



Parent Handbook and Student Code of Conduct

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Mrs. Stephanie Miller, Assistant Principal of Academics

Mr. Kyle Upton, Assistant Principal of Culture

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2025-2026

STEM Preparatory Academy does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, creed, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, color, age, and/or disability in admission to, access to, or operation of its programs, services, or activities. STEM Preparatory Academy does not discriminate in its hiring or employment practices.

STEM Preparatory Academy reserves the right to revise its policies and procedures to ensure a safe and secure learning environment and the academic achievement of every student. Current policies and practices are available in the school's main office.

STEM Preparatory Academy Student and Parent Policies

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Unless otherwise indicated, policies and procedures are consistent with MNPS policy, federal, state, and local law.



A Note From Principal Jones, STEM Prep Middle School Principal

Dear STEM Prep Academy Families,

I am excited to welcome our students and families back for the 2025–2026 school year, beginning August 5th. This year, we are embracing growth with bold goals and a renewed commitment as we continue building the best middle school in Tennessee. At STEM Prep Academy, we are aiming for **80% mastery** on all exit tickets, assessments, and exams. This is a powerful reflection of what our students can achieve when given the time and tools they need. To support this, we've transitioned to **a block schedule with 90 minute long classes**, allowing for deeper instruction, stronger student-teacher relationships, and more time for meaningful learning each day. We are also deepening our commitment to **inquiry-based learning**, empowering students to ask questions, think critically, and actively explore real-world problems across content areas. We will continue to prioritize **Response to Intervention (RTI)** to ensure that we meet every child where they are, academically, behaviorally, and emotionally.

In addition, we remain deeply committed to creating **a school culture that is safe, inclusive, and supportive**. Our **Social Emotional Learning (SEL) program** will continue to be a cornerstone of our school experience, equipping students with the tools they need to build identity, manage emotions, resolve conflict, and thrive socially. **Strong anti-bullying policies** will be enforced, ensuring every student feels respected and valued.

Our goal this year is to become the best middle school in Tennessee and achieve Award School status. Collaboration with parents is crucial to our success, and we are excited to host monthly parent events throughout the year. We ask for your continued partnership in ensuring that students arrive on time, in full uniform, and with completed homework and signed planners each night. Additionally, we ask that you check, sign, and have meaningful conversations at home about your student's Weekly Kickboard Behavior Report, as we work together to help every student show up as their best self each day. **"Focused on Driving Results for Our Future World Changers"** is our 2025–2026 SPA Motto. Together, we will make this year our most impactful one yet!

Sincerely,

Crystalline Jones
SPA Principal



A Note From the Assistant Principals of STEM Prep Middle School

Welcome to the upcoming school year at STEM Prep Academy!

I'm honored to introduce myself as the Assistant Principal of Culture. In this role, I'm committed to making STEM a place where students feel safe, supported, and celebrated every single day. Our goal is simple but powerful: to build a school environment that promotes positivity, joy, and a strong sense of community. I'll be leading efforts to encourage positive behavior, celebrate student growth, and address challenges with fairness and care. Whether it's through engaging events, recognition systems, or daily interactions, our focus is on creating a culture where students feel proud to be part of STEM. Everything we do is grounded in our core values—collaboration, integrity, imagination, inquiry, and drive. These values guide our approach to learning, relationships, and school-wide expectations. I'm excited to work alongside our amazing staff, families, and students to create a school year full of meaningful learning, positive experiences, and unforgettable moments. Please feel free to reach out at any time—I'm here to support you. Warm regards,

Kyle Upton
Dean of Students

Dear STEM Prep Families,

I'm honored to begin the 2025–26 school year as your Assistant Principal of Academics. After serving the last two years as Academic Dean of Math, I step into this new role with 18 years of experience and an unwavering belief in the capabilities of our students.

At STEM Prep, we are committed to delivering a rigorous, inquiry-based education that prepares students to thrive in the most competitive colleges and careers, becoming leaders in their fields. My goal is for every student to feel confident, successful, and empowered—as critical thinkers, problem solvers, and future innovators in whatever path they choose.

To help every child reach their full potential, I ask for your partnership in making learning a daily habit at home. Whether it's reading together, reviewing assignments, or helping your scholar stay organized, your involvement makes a measurable difference.

I'm excited to partner with you in what I know will be a joyful and high-achieving school year.

With gratitude,

Stephanie Miller
Assistant Principal of Academics

Mission and Vision

STEM Preparatory Academy is dedicated to delivering a rigorous, standards-based middle school education with an integrated curricular focus on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. In steadfast support of our students and families, STEM Prep is founded upon and firmly committed to three core beliefs which underpin our design and the daily execution of our mission:

- I. Every child deserves a rigorous, college preparatory education delivered by highly effective teachers.
- II. A culture of accountability and high expectations develops learners and leaders.
- III. Excellent schools are deeply and broadly tied to the communities they serve.

Graduates of STEM Prep will become persistent and steadfast problem-solvers, active leaders in the community, and highly engaged and empathetic citizens of the world. Our vision is to become a national model for public charter schools and STEM learning. We aim to become Nashville's premier public charter school, the chosen school of students and families in our community.

Defining the “STEM” in STEM Preparatory Academy

“STEM” has become an acronym, typically used by government agencies and policy makers, for the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics. It represents an innovative integration of the essential concepts and critical thinking skills underlying these four interrelated disciplines. STEM education aims to engage students' natural curiosity and creative talent as they develop the ability to problem solve, reason, invent, innovate, and hypothesize. These critical thinking skills are not exclusive to the STEM subjects; they are indeed transferable and desirable performance objectives in all content areas.

As stated in our mission, STEM Preparatory Academy provides a college preparatory, *standards-based* education with an *integrated focus* on STEM. Our approach uses STEM to engage students in inquiry- and standards-based learning, balanced with direct instruction to ensure mastery of basic skills, particularly in literacy and mathematics. STEM Prep does not teach STEM to the exclusion of other subjects, nor do we use a singular, inquiry-based instructional approach. Our goal is to provide remediation and highly effective instruction tailored to individual needs, while actively designing multiple entry points for students to engage their critical thinking skills.

Our Student Culture of Care

At STEM Prep Academy, we will support our students within our Culture of Care by establishing a safe physical and emotional environment and cultivating a sense of unity and pride while enacting our core values. This will serve to empower our students to achieve their personal goals and our collective mission.

Core Values of the STEM Prep Community

In order to accomplish the STEM Prep mission, we are committed to and focused on living the STEM Prep community's core values. These core values are the foundation upon which our academic program and community-centered school model are based.

We aim to build and sustain a strong and safe learning environment grounded in the following core values:

- **Drive:** Making every effort to accomplish ambitious goals that challenge you and help you grow.
- **Inquiry:** Asking good questions, and seeking deeper understandings of others' thinking and the world.
- **Collaboration:** Building meaningful partnerships, and working together to achieve shared goals.

- **Imagination:** Forming new ideas, thinking big, and being resourceful in solving problems, exploring the unfamiliar and making connections.
- **Integrity:** Being honest, fair, and trustworthy in your words and actions, and maintaining the confidence and resolve to make right decisions in the face of pressure and adversity.

All individuals in the STEM Prep community ---including the Board of Directors; Executive Director, school administration, faculty, staff, and community partners; families, parents and students---will engage in a series of activities to learn, reflect upon, and enact STEM Prep's core values. All members of the school community will publicly sign the STEM Prep Core Value Commitment and focus on living the community's core values each day both within and outside of the school building.

Charter School Contract Goals

The following section outlines the academic goals of STEM Preparatory Academy as agreed upon in the school's charter contract with Metro Nashville Public Schools.

Academic Performance Goals – State Assessment

- I. All STEM Prep Academy students, on average, will exhibit growth of at least 2 years on NWEA MAP.
- II. 50% of all STEM Prep Academy students will exhibit "Proficiency/Mastery" on EOY assessments

Additional Performance Goals

- I. All STEM Prep Academy students will encounter a joyful, rigorous, equitable, and inclusive learning environment in STEM Prep Academy schools.
- II. All STEM Prep Academy leaders will experience cognitive empathy, role-support, and consistent development in STEM Prep Academy schools.
- III. All STEM Prep Academy staff will experience a "culture of care" as evidenced by daily, monthly, and quarterly school team rituals that promote team belonging and joy.
- IV. For each day that school is in session, an average of 90% of students will complete and submit all homework assignments on the due date. 100% of students will complete and submit all homework assignments within every unit of study.
- V. 100% of students who did not complete and submit homework assignments on time will (re)submit the completed assignment within two school days of the due date.
- VI. 100% of students who received an "F" on a summative or formative will correct and resubmit the assessment.
- VII. STEM Prep will maintain an average daily attendance rate of 95% or higher.

