



Community Handbook

2023-24

Although every effort will be made to fully update the community handbook prior to the start of each school year, Explore! Community School reserves the right to change this handbook and any content within, without notice, except as may be required by state and federal law. As a result, please refer to the online version of the community handbook throughout the school year.

Explore! Community School is an outreach of the Martha O'Bryan Center, an anti-poverty nonprofit organization with longstanding history and deep community roots. The Martha O'Bryan Center has operated from the heart of Cayce Place since 1948, opening doors of hope and possibility to create a culture of attainment and positively shape future generations.

Curiosity – Compassion – Community – Courage - Craftsmanship



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School Information

Letter from Explore! Leadership

Dear Families,

For the first time, Explore! Community School welcomes Kindergarten through 8th Grade Explorers on-campus this year! After years of planning and growth, we are excited to complete the buildout of a dream that began over ten years ago. Explore! Community School provides a challenging education in a joyful and supportive environment. We embody the spirit of a community school and work to uphold our values of Curiosity, Community, Compassion, Courage, and Craftsmanship.

Daily, Explorers engage in meaningful project-based learning that ensures they master core academic content while developing the character and social skills that will equip them to become innovative leaders. Led by an extraordinary group of loving and supportive teachers, Explorers demonstrate the highest levels of academic achievement, character growth, and care for themselves and their community. Every day at Explore, we embrace the diversity that surrounds us. We grow together through curiosity, reflection, and collaboration to ensure our Explorers are known, supported, healthy, happy, challenged, and fully prepared for college and beyond.

We know caregivers are Explorers' first and primary teachers, and we look forward to learning with and from you as we develop. As a member of this community, you and your Explorer will play an integral role in helping us achieve our mission and vision. This handbook is designed to facilitate your participation and collaboration around important topics relating to our mission, approach, and policies.

Of course, no document can address every question you may have. We encourage you to contact our leadership team if you need further information. Thank you again for joining our community. It will be an incredible journey, and we are glad to embark upon it together!

With love,
Explore! Community School Leadership



School Information

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Foundational Beliefs

The mission of Explore! Community School is to foster the independence, critical thinking, and creativity of a diverse community of learners, so they are fully prepared to become confident, conscientious leaders who change the world. As we work towards this mission, we are guided by three foundational beliefs:

1. We believe in providing meaningful opportunities for Explorers to engage in authentic learning experiences.

Daily, Explorers engage in learning opportunities that reinforce Tennessee State Standards and concepts while developing the creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and citizenship skills necessary for success in the 21st Century. This approach ensures learning is meaningful to Explorers, challenging them to apply their learning through exciting project-based tasks requiring expert thinking and complex communication. It allows seamless art, music, technology, and community service integration. At Explore, we encourage Explorers to learn as readers, authors, mathematicians, scientists, and artists.

2. We believe in creating a culture of excellence, joy, and love.

At Explore, we understand that when Explorers are held to high standards and create work in which they have pride and ownership, they realize their true potential, unlocking the capacity for excellence in every area of their lives. We support learning that promotes craftsmanship by developing Explorers' ability to study, reflect, and improve. Children are born with a love for learning, and we will cultivate that love by providing a joyful educational experience that supports each student's unique passions and interests. We recognize that relationships form the foundation of community and are committed to seeking to understand others' actions, thoughts, and backgrounds. We depend on one another within our school community.

3. We believe in collaborating with families and communities.

We recognize that caregivers are children's primary teachers and that explorers learn everywhere all the time. Therefore, we work purposefully to engage families and empower them to participate meaningfully in their child's education. We work collaboratively, creatively, and relentlessly to dismantle barriers and obstacles to community success. We develop strong relationships with the community and among one another and will look to each other for support and inspiration. We acknowledge that care for each individual by each individual is vital to a thriving school environment. As such, we are committed to academically, socially, and emotionally educating the whole child. We support a community where each individual's voice is valued and nurtured. We believe in celebrating diversity as a strength by actively seeking to learn and understand perspectives.



Core Values and Community Commitments

Our Core Values come directly from our foundational beliefs. The Community Commitments are the Core Values in action and serve as a guide for our daily conduct. All community members make the following commitments to ensure that we live out our core values and that every community member is empowered, challenged, inspired, and loved.

Core Value	Commitments
Curiosity: <i>We encourage exploration and discovery in teaching and learning.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will wonder, dream, and ask questions. • We will discover our talents, passions, and potential. • We will ensure learning is always purposeful, interesting, and fun.
Community: <i>We learn from each other and collaborate to make a positive impact on our school, families, and world.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will celebrate diversity as an essential strength of our community. • We will recognize and honor the qualities that make each of us unique. • We will take responsibility for our success and support the success of others. • We will keep others and ourselves safe.
Compassion: <i>We are mindful of others and are kind and helpful to ensure we all experience success</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will act with kindness, speak with love, and listen with respect. • We will seek out opportunities to help one another. • We will take action to improve our school, community, and world.
Courage: <i>We take action to do the right thing even when it's hard. We stand up for others, admit our mistakes, and ask for help when we need it.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will take risks in order to grow and improve. • We will do the right thing even when it's hard. • We will Explore new places, ideas, and possibilities.
Craftsmanship: <i>We will do whatever it takes to ensure we create work that is worthy of pride.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will seek out and implement feedback in order to improve. • We will create beautiful work. • We will revise and improve until we are proud.



Academics

K-4 Daily Schedule

Breakfast and Arrival	Our doors open at 7:30 AM and breakfast is served until 7:45 AM. Explorers are greeted by teachers, staff, and friends as they enter the building, get organized for the day, and interact with the morning message when they arrive in their classrooms.
Community Meeting and Move this World	Teachers utilize the Responsive Classroom Morning Meeting to help build community in the classroom. Explorers start daily with a Greeting, Share, Activity, Message, and daily announcements. This joyful time is directly followed by Move this World, a social and emotional curriculum that utilizes mindfulness and symbols to identify emotions
Calendar (K-1)	Understanding the world around us can be hard work! Our youngest learners experience calendar Math as a part of their morning routine. Mathematicians learn how we organize time, temperature, and weather and recognize patterns and review important mathematical understandings.
English/Language Arts	Readers use Wit & Wisdom as their primary reading instruction for comprehension, and vocabulary development. We combine this instruction with at least 60 minutes of foundational literacy skills in phonics, phonemic awareness, and fluency. We utilize the science of reading in the TN Best for All phonics curriculum in K-2.
Recess	Play is essential for developing creativity and increasing academic achievement. Explorers at Explore will enjoy this chance to connect with their friends, cultivate their imaginations and exercise!
Lunch	Explorers will enjoy a healthy, delicious lunch and then have the opportunity to rest, focus their thoughts, and re-energize.
Content Literacy	Content Literacy is an opportunity for Scientists/Historians and Engineers to read and write about the world around us. This time of the day focuses on the incorporation of non-fiction texts and helps develop research skills. Explorers look at primary sources, answer document-based questions, utilize the scientific method, and participate in the engineering design process. All grades K-2 utilize the Engineering is Elementary Curriculum which relies on real-world contexts and the design thinking process. Beginning in



	<p>Grades 3-4 Explorers have the opportunity to Experience Ph.D. Science which focuses on phenomenon finding!</p>
Writing	<p>During writing, teachers use mentor texts to help authors develop their voice and create stories from their unique, personal experiences and through active research and discovery.</p>
Balanced Math	<p>Mathematicians will focus on developing number sense and problem-solving. Mathematicians construct deep conceptual understanding through guided play and discovery. Explorers will discover new patterns and relationships in composing and decomposing numbers. Mathematicians need a variety of methods to help support their development. Explore has planned for this with the careful addition of Achievement First mathematics. This curriculum is standards-aligned and very rigorous.</p>
Related Arts	<p>At Explore we believe every child deserves the opportunity to discover and exercise their passions and that the arts are as important as our traditional curriculum. Kindergarten through fourth grade Explorers will participate in Music, Garden, Art, Spanish, and Fitness and Adventure once a week. They will also attend library on a weekly basis!</p>
Explorations	<p>Explorers will engage in purposeful project-based learning, taking the knowledge they gain during the rest of the day and applying it in authentic, hands-on activities. Explorers will create works of beauty and will present publicly their learning to the community.</p>
Passions	<p>We will collaborate with several community partners for the 2023-24 school year and offer a Passions program for one hour on Friday. This enrichment occurs during the school day and is designed to help Explorers develop life long learning interests.</p>
Closing Circle	<p>This is a time to celebrate the ways that we have demonstrated learning and our core values throughout the day. Explorers are able to share compliments, point out something they learned, or share something they are looking forward to.</p>
Dismissal	<p>Explorers leave for home or transition to after-school programming. Monday through Friday school is dismissed at 3:15pm.</p>



5-8 Daily Schedule

Breakfast and Arrival	Our doors open at 7:30 AM and breakfast is served until 7:45 AM. Explorers should be in their seats, ready to learn no later than 7:45 AM. Explorers are greeted by teachers, staff, and friends as they enter the building. Explorers get organized for the day by going to hooks/lockers before entering the classroom.
Morning Advisory	Morning advisory is a time where Explorers explore the concepts of growth mindset and executive functioning skills through the Responsive Advisory curriculum, part of Responsive Classroom. They also engage in written reflection, goal setting for the week, current events, SEL lessons and team building activities.
Instructional Blocks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 75 minutes of Math & English Language Arts (ELA) daily • 75 minutes of Science & Social Studies (alternating days) • 45 minutes of Related Arts (Monday through Thursday) • 60 minutes of Passions (Friday) • 45 minute of Project Based Learning/Explorations (4x per week) • 45 minutes of WIN or "What I Need" (5x per week)
Lunch	Explorers have approximately a 25-minute block for lunch each day. In addition to enjoying a healthy lunch, Explorers will get the opportunity to socialize with peers in order to build healthy relationships outside of the classroom. 5th and 6th Grade eat together, while 7th and 8th Grade eat together.
Recess	5th and 6th Grade Explorers have a 10-minute recess (adjacent to their lunch) that provide a short break for physical activity and socialization. 7th and 8th Grade Explorers do not have a designated recess time, similar to their high school experience.
Related Arts	At Explore, we believe every child deserves the opportunity to discover and exercise their passions and that the arts are as important as our traditional curriculum. In 5th and 6th Grade, Explorers attend one quarter of Art, Fitness and Adventure, Music and Spanish. To provide further choice and voice, 7th and 8th Grade Explorers attend one semester each of their most preferred classes, which includes Jazz Band.



Explorations	Explorers will engage in purposeful project-based learning, taking the knowledge they gain during the rest of the day and applying it in authentic, hands-on activities. Explorers will create works of beauty and will present publicly their learning to the community.
Passions	We will collaborate with several community partners for the 2023-24 school year and offer a Passions program for one hour on Friday. This enrichment occurs during the school day and includes several community partners, in addition to our Related Arts team.
Closing Circle	This is a time to celebrate the ways that we have demonstrated learning and our core values throughout the day. Explorers are able to share compliments, point out something they learned, or share something they are looking forward to.
Dismissal	Explorers leave for home or transition to after-school programming. Dismissal is at 3:15 PM from Monday through Friday.

Curriculum

K-4		5-8	
Subject	Curriculum	Subject	Curriculum
Phonics (K-2)	Best for All	English/Language Arts	Wit & Wisdom
English/Language Arts	Wit & Wisdom	Math	Achievement First
Math	Achievement First	Science	STEMscopes and Gizmos
Science (3-4)	Ph.D. Science Engineering is Elementary	Social Studies	Gallopage

Project-Based Learning

Project-based learning is an in-depth study of problems which occur in our Explorers' local and global communities. We teach our Explorers to look around them and ask who in our community is doing excellent work and how we can learn from the work they are doing. This helps Explorers recognize the strengths of our community and not just the problems. The units of study are based on community interests collected at the yearly curriculum summit. In the first trimester, Explorers will complete a K-4 project and a 5-8 project. In the second trimester, each



grade level will complete individual projects. We will finish the school year with a K-8 community project.

