

Wildflower New York Charter School

Family Handbook



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"We shall walk together on this path of life, for all things are part of the universe and are connected with each other to form one whole unity."

Maria Montessori



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Introduction

Welcome Letter to Parents

Dear Wildflower Families,

Welcome to Wildflower New York Charter School. We are excited to begin a new school year with you and your child. On behalf of the Teacher-Leaders, we are honored to welcome you into our school community and look forward to partnering with you in your child's learning journey. At Wildflower, we are guided by the Montessori approach, which supports children in developing independence, confidence, and a love of learning. Our classrooms are designed to meet students where they are, helping them grow academically, socially, and emotionally through meaningful and purposeful work.

We believe that strong relationships between families and the school are essential to a successful learning experience. We value your role as your child's first and most important teacher and are committed to maintaining open, respectful, and consistent communication throughout the year. This Parent Handbook is designed to provide you with important information about our school's policies, procedures, and expectations. We encourage you to review it carefully and keep it as a reference throughout the year.

We are looking forward to a joyful and engaging school year and to building a strong partnership with you and your family.

Warmly,

The Teacher-Leaders
Wildflower New York Charter School

Mission Statement

Wildflower New York Charter SchoolCharter School will offer Montessori educational environments in which children have the tools and freedom to do the great work of constructing themselves, led by teachers operating as social entrepreneurs. Our students will develop strong academic foundations and skills in the areas of critical thinking, collaboration, creativity and communication, and grow into curious, capable contributors to their communities and the world.

Our Nine Principles

An Authentic Montessori Environment:

The Montessori Method emerges from the belief that children are naturally good, peaceful and curious and that in the context of a supportive environment, all children engage instinctively in the work of self-construction. With appropriate freedoms and the right support, children follow their interests to create rich learning experiences, form peaceful communities, and support and learn from one another. We are dedicated to the preparation of environments and ourselves to support the development of children.

A Teacher-Led School:

Wildflower New York Charter School's Teacher-Leaders (TLs) serve in dual roles as both educators and school administrators, collectively overseeing all aspects of the school's operations. Operating on a small scale enables teacher-leaders to make responsive, day-to-day decisions that meet the evolving needs of students, while also shaping broader school-wide practices that reflect their shared vision. This model ensures that the priorities of children, families, and educators remain at the center of all decision-making.

A Shopfront Setting:

Wildflower schools sit in street-facing, directly-accessible, light-filled spaces on walkable streets and invite community members visually into the daily work of children. Wildflower schools increase the presence of children and families in the community, as a more narrow geographic focus supports walking to and from school, and through the schools' reliance on public playgrounds, gardens and other civic spaces that would otherwise be on-site in larger institutions.

A Laboratory for Innovation:

Wildflower schools are committed to providing authentic Montessori environments for our students and at the same time keeping Dr. Montessori's commitment to scientific pedagogy alive. In our work to continuously improve, we try new things, rigorously evaluate our efforts, learn from colleagues within and outside of Wildflower, and make adjustments as necessary.

A Seamless Learning Community:

We see our work as a partnership between teachers and families. Teachers value families' wisdom, invite their engagement, and enthusiastically share Montessori methods with them. Wildflower parents see their roles as active supporters of the schools and teacher-leaders, rather than its customers. Wildflower schools look for ways in which children's home, school, and community environments can offer seamless experiences, reflecting consistent perspectives on children's development and engaging children as authentic contributors in each setting.

A Commitment to Equity:
At Wildflower New York Charter School we believe early childhood education is the cornerstone to the long-term improvement of society and our greatest hope for a more peaceful world. We recognise the importance of ongoing reflection and continuous improvement in our practice with the school's aim to support equitable access to educational opportunities and to maintain an environment that reflects respect, inclusion, and shared responsibility.

An Attention to Beauty:
Dr. Montessori wrote that schools should be aesthetically engulfing and culturally enriching for children who deserve nothing less. Wildflower schools live into this through the choices we make about materials and fine art, interior designs that burst with beauty and communicate to children, teachers and families that they are valued, and the inclusion of working artists as parts of the prepared environment. All of us - adults and children - explore and cultivate the beauty of our inner landscapes through mindfulness practices, and seek to carry that beauty into our relationships with each other.