Family and Community Engagement Goals

- I. 100% of STEM Prep parents, families, and/or guardians will volunteer at the school or at a school-sponsored event at least one time each year.
- II. 100% of STEM Prep parents, families, and/or guardians will sign their students' interim assessment reports and report cards throughout the school year.
- III. 100% of STEM Prep parents, families, and/or guardians will attend one parent-teacher-conference each semester.

Academic Calendar

In support of the STEM Prep mission, the academic calendar provides 180 instructional days per school year. Major holiday breaks (e.g., spring break, winter holiday) are typically, though not always, consistent with the MNPS academic calendar. *Note: the STEM Prep calendar is different from the MNPS calendar.* Please review it carefully.

Inclement Weather

STEM Prep will announce any inclement weather-related disruptions to the regular calendar through call outs and on social media. Please report any changes in your contact information to our front office immediately so we can ensure you are receiving any updates. STEM Prep will announce any inclement weather-related disruptions to the regular calendar through call outs and on social media. Please report any changes in your contact information to our front office immediately so we can ensure you are receiving any updates.

Daily Schedule

The STEM Prep school day structure provides robust academic and social support to all students. Remediation, community meetings, and advisories are built into the schedule to address the needs of every student. Moreover, teacher professional development and common planning time are embedded to ensure the effective advancement of teacher learning, improvement of instructional practices and student learning.

Every school day doors open at 8:20 A.M., and classes begin promptly at 8: 45 AM.

Students are dismissed at 3:45 PM daily. Early dismissal occurs some **Fridays at 12:45 PM**.

The following structures support STEM Preparatory Academy's rigorous, college preparatory program:

1. **Intervention and Enrichment:** The Intervention block is the site for school day-embedded tutoring and small group instruction, related arts and STEM-focused learning. For students achieving at high levels of mastery, they will be provided with opportunities to enrich their knowledge through work at learning centers set up in the classrooms. These centers provide individualized and small group activities to further bolster students' conceptual understanding of content. College Prep supports the culture of excellence and high expectations.
2. **Morning Meeting:** Students will gather with an adult and group of peers to check in from 8:20-8:40. During this time students will explore core values, their own sense of self and the world around them. Students will enrich and enhance their personal growth by setting academic and behavioral goals each week. Students will be actively engaged in the betterment of themselves, as well as their school and surrounding community. This time is dedicated to social and emotional growth aligned with age-appropriate development.
3. **Clubs:** Clubs are designed and created to foster student passions and interests. Students meet with a sponsoring teacher and other similarly interested peers at specified times during school hours. This enrichment proves to engage the whole student by tapping into his/her creativity and individualities. Examples of Clubs are: Performing Arts, Community Involvement, Sports Club, Visual Arts, Dance, Travel and Environmental Club. Additional clubs (like EcoLab) will also be held outside of school hours.
4. **Soccer:** We encourage all students between the grades 6th -8th who are able to try out for/ participate in our extra-curricular soccer program.

Overview of Parent Involvement and Expectations

STEM Preparatory Academy believes that excellent schools are deeply and strongly tied to the communities they serve. We believe that parents and families should be an integral part of the school and work alongside students and teachers to build a culture grounded in our core values.

In order to ensure our students' success, all parents at STEM Prep are responsible for engaging with their students and school staff with regards to their students' academic progress and achievement. As a result, ***parents should participate in the following ways:***

1. Sign the student's report cards, assessments, and student progress reports and return them on time.
2. Sign the student's completed planners and homework assignments on a daily basis to ensure that the student is completing homework each night.
3. Sign and review student's weekly culture reports that identify student's behavioral and homework performances. Return culture reports on time every Monday.
4. Attend quarterly parent-teacher conferences and communicate regularly with student's teachers regarding their academic progress.
5. Ensure that their student is on time and prepared for school each day with his/her homework completed, all necessary school materials, and dressed appropriately in STEM Prep Academy's Standard School Attire.
5. Share feedback with the school on our parent-satisfaction surveys.
6. Participate in the quarterly Parent Nights or Parent Events.

A Parent's Rights

At STEM Preparatory Academy, we believe that parents have the right to be informed about their students' academic progress, be an integral part of their child's school community, and have an active voice in ensuring that their child is receiving an excellent education. As a school staff, we will strive to ensure that this is possible through constant communication with parents and monthly community events and parent meetings. If at any time you feel that these rights have been violated, we encourage you to reach out to any member of our school's administration so that the issue can be resolved and we can continue to work together to ensure the best outcomes for your student and your family.

STEM Preparatory School is required to provide annual notice of The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the rights it provides parents and students. The FERPA gives parents and students over eighteen (18) years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights are:

- (1) The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the school receives a request for access. Parents of eligible students should submit to the school principal (or appropriate school official) a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The school official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
- (2) The right to request an amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate or misleading. Parents or eligible students may ask the school to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write the school principal (or appropriate official), clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the school will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

(3) The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the school as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the School Board; a person or company with whom the school has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or student on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official performing his or her tasks; or an attorney from the Department of Law with a legitimate educational interest. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his/her professional responsibility. Upon request, the school can disclose education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll. (Note: FERPA requires a school district to make a reasonable attempt to notify the parent or eligible student of the records request unless it states in its annual notification that it intends to forward records on request.)

(4) The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the school to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202-4605

Student directory information is restricted, in accordance with the FERPA, to name, address, date/place of birth, photograph, telephone number, email, sports/activities, field of study, honors/awards received, height/weight, enrollment, dates of attendance, most recent school attended, and grade level. This information is considered public unless a parent or student over the age of 18 declines to have the information listed in a directory and released by the school district. Please confirm your permission to release your child's directory information.

Parent Complaint Policy

STEM Prep is committed to providing a high-quality education for all students while maintaining strong relationships with the family and community - relationships that support each and every student. Should a situation arise in which a formal complaint to school administration is desired, the individual should provide a letter to the School Director in a sealed envelope. The letter should include the individual's name, student name, address, phone number and description of the nature of the complaint. In addition, the letter should include an address and phone number for the individual in order for the School Director to respond. Should the individual feel the complaint was not addressed at the school level, the individual should provide a letter to the Executive Director via the front office manager or direct mail to the school's address including all information listed above plus a description of the school's action upon filing of the initial complaint. Interpretation support will be provided upon request.

Attendance

Students must be in class in order to learn. Parents and legal guardians are responsible for their child's attendance. Children who miss one or more **class periods** in a school day for any reason must submit a note upon their return to school. A note from the parent or legal guardian should be submitted in the case of late arrival and early dismissal as well.

The note must contain the following information:

- Student name
- Date(s) of absence
- Reason for absence. If the absence is due to illness, a doctor's note should be submitted with the parent's note. An absence due to illness is excused only if accompanied by a doctor's note.
- Parent name and signature
- Phone number(s) where the parent or guardian can be contacted

Families have *three days* to send this note before the absence is considered unexcused. When a student is frequently absent or becomes truant - *five (5) or more total days of unexcused absences* - the school administrator will refer the student to an attendance officer, send a legal notice to the family, or send the case to juvenile court.

Excused Absences

We recognize there are times when a student cannot be at school; however, STEM Prep believes your child's education and academic integrity should be his/her top priority and modeled by all members of the STEM Prep community. For this reason, STEM Prep will only count absences as "excused" for the following reasons:

- Personal Illness if a doctor's note is provided.
- Death in the immediate family (not more than 3 days)
- Deployment of a parent/guardian serving in the armed forces (one day for deployment; one day for return)
- Head lice, up to 3 days per infestation
- Recognized religious holidays regularly observed by persons of the child's faith
- Court appearance or legal mandates
- Upon written request of the parent/guardian, a student's absence may be excused for the reasons below:
 - Unforeseeable emergencies
 - Emergency doctor or dental appointments
 - Other reasons requested in writing by the parent/guardian and considered legitimate by the school administrator or designee.

In the event of a necessary absence, **a parent/guardian must call the main office and report the absence by 8:00 a.m.** The parent/guardian needs to include the child's name, date of absence, the reason for the absence and a contact number for the parent/guardian. *The notification and explanation of the absence is only that and does not automatically excuse the absence.*

School Administrator Authority

School leaders may excuse an absence, refuse to excuse an absence, or require further explanation from the parent or guardian explaining the reason for each absence. The school leader may also request other documentation that they deem appropriate or require a physician's statement of consent to participate in the regular school program, extracurricular activities, or to validate an extended illness or excessive absences due to illness.