Homework/Practice

We believe that Explorers learn everywhere, all the time, and that children in the primary grades need significant time at home for imagination, play, and quality time with family and friends. For 2022-2023, homework has the following components:

- **Kindergarten - 4th Grade:** Homework will be selected based on skills which the class can most benefit from. Homework practice will go home on Mondays and will need to be returned to school on Thursdays.

- **5th - 8th Grade:**
 - ELA - 20 minutes of reading daily
 - Math - 20 minutes of Math practice reinforcing the current skills
 - Science - 10 minutes of Science practice, including articles, study guides, or unfinished work
 - Social Studies - 10 minutes of Social Studies practice, including articles, study guides, or unfinished work

At the teacher's discretion, additional materials to target gaps or trends may be included in each week's packet. Any additional materials will be designed to require less than fifteen additional minutes during the week.

Please note: In addition to reinforcing and maintaining previously taught content, homework practice also helps Explorers develop responsibility, organizational, and time management skills. Families who prefer additional assignments will be provided a list of resources and tasks/problems they can use for more academic practice at home.

Grading Scale

Explore! Community School uses the MNPS grading scale outlined below.

A	90-100
B	80-89
C	70-79
D	60-69
F	59-0



Report Cards and Parent Conferences

Communication between school and home helps ensure all stakeholders are working together to support each Explorer's success. At any time, parents may call teachers or leaders to schedule a time and discuss their child's progress. Parents can also check grades any time by logging into PowerSchool.

Report cards will be distributed at the end of each quarter to formally report Explorers' progress. This includes areas of strength and growth. Report cards consist of two components: a Reflection on Valuable Moments and the Academic Report.

In addition to report cards, there are two scheduled parent conference days during the school year. We invite all families to attend these conferences, but require attendance when:

- Explorer has a "C" or below in any class.
- Explorer is experiencing academic or behavioral challenges in the classroom.
- Explorer has attendance issues, including tardies and early dismissals.
- Explorer is considered at risk for retention.

Assessments

K-2	3-4	5-8
Map Assessments	Map Assessments	Map Assessments
Fountas & Pinnell Assessment	Wit and Wisdom	Wit and Wisdom
Achievement First Unit Tests	Achievement First Unit Tests	Achievement First Unit Tests & Benchmark Exams
	TN-Ready State Assessment	Mastery Connect Benchmarks
		TN-Ready State Assessment



Promotion/Retention

Explore! has been designed to support the success of every student. We will work relentlessly to ensure Explorers receive the instruction and social support necessary to succeed in the following grade.

However, some Explorers need more time or support to meet grade-level benchmarks. Based on Explorers' academic, social and emotional progress, an individual student may not be ready for promotion to the next grade. This decision is made on an individual student basis in collaboration with families at the school's discretion.

Caregivers can expect a meeting with their Explorer's teachers and a member of the leadership by the third quarter of the school year if the school team has any concerns about an Explorer's readiness for promotion for the upcoming school year. If you, as the caregiver, have any significant concerns about your Explorer's progress, you can request a meeting with your child's teacher and the support team.

We want to be sure that we are supporting all of our Explorers and working in close collaboration with families and caregivers to develop the best plan for short and long-term success and well-being of the Explorer.

3rd Grade Promotion/Retention

3rd grade students aim to solidify their ability to read fluently and comprehend what they read. At the end of the school year, students will take the statewide assessment called the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program, or TCAP. This assessment gives us important information and data to show how progress toward mastery of academic standards.

Prior to the 2022-23 school year, the state passed T.C.A. § 49-6-3115, which requires 3rd grade students to demonstrate proficiency in TCAP in English Language Arts. Achievement on this test is measured as below, approaching, mastered, or exceeding. According to the legislation, all students who score below or approaching will be retained unless they receive additional support.

To avoid retention, students who are **below expectations** will need to;

- Attend the MNPS summer learning program with a 90% attendance rate (this is scheduled to be a six-week program) **AND** receive high-dosage tutoring for the entirety of their 4th Grade year, which may occur outside of regular school hours.

To avoid retention, students who are **approaching expectations** will need the following;

- Attend the MNPS summer learning program with a 90% attendance rate (this is scheduled to be a six-week program) **OR** receive high-dosage tutoring outside of the regular school hours for the entirety of their 4th-grade year.



This support plan is mandated by the district and supports the state legislation. You will receive regular updates on your students' predicted achievement level throughout the school year.

Response to Intervention

Explorers take MAP (a universal screener) each Fall, Winter and Spring, which compares their performance to other students across the country. If an Explorer falls below the 25th percentile on the universal screener, they may qualify for RTI. Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTI) is a framework for teaching and learning. At Explore, our mission is to help all Explorers succeed and to give every Explorer the support they need to reach high expectations. Each instructional period is designed to allow Explorers to work at their instructional and independent levels. Instructional levels are those levels that an Explorer requires teacher support and scaffolding to master. Independent levels are those levels that the Explorer is working at on their own.

RTI relies on high-quality instruction by teachers coupled with decisions that are guided by data. Response to Instruction and Intervention is designed to support and extend learning for all Explorers. As such, all learners fall into and pass between the different levels throughout their educational experiences.

- **Tier I Instruction:** All Explorers receive research-based, high-quality instruction from their general education instructors.
- **Tier II Instruction:** In addition to Tier I, 30 minutes of extra help is provided to Explorers who need additional support in math, reading, and/or the development of their social and emotional skills.
- **Tier III Instruction:** In addition to TI support, 45 minutes of extra help is provided to Explorers who need more intensive support. At Explore, we use triennial MAP data, reading running record data, and supplemental math data, to ensure that Explorers who need additional instruction receive it at a level and in a format that is most appropriate for them.

Exceptional Education

Families or caregivers who suspect their Explorer has a disability may request (in writing) that the school initiate a Support Team (S-Team) process. The S-team will review the concerns and develop a plan for any next steps. Families may also request (in writing) that the school test their child for any suspected disabilities by first communicating with their child's teacher and S-Team coordinator. If an Explorer is found eligible for Exceptional Education services, an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) will be developed and appropriate services provided.



Field Trips

Throughout the year, Explorers will have the opportunity to extend their learning into the community through field trips. These may be connected to academic learning or a specific project-based learning unit. If Explorers consistently demonstrate challenges meeting Explore's behavior expectations, they may lose the privilege of participating in upcoming field trips. Alternatively, a caregiver may be asked to attend and support the individual child's behavior. This is most likely if an Explorer has been aggressive, destructive, or spent significant time out of the classroom for behavioral concerns within a week of the trip.

If Explorers with Individualized Education Plans, Behavior Intervention Plans, 504s, or other support plans require additional supervision or support during field trips, the team will collaborate with the caregivers to establish, document, and execute those interventions.

Explorers who consistently demonstrate such behaviors must regain Field Trip privileges by fixing any harm done and staying in class for at least three consecutive days leading up to the field trip. If Explorers have not earned this privilege then a caregiver must accompany them on any field trip.



Student Culture

Rationale

This behavior response framework is enacted to support the strong sense of community that is central to Explore Community School's mission, vision, values, and model. Explorers, staff, and families all have a role to play in building and keeping the culture of our school. Our school has developed its school behavior response by integrating philosophies and practices from Responsive Classroom, Restorative Practices and is supported by nuanced application of classroom management strategies.

Our premise is that 80% of the practices are **proactive measures** that build authentic relationships, give members of the community language to express their feelings, give staff members protocols for engaging with Explorers, and give Explorers voice and agency in their school day. The other 20% is responsive; how do we respond and repair harm when harm has been done?

When a student has made a knowing choice to break the rules and breach our culture, an appropriate consequence will be determined through our Fair Process. We will work actively with the Explorer, family, teacher, and other school community members to fully and thoughtfully reintegrate the student(s) back into the learning community without guilt or blame. We think mistakes are learning opportunities and we work together to learn and grow from them. We will use conferences, mediations, and restorative circles to elevate root causes, learn lessons, and teach replacement behaviors that will benefit the individual and the group. By design, the restorative process is collaborative and requires the active participation of the student which is what will increase the positive impact of the practice.

This year, we will continue to use a national assessment called the Devereux Student Strengths Assessment (DESSA), to measure the development of behavioral competencies related to our core values over the course of the year. We will also conduct other screenings and use a collection of data to determine if an Explorer needs additional social support and will work in tandem with families to develop and implement appropriate interventions and supports.

Responsive Classroom

Explore uses the Responsive Classroom (RC) approach to create a safe environment where children are able to take academic and social risks. The RC approach helps children understand the importance of kindness toward and acceptance of all people, and to learn important social skills such as empathy and problem-solving. Drawing upon the work of many great educational theorists and practitioners, Responsive Classroom operates on the following seven guiding principles:



1. The social and emotional curriculum is as important as the academic curriculum.
2. How children learn is as important as what they learn.
3. Great cognitive growth occurs through social interaction.
4. To be successful academically and socially, children need to learn a set of social and emotional skills that include cooperation, assertiveness, responsibility, empathy, and self-control.
5. Knowing the children we teach—individually, culturally, and developmentally—is as important as knowing the content we teach.
6. Knowing the families of the children we teach is as important as knowing the children we teach.
7. How we, the adults at school, work together is as important as our individual competence: Lasting change begins with the adult community.

The Responsive Classroom approach offers interconnected strategies to build community, and encourage decision-making in our Explorers.

Valuable Moments

Valuable Moments are the way we acknowledge our core values in action. Explorers' demonstration of a valuable moment is publicly recognized on a daily basis through the use of a closing circle. During the closing circle, Explorers recognize the valuable moments of the day. These Valuable Moments will hang for the next day outside of the classroom as further public recognition until the next day. These Explorers will be eligible for recognition during the Morning Program and Family Meeting.

Valuable Moment reports are available online through Kickboard and are sent home each Monday.

Valuable Moments

Curiosity	Community	Compassion	Courage	Craftsmanship
Joyful Learning	Cooperates with Peers	Expresses Concern or Care for Others	Accepts Responsibility	Shows Care When Doing Work
Asking Questions	Contributes to Group Effort	Teaches Another Person to Do Something	Seeks out Challenging Task	Works Independently
Experimenting	Practices Safety For All	Recognizes Personal Strengths	Takes Risk	Works Hard on Improving Product



Rewards

We use positive praise and community recognition to reward Explorers when they succeed. Positive whole-group reinforcement furthers the development of a supportive school/classroom community. We believe that, if children only experience extrinsic rewards, they learn to work for those and do not connect their learning to their own goals and the outside world. We strive to help Explorers make these connections, believing that the purpose of learning is to interact thoughtfully with the world.

Social/Emotional Learning

Move This World (K-4): An online social and emotional curriculum that ritualizes a daily practice of identifying, expressing and managing emotions. Daily use of this curriculum helps to build healthy classroom environments, increases academic performance, and supports lifelong learning and critical thinking skills that are essential for student success.

Restorative Practices: Restorative practices promote inclusiveness, relationship-building and problem solving, rather than the administration of a punitive consequence. Explorers are encouraged to reflect and take responsibility for their actions and come up with a plan to repair harm. Two examples of restorative practices which are utilized at Explore are Apology of Action and Restorative Circles.

Mindfulness: Mindful Schools defines Mindfulness as the means of maintaining a moment-by-moment awareness of your thoughts, emotions, bodily sensations and the surrounding environment with openness and curiosity. It is proven to reduce stress, improve work satisfaction and help with emotional regulation.

Breaches of Culture

Expectations

Explorers are expected to know and follow teacher directions and school rules, resolve conflicts without physical contact, be respectful of adults and each other, use appropriate language and respect the rights and property of others. The goal of Explore's approach to behavior is to set a high standard for kind, appropriate conduct and provide Explorers with clear guidelines of acceptable behavior.

Staff members will treat Explorers respectfully in all situations. Explorers are expected to make appropriate choices that ensure safety and respect for themselves and others. Each class works on developing an understanding of the community around the idea of mutual respect and encouragement.



Staff will demonstrate to Explorers that they can make choices in social situations and that their behavior has consequences. Explore expects Explorers to become positive members of the school community and to uphold our expectations for appropriate behavior. Rules and logical consequences will be clearly communicated to Explorers, and those consequences will be administered calmly and fairly.

Discipline Tables

Discipline is used to teach and guide Explorers on how to demonstrate care for our community. When Explorers are disruptive or behave inappropriately, school staff members respond logically, appropriately, and consistently. Staff members ensure that all Explorers are treated with kindness, equity, and fairness. The discipline table describes four types of behavior breaches, increasing in seriousness from a Minor Breach to a Critical Breach. The table also includes possible consequences for each level of breach behavior. A member of the leadership team will assign appropriate consequences and interventions.

When choosing a higher-level response within the range of possible responses, the leader will consider:

- the student's age, health, disability, decision-making ability and prior intervention history
- the student's willingness to repair the harm
- the seriousness of the act
- the harm caused or the potential to cause harm, including any injuries caused
- the extent of actual disruption to the learning environment

LEVEL	BEHAVIOR	INTERVENTION
Minor Breach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued Defiance-Refusing to follow reasonable request from a staff member • Indecent Language- Using profane or indecent language on school grounds or at school sponsored activities • Tardy to class-Arriving to scheduled class late • Unwanted Touch-Engaging in minor physical contact with another student such as pushing, bumping, or horseplay 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small Impromptu Conference (Mediation) • Buddy Classroom • Logical Consequence • Parent Notification



Moderate Breach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Vandalism-Willfully destroying or defacing school or personal property ● Theft- Taking the property of another individual or school without permission. ● Disruption- Continuously and intentionally disrupting the school environment to the extent that the learning of other students or the normal functioning of the school is impaired ● Repeated Minor Breach Behaviors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Restorative Conference ● Logical Consequence ● Modified Schedule ● Parent Conference ● Extended Buddy Classroom ● In School Suspension ● Out of School Suspension ● Apology of Action
Major Breach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Theft- Taking the property of another individual or school without permission, with the intent of depriving the owner of the property. ● Bullying-teasing, intimidating behavior, public humiliation ● Physical Aggression-Intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly committing a physical attack on another person ● Verbal Aggression-A threat to cause harm to students, staff or school. Evidence must support the threat is actually or potentially harmful to the safety of the school or community ● Inappropriate Sexual Behavior-Physical contact or communication of a sexual nature ● Possession of Tobacco Products-Possessing any tobacco products, including but not limited to, cigarettes, cigars, vapor or e-cigarettes, or chewing tobacco. ● Inappropriate Use of Electronic Devices-Viewing or distribution of sexually explicit images/videos and/or fights (i.e., air drop, social media post, etc.) ● Inappropriate Physical Contact Toward School Staff-Engaging in intentional physical contact with MNPS staff that does not rise to level of bodily injury. ● Repeated Moderate Breach Behaviors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Parent Conference ● Restorative Conference ● Classroom Restorative Circle ● Logical Consequence ● In School Suspension ● Out of School Suspension ● Collaborative Referral



Critical Breach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group Fighting-Three or more students engaging in a physical altercation. The altercation may include more students against a few students or multiple one on one fights. • Repeated Fighting-Engaging in 3 or more documented fights involving physical contact (e.g., slapping, closed fists, pulling hair, kicking, biting) during the current year • Assault of Staff-Any act, intentional or unintentional, that causes or has the potential to cause physical injury to a teacher or school staff. An assault is more than incidental contact. • Vandalism of \$1000-Willfully destroying or defacing school or personal property. The damage caused is over \$1000. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent Conference • Restorative Conference • Out of school suspension (5-10 days) • Expulsion
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Suspension and Expulsion

Explore emphasizes social-emotional development and respect for others. We will always work to provide Explorers the support that they need behaviorally and socially/emotionally, just as we do with academics. We hope that this will minimize the need to suspend or expel Explorers. However, the Principal or the Director of Culture may suspend or expel a student under circumstances when the safety and well-being of the student or others are threatened or the seriousness of the behavior requires time away from school.

Explorers may be suspended from school for a specified number of days or expelled from the school for the remainder of the year. Expelled Explorers may re-apply to attend Explore the following year but will receive no admission preference.

If an Explorer serves ISS or OSS, due to a major breach behavior, they are unable to attend or participate in extracurricular activities or school events on the day of their suspension.

The school's board of directors must approve any expulsions. The principal will determine the number of days for suspensions based on the severity of the infraction, the age of the student, previous infractions, and MNPS district-level policies. When a student is suspended, a parent is required to pick the child up from school. When a child is suspended, a letter is sent home with the parent/guardian, and a re-entry meeting is scheduled with school leadership, the student, the caregiver, and teachers.



Expulsion is defined as the exclusion from Explore Community School on a permanent basis. Tennessee law provides the Principal with the authority to expel Explorers without Board involvement for the following behaviors (typically known as “Zero Tolerance” offenses):

- **Drugs (17-10ZT)** – Possession, use or distribution of illegal drugs; unlawful use, cultivation, manufacture, distribution, sale, solicitation, purchase, possession, transportation, or importation of any controlled drug (e.g. Demerol, Morphine) or narcotic substance.
- **Handgun (18-10ZT)** – Possession of a handgun; the weapon involved was a handgun or a pistol.
- **Rifle/Shotgun (19-10ZT)** – Possession of a rifle or shotgun; the weapon involved was a shotgun or rifle.
- **Explosive (20-10ZT)** – Possession of explosive, incendiary device, any destructive device which includes; any explosive, incendiary (e.g., bomb, grenade, rocket/missile, mine) or poison gas.
- **Assault of Staff (32-10ZT)** – Intentionally, knowingly or recklessly causing bodily injury to a staff person, or causing physical contact with another that was extremely offensive or provocative.
- **Aggravated Assault of Staff (35-10ZT)** – This is considered assault of staff. Intentionally or knowingly causing serious bodily injury to the staff person.

The Principal reserves the right to request that the Board of Directors hold an expulsion hearing and consider the student for expulsion for a specific, severe behavioral infraction or for repeated disregard of school policies and procedures. Specifically, regarding the latter, a parent meeting will be required once a student has been suspended for four incidents. A behavior contract will be made between the student and school if he/she has been suspended for three incidents. A student’s breach of this contract may lead to the recommendation of an expulsion hearing. Whenever an expulsion hearing is recommended, the below procedural safeguards will be in effect:

The student shall receive written notice of the following:

- Outline of infractions/charges and a statement of the evidence;
- Date, time, and place of a hearing;
- Notice of the right at the hearing to:
 1. Be represented by their parents, legal or another representative (at the student’s/parent’s own expense).
 2. Present evidence.
 3. Confront and cross-examine witnesses.

The school will record (by tape or other appropriate means) the hearing and a copy of such will be made available to the student upon request.



All preceding communication, notices, and proceedings will be translated into the student's/parent's primary language if necessary for their understanding of the proceedings.

A student and/or parent, upon request, will have the right to review the student's records in accordance with the TN Records Regulations or other applicable law.

All decisions by the Board of Directors regarding expulsion of a student will be issued to him or her in writing. In addition to the above stated policies, any breaches of Federal, TN State or Nashville City laws may be handled in cooperation with the local police department.

Procedural Safeguards for Explorers with Special Needs or Disabilities

Federal and state law provide certain procedural rights and protections relating to discipline of Explorers who have been identified under such laws as having special needs based upon an IDEA or Section 504 recognized exceptionality . A copy of the Notice of Procedural Safeguards or Parent and Educator Guide to Section 504 rights can be found in the Main Office.

Explore! Community School officials may suspend Explorers with IDEA recognized exceptionalities and Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and cease educational services for a total of up to 10 consecutive or 10 cumulative school days in one school year without providing special education procedural safeguards. Detentions do not count toward the 10-day limit. The Principal has discretionary flexibility in regards to the amount of days of suspensions given to each student with an IEP. Explorers with IEPs can be suspended in excess of 10 school days in certain circumstances. When campus officials anticipate a referral for expulsion, the following apply:

Provide written notice to the parent/guardian or surrogate parent of the intervention or consequence being considered and the date of an Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting, which must be held within 10 days of the date of the decision to discipline the student.

The IEP team must:

- Determine whether the misconduct is related to the student's disability by reviewing evaluation and diagnostic results, information from the parent/guardian, observations of the student, and the student's IEP and placement. The behavior is not a manifestation of the student's disability if:
 - The student was given appropriate special education supplementary aids and intervention strategies; and
 - The disability does not impair the ability to control behavior.
 - A modification can be made so that the behavior plan is consistent with the IEP.



- Determine the appropriateness of an interim alternative educational setting, and as indicated, include in the IEP those services and modifications that will enable the student to continue to participate in the general curriculum and address the behavior so it will not recur.

Although the Section 504 regulations do not set a specific timeframe within which Explorers with 504 plans must be reevaluated to make sure that they are receiving the appropriate services, Section 504 does require schools to conduct reevaluations periodically for Explorers with 504s, especially before a significant change in placement. The Office of Civil Rights considers an exclusion from the educational program of more than 10 consecutive school days to be a significant change in placement. Therefore, even for Explorers with 504 plans, the school must reevaluate prior to imposing the 11th day of suspension to determine whether the student's misconduct is caused by or related to their 504 exceptionality (manifestation determination), and if so to further evaluate to determine if their current placement is appropriate.

While it is not anticipated and is extremely rare, Explorers with IEPs may be referred for an expulsion hearing if they are in violation of any Zero Tolerance offense. All Explorers will be ensured a due process expulsion hearing.

Dress Code

In order to maintain a safe learning environment that minimizes distractions, the minimum standards for acceptable clothing during the school day are as follows.

- Tops of shoulders must have a minimum of a 1-inch strap.
- Skin and undergarments must be covered with opaque clothing from the underarm to mid-thigh. Mid-thigh is defined as the mid-point between the waist and mid-knee.
- All pants, shorts and skirts must be held at the waist.
- Hoodies may be worn at school, so long as the hood remains off.
- Hats are permitted in Grades K-4, if worn appropriately and don't cause a distraction to the learning environment. Hats are not permitted in Grades 5-8, unless special permission is given for spirit day, community celebration, etc.
- Appropriate shoes must be worn at all times. Shoes should be closed toe and have a back strap. Examples of inappropriate shoes:
 - Flip flops or beach shoes
 - Open-toed or open-backed shoes (including Crocs)
 - Slides or mules (backless shoes)
 - Footwear with heels greater than 1"
- Any type of clothing, apparel or accessory, including that which denotes such students' membership in or affiliation with any gang associated with criminal activities is not permitted.
- Any apparel or dress that advertises or promotes products or activity prohibited by law or other school rules is prohibited (e.g., profanity, illustrations, or suggestive language, etc).



Toys

Explorers are not permitted to bring toys to school unless they are instructed to do so by their teacher. Teachers will correspond with parents via written communication at appropriate times when Explorers are allowed to bring toys to school. If toys are brought to school without permission, they will be stored in a closet until dismissal.

Technology

To protect all Explorers, and the school community, and ensure technology is used properly, safely, and solely for the purpose of learning, all K-8th Grade Explorers and families are required to sign the Student Technology Terms and Use Policy (see appendix) at the beginning of each school year before accessing technology resources at Explore!

Backpacks

Upon arrival at school, Explorers should safely store their backpacks on a hook or in their locker prior to 7:45 AM. Backpacks must remain stored throughout the school day and should not be in the classroom.

Cell Phones

Explorers may have “silenced” cell phones and mobile communication devices stored in their backpacks during the school day. The use of these devices during instructional time in the school setting is prohibited. Cell phones and Mobile Communication Devices that ring, vibrate excessively, or in any other way disrupt the educational process of school, are grounds for confiscation of the device by school staff or personnel. Administration may authorize the use of cell phones in the event of an emergency or other serious situation.

Though school leaders will make every effort to investigate lost or stolen devices to ensure they are returned to the owner, Explore! is not responsible for lost or stolen devices during the school day.

- First offense – Cell phone held until the end of the day; pick-up by student
- Second offense – Cell phone held until the end of the day; pick-up by student
- Third offense – ISS and cell phone held until the end of the day; pick-up by parent
- Subsequent offenses – additional disciplinary measures including turning phone in to a leader at the start of each school day and picking it up at the end of the school day



Operations

Arrival

Explore Community School opens its doors at 7:30 AM daily. Explorers are welcome to arrive any time between 7:30 and 7:45 AM, but must be inside the school by 7:45 AM when the school day officially begins. Any student who arrives into the school after 7:45 AM will be counted as tardy and needs to be signed in by a parent or a guardian. All Explorers must enter through the front door of the main building (Elementary School) and through the front gate and middle school entrance (Middle School).

Breakfast is available at 7:30 AM, and serving ends at 7:45 AM. If Explorers arrive at school late, breakfast may no longer be available.

If parents need to speak to a teacher or conduct any other classroom business, this should occur after the school day and by appointment with the teacher only. We are unable to accept same-day requests for appointments. Please do not park on South 8th or on Dew and walk your child or have your child walk to the building. This is unsafe and or creates congestion for traffic. Please keep your Explorer with you in the car or supervised while waiting to enter the building.

Dismissal

Explorers will be dismissed from school at 3:15 PM daily. Parents/guardians who arrive before dismissal must wait outside until their teacher dismisses Explorers. In order to ensure a safe, timely dismissal for all Explorers, we are unable to provide early dismissal for Explorers past 2:30 PM. Please do not ask staff to change a student's method of dismissal by walking up to them as they are executing end-of-day procedures outside.

Teachers will keep a list of each Explorer's dismissal method (bus, car, walk, after-school program) in their classroom. If the student is to be dismissed in a manner departing from the routine, caregivers must contact the front desk by 2:30 PM. The front desk will update the method on our Explore dismissal channel. Requests to change dismissal methods made after 2:30 PM will not be permitted.

Every family will be issued two dismissal placards per student. These placards will serve as mandatory identification each time your child is dismissed from school. Maintaining the placards is the responsibility of each parent as they serve as proof of permission to pick up Explorers from Explore. Please let us know as soon as possible if a placard is lost or stolen, and we will issue an alternate. To ensure the safety of our Explorers, we will check the identification and the list of individuals approved to pick up Explorers for everyone picking up a student without a placard.



Timely pick-up of Explorers is critical so that our already hard-working and highly dedicated teachers do not have to stay after their normal working hours. Keep in mind that Explore teachers are salaried paid employees and do not earn over-time when they work beyond their regular schedule. Three pick-ups of Explorers after 4:00 PM will result in a phone or in-person conference being scheduled between the caregiver and school operations team to problem solve the late pick-ups. The next steps and potential consequences will be discussed. Consistently late pick-up adds undue stress on school team members and often causes embarrassment and anxiety for the student.

Attendance Policy

To achieve our ambitious mission, we must maximize our time with Explorers in school every moment of every day. Regular attendance is mandatory. Families should not schedule vacations and non-emergency appointments during school time. Families should take advantage of holidays and school vacations to schedule appointments and travel.

Absences

Explorers will be “excused” for illness, verifiable family emergency, recognized religious holidays regularly observed by persons of the child’s faith, or (in rare instances) other reasons requested in writing by the parent/guardian and considered legitimate by the principal or designee. Per MNPS policies, these absences can only be counted as excused if written verification from the legal guardian is received in the main office within 24 hours of the student’s return to school. A doctor’s note or other official documentation is required for any absence period of 2 or more consecutive days. Notes from the doctor must come on official letterhead. ***Families must bring in written documentation for any school time missed on the first day of return.*** This is recorded in Infinite Campus (our student information system) and shared with the MNPS school district and state.

A student must remain in school until noon to be counted as present. If a student comes to school and must go home before 12:00 PM, due to illness, then the student’s attendance status will be changed from “Present” to “Excused Absence.” Additionally, if a student arrives at school after 12:00 PM, they will be marked as “Absent” pending documentation from the family.

All other absences, including trips or vacations taken outside of school-wide breaks, are considered “unexcused.”



Tuancy

After three unexcused absences, Explorers are flagged for truancy intervention. The school is then legally required to do our due diligence to ensure compliance with the TN State laws for student attendance.

According to T.C.A § 49-6-3001, all Explorers under 18 are expected to be in school. All Explorers under the age of 18 will be expected to comply with these laws and the school will follow procedures set out in TCA § 49-6-3007 if the student does not comply with the law. In cases of truancy, the Principal (or her/his designee) will investigate the situation. Explore Community School operates in compliance with TCA § 49-6-3007 requirements, which can include mandated reporting of truancy to appropriate state agencies.

Explorers are afforded rights under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act should their absences be related to a disabling condition.

Due Diligence for Truancy Prevention can include:

- Telephone call(s)
- Face-to-face meeting with the Registrar or member(s) of the Culture Team
- Development of an attendance support plan
- Follow-up mailed letter summarizing communications/action steps or attempts at caregiver outreach sent via certified letter
- Outreach to state agencies if none of the previous interventions were successful in improving attendance outcomes.

Chronic Attendance and Enrollment Implications

If a student is absent the first five (5) days of school, or at least ten consecutive days during the school year, and there has been no successful contact between the family and the school to explain his or her absences, that student may lose his or her seat at Explore and may be considered un-enrolled from the school.

Tardies

Explorers are expected to be inside the school before 7:45 AM Explorers arriving at school after 7:45 AM, even if it is before the start of the morning meeting, are marked tardy. Tardies may be excused if a written note with a valid reason is received. In the case of chronic tardies (over 10% of school days or 10 unexcused tardies), the student's family must attend an attendance conference with Explore administration. *If unexcused tardies continue, a student is at risk of retention and additional action, including referral to an Attendance Officer, issuance of legal notices, and juvenile court intervention.*



Any student arriving late to school must be escorted in by an adult and signed in with an Explore staff member to ensure Explorers are safe and accounted for at all times. We will record their presence and update our attendance records accordingly.

Early Dismissals

Unless a parent, a guardian, or designated emergency contact has contacted the school in advance or provided a signed note to the school explaining the situation, and the school has granted permission, no student will be dismissed early from school. In addition, the parent, guardian, or designee must sign the student out with the Main Office before removing the student from school grounds. *Explorers will not be dismissed unless the parent or guardian physically comes to the Main Office.* Notification regarding early dismissals should be made as far in advance as possible. To ensure an orderly dismissal process, Explorers will not be dismissed after 3:00 PM.

Likewise, if a student needs to be sent home due to an illness or behavioral infraction, a parent/guardian or other individual authorized for pickup must come to the school, meet with the Principal or his/her designee, and remove the student from school. Explorers being sent home for behavioral infractions will not be dismissed unless the parent, guardian, or a designee has physically come to the school.

In such situations, Explorers are not permitted to return to school until an in-person meeting or telephone conference with a member of the school leadership team has been completed.

Communication

Beginning in the 2023-2024 school year, Explore! will use PowerSchool as our main source of communication. The Executive Principal will send regular weekly updates via PowerSchool. Similar information will be shared on the school Facebook page and other outlets, but PowerSchool posts will be the official source for up-to-date information about Explorers. In addition to school leadership posts, teachers will also post to PowerSchool weekly to ensure families are informed about what is going on in classes for the week.

Families are encouraged to check your child's folder each afternoon for homework, flyers, notices, reminders, and other written communication from school staff that may not be able to be sent via these virtual communication means.

Teacher Contact

All school staff members have 48 hours to respond to emails or phone messages. Any urgent requests can be made to our front desk attendant and they will expedite as needed according to the circumstance.



Parents are encouraged to communicate with their child's teacher. We advocate the use of PowerSchool to communicate with teachers. Messages may be left for teachers with the Front Office during the school day. Please leave your name and your child's name, a phone number and time you may be reached, and a brief message regarding the reason for the call. Teachers will return a parent's call within 48 hours. Remember that messages will not be received until after the instructional day ends. Teachers are also available through their Explore email address (first initial last name @Explore.school). **Please do not communicate transportation changes with your child's teacher.**

Parents should contact their child's teacher directly with questions about academic progress as well as behavior.

Parents can contact the main office directly for any of the following issues:

- Information about your student's records (ex. updating contact information etc.)
- Visits or volunteering
- Attendance issues
- Calendar and schedules
- Food

Teachers will list their contact information, including phone numbers and email addresses in the introductory letter to Explorers' families during the first week of school.

For safety reasons, we must be able to reliably get in touch with Explorers' caregivers. It is the caregivers' responsibility to promptly update the school with any phone and/or address changes.

Food Procedures

Families of Explorers who order the school's lunch and have particular dietary restrictions should alert the Lead Server prior to the beginning of school, so that school staff is able to describe reasonable accommodations to the student or, if necessary, the family can choose to make alternate arrangements.

Breakfast and Lunch

Children need healthy meals to learn. Explore! Community School offers healthy meals every school day. Explore participates in the Community Eligibility Program which allows all of Explorers to be served breakfast and lunch.

Explorers may either receive meals from the school or bring their own food from home.



Families will be given a menu of meals at the beginning of each month and will be asked to opt in or opt out for the entirety of the month so that we can order an accurate amount of food and reduce waste of food or school funds. The school is charged for meals ordered, but not eaten. So we want to be as sustainable as possible and planning for meal ordering will allow us to do this.

Food from Home

Families who decide to provide lunch from home must comply with the following guidelines. We encourage families to pack Explorers a healthy lunch that limits sugar, processed foods, etc. Each meal should also be individual for your Explorer, as food sharing is not permitted in the cafeteria.

Prohibited foods for packed breakfasts, lunches, and snacks:

- **ALL FOOD CONTAINING NUTS!**
- Soda or energy drinks of any kind (even diet)
- No gum of any kind
- Fast food

Any hot food must be kept in a thermos. Staff will not be able to reheat lunches for Explorers.

Lunch With Your Child

For the 2023-2024 school year, our spacious Cafeteria can accommodate lunch visits. If you would like to eat lunch with your child at school, please make arrangements with your child's teacher and the front office. Please be considerate of the other Explorers when selecting food to bring to eat with your child. Fast food will not be permitted in the cafeteria.

Birthdays

Explorers are permitted to bring single-serve, store-bought, nut-free treats to be shared with classmates. Please coordinate with your teacher at least 48 hours in advance for birthday celebrations. Families can notify the teacher via email or PowerSchool. Celebrations should be limited to 15 minutes. Full parties, including pizza parties, are not permitted.

Treats will be shared at lunch or during the closing circle. Parents are **not** required to send birthday treats to school. Invitations for individual birthday parties are not to be distributed at school unless an invitation is included for every child in the student's class.



Transportation

The most updated bus routes will be posted on the Explore website, under family resources (https://www.explore.school/family_resources).

Rights and Responsibilities

We are happy to be able to provide our Explorers with the opportunity to ride the school bus! We use the bus in order to get Explorers to and from school safely and to participate in fun and enriching activities off-site.

Explore partners with Grayline as our official bus service. The following outlines expectations from both Explore and Grayline on the rights and responsibilities that our Explorers and families have when riding the bus for any school-related purpose. Our shared goal is to provide a safe and comfortable ride for the Explorers, our staff, and the drivers.

Rules of the Bus
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Follow the directions of the driver and/or monitor.2. Stay seated throughout the ride and be kind.3. Keep hands, arms, legs, and objects to yourself..4. Take care of the bus. (No trash, no writing or damage to the bus)

Explorers are expected to follow these rules whenever they are riding the bus. If a student is struggling to meet the expectations of the bus, then Explorers can earn consequences starting from a one-way suspension from the bus for the afternoon, up to a full removal from the bus for the semester or year.

Caregivers will be contacted in the case of any unexpected behaviors on the bus. For more information about the bus discipline policy, please see the full bus discipline policy outlined below.

The following are non-negotiable behaviors that warrant the highest level of discipline and may **lead to immediate removal from the bus**:

- Fighting/Physical Attacks
- Verbal Aggression (Making threats to the driver, monitor, or another rider)
- Three-afternoon student returns to school

The safety of our community members is paramount and the above-listed behaviors compromise the overall safety and well-being of our community and thus, cannot be accepted.

In addition to rules for our Explorers, our staff, Grayline drivers, and families also have rights and responsibilities.



Community Rights All Explorers, Grayline staff, and Caregivers have the right to:	Community Responsibilities All Explorers, Grayline staff, and Caregivers have a responsibility to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A safe and timely riding experience • Courteous and respectful treatment • Ask questions or express concerns about their experience • Expect follow up to address their concerns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be at the bus stop on time for AM pick up and PM drop off • Use respectful language and tone when interacting with Explore/Grayline staff and Caregivers, and Explorers • Raise any questions or concerns to the school, rather than confronting the bus driver at the stop • Participate in any follow up actions to address concerns (i.e. meetings/phone calls, etc.)

Caregivers should plan to arrive at the bus stops to meet their Explorers at least five minutes before the scheduled arrival time. Bus drivers will have a copy of the list of individuals authorized to pick up every student and will check for placards or IDs before releasing Explorers off the bus. *No student will be released off the bus without a caregiver or authorized representative present.*

Bus Rule Violation Consequences

- **One infraction** = Student receives a verbal warning from school leadership and school leadership makes a phone call home to the student's caregiver.
- **Two infractions** = School leadership makes a phone call home to the student's caregiver informing him/her that the student will be suspended from the bus in both the morning and afternoon the following day.
- **Three infractions** = School leadership makes a phone call home to the student's caregiver informing him/her that the student will be suspended from the bus in both the morning and afternoon for the next three (3) days.
- **Four infractions** = School leadership makes a phone call home to the student's caregiver informing him/her that the student will be suspended from the bus in both the morning and afternoon for the next five (5) days.
- **Five infractions** = School leadership makes a phone call home to the student's caregiver informing him/her that the student is permanently suspended from the bus, either for a semester or the remainder of the school year.



A staff member will meet the bus at school every day. No student will board or exit the bus before the staff member checks with the driver about behavior.

- If the school determines a child is not ready to ride the bus safely, a parent will be asked to come to the school building to pick up the child from school.
- More serious behavior (i.e. fighting) will be investigated and Explorers will be treated exactly as if the incident happened on school grounds.

Infractions, if serious enough, can warrant the immediate loss of bus privileges for the remainder of the school year. Families are strongly encouraged to reinforce the importance of proper bus behavior and the potential consequences of poor behavior choices. Should a student lose bus privileges, the student's caregiver is responsible for arranging alternative transportation for the student. Unless a student is suspended, the student will earn an "unexcused absence" for failure to attend school as a result of lost bus privileges.

Field Trips

It is expected that all Explorers participating in transportation provided by Explore! for the purposes of field trips abide by all of the above policies for transportation. In addition, it is a requirement that all Explorers return a permission slip when a field trip involves transportation off campus. When possible, Explore! will provide transportation for chaperones and individuals accompanying our school on trips; please note, however, that this might not always be feasible.

Safety

Closed Campus

Under no circumstances are Explorers allowed to leave the school building without permission. A student with permission to leave may only leave under the escort and supervision of an authorized adult. Explorers should be aware that the school has several neighbors, and should be respectful and courteous of their needs. Once Explorers have entered the school in the morning, they may not leave the building unless a school staff member or other authorized adult escorts them. **If a student leaves the school building or school grounds the school team reserves the right to contact law enforcement and the parent to ensure that the student returns safely to school.**

Visitor Policy

All visitors are required to report to the Front Desk and show Identification upon entering the building. Any visitor, including parents, who do not report to the office or are found in the building without authorization, will be asked to leave immediately. Visitors must wear **visitor stickers** at all times to indicate that they have checked in at the main office. Parents are encouraged to visit the school or volunteer, but we must ensure that all adults are clearly identified when in the building with Explorers.



School Searches

In order to maintain the security of all Explorers, the School authorizes the Principal and his or her designee(s) to conduct searches of Explorers and their belongings if the authorized school official has reasonable suspicion to believe that the search will result in evidence that the student violated the law or the School's Code of Conduct or otherwise constituted a threat to the health, safety, welfare, or morals of the school, other Explorers, school personnel, or any other person lawfully on school property or attending a school function. In authorizing searches, the school acknowledges both state and federal constitutional rights, which are applicable to personal searches of Explorers and searches of their possessions.

Explorers have no reasonable expectation of privacy rights in school lockers, desks, or other school storage places. The school exercises overriding control over such school property, which may be opened and subjected to inspection at any time by school officials.

An authorized school official may search a student or the student's belongings based upon information received from a reliable informant. Individuals, other than the school's employees, will be considered reliable informants if they have previously supplied information that was accurate and verified, make an admission against their own interest, provide the same information that is received independently from other sources, or appear to be credible and the information they are communicating relates to an immediate threat to safety. School employees will be considered reliable informants unless they are known to have previously supplied information that they knew was not accurate.

Explorers may be subject to personal searches and searches of their possessions where reasonable individualized suspicion exists to conduct such search. Reasonable individualized suspicion to conduct a search of a student or a student's possessions and the scope of the particular search shall be based upon, among other things, the student's age, the prevalence and seriousness of the problem to which the search is directed, the urgency necessitating an immediate search, and the probative value and reliability of information used as justification for the search.



Emergency Drills

In accordance with Tennessee state law, Explore! participates in the following emergency drill requirements:

Fire Drills: Fire drills requiring full evacuation shall be held at least one (1) time every thirty (30) **SCHOOL DAYS**, with two (2) fire drills occurring during the first thirty (30) full days of the school year. Additionally, four (4) fire safety educational announcements will be conducted throughout the year. The LEA can develop the content of the educational announcements or utilize scripts provided by TDOE. A record of all fire drills, including the time and date, shall be kept in the respective school or institutional offices and shall be made available upon request to the state fire marshal, or the state fire marshal's deputies or assistants, for inspection and review. (*TN Code Annotated 68-102*)

Intruder Drill: Each school shall conduct at least one (1) armed intruder drill annually. The drill shall be conducted in coordination with the appropriate local law enforcement agency. (*TN Code Annotated 49-6-807*)

CPR/AED Drill: Each school having one (1) or more AEDs shall schedule annual CPR/AED training for **ALL** school personnel and conduct an annual CPR and AED drill. (*Tennessee Code Annotated 49-2-122*)

Shelter-in-place: These drills teach staff and students when and how to shelter for severe weather and hazardous materials release.

Transportation Evacuation Drills: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) recommends each pupil transported from home to school in a school bus participate at least once during each semester in supervised and timed emergency evacuation drills that teach students and drivers when and how to evacuate a school bus, including how to manually operate the lever that opens the loading doors, should the driver become incapacitated.

Additional Drills:

- Each school shall conduct three (3) additional drills, not requiring full evacuation, during each school year. (*TN Code Annotated 68-102*)

Note that our emergency drills are developed, practiced, and pressure-tested with input from our local law enforcement agencies and fire departments.



Health

Health and safety are a top priority at Explore! Before a student can enroll in the school, the school must have on file the following forms:

- **Medical Requirements Checklist.** This form contains records showing that the student has: 1) up-to-date immunizations; and 2) permission to receive screening for vision, hearing, and scoliosis.
- **Health Information Form.** This form provides important information about a student's emergency contacts, health care providers, and insurance. Most importantly, it gives the school permission to initiate emergency medical treatment in the event that a parent or guardian cannot be reached.
- **Authorization to Dispense Medication Form.** If a student requires medication while in school, the school must have on file an Authorization to Dispense Medication form, completed by the student's physician. No student is allowed to bring medication to the school without the school's full knowledge. Explorers who have provided the school with medication dispensation authorization forms should bring the medication to the school on the first day, or contact the school to make other arrangements. All medication must be presented in its original container from the pharmacy and must be brought in by a parent or accompanied by a note from the parent.
- **School Sickness.** If a student has had vomiting, diarrhea, pink-eye, or a fever, then they are not allowed back in school until 24 hours after that illness has been resolved and necessary medicines have been started. This is to allow the student to heal and prevent the spread of communicable illness across the school community.

Medication

The medication dispensation authorization form requirement applies to all medication, including over-the-counter medication which must be in an unopened package. This must be brought in by a parent providing signature upon delivery of medication and new authorization to dispense form signed. Alternatively, parents may come to the school and administer medication to the student if preferred. The medication dispensation authorization form requirement also applies to asthma inhalers, which Explorers should keep in their backpacks. If a student needs to use his/her asthma inhaler during the school day, he/she should go to the main office to self-administer the inhaler.

All Explorers needing medicine to be administered at school require the following:

- A medical administration form signed by your doctor
- Medicine must be in the original bottle
- Medicine need to be transported and dropped off at the school by the parent, Explorers cannot transport medicine via backpack



Records

Student Records

Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), parents have certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level.

Definition of Student Records

"Student Records" shall mean any written or recorded information concerning a student by which a student may be individually identified and which Explore Community School maintains. They may include, but are not limited to, the following; basic identifying information, academic transcript, attendance records, health records, performance scores on standardized assessments, disciplinary records, records from previous schools. Recorded information maintained by a staff member for his or her exclusive use, or his or her substitute, shall not be considered a part of the student records.

Inspection of Student Records

Parents shall have the right to inspect, challenge and copy student records of that parent's child until one of the following events occurs:

- The student attains 21 years of age; or
- The student attains 18 years of age-and declares himself or herself financially independent of his or her parents.

Student records shall be made available to parents and eligible Explorers within fifteen (15) school days of the time a written request for review is submitted to the Office Manager.

Right to Control Access of Student Records

School officials shall release student records to the official records custodian of another school in which the student has enrolled or intends to enroll upon the written request of such official or student, provided that the parent receives prior written notice of the nature and substance of the information to be transferred. Parents may, upon written request, inspect, copy and challenge such information. Once parents have been notified of their right to inspect, copy and challenge information to be transferred to another school and the parents do not respond within ten (10) school days, the records shall be forwarded to the requesting school.

Access to Records Without Parent Consent

School staff members who have a current and legitimate educational interest in the student records shall have access as needed for professional purposes to both the student's permanent and temporary records.



School officials shall release student records without parent permission pursuant to a valid court order or subpoena presented by local, state or federal officials. However, the school officials shall notify the parents in writing regarding the judicial order and the information so provided.

Student records may be made available to researchers for statistical purposes, provided that: a) Permission has been received from the State Superintendent of Education; and b) No student or parent shall be personally identified from the information released.

Information may be released without parental consent in connection with an emergency to appropriate persons if the knowledge of such information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other persons.

If a student is 18 years of age and the student is financially independent of parents, the student may request the parents be denied access to his or her records. A student who desires to declare himself or herself financially independent of his or her parents shall submit a request in writing to the school's records custodian.

Challenge Procedures

A parent shall have the right to challenge the accuracy, relevance or propriety of any entry in the student records of his or her child, exclusive of grades. A request to challenge the contents of a student record shall be made in writing to the school by the parents and shall state in specific terms what entries in their child's record are being challenged. The Principal shall conduct an informal conference with the parents within fifteen (15) school days of the receipt of the written challenge.

Maintenance of School Records

Student permanent records and the information contained therein shall be maintained for a period of sixty (60) years after the student has transferred, graduated or permanently withdrawn from school. Student temporary records shall be maintained until August 1st of the year the student transfers, graduates or permanently withdraws from school. The records of special education Explorers shall be maintained for a period of three (3) years. Information maintained by staff members for their exclusive use shall be destroyed by the staff member maintaining the information no later than the student's transfer, graduation or permanent withdrawal from the school. The Principal shall be responsible for having all student records verified and to eliminate or correct all out-of-date, misleading, inaccurate, unnecessary or irrelevant information on all Explorers' files.

Withdrawal Procedures

In the unfortunate event that a student leaves Explore!, the following steps must be taken. Parents should visit the front office to fill out withdrawal paperwork and return all Explore! materials, including books, manipulatives, etc.

**Inclement Weather**

Explore follows the MNPS inclement weather closing policy. Please monitor local television and radio stations for any closure announcements. Explore will also confirm such closings through PowerSchool as soon as the decision is made.

In the rare case that there is a school closing that is separate from the district, Explore will inform caregivers via phone and through PowerSchool. Caregivers will also be notified of school re-opening information as soon as it is made available. Some examples of reasons why schools may close: flooding, no power, safety, or security issues in the building or community.



Family and Community Involvement

Athletics

Explorers in 6th, 7th and 8th Grade may try out for participation in Athletics through a partnership with East End Prep. Our conference includes other charter schools throughout Nashville. Sports include Football (B), Volleyball (G), Soccer (B,G), Basketball (B,G) and Track (B,G). Tryout information will be shared with Explorers in advance and through our weekly school communication. Practices are held at East End Prep and attendance is required for eligibility to play in the games. All questions regarding Athletics should be directed to our Athletic Director, Mr. Grayson, at gmcginnis@explore.school.

FAC

The Family Advisory Council is a committed, action-oriented group of families with a focus on strengthening the school program through school events, fundraisers, community outreach, and other initiatives. It is open to any parent, guardian or adult family member who wants to work collaboratively with other parents and school staff to support the school community.

All volunteer efforts are coordinated through the FAC. Interested caregivers should contact explorefamilies@gmail.com or attend the FAC meetings that are scheduled throughout the school year for more information.

Community Partners

We will collaborate with several community partners for the 2023-24 school year, including our Passions program. Community partnerships include Plant the Seed, Mr. Bond the Science Guy, Construct Breakin, Turnip Green, Nashville Chess, Rejoice Ballet, Southern Word, Unscripted, Capoeira, AthElite Training, Youth in Tech Coding, Hero's Guild, and many others. We also have partnerships with Vanderbilt University and other professional educational organizations.

Community Conduct

All members of Explore's community are expected to serve as strong examples for Explorers and to treat all other members with respect. In the event that a caregiver or other community member demonstrates conduct that does not live up to this expectation (cursing, disrespect, etc.) they may be asked to leave campus immediately. In the event of disrespectful or abusive language or actions towards staff members or Explorers, individuals may be barred from campus at the discretion of the school principal or designee.

Feedback

Throughout the school year, families will have the opportunity to share positive and constructive feedback with school leadership via Possip, an online survey tool that is used by schools throughout the country. These surveys will be sent bi-weekly via text. Families may remain anonymous or provide their name for a member of the leadership team to follow-up.



Appendices

DCS Mandatory Reporter

According to TCA 37-1-403(i)(1), all school personnel are mandated reporters of suspected abuse and/or neglect. Mandated reporters are required to report suspected child maltreatment immediately when they have reason to believe that harm has come to a child that “reasonably appears to have been caused by brutality, abuse or neglect.” Under this law, failure to report such abuse is a Class A Misdemeanor.

Once any staff member becomes aware that a student may be the victim of abuse or neglect, they must:

- Call the DCS central intake hotline at (877) 54-ABUSE (552-2873)
- Notify the principal
- Complete an Explore Community School incident report.

When calling the hotline, the staff member must have the following information (or as much as is known): the name, birth date, and address of the alleged victim; the name, address, age or birth date, and relationship of the alleged perpetrator; what type of injury or harm was allegedly done to the victim; and a description of the incident (time/date, place in which it occurred, and indication of intention to harm). The staff member should also have the names and ages of other children in the household, information as to whether or not English is fluently spoken by the parents and the work phone number of the alleged perpetrator.

While these steps are taking place, the Principal will assist both the faculty member and student in understanding the ramifications of the call. The Principal will debrief the student and, when appropriate, will contact the parent(s)/guardian.

No one in the workplace, even a supervisor, is permitted to suppress, change, or edit a report of abuse. A mandated reporter who willfully fails to report suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect is subject to license suspension or revocation, and commits a misdemeanor. Falsely reporting information to the hotline is also a misdemeanor.



Concerns and Contact

Both the school and the Board of Directors work in conjunction with one another to hear and resolve any caregiver complaints. If a problem arises, both the school and the Board encourage the complainant to address the problem directly with the staff member(s).

If you are dissatisfied with the proposed resolution by the appropriate faculty or staff member, the complaint should be delivered in writing to the Principal. The Principal will also request a written report from the appropriate faculty or staff member. After reviewing the staff member's and the complainant's written statements and undertaking any additional investigation deemed necessary by the situation, the Principal will present an appellate decision to the complainant.

If the situation has still not been resolved following the Principal's intervention, then the Explore Board of Directors encourages the complainant to email Marsha Edwards at medwards@marthaobryan.org. In this email, you should outline your concerns, actions taken, and results to date. The complainant should then follow up with the next steps provided by Marsha Edwards as our CEO and representative for the Explore Board of Directors. If you are still not satisfied with that result, then you can attend the next board meeting and present your concerns there. The Board will not hear complaints that have not first followed these procedures.

We welcome you to contact us at any time. Please use email or PowerSchool to reach out to the individual(s) involved.

Steps for a Making Formal Complaint

1. Send a written complaint to the Principal including details such as who, what, where, when, and why you are making a complaint.
2. The Principal will investigate and follow up with family with a decision.
3. If the caregiver still has concerns with the proposed solution, they should request an in-person meeting with the Principal.
4. If, following the meeting, the caregiver still has concerns, they should email the CEO of Martha O'Bryan Center, Marsha Edwards at medwards@marthaobryan.org
5. If the issue has still not been resolved, caregivers can plan to attend the next Explore board meeting. They should notify the Principal and CEO of Martha O'Bryan 24 hours in advance so their concerns can be added to the agenda



Explore! Community School Title IX Policy - (adapted from MNPS)

In order to maintain a safe, civil, and supportive learning environment, all forms of sexual harassment and discrimination on the basis of sex are prohibited. This policy shall cover employees, employees' behaviors, students, and students' behaviors while on school property, at any school-sponsored activity, on school-provided equipment or transportation, or at any official school bus stop in accordance with federal law. This policy shall be disseminated annually to all school staff, students, and parent(s)/guardian(s) via the Employment Manual and the Community Handbook, and will also be posted to the "Public Information" section of Explore! Community School's website. The Title IX Coordinator as well as any personnel chosen to facilitate the grievance process shall not have a conflict of interest against any party of the complaint. These individuals shall receive training as to how to promptly and equitably resolve student and employee complaints.

All employees shall receive training on complying with this policy and federal law.

TITLE IX COORDINATOR

The Title IX Coordinator shall respond promptly to all general reports as well as formal complaints of sexual harassment. He/she shall be kept informed by school-level personnel of all investigations and shall provide input on an ongoing basis as appropriate.

Any individual may contact the Title IX Coordinator at any time using the information below:

Name: TaBoya Holman
Mailing address: 707 S. 7th St.
Phone number: 615-784-8222
Email: tholman@explore.school

DEFINITIONS

"Complainant" is an individual who is alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment. "Respondent" is an individual who is reported to be the perpetrator of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment. "Sexual harassment" is conduct on the basis of sex that satisfies one or more of the following:

1. An Explore! Community School employee conditioning an aid, benefit, or service of an education program or activity on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct;
2. Unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to the education program or activity; and/or
3. Any act defined in items A-D below:
 - a. Sexual assault: An act of sexually-motivated physical contact directed towards another person when the other person does not consent or is incapable of giving consent. This includes but is not limited to rape, sodomy, sexual battery, fondling, incest, and statutory rape. See Title IX Regulations, which cite to 20 U.S.C. § 1092(f)(6)(A)(v).



- b. Dating violence: The term “dating violence” is defined in the new Title IX Regulations by reference to federal statute 34 U.S.C. § 12291(a)(10), which defines the term as violence committed by a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim; and where the existence of such a relationship shall be determined based on a consideration of the following factors: (i) the length of the relationship, (ii) the type of relationship, and (iii) the frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship.
- c. Domestic violence: : The term “domestic violence” is defined in the new Title IX Regulations by reference to federal statute 34 U.S.C. § 12291(a)(8), which defines the term as felony or misdemeanor crimes of violence committed between: two individuals who are current or former spouses or intimate partners, persons who share a child in common, two persons who currently live together or have formerly lived together as spouses or intimate partners, a person similarly situated to a spouse of the victim under the domestic or family violence laws of the school’s jurisdiction, or any other person against an adult or youth victim who is protected from that person’s acts under the domestic or family violence laws of the school’s jurisdiction.
- d. Stalking: The term “stalking” is defined in the new Title IX Regulations by reference to federal statute 34 U.S.C. § 12291(a)(30), which defines the term as engaging in a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to fear for his or her safety or the safety of others, or suffer substantial emotional distress. Types of stalking could include, but are not limited to: - Following the targeted person; Approaching or confronting that person in a public place or on private property; Persistent and unwelcome attempts to contact the person by phone, electronic communication (including via the internet and cellphones), or regular mail, either anonymously or non-anonymously; Vandalizing the person’s property or leaving unwanted items for the person; Persistently appearing at the person’s classroom, residence, or workplace without that person’s permission or other lawful purpose; Cyber-stalking, in which a person follows, observes, monitors, or surveils another person through the use of electronic media such as the Internet, digital media networks, blogs, cell phones, texts or other similar devices; and Using visual or audio recording devices or hidden or remote cameras used without the subject’s consent.

Effective Consent: Is consent that is informed and freely and actively given. Effective consent requires mutually understandable words or actions indicating a willingness to engage in mutually agreed-upon sexual activity.

- A. The person who wishes to engage in sexual activity with another bears the burden of specifically obtaining effective consent. If effective consent is in question or ambiguous, then the person who wishes to engage in sexual activity must clarify or explicitly ask for permission.
- B. There is no requirement for a person to resist, physically or otherwise, in order to demonstrate a lack of effective consent. Effective consent means communicating “yes” by word or action; the absence of saying or indicating “no” does not equal consent.
- C. Effective consent must be maintained by both parties throughout the sexual interaction.



- D. Effective consent to sexual activity may be withdrawn at any time, at which point all sexual activity must cease immediately.
- E. Effective consent for one form of sexual activity does not constitute effective consent for another form of sexual activity.
- F. When “no” to a form of sexual activity is communicated by word or action, that sexual activity must cease immediately. Repeated requests to engage in a form of sexual activity may amount to coercion, as explained below.
- G. Previous sexual relationships of the complainant and the respondent with others are generally irrelevant to the existence of effective consent, but a previous, current, and/or subsequent sexual relationship between the complainant and the respondent may or may not be relevant to demonstrating or establishing, depending on the facts and circumstances, whether effective consent was sought or obtained. Relevancy of a previous, current, and/or subsequent sexual relationship between the complainant and respondent or others will be evaluated on a case-by case basis.
- H. Effective consent expires. Effective consent lasts for a reasonable time, depending on the circumstances. Thus, effective consent on one occasion, whether on the same day or another day, may not carry over to another sexual interaction.
- I. Effective consent is never implied by a person’s attire, the person’s extension or acceptance of an invitation to dinner, a date (social function), or a person’s residence, or the person’s consensual participation in kissing or other sexual activity.
- J. Because effective consent must be informed, an individual must not engage in sexual activity with another person if the individual knows or reasonably should know the person is incapacitated.
- K. Effective consent is deemed withdrawn at any point during sexual activity when an individual has become or is incapacitated.
- L. Agreement or acquiescence obtained through the use of fraud, force (actual or implied), or other forms of coercion, as defined below, is not effective consent.
- M. Effective consent requires mutual understanding and agreement regarding the use and/or method of prophylaxis and contraception.
- N. A person’s age may be a factor in determining the ability to give effective consent. For example, under Tennessee law, a person who is under the age of 18 cannot effectively consent to sexual intercourse with a person four or more years older than the underage person.
- O. The existence of a cognitive disability or other condition that significantly limits a person’s ability to understand the nature of an action for which effective consent is requested may be a factor in determining the ability to give effective consent.
- P. The existence of a physical disability or other circumstances may prevent a person from giving effective consent
- Q. The intoxication of a respondent does not excuse the failure to obtain effective consent

The Title IX Regulations’ use of federal definitions of sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking may differ from state law. Accordingly, any criminal proceeding brought by state or local law enforcement authorities may use different definitions.

Behaviors that constitute sexual harassment may include, but are not limited to:

1. Sexually suggestive remarks;
2. Verbal harassment or abuse;
3. Sexually suggestive pictures;



4. Sexually suggestive gesturing;
5. Harassing or sexually suggestive or offensive messages that are written or electronic;
6. Subtle or direct propositions for sexual favors; and
7. Touching of a sexual nature.

Sexual harassment may be directed against a particular person or persons, or a group, whether of the opposite sex or the same sex.

SUPPORTIVE MEASURES

“Supportive measures” are non-disciplinary, non-punitive, individualized services and shall be offered to the Complainant and the Respondent, as appropriate. These measures may include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Counseling;
2. Course modifications;
3. Schedule changes; and
4. Increased monitoring or supervision.

The measures offered to the complainant and the respondent shall remain confidential to the extent that maintaining such confidentiality would not impair the ability of the school district to provide the supportive measures.

GRIEVANCE PROCESS

Upon learning of an instance of alleged sexual harassment, even if no formal complaint is filed, the Title IX Coordinator shall:

1. Promptly contact the complainant to discuss the availability of supportive measures;
2. Consider the complainant's wishes with respect to supportive measures; 3. Inform the complainant of the availability of supportive measures; and 4. Explain the process for filing a formal complaint.

While Explore! Community School will respect the confidentiality of the complainant and the respondent as much as possible, some information may need to be disclosed to appropriate individuals. All disclosures shall be consistent with the school's legal obligations and the necessity to investigate allegations of harassment and take disciplinary action.

Disciplinary consequences or sanctions shall not be initiated against the respondent until the grievance process has been completed. Unless there is an immediate threat to the physical health or safety of any student arising from the allegation of sexual harassment that justifies removal, the respondent's placement shall not be changed. If the respondent is an employee, he/she may be placed on administrative leave or suspension without pay consistent with Tenn. Code Ann. 49-5-511(a)(3) during the pendency of the grievance process. The Title IX Coordinator shall keep the appropriate parties informed of any respondents so that he/she can make any necessary reports to the State Board of Education in compliance with state law.



COMPLAINTS

Any individual who has knowledge of behaviors that may constitute a violation of this policy, shall report such information to the Title IX Coordinator, within 24 hours. Nothing in this policy requires a complainant to either report or file a formal complaint within a certain timeframe. If the complaint involves the Title IX Coordinator, the complaint shall be filed with the Chief of Human Resources.

If a complaint involves allegations of child abuse, including child abuse on school grounds, appropriate notification shall be made per the board policy on reporting child abuse.

Upon receipt of a formal complaint, the Title IX Coordinator shall promptly:

1. Provide written notice of the allegations, and the grievance process to all known parties to give the respondent time to prepare a response before an initial interview;
2. Inform the parties of the prohibition against making false statement or knowingly submitting false information;
3. Inform the parties that they may have an advisor present during any subsequent meetings; and
4. Offer supportive measures in an equitable manner to both parties.
5. If appropriate, at the discretion of the Title IX Coordinator, the parties may opt to pursue an Informal Resolution as an alternative to the formal grievance process. An Informal Resolution involves a remedies-based, non-judicial process designed to eliminate or address potential sexual misconduct. This process aims to assure fairness, to facilitate communication, and to maintain an equitable balance of power between the parties. Explore! Community School will not compel face-to-face confrontation between the parties or participation in any particular form of Informal Resolution. The Title IX Coordinator will make an initial decision about whether a case qualifies for an Informal Resolution, and if both parties then agree to pursue that path, Explore! Community School will halt any investigation or scheduled Resolution Hearing so that the parties can explore the possibility of Informal Resolution. Participation in an Informal Resolution is voluntary, and either party can request to end the Informal Resolution conference at any time and return the investigation or proceeding to its pre-conference status. If the parties agree to a resolution during an Informal Resolution process, the Title IX Coordinator will oversee its implementation, the Complaint will be deemed withdrawn, and the matter will be terminated. However, the resolution will be considered binding, and its breach would give rise to a new Complaint, which may restart the investigation and/or Resolution Hearing process

If the Title IX Coordinator dismisses a complaint, written notice, including the reasons for dismissal, shall be provided to both parties simultaneously.



INVESTIGATIONS

For complaints of student on student harassment the senior leadership for the organization or the principal, as determined by the Title IX Coordinator, shall serve as the investigator and be responsible for investigating complaints in an equitable manner that involves an objective evaluation of all relevant evidence. For complaints of employee on student or employee on employee harassment, the Human Resources Relational Committee will investigate. The burden for obtaining evidence sufficient to reach a determination regarding responsibility rests on the school district and not the complainant or respondent.

Once a complaint is received, the Investigator shall initiate an investigation within forty-eight (48) hours of receipt of the complaint. If an investigation is not initiated within forty-eight (48) hours, the investigator shall provide the Title IX Coordinator with appropriate documentation detailing the reasons why the investigation was not initiated within the required timeframe.

All investigations shall be completed within thirty (30) calendar days from the receipt of the initial complaint. If the investigation is not complete within thirty (30) calendar days, the investigator shall provide the Title IX Coordinator with appropriate documentation detailing the reasons why the investigation has not been completed.

All investigations shall:

1. Provide an equal opportunity for the parties to present witnesses and evidence;
2. Not restrict the ability of either party to discuss the allegations under investigation or gather and present relevant evidence;
3. Refrain from requiring, allowing, relying upon, or otherwise using questions or evidence that seek disclosure of information protected under a legally recognized privilege unless such privilege has been waived;
4. Provide the parties with the same opportunities to have others present during any grievance proceeding;
5. Provide to parties whose participation is requested written notice of the date, time, location, participants, and purpose of all investigative interviews, or other meetings, with sufficient time for the party to prepare to participate;
6. Provide both parties an equal opportunity to inspect and review any evidence directly related to the allegations in the formal complaint; and
7. Result in the creation of an investigative report that fairly summarizes relevant evidence.

Prior to the completion of the investigative report, the investigator shall send to each party the evidence subject to inspection and review. All parties shall have at least ten (10) days to submit a written response which shall be taken into consideration in creating the final report.

Within the parameters of the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the Title IX Coordinator shall keep the complainant and the respondent informed of the status of the investigation process. At the close of the investigation, a written final report on the investigation will be delivered to the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the complainant, parent(s)/guardian(s) of the respondent, and to the Title IX Decision Maker (if applicable, also to the HR Relational Committee if employee to employee; employee to student).



DETERMINATION OF RESPONSIBILITY

The respondent is presumed not responsible for the alleged conduct until a determination regarding responsibility is made at the conclusion of the grievance process. The preponderance of the evidence standard shall be used in making this determination.

The CEO, his or her designee, or Human Resources Legal Liaison shall act as the decision-maker. He/she shall receive the final report of the investigation and allow each party the opportunity to submit written questions that he/she wants asked of any party or witness prior to the determining responsibility.

Within 10 days of receiving answers to all written questions, the decision-maker shall make a determination regarding responsibility and provide the written determination to the parties simultaneously along with information about how to file an appeal. The following definitions will be used to make a recommendation and final determination:

- **Substantiated, Founded** - The information determined through the investigation supports a finding that the Respondent has violated the Policy.
- **Unsubstantiated, Inconclusive** - The investigation does not allow for the establishment of facts or supported conclusions necessary to render a finding that misconduct occurred (i.e., a lack of information prevents the investigator from making a conclusive finding).
- **Unsubstantiated, No Misconduct** - The investigation supports the finding that no violation of the policy occurred (i.e., sufficient information exists for the investigator to conclude that the alleged misconduct did not occur).

A substantiated charge against a student may result in corrective or disciplinary action up to and including expulsion. A substantiated charge against an employee shall result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

After a determination of responsibility is made, the Title IX Coordinator shall work with the complainant to determine if further supportive measures are necessary. The Title IX Coordinator shall also determine whether any other actions are necessary to prevent reoccurrence of the harassment.

APPEALS

Either party may appeal from a determination of responsibility based on a procedural irregularity that affected the outcome, new evidence that was not reasonably available at the time of the determination that could affect the outcome, or an alleged conflict of interest on the part of the Title IX Coordinator or any personnel chosen to facilitate the grievance process. Appeals shall be submitted to the Title IX Coordinator within ten calendar (10) days of a determination of responsibility. The Board Chair of Explore! Community School's Board of Directors, or his or her designee, shall act as the appeals officer.

Upon receipt of an appeal, the Title IX Coordinator shall:

1. Inform the Title IX Appeals Officer within five (5) days of receipt of the appeal;
and
2. Notify the parties in writing.



During the appeal process, the parties shall have a reasonable, equal opportunity to submit written statements. Within ten (10) calendar days, the Title IX Appeals Officer shall issue a written decision describing the result of the appeal and the rationale for the result. The written decision shall be provided simultaneously to both parties.

RETALIATION

Retaliation against any person who makes a report or complaint or assists, participates, or refuses to participate in any investigation of an act alleged in this policy is prohibited. Retaliation may result in further disciplinary action being warranted.



Student Technology Acceptable Terms and Use

Explore! Community School recognizes that the effective use of technology enhances the quality of education in our schools by enabling access to unique sources of information and by providing significant opportunities for collaborative work.

1. **Purpose.** This policy will establish standards for the acceptable use of technology by students of Explore! Community School facilities. Attachments to this policy will provide mechanisms for implementing various sections of this policy
2. **Definitions.**
 - a. "Student". For the purposes of this policy"
 - a. "Student" is defined as any individual enrolled in a class at any Explore! Community School school or Explore! Community School supervised charter school.
 - b. "Staff Member". For the purposes of this policy a "Staff Member" is defined as any employee of Explore! Community School, any contractor employed by a company that is providing paid services to Explore! Community School, or any employee or contractor of a charter school under the supervision of Explore! Community School.
 - c. "Technology Resource". For the purposes of this policy, a "Technology Resource" will be defined as any Local Area network; Wide Area Network or any telecommunications circuit whether wired or wireless, that is used to access the Internet or any information source that is, or is not owned or controlled by Explore! Community School; or any computing device, regardless of operating system or form factor.
 - d. "Account". For the purposes of this policy, an "Account" will be defined as any Active Directory account or other set of credentials consisting of a unique username and password that are collectively designed to authenticate the user's identity for the purpose of providing access to Explore! Community School technology resources.
3. **General Policies.** The use of technology resources by students, staff members, or visitors to Explore! Community School is a privilege and is subject to all applicable state and federal laws and policies of the district. Students are responsible for their ethical and educational use of the computer online services in the District.
 - a. Account Usage. The user for whom an account is created is assumed to be responsible for all activities that occur in connection with the use of this account.
 - b. Expectation of Privacy. All Explore! Community School technology resources, and all information process by, created on, or transmitted through Explore! Community School technology resources are subject to the provisions of applicable Public Records laws. At no time shall there be an expectation of privacy by students, staff, parents, visitors or contractors while utilizing any Explore! Community School technology resource, any Explore! Community School network, stand-alone system, or other device. The district reserves the right to examine, at their sole discretion, any information originating on, accessed by or processed through Explore! Community School owned computers, networks or other information system components. This examination may occur with or without the user's prior knowledge and may be conducted in real time or by examining access history and/or related files.



- c. Monitoring and Reporting Alleged Policy Violations.
 - System administrators will not routinely monitor user Internet, social media, online services and email activities, except for student users in order to protect students from unacceptable content. Explore! Community School will take reasonable precautions to protect user privacy. However, Explore! Community School may monitor a user's Internet, online services and/or email activity when there is a legitimate business or technical need to do so. Circumstances that would warrant this level of access or monitoring include, but are not limited to:
 - 1. When there is a need to access information when a user is absent for an extended period of time or unavailable to assist technical personnel
 - 2. When there is a need to diagnose and/or resolve technical problems involving system hardware, software or communications
 - 3. As an incidental activity when conducting network maintenance
 - 4. When there is a need to gather information required for litigation.
 - 5. As a part of testing performed by auditors
 - 6. When a reasonable suspicion exists that a user is engaging in unprofessional and/or illegal activities that are facilitated by or otherwise involve use of the Explore! Community School network
 - 7. As a part of an investigation of a possible crime or violation of Explore! Community School policy
 - 8. When there is a legal requirement to disclose email or internet activity to law enforcement officials
 - 9. When there is a request for access to information under the Open Records Act
 - Alleged violations involving employees shall be reported to the appropriate principal or department head, which will investigate the incident with input from the Director of Operations. Clear and willful violations or abuse of acceptable usage as set forth in this policy will be subject to disciplinary actions, depending on the severity of the transgression and policy abuse, up to and including termination. Criminal or civil action may be initiated if the violation involves action that is against the law.
- d. Data Security. Users should be aware that electronic communications could, depending on the technology, be forwarded, intercepted, printed and/or stored by third parties, even if these communications occur on Explore! Community School owned systems or on Explore! Community School owned networks. Electronic communications are also retrievable after the user has deleted them from his/her system. It is best practice to not to store personal confidential information on a district resource.
- e. Respect for Copyrighted information. All users are expected to follow existing copyright laws. Transmission of any material that is in violation of any federal or state law is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to confidential information, copyrighted material, threatening or obscene material, and computer viruses. Users may access copyrighted material for research purposes, but its use must strictly adhere to the agreement posted by the author and/or current copyright law (17 USC §101).



- f. **Network Filtering.** Explore! Community School will undertake good faith efforts to ensure that Explore! Community School users are provided filtered Internet access that prevents access to unacceptable content. All users and parents should understand that despite good faith efforts at network filtering, objectionable content might be available either as a result of the users using unauthorized techniques designed to bypass filtering or as a result of the creation of objectionable content that has not yet been identified by filtering software.
- g. **Enforcement of External Laws and Policies.**
- In accordance with federal law, Explore! Community School shall ensure the safety of students through strict enforcement of acceptable use guidelines and a filtered network that is consistently monitored for unacceptable content pursuant to 47 USC §254(h) and the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA).
 - The District will cooperate fully with local, state, or federal officials in any investigation concerning or relating to violations of computer crime laws. The Tennessee Open Records Act governs contents of email and network communications; therefore, proper authorities will be given access to their content.
 - Violations of applicable state and federal law, including the Tennessee Code, Computer Crimes, Chapter 39 will result in criminal prosecution, as well as disciplinary actions by the District.
- h. **Unacceptable Use. Explore! Community School Users will not engage in unacceptable use of technology resources. Unacceptable use consists of activities described below.**
- Using the network for illegal activities includes violating copyright laws, downloading software without the proper license, or contract violations or downloading inappropriate materials, installing viruses and/or similar software, such as but not limited to hacking and host file-sharing software.
 - Accessing or transmission of threatening, offensive or harassing information (text or images) which contains defamatory, abusive, obscene, pornographic, profane, sexually oriented, racially offensive, or otherwise biased, discriminatory or illegal materials shall be strictly prohibited.
 - Transmission of incendiary statements that potentially might incite violence or describe or promote the use of weapons or devices associated with terrorist activities shall be strictly prohibited.
 - Using the network for financial or commercial gain, advertising, or political lobbying.
 - Attempting to subvert network security, impair the functionality of the network, or to bypass restrictions set by network administrators is forbidden. This includes creation and use of proxy servers.
 - Use of "system" or "administrative" passwords is prohibited by unauthorized individuals.
 - Downloading "pirated" copies of copyrighted music, video recordings, or unapproved or illegal software onto the Explore! Community School network is prohibited.
 - Accessing or exploring online locations or materials that do not support the curriculum and/or are inappropriate for school assignments, such as but not limited to pornographic sites or sites that are intended to engage in



or encourage the cyberbullying of Explore! Community School students or staff.

- Vandalizing and/or tampering with equipment, programs, files, software, system performance, or other components of the network. Use or possession of hacking software is strictly prohibited.
- Causing congestion on the network or interfering with the work of others, e.g., chain letters, broadcast messages to lists or individuals or video streaming of non-instructional material on Explore! Community School or personal equipment using Explore! Community School resources.
- Intentionally wasting finite resources, i.e., online time, real-time music.
- Gaining unauthorized access anywhere on the network.
- Revealing the home address or phone number of one's self or another person.
- Invading the privacy of other individuals.
- Using another user's account, password, or ID card or allowing another user to access a student's personal account, password, or ID.
- Coaching, helping, observing, or joining any unauthorized activity on the network.
- Posting anonymous messages or unlawful information on the system.
- Engaging in sexual harassment or using objectionable language in public or private messages, e.g., racist, terroristic, abusive, sexually explicit, threatening, demeaning, stalking, slanderous, or encourage the cyberbullying of Explore! Community School students or staff
- Falsifying permission, authorization, or identification documents.
- Obtaining copies of or modifying files, data, or passwords belonging to other users on the network.
- Knowingly placing a computer virus on a computer or network.

4. Disclaimer of Liability

- a. Explore! Community School makes no warranties of any kind, either express or implied, that the functions or the services provided by, or through, the Explore! Community School network will be error-free or without defects. Explore! Community School will not be responsible for any damage users may suffer, including but not limited to, loss of data or interruption of services.
- b. Explore! Community School is not responsible for the content of any advice or information received by a user from a source outside Explore! Community School, or any costs incurred as a result of such advice.
- c. Explore! Community School will not be responsible for financial obligations incurred or arising through the use of the system by employees.
- d. Explore! Community School is not responsible for the communications of individuals utilizing the Explore! Community School network.
- e. Explore! Community School will undertake good faith efforts to filter "scam" emails. Despite good faith efforts, some "scam" emails will inevitably be delivered to Explore! Community School users via email or other means. Explore! Community School users are expected to independently evaluate the legitimacy and merits of any solicitation or offer that they might receive via email or other electronic communication. Explore! Community School will not be responsible for any loss that a user might suffer as a result of a scam transmitted via email or other electronic communication method.



5. Expectations for Use:

- a. A staff member only allows student use of computers, other technology hardware, software, and computer networks, including the Internet, when supervised or granted permission. Students will have access to all available forms of electronic media and communication that is in support of education and research, and in support of the educational goals and objectives of the District.
- b. Although the District has an Internet safety plan in place, students are expected to notify a staff member whenever they come across information or messages that are inappropriate, dangerous, threatening, or make them feel uncomfortable.
- c. Students who identify or know about a computer security problem or a way of bypassing established filtering and other network security procedures are expected to convey the details to their teacher without discussing it with other students.
- d. Any attempt to alter data, the configuration of a computer, or the files of another user without the consent of that individual, a campus administrator, or a technology administrator, will be considered an act of vandalism and subject the student to disciplinary action in accordance with the District's Student Code of Acceptable Behavior.
- e. Consequences for Misuse
 - The individual to whom computer hardware is issued will be responsible at all times for its appropriate use.
 - Use or possession of hacking software is strictly prohibited and violators will be subject to consequences outlined in the Student Code.
 - Noncompliance with the guidelines published here and in the Student Code of Acceptable Behavior may result in suspension or termination of technology privileges and disciplinary actions. Use or possession of hacking software is strictly prohibited and violators will be subject to consequences of the Student Code. Violations of applicable state and federal law, including the Tennessee Code, Computer Crimes, Chapter 39 will result in criminal prosecution, as well as disciplinary actions by the District.
 - Damaged materials that are incurred during atypical use will be charged in accordance to the following table:

Summary of Repairs		
<input type="checkbox"/> Charger (\$24.50)	<input type="checkbox"/> Screen (\$80)	<input type="checkbox"/> Keyboard (\$120)
<input type="checkbox"/> Webcam (\$18-70)	<input type="checkbox"/> Motherboard (\$120)	<input type="checkbox"/> Hinge (\$30)
<input type="checkbox"/> Touchpad (\$18-70)	<input type="checkbox"/> Hotspot (\$72)	<input type="checkbox"/> Liquid Damage (\$250)
<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ (price will vary based on Technology Labs assessment of damage)		



2023-2024 Explore! Handbook Acknowledgement

Student Name:	Student Grade:
Caregiver Name:	
Date:	

- I acknowledge that I have received and read Explore! Community School's Community Handbook.

Initials

Date

- I agree to abide by the outlined code of community conduct.

Initials

Date

- I have read and agree to the acceptable technology use terms and conditions for students.

Initials

Date

- I [**DO** / **DO NOT**] (circle one) give permission for my child's name and/or photograph to be used for school-related public media and the school's website.

Initials

Date

- I [**DO** / **DO NOT**] (circle one) give permission for my child to participate in annual hearing and vision screenings.

Initials

Date

- I [**DO** / **DO NOT**] (circle one) give permission for my name and contact information to be shared as part of a directory with my Explorer's classroom/cohort.

Initials

Date