commentary, etc. that demeans based on ethnicity, race, religion, sexuality, sexual orientation, age, class, disability, etc.
- Forging electronic information.
- Creating, altering, or deleting the attribution of origin (“from” in email, IP address headers, etc.).
- Sending messages under someone else’s address or posing as another user in any way.

- **Respect for Resource Limits** – It is unacceptable to intentionally waste limited computer resources. It is unacceptable to download large files. It is unacceptable to post or forward chain letters, send “bomb” emails, or engage in “spamming.” Sending numerous or large email messages to one person is considered “email bombing.” Spamming is sending an annoying or unnecessary message to a large number of people.

- **Respect for Privacy** – It is unacceptable to repost a message that was sent to you privately without permission of the person who sent you the message. It is unacceptable to post private information about another person.

- **Personal Safety** – It is unacceptable to post personal contact information about yourself or other people. Personal contact information includes your address, telephone, work address, etc. It is unacceptable to agree to meet with someone you have met online for non-academic reasons. This is subject to review by the Head of Academic Supports, staff, or administration.

- **Commercial Use** – It is unacceptable to offer, provide, or purchase products or services through Freire Charter School.

- **System Tampering** – Any unauthorized alteration of operating systems, individual accounts, software, networking facilities, and/or other programs.

- **Obscenity** – Students may not use the network to access material that is profane or obscene. This includes pornography, inappropriate music or text, etc.

### Cell Phone and Electronics Policy

Freire Charter School understands that cell phones and electronic devices are an important part of a person’s everyday life. However, cell phones and other electronic devices are not permitted in a Freire classroom, because they serve as an educational distraction and can promote cheating. If a parent needs to contact a child during the course of the instructional day, please call the front desk and we will get a message to your child. If your child needs to contact a parent during the course of the school day, they are permitted to use a school telephone at the front desk. We encourage students to take cell phones on class trips as a safety precaution.

Students are permitted to bring cell phones and electronic devices to school provided the following guidelines are followed:

- Students must turn their cell phones and electronic devices off BEFORE entering school.
- Detention and after-school tutoring are considered classroom activities. Therefore, cell phones must remain turned off at all times during these activities.
- Freire Charter School is not financially responsible for lost or stolen property that a student voluntarily brings to school, including cell phones and other electronic devices.
• Cell phones and electronic devices are expected to be stored in a student’s locker during school hours (including during after-school activities, sports, homework club, etc.).

Any cell phone or electronic device that is seen or heard during the day will be confiscated. (Please see below for procedures for picking up confiscated phones.)

If a phone/electronic device is confiscated, then the following procedure must be followed when retrieving the phone:

• Phones can only be picked up by the person listed as parent/guardian on PowerSchool unless previously approved by the Dean’s office.
• Confiscated items will only be returned to the parent/guardian identified in the PowerSchool system.
• Appointments must be made to retrieve items. Please call the Dean’s office at 267-670-7499 to schedule an appointment.
• The cell phone will be returned when a parent or guardian makes an appointment and comes into the school to personally claim the device.
• Parents will have to sign a copy of the Cell Phone and Electronics Policy when they pick up the student’s device.

Students who repeatedly break the Cell Phone and Electronics Policy will have a mandatory parent meeting with the Dean, and the Head of Academic Supports. If the policy is chronically broken, the School may require the students to turn in their phone to the Dean’s Office at the start of the day and retrieve it upon completion of the day should they desire to continue to bring a cell phone to school.

Freire Charter School is not financially responsible for property that a student voluntarily brings to school, including cell phones and other electronic devices, including in the event that property is lost, misplaced, or stolen. Although the School takes every precaution to store confiscated student electronic devices safely and securely, Freire is not financially responsible for student electronic devices whether they are in the student’s or the School’s possession.

Refusal to surrender a requested cell phone or removing the SIM chip from the phone will be considered an act of extreme defiance and will result in the following actions:

• The student’s parent will be contacted immediately
• The student will be sent home for the remainder of the day
• A mandatory informal hearing will be held the next school day
• During this hearing the parent and student will be warned future behaviors like this may lead to more severe consequences
• One (or more) of the following consequences will be assigned:
  o Contract
  o Loss of school privileges
  o Community service

Policy on Reporting a Freire Community Member

Any member of the public or School community may report another community member for breaking the rules listed in the Code of Conduct. Students have the responsibility to inform a staff member if they become aware that a fellow student is in possession of illegal substances, firearms, weapons, or any items that could
endanger the health, safety, or welfare of the school community or property. The Dean’s Office will follow up on all reports.

**Retaliation Policy**

It is the policy of Freire Charter School that a positive, open environment be maintained at all times. Therefore, the School encourages all community members to report problems or concerns *without fear of retaliation or reprisal*. All reports will be promptly investigated. Freire is committed to doing whatever is necessary to protect students from retaliation resulting from a concern or complaint. Should the School determine that retaliation has indeed occurred, or that a community member is planning retaliatory action, disciplinary steps will be taken. The consequences could include any of the following:

- Community service
- Written apology
- Suspension
- Informal hearing
- Recommendation for expulsion
- Police notification

**Search and Seizure Policy**

Freire Charter School reserves the right to search students and their belongings and/or lockers to find weapons, drugs, stolen property, and other contraband. In addition, students may be asked to empty pockets, purses, etc. If a student is found in possession of items that are illegal, the student will be charged with the appropriate school offense, and the Philadelphia Police Department will be notified; the student may be held for the police, and charges may be filed. Any student who refuses to cooperate with School authorities is subject to expulsion from Freire. All searches of a student’s locker, belongings, or person will be done with at least two Freire staff members present.

**Act 26 Policy**

Act 26 of 1995 (the Safe Schools Act) creates a mandatory one-year expulsion for the possession of weapons on school property, including school-sponsored events. It requires parents to provide a sworn statement upon registering their child in school as to whether the child had previously been suspended or expelled from another school. Act 26 also requires schools to maintain records on acts of violence and weapon possession and to forward student discipline records when a student transfers to another school.

Act 26 defines the term weapon as “including, but not limited to, any knife, cutting instrument, cutting tool, nunchaku, firearm, shotgun, rifle, and any other tool or instrument capable of inflicting serious bodily injury.” The law requires action for documented cases of weapon possession in school or while traveling to and from any school or school program, including while on public transportation or school buses.

A student found in possession of a weapon will be considered in violation of the Code of Conduct and will be recommended for expulsion.

**Expectation on Conduct of Friends and/or Family**

Any outside guest (including friends and family) is held to the same behavioral expectations as the students. Students who bring outside guests to any school-sponsored event or location (including but not limited to
graduation, dances, assemblies, school bus, early dismissal, etc.) will be held accountable for their guests' behavior as if it were the student's own behavior.

**Dress Code Policy**

*Expectations*

Freire Charter School expects students to dress like college scholars. In middle school, that means that students are expected to wear the uniform at all times. Students are expected to be in uniform throughout the school day and during all school activities, including before-school and after-school activities, Saturday interventions, and field trips. For summer school, students are expected to follow the Dress Down Day guidelines, except in Dean’s summer school, during which students must adhere to the regular uniform. The only exception to this rule will be on Dress Down Days. These will be announced in advance. Please refer to the special activities guidelines below for acceptable clothing on Dress Down Days.

For safety reasons, students are expected to be in full uniform at all times, including as they travel to and from school. Students who do not adhere to this policy will face disciplinary consequences.

*Uniform*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Boys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Gray skirt or pants</td>
<td>• Gray pants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Black Freire polo-style shirt <em>(Must be purchased via Cramer’s)</em></td>
<td>• Black Freire polo-style shirt <em>(Must be purchased via Cramer’s)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Black, White or Gray shoes</td>
<td>• Black, White, or Gray shoes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Gray or black knee socks <em>(with skirt)</em> or gray, black, or white socks <em>(with pants)</em></td>
<td>• Gray, black, or white socks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Black Freire cardigan <em>(OPTIONAL)</em></td>
<td>• Black belt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Black Freire cardigan <em>(OPTIONAL)</em></td>
<td>• Black Freire cardigan <em>(OPTIONAL)</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please note:

- **Shoes must be black, white, or gray with no ornamentation.**
  - Sneakers are permissible as long as they are solid black, white, or gray or a combination of any of these colors (no other color or decorations, including on the sole of the shoe).
  - Boots may be worn as long as they are below the shin.
  - During winter months, students may wear snow boots to school, but they must change into their school shoes once they arrive.
- **Long-sleeved t-shirts may be worn under short-sleeved shirts only if they are solid black, gray, or white.**
- **Jewelry must be modest (Dress Down Days included).**
  - Small earrings – no bigger than a quarter
  - Simple bracelets – no more than three per arm
  - Simple rings – no more than three
- **No head coverings are allowed** – Religious exceptions will be granted.
- Students may not wear anything (including coats) over their uniforms.

*PE Uniform*
Students will participate in Physical Education for one quarter per school year. During that quarter, on days when students have physical education class, students may wear the **FCMS PE uniform** for the entire day.

**The FCMS PE uniform is:**

- Black FCMS sweatpants
- Black FCMS T-shirt
- Sneakers (can be any pair of athletic sneakers)

Students will NOT need to change into the regular uniform on Physical Education days. Like the regular uniform, students may still wear the Freire cardigan over the PE uniform (i.e., if the student is cold).

**Vendor Information**

All uniforms items may be purchased at Cramer’s Uniforms online at [www.cramersuniforms.com](http://www.cramersuniforms.com) or at the following locations:

- **4533 Frankford Avenue**
- Philadelphia, PA 19124
- **5226 Market Street**
- Philadelphia, PA 19139
- **1916 E Passyunk Avenue**
- Philadelphia, PA 19147
- **215-743-0750**
- **215-307-3829**
- **215-468-2400**

**Be mindful that the black polo, black cardigan, and Physical Education uniform must be purchased through Cramer’s Uniforms.**

**Dress Down Day (and Summer School) Dress Code Guidelines**

Special activity days (Dress Down Days) will be announced one week prior to the event. On these days, students may opt out of wearing their uniform and instead wear their own clothing that meets the standards below. Special activity days are a privilege and not a right. The School reserves the right to restrict students from participating as a behavioral consequence.

**Acceptable Clothing Guidelines:**

- **Bottoms:**
  - Jeans (no holes or rips allowed)
  - Skirts (must be knee length)
- **Tops:**
  - All tops MUST have short or long sleeves
  - Must cover from the shoulders to the waist
  - Must be free of any obscene language, profanity, or unacceptable images
- **Shoes:**
  - Sneakers
  - Flat shoes
- **PROHIBITED ITEMS**
  - Sunglasses in the classroom
  - High heels
  - Open-toed shoes (flip-flops, sandals)
  - Hats, hoods and head coverings (except for religious purposes)
  - Joggings
  - Bandanas
- Shorts
- Tights (except under a knee-length skirt)
- Any shirt that reveals cleavage, shoulders, midsection or undergarments

Violations of the uniform policy are considered violations of the school’s Code of Conduct and repeated violations will be dealt with increasing severity.

**First Offense:** Phone call home; parents will need to bring appropriate clothing to school depending on the severity of the offense.

**Second Offense:** Parents MUST bring a change of clothes that day for the student. Student will receive an Intervention (at the Dean’s discretion). See the Interventions section below for examples of interventions.

**Third Offense:** Mandatory conference with parent, and parent must provide a full additional uniform to be kept at the school. All uniform pieces must be labeled with the child’s name.

**NOTES:**

Students who abuse the privilege of special activity days by wearing ANY prohibited items (including hoods covering their heads) during those days will lose that privilege for the remainder of the school year.

Students must travel to and from school in their full uniform. Any student who does not adhere to this policy will face an intervention assigned by the Dean. See the Interventions section below for examples of interventions.
General Behavioral Expectations

DRess appropriately
Aways be kind & respectful
Grounds kept neat & clean
ON time & ready to learn
Safety first

Dress Appropriately

Please see the Dress Code section above.

Always Be Kind and Respectful

Creating and maintaining a good relationship with the entire surrounding community both inside and outside of the school grounds is an important goal of our school.

Expectations:

Freire Charter School expects students to treat others like scholars at all times. Community members are expected to act in the following manner:

- Speak to students, teachers, and our neighbors with courtesy.
- Use considerate phrases such as “Please,” “Thank you,” and “Excuse me.”
- Help others in the school and community.
- Tell the truth.
- Be courteous of others on the sidewalks, at bus stops, and at local businesses.
- Encourage others.
- Be willing to listen openly to the opinions of others.
Accept and be open to personal differences.
Be open to the school’s mediation program.
Know all policies surrounding the Code of Conduct.
Keep your hands to yourself and don’t touch others.
Refrain from any public displays of affection.

The following actions conflict with our expectations and are unacceptable:

- Sexual activity or public displays of affection, including kissing, hugging and handholding.
- Loitering on the street corners or sitting on the steps of surrounding buildings.
- Running down the stairs or hallways in the school, around school, and outside of the school.
- Making excessive noise when entering the building or leaving the building.
- The use of profanity (cursing) anywhere inside or out of the building.
- Throwing objects anywhere in the building (extreme circumstances could lead to recommendation for expulsion).
- Interrupting the learning environment.
- Speaking to or treating any community member in a rude/disrespectful manner.
- Using local businesses as places to hang out, or gathering inside stores, restaurants or local businesses before or after school.

Students who do not adhere to our expectations will receive a consequence. This consequence will be assigned by the Dean and is expected to be completed. See the Interventions section below for examples.

Repeated or excessive violation of the same rule will result in more severe consequences.

Grounds Kept Clean and Neat

Expectations:

Freire Charter School expects students to act and think like college-trained professionals at all times. Community members are expected to act in the following manner:

- Use trash receptacles inside and outside of the school grounds.
- Keep desks, lockers, walls, and all other property free of graffiti, stickers, ink, and all other damage/destruction.
- Students are to use only the locker assigned to them.
- Return shared materials to proper place in good condition (including laptops!).
- Leave things better than you found them.
- Dispose of trash in appropriate locations.
- Gum is prohibited.
- Eat only in the cafeteria or outside of the school building. Eating in classrooms is permitted only if there is adult supervision during lunch or special events; not during academic time unless authorized by an administrator.
- Clean up your own area (desk, floor, lunch area).

The following actions conflict with our expectations and are unacceptable:

- Littering anywhere near the school grounds – inside or outside.
• Sharing a locker. (Students who share lockers will be held responsible if it contains any items deemed inappropriate or prohibited, and all students using that locker will receive disciplinary action.)
• Eating or drinking in any area except the designated areas. (Eating can only happen in classrooms if there is adult supervision during lunch or special events; not during academic time unless authorized by an administrator.)
• Possession of a glass bottle.
• Possession of gum.

Students who do not adhere to our expectations will receive a consequence. This consequence will be assigned by the Dean and is expected to be completed. See the Interventions section below for examples.

Repeated or excessive violation of the same rule will result in more severe consequences.

On Time and Ready to Learn

The community believes that learning and maintaining an appropriate learning environment is essential for success.

Expectations:

Freire Charter School expects students to study like college-trained professionals at all times in order to maintain an appropriate learning environment. Community members are expected to act in the following manner:

• Adhere to and follow your schedule. Make and keep appointments.
• Be prepared with materials; bring a pencil or pen to every class every day.
• Complete homework.
• Listen to others, wait your turn, raise your hand and follow directions at all times.
• Arrive to school on time.
• Carry an appropriate hall pass if you leave a classroom.
• Although electronics are prohibited in the school, should a student bring an electronic device at his/her own risk, it must be placed in lockers or handed in to homeroom teachers during school hours.
• Go to the appropriate authorities if you need to make an emergency phone call. If there is an emergency and a student needs to use their phone or a school phone, THEY MUST go to the Dean’s office, the main office, or an office of one of the Heads of School.

The following actions conflict with our expectations and are unacceptable:

• Using school telephones without permission.
• Sleeping in class.
• Roaming the building without a pass.
• Talking in class.
• Disrupting the learning environment in any way.
• Playing cards or dice, or gambling in any way.
• Being tardy to class.
• Cheating and/or plagiarizing.

Students who do not adhere to our expectations will receive a consequence. This consequence will be assigned by the Dean and is expected to be completed. See the Interventions section below for examples.
Repeated or excessive violation of the same rule will result in more severe consequences.

**Safety First**

The community members of Freire Charter School believe that having a clean, safe environment is mandatory and non-negotiable. Feeling safe to explore, to make mistakes, and to learn is essential.

**Expectations:**

Freire Charter School expects students to act like college-trained professionals at all times in order to maintain a safe environment. Community members are expected to act in the following manner:

- Notify staff of dangerous or illegal weapons or situations inside or outside of school.
- Notify staff of strangers in and outside of the building.
- Keep your hands to yourself.
- Avoid unnecessary physical contact.
- If physical contact is necessary, make sure that it is neither aggressive nor sexual.
- Depart for home immediately after the last class of the day or completion of an after-school program.
- Carry a student ID at all times and produce it when requested.
- Follow all procedures and policies outlined in appropriate section of this manual.