A Focus on Nature:
Montessori schools seek to cultivate each child's direct relationship with the natural world. At Wildflower, we attend to and go out into the nature that surrounds us, and we bring abundant plant life into our schools so that children learn to care for their living environment. We limit each school's physical footprint and minimize its impact on the environment by using sustainable, nontoxic and earth-friendly materials whenever possible. We maintain nutritional standards that are earth-conscious and promote natural, healthful diets for children.

A Decentralized Network:
Wildflower New York Charter School is part of a decentralized network of schools grounded in shared principles and collaborative learning. As the network grows, it connects educators and schools who learn from one another, share resources, and contribute to a collective body of practice that supports high-quality education for children.

Each school operates with significant autonomy, with teacher-leaders empowered to make decisions that best serve their students, families, and local community. At the same time, schools benefit from being part of a broader network, accessing shared resources, ideas, and support when they are useful and relevant to local needs.

Schools within the Wildflower network also engage in mutual accountability and collaboration, recognizing their responsibility to contribute to and support one another. Where possible, learning materials, tools, and insights are shared more broadly to support educators beyond the network and to contribute to the wider field of education.

To learn more visit www.wildflowerschools.org

General Information

2026-27 School Calendar and Days Off

November Break	November 23rd, 2026 - November 27th, 2027
Winter Break	December 21st, 2026 - January 1st, 2027
Midwinter Break	February 15th-19th, 2027
Spring Break	March 29th - April 2nd, 2027

Additional days off include:

Labor Day	September 7, 2026
Indigenous People's Day	October 12,2026
Election Day	November 3, 2026
Veteran's Day	November 11, 2026
Martin Luther King Jr. Day	January 18, 2027
Eid al-Adha	May 17, 2027
Memorial Day	May 31, 2027
Juneteenth	June 19, 2027

School Policy on Holidays

At Wildflower New York Charter School, our approach to the school environment is grounded in Montessori principles, which emphasize respect for the child, purposeful work, and the development of concentration and independence. As part of this approach, our classrooms are intentionally designed to remain calm, consistent, and focused on the child's developmental needs.

For this reason, Wildflower does not celebrate holidays within the classroom, including widely recognized and commercial holidays such as Valentine's Day, Halloween, and others. While we recognize that these celebrations

may be meaningful to many families, we maintain a school environment that is not centered around holiday-based activities, parties, or events.

This decision is rooted in several key Montessori considerations:

Protection of the work cycle: The uninterrupted work period is central to Montessori practice. Holiday activities and celebrations can disrupt the consistency and depth of children's engagement.

Respect for diverse backgrounds: Our community includes families with a wide range of cultural, religious, and personal beliefs. By not centering classroom experiences around specific holidays, we create a more inclusive environment for all children.

Focus on intrinsic motivation: Montessori classrooms emphasize meaningful, child-driven work rather than externally driven events or rewards tied to celebrations.
Consistency and predictability: A stable, predictable environment supports children's sense of security and ability to concentrate.

This does not mean that culture, identity, or community are absent from the classroom. We respect and honor the important traditions and celebrations that take place within your homes and communities, and we encourage families to celebrate in ways that are meaningful to them outside of school.

We appreciate your understanding and partnership in supporting a learning environment that remains grounded in Montessori principles and centered on the needs of the child.

Warmly,

The Teacher-Leaders
Wildflower New York Charter School

Daily Schedule

Primary (Pre-Kindergarten)

7:30 am - 8:00 am	Student Arrival	
8:00 am - 11:00 am	Morning Work Cycle	
11:00 am - 11:30 am	Lunch	
11:30 am - 12:00 pm	Recess	
12:00 pm - 12:40 pm	Nap time	
12:40 pm - 3:40 pm	Afternoon Work Cycle	
3:40 pm - 4PM	Student Dismissal	On Fridays, dismissal is at 2pm

Lower Elementary (Kindergarten - 3rd Grade)

7:30 am - 8:00 am	Student Arrival	
8:00 am - 11:40 am	Morning Work Cycle	
11:40 am - 12:10 pm	Lunch	
12:10 am - 12:40 am	Recess	
12:40 pm - 3:40 pm	Afternoon Work Cycle	
3:40 pm - 4PM	Student Dismissal	On Fridays, dismissal is at 2pm