Tardiness

Being prompt to all school commitments is an important expectation of each student. Students are required to be at school on time. If a student is late to school or to class 2 or more times in one week, the parent/guardian will be notified of this problem and the parent/guardian will be expected to implement a plan to correct the problem. Should there be an emergency that prevents a student from being on time, a parent/guardian may call the office or send a signed note which will excuse the tardy. Students arriving after 8:45 AM should be escorted into the building by a parent or guardian to be signed in at the front desk.

Late Arrival/Early Dismissal

Students must attend 3.5 hours of a school day to be considered present for the school day at-large. Students arriving after the designated start of either the school day or a class period are counted as tardy.

Students who arrive after 8:45 AM must obtain an admit slip to class from the office and present the slip to the teacher of the missed class(es) upon classroom entry.

Students are not released from school for early dismissal without an excuse note provided by the parent or legal guardian per STEM Prep attendance policy.

Information on who can retrieve the student must remain on file at the school. Without prior notification from the student's parent/guardian, a student will not be released to another adult. The parent/guardian or pre-approved adult will be asked to present a picture ID to front office personnel before the student can be released from school.

Notice of Compulsory Attendance - Pursuant to TCA 49-6-3001, every parent, guardian, or other legal custodian residing within Davidson County, Tennessee, having control or charge of any child or children between six (6) years of age and seventeen (17) years of age, both inclusive, shall cause such child or children to attend public, home, or non-public school, and in the event of failure to do so, shall be subject to penalties. When a student, who is subject to compulsory school attendance, is found to be unlawfully absent from school and/or habitually truant, the student may be taken into temporary custody by law enforcement personnel and delivered to the Metro Student Attendance Center (MSAC).

Official Action

In cases of chronic absence or truancy (5 total days of unexcused absences), and after consultation with the appropriate staff, in accordance with policy and procedures, school administrators must take strong action including but not limited to referral to an Attendance Officer, issuance of legal notices, and juvenile court intervention.

Note: If a student is absent for 10 or more days, they may be retained at the discretion of the school administrator.

Make-Up Work

All students with excused or unexcused absences are responsible for missed work and are expected to make up the work to ensure their mastery of the content and skills taught in each class. Students with an excused absence will be allowed to complete assignments missed during the absence and make up the work when they return for the full grade. Students will have the number of days he or she was absent to submit the work. For example, if a student was absent for two days, the student will have two days to complete the missed work. Students with excused absences will receive full credit for missed assignments when submitted on time. Please note the attendance record is not changed when missed work is completed.

Under the A/B block schedule, students are expected to retrieve missed assignments on the next school day they are present in the building, even if they do not attend the missed class that day. Students should connect with their teachers during homeroom to receive assignments and instructional guidance.

Students with unexcused absences and absences due to suspensions must complete all missed work and will have the number of days absent to complete all work. A student's consultation with his/her teachers regarding missed work is very important in the student's understanding of the content and skills taught during the missed class(es). For this reason, STEM Prep does not gather assignments for pick up on the day(s) the student is absent. Upon the student's return, the teacher will provide all notes and assignments, as well as general instructional guidance. Should an emergency or unforeseen circumstance arise in which case the parent feels obtaining missed work without teacher consultation may be useful, the parent may request missed work through a formal request to school administration.

Bus Transportation

Students residing in the target zones will receive free school bus transportation. Your student's transportation plan will be provided prior to the school year starting.

The transportation plan is structured around cluster stops within approximately 1.5 miles from your residence. To ensure maximum safety and security, we ask for parents to accompany their students to the cluster stop during both pick up and drop off times. All school policies and rules will be enforced on the school bus. Break of transportation policy will result in loss of bus transportation.

Bus Suspension Policy

Students are expected to behave in a respectful, empathetic, and reasonable manner on the bus. All students will have an assigned seat. They must remain seated at all times. Students may not eat or drink on the bus and they must ensure that they do not throw trash or other detritus on the floor. Students may talk at a reasonable volume level that allows for the driver to remain focused on the road and fully aware of any sirens or other emergent traffic signals. In cases when the students are talking above a reasonable volume level, the driver may stop the bus at the next available spot. The bus driver will use the quiet signal and will redirect the students to lower their volume. In the event that students do not comply, the driver will inform the students that they have lost talking privileges for the remainder of the ride.

When a student does not comply with any of the bus behavioral expectations, the driver will inform the student that they must write an apology letter. The driver will give the "Bus Apology Letter" form to the student to ensure that they are aware of the consequence. Additionally, the driver will keep the second page of the "Bus Apology Letter" form and will give this second page to the Dean of Students on the following morning. This will provide an account of the inappropriate behavior on the bus. The Dean of Students will use this documentation to determine a consequence in addition to the letter. If there is another leader referral given for bus behavior, the student will be issued a one-day suspension from the bus. If there is another leader referral earned for inappropriate behavior the student will be suspended for three days. issue a deduction in Kickboard and to keep a log of this student's prior bus behavior. If a student earns a deduction on the bus two separate times, the student will be issued a one-day suspension from the bus. If the student earns a deduction on the bus three separate times, the student will be issued a three-day suspension. Additionally, if a student engages in behavior that inflicts harm (emotional/physical) on another passenger, the student may be suspended from the bus for an extended amount of time and, in extreme cases, the remainder of the academic school year, at the discretion of the Dean of Culture.

Car Riders

The parent or legal guardian of the car rider will be given a car rider identification card with his/her designated number.

In the morning, parents/guardians should drive students to the front of the main school building to drop off students. All car riders should arrive at school between 7:45 AM- 8:45 AM. Breakfast will begin being served at 7:45 A.M. Please ensure all children exit the car in one location to maintain the swift and efficient flow of traffic for morning drop-off.

The exact dismissal point is clearly marked with a set of cones. Students with parents waiting between the cones in the outer circle are released to their cars first. Parents must be between the cones in order for students to be dismissed. Teachers are staffed at either end of the cones as well as the top of the lot and next to the gate to ensure students follow this flow. Once the entire outer circle has moved through, the next circle will be dismissed in the same manner. The teacher at the top of the lot controls the flow of traffic, waiting for all students to be in their cars before release. When car riders remain without being picked up, they are to be brought back to the front lobby to place parent phone calls. If any driver picking up a scholar does not follow our safety policy and procedures for picking up students through the car rider line, they can be barred from picking up students in the car rider line, and the authorities may be contacted for possible citations to be issued. Our students' safety is our top priority.

Parents/guardians must pick up students on time. If you have an emergency and are unable to pick up your child on time, you must notify us immediately. To ensure the safety of our students and STEM Prep's compliance with rules and regulations, school staff will notify the authorities if contact cannot be made with a parent/guardian. Please make a family safety plan in advance of unforeseen difficulties in bringing or picking up your children at the specified times. For example, during inclement weather when school may be released earlier than the regular dismissal time. Your family should establish a contingency or emergency plan for those rare occasions.

All students must be picked up by 4:30 P.M., and in the event that a student is left on more than 3 occasions for late pick up a meeting will be arranged between parents and an administrator to come up with a plan of action. If the same student is picked up 2 more times without communication, Metro Action will be contacted.

Changes in a Student's Mode of Transportation

In the event a student's method of transportation to or from school changes on any particular day for any length of time, the legal parent or guardian must submit a signed note to the main office by 8:00 am on the first day of the change. We will not release a student to anyone who is not the legal parent or guardian unless we have a signed note from the legal parent or guardian.

This policy is designed to ensure each child's safety and security. We ask that each student's family has a transportation plan and contingency plan should unforeseen circumstances arise. Part of that plan must be to notify the school in writing by 8:00am the first day of the change.

Dress Code and Uniform – Middle School Policy

Uniform items may be online or at **Max & Alice School Uniforms, 3205 Powell Ave, Suite B, Nashville, TN 37204.*

1. Shirts

- a. Students must wear unaltered, STEM Prep-logoed school shirts each day. Shirts must always be tucked/not hang below the belt whenever students are on school grounds, which includes arrival, dismissal, and on field trips/off-campus events.
 - a. Options for the STEM Prep-logoed shirt include the STEM Prep polo shirt, STEM Prep t-shirt, and STEM Prep sweatshirt and sweater.
 - b. Note: STEM Prep Middle School (5th-8th grade) wear the navy polo shirt. STEM Prep High School (9th-12th grade) students have the option of teal, pink, and black polo shirts.
- b. If students wear the STEM logoed long-sleeved Oxford shirt, it should be fully buttoned and tucked. The top collar button may be unbuttoned for student comfort.
- c. Students may wear a solid undershirt that matches the same color of their uniform shirt or is a professional white t-shirt or undershirt, though students are not required to wear undershirts. In cooler temperatures, students may wear one solid white long-sleeved t-shirt or one white solid, long-sleeved turtleneck shirt. The long-sleeved t-shirt may also be the same color of the STEM Prep-logoed shirt.