**The following actions conflict with our expectations and are unacceptable:**

- Not producing student ID when asked.
- Lost student IDs will cost $5 to replace (IDs that are in poor shape will be replaced free of charge).
- Participating in horseplay or play fighting.
- Horseplay and play fighting are defined as rough, noisy, unruly, or rowdy play that may or may not involve physical contact.
- Speaking to any community member in a way that makes them feel unsafe or violated (Extreme circumstances may lead to a suspension and or recommendation for expulsion).
- Turning lights off in the gym, hallway, or classrooms without permission.
- Tampering in any way with school building systems or equipment (such as fire alarms or fire extinguishers).
- Being in the building before or after school, or unauthorized areas of the building at any time, without the permission and presence of a staff member.

There are no second chances for violation of the Nonviolence and Commitment to Peace Policy. Any act of violence is immediate grounds for expulsion. NO EXCEPTIONS.

Repeated or excessive violation of the same rule will result in more severe consequences.

**Interventions Policy**

The Board grants the Head of School authority to develop a program of consequences and interventions for violating the Code of Conduct. In the event of potential violations of the Nonviolence Policy, Bullying and Cyberbullying Policy, Sexual Harassment Policy, or other serious infractions, students shall be afforded all rights defined by 22 Pa. Code Chapter 12.
Interventions Procedure

First Level Interventions

If a student chooses to act in an unacceptable way, the Dean’s office will assign a consequence for the student’s actions. Each intervention is meant to be used as a warning that the student’s behavior is unacceptable and therefore should NOT BE REPEATED.

A student whose behavior does not change or intensifies will be subject to interventions of increased severity. All students and parents will receive a warning notification if unacceptable behavior continues, or the frequency of that behavior increases.

The following is a list of interventions which may be used by the Dean. This is not an exhaustive list, but rather a sample of the interventions the Dean may use:

- Anger management
- Apology letter
- Community outreach/service
- Behavior contract
- Probationary contract
- Detention
- Saturday school
- Educational seminars
- Hours outside of school time
- Informal hearing
- Losing privileges to attend school functions
- Losing special activity day privileges
- Parent conference (phone or personal)
- Personalized Improvement Plan (PIP)
- Public apology (written or verbal)
- Research project
- Support groups
- Teacher/student conference
- Teacher detention
- Therapy

Initial Investigation Procedure

If there is a suspected violation of the Nonviolence and Commitment to Peace Policy, the Policy Against Bullying and Cyberbullying, the Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault Policy, or another serious infraction, the School will follow these following steps:

- Students will be separated as necessary
- A preliminary investigation to determine whether the policy was violated will be conducted.
- Once the Dean has provided the family with the opportunity to explain their story and evidence has been discussed, the Dean will determine two things:
  - Did the student know about the policy?
Did the student break the policy?

- If it is determined the policy was violated, the following steps will be taken:
  - For a first violation of the Policy Against Bullying and Cyberbullying, the student will be issued, at minimum, after school detention.
  - For a repeat violation of the Policy Against Bullying and Cyberbullying, or any violation of the Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault Policy, the student will be suspended for a minimum of 2 days (see the Suspension Policy and Procedure below). If the suspension is for 4 days or more, an Informal Hearing will be held (see the Hearings Policy below).
  - Extreme or repeat violations of these policies may result in a recommendation for expulsion.
  - A Behavior Contract, as deemed appropriate by the Head of School or Dean (see the Behavioral Contract Procedure below). This may include counseling for the student(s) involved.

- Should the Dean find that the student both knew about and violated the Nonviolence Policy then the Dean is required to recommend the student for expulsion from the school.

- In a case where a student may have violated the law, the school may refer the incident to law enforcement while simultaneously continuing the school’s disciplinary process. Consequences imposed by the School are independent of and in addition to any penalties imposed under the law.

PLEASE NOTE: A Dean's recommendation for expulsion is a recommendation only. A student is not formally expelled until after a formal expulsion hearing is held and the Board of Directors votes to expel the student.

Upon the recommendation for expulsion, the student and his/her parent will be provided with the following:

- Their rights and responsibilities as a student/parent.
- The formal hearing/expulsion policy and procedures.

**Suspension Policy**

Suspension is exclusion from school for a period of from 1 to 10 consecutive school days. Suspensions may be issued by the Head of School or Dean. A student may not be suspended until the student has been informed of the reasons for suspension and has been given the opportunity to respond. Parents/guardians shall be notified immediately in writing when a student is suspended. Prior notice of the intended suspension is not required if the health, safety or welfare of the school community is threatened. When the suspension is for 4 or more school days, the student and parent/guardian shall be given the opportunity for an Informal Hearing in compliance with the requirements of §12.8(c) (see the Hearings Policy below). The Head of School can develop procedures and expectations around suspensions within their authority under 22 Pa. Code Chapter 12 and the board policy.

**Suspension/Reinstatement Procedures**

If a student has been suspended, they will be prohibited from attending school, being on school grounds or participating in or attending school activities (dances, field trips, athletic events, etc.). Students are required to make up all class work and tests missed during a suspension. Actions that will result in a suspension from school activities include, but are not limited to:

- Jeopardizing the safety of another community member, including but not limited to any act of violence, pulling fire alarms, setting off alarm doors, or use of fire extinguishers except in life-threatening emergencies.
• Active or passive participation in the destruction of property.
• Possession of weapon, drugs, alcohol, or other illegal items.
• Breaking the Nonviolence Policy.
• Cutting class, leaving the classroom without permission, or being out of bounds (in a location where students are not allowed).
• Involving other community members (or your friends) in personal matters and situations that began in school.
• Stealing.
• Sexual harassment.

After a preliminary investigation is conducted by the Dean’s Office and it is determined that a suspension is appropriate, the school will verbally notify parent or guardian of the reason for the suspension using contact information on file and will mail and/or email a copy of the suspension notice to the address on file and give the family an opportunity to respond. The school will also attempt to schedule a Reinstatement Meeting with the student and parent or guardian at this time.

If a parent gives verbal permission for the student to leave school, the suspension will begin immediately, and the student will be dismissed. If the parent cannot be reached, the student will be held until the end of the school day.

If a student has been suspended, he/she will be prohibited from attending school, being on school grounds or participating in or attending school activities.

Students are required to make up all class work and tests missed during a suspension.

During testing times, students may not be suspended at the discretion of the school administration. However, any infractions that accrue during that time may lead to a suspension once testing is completed.

Reinstatement Meetings

If a student is suspended but not expelled, the student and their parent or guardian are required to participate in a meeting with the Dean’s Office before the student will be permitted to resume attending school or school activities. Students may not attend school or school activities until this mandatory meeting occurs.

The Reinstatement Meeting will serve as a warning to alert the student and their parent/guardian that they have seriously or chronically violated the school’s Code of Conduct. It is further hoped that the student will realize the impact their behavior has had on their learning and that of their fellow students, and therefore make all necessary changes in their behavior while in school.

The School may waive the requirement for a Reinstatement Meeting only if a behavior contract was put in place as part of an informal hearing.

Hearing Policy

Informal Hearings

Informal hearings are held in cases where a serious infraction of the Code of Conduct has occurred, including when a suspension is 4 days or more or any instance where the School makes a recommendation for expulsion. Informal hearings will follow the format described below:
• The school will offer to hold the informal hearing within the first 5 days of the suspension.
• The school will provide both parent and student with sufficient notice of the time and place of the informal hearing.
• During the informal hearing, the School will state the concerns and observed behaviors.
• The school will provide the results of any investigation should the incident have required one.
• Both parent and student will have the opportunity to provide their observations, comments and concerns regarding the incident.
• Students have the right to question any witnesses present at the hearing.
• Students have the right to speak and produce witnesses on their own behalf. Upon conclusion of the meeting, the School will determine the next action. The Dean will recommend one of two consequences: recommendation for expulsion or a probationary behavioral or contract.
  o Recommendation for Expulsion:
    ▪ See Formal Hearing/Expulsion policy (see next section)
  o Behavioral or Probationary Contract:
    ▪ The Head of School or Dean may determine that a behavior contract is required

**Behavioral Contract Procedure**

• The administrator will review with the student the written warning, which states the student understands:
  o This is his/her final warning from Freire.
  o Students will be required to fulfill the conditions of the contract.
  o Failure to fulfill the conditions of the contract may result in a recommendation for expulsion from the School.
• In order for a contract to be issued, the student and parent must agree to follow the terms being presented by the Dean’s office.
• The contract will establish a time and date when the compliance of the contract will be reviewed.
• The contract may include restorative measures such as an apology letter, seminars, or other interventions assigned by the School.

**NOTE:**

Contracts are non-negotiable. Students and parents must agree to follow all terms of the contract. Since contracts are issued in lieu of a recommendation for expulsion, if a parent/student does not agree to follow the terms of the contract, then there is a possibility that the refusal could result in a recommendation for expulsion. Prior to this, a meeting to review the contract will be held by the Head of Academic Supports. This meeting will include the parent/guardian, student, and the Dean.

**Formal Hearing/Expulsion Policy**

If a student is recommended for expulsion as a consequence of his/her actions, they have the right to a formal expulsion hearing. This hearing must commence within 15 days of formal charges (unless mutually agreed upon by both parties). Special Education students have additional rights as described below in the Policy on Discipline of Students with Disabilities.

• A formal hearing is **REQUIRED** in all expulsion actions.
• An expulsion hearing will be arranged and notification of the charges, all evidence, and the rights of students/parents shall be sent to the student’s parents or guardians at least 3 days prior to the hearing. All information will be sent via regular and certified mail.
• The hearing will commence on the agreed upon date with an independent Fact Finder presiding over the hearing.
• The School will present evidence, statements, and its case, giving the parent and student chance to view all information.
• Parents and students will be given the opportunity to question witnesses and present their own information.
• The hearing shall be held in private unless the student or parent requests a public hearing.
• The Fact Finder will write a summation of facts that will be presented at the following Board Meeting.
• The Board of Directors, through a vote, determines whether a student is to be expelled.
• Notice of a right to appeal the results of the hearing shall be provided to the student with the expulsion decision.

Parent and Student Rights

• In a case involving a possible expulsion, the student is entitled to a formal hearing.
• A formal hearing is required in all expulsion actions.
• This hearing will be conducted by an impartial Fact Finder.
• The Board of Directors is given a summation of facts by the Fact Finder and a majority vote of the entire Board is required to expel a student.
• The following due process requirements shall be observed with regard to the formal hearing:
  o Notification of the charges shall be sent to the student’s parents or guardians by certified mail.
  o At least 3 days’ notice of the time and place of the hearing shall be given. 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. Otherwise the hearing will proceed as scheduled.
  o The hearing shall be held in private unless the student or parent requests a public hearing.
  o The student may be represented by counsel, at the expense of the parents or guardians, and must have the parent or guardians (as identified in the PowerSchool database) attend the hearing.
  o 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.
  o The student has the right to request that the witnesses appear in person and answer questions or be cross-examined.
  o The student has the right to testify and present witnesses on his/her own behalf.
  o 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.
  o The 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:
    ▪ Laboratory reports are needed from law enforcement agencies.
- Evaluations or other court or administrative proceedings are pending due to a student invoking his/her rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 1400—1482).
- Notice of a right to appeal the results of the hearing shall be provided to the student with the expulsion decision.
- The initial responsibility for providing the required education rests with the student’s parents or guardian, through placement in another school, tutorial or correspondence study, or another educational program approved by the district’s superintendent. Parents have 5 days to find the appropriate placement and notify the School.

**Parents Right to Withdrawal**

Freire Charter School is a school of choice for families. Parents may choose to voluntarily withdraw their child from the school at any time for any reason. The School cannot formally expel a student who is no longer enrolled at Freire. Should a parent choose to withdraw their child prior to potentially being expelled, all expulsion procedures will cease. The student’s academic record will reflect the withdrawal, not an expulsion. If a parent decides to withdraw their student, they must submit the Official Withdrawal Form.

**Policy on Discipline of Students with Disabilities**

Freire Charter School will develop and implement positive Behavior Support Plans and programs for students with disabilities who require specific interventions to address behaviors that interfere with learning.

Students with disabilities who violate the Code of Conduct, or engage in inappropriate behavior, disruptive or prohibited activities and/or actions injurious to themselves or others, which would typically result in corrective action or discipline of students without disabilities, will be disciplined in accordance with state and federal laws and regulations, School policy, and, if applicable, their Individualized Education Program (IEP) and Behavior Support Plan.

**Suspension from School**

A student with a disability may be suspended for ten (10) consecutive and fifteen (15) cumulative days of school per school year, for the same reasons and duration as a student without a disability. Such suspension shall not constitute a change in the student’s educational placement.

**Changes in Educational Placement/Manifestation Determinations**

A manifestation determination is required by IDEA (2004) when considering the exclusion of a student with a disability that constitutes a disciplinary change of placement.

*Disciplinary Change of Placement*

A disciplinary change of placement occurs when a student who is receiving special education services is excluded from school:

- For more than ten (10) school days in a row,
- For more than fifteen (15) school days in any one school year,
- When days 11-15 constitute a pattern of exclusion, OR
- For even one (1) school day for a student with an intellectual disability*.
For students with intellectual disability, any disciplinary suspension or expulsion is a change in educational placement and may not be made without parental consent or judicial approval.

The School may unilaterally remove a student to an interim alternative educational setting for no more than forty-five (45) school days without a manifestation determination review under the following circumstances:

- Carrying or possessing a weapon
- Knowingly possessing, using, selling or soliciting illicit substances
- Inflicting serious bodily injury upon another person

**Manifestation Determination Process**

Within ten (10) school days of the decision to change the student’s placement, the parent/guardian and members of the students’ IEP team shall conduct a Manifestation Determination meeting to answer the following questions:

1. Was the behavior caused by, or directly and substantially related to, the student’s disability; OR
2. Was the behavior a direct result of the failure to implement the IEP?

If the behavior is a manifestation of the student’s disability, the IEP team will take one of the following actions:

- Conduct a Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA), unless one was already conducted prior to the change of placement occurring, and implement a positive Behavior Support Plan for the student; OR
- If a positive Behavior Support Plan has already been developed, review and modify it as necessary to address the behavior; and return the student to the placement from which they were removed, unless the parent/guardian and IEP team agree to a change of placement as part of the positive Behavior Support Plan.

If the behavior is not a manifestation of the student’s disability:

- The student may be disciplined in accordance with school policy, rules, and regulations in the same manner and to the same extent as students without disabilities.

**Automatic Violations of the Code of Conduct**

The following conduct will not be tolerated at any time, and violations of this expectation will be dealt with by the Dean. Consequences will vary depending on the nature of the offense. Offenses which will result in immediate recommendation for expulsion are noted.

- Possession of illegal substances (inside or outside of school)*
- Possession of weapons (including BB guns, toy guns, or any other form of weapon during school hours or at school-sponsored functions)*
- Violation of the Nonviolence Policy*
- Damaging school property*
- Acting in a way that could endanger anyone in the community*
- Disrespect of a community member**
- Disruption of the learning environment**
- Defiance**
- Electronics or cell phones during school hours
- Stealing*
• Violation of the Bullying/Harassment or Sexual Harassment policy*

*Grounds for Expulsion

**Repeated offenses could result in an informal hearing and recommendation for expulsion.
IV. Academic Policies

Academic Program

5th and 6th Grades

- Core courses (daily) – ELA, Math, Science, and Social Studies
- Enrichment courses (quarterly) – Art, Character Development, Computer Literacy (6th grade only), Health, and Physical Education
- Intervention course (daily) – Train Your Dragon

7th and 8th Grades

- Core courses (daily) – ELA, Math, Science, Social Studies, Foundational Math (8th grade only)
- Enrichment courses (quarterly) – Health, Physical Education, Character Development, Financial Literacy (8th grade only) and Art
- Intervention course (daily) – Train Your Dragon

Policy on Promotion Requirements

5th to 6th Grade and 6th to 7th Grade

Students must pass all core and enrichment courses and/or demonstrate mastery of grade-level standards. Students are eligible for summer school if they fail one core class or any number of enrichment classes. Successfully completing summer school will allow students to be promoted to the next grade. Students are retained if they fail two or more core classes, fail to complete a make-up assignment for a failed enrichment class, and/or fail to demonstrate mastery of grade-level standards.

7th to 8th Grade and 8th Grade to High School

Students must pass all core and enrichment courses and/or demonstrate mastery of grade-level standards. Students are eligible for summer school if they fail two core classes or any number of enrichment classes. Successfully completing summer school will allow students to be promoted to the next grade. Students are retained if they fail three or more core classes, fail to complete a make-up assignment for a failed enrichment class, and/or fail to demonstrate mastery of grade-level standards.

If a student fails an enrichment class, the student must complete an assignment in order to demonstrate mastery of that material. That assignment can be completed by the student (on the student’s time) at any point throughout the school year. The student does not need to wait and complete the assignment during the summer. Students are encouraged to complete the assignment as quickly as possible in order to maintain good academic standing. A student may complete the make-up assignment as many times it takes for them to demonstrate mastery.