Upper Elementary (4th — 6th Grade)

7:30 am - 8:00 am	Student Arrival	
8:00 am - 11:00 am	Morning Work Cycle	
11:00 am - 11:30 am	Lunch	
11:30 am - 3:40 pm	Afternoon Work Cycle / Recess	
3:40 pm - 4PM	Student Dismissal	On Fridays, dismissal is at 2pm

Bad Weather Days and Other Closings

Wildflower New York Charter School Bad Weather Days and Other Closings Policy

Wildflower New York Charter School is committed to the safety and well-being of its students, staff, and community members. In the event of inclement weather or other situations beyond the School's control, Wildflower New York Charter School may be closed to ensure safety.

Policy Details:

1. **Closure Decision**:
    - The decision to close the school will be based on weather conditions and other safety concerns. If the New York City Department of Education (NYC DOE) closes its schools due to inclement weather or other emergencies, Wildflower New York Charter School will also be closed automatically.
2. **Parent Notification**:
    - A notification process will be established to ensure that all parents and guardians are informed promptly about school closures. This process will include:
        - Brightwheel
        - Emails
        - Text messages
        - Updates on the school's official website and social media channels
3. **Staff Notification**:
    - Staff members will be notified of school closures through email and text messages. Updates will also be posted on the staff communication platform.
4. **Reopening**:
    - The school will reopen when conditions are deemed safe. Parents, guardians, and staff will be notified of the reopening through the same communication channels used for closures.
5. **Make-Up Days**:
    - If necessary, make-up days will be scheduled to ensure that the school meets the required number of instructional days/hours for the academic year. Parents and staff will be notified in advance of any adjustments to the school calendar.

Conclusion:

Wildflower New York Charter School prioritizes the safety of its students and staff. We encourage everyone to stay informed about weather conditions and follow safety guidelines during closures.

Public Transportation To and From Wildflower New York Charter School

Address: 1332 Fulton Avenue, Bronx, NY 10456

Public Transit Options

Option 1: Subway and Bus Combination

1. **Take the Subway:**
    - **Line 2 or 5:**
        - Board the 2 or 5 train heading towards the Bronx.
        - Exit at **149th Street - Third Avenue** station.
2. **Transfer to Bus:**
    - Walk to the bus stop at East 149th Street and Third Avenue.
    - Take the **Bx15 bus** heading towards **Fordham Plaza**.
    - Exit the bus at **East 169th Street and Third Avenue**.
3. **Walk to School:**
    - Head northeast on **East 169th Street** toward Fulton Avenue.
    - Turn left onto **Fulton Avenue**.
    - Walk straight to reach 1332 Fulton Avenue.

Option 2: Direct Bus Route

1. **Take the Bx21 Bus:**
    - Board the **Bx21 bus** from any accessible stop in your area.
    - The Bx21 bus runs along **Boston Road and Third Avenue**, which are central locations in the Bronx.
2. **Exit the Bus:**
    - Get off at the **East 169th Street and Boston Road** stop.
3. **Walk to School:**
    - Walk north to **Fulton Avenue**.
    - Turn right onto **Fulton Avenue**.
    - Continue to 1332 **Fulton Avenue.**

Additional Tips

- **Real-Time Updates:** Use the MTA's official website or apps like Google Maps for real-time transit updates and schedule changes.
- **Travel Time:** Plan your trip to allow for potential delays, especially during peak hours.
- **Accessibility:** Check MTA services for any accessibility needs you might have to ensure stations and buses are equipped accordingly.

Transportation Arrangements
Office of Pupil Transportation determines a student's eligibility to receive transportation services based on the student's grade level and distance from the school using the following guidelines:

Wildflower New York Charter School				
	Less than .5 miles	.5- 1 miles	1- 1.5 miles	1.5 miles or more
Kindergarten — 2nd Grade	Half fare	School bus or full fare	School bus or full fare	School bus or full fare
3rd — 6th Grade	Not eligible	Half fare	School bus or full fare	School bus or full fare

Supplemental Transportation Arrangements
For days when Wildflower New York Charter School is in session when the New York City public schools are not, we will seek arrangements with the New York City Department of Education to provide transportation for eligible students.

Students who are ineligible for transportation will be required to provide their own transportation. Since these are likely students in grades 3 and above who live within a half mile of the school, we anticipate that they can walk to and from school with family members or other approved caregivers.