2. Outerwear

- a. While students are not required to wear these items during the school day, we do recommend that each student own a crewneck, fleece, or cardigan to ensure they are comfortable in class, as temperatures can fluctuate.
- b. Students may wear crewneck, fleece or cardigan sweatshirts with or without STEM Preparatory Academy's logo.
 - a. If the outerwear is *not* the available STEM Prep-logoed outerwear, items must be solid **GREY, NAVY, or WHITE**.
 - i. STEM Prep High (9th-12th grade) students may also wear black outerwear to coordinate with the high school shirt options.
- c. Students' outerwear may have a hood; however, the hood is not allowed to be up/on while on school grounds.
- d. During rain and cold weather months, students may wear a raincoat or winter coat of the family's choice. These items should be school appropriate.

3. Pants/Skirts

- a. Students should wear *solid* khaki, navy, or gray dress pants.
 - a. Shorts, capri pants, and corduroys are not permitted.
 - b. STEM Prep High (9th-12th grade) students may also wear black pants to coordinate with the high school shirt options.
- b. Students may not wear pants that are low-rise (below the hip), bell-bottom, cargo (more than two front pockets and two back pockets), carpenter, wide-legged, overly tight or baggy (including pants with a "skinny" cut), or made of denim or corduroy.
- c. Students may not wear jeans, jeans material, or denim pants of any kind - even if the jeans/denim are the correct color.
- d. Students may not wear clothing with logos, unless it is the STEM Prep logo or a small dress pant logo (i.e. Dockers) on the rear pocket. No other logos are allowed.
- e. Students may wear skirts/skorts in solid khaki, navy, or gray. Skirts/skorts should be an appropriate length, defined as the length of the skirt matches your natural fingertip.
 - a. STEM Prep High (9th-12th grade) students may also wear black skirts to coordinate with the high school shirt options.
- f. Designs, jewels, glitter, etc. on the pockets, pants, or skirts/skorts are not permitted.

- g. Pants and skirts should not reveal parts of the body otherwise concealed by undergarments and should not reveal parts of the body in ways that are not school appropriate.

4. Shoes and Socks

- a. Students may wear shoes and socks of the family's choice. Shoes, however, must be safe for science labs and physical education/wellness course activities. As a result, flip flops, heels, and shoes that do not cover the foot are not permitted.
- b. All shoes and socks must be school-appropriate.
- c. Any shoes or socks with images of *and/or* references to dehumanizing acts or language, drugs, violence of any kind, criminal actions, or otherwise harmful content are strictly prohibited.

5. Belts

- a. Families may choose a school-appropriate belt for their student's uniform.
- b. Belts should be fastened and worn appropriately on school grounds.

6. Accessories and Make-up

- a. Jewelry may be worn, but should not be distracting.
- b. *Due to student and staff allergies*, we ask that heavy perfume and scented lotion be avoided or minimized.

8. Head Coverings

- a. No hats or other head coverings are permitted on school grounds, including scarves, hairnets, athletic sweatbands, and bandanas, except where mandated by religious requirements or medical exemptions.

9. Other

- a. Any clothing, handbag, backpack, body art or any item with *or* on his/her/their person with images of *and/or* references to dehumanizing acts or language, drugs, violence of any kind, criminal actions, or otherwise harmful content are strictly prohibited.
- b. No clothing or jewelry that is determined by any teacher or staff member to distract from the learning process is permitted.

Dress-Down Policies (Every Friday)

These policies relate specifically to school days officially recognized on Friday's, Dress Down days, or Spirit Days. Students who fail to follow these policies will be subject to consequences consistent with our standard dress code policy.

- Only students who have earned a particular incentive may participate in the dress-down activity.
- Any alteration of student dress must align with the specific guidelines offered by the Principal.
- Students not participating in the specified dress down activity must wear their issued school uniform.
- Unless sponsored school-wide, students participating in any dress down activity must present a pass upon request from STEM Prep staff.
- Distressed pants with rips of any sort are not allowed.
- Any shirts with logos or writing must be school appropriate. What is school appropriate is determined at the sole discretion of the school admin.
- Shirt tops must cover midribs and backs including when students are sitting, raising hands, or moving in any direction.

Parents/Guardians and Visitors

All parents and visitors must sign-in and sign-out at the front desk when they enter or leave the building. Parents/guardians are not permitted to proceed beyond the lobby area without prior permission from the Office Manager or an Administrator. Parents/guardians are expected to abide by the school's visitor rules and core values in all their interactions with faculty, staff, administration, and other parents and students. Parents/guardians will be asked to leave the school campus if the school's core values are not practiced. Parent/guardians and visitors are asked to refrain from using their cell phones inside of the building.

Disruptive Visitors/Parents

Persons, whose conduct disrupts the safe and orderly operations of school facilities, in the reasonable judgment of authorized school personnel, may be required to request permission to be on school facilities in advance. In some circumstances, such behavior could result in a zero tolerance action. Zero tolerance of disruptive visitors/parents means that they may not be allowed on any school property or attend school activities for up to one (1) year.

No person shall remain in any school building or on the grounds of the school after being requested to leave the premises by a school administrator, his/her designee, person charged with the responsibility for the facility, school security officer, or a law enforcement officer. Anyone who trespasses, loiters, or fails to comply with a request to leave the premises of a school facility given by an individual authorized to make such a request will be subject to personnel action and/or prosecution under law.

When the school is on lock down due to a security or weather-related issue, the first priority is the safety of staff and students. Parents or other visitors to the building must follow school emergency procedures under the direction of school staff until the lock down is lifted. During a security lock down, no one is permitted to enter the building from the outside. In weather-related lock downs, schools may allow those outside to seek shelter indoors until such time as it becomes necessary for staff to take shelter.

Cell Phone Policy

Personal technology includes, but is not limited to, cellular phones, apple watches, wireless earpieces, iPods, iPads, mp3 players, calculators, and portable gaming devices.

House Bill (HB) 0932 requires school districts to create policies prohibiting students from using cell phones, tablets, laptops, or gaming devices during class. The bill, passed by the Tennessee House and Senate, mandates that districts develop these policies, but leaves the specifics to individual school districts. The bill also allows for exceptions, such as use for educational purposes, health concerns, or emergencies, and for students with IEPs or 504 plans.

Specifically focus on cell phones and unapproved devices.

Prohibition of Wireless Communication Devices:

The bill requires schools to prohibit the use of any device capable of "voice, messaging, or other data communication between two or more parties" during instructional time.

The STEM Prep cell phone policy does not permit the usage of cell phones during school hours.

- All cell phones must be turned off and in the students backpack, prior to entering the building. Students are required to ensure the cell phone is turned off and out of sight during the instructional day, but is permitted for after school activities beside ASD.
- Use of cell phones by middle school students riding to and from school on STEM Prep buses is permitted as long as it does not impact the safe operation of the school bus. If the bus driver feels a cell phone is causing problems on the bus they will direct the student to turn off the phone and put it away. We expect students to comply with the bus driver's directions or face disciplinary consequences.
- Students may not use cell phones on STEM Prep or commercially chartered buses used for school-sponsored activities, such as field trips, during the instructional day.
- If a student's cell phone is confiscated it must be picked up by the parents no later than 4:15 or the phone must be picked up the following day 8:45-4:15.

Consequences for Violation

Possession of personal technology by a student is a privilege. This privilege will be forfeited by any student who fails to abide by the terms of this policy. A device used outside of these policies will result in confiscation of the technology. While the classroom teacher

may confiscate personal technology devices used in violation of this policy, those devices which are confiscated are sent to the school administration. Therefore, personal technology devices may only be retrieved by a parent from office administration during designated office hours as prescribed by the school administrator. A student in possession of personal technology in violation of this policy may be subject to the any of the following:

First-Third Offenses:

- Devices will be confiscated and returned to the parent at the discretion of the building administrator.
- Parent conferences may be required to retrieve devices.
- Disciplinary consequence at the discretion of the building administrator.

Four or More Offenses:

Students in violation of this policy on four or more occasions are subject to additional consequences which may include, but are not limited to:

- In-School Suspension
- Disciplinary consequence at the discretion of the building administrator

Severe Clause:

Highly inappropriate activities include but are not limited to:

- Communication that contains inappropriate content, profanity, intimidation or threats to others;
- Cheating and other forms of academic dishonesty;
- Taking or showing inappropriate photographs/video
- Communicating with groups or individuals in a manner that causes a disruption of the school environment; and/or
- Refusal to relinquish phone to persons of authority upon request
- Phone recording, social media sending, or displaying harm, violence, or bullying would have consequences aligned with our behavior matrix.

Violation of the severe clause may result in suspension from school for up to 10 days regardless of the number of previous offenses.

General Academic Policy

By cultivating a community of learning and academic excellence, STEM Prep will bolster the number of underrepresented students who graduate from the most competitive postsecondary programs and universities in the country and lead the discoveries and innovations of the future. At STEM Prep, we stand committed to maintaining a rigorous college-preparatory curriculum that aids our students in the college application process and prepares our students for post-secondary opportunities.

Our 2025-2026 grading policy acts in alignment with our goal of college preparation for all our students. Specifically, at STEM Preparatory Academy, grades are based on work products that address grade-level standards. For each grading period, grades will be determined and recorded using multiple forms of assessments, including performance-based assessments, formative assessments, summative assessments, etc.

Academic Honor Code

The Honor Code states that you shall put forth your own individual and independent best effort on all academic work you produce. Hard work will equate to success in our system. This may mean additional assignments, tutoring hours, retaking an assessment, or an individualized plan. For this reason, we do not condone any and all violations of the Honor Code. Violation of the Honor Code may take several forms, including, but not limited to, plagiarism, cheating and copying. Any of the following forms without full acknowledgment of the original source counts as a violation of the Honor Code:

- Direct duplication by copying another's work, whether from a book, article, website, another student's assignment, etc. – this includes allowing another student to copy, review, and/or use one's original work in any way. Additionally, no student shall directly or indirectly copy from any artificial intelligence such as ChatGPT or any similar software program or platform.
- Duplication in any manner of another's work during an assessment, test, or exam, as well as during an independent practice, homework, project-based task or assessment, or during web-based learning and/or assessment periods or tasks. In other words, cutting and pasting information from the internet into an assignment.

- Verbal or nonverbal communication, or attempt thereof, during an assessment of any kind.
- Having and working from any unauthorized documents or resources during class time, including notes, calculators, the internet or any other resource.
- Paraphrasing another's work closely, with minor changes but with the essential meaning, form and/ or progression of ideas maintained. Additionally, not student shall directly or indirectly copy from any artificial intelligence such as ChatGPT or any similar software program or platform.
- Piecing together sections of the work of others into a new whole.
- Submitting one's own work that has already been submitted for assessment purposes in another subject or at another school.
- Producing assignments with other people (e.g., another student, a tutor) that should be one's own independent work.
- Circulating one's original work, or the work of another, through electronic communications to include email, text message, or other virtual or electronic application. Also includes the review, downloading, or use – real or attempted – of another's work on one's device (laptop, phone, etc.).
- Pressuring others to violate the Honor Code.
- The presentation of group work as individual, independent work, or the presentation of an individual's work as a group's.
- Falsifying, creating and fabricating information, data, score, or sources.

Every student receives instruction regarding the Academic Honor Code during Student Orientation. Students learn the principles of academic integrity and review the honor code and its expectations. They are given feedback and coached towards success. At the conclusion of Student Orientation, students sign the honor code pledge and commit to upholding it throughout the year. Families will also be asked to sign a statement of support as well.

- It is our acknowledgement that all people, including students, are lifelong learners - that they are continuously growing and learning. We want students to recognize and be empowered to learn from their decisions, both decisions that lead to success and those that have consequences. Therefore the following consequences will be implemented for any violations of academic integrity. Violations will accumulate across all classes for each student.

Consequences for Violating the Academic Honor Code:

1st Offense: The first time the Academic Honor Code is violated, a student will be called to a meeting with their teacher and a school leader, the parent will be notified, and the offense logged into the school behavior system. The student will share their decision to violate the academic honor code and what they learned from it. They will have one additional opportunity to complete the assignment initially done without integrity. Until the assignment is completed, a student will have a failing 0 in the gradebook. The assignment will be graded the second time with a maximum score of 70%. If a student chooses not to complete the assignment within a week of the meeting, they will receive a score of zero.

2nd Offense: The second time the Academic Honor Code is violated, a student will be required to do research on collegiate honor codes and produce a paper describing the consequences of violating college Honor Codes within 48 hours, to be turned into the teacher. The student will give an in-person presentation of the paper to their family, teacher, and a school leader, and the offense will be logged into the school behavior system. Until the assignment is completed, a student will have a failing 0 in the gradebook. They will have one additional opportunity to complete the assignment initially done without integrity. The assignment will be graded the second time with a maximum grade of 50%. If a student chooses not to complete the assignment within a week of the meeting, they will receive a score of zero.

3rd Offense and Repeat Offenders: Should a third offense take place, the student will be required to submit an argumentative essay to the teacher, principal and parents indicating why they should be allowed to an additional opportunity to complete the assignment with integrity, and what other consequences should be upheld. Should the committee determine that the assignment can be completed again, the student will receive a maximum grade of 50%. Until the assignment is completed, a student will have a failing 0 in the gradebook. If a student chooses not to complete the assignment within a week of the committee determination, they will receive a score of zero.

Any 4th or additional offenses will result in a score of 0 in the gradebook. Each offense should continue to be logged into the school behavior system.

Homework Policy

Daily homework is a core component of the STEM Prep academic program and is critical to a student's mastery of academic content and skills.

Teachers strategically design homework to provide students with independent practice of skills taught during class. Since the homework is the "Part 2" of the in-class practice of skills taught, it's incredibly important for students to take careful notes and listen attentively during class. Scholars will receive ELA and Math homework everyday, Science on Monday and Wednesday, Social Studies on Tuesday and Thursday, and are expected to read and study each night for at least thirty minutes. Homework totals up to an hour and thirty minutes each night.

Students are expected to record all assignments in their daily planners and return all homework at the beginning of each class during the first five minutes of the class period. Submitted homework assignments are categorized as complete, incomplete, and missing.

- **Complete:** Student work is considered complete if the student writes in **complete sentences** and clearly **re-states the question** in their response. In addition, each sentence must contain a **capital letter** and the **correct punctuation**. Finally, complete work must be **written neatly** and legibly and must thoughtfully and **directly respond** to each question.
- **Incomplete:** Student work is considered incomplete if a student makes a minor grammatical or formatting error. These errors include: forgetting to capitalize or punctuate a sentence correctly, not writing their name or date at the top of the paper, or if the homework assignment is missing a student signature, parent signature or date.
- **Missing:** Student work is considered missing if a student makes any error related to the content of their response. These errors include: not re-stating the question in the response, failing to complete a problem or question, or providing a response that is insufficient in length (i.e. the teacher may ask for two sentences, but the student has only written one sentence.)

Students are rewarded for homework completion both academically and otherwise. Students who chronically do not complete their homework may lose access to fun activities, be placed on academic/ homework probation, or may be given school level consequences. Homework is a critical part of a student's success.

Academic Probation

Students may be placed on academic probation for course failure or routinely choosing to submit incomplete or missing homework. Parents/guardians will be notified and required to meet with school administrators to develop an intervention and probation plan, which may include after-school homework hours, Saturday school, and/or other activities. Academic probation requires the student to complete a quarterly probation tracker. If academic effort continues to be a problem, a conference with the parent/guardian will be held to discuss more serious steps that may include retention. Upon successful completion of the academic probation terms, the student will be removed from academic probation.

Grading Policy

At STEM Preparatory Academy, grades are based on work products that address grade level standards. For each grading period, grades will be determined and recorded using multiple forms of assessments, including but not limited to:

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| -Oral performance | -Observations |
| -Written performance | -Projects |
| -Quizzes/Tests | -Formative Assessments |

In addition, students' scores on the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment will comprise a portion of the student's final grade for the spring semester in the subject areas of mathematics, reading/language arts, science, and social studies.

Grading Scale

In alignment with the grading scale enacted by the state of Tennessee beginning in the 2022-2023 school year, teachers will use a traditional grading scale of 0 – 100%:

- A = 100 - 90
- B = 80 - 89
- C = 70 - 79
- D = 60 - 69
- F = 59 or below

In keeping with the MNPS

Course Grades Required for Mastery/Credit/Passing

- 85% is considered mastery.
- Overall, a score of sixty (60) percent is considered passing.
 - Any score 59% and below on any formative or summative, as a final quarter grade, or a final semester grade, is considered a failing grade.
 - At the end of a quarter, if a student scores lower than a 50%, the student's grade should be rounded up to 50% for their final quarter grade.

Grade Entry and Category Weights

Grades for the week should be entered into PowerSchools by 4:00 p.m. each Friday.

In order to calculate Final Grades, teachers will use the following weighted calculations:

- **0% Exit Tickets:** Exit tickets are administered at least 2-3 times per week. Exit Tickets are designed to help teachers understand students' mastery toward standards and should not penalize student grades. Therefore, Exit Tickets should be entered as a **Diagnostic Grade** which will capture the data but will not count toward student grades.
 - *The difference between an exit ticket and a quiz is that an exit ticket assesses a lesson at the end of 1 class block, and a quiz assesses multiple lesson objectives.
 - All Exit Tickets must be recorded in the Exit Ticket tracker.
- **50% Formative Assessments** - serve as a progress tracker for teachers to understand students' mastery towards standards. Formative assessment measures how a student *is learning* during a course of study. (i.e. quiz, think-pair-share, etc)
 - **Quizzes, etc.:** Should be administered in alignment with course objectives and unit alignment.
 - **Bi-Weekly quiz:** Every two weeks a "bi-weekly" quiz will be *administered on Performance Matters* unless otherwise directed by the Managing, Director of Academics and entered into the gradebook bi-weekly. Teachers will maintain a unit tracker in which students track their progress towards mastery with teacher support and facilitation. Teachers will track the percentage of students meeting mastery per assessment, which will be posted in the classroom;
 - Formative assessments will be graded within 2 school days and returned to the student in class. Students will be in charge of tracking their individual progress while teachers track whole-class progress, including the percentage of students reaching mastery (85% or higher) at least weekly.
 - Students cannot retake formative assessments unless the teacher has created an academic Intervention plan for the student to increase their failing grade and the formative is part of the plan.
- **30% Summative assessments** - measure a students' mastery of standards, including end of unit assessments, interims, midterms and finals/capstone. Summative assessments should always assess content that has already been covered in class.
 - **One assessment (1) per unit** will be *administered utilizing the curriculum approved curriculum platform*. Within one week of the administration of a summative or project-based assessment, the assessment should be graded, returned to students and included in the Data Driven Instruction (DDI) analysis. Students should note their progress toward their overall goal of 85% mastery.
 - **Summative Retake:** In order to retake an exam, students must complete a reflection that includes the following information and requirements: 1) Thoughtful and high quality error analysis; 2) Letter of Intent which explains why the student did not achieve at least 85% mastery on the first assessment and the next steps the student has taken to demonstrate mastery on the retake exam. The exam retake will be administered in-class within two weeks of the initial tracking date. However, retakes should only occur after the areas of growth identified on the initial assessment have been remediated. All students who scored below an 85% may retake the exam. Teachers may choose to administer the entire exam or administer only portions that students did not master.
 - **Interim Assessment (IA):** All classes will give an IA exam at the end of each *quarter one, two, and three*. IA will be administered using Mastery Connect unless otherwise directed by the Deputy Chief of School or Managing, Director of Academics.

- **20% Discourse/Do Now/Independent Practice/Classwork/Homework** - This work is intended to provide students with multiple-at-bats and align to our growth mindset as students work toward mastery of standards. As such, teacher and student should assess accuracy to determine mastery of the content. Grades may be entered based on completion as long as there is opportunity for student and teacher reflection.
 - **At least one (1)** discourse, do now, independent practice, homework, or classwork grade will be entered into the gradebook weekly.
 - Homework assignments grades should be purposeful and provide an opportunity for students to practice a skill that students can do independently but not yet fluently, elaborate on information that has been addressed in class to deepen students' knowledge, and/or provide opportunities for students to explore topics of their own interest.

“Diagnostic Grades” and Assessments

- If more than 25% of students in a given class do not pass a formative or summative assessment, change the assessment category to “diagnostic” and partner with the coach for next steps, which should include a strategic reteach/spiraling and reassessment cycle.
- If more than 20% of students did not submit a given homework assignment, record this as a diagnostic and re-administer the assignment following the identification and resolution of the root cause(s), with support of the coach.

Academic Intervention Policy

- If a student is failing a class at the time of progress report distribution (minimum bi-weekly), the teacher should, within one week of progress report distribution: 1) meet with the student to develop a remediation plan; 2) contact parents/guardians to engage them in the remediation plan; and 3) maintain a log of family communication on KickBoard.
 - Should the voicemail be reached, the call should be repeated using all available communication tools until a conversation can be had.
 - Once 3 documented attempts have been completed *and* reflected in KickBoard, and if the parent has not yet been reached for this conversation, the teacher should email the coach and cc Principal.
 - Leaders will support connecting with the parent.
- If a student is failing two or more classes at the time of progress report distribution (minimum biweekly), an in-person or virtual conference is required with the parent, administrator, teachers of failing courses, student advisor and EE/EL (as relevant). The advisory teacher will be responsible for coordinating the meeting and acting as a student advocate during the meeting. The outcome of this meeting will include a grade recovery contract which indicates the steps necessary to pass the course.
- If a student is failing a class at the time of progress report distribution (no longer than every 3rd week), an in person or virtual conference is required with the parent, administrator, teachers of failing courses, student advisor and EE/EL if relevant. The advisory teacher will be responsible for coordinating the meeting and acting as a student advocate during the meeting. The outcome of this meeting will include student and teacher commitments and timelines for implementation.

MS Retention and Failure Policy

At STEM Prep, we are fully committed to ensuring that each student receives the individualized instruction necessary to master all content at the student's grade level. However, we are also committed to ensuring that each student is fully prepared for the next step in their own education, with all students fully prepared to attend a high - performing high school at the completion of their 8th grade year. As a result, students will be retained at the end of the school year if they score below a sixty (60) percent in any core subject area, including math, reading/language arts, science, or social studies. In addition, if students are absent for 10 or more school days, they may be retained due to chronic absence. These decisions will be made based on the discretion of the school administrator. Students requiring remediation may be asked to complete additional course work and take an exam upon the conclusion of the summer course work.”(see Parent Handbook and Student Code of Conduct)

Any Middle school or High School students demonstrating difficulty in achieving the requirements for promotion to the next grade level and therefore may be at risk for retention by February 1. However, a student may be identified as at risk for retention after February 1 if reasons for identifying a student as at risk for retention are identified in a lawfully adopted local board policy that identifies limited situations in which students may be identified as at risk for retention. We will notify the parent or legal guardian if their student has been identified as at risk for retention within fifteen (15) calendar days of identification.

If a retention decision has been made, then the school shall develop an individualized academic remediation plan for the retained student within thirty (30) calendar days after the beginning of the next school year. A copy of the academic remediation plan shall be provided to the student's parent or legal guardian within ten (10) calendar days of the development of such plan.

Course Failures - EL students and Students with Disabilities

In accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the Tennessee State Board of Education Promotion and Retention Policy and the Tennessee State Board of Education Retention Guidelines for English Learners, and aligned with our mission, STEM Prep is committed to providing appropriate services and accommodations as identified in students' Individualized Education Programs (IEP) or Individual Learning Plans (ILP). Prior to assigning a failing grade below 60% in any course to a student identified as a Student With Disabilities (SWD) or English Language Learners (ELL), teachers must provide evidence that the accommodations identified on the student's IEP and/or ILP were provided to the student throughout the grading period in which the student earned a failing grade. Please see the linked examples of common accommodations and examples of evidence.

Student Code of Conduct

We believe that in order for students to achieve at a high level, they must be able to learn in a safe and welcoming classroom environment. As a result, students are expected to abide by all rules and policies developed by STEM Preparatory Academy. A teacher or school administrator will immediately address any breach of school norms and expectations. Students will be encouraged to take responsibility for their behavior and actions and will be expected to work with other members of the school team in order to develop a solution. Every reasonable effort will be made to work with a student to solve a breach of the school's Code of Conduct before the implementation of more serious consequences such as suspension or expulsion.

If a student who receives special education services or a student who has an individual education program (IEP) violates school rules or district policies outlined in the Code of Conduct, he or she will receive disciplinary interventions in accordance with district policy, state and federal laws that govern Special Education (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, IDEA).

General Guidelines

The following expectations of conduct apply to all students at STEM Preparatory Academy:

- Students are expected to attend school every day and arrive on time.
- Students are expected to appear well groomed and in proper school attire
- Students are expected to be in class, on time, with all necessary materials, demonstrating their readiness to learn.
- Students are expected to positively contribute to the classroom.
- Students are expected to uphold the core values of STEM Preparatory Academy at all times.
- As representatives of STEM Preparatory Academy, students are expected to conscientiously strive to promote a positive image, while maintaining the character and integrity of our school.
- Students are expected to follow staff prompts/instruction upon first request.

School-Wide Positive Behavior System

In order to encourage students to exhibit our core values at all times, STEM Prep Academy will employ a system to reward positive behavior. Each week, students will earn honors which will be tracked in the STEM behavior system. Students earn honors for positive participation and behavior throughout the school day. Students will be able to participate in school events after earning their honors.

Response to Minor Infractions

Teachers are expected to respond to all minor infractions in order to maintain a classroom climate that is safe, welcoming, and warm; one that is focused on student learning and engagement. When a minor infraction occurs, teachers will first hold a teacher-student conference and implement a consequence if deemed necessary. In the classroom, these can include a move to alternate seating within the room, a letter or phone call to the students' parent or guardian, a parent-teacher conference, a lunch detention, or another consequence that maintains the student's self-concept and is in alignment with the school's core values. When students are unable to meet expectations of respect, they will earn an appropriate consequence. School Administrators will determine the most appropriate consequence for the specific behavior exhibited by the student. Disciplinary referrals will also be utilized for serious infractions.

Discipline Referrals

The purpose of disciplinary consequences is to ensure that both individual students and the school community maintain a complete focus on learning and growth. As a result, prompt resolution to inappropriate behavior is expected. Teachers will submit a discipline referral for behavior that needs to be addressed outside of the instructional class time to the Dean of Students. If a student is referred to a school administrator because of misbehavior, the parent or guardian will be notified and one or more of the following actions will occur:

- Behavior Referral Conference: a mandatory conference with an administrator regarding homework, organization/professionalism, or behavior. A Red Card will be completed and sent home for parent signature and return the following day. Students will complete red cards to bring home for parent review and signature
- Student Reflection: as part of the office referral the student will reflect, verbally or in written form, upon the behavior and strategize how to better handle a similar situation in the future.
- Written Assignment: a written assignment that reflects on the school's values, the student's inappropriate behavior, and communicates a plan to improve that behavior.
- After School Detention: detention will be served after school on Mondays and Wednesdays. Typically, students will be assigned an after school detention for receiving three (3) or more classroom-level deductions or one (1) automatic-referral deduction during a school day.
- Disciplinary Probation (DP): Students demonstrating pervasive difficulty adhering to STEM behavioral expectations will be placed upon DP. Due to their behavior being disruptive to their success, as well as that of their peers, students will automatically receive one (1) day of ISS if they earn three (3) or more deductions or one (1) Automatic Referral deduction in one (1) day while serving DP.
- In School Suspension (ISS): A predetermined amount of time, wherein a student will complete his/her work away from his/her peers, under the supervision of the Dean of Students.
- Out of School Suspension (OSS): result of major disciplinary infraction or repeated inability to adhere to behavior contracting.
- Expulsion: student is asked to leave school (in an excess of 10 days) and will not be allowed on premises.

Discipline Probation

Students demonstrating a frequent and pervasive inability to adhere to the STEM Prep Code of Conduct will be placed on disciplinary probation. This probation will be effective for an entire quarter. Students serving disciplinary probation must not earn an office referral during their 10-week probationary period. If a student were to earn an Automatic Referral/receive 3 deductions in one school day, he/she will immediately begin serving an In School Suspension (ISS). Students serving ISS are isolated from their peers for the duration of the school day and are not allowed to join their peer group for community meetings, meals, or clubs. An inability to adhere to ISS parameters will result in Out of School Suspension (OSS). Upon returning from OSS, students will serve the remainder of their ISS and then return to the regular classroom. If a student is unable to correct his/her behavior during disciplinary probation a parent conference will be held to discuss the most appropriate placement for the student.

Disciplinary Due Process

Suspension

When a student has been assigned In-School Suspension (ISS), he or she will be isolated from all other peers and school activities. All meals and classwork will be completed without interaction with anyone other than instructors and school administrators. ISS is assigned by an Administrator and may vary in length. Students receiving frequent ISS assignments are demonstrating difficulty with STEM Prep's Core Values, Mission and Vision and may be assigned Out-of-School Suspension.

When a student has been assigned an Out-of-School Suspension, he or she is not allowed on the school's campus for the duration of the suspension. OSS is assigned by the School Leader and can be assigned for periods of up to 10 school days. If suspended, the student will be expected to complete all missed assignments or exams.

When a student is suspended, the school administrator will attempt to reach the student's parents or legal guardian to inform them of the school's action and to request they come to the school for their child. If the parents are unable to come for their child, the student must remain on school property until the close of the school day. Students receiving OSS will not receive bus transportation privileges. Parents will be notified when a student is placed on suspension and will be required to attend a parent-conference before a student is allowed to return to regular school activities.

Expulsion

The school leader will notify parents of students who are recommended for expulsion. A meeting of the school's disciplinary board will take place at which a final decision regarding the student's status will be made. A student who is recommended for expulsion will be subject to due process under Tennessee state law.

Suspensions and Expulsions (A suspension of more than 10 days)

Disciplinary action will be initiated at the school level. The principal/designee will investigate a student's alleged misconduct and determine whether disciplinary action is necessary. The principal/designee may suspend the student immediately for a maximum of two (2) days**

If it is determined that disciplinary action is not warranted, the incident will be deleted and the suspension days will be changed to excused absences. When a student is suspended, the principal/designee must notify the student's parents/guardian to inform them of the school's action within 24 hours. If the parents are unable to come for their child, the student must remain on school property until the close of the school day. Parents should be provided written notice of the suspension or expulsion.

If a suspension is for more than five (5) days, the principal shall develop and implement a plan for improving the behavior which shall be made available for review by the director of schools upon request. The student shall be provided the opportunity to make up missed work at the discretion of the teacher or principal/designee.

An expulsion is defined as a suspension of more than 10 days. When a principal/designee seeks an expulsion (suspension of more than 10 days), the principal/designee must immediately give written or actual notice to the student and the student's parents.

This written notice of the alleged misconduct shall include: the rule allegedly violated and a brief description of the misconduct. Parents and students must also receive the information related to their right to appeal an expulsion. Written statements about the misconduct and the evidence collected concerning the incident are available to parents, excluding school-based video evidence.

This information is to be provided by the school. This will include the name and contact information for the Discipline Coordinator as well as the requirement to contact the Discipline Coordinator within five (5) days of the notice of expulsion. If a student has received an expulsion (suspension of more than 10 days), the parent or legal guardian may contact the Discipline Coordinator for further questions. Please call the district Customer Service number at 259-INFO (4636) or call the Discipline office at 259-8757.

Suspended or expelled students are not allowed to be on school property or participate in any school-sponsored activity/event (for example, graduations, athletic events, etc.). If a student is suspended on an instructional day that is cancelled because of inclement weather, any scheduled suspension days must be made up on the days following the inclement weather days.

** "Days" represent calendar days - Monday through Friday, excluding designated district holidays and inclement weather days.

Process for Expulsions (A suspension of more than 10 days) & Appeal of the Expulsion

There are three levels of appeals:

LEVEL 1 is to the hearing authority, LEVEL 2 is to the Assistant Superintendent of Student Services/designee, and LEVEL 3 is to the Board of Education. Upon making a decision to expel a student the principal or assistant principal/dean shall immediately give written or actual notice to the parent/guardian and the student of the right to appeal the decision to expel (suspend for more than 10 days). The decision from the Level 1 or Level 2 appeals may: affirm the decision of the principal, order removal of the suspension unconditionally 2 TCA 49-6-340112 or upon such terms and conditions as it deems reasonable, assign the student to an alternative program, or suspend/expel the student for a specified period of time.

All appeals of disciplinary decisions associated with expulsion (suspension of more than 10 days) must be filed, orally or in writing within five (5) days of notice of the decision about the expulsion. If the appeal is not filed within the five (5) days, the right to appeal is waived. Notice of the parent/guardian's intent to have legal representation must be given to the Discipline Office at the time the appeal is requested, in order for the district to also have legal representation. Each appeal hearing is recorded.

LEVEL 1

The appeal from this decision shall be to a disciplinary hearing authority appointed by the board. The hearing shall be held no later than ten (10) days after the beginning of the expulsion (suspension of more than 10 days). The disciplinary hearing authority shall give written notice to the time and place of the hearing to the person requesting the appeal and the principal or assistant principal who

ordered the expulsion. During deliberations, all parties will be excused excluding the hearing authority. Failure to attend this appeal constitutes a waiver of the students/parents right to appeal. Extenuating circumstances will be considered by the Discipline Coordinator.

A written record of the proceedings including a summary of the facts and the reasons supporting the decision shall be made by the disciplinary hearing authority.

LEVEL 2

In the case of a Zero Tolerance (ZT), the Assistant Superintendent of Student Services/designee makes a recommendation to the Director of Schools, who will make the final decision.

LEVEL 3

The board of education may grant or deny a request for a board hearing and may affirm or overturn the decision with or without a hearing before the board.

Expelled Students (suspended for more than 10 days)

Alternative Learning Centers are available for students in grades one through twelve (1-12) who have been expelled (suspension of more than 10 days). All expelled students have the opportunity to attend an Alternative Learning Center when space is available. Parents must request an Alternative Learning Center placement by contacting the student's Discipline Coordinator.

Notice of Modification Request

A request for modification of an expulsion is a request for the Director to change the terms of the expulsion, including but not limited to the length of the expulsion or the school assignment. At any time after the conclusion or waiver of the appeals process, a parent/guardian and/or student may submit to the Director of Schools a written request for modification of the student's expulsion. The Director of Schools has the power to modify any expulsion on a case-by-case basis at any time after the completion of the appeal process. The written request should include a statement of reasons supporting the modification. The Director of Schools/designee will respond to the request with his/her decision within a reasonable time, which shall not exceed 21 calendar days from receipt of the request. The Director of Schools/designee is not required to provide an explanation of the decision.

Student Conduct Rule Infractions

The safety of students and employees is a priority for Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools. Offenses that threaten the safety of students or staff will not be tolerated. Any principal, assistant principal/dean or administrative designee of any public school in this state is authorized to suspend a pupil from attending the school, including its sponsored activities, or from riding a school bus, for good and sufficient reasons and assign a reasonable punishment for each offense.

Good and sufficient reasons for suspension include, but are not limited to the following. A student may be suspended up to 10 days or expelled for more than 10 days up to one calendar year for non-Zero Tolerance (ZT) offenses. ZT indicates Zero Tolerance infractions, which carry an expulsion for a period of not less than one (1) calendar year, except that the director may modify this expulsion on a case by case basis. The following lists the student conduct rules and their corresponding state infraction codes school administrators assign to student misconduct.

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Zero Tolerance Policies

For information regarding consequences for zero-tolerance offenses (cyberbullying, possession or use of illicit substances, physical altercation, etc.) please visit: <https://mnps.org/students-families/student-resources/handbook/handbook-discipline/discipline-tables>.

MNPS Discipline Codes

STEM Prep Academy will follow MNPS Discipline Codes for all student behaviors, ensuring alignment with the school's consequence process.

Closed Campus

Students are not permitted to leave the campus during the school day without proper authorization. Students may be granted authorization for illness, medical emergencies, or school-approved off-campus events. Any student who leaves campus without the authorization of a school official will be assigned a suspension from school. Repeated offenses may result in expulsion.

Enrollment Policy

At STEM Prep Academy we aim to be Nashville's premier public charter school. We strive to be the chosen school of students and families in our community. As required by state law, all MNPS students and residents of Davidson County are eligible to apply to STEM Preparatory Academy. Open Enrollment runs from October to January.

In order to guarantee a transparent enrollment process, we are committed to and focused on forging strong and meaningful relationships with all families. We aim to build and sustain strong relationships where all families are included in every single step of the enrollment process.

Application Process: STEM Preparatory Academy operates on an enrollment window that runs from October to January. Applications and deadlines are found on-site and online. For every applicant a parent/guardian must provide accurate and up-to-date information. Every application must include a parent signature along with the date of submission. Once the application is submitted to STEM Prep Academy, it is stamped, coded with the student's MNPS identification number and immediately submitted to MNPS student information system for lottery and tracking purposes. If a student does not have an MNPS student number, one is generated at STEM Prep following MNPS' registration procedures.

Voluntary withdrawals: If a family decides to unenroll from STEM Prep Academy, the family is required to meet with the School Director and Director of Family and Community Engagement for a dialogue prior to withdrawing. All of our scholars play an integral part in our community, and we are committed to learning about their experiences at our school. If the family decides to withdraw, they will receive a copy of the Voluntary Withdrawal Form. STEM Prep will retain a copy.

If a scholar decides to return to STEM Prep Academy after withdrawing, he or she must re-apply to our school. Parents/Guardians must fill out a new application and follow our application process.

Enrollment Orientations: All incoming families (parents and scholars) are asked to attend a school-wide orientation to deepen their knowledge and ease their transition into the STEM Prep Academy community. We ask that parents attend orientation with their students.

Parent Advisory Committee

At STEM Prep, our parents are partners. We believe that our parents should be and are an integral part of the decision making process, thus creating a collaborative environment for both student and organizational growth. Joining our parent advisory committee is an opportunity for parents to become more involved in the decision making process working in tandem with leaders and teachers in the organization. All families are welcome to join our parent advisory committee. If you are interested in joining or would like to get more information about this opportunity, please email Jeremy.Quinonez@stemprepacademy.org.



STEM Student Commitment to Scholarship

In order to uphold our mission, scholars annually re-commit to upholding the shared values and aims of our STEM Prep community.

I, _____, commit to adhering to each of the expectations listed below.
(Student Name, Printed)

- I will appear in proper school attire every day.
- I will be in class, on time, with all necessary materials, demonstrating my readiness to learn.
- I will show respect to my teacher and peers during all parts of the school day. This includes appropriate classroom behavior for learning and growing.
- I will fill out my planner completely each day and have my parent/guardian sign it.
- I will transition between classes and school activities silently.
- I will be responsible for all school items loaned to me or that I borrow including: books, electronics, loaned uniform items, and school supplies.
- I will refrain from using my electronic devices at inappropriate times and I understand they will be taken away and kept in an Administrator's office until my parent/guardian comes to retrieve them.
- I will accept responsibility for my actions and will apologize when necessary.
- I will uphold the core values of STEM Preparatory Academy at all times.
 - I will demonstrate integrity for my school environment by keeping all work areas, the restrooms, cafeteria and hallways neat and free of rubbish.
 - I will demonstrate drive by completing 100% of my homework at a high quality and having my parents sign each assignment.
 - I will demonstrate collaboration by assisting others with classwork, homework, picking up dropped items, and reporting any undesirable behaviors.
 - I will demonstrate imagination in class by sharing my thoughts and connections at the appropriate time.
 - I will demonstrate inquiry by asking relevant and thought provoking questions during class time.
 - I will strive to promote a positive image, while maintaining the character and integrity of our school when I am in school, on the bus, or on a field trip.
 - I will follow staff instructions upon first request.
 - I will be respectful of others at all times.
 - I will speak to an adult immediately if I witness or suspect bullying of any kind.

By signing below, I am committing, along with my parent/guardian and school administrator, that I will abide by each expectation and emulate the core values of STEM Preparatory Academy while on and off school grounds.

Student Signature

Date

Parent Signature

Date

Administrator's Signature

Date



STEM Family Commitment to Scholarship

Dear Parents/Guardians,

We believe that a strong partnership between the school and home is essential for the academic success of our students. As a parent/guardian of a student at STEM Prep Academy Middle School, we ask for your commitment to support your child's academic growth and hold them accountable to high standards. By signing this commitment, you acknowledge that you have read and understood the contents of the Parent-Student Handbook.

We understand that education is a shared responsibility, and we ask for your active participation in the following areas:

1. Regular Attendance and Punctuality:

- Ensure that your child attends school regularly and arrives on time.
- Notify the school of any absences or tardiness promptly.

2. Homework and Study Time:

- Establish a quiet and well-equipped study area at home.
- Encourage your child to complete their homework assignments on time.
- Monitor their progress and offer support when needed.

3. Communication:

- Maintain open lines of communication with teachers and school staff.
- Stay informed about your child's progress, assignments, and school events.
- Respond to school correspondence in a timely manner.

4. Encouragement and Support:

- Foster a positive attitude towards learning and emphasize the value of education.
- Support and encourage your child's participation in extracurricular activities, including STEM-related clubs and events.
- Celebrate your child's achievements and provide constructive feedback.

5. Technology Usage:

- Monitor and guide your child's use of technology for educational purposes.
- Encourage safe and responsible digital citizenship.

6. Volunteerism and Engagement:

- Participate in school events, parent-teacher conferences, and volunteer opportunities.
- Contribute your skills, knowledge, and time to support the school community.

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have read the Parent-Student Handbook and understand the expectations outlined in the STEM Family Commitment to Scholarship. I commit to support and hold my child accountable to high academic standards, fostering their educational growth.

Parent/Guardian Signature(s): _____ Date: _____

Student Name(s): _____ Grade(s): _____

Sincerely,

Crystalline Jones