If a student fails a core class, that student must demonstrate mastery of the content through summer school.

In their 8th grade year, all students will complete a portfolio presentation. In their portfolio, students will collect work throughout the year that demonstrates their readiness for high school. At the end of the year, students will present, explain, and reflect on their work to prove that they are high school-ready. The portfolio process is a promotion requirement at Freire.
In order to participate in the promotion ceremony (a celebration of moving from 8th grade to high school), students must pass the 8th grade portfolio and all classes (core and enrichment). Any student being retained is not eligible to participate in the ceremony.

**Grading Procedure**

The passing grade for all core courses is a 75. All grades are a combination of 70% mastery of grade-level standards and 30% effort. Any further breakdown of mastery and effort is done at the individual teacher’s discretion. We foster a learning community that allows students to earn passing grades at whatever time in the learning cycle the student can prove mastery through Yet cards.

All enrichment courses are graded on a Pass/Fail scale.

Train Your Dragon is an ungraded course.

Grades are updated the 15th and 30th of every month in PowerSchool.

**Honor Roll**

First honors – A grade point average (core classes only) of 90 or above with no grade less than an 80.

Second honors – A grade point average (core classes only) of 85 to 89 with no grade less than an 80.

**Formal Assessments**

All students will participate in the Math PSSA and English Language Arts PSSA annually in the spring. The 8th grade students will also participate in the Science PSSA.

**Report Cards and Parent-Student-Teacher Conferences**

Report cards are issued quarterly. Parent-Student-Teacher Conferences are held quarterly (with the exception of Q4) on a first-come, first-served basis. There are two sessions: 8:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Any report card not picked up at conferences will be mailed no more than one week later.

**Completing Missed Work**

Please see the Student Attendance Policy under the General Policies & Procedures section for Freire’s policy on completing missed work.

**PowerSchool Parent Protocol**

Freire Charter School uses a database system called “PowerSchool.” Parents and students are provided the ability to access to their grades on-line. It is a privilege to have access and any abuse of this privilege will result in those privileges being terminated. Parent access to student grades will provide an opportunity for on-going conversations with your child regarding their progress in school. It will allow you the ability to see missing assignments. It will give you access to the date that grades were last updated for your child in a specific class by a specific teacher. It will also allow you to see attendance and tardies to school over a two-week period.
Each parent will get a username and password to login to see their child’s grades. Grades are not usually updated on a daily basis. It is therefore important to note when the gradebook was last stored, which is displayed at the bottom of the individual class screen.

It is also important to recognize that PowerSchool access is not a way to check daily progress. Should a parent have questions regarding any information on PowerSchool, we ask that they follow the procedures outlined below:

- Parents are to email teachers regarding any questions they may have about information on PowerSchool. A list of all staff email addresses can be found at freirecharterschool.org.
- Teachers will respond to parent inquiries within two business days.
- We encourage parents to have a conversation with their student while they await the teacher’s response. By involving the student in the conversation, parents will start to build the foundation for students to become more responsible and self-reliant for academic success.
- If you still have further concerns, you may contact the Head of School.

**Academic Integrity**

Freire Charter School’s mission is to prepare students for college. This mission is at the heart of everything that we do. To that end, we believe that it is important to have a policy that emphasizes academic integrity and gives emphasis to academic honesty. Students must be able to understand the importance of academic honesty and recognize that it is expected of them in any educational institution they may enter in the future.

**What is plagiarism?**

Plagiarism is the practice of claiming, or implying, original authorship or incorporating material from someone else’s written or creative work, in whole or in part, into one’s own without adequate acknowledgment. In simple terms, it is claiming someone else’s words or ideas as your own.

**Examples of plagiarism include (but are not limited to):**

- Copying another student’s work (test answers, homework assignments, class work, computer files, etc.) and submitting it as your own.
- Working on an assignment with another student and then submitting the assignment as if you completed it individually.
- Quoting, paraphrasing, or summarizing another person’s work (from a book, article, speech, or other source) and not crediting the source.
- Copying works from an Internet source and not crediting the source.
- Using another’s wording or phrase or paraphrasing another’s argument and submitting it, in part or in its entirety, as your own.
  - This can include parent help. It is important for all students to clearly relay to the teacher who helped support them in their work.
- Falsifying documentation of a source (bibliography or works cited sources falsely listed).

**Why is plagiarism wrong?**

When work is plagiarized everyone involved loses. The person who plagiarizes work deprives him/herself of the opportunity to truly learn and understand the material. Students who plagiarize cheat the person whose thoughts or ideas were taken, because they pass them off as their own and do not give credit where credit is
due. When teachers receive work, they assume it is original and make educational decisions based on the student’s work. If the material is plagiarized, this can lead to a teacher making a false assumption that the student understands the material. Ultimately this can affect the effectiveness of the instruction. Teachers might continue the instruction assuming a student has mastered the material when in actuality they have not. In college, plagiarism is treated as a very serious offense. Colleges work on an academic honor system and students who break that code by plagiarizing are usually asked to leave the school.

**Consequences for Plagiarism**

The following consequences are designed to help students recognize plagiarism and to provide a learning opportunity for students so they can learn why their actions are wrong and take active steps to make sure that they do not repeat the undesirable action.

**5th Grade and Quarters 1 & 2 of 6th Grade**

- Teacher contacts parent within one day of acknowledgement of plagiarism.
- Teacher ensures student understanding of expected skills and behaviors and re-teaches if necessary.
- Student re-submits assignment with necessary changes within 5 calendar days of teacher acknowledgement of plagiarism.
- Teacher notifies the Head of School.

**Quarters 3 & 4 of 6th Grade and 7th and 8th Grade**

- Teacher contacts parent within one day of acknowledgement of plagiarism.
- Teacher ensures student understanding of expected skills and behaviors.
- Student re-submits assignment with necessary changes within 3 calendar days of teacher acknowledgement of plagiarism.
- Teacher notifies the Head of School.

If a student repeatedly plagiarizes, the student may be subject to more serious consequences as determined by the Head of School.
V. General Policies and Procedures

Family Involvement Policy

Program Information for Family Involvement

Freire Charter School is fully committed to finding meaningful and mutually enriching ways for parents to participate in our school that involve improving the quality of teaching and learning for all of our students and at every level.

Freire works hard to help parents understand how we assess our students, as well as how Pennsylvania and the nation as a whole assess them to determine whether or not they are college-ready. As part of our regular academic calendar, parents and School staff discuss our curriculum, achievement, standards, assessments and student academic growth at the following events:

- Back to School Night – Back to School Night happens very early in the school year and is the first chance parents have to meet their children’s teachers in person.
- Parent nights
- Student-Parent-Teacher Conferences – At Freire, conferences work best when both the student and parent attend the conference with the teacher. That way, we can work together to build on each student’s individual strengths and make sure we all follow the plan as a team.
- Regularly held family meetings where a member of the Freire staff is often present to highlight the Dean’s office, after-school activities, the family therapy program, etc.
- Family visits for all students identified as needing additional supports held either at the home of the new student with parent present or held at the School on an individual basis.

Each grade level has a dedicated academic advisor. This individual reaches out to the family of any student failing one or more classes at the conclusion of the first semester so that a family meeting can be scheduled, and appropriate measures taken to support the student.

Freire’s student report cards also offer information beyond the traditional content of grades, teacher comments, and attendance information. Our report cards provide parents with their student’s progress on standardized tests, a record of their behavior, and information on their student’s participation in extracurricular activities.

Course syllabi for every class are available to parents, which provide a description and explanation of the curriculum in use at the school, the forms of academic assessment used, and the standards students are expected to meet.

Parent Contact Information

It is essential that parents keep their contact information on file with the school up to date at all times. The school may need to reach parents in emergencies, to notify them of incidents involving their child at school, or for other important reasons. Parents must therefore contact the school any time there is a change to their address, phone number, or email address.
Contract for Excellence

From the students themselves to their parents/guardians, teachers, and support staff – each and every member of the school community has a critical role to play in supporting success for our learners. To make sure each individual knows their role in the process, all community members must agree to and sign the Freire Contract for Excellence which was developed jointly with parents. A copy of the contract is attached as an appendix and must be signed and returned to the school.

Materials and Training Available to Parents/Guardians

PowerSchool Training

Freire is committed to doing everything possible to help parents have the tools they need to support their students in school. To that end, Freire holds trainings and/or provides written instructions so that parents feel adept at using our student database (PowerSchool) from their homes and offices. Parents can log into PowerSchool at any time and receive up-to-date information about their individual student. From PowerSchool they can see a current reflection of their student’s performance in each class, including specific information on how a student performed on every class assignment and assessment. Parents also have access to their student’s daily attendance, current overall grades as well as test and quiz grades, homework performance, and in-school behavior.

Training for PowerSchool usually occurs in September as part of our Back to School Night but is also offered through individual tutorials. Parents receive a username and password in order to enter their account on PowerSchool. As part of that training, parents learn the capabilities of the program and how to tailor those capabilities to meet their individual needs and access the information they want to see about their child’s progress. For any parents who miss Back to School Night and still want to learn how to access their child’s progress online, our Academic Advisors are available by appointment throughout the year to help parents access this very important feature.

Academic Advisors

Each child has an Academic Advisor at Freire. The job of the Academic Advisor is to support students in their academic growth by following student progress on a regular basis, communicating with a student’s parent/guardian in times of concern, helping to link students to the extra help and support centers Freire has available to all students, and helping to ensure that the staff at school and parents at home are doing all we can to support our students’ academic success. When requested by parents, academic advisors will also facilitate regular meetings that provide parents with an opportunity to formulate suggestions and participate as appropriate, in decisions relating to the education of their children.

Emotional Support Team

Another fundamental way that we support parents in helping their children’s achievement and potential soar is through our emotional support team. Freire’s emotional support team serves all students in need of therapy on a regular basis. Students meet with either our in-house certified family therapist or one of the handful of graduate school interns studying the science of emotional support and working closely under our family therapist’s direction. Any and all family members of a Freire student are also welcome to participate in emotional support therapy sessions. In accordance with PA Act 147 of 2004, students who are 14 years of age or older can request counseling and are entitled to confidentiality, subject to legal restrictions (for
example, counselors must report any suspicion of child abuse or neglect and may be required to report a suspicion that the student has been a victim of a crime.

21st Century CCLC Parent Programming

Lastly, thanks to the Pennsylvania Department of Education’s 21st Century Community Learning Centers Grant, Freire provides parent programming throughout the year. If you are interested in being a part of Freire’s 21st Century CCLC parent programming, please contact the Director of Student Activities.

Parent Concerns

When parents/guardians have a concern about something going on in a classroom or at the school, the best thing to do is first contact their child’s Academic Advisor or classroom teacher to discuss the matter. After that, if the situation still has not been resolved, the parent needs to contact either the Head of School (for any matters relating to teaching and learning in the school) or the Head of Academic Supports (for any matters in the school not directly related to teaching and learning). If the concern is not resolved at the school level, or if a community member wishes to make a specific complaint to the Board, they can provide notice to the Head of School who can relay their concern to the Board and set aside time on a meeting agenda when appropriate. Parents and community members may attend any board meeting and present a statement during the public comment period but are encouraged to share any specific concerns beforehand so that the board can best address them. The Board will review the complaint and come to a final decision as quickly as possible.

Parent Conduct

All parents must represent Freire and Freire’s values at all times. While this rarely, if ever, occurs at Freire, in the case that a parent/guardian comes to the school or to a school event and is not conducting him/herself appropriately or violating our school safety polices, that parent/guardian will be asked to leave the school property, and, if necessary, law enforcement may be called. Severe instances may lead to a parent/guardian being permanently prohibited from entering school property and/or school events.

Education for Our Educators about the Importance of Parents in Student Success

Every Freire staff member participates in at least two trainings per school year on effectively partnering with parents to maximize student achievement. One of these trainings is held during our start of the year staff orientation, and the second at one of our regularly scheduled staff professional development sessions. Issues about differences in culture, expectation, communication styles, etc. are addressed.

Additionally, administrative personnel and school leaders participate in ongoing informal conversations regarding how to support parents and their students most effectively. One of the primary roles of our Academic Advisors is to serve as a liaison to and for parents with the school and to make sure to give voice to parent concerns, feedback, and positive experiences.

Understandable Communication

Freire has an accurate perception of the number of our parents for whom English is not their first language as a result of input provided on a Home Language Survey that parents are required to complete when a student first enrolls in the school. As a result, we are able to support these parents directly with a variety of resources including a free ESL course taught at the school in the summer, and telephonic translation services provided by LanguageLine. Additionally, as part of a quarterly phone call held with parents of any ESL student the
school, Freire is able to regularly check in with these parents to ensure that they fully understand communications from the school and provide additional support as needed. The school also maintains a relationship with a company called LanguageLine. This company provides translation services in approximately 170 languages and the school utilizes them when appropriate to ensure that the content of essential school communications can be understood by all parents.

**Title I**

Freire invites parents to attend an annual Title I informational meeting, held in conjunction with a regular parent association meeting. At this meeting we explain the purpose and requirements of Title I programs, describe how Freire participates in the program, and detail how the school is spending its Title I funding in the current school year. School representatives review parents’ right to be involved, provide the complaint procedure, and identify Freire’s federal programs coordinator. At this time, we solicit feedback from parents on topics including how Freire is spending Title I funds, the quality of the school-parent compact, and this Family Involvement Policy. School administrators consider any feedback received when seeking to make improvements at the next relevant annual opportunity (e.g. policy updates, budgeting, program planning, etc.).

As the school creates, improves, and implements its Title I Schoolwide Program, the planning team takes into account parent feedback received at the annual Title I informational meeting, comments from regular monthly parent association meetings, survey results, and relevant informal suggestions made by parents.

School events that provide opportunities for parent involvement throughout the year are held at a variety of times, both during the school day and in the evening. Student-Parent-Teacher Conferences are held with both morning and afternoon times at the middle school and afternoon and evening times at the high school.

Title I funds may be used to pay reasonable and necessary expenses associated with parent involvement activities, including transportation, childcare, or home visit expenses to enable parents to participate in school-related meetings and training sessions.

**Parent Rights Under Title I**

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

- Be involved in our Title I, Part A programs – Freire, with the help of its parents, will develop and implement a Title I Family Involvement Policy and a School-Parent Compact
- Request regular meetings – Requests for meetings to discuss Title I programs should be put in writing and submitted to the Federal Programs Coordinator.
- Know teacher and paraprofessional qualifications – Parents may request, and Freire then will provide, certain information on the professional qualifications of the student’s classroom teachers and paraprofessionals providing services to their child. Requests should be put in writing and submitted to the Federal Programs Coordinator.

**Title I Complaint Procedures for Parents**

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

- An annual meeting was not convened to explain Title I offerings to parents
• Parents were refused information on the professional qualifications of their child’s classroom teacher

If the concern was not resolved at the school level, a parent should begin a formal Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) complaint procedure as outlined below. A complaint is defined by Freire Charter School as a written, signed statement. It must include the following:

a. A statement that PDE or Freire has violated a requirement of federal statute or regulations which apply to programs under the Every Student Succeeds Act
b. The facts on which the statement is based
c. Information on any discussions, meetings or correspondence with PDE or Freire regarding the complaint

Federal Programs Coordinator Contact Information

Freire Charter School’s Federal Programs Coordinator is:
Max Matthews, Director of Operations, Build the Future Education Collaborative (Freire central office)
1617 JFK Blvd Ste 1260
Philadelphia PA 19103
(267) 583-4456
max.matthews@buildthefuture.org

Other Important Parent Involvement Information

At Freire, we are always working to form stronger, better partnerships with parents. Some of the ways in which we further this goal that have not been mentioned specifically above are:

• One parent from the Middle School and one from the High School each serve on the school’s Board of Directors.
• Parents are surveyed yearly for input on the quality of their children’s teachers and staff of the school.
• Parents receive a weekly email newsletter updating them on school activities, events, issues, etc.
• Parents receive mailings frequently through the regular mail.
• Parents serve on Freire’s ESL Committee.
• Freire contracts with the SchoolMessenger service, which allows us to communicate information to parents via automated phone calls, text messages, and emails.
• Freire teachers are required to respond to every communication from a student’s parents within a reasonable period of time.
• Freire teachers take the time to write comments on report cards thereby giving parents more specific information than just a grade.
• The interview process for hiring staff includes parent input when possible, and in particular when hiring senior administrative staff members.
• Parents are consulted by phone to evaluate teachers for contract renewal.

Student Attendance

Student Attendance Policy

Regular school attendance is a primary factor in a student’s successful academic and social development and lays the groundwork for a successful and productive life beyond school. Frequent absences of pupils
from regular classroom learning experiences disrupt the continuity of the instructional process. The benefit of regular classroom instruction is lost and cannot be entirely regained, even with extra after-school instruction. Many pupils who miss school frequently experience great difficulty in achieving the maximum benefits of schooling.

**Excused vs. Unexcused Absences**

*Excused Absence*

An **excused absence is any absence that is documented for official business.** Examples include, but are not limited to: court dates, death in family, doctor or dentist appointments, etc. Excuses of this kind must be documented on official letterhead or back to work slips from a doctor, court, or other professional. Hand-written notes or parent notes will not be accepted as proof of official business. In addition, suspensions will be counted as excused absences. Students will also be excused for participation in a project sponsored by an organization eligible for Pennsylvania Agricultural Fair Act grants (such as FFA for 4-H), to participate in a musical performance for an event or funeral with a national veterans’ organization, or if health or sanitation laws or regulations prevent a student from attending school.

*Unexcused absence*

An unexcused absence is any other kind of absence from school. Examples include, but are not limited to: sickness, family trips, etc. **While parents should still send a note to school explaining the absence in order to mitigate truancy, parent notes do not excuse absences.** The Head of School is authorized to develop a system of consequences for attendance. See below for the School’s Truancy Policy and Procedures.

Pennsylvania regulation requires that we remove any student from the roll who has accumulated 10 consecutive unexcused absences. A certified letter will be sent to notify parents of their child’s removal from the School roll.

**Student Attendance Procedures**

**Unexcused Absence Procedures**

Unexcused absences can lead to serious consequences, including the following:

- Student may fail any class that has been missed 20 or more class days.
- Upon reaching 20 absences, a student will be placed on probation and a mandatory parental meeting with the Head of Academic Supports will be held.
- Upon reaching 25 absences, a student may be mandatorily retained, regardless of student’s end of year grades, at the discretion of a Head of School

**Completing Missed Work**

Significant learning happens daily; any missed days or minutes of instruction put a student further behind.

It is the student’s responsibility to obtain missed work, including classwork and homework, from each teacher upon returning to school. A student has as many days as they were absent to complete missed work unless alternate arrangements have been made by the teacher or Academic Advisor. For example, if a student was
absent for two days, the student has two days to complete the missed work. For 7th and 8th grade Science and Social Studies, a student has as many days as the class met while the student was absent.

If a student misses an assessment or project deadline, the student is expected to take the assessment or turn in the project on the day he/she returns to school unless prior arrangements have been made with the teacher or Academic Advisor.

**Participation in After-School Activities**

A student who is absent from school may not participate in any after-school activity, center, or sport on the day they were absent.

**Parental Notification of Absences**

The school will use the following methods to notify parents/students of their attendance record:

- Daily automated attendance call to all students who are absent (please make sure that the school has the most up-to-date contact number for you at all times).
- Attendance will be printed on all official grade reports that are sent home on a quarterly basis.
- A letter will be sent to the student’s home when they have accumulated 3, 6, 10, 15, and 20 unexcused absences. See the Truancy section below for more information.

**NOTE:** Parents may view attendance through their personal access to the PowerSchool system.

**Lateness Procedures**

First period starts promptly at 8:00 a.m. All students who are not in their assigned seats at 8:00 a.m. will be marked late. Students arriving late will need to sign in and get a late slip to be admitted to class. A parent meeting with the Dean may be required for a student who is frequently late to school.

**Early Dismissal Procedures**

There is a strong relationship between attendance and academic success; therefore, it is Freire’s goal for every student to attend every day in order to maximize their learning experience. To help us meet that goal, we request, whenever possible, that all medical appointments be scheduled for outside of school hours.

**Early dismissal procedures:**

- All students MUST be picked up personally by an authorized person (this is defined as a person who is listed in the PowerSchool system).
- Individuals NOT LISTED in PowerSchool will be denied access to the student and the student will not be released.
- ALL adults must present proper identification (a valid photo ID) when requesting an early dismissal for a student.
- Parent/Guardian must come into the building to complete the necessary paperwork.
- No early dismissals will be granted after 2:30 p.m. unless prior arrangements were made with a Head of School.

**Important Note:**
Official attendance is taken at 9:30 a.m. every day. A student MUST be present at this time in order to be marked present for that day. Therefore, ANY student who receives an early dismissal prior to this time will be marked absent the remainder of the day.

**Illness**

If a student becomes ill in class and he or she is no longer able to stay in class and work, the teacher will contact the nurse. The nurse will go to the classroom and collect the student. In the event the nurse is not available the teacher will call the Assistant to the Head of Academic Supports to collect the student.

**Times when the nurse is on site:**

When the nurse is on site, s/he is the person who will determine whether or not the student is able to return to class. If the nurse determines that a student needs to leave, then s/he will contact the parents and request that they pick up their student. The nurse is the only person who has the authority to determine if a student must leave for the day.

**Times when the nurse is not on site:**

On days that the nurse is not at the Middle School, the School will honor the wishes of the parents/guardians as to whether the student should stay in school for the day. In the event the nurse is not available, and the School and parent do not agree about the resolution, the Head of School will have the authority to determine whether the student is too ill to stay in school. In the event a student is too ill to remain in school, the student MUST be picked up by the parent/guardian or their designee. Please refer to the early dismissal policy. Students who are sick will not, under any circumstances, be allowed to leave school without being picked up by a parent/guardian or person they designate.

Note: When the school determines that a student must be sent home due to an illness, their absence for the remainder of the day shall be excused.

**Prolonged/Extended Injury and Illness:**

If a student is unable to attend school for a prolonged period (more than two weeks), the parent is required to personally meet with the Head of Academic Supports and the school nurse. At this meeting, the parent will be required to provide an official doctor’s excuse note. This meeting is essential so that the School can understand and then arrange the appropriate supports. Therefore, during the meeting, the School will require the parent to take one of the following two actions:

- Sign a consent form so that the School can speak directly to the physician regarding restrictions and requirements
- Provide a written letter from the physician to outline the following:
  - An official diagnosis
  - Why this diagnosis prevents the child from attending school
  - The prognosis
  - Specific restrictions the child has due to his/her condition

Parents must accompany any child who is returning from a prolonged illness (more than 3 days) for which they have been under a doctor’s care and meet briefly with the nurse to discuss the details of the absence. Parents are encouraged to call the nurse or the Head of Academic Supports and notify them prior to bringing a child back to school. **Students who return without a parent will be denied entrance until the parental**
**meeting occurs.** On days the nurse is unavailable, the Head of Academic Supports will meet with the parents.

For information on absences due to illness that last longer than four weeks, please see the Homebound Policy below.

*Medical Emergencies and Accidents:*

In the event your child has a medical emergency (defined as an incident that requires immediate medical attention), we will make him/her comfortable and begin appropriate first-aid procedures. If your child needs to be transported to a hospital, an ambulance will be called. A School staff member will accompany your child to the hospital and stay with him/her until you arrive. If you cannot be reached, we will attempt to contact the emergency numbers you have listed as emergency contacts.

**Truancy Policy**

A student is considered truant after 3 truant absences. A child is considered habitually truant after 6 or more truant absences. To avoid truant absences, students must always bring a parent note explaining their absence within 5 days. The standards to avoid a truant absence are less strict than those to have an absence excused. However, while a parent note may be used to avoid a truant absence, the School must still determine that the absence was for a legitimate reason. Parent notes can only be used to prevent up to 6 truant absences per year. After 6 absences with parent notes, any further such absences will be considered truant.

Within 10 days of a student’s third truant absence, Freire will notify the student’s family of the child’s violation of compulsory school attendance. The notification will be sent in writing to the person in parental relation with the child who resides in the same household as the child. When transmitted to a person who is not the biological or adoptive parent, the notice will also be provided to the child’s biological or adoptive parent if the parent’s mailing address is on file with the School and the parent is not precluded from receiving the information by court order. The notice will:

- Include a description of the consequences that will follow if the child becomes habitually truant
- Be in the mode and language of communication preferred by the person in parental relation

**School Attendance Improvement Conference**

After a student reaches 6 unexcused absences, the School will hold a School Attendance Improvement Conference for the purpose of addressing barriers to a student’s attendance. The School will send a second notice to the family as described above which will additionally include notice of the conference. Neither the child nor the person in parental relation may be legally compelled to attend the conference, but Freire strongly urges both to participate. The conference must occur even if the person in parental relation declines to participate or fails to attend the scheduled conference after advance written notice and attempts to communicate via telephone. Freire reserves the right to provide notice and subsequently hold a conference at its discretion regardless of whether a student has yet accumulated 6 unexcused absences.

The conference should ideally engage the student, family, school, and all participants involved in the student’s life to explore possible solutions to increase the student’s school attendance. In the case of a follow-up conference after a student has already been referred to the Philadelphia District Attorney’s Office,
Truancy Court, or Family Court, the conference will also include a representative from the appropriate office. Maintaining open communication between the student and adults will facilitate positive outcomes.

The purpose of the conference is to discuss the cause(s) of the truancy and to develop a mutually agreed upon plan to facilitate regular school attendance. The conference provides both parties with the opportunity to identify, understand, and explore all issues contributing to the student’s truant behavior. Participation by the student and family is an integral component for this conference. In addition, representatives from relevant and/or involved community-based agencies, community and school services, and school personnel should be invited to participate, as needed. During the conference, a Student Attendance Improvement Plan (SAIP) shall be developed cooperatively with the student and other meeting participants.

Issues to be addressed at the conference should include but not be limited to:

- Appropriateness of the student’s educational environment
- Possible elements of the school environment that inhibit student success
- Student’s current academic level and needs
- Social, emotional, physical, mental, and behavioral health issues
- Issues concerning family and home environment
- Any other issues affecting the student’s attendance

The participants in the school-family conference should work collaboratively to conduct a holistic assessment to determine the reason(s) the student is exhibiting truant behavior. Every member should have a vested interest in and responsibility for determining an appropriate plan to assist the student to succeed both socially and academically. This conference should also provide an opportunity to ensure that both the student and the family clearly understand the School’s attendance requirements and the legal ramifications of not adhering to the state’s compulsory attendance requirements. This methodology promotes full understanding and appreciation of the root causes of truancy as well as the resultant personal and societal impacts when truant behavior is not adequately addressed.

The School may not take further legal action to address unexcused absences until the conference has occurred. The outcome of the conference must be documented in a SAIP. The SAIP must be documented on an official form substantially similar to one developed by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. This plan substantiates efforts made by the school, the family and other vested third parties to assist the student in addressing and resolving school attendance issues.

**Legal Consequences for Sustained Truancy**

Freire must report incidences of truancy to the Pennsylvania Department of Education and may report them to the School District of Philadelphia’s Office of Attendance and Truancy, the Philadelphia District Attorney, the Philadelphia Family Court, and/or the Philadelphia Department of Human Services. Families may be required to appear at court hearings or be assigned a case worker who will make home visits. Parents or guardians convicted of violating compulsory attendance can be fined, required to complete an appropriate course, or perform community service. In order to support legal proceedings conducted under Pennsylvania’s truancy law, Freire will document all truant absences, all outreach efforts made, any conferences held, and any interventions pursued.

**Homebound Policy**
In accordance with the Pennsylvania Code, a principal or teacher may, upon receipt of satisfactory evidence of mental, physical, or other urgent reasons, excuse a student for non-attendance during a temporary period and may provide those students with homebound instruction for a period not to exceed 3 months.

Parents can request homebound instruction in the event that a child is medically unable to attend school for a period of 4 weeks to 3 months due to:

- Physical disability
- Illness (acute or chronic)
- Injury
- Psychological or psychiatric condition
- Pregnancy, if there is satisfactory evidence of mental, physical, or other urgent reasons certified by a physician (See the Married, Pregnant and Parenting Policy #225 for more details)

Homebound instruction will be based on the Instructional Plan and the student will not be marked “absent” from school while receiving approved homebound instruction. The school nurse will monitor medical progress of student by contact with parent/guardian at least once during the scheduled absence. Once a student is ready to return to school, the School team will meet with a parent to review progress and suggest additional supports necessary to return the child to school. Progress reports from the homebound teacher will be used by teachers and administrators in the determination of a student’s overall class grade.

Homebound Procedure

To submit a request for Homebound Instruction, parents must follow the following procedures:

- Parent must obtain from and return to the school nurse a completed Physician’s Referral Form. The form MUST be completed by the doctor treating the specific condition causing the child’s absence from school.
- Incomplete forms or forms with missing information will be considered; however, lack of information may be sufficient reason for a denial of homebound services.
- All information provided will be considered by the School team to determine whether or not homebound services should be provided. Parents will be informed of approval or denial of services.
- If services are approved, a meeting will convene in order to create a Homebound Instructional Plan for the student for the duration of the approved absence. A parent/guardian must attend this meeting and sign the plan and consent form.

NOTICE: Homebound instruction can only be granted for a period of 3 months. In the event that a student requires services for longer than 3 months, a parent must reapply for services following the procedure above. For students diagnosed with chronic illnesses requiring extended periods of homebound instruction throughout the school year, School teams may refer the student for evaluation for continuation of services under IDEA or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

ID Card Procedure

IDs are provided free of charge. However, only one ID will be issued.

Locker Procedure
All lockers are assigned at the discretion of Freire Charter Middle School for the convenience of each student and remain the property of Freire. All students who receive permission to use a locker must sign an agreement stating the terms and conditions for its use. Only school-issued locks may be put on a locker and non-school-issued locks will be immediately removed. Students are to use only the locker assigned to them. Sharing lockers is not permitted. As the School reserves the right to inspect lockers, students must open them upon request. All items found in lockers not assigned to that specific student, or those that do not have a school-issued lock on them, will be removed. The School reserves the right to periodically and randomly inspect lockers.

**Athletic Eligibility**

In order to participate in athletics programs at Freire Charter Middle School, students must:

- Have a current physical examination record on file with the School
- Have a signed parental permission form on file with the School

In order to be eligible to participate on athletic events on a given day, a student must:

- Be passing all classes
- Not be serving a suspension
- Not be absent from school (see Attendance Policies)

**Meal Procedures**

**Lunch Program**

All students are eligible for free lunch for the entire school year. There is no sign-up process required. Students simply have to present their school ID or student ID number to the lunch staff each day prior to receiving their lunch.

**Breakfast**

For students who **do not** take a school bus to school (primarily 7th and 8th graders), breakfast is served in the gym between 7:30 and 7:45 a.m.

For students who **do** take a school bus to school (primarily 5th and 6th graders), bagged breakfast will be offered on the way to students’ classes.

**Snack**

All students who participate in organized after-school activities are eligible for free afternoon snack.

**Cafeteria Procedures**

- Students are only permitted to eat in the cafeteria.
- Students must remain in the cafeteria during the entire lunch period.
- Students are only allowed to use the restrooms on the cafeteria level during lunch.

**Transportation Procedures**
The School District of Philadelphia is responsible for the transportation of your child to and from school. According to the District’s policy, students who reside more than 1.5 miles from the school will receive yellow bus or SEPTA transportation. Students who qualify for SEPTA transportation will receive a SEPTA TransPass. For additional information regarding the School District of Philadelphia’s TransPass policy, please visit the transportation page on the School District of Philadelphia’s website at https://www.philasd.org/transportation/, or call 215-400-4350 and ask to be transferred to the contact person who handles transportation.

Bus Behavior and Expectations

Students who take a school bus are expected to act according to the Freire Code of Conduct and related policies, including but not limited to the Nonviolence and Commitment to Peace Policy, Bullying Policy, and General Behavioral Expectations. These rules apply whenever a student is on a school bus, at the bus stop or traveling to/from the bus stop. Any student who does not follow the Code of Conduct will be subject to the appropriate consequences for their behavior as outlined in the code.

Expected Conduct on the School Bus

- Abide by the Freire Charter School Code of Conduct at all times.
  - Any student who does not follow the Code of Conduct will face consequences for their behavior as outlined in the code as well as possibly losing their bus privileges.
- Get on and off the bus in a safe and orderly manner.
  - Wait for the driver to signal it is ok to board or exit the bus.
  - Board and exit the bus quickly and quietly.
  - Board and exit the bus in a single file line.
  - Students should wait for the person in front of them to sit down before taking their own seats.
- Students MUST remain SEATED at all times during the bus trip. They may not get out of their seats, stand-up, kneel, or change seats for any reason during the trip. The only time students may move around the bus or get out of their seats is when boarding and exiting the bus.
- Students are prohibited from using any electronic device (including cell phones) while on the bus.
- Be respectful of the bus property and the property of others.
- Remain quietly in your seat. (Students may talk quietly with the student sitting next to them.)
- Do not engage in any activity that might be disturbing to the driver or endanger the safety of anyone on the bus, including:
  - Screaming or yelling
  - Standing
  - Moving around the bus (except for boarding and departure)
  - Throwing things
- No eating or drinking on the bus.
- Follow the bus driver’s directions promptly, the first time they are given.
- Keep hands, head and arms in the bus at all times.

The School is committed to taking the following actions in order to facilitate responsible and respectful bus behavior, including but not limited to:

- All students and parents will receive a letter in the mail outlining bus policies and procedures.
- Bus policies and procedures will be posted on the web site.
The Head of Academic Supports or his/her designee will review expectations for appropriate bus behavior at all Family Orientations.

Classroom teachers will review expectations for appropriate bus behavior.

The Head of Academic Supports or his/her designee will meet each bus every morning to ensure appropriate student behaviors with the bus driver.

The Head of Academic Supports or his/her designee will contact any parent or guardian whose child has failed to follow the above expectations on the bus and impose the appropriate consequences for the misbehavior.

**Consequences for Inappropriate Bus Behavior**

Since School officials do not ride the bus, the School considers the bus driver to be an agent of the school during transportation. The bus driver is the main disciplinarian while students are on the bus. All discipline referrals from the bus driver will be investigated and students will face consequences as outlined below.

- **Minor Incidents** – Warning letter and phone call to parent. Examples:
  - Not sitting in seat
  - Eating on the bus
  - Teasing, vulgarity or mild cursing
  - Being loud and unruly

- **Moderate Incidents** – One-week minimum suspension from the school bus and assigned seat upon reinstatement. Mandatory parent/student reinstatement meeting to review the incident and the expectations. Examples:
  - Not following instructions of the bus driver
  - Throwing objects
  - Standing on the seat or moving around the bus
  - Horseplay
  - Severe cursing and obscene vulgarity
  - Shouting from the bus at pedestrians

- **Severe Incidents** – Dismissal from the school bus for the remainder of the school year (child may not ride the school bus). Mandatory parent/student meeting to review the parent’s alternate transportation plan for the remainder of the school year. Examples
  - Destruction of school bus property
  - Endangering self or others

Please note the following:

- Students will be held accountable for the Code of Conduct at all times. Students who do not abide by the Code of Conduct policies will face consequences for their behavior. (This includes the Nonviolence and Commitment to Peace Policy.)

- These expectations and consequences will apply to children at or around the school bus stop, in the bus line (at school) and on the school bus.

- If a student is suspended from school bus service, a parent must continue to provide a means of transportation to the school for the student. Suspension from the bus does not mean suspension from school. School attendance is mandatory. Parents are responsible for finding an alternate means of transportation.
Appeal of Bus-Related Decision

In cases where the parent disagrees with a bus-related decision and they feel that they have additional evidence that would alter the decision, the parent may appeal to the Head of Academic Supports by completing the following steps:

- Schedule an appointment with the Head of Academic Supports to discuss the decision.
- At the meeting the parent will be asked to provide new evidence as to why they feel that the decision should be overturned.
- If the parent is unable to provide new evidence regarding the situation, then the decision will be upheld.

TransPass Policies (7th and 8th Grades Only)

Students who reside in Philadelphia and meet eligibility requirements will receive a weekly TransPass from the School District of Philadelphia. Although Freire is responsible for distributing the TransPasses, the School District of Philadelphia is responsible for determining eligibility and then issuing passes to the School for distribution. Although Freire Charter School does not determine eligibility, nor do we have any authority over TransPasses, we still encourage parents to contact us with any questions and concerns. We will work to resolve any outstanding issues. If you DO NOT reside in the School District of Philadelphia, you need to contact the district you reside in. Please refer to the Out of District Residents section below for contact information. The Assistant to the Head of Academic Supports is responsible for all TransPass issues and can assist you with any question or concerns.

Eligibility for TransPasses:

A student must meet the following requirements in order to be eligible for a TransPass:

- Reside in the School District of Philadelphia (Out of district residents please see the section below)
- Live MORE than 1.5 miles from the school (the School District of Philadelphia determines this through addresses and zip codes)

Process for Determining Eligibility:

- At the beginning of the year the School District of Philadelphia will process the addresses of all students registered at Freire Charter School.
- The students who are deemed eligible (see eligibility requirements) will be placed on a list that is sent to the school.
- The School District of Philadelphia will provide Freire with a list of eligible students and a TransPass for EACH of those students. Please note: The school ONLY receives a TransPass for the students whose names appear on the eligibility list.
- This process takes sometimes up to a month or more before the School District of Philadelphia has coordinated all of the information. During this period Freire relies on parents to ensure that students have transportation to and from school.

Please note: Freire Charter School submits all paperwork to the School District of Philadelphia in a very timely fashion. Once that paperwork is submitted, Freire (and parents) have to wait until the District determines eligibility and then issues a TransPass.
Freire Charter School is not responsible for lost or stolen TransPasses. If a student loses their pass or it is stolen, the student/parent will be responsible for his/her own transportation during that week. The School District of Philadelphia provides one TransPass per student. There are no extra TransPasses.
Out of District Residents

Students who reside outside of the School District of Philadelphia must contact their home district directly in order to receive transportation. Transportation contact information for other districts:

- Upper Darby – Philip Bush – 610-352-7112
- Southeast Delaware County – Dennis Kraus – 610-522-4300 ext. 5533
- Chester Upland – Nicholas Carabetta – 610-499-3821 ext. 3822

According to PA state law, districts are not required to provide transportation to students who attend a school that is more than 10 miles away from the home district.

Car Drop-Off and Pick-Up

Parents who wish to drop off or pick up their children must do so via the Market Street entrance. Students must leave the car on the curb side of the street and use all crosswalks in appropriate fashion in order to reach the school in a safe manner.

Arrival Procedures

The school building opens at 7:30 a.m. every day.

*Bus Students (5th and 6th grade students):*

- Bus students will be dropped off on Ludlow Street.
- These students go directly to the third floor beginning at 7:45 a.m.

*Students Arriving by Car:*

- Students will be required to report directly to the cafeteria, and must remain in the cafeteria until they are dismissed to the 3rd floor at 7:45 a.m.

*Students Arriving by Public Transportation (7th and 8th grade students):*

- Students arriving via SEPTA before 7:45 a.m. report directly to the cafeteria. Students arriving after 7:45 a.m. report directly to the 3rd floor.

Departure Procedures

Upon conclusion of the day, students are expected to depart for home immediately. Loitering in the vicinity, waiting for people, or socializing is prohibited.

*Bus Students (5th and 6th grade students):*

- Bus students remain inside the classroom until their bus color is called over the phone system.
- Once a student’s bus is called, the student reports directly to the back hallway for bus dismissal. Students are expected to remain in a quiet, single-file line while in the back hallway.

*Students Departing by Car:*

- Students will remain inside the classroom until “Parent Pickup” is called over the phone system. Students then proceed directly to the Market Street entrance for dismissal.
Students Departing by Public Transportation (7th and 8th grade students):

- Students remain inside the classroom until “8th grade SEPTA” or “7th grade SEPTA” is called over the phone system. Students are expected to leave the area quickly and not loiter along Market Street.

Emergency School Closings

All school closings (whether announced prior to opening or during the day) and delayed openings will be listed on our school website, freirecharterschool.org. In addition, information will be distributed through the School Messenger system (automated phone calls and text alerts). School closing information may be available on local TV news outlets and on the radio at KYW 1060 AM. Freire Charter Middle School’s KYW school closing number is 1470.

Telephone Calls

Outgoing Calls from Students

If a student needs to contact a parent/guardian during the school day, students are only permitted to use the phone at the 3rd floor front desk.

Incoming Calls to Students

If a parent/guardian has a message that must be delivered to a student, the receptionist will record the message and distribute it to the student at an appropriate time. Instruction will not be interrupted to deliver a message unless it is an emergency. In order to ensure a safe dismissal, NO messages will be delivered after 2:30 p.m.

Visitor Procedure

Freire Charter Middle School welcomes all visitors, including parents and guardians. Upon arrival to the School, all visitors must check in with the receptionist in the basement and be prepared to show identification. After receiving a visitor pass (which must be worn at all times), the visitor will be escorted to his or her destination within the School. Please schedule your visit in advance. A phone call to the School will alert all staff of your presence. Walk-in visits can unfortunately not be accommodated.

If you wish to visit and observe your child in his/her classroom, call or email the Head of School ahead of time so that proper arrangements can be made. Please be mindful that some days are not appropriate for visits (e.g., testing days, special schedules). For this reason, the Head of School reserves the right to deny classroom observation requests.

Field Trips

Field trips are an essential part of learning. Only students who return a signed school-provided permission slip will be permitted to participate on the field trip; no other forms of permission will be granted.

Volunteer Procedures

All volunteers (parents, grandparents, community members) must have all clearances required under Pennsylvania law on file with the school. Volunteers are assigned duties by the Head of Academic Supports and will work directly with an administrator, who will work with faculty or staff for appropriate placement and
directions for the volunteer work. Any other arrangements must be cleared by the Head of Academic Supports.

If you would like to volunteer at Freire (including parents chaperoning a field trip), please notify Matt Kong (matt.kong@buildthefuture.org), Human Resources Manager at Build the Future, who tracks all clearances for the School.

Volunteers are required to obtain the following clearances:

- Child Abuse History Clearance from PA DHS
- Criminal Record Check from PA State Police
- FBI Fingerprint Background Check (if the volunteer has not been a continuous resident of PA for the last 10 years)

Effective 7/25/15, the fees for a child abuse clearance and PA criminal background check have been waived for volunteers. Volunteers should obtain their clearances online and when prompted to select the reason for the clearance, they should select “VOLUNTEER.” This will ensure that they are not charged a fee. The fee for an FBI fingerprint check still applies.

For more information, please visit http://keepkidssafe.pa.gov/clearances/index.htm.

Lost and Damaged Property

School Property

Students are responsible for taking care of and returning School property provided for their use, including but not limited to books, locks, lockers, lab equipment, laptops, sports uniforms, sports equipment, etc. Families will be billed for lost or damaged items. Students will be required to pay off all account balances prior to receiving transcripts or diplomas.

Personal Property

Freire Charter School is not responsible for students’ or community members’ personal property brought onto the School’s campus or to any school activities regardless of location. Students and visitors are responsible for ensuring that their personal property is secured against theft or loss at all times. Valuables such as wallets and phones should be kept with you or locked at all times, never left unsecured and unattended.

Inappropriate Public Displays of Affection

Romantic physical contact such as, but not limited to, hand holding, hugging, and kissing is prohibited at all times. Students who engage in inappropriate public displays of affection may be subject to disciplinary measures. Inappropriate public displays of affection distract from the college preparatory environment that is expected at Freire Charter School at all times. Age and circumstance will be taken into consideration when applying discipline measures for inappropriate public displays of affection.

Freedom of Expression Policy

The Constitutions of the United States and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania guarantee a student’s right to freedom of speech. This right is guaranteed in school unless the right to express themselves unless the right to express themselves causes one or more of the following consequences:
a) Materially and substantially interferes with the education process  
b) Threatens harm to the school or community  
c) Encourages unlawful activity  
d) Interferes with another individual’s rights.

**Freedom of Expression Procedures**

In these circumstances the school will take action necessary to protect the educational environment. Student publications, handbills, announcements, assemblies, group meetings, buttons, and other means of communication must conform to the following additional conditions:

a) All posted, distributed or printed material must be presented to the Head of School or his/her designee for approval prior to distribution or posting  
b) Identify at least one student who is interested in posting or distributing the information  
c) The students must obey laws governing libel and obscenity  
d) Be aware of the feelings and opinions of others and give others a fair opportunity to express their views

**Non-Discrimination Policy**

Freire Charter School does not discriminate against any community member, applicant, or any other person because of age, ancestry, citizenship, color, creed, disability, domestic or sexual violence victim status, ethnicity, familial status, gender expression, gender identity, genetic information, marital status, medical condition, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, veteran status, or any other basis that is unlawful.

**Title IX**

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended, is a comprehensive federal law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any federally funded education program or activity. Please contact the Head of Academic Supports, who is serving as the Title IX Coordinator, with any questions or concerns.

**Corporal Punishment Policy**

The physical punishment of students for infractions of the discipline policy is strictly prohibited. The School authorities may use reasonable force under the following circumstances:

- To quell a disturbance  
- To obtain possession of dangerous objects  
- In protection of persons or property

**Student Health Policies**

**Wellness Policy**

Freire Charter School is fully committed to doing anything and everything it can to provide for, facilitate, and maximize student achievement and success at Freire, in college, and throughout life. This commitment to student achievement and excellence is behind Freire’s wellness policy. Ubiquitous research shows clearly that students who eat better do better in school. Research also shows that students who participate in physical activity several times or more during the week outperform their peers who do not participate in
frequent physical activity. This policy is in place in order to realize Freire’s commitment to students and to comply with provisions of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 and its implementing regulations, specifically 7 CFR §210.31.

Please see the school website for the School Wellness Policy #212 in full, which includes goals and programs that promote student wellness, Freire’s food standards and sales guidelines, policy review process, etc.

Health Examinations and Screenings

Medical and Dental Examinations

Physical examinations are required upon entry to Freire and in eleventh grade. Dental examinations are required upon entry. Students without adequate health records who are transferring from other schools are required to be examined as soon as possible upon entry to Freire. These examinations may be completed no more than one year prior to a student’s entry into the grade where an exam is required. Entry is considered to occur on July 1.

Health Screening Tests

The following screening tests shall be conducted by a nurse or medical technician following Department of Health requirements and guidelines:

- **Vision**: Near and far visual acuity tests are conducted annually for all students.
- **Hearing**: Initial hearing screenings are conducted in eleventh grade.
- **Growth**: Height and weight measurements are taken annually.

Immunizations

Students who are not in compliance with Pennsylvania immunization requirements may not be permitted to attend school. All parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to provide a Certificate of Immunization or other valid immunization record for their student. If the School is unable to ascertain whether a student has received all required immunizations, the student may then be admitted only under one of the following conditions:

- The parent/guardian provides proof of vaccination for all single dose vaccines and the first dose of all single dose vaccines, as well as an immunization plan (“Medical Certificate”) signed by a health practitioner for any remaining doses of a multiple dose vaccine series within 5 school days
- The student is transferring directly from another Pennsylvania school and can provide immunization records within 30 days
- The student is unable to provide records due to being in foster care and can provide immunization records within 30 days
- The student is unable to provide records due to being homeless
- A physician provides a written statement that immunization may be detrimental to the health of the student
- The parent/guardian objects in writing to the immunization on religious grounds, or on the basis of a strong moral or ethical conviction similar to a religious belief
**Required Immunizations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Immunization</th>
<th>Grades 5-6</th>
<th>Grades 7-8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diphtheria, Tetanus, Acellular Pertussis</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polio</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Same</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measles, Mumps, Rubella</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Same</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hepatitis B</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Same</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varicella (vaccine or disease history)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Same</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meningococcal</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Reporting of Potential Student Medical Conditions**

All teachers must report to the School any unusual behavior, changes in physical appearance, changes in attendance habits, or changes in scholastic achievement which may indicate impairment of a student’s health. Likewise, the School will inform teachers of the health conditions of students which may affect behavior, appearance, or scholastic performance. The School may, upon referral by a teacher of on their own initiative, advise a student’s parent/guardian of the apparent need for a special medical or dental examination. Parents/guardians should note that the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA), allows the School and a student’s physician to communicate with each other without written authorization of the parent/guardian if it is for treatment purposes of the student.

**Response to Potential Student Medical Conditions**

The appropriate designee of the School may, upon referral by a teacher or on their own initiative, advise a student’s parent/guardian of the apparent need for a special medical or dental examination. The School will notify the parents/guardians of all students who appear to deviate from their normal growth and development pattern. The School will ask the parent/guardian to have the student examined by their family physician or dentist and provide the results of the examination to the School. If a parent/guardian fails to report the results to the School within a reasonable length of time, the School will arrange a special medical examination for the student.

If the medical record of any student at any time discloses a condition which requires medical, dental, or surgical treatment and the parent/guardian states to the School that s/he is financially unable to have such care provided, the School will recommend that the family apply for Medical Assistance.

**Allergy Management Policy**

Parents/guardians have the responsibility to notify the School immediately of all student allergies and include all information requested under School procedures. See the Allergy Management Policy #211.3 on the school website for more information.

**Medication Administration Policy**

Ideally, the administration of medication should take place at home. However, students may require medication administration during school hours in order to function optimally in the classroom in certain circumstances. All medication administered to students at school (prescription and over the counter) must be given only under a physician’s authority and the written consent of a parent/guardian, except during life-threatening emergency. Written authorizations from parents must be renewed at the start of each school year. Parents/guardians who wish to exercise their right to opt out of allowing the School to administer
emergency epinephrine treatment for their child must contact the School. The Pennsylvania Public School Code, Section 1414.2(g) allows parents/guardians to request an exemption to the administration of an epinephrine auto-injector for their student. In order to request this exemption, parents/guardians must contact the School to make an appointment to discuss this decision, review and sign the opt-out form.

Please see the Medication Administration Policy #211.4 on the school website for more information.

**Diabetes Care and Management**

For a student to receive diabetes-related care and treatment at school, a parent/guardian must provide written authorization and instructions from the student’s health care practitioner. This information will be used to create a diabetes management plan, which must be consistent with a student’s Section 504 Service Agreement.

**Field Trips, Before- and After-School, and Summer Programs and Activities**

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 has been interpreted to require that students with disabilities have access to non-academic services such as field trips and cannot be denied access to school programs and activities on the basis of that disability. All students participating in school-sponsored programs are entitled to the same health services they need during the regular school day. Contact the School’s 504 Coordinator for more information.

**Concussion Protocol**

If a student-athlete receives a bump, blow or jolt to the head, he/she will be removed from play immediately. If the student-athlete is determined by a game official, school staff member or present healthcare professional to exhibit signs or symptoms of a concussion, the student-athlete will not be allowed to return to participation that day. The School staff member will notify the parent/guardian or relevant emergency contact.

If the student-athlete was not allowed to return to play the day of the bump, blow or jolt to the head, the student-athlete cannot return to participation/play at all until he/she has been evaluated and cleared by an outside healthcare professional and presents signed documentation stating such.

**Student Health Records Procedure**

The School will maintain a comprehensive health record for each enrolled student, containing all the information the School obtains concerning the health of the child. All student health records are confidential, and their contents will be divulged only when necessary for the health of the child, at the request of the parent/guardian to a physician legally qualified to practice medicine, or to the student’s new school if the student transfers.

When new students enroll at Freire Charter School who previously attended any other Pennsylvania school, the School will request the health records of those students from their previous schools. When a student transfers from Freire Charter School to any other Pennsylvania school, the School will send a copy of the student’s health record to the new school upon the request of the new school, or to a parent/guardian if the child does not enroll in another Pennsylvania school.

The School and individuals acting on behalf of the School will comply with applicable privacy and confidentiality laws at all times. Student health records are primarily governed by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (see the FERPA Policy for more information).
Foster Care Policy

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Foster Care Provisions establish, enhance and formalize collaborative working relationships between child welfare and local educational agencies.

**Best Interest Determination**

Freire ensures that foster students’ best interests are in mind. This means that foster students shall remain at the School (school of origin), unless it is determined that it is not in his/her best interest. If remaining at Freire is not in his/her best interest, immediate enrollment in a new school and the transfer of school records shall be carried out by Freire.

**Transportation**

In collaboration with local child welfare agencies, Freire will develop written procedures for how transportation will be provided, arranged, and funded for the duration of a child’s time in foster care.

**Foster Care Point of Contact (POC)**

The Head of School, Academic Supports is Freire’s Foster Care Point of Contact (POC). The Foster Care POC shall coordinate with state and local child welfare agencies, the State’s Foster Care POC, and other school administrators on regarding the following responsibilities:

- Facilitation of professional development and staff training of Title I foster care provisions and needs of foster students, as needed;
- Best Interest Determination and documentation
- Transfer of student records, including immunizations, medical records, IEPs and Section 504 plans to ensure immediate enrollment
- Facilitation of data sharing and reporting, consistent with FERPA
- Development, implementation, and coordination of local transportation procedures
- Special education programming
- Ensuring the educational stability and safety of all foster students.

Homeless Students Policy

The Board of Directors (“Board”) of Freire Charter School (“School”) recognizes its obligation to ensure that homeless students have access to the same educational programs and services provided to other School students. The Board shall make reasonable efforts to identify children experiencing homelessness, encourage their enrollment, and eliminate existing barriers to their attendance and education, in compliance with the McKinney-Vento Act and other federal and state law regulations.

The Board may waive policies, procedures and administrative regulations that create barriers for enrollment, attendance, transportation, and success in charter schools of homeless students, based on the recommendation of the Head of School.
Definitions

Homeless Students

Homeless students are defined as individuals lacking a fixed, regular, and night-time residence, which include the following conditions:

- Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing or economic hardship.
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations.
- Living in emergency, transitional, or domestic violence shelters.
- Abandoned in hospitals.
- Living in public or private places not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations for human beings.
- Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, transportation stations, or similar settings.
- Living as migratory children in conditions described in previous examples.
- Living as run-away children.
- Abandoned or forced out of homes by parents or caretakers.
- Living as school-age unwed mothers in houses for unwed mothers if they have no other living accommodations.

Migratory Children

The term “migratory children” means children who are, or whose parent or spouse are, migratory agricultural workers, including migratory dairy workers, or migratory fishermen, and who have moved from one school district to another in the preceding 36 months, in order to obtain temporary or seasonal employment in agricultural or fishing work, or to accompany a parent or spouse who is doing so.

Student and Family Rights

Under McKinney-Vento, eligible students have the right to the following:

- Receive a free, appropriate public education
- Enroll in school immediately, even if lacking documents normally required for enrollment
- Enroll in school and attend classes while the school gathers needed documents
- Enroll in a local school or continue attending the School (school of origin), if that is your preference and is feasible
- If it is determined that the school selected is not in the student’s best interest, the School will provide a written explanation of its position and inform you of your right to appeal the School’s decision
- Receive transportation to and from the School, if requested
- Receive educational services comparable to those provided to other students, according to your needs as a student
School Responsibilities

Delegation of Responsibility

The Board designates the Head of Academic Supports or her designee to serve as the School’s liaison for homeless students and families.

The School’s Liaison shall coordinate with:

- Local service agencies that provide services to homeless children, youth and families.
- School districts on issues of records transfer, per pupil allocation, transportation and special education programs to ensure that homeless children who are in need of special education and related services are located, identified, and evaluated.
- State and local housing agencies responsible for comprehensive housing affordability strategies.

The School Liaison has the following responsibilities:

- Identify homeless children and youth.
- Inform parents or guardians of educational rights and related opportunities available to their children, and provide them with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children.
- Disseminate public notice of the educational rights of homeless students where children and youth receive services under the Act and forms to such places as schools, family shelters, and food pantries.
- Mediate enrollment disputes in accordance with the Enrollment Dispute section and ensure immediate enrollment pending resolution of disputes.
- Inform the parent/guardian of a homeless child or youth, and any unaccompanied youth, of all transportation options, including to the school of origin, and assist in accessing these transportation services.
- Assist children and youth who do not have immunizations or immunization or medical records to obtain necessary immunizations or immunization or medical records.
- Understand the Pennsylvania Department of Education guidance issued for the education of homeless students in order to distribute information on the subject as well as to present workshops for school personnel, including office staff.

Best Interest Determination

The School ensures that the best interests of students and families experiencing homelessness are in mind. This means that homeless students shall remain at the School (school of origin), unless it is determined that it is not in his/her best interest. If remaining at the School is not in his/her best interest, the necessary transfer of school records shall be carried out by the School to ensure the student’s immediate enrollment in a new school.

PPRA Notice and Consent/Opt-Out for Specific Activities

The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA), 20 U.S.C. § 1232h, requires Freire Charter School to notify you and obtain consent or allow you to opt your child out of participating in certain school activities. These activities include a student survey, analysis, or evaluation that concerns one or more of the following eight areas (protected information surveys”):

- Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student’s parent
Mental or psychological problems of the student or student’s family
• Sexual behavior or attitudes
• Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior
• Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships
• Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers
• Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents
• Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility

This requirement also applies to the collection, disclosure or use of student information for marketing purposes (“marketing surveys”), and certain physical exams and screenings.

Freire Charter School will provide parents, within a reasonable period of time prior to the administration of the surveys and activities, notification of the surveys and activities. Parents will be provided an opportunity to opt their child out, as well as an opportunity to review the surveys. (Please note that this notice and consent/opt-out transfers from parents to any student who is 18 years old or an emancipated minor under state law.)

Student Records Confidentiality

School Responsibilities

Student records and information regarding students shall remain confidential to the extent consistent with applicable state and federal laws and regulations, including but not limited to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 ("FERPA"), 20 U.S.C. § 1232(g), as amended, and its accompanying regulations at 34 C.F.R. Part 99; the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Improvement Act of 2004 ("IDEA"), 20 U.S.C. § 1417(c) as amended, and applicable implementing regulations at 34 C.F.R. Part 300; the Pennsylvania Public School Code of 1949, including Sections 24 P.S. § 5-510, 14-1409 and 13-1304-A-1307-A; Chapter 12.31-12.32 of Title 22 of the Pennsylvania Code; and Chapter 711.8 of Title 22 of the Pennsylvania Code.

Student information shall not be shared with anyone who does not have a legitimate educational interest in that information. Generally, if a person is not directly involved with the student or his/her information then that person does not need to know the information. To protect confidential student records and information and still give staff the information needed to perform their job duties, these guidelines are in place for School staff and students who have access to student records for any reason:

1. Read and understand the School’s Student Records Policies and Procedures. If you have any questions regarding the School’s policies or procedures regarding student records and the confidentiality of student information, direct those questions to the Head of School or his/her designee. Maintain the confidentiality of student records and information in accordance with the School’s Student Records Policies and Procedures.
2. Do not discuss any student or his/her situation in public.
3. Discuss student matters on a need to know basis only. Only discuss information with another staff member if that person is directly involved with the student or otherwise has a legitimate educational interest in that information as defined in the school’s Student Records Policies and Procedures.
4. Keep your parent/guardian contact list in a place that is not accessible to students.
5. Do not discuss a student with another student or parent/guardian, and do not volunteer any type of information for any reason to another student or parent/guardian. (This information includes but is not limited to academic standing, discipline violations, and family situations/crises.)
6. Do not use the office phone to call students/parents/guardians. In the event you need to speak to a parent/guardian, always use a private phone such as the phone in the Teachers’ Lounge.
7. If requiring information from a student’s file, please sign the file out and do not remove it from the office. When you are finished return the file to the appropriate cabinet in the appropriate section.
8. Go to the student’s advisor with any questions or to discuss any issues regarding a student when reading or relaying information about a student.

Confidentiality for Student Leaders

Student workers and representatives shall read, understand and comply with the School’s Student Records Policies and Procedures and shall adhere to the School’s policies and procedures regarding maintaining the confidentiality of any student information and/or records to which they have access.

The following are the consequences for violation of this policy. Note: These consequences may differentiate at the discretion of Administration depending upon the severity of the violation and relevant circumstances:

- 1st offense – Suspension depending on the severity of the disclosed information released.
- 2nd offense – Being brought before the Board of Directors for a possible expulsion.

Students subject to the School’s Confidentiality Policy include but are not limited to:

- Student Representatives on the Board of Directors
- Student Government
- Mediators
- Anyone working in the office
- Anyone working with the senior administrative staff, the Deans Team, and/or any teacher(s) or staff that you may work with where you may witness confidential information

These are a few examples of information consistent with the confidentiality policy:

- Test scores
- Mediation records
- Disciplinary information
- School records

Annual FERPA Notification

Annual Notification of Rights under Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) for the 2019-2020 School Year/Notice to Parents and Guardians Regarding the Disclosure of Student “Directory Information”

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), a federal law, affords parents, legally emancipated students, and students over 18 years of age (“eligible students”) certain rights with respect to the student’s education records.

These rights are briefly summarized below and are explained more fully in the Board’s Student Records Policy which is on file at the School and is available upon request. You are encouraged to review the School’s Student Records Policy for a full explanation of privacy rights.
1. The right to inspect and review the student’s education records within 45 days of the day the Freire Charter School (“School”) receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the School CEO a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The School official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

2. The right to request the amendment of the student’s education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate or misleading. Parents or eligible students may ask the School to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write to the Head of School, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. If the School decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the School will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise him or her of the right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

3. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student’s education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to School officials with legitimate educational interests. A School official may include a person employed by the School as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law unit personnel); a person serving on the Board; a person or company with whom the School has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); contractors, consultants, volunteers, and other outside service providers used by the school; or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another School official in performing his/her tasks. A School official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility. Upon request, the School discloses education records without consent to officials of another school, school district, school system, or institution of higher learning in which a student seeks or intends to enroll. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the School to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the office that administers FERPA is:

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

Directory Information

Directory information includes information contained in the educational record of a student, which is not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed, so that it may be disclosed without prior parental consent, unless you have advised the School to the contrary in accordance with School procedures. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow the School to include this type of information from your child’s education records in certain school-related publications or notices.

As part of the School’s annual notification under FERPA, we designate for the school year 2019-2020 the following types or categories of information as “directory information”:

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- Student name
- Participation in officially recognized activities, clubs and sports
- Naming of student to the Honor Roll, National Honor Society or as valedictorian
- Address
- Telephone listing
- Weight and height of members of athletic teams
- Email address
- Photograph
- Degrees, honors, awards received
- Date and place of birth
- Major field of study
- Dates of attendance
- Grade level
- The most recent educational agency or institution attended

Examples of how and where the School may disclose directory information include disclosing the directory information in the following, by way of example:

- Newsletters
- A playbill, showing student’s role in a drama production
- The annual yearbook
- Honor Roll or other recognition lists
- Graduation programs
- Sports activity sheets, such as for wrestling, showing weight and height of team members
- Companies or outside organizations that manufacture class rings or yearbooks
- Newspapers or other news sources
- Class lists
- Staff and/or student directories and/or listings
- School website
- School bulletin boards
- Organizations conducting studies
- Military recruiters requesting directory information
- Institutions of higher learning requesting directory information

These examples are for illustration only and are not an exclusive list of the manner in which directory information may be disclosed. This notice provides you as a parent or eligible student with an opportunity to object in writing to any or all of those types of information that the School has designated as directory information. You have the right to refuse to permit the release by notifying the School in writing that you do not want any or all of those types of information to be designated as directory information for your child or yourself.

Please submit any refusal with the types of information you wish removed from the list of directory information and mail your written objections on or before September 1, 2019, to the Head of School at:

Freire Charter School
1026 Market Street
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Please note that an opt-out of directory information disclosures does not prevent the School from identifying a student by name or from disclosing a student’s electronic identifier or institutional email address in class. The right to opt out of directory information disclosures does not include a right to remain anonymous in class, and may not be used to impede routine classroom communications and interactions, whether class is held in a specified physical location or on-line through electronic communications.

If you have any questions regarding this notice, please call or write the Head of School at: 1026 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19107, (267) 670-7499. **If you do not submit a written refusal on or before September 1, 2019 then the School may disclose directory information without your prior consent.**

THE CONTENT OF THIS NOTICE HAS BEEN WRITTEN IN STRAIGHTFORWARD, SIMPLE ENGLISH. IF A PERSON DOES NOT UNDERSTAND ANY OF THIS NOTICE, HE OR SHE SHOULD ASK THE CEO OF FREIRE CHARTER SCHOOL FOR AN EXPLANATION. THE SCHOOL WILL ARRANGE FOR AN INTERPRETER FOR PARENTS WITH LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY. IF A PARENT IS DEAF, BLIND, OR HAS NO WRITTEN LANGUAGE, THE SCHOOL WILL ARRANGE FOR COMMUNICATION OF THIS NOTICE IN THE MODE NORMALLY USED BY THE PARENT (E.G., SIGN LANGUAGE, BRAILLE, OR ORAL COMMUNICATION). IF A STUDENT HAS A DISABILITY, ADDITIONAL INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE IN THE SCHOOL’S ANNUAL PUBLIC NOTICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES AND PROGRAMS AND RIGHTS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES.

**Child Find and Public Awareness Policy and Procedures**

Freire Charter School is committed to the identification of students with disabilities in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Chapter 711.

**Public Notice**

- Freire Charter School provides access to informational brochures detailing the special education process in Pennsylvania Charter Schools at all parent meetings and in the main office.
- Freire Charter School publishes an annual notice regarding special education on the school’s website and in the School’s student and family handbook.

If you have questions or concerns, please contact Erin Thomas, Director of Student Services at 267-670-7499 extension 2915 or Erin.Thomas@freirecharterschool.org.

**Academic School Year Child Find Process**

Freire Charter School has created a multi-disciplinary team to determine the need for further evaluation. The process is as follows:

- Every quarter, academic advisors as well as teachers compile curriculum-based performance reports for each student assigned to their caseload. This may take the form of a report card, a progress note, or some other format.
- Teachers screen these reports to determine which students are struggling academically. Any students appearing to need extra support are referred to the Head of School for either informal instructional
support or some level of our response to intervention program, depending upon the needs of each student.

- Parents and students are notified and invited to an informal meeting to discuss student needs and teacher/parent concerns. A determination is made to refer students for response to intervention remediation and support, and/or a multi-disciplinary evaluation.

- Midway through the following quarter, academic advisors check on the grades and progress of these students using three-pronged criteria:
  - Is the student coming for extra help?
  - Is the student completing homework assignments?
  - Is the student passing?

- Teachers are then asked to determine whether the student appears to need further evaluations and/or supports. This may lead to an eventual full evaluation, conducted by a school psychologist. In the case of a full evaluation, parents, teachers and student meet to discuss the results and potential outcomes of the evaluation process. NOTE: In order for a Freire student to go through a full evaluation with a school psychologist, the parent must give consent on Freire’s Permission to Evaluate form.

- A student is referred for a full evaluation only after reasonable regular education and response to intervention options have been exhausted and/or the student’s needs have demonstrated significant resistance to intervention within the regular education classroom.

Summer Child Find Process

In an effort to most efficiently and proactively identify students with disabilities Freire Charter School extends its Child Find process to encompass the summer school program, as it is likely that unidentified students with disabilities will experience a degree of academic difficulty that requires the attendance of summer school.

The administrators and teachers at Freire Charter School will review the academic histories and transcripts of the students attending the summer school program. The School officials may identify students who have experienced chronic educational difficulties to be referred for a formal educational screening and/or a Full Scale Evaluation by our school psychologist (MDE). The following guidelines will be utilized to determine which students require assessment as a component of the school-wide Child Find process:

- If a student is enrolled in summer school for the second consecutive year or more, such students may be referred for a screening and/or a Full Scale Evaluation by our school psychologist.
- If the student is enrolled in summer school for the areas of science, social studies, and language arts, such students may be referred for a screening and/or a Full Scale Evaluation by our school psychologist.
- If the student is an eighth grader and is enrolled in two or more summer school classes, the student may be referred for a screening and/or a Full Scale Evaluation by our school psychologist in attempt to actively identify students with disabilities prior to the development of a chronic pattern of educational failure at Freire Charter School.
- Students who present evidence of underachievement and/or whose educational difficulties are related to factors other than a disability may not be referred for a screening and/or a Full Scale Evaluation by our school psychologist. However, efforts will be made to identify other resources and supports to assist in meeting the educational needs of such a student. Further, Freire Charter School strongly encourages the parents of such students to actively engage in working with their son/daughter to address the barriers to his/her educational success.
VI. Emergency Procedures

What the School Needs from Parents/Guardians in an Emergency

- In the event of an emergency, remain calm.
- Do not call the School. The School will communicate with you as soon as we can via either text message, automated phone calls, or updates to our website.
- Please review this entire plan and ask questions. Make sure that you understand exactly what will happen and the steps the School will take in response to an emergency.
- An emergency can happen at any time, so we need you to make sure that the following information is always up to date in our system:
  - Parent/guardian phone numbers
    - Cell
    - Work
    - Home
  - Emergency Contacts
    - Name/relationship and contact numbers

Emergency Drill Procedure

If a drill taking place either during or after school hours, students or parents/guardians are not permitted to leave the premises until the drill is complete.

Parent/Guardian Notification

Parents will be informed of school emergencies as soon as possible. The following communication tools will be used during an emergency:

School Messenger Automated System

- Calls and/or messages will be sent out periodically so that parents and guardians can have up to date information.

Text Alert

- Please contact the Head of Academic Supports, to ensure that your current mobile phone number is listed in the School’s alert system.

Website Postings

- Please refer to the school’s website for in-depth information: freirecharterschool.org

Applicability

THESE PROCEDURES WILL BE FOLLOWED AT ALL TIMES (INCLUDING AFTER REGULAR SCHOOL HOURS) AND IN ALL FACILITIES THAT FREIRE CHARTER SCHOOL OCCUPIES TO THE DEGREE THAT THEY ARE RELEVANT AND PRUDENT.
Fire and General Building Evacuation Procedure

In the event that the building needs to be evacuated students will be evacuated to one of the two evacuation sites:

- Primary: Washington Square Park
- Secondary: 8th and Market SEPTA concourse

Parents will be informed of the evacuation as soon as possible via the modes of communication described above under “Parent/Guardian Notification”.

Once students have arrived at the evacuation site, and attendance has been taken, the administration will take one of the following steps:

- If the building is safe students will return to it and resume normal school activities.
- If the building is deemed unsafe then the students will be dismissed from the evacuation site.
  - The school will alert parents of the early dismissal via the modes of communication described above under “Parent/Guardian Notification.”
  - Reunification procedures begin.

If students are dismissed after an emergency evacuation, they will not be permitted to return to the building. This means that students may not have some of their belongings such as coats or bags.

Because the school building may be unusable for a period of time after an emergency evacuation, the School will use the modes of communication described above under “Parent/Guardian Notification” to provide parents, students, and staff with updates regarding the schedule for the days following.

Medical Emergency During Evacuation

In the event of a medical emergency during an evacuation the following provisions have been made:

- School nurse will respond to all emergencies with an extensive first aid kit. Included in the kit are:
  - Epinephrine pen (prescribed by the school’s physician)
  - Albuterol inhaler (prescribed by the school’s physician)
  - These items will be used only at the discretion of the nurse
- In the event that the nurse is not available during an evacuation the Head of Academic Supports will bring a similarly equipped first aid kit.
- Steps the administration will follow should a medical emergency occur:
  - Move affected student to the nearest safe location
  - Call 911
  - Notify school nurse
  - Student’s family will be contacted by a school administrator

Bus Evacuation Procedure

Typically, it is safer for students to remain on the bus during an emergency. However, if and emergency occurs and evacuation is necessary, the following procedure is in place:

- Students should remain seated on the bus and listen carefully for the driver’s instructions on how to safely exit the bus
• Ambulatory students with disabilities will be evacuated in the same manner as students in general education, whenever possible. Students in wheelchairs or non-ambulatory students will be given special consideration during the evacuation process.
• An able student or students may be appointed to assist Freire staff in an emergency situation
• When instructed to do so, students should exit the bus quickly and calmly, leaving all personal belongings behind
• Students should move a safe distance from the bus and wait quietly for further instructions

Steps the administration will follow:
• Ensure that students remain calm and quiet during an emergency situation and follow the directions of the driver
• Staff may appoint an able student or students to assist other students to evacuate during an emergency situation. If this student is appointed at the start of the school year, parents/guardians may be consulted to discuss the particular abilities of the student
• Students who are blind and/or deaf will be assigned a partner who can assist them in an emergency
• Determine whether students in wheelchairs should be evacuated in wheelchairs or removed from them before evacuation
• Appropriately assisting non-ambulatory students from the bus, if necessary
• If a medical emergency occurs during a bus evacuation, school administration will follow the Medical Emergency During Evacuation procedure
• For students with unique and special needs, specific plans may be written and developed for safe evacuation during an emergency

**Lockdown Procedure**

A lockdown procedure will be enacted during any of the following situations:
• An intruder has entered the school building. An intruder is defined as an individual who has not received permission from the school to be on school premises.
• A violent/potentially violent event has happened outside of the school building and is a threat to students and staff in the school.

The school will follow the procedures below when enacting a lockdown:
• 911 is immediately notified.
• All students in common areas will be cleared and moved to a secure area.
• The command center will notify all classrooms that the school is entering lockdown.
• The school will await the response of the police.
• Once the police are on the scene, the school will await their assessment of the situation and cooperate with them fully.
• The front doors will be secured and locked and no one will be allowed in or out of the building (unless the dangerous individual attempts to leave).
• The only external communication during a lockdown will be from the school’s administration.
• As soon as possible, a school administrator will alert parents of the situation via the modes of communication described above under “Parent/Guardian Notification.”

Procedures that will be followed in classrooms and offices:
• All doors will be locked.
• Windows will be covered.
• Lights and all equipment will be turned off.
• Students and teachers are expected to stay away from the door and be silent until the lockdown is lifted.

Once the police have cleared the building or declared the situation safe, the school will either return to a normal schedule, or dismiss the students.

• If the administration deems that students are able to return to a normal schedule the school day will continue as usual with dismissal at the normal time.
• If the administration decides to dismiss the students due to the situation, the School will implement the Reunification Plan (see below).
• Should a medical emergency occur during a lockdown staff are equipped with a first aid kit that is stored in the classroom emergency kit.
• Emergency/medical personnel will be on hand to deal with any potential injuries when the police deem the building safe.
• Parents will be notified when the lockdown has been lifted and will be given any additional pertinent information.

**Shelter in Place Procedure**

Shelter in place will be enacted under the following conditions:

• The school is directed by the Philadelphia Police or Fire Department to implement the plan
• The school determines that a dangerous condition exists outside the school building and that it is unsafe for community members to leave the school building

The procedure for shelter in place is as follows:

• The HVAC system will be shut down to minimize the entrance of outside air into the facilities.
• Any other building system that needs to be shut down (depending upon the situation) will be shut down accordingly.
• Safety Team will alert all staff to shelter in place:
  o Students will continue to attend class and school functions will continue normally until the situation dictates otherwise.
  o The front door to the school will be locked and no one except emergency personnel will be permitted to enter or leave the school.
  o The safety team will ensure that all other doors are secured.
• As soon as possible, the communications officer will alert parents to the situation via the modes of communication described above under “Parent/Guardian Notification.”

Should the need arise for shelter in place to continue beyond the normal school day, the reunification plan will commence:

• Students will not be dismissed until the school administrators have been alerted by the Fire or Police that it is safe to dismiss, or the school administration deems that it is safe for community members to leave the building.
• The school will provide necessary food, water and other provisions to all community members during a shelter in place scenario.
• Parents/guardians will be informed of the situation and when students will available to be picked up, as per the reunification procedures.

Reunification Procedure

In the aftermath of an emergency, including a lockdown, Freire Charter Middle School will enact the reunification plan. Upon the administrators’ determination that students will be dismissed, the school, parents, and students will follow these procedures:

In the event that students stay at 1026 Market Street

• A school administrator will alert all parents/guardians of when dismissal will begin via the modes of communication described above under “Parent/Guardian Notification.”
• At the chosen dismissal time, students will proceed to their homeroom with their belongings.
• The greeter will be stationed at a table at the front door.
• The greeter will check IDs to make sure that the person picking up a student is a parent/guardian of the child or a designated person from the emergency form.
• Once verified, the parent/guardian will proceed to the cafeteria.
• A school official will be in the cafeteria, where the parent/guardian will relay their child’s name. The school official will radio up to the school designee on the second floor, and the child will be sent down to meet up with the parent/guardian.
• When reunified, the parent/guardian and child will “check out” with a school official positioned at the Ludlow Street exit.

In the event that students go to the emergency location

• A school administrator will alert all parents/guardians of when dismissal will begin via the modes of communication described above under “Parent/Guardian Notification.”
• Students will follow their teacher to the emergency location, with their belongings if at all possible.
• Students will sit with their class in a specific area of the location, so that their safety is maximized.
• The greeter will be stationed at the location referenced in the School Messenger alert at a table in the front of the locale.
  o Parent/guardian will be directed to the check-in area.
  o The greeter will check IDs to make sure that the person picking up a student is a parent/guardian of the child, or a designated person from the emergency form.
  o Once verified, the parent/guardian will proceed to the meeting place as their child’s name is radioed to a school official assigned to the teacher’s area.
• A staff member will proceed to the student’s area, and escort the student to the meeting place where the parent/guardian is waiting.
• When reunified, the parent/guardian and child will “check out” with a school official positioned at a designated exit.
• In the event that a parent/guardian/emergency contact person cannot be reached, the student will remain with school officials until contact/reunification is made.
Death of a Community Member

In the event a Freire Charter School community member should die, the school will put the following procedures into place to support the community:

- Parents will be alerted to the situation by a letter from the administration.
- This communication will include:
  - An outline of all supports that the school will provide for community members.
  - Details of how community members can access the supports.
  - When and where these supports will be provided.
  - Any alterations to the school schedule in order to provide these supports.
- Grief counseling will be available to all community members who wish to participate.
  - The details of this support will be provided in the communication to parents.
  - The school’s counselors will be used as the primary resource for grief counseling.
  - The school will utilize the following resources if we cannot adequately support grief counseling in-house:
    - The Center for Grieving Children, Teens, and Families: (215) 744-4025
    - The City of Philadelphia Department of Behavioral Health and Mental Retardation Services Mobile Emergency Team (MET): (215) 685-6440
- The school will make accommodations for any community members who wish to attend funeral services or memorial services planned by the family of the deceased.
  - The school will provide support and counseling for community members immediately before and immediately following the funeral or memorial services.
  - Freire will continue to provide ongoing personal and group support for grieving community members for as long as community members require the services.

Memorial Policy

The School prohibits physical memorials such as stuffed animals, candles, etc. because they can create a safety hazard. The school will always work with community members in order to find a meaningful way to remember the deceased.

School Visitors and Security

Freire Charter School utilizes video surveillance at all entrances and exits to the school building. This surveillance is used to ensure the safety of all community members.

- All visitors must enter and exit the building from the main entrance unless otherwise directed by a member of the administrative staff.
- All visitors must check-in with the greeter, located on the lower floor; no visitors are allowed to enter the school environs without doing so.
- Procedure for Visitors:
  - The greeter will obtain the visitor’s name and reason for their visit.
  - If the visitor has a valid reason for entering the school, the greeter will give them a sticker marked “Visitor” and then contact the appropriate party within the school.
  - If the visitor does not have a valid reason for entering the school, the greeter will ask them to leave school property immediately.
Should the person refuse, 911 will be called and the visitor will be considered a trespasser.

- Freire Charter School will prosecute all trespassers to the fullest extent of the law.
- Should the individual enter the building without approval, the Head of Academic Supports or designee may decide to initiate the lockdown procedure.

Pandemic Flu Response Plan

This plan is designed to manage the impact that any pandemic flu may have on the Freire community.

The Pandemic Flu Response Plan will be implemented whenever:

- A new strain of flu virus capable of infecting humans emerges and is present in the school’s general geographic area.
- The flu season is predicted to be uncharacteristically heavy.
- Absenteeism of students and/or staff is high due to flu-like illness.

The school plans to achieve this goal by instituting the following measures:

- Cleaning measures completed at a minimum of once per day:
  - All common touch areas will be wiped down with a 10% bleach solution (1:9 ratio of bleach to water).
  - Sensitive electronic equipment such as computer keyboards will be disinfected with bleach containing wipes. This disinfecting will be performed once daily.
  - All bathrooms will be checked thrice daily to ensure the presence of soap and paper towels in sufficient quantities.
  - All classrooms will be checked every morning to ensure they have tissues available.
  - All hand sanitizer dispensers in the school will be checked daily to ensure they are full and functional.

- Completed on a weekly basis:
  - All lockers in the school building will be wiped down with a 10% bleach solution.
  - Maintenance staff will make disinfectant wipes available throughout the school should staff or students wish to utilize them to disinfect their lockers, phone receivers, etc.

- Social Distancing Measures:
  - Students and staff with flu-like symptoms will be asked to remain home until at least 24 hours after they are free of fever (100°F or greater), or signs of a fever, without the use of fever-reducing medications.
  - Students and staff with flu-like symptoms upon arrival to school, or who develop flu-like symptoms during the day, will be promptly separated from the general school population until they can return home.
  - The room used for separation will be determined based upon the usage of school space at that particular time.

- Education Measures:
  - Education around respiratory and hand hygiene will be implemented.
  - Signage encouraging proper hand washing and covering one’s nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing will be heavily posted throughout school facilities.
  - Teachers will be asked to remind students of the essentiality of proper hand and respiratory hygiene practices.
• **Communication Measures:**
  o **Parents and Students:**
    - In the event of a pandemic flu outbreak, a letter will be sent home with all students and a copy will be mailed to their home. This letter will provide the following information:
      - Accurate and up-to-date information on the outbreak.
      - Parents will be reminded to keep their children home from school if they are exhibiting flu-like symptoms.
      - The letter will also detail the school’s response measures and provide any other pertinent information.
      - Additionally, the school will use all the communications means at our disposal to keep parents up-to-date.
  o **Community Partners:**
    - The school will maintain open lines of communication with the Philadelphia Department of Public Health (PDPH) during any period of increased flu activity.
• **Attendance Policy:**
  o The school’s attendance policy of requiring a note from a student’s doctor when that student is absent due to illness will remain in place until the burden of absenteeism becomes such that this policy is no longer feasible.
  o When the school has made this determination, parents will be required to contact the Head of Academic Supports, and report their student’s absence directly to this individual in place of obtaining a doctor’s note.
  o Once the disease outbreak subsides the attendance policy will return to normal. The change in attendance policy will be announced to parents via a “One Call” phone message.

**Alternate Transportation Plan (for 7th and 8th graders ONLY)**

In the event that SEPTA is not running, the school will enact the Alternate Transportation Plan.

• The school will provide transportation via yellow school buses for students using the plan outlined below:
  o The buses will run every day and leave their points of departure at the times indicated in order to arrive at the school by 8:00 a.m.
  o All buses will make appropriate stops in order to achieve a balance between convenience for the students and timeliness of arrival.
  o On the return trip the buses will be waiting outside of 1026 Market Street (behind the building on Ludlow St.) at 3:00 p.m. and will leave by 3:15 p.m. From this point they will follow the reverse of their morning routes adjusted for traffic flow as necessary.
• **Security:** All students must show their Freire Charter Middle School identification card in order to board the bus anywhere other than at the school building for the trip home.
• **Staggered Arrivals:** In the event that a staggered arrival of students to the school is necessary due to testing or other considerations, special plans will need to be made.
• **The school will continue to provide this service until one of the following occurs:**
  o SEPTA resumes operation
  o The school can no longer financially afford the service
• Should SEPTA cease operation in the middle of the day, the school will immediately enact shelter in place until one of the following can occur:
Alternative transportation can be arranged
SEPTA service is reinstated
Parents pick up their students

Alternate School Space

In the event Freire Charter Middle School is no longer inhabitable, then the school will relocate to an alternative space.