Transportation for Special Education Students
Students with Individual Education Programs and students with disabilities may have different eligibility for transportation. Their Individual Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan will dictate their eligibility. Transportation for special education students will be provided in accordance with all applicable State and Federal laws. If a student is not eligible for transportation, transportation will become the responsibility of the child/s parents or guardian.

Parents of students with disabilities seeking transportation services will be required to submit a written request each year, no later than April 1st, to the CSE, as the CSE is responsible for updating student records in the Department of Education Pupil Information System. Parents can contact the Office of Pupil Transportation's Customer Service Unit to check the student's transportation status. As a result, parents will have to make transportation requests prior to being admitted to Wildflower New York Charter School.

General Family Communication

The success of each child is supported through strong partnership between families and educators. Open and consistent communication between home and school is essential in creating a cohesive and supportive environment that meets the needs of each child.

Families can expect to receive important updates, newsletters, and general school communication through the Brightwheel app or email. To ensure clarity and consistency, all family inquiries should be submitted through the Brightwheel app, with a standard response time of up to 48 hours during school days.

In alignment with Montessori principles, we also prioritize the protection of the uninterrupted work cycle. The school day is intentionally structured to support deep concentration, independence, and sustained engagement in learning. For this reason, we do not interrupt instructional time for non-emergency family requests or messages. We ask families to support this structure by refraining from contacting teachers during the school day except in urgent or time-sensitive situations.

This shared commitment helps preserve a calm, focused learning environment where children can fully engage in their work and develop their fullest potential.

School Website and Social Media Handle

We encourage families to regularly visit the school's website at www.wildflowernewyorkcharterschool.org and Instagram (@wildflowernewyork) for recent news, updates and upcoming events.

School Contact Information

Wildflower New York Charter School
1332 Fulton Avenue, Bronx, NY 10456
E. info@wildflowernewyorkcharterschool.org
P. (718) 635-0474

School Wide Policies

Arrival

Parents/guardians are encouraged to plan your morning trip to allow for potential delays, especially during morning hours. Early drop off begins at 7:30 AM. Children must be dropped off at school between 7:30 A.M. and 7:50 A.M. All children need to be on time to start the day with the rest of the class. Children arriving at or after 8:00 A.M. are considered late and tardiness will be recorded.

In case of an emergency or medical appointment, parents/guardians must notify the school in advance, via ParentSquare or texting the school at (718) 635-0474. Parents and guardians are expected to communicate with the school as early as possible, but by no later than 7:30 a.m., if their child will be late or will not be attending school for any reason. Communication should be made as far in advance as possible. If a student is not in class and the school has not been notified, the child's parent or guardian will be texted/called.

Since it is the parents' responsibility to transport the child to school, any student whose tardiness or absences begin to significantly interfere with instruction will be required to have a formal meeting with the school's administration.

Dismissal

Parents/guardians are encouraged to plan your afternoon trip to allow for potential delays, especially during peak afternoon hours. Parents/guardians must pick up their child during the window of time marked on their child's schedule. Since it is the parents responsibility to pick up their child from the school, any student who is picked up late twice during the fall and spring semester will have a formal meeting with the school's administration and be ineligible for afterschool. Parents are responsible to inform any other adults authorized to pick up the child of the rules and expectations of dismissal and pick up times.

Attendance Policy

Consistent attendance is essential to your child's experience in a Montessori environment. Each school day is carefully prepared to support children in engaging with a full work cycle—time for choosing meaningful work, concentrating deeply, practicing skills, and completing learning experiences at their own pace.

When children are absent or arrive late, they miss not only academic instruction, but also the continuity of their work, the development of independence, and the opportunity to fully participate in the classroom community. Because Montessori learning builds progressively and relies on repetition, consistency, and relationship, regular attendance is key to your child's growth and confidence. Therefore, the phase-in period for Pre-k and Kindergarten is mandatory. Students who do not participate or who miss multiple days during the phase-in period (August 17–28) will be placed on a waitlist.

We understand that occasional absences are sometimes necessary. However, we ask families to prioritize daily, on-time attendance whenever possible so that children can fully benefit from the prepared environment and maintain strong connections with their peers and teachers.

We are committed to supporting consistent attendance as an essential part of each child's learning experience. Regular attendance is closely monitored in accordance with New York State Education Department requirements.

As mandated reporters under New York State law, school staff are required to report any situation in which there is reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or maltreatment, which may include concerns related to educational neglect. Educational neglect may be considered when a child experiences ongoing, unexplained, or excessive absences that significantly impact access to instruction, and when efforts to engage and support the family have not resulted in improved attendance.

Our primary approach is always to work in partnership with families. When attendance concerns arise, we will communicate directly with caregivers and collaborate to identify barriers and provide support to ensure the child's consistent participation in school.

Our shared goal is to ensure that every child has consistent access to a stable, prepared learning environment where they can fully engage in their Montessori experience.

Excused Absences

There are times when a child cannot attend school for legitimate reasons. Excused absences are occurrences considered legitimate reasons for non-attendance.

Excused absences include:

- Illness or injury, requires a doctor's note if absent 3 or more days
- Observance of religious holidays
- Quarantine, requires a doctor's note
- Court appearance
- Emergency medical or dental treatment for the student, requires a doctor's note
- Other agreed absences pre-approved by school administration

Unexcused Absences

Wildflower New York Charter School does not recognize unexcused absences as legitimate reasons for non-attendance. Unexcused absences count towards your child's attendance. Unexcused absences include, but are not limited to:

- Non-essential travel or extended weekends
- Missed transportation or bus-related issues within family control
- Oversleeping or late wake-ups
- Keeping a child home for convenience or childcare reasons
- Family vacations taken during the school calendar year
- Visiting relatives or hosting out-of-town guests
- Celebrating birthdays or other personal events during school hours
- Mild or non-specific complaints without medical justification (e.g., “tired,” “not feeling up to it”)
- Failure to submit required documentation for an otherwise excusable absence
- Inclement weather decisions made independently when school remains open

Procedures to address unexcused absences:

- First unexcused absence: Staff will call/text and inform the parent of the absence
- Second unexcused absence: Staff will contact the parent in writing explaining the policy for excused and unexcused absences
- Third unexcused absence: Staff will contact the parents for a formal meeting with the school’s administration.

Note: Chronic absenteeism is defined as missing 10% or more of school days in a school year.

Food Policy

Wildflower New York Charter School is committed to fostering an environment that supports healthy eating and positive dietary habits. The school expects that all food brought to and consumed on school property aligns with our nutritional standards, emphasizing the consumption of healthy food options and water.

Food and Beverage Guidelines

1. **Healthy Food Options:**
    - All snacks and meals provided by the school or brought from home should consist of nutritious items such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and low-fat dairy products.
    - Processed foods high in sugar, salt, or unhealthy fats are discouraged.
    - Examples of healthy snacks include fresh fruits, vegetables with hummus, yogurt, whole grain crackers, nuts, and seeds.
2. **Beverages:**
    - To support children's focus, independence, and overall well-being, only plain water is permitted during school hours. Sugary drinks, including soda, sports drinks, and juice, are not allowed. We also ask that water remain unflavored and without additives, meaning coconut water, electrolyte-infused beverages, and water with added ingredients such as sliced fruit are not permitted.
    - Students are encouraged to bring plain reusable water bottles to school to stay hydrated throughout the day.
3. **Lunch and Snack Time:**
    - Lunch and snack times are opportunities to reinforce healthy eating habits. Students are encouraged to participate in mindful eating practices and make nutritious choices.
    - In support of children's health, independence, and connection to real food, students are expected to bring a complete, home-prepared meal each day. Meals should consist of freshly prepared, cooked foods. Highly processed and pre-packaged items—including snack or nutrition bars and pre-assembled kits such as Lunchables—are not permitted. As we do not use microwaves or reheat food at school, all meals must be packed in a heat-retaining container (e.g., a thermos or insulated food jar) to ensure they remain warm and ready to eat. Families play an essential role in preparing meals that nourish and sustain children throughout the school day.