Parents will be alerted to the situation by a School Messenger alert. The alert will include:

- Directions and address to the alternative school space.
- Schedule adjustments (if necessary).
- When school will resume.
- Pertinent information regarding materials/books/etc.
- Communication tools that families can use to stay up to date regarding the situation.

In addition:

- The school will provide community members with support and assistance in order for them to relocate to the alternate site. The details of this support will be provided in the communication to parents.
- The school will make schedule and calendar adjustments as needed to ensure that the adequate amount of instructional time is maintained.
- The school and administration will work hard to replace all instructional materials in a timely fashion.
Appendices
Appendix A: Nonviolence and Commitment to Peace Policy Contract

Freire is a nonviolent community. This policy, written by the Freire Charter School Board, mandates a recommendation of expulsion for all acts of violence (including acts committed in self-defense). The recommendation will be made by the designated school personnel and will be carried out regardless of the circumstances surrounding any specific event or the disciplinary history or academic standing of any student involved.

My child and I have read, discussed and agree to the following:

- Freire Charter School is a nonviolent school, and, as members of the school community, my child and I promise that he/she will not to be involved any act of violence no matter the circumstances, including acts of self-defense.
- I understand that any act of bullying is a violation of the Nonviolence and Commitment to Peace Policy.
- There are NO SECOND CHANCES. Any violation of the above policies will result in my child being recommended for expulsion.
- I understand that Freire Charter School is a school of choice and that it is my right to withdraw my child at any time. If my child is recommended for expulsion for a violation of the Nonviolence Policy, withdrawing them from Freire will immediately stop the expulsion process as the school cannot move to expel a student that is no longer enrolled in the school.
- I acknowledge that Freire Charter School provides many different programs that are specifically designed for my child to learn how to solve conflict in a nonviolent way. These programs include mediation, character building, anger management, individual counseling, family therapy, and bullying prevention programs. It is my responsibility, as a parent, to contact the school and request additional support should I feel that my child requires it in order to be successful at Freire Charter School.
- I understand that Freire teachers and staff are here to support my child in any way they can so that neither my child nor I will ever use violence at Freire Charter School.

THERE ARE NO SECOND CHANCES FOR STUDENTS WHO BREAK THIS POLICY.

______________________________  ______________________________  __________
Student Name (Print)           Student Signature          Date

______________________________  ______________________________  __________
Parent/Guardian Name (Print)   Parent/Guardian Signature    Date
(Required for 5th grade)       (Required for 5th grade)      

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Appendix B: Bullying and Cyberbullying Contract

Pennsylvania law defines "bullying" as an intentional electronic, written, verbal or physical act, or a series of acts directed at another student or students that is severe, persistent or pervasive; and that has the effect of (i) substantially interfering with a student's education; (ii) creating a threatening environment; or (iii) substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

Freire’s Code of Conduct prohibits additional behaviors beyond the legal definition of bullying, which include:

- Verbal or physical taunting or intimidation against students or staff because of age, ancestry, citizenship, color, creed, disability, domestic or sexual violence victim status, ethnicity, familial status, gender expression, gender identity, genetic information, marital status, medical condition, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, veteran status, or any other protected status.
- Acts occurring over the Internet (Snapchat, Instagram, etc.), through cell phones, cameras, or video, or by any other means through which people can communicate or share information
- Any unwanted, aggressive behavior among individuals that instills fear or serves to demean an individual and are committed over a period of time, regardless of the intentions of the bully/bullies
- Taking a passive role as a bystander by encouraging a bully or willingly not taking action to prevent abuse from occurring

Freire takes a firm stance against bullying and is committed to address this negative behavior, as it is detrimental to the well-being of an individual, is a major disruption to the learning environment, and is damaging to the entire community.

Depending upon the facts and circumstances, Freire may define bullying as an act of violence and therefore a violation of the Nonviolence Policy (See Nonviolence and Commitment to Peace Policy). The Dean may then make a recommendation for expulsion if it is deemed necessary. In these cases, the Dean will be required to review the reason for the decision to the student and parent, Head of School, and the Board of Directors.

If there is a suspected violation of the Bullying and Cyberbullying Policy, the School will follow the disciplinary policies and procedures outlined in the Student and Family Handbook.

______________________________  ______________________________  ___________
Student Name (Print)           Student Signature          Date

______________________________  ______________________________  ___________
Parent/Guardian Name (Print)   Parent/Guardian Signature  Date
(Required for 5th grade)       (Required for 5th grade)
Appendix C: Student Technology Agreement

No student shall be allowed to use Freire Charter School technology or the Internet until he/she has signed and returned this Agreement.

- I have read the Freire Charter School Student Technology Policy.
- I understand the terms and conditions set forth by Freire about acceptable and unacceptable use of technology.
- I understand that if I break a piece of equipment while using it, my family and I are responsible for replacing that equipment.
- I understand that unacceptable use, as defined by the Student Technology Policy or at the discretion of the School’s staff or administration, may result in restriction or cancellation of access (even for required coursework) as well as other disciplinary or legal action.

______________________________  ________________________________  __________
Student Name (Print)                  Student Signature                  Date

______________________________  ________________________________  __________
Parent/Guardian Name (Print)       Parent/Guardian Signature                  Date
(Required for all grades)           (Required for all grades)
Appendix D: Cell Phone and Electronics Contract

Freire Charter School understands that cell phones and electronic devices are an important part of a person’s everyday life. However, cell phones and other electronic devices are not permitted in a Freire classroom, because they serve as an educational distraction and can promote cheating. If a parent needs to contact a child during the instructional day, please call the front desk and we will get a message to your child. If your child needs to contact a parent during the school day, they are permitted to use a School telephone at the front desk. We encourage students to take cell phones on class trips as a safety precaution.

Students are permitted to bring cell phones and electronic devices to school provided the following guidelines are followed:

- Students must turn their cell phones and electronic devices off BEFORE entering school.  
- Detention and after-school tutoring are considered classroom activities. Therefore, cell phones must remain turned off at all times during these activities.  
- Freire Charter School is not financially responsible for lost or stolen property that a student voluntarily brings to school, including cell phones and other electronic devices.  
- Cell phones and electronic devices are expected to be stored in a student’s locker during school hours (including during after-school activities, sports, homework club, etc.).

Any cell phone or electronic device that is seen or heard during the day will be confiscated. (Please see below for procedures for picking up confiscated phones.)

If a phone/electronic device is confiscated, then the following procedure must be followed when retrieving the phone:

- Phones can only be picked up by the person listed as parent/guardian on PowerSchool unless previously approved by the Dean’s office.  
- Confiscated items will only be returned to the parent/guardian identified in the PowerSchool system.  
- Appointments must be made to retrieve items. Please call the Dean’s office at 267-670-7499 to schedule an appointment.  
- The cell phone will be returned when a parent or guardian makes an appointment and comes into the school to personally claim the device.  
- Parents will have to sign a copy of the Cell Phone and Electronics Policy when they pick up the student’s device.

Students who repeatedly break the Cell Phone and Electronics Policy will have a mandatory parent meeting with the Dean, and the Head of Academic Supports. If the policy is chronically broken, the school may require the students to turn in their phone to the Dean’s Office at the start of the day and retrieve it upon completion of the day should they desire to continue to bring a cell phone to school.

Freire Charter School is not financially responsible for property that a student voluntarily brings to school, including cell phones and other electronic devices, including in the event that property is lost, misplaced, or stolen. Although the school takes every precaution to store confiscated student electronic devices safely and securely, Freire is not financially responsible for student electronic devices whether they are in the student’s or the school’s possession.
Refusal to surrender a requested cell phone or removing the SIM chip from the phone will be considered an act of extreme defiance and will result in the following actions:

- The student’s parent will be contacted immediately
- The student will be sent home for the remainder of the day
- A mandatory informal hearing will be held the next school day
- During this hearing the parent and student will be warned future behaviors like this may lead to more severe consequences
- One (or more) of the following consequences will be assigned:
  - Contract
  - Loss of school privileges
  - Community service

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Appendix E: Code of Conduct and Handbook Contractual Agreement

I, ____________________________ (print student name), have read and understand the Code of Conduct and all other Freire Charter School policies contained in the Student & Family Handbook. I agree to follow all the rules and regulations outlined in the Code of Conduct as well as Freire Charter School’s other policies which have been defined by the Freire Community.

Please read below and write your initials next to each statement:

___ I realize it is my responsibility to take the Code of Conduct home and give it to my parents to review.

___ I understand there are NO second chances for breaking the Nonviolence and Commitment to Peace Policy.

___ I understand that verbally harassing/abusing another person may be considered an act of violence.

___ I understand that electronic devices of any type (including cell phones) are prohibited. I also realize that if I bring one of these items to school I do so at my own risk and the school will not take financial responsibility for lost/stolen items.

___ I understand that I must DRe ss Appropriately.

___ I understand that I must Always Be Kind and Respectful.

___ I understand that I must keep the G rou nds Neat and Clean.

___ I understand that I must be ON Time and Ready to Learn.

___ I understand that I must be Safe myself and with others.

______________________________  ____________________________  _________
Student Name (Print)                Student Signature                     Date

______________________________  ____________________________  _________
Parent/Guardian Name (Print)        Parent/Guardian Signature            Date
(Required for 5th grade)            (Required for 5th grade)
Appendix F: Contract for Excellence

From the students themselves to their parents/guardians, teachers, and support staff – each and every one of us has a critical role to play in supporting success for our learners. To make sure each of us knows our role in the process, we all must agree to and sign the Freire Contract for Excellence. This document establishes the commitments listed below:

Student Commitment

I fully commit to Freire Charter School in the following ways:

- I will arrive at Freire Charter School every day by 7:50 a.m. (Monday-Friday).
- I will remain at Freire Charter School until 4:30 p.m. when necessary if I need extra academic help.
- I will make arrangements to attend Freire functions during times beyond the traditional school day, with little exception.
- I will complete all Freire summer work required of me, including all summer reading assignments.
- I will always work, think, and behave in the best way I know how, and I will do whatever it takes for my fellow students and me to learn.
- I will only be absent for excused reasons (sickness, family emergency, legal issue, etc.), and I will call or email the school to let the staff know. Also, I will bring an official doctor’s note, court notice, etc. when I return to school.
- I will ask questions and ask for help if I do not understand something.
- I will always make myself available to my parents/guardians and school staff, and address any concerns they might have.
- If I make a mistake, I will tell the truth and accept responsibility for my actions.
- I will always behave to protect the safety, interests, and rights of all individuals involved with Freire Charter School.
- I will always listen to my fellow community members and give everyone my respect.
- I am responsible for my own behavior, and I will follow the staff’s directions. I will also bring home any papers the school asks me to.
- I will do whatever it takes to aim toward college, including doing my homework every day, reading at least 30 minutes per day outside of school time, and getting involved in extracurricular activities, volunteering and sports.
- I promise to solve differences in a peaceful manner and to treat others with respect at all times.

Staff Commitment

I fully commit to Freire Charter School in the following ways:

- I will arrive at Freire Charter School every day by 7:50 a.m. (Monday-Friday).
- I will remain at Freire Charter School, or my designated location, until my obligations are complete (Monday-Friday).
- I will make arrangements to attend Freire functions during times beyond the traditional school day, with little exception.
- I will ask questions if I do not understand something.
- I will always teach and/or work in the best way I know how, and I will do whatever it takes for students to learn.
Student & Family Handbook

- I will always make myself available to students and parents and address any concerns they might have.
- I will always protect the safety, interests, and rights of all individuals involved with Freire Charter School.
- I will do whatever it takes to move students toward college.
- I promise to solve differences in a peaceful manner and to treat others with respect at all times.

Parent/Guardian Commitment

I fully commit to Freire Charter School in the following ways:

- I will make sure my student arrives at Freire Charter School every day by 7:50 a.m. (Monday-Friday).
- I will make arrangements so my student can remain at Freire Charter School until 4:30 to attend support centers when needed.
- I will make arrangements for my student to attend Freire functions beyond the traditional school day, with little exception.
- I will ask questions if I do not understand something.
- I know that I am a welcome part of the Freire community at all times, including participating in board meetings and committees, observing classes, volunteering, etc.
- I will always help my student in the best way I know how, and I will do whatever it takes for him/her to learn. This means that I will:
  o Attend Parent-Student-Teacher Conferences three times per year on the days stated in the school calendar or whenever necessary.
  o Contact the teachers and staff if there is a concern.
  o Remain active in my student’s education.
  o Do whatever it takes to move my student toward college.
  o Read any and all papers that the school sends home to me.
  o Make sure my student completes their homework every evening.
  o Serve the Freire community to the extent possible by participating in advisory groups, attending Freire Family Association meetings, and/or volunteering.
- I will always make myself available to my student and the school and address any concerns they might have.
- I will ensure that my student only misses school for excused reasons (sickness, family emergency, legal issue, etc.). If my student is going to miss school, I will call and notify the school as soon as possible.
- I will allow my child to go on Freire field trips and participate in other off-campus events.
- I understand that my student must follow Freire Charter School rules and the Code of Conduct to protect the safety, interests, and rights of all individuals in our community. I am responsible for the behavior and actions of my student.
- I will encourage and expect my student to solve conflicts only in a peaceful manner.

School Commitment

The school fully commits to Freire Charter School in the following ways:

- The school will involve parents in the planning, review and improvement of the school’s parental involvement policy in an organized, ongoing and timely way.
• The school will involve parents in the joint development of any school-wide program plan in an organized, ongoing and timely way.

• The school will hold an annual meeting to inform parents of the school’s participation in Title I, Part A programs, and to explain the Title I, Part A requirements and the right of the parents to be involved in Title I, Part A programs.

• The school will provide to parents a description of the school’s curriculum, the forms of academic assessment used to measure student progress, and the proficiency levels students are expected to meet.

• At the request of parents, the school will provide opportunities for regular meetings for parents to formulate suggestions, and to participate, as appropriate, in decisions about the education of their children.

• In the very rare, if ever occurring, event that a child has been assigned to or has been taught for four (4) or more consecutive weeks by a teacher who is not highly qualified, the school will provide each parent timely notice.

PLEASE SIGN BELOW TO DEMONSTRATE YOUR COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE.

FAILURE TO ADHERE TO THESE COMMITMENTS CAN LEAD TO LOSS OF PRIVILEGES OR REMOVAL FROM FREIRE.

__________________________________________________________________________  ______________________________________________________________________  ____________
Student Name (Print)  Student Signature  Date

__________________________________________________________________________  ______________________________________________________________________  ____________
Parent/Guardian Name (Print) (Required for all grades)  Parent/Guardian Signature (Required for all grades)  Date
Appendix G: Attendance Agreement

Please read below, write your initials next to each statement, and sign below.

_____ I understand the student attendance policies of Freire Charter Middle School.

_____ I understand that an excused absence is only an absence for official business like a court date, death in family, or doctor or dentist appointments. I understand that I MUST bring in proof of these events with back to work slips and/or other documentation to prove my absence was for official business.

_____ I understand that I may fail any class that I have missed for 20 or more class days.

_____ I understand that if I reach 20 unexcused absences, I will be placed on probation and will be required to attend a meeting with my parents and the Head of Academic Supports.

_____ I understand that after 25 absences, I may be retained in my current grade regardless of my academic standing or passing grades, at the discretion of the Head of School.

_____ I understand that, pursuant to Pennsylvania regulation, I will be removed from the School’s roll if I have accumulated 10 consecutive unexcused absences.

_____ I understand that I will be considered truant after 3 truant absences, unless I provide the School with a written explanation of a legitimate reason for the absence within 5 school days of the absence. I understand that the purpose of such notes is to prevent a truancy citation and that parent notes do not excuse absences under Freire Charter School policy. I understand that truancy may result in a citation from Philadelphia Family Court and involvement from the Philadelphia Department of Human Services.

________________________________________________________________________
Student Name (Print)          Student Signature          Date

________________________________________________________________________
Parent/Guardian Name (Print)  Parent/Guardian Signature  Date
(Required for all grades)    (Required for all grades)
Appendix H: Locker Contractual Agreement

I, _________________________ (print student name), have read and understand the locker procedures as set forth in the Code of Conduct and the Freire Charter School Student and Family Handbook. I promise to keep my locker in good shape, as it is the property of the school. In addition, I will keep my school-issued lock on the locker.

Please read below and write your initials next to each statement:

____ I understand that no one else may use my locker at any time.

____ I understand I am responsible for the contents of the locker at all times.

____ I understand that the contents of my locker may be searched at any time.

____ I understand that if my locker is left unlocked, the contents will be emptied, and I may forfeit my right to have a locker.

__________________________  __________________________
Student’s Name (please print)  Grade

__________________________  __________________________
Student’s Signature  Date

__________________________  __________________________
Locker #  Locker Combination

__________________________  __________________________
Parent Signature  (Required for 5th grade)  Date