    - Snacks and lunch are provided by NYC Public Schools. The menu is located at https://www.schools.nyc.gov/school-life/food/menus

Allergy and Dietary Restrictions

1. **Allergy Awareness:**
    - The school is committed to maintaining a safe environment for students with food allergies. Parents are required to inform the school of any allergies or dietary restrictions.
    - Foods that pose a significant risk of allergic reactions, such as peanuts and tree nuts, may be restricted in certain classrooms or school-wide if necessary.
2. **Special Dietary Needs:**
    - The school will make reasonable accommodations for students with special dietary needs, including those with medical conditions or religious dietary restrictions.

Education and Awareness

1. **Nutritional Education:**
    - The school will integrate nutrition education into the curriculum to teach students about the benefits of healthy eating and making informed food choices.
    - Workshops and resources will be made available to parents and guardians to support healthy eating habits at home.

Role Modeling:

- Staff members are encouraged to model healthy eating behaviors and support the school's commitment to health and wellness.

Compliance and Review

1. **Policy Compliance:**
    - All members of the school community, including students, staff, and parents, are expected to comply with this policy.
    - Non-compliance will be addressed through education and communication with students and families.
2. **Policy Review:**
    - This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure its effectiveness and alignment with current health guidelines. Revisions will be made as necessary to improve the school's nutritional environment.

Celebrations and Special Events Policy

1. **Birthdays and Classroom Celebrations:**
    - In alignment with our commitment to a calm, purposeful, and inclusive learning environment, the school does not hold birthday celebrations or other classroom-based celebrations during the school day. We intentionally avoid activities such as parties, treats, decorations, and the distribution of favors or gifts. Our approach centers on protecting uninterrupted work cycles, minimizing social comparison, and ensuring that no child feels excluded or singled out based on personal, cultural, or family circumstances. The classroom remains a space for meaningful work, concentration, and respect for each child's individual development.
    - Families are kindly asked not to send in food, treats, or materials for celebratory purposes, as these will not be shared in the classroom.
    - Families are recommended to celebrate birthdays outside of school in ways that are meaningful to them. Parents are welcome to invite staff to attend birthday celebrations outside of school.
2. **School Events:**
    - Wildflower New York Charter School offers Winter and Spring Student Showcases for Upper Elementary students (grades 3–6). These showcases are grounded in students' academic work and

provide an opportunity to share their learning with the community. Performances are thoughtfully incorporated from our extracurricular activity cycles and reflect the children's ongoing development, creativity, and engagement.

Dress Code Policy

The purpose of this dress code policy is to create a respectful and inclusive environment that allows students to express their individual identities while ensuring a focus on learning and community values. This policy aligns with New York City's legislation promoting inclusivity and diversity in school dress codes.

General Guidelines

1. Inclusivity and Expression
    - Students may wear attire that reflects their cultural, religious, and gender identities. This includes but is not limited to hijabs, turbans, yarmulkes, and clothing that aligns with students' gender expression.
    - Hair styles and coverings related to cultural or religious practices are permitted.
2. Nondiscrimination
    - The dress code applies equally to all students, regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, or religion.
    - The school prohibits policies that disproportionately affect specific groups of students.
3. Safety and Learning Environment
    - Clothing should be suitable for a school setting and not disrupt the educational process. This includes avoiding clothing with offensive language or imagery.
    - Footwear must be worn at all times for safety reasons. Closed-toe shoes are recommended for certain activities.
4. Clothing Fit and Coverage
    - Students should wear clothing that covers undergarments, and midriffs should be covered.
    - Shorts, skirts, and dresses should be of a length that allows students to engage comfortably in school activities without revealing undergarments.

At Wildflower New York Charter School, the uniform is designed to promote a sense of community and equality while allowing students to focus on their studies. The uniform combines comfort with a professional appearance, ensuring that students are ready for the academic day.

General Uniform Components

1. Tops
    - Colors: Yellow, Navy, or White
    - Styles: Polo shirts, button-down shirts, or blouses

- Details: Shirts should be plain or feature the school logo. T-shirts with school branding are allowed on designated casual days.

2. Bottoms
    - Colors: Blue, Black, or Khaki
    - Styles: Pants, shorts, skirts, or skorts
    - Length: Shorts, skirts, and skorts should be knee-length or longer to ensure comfort and appropriateness for school activities.
3. Footwear
    - Styles: Comfortable shoes, including sneakers or indoor shoes
    - Details: Shoes should be practical for daily school activities, with closed toes for safety.
4. Optional Layers
    - Outerwear: Students may wear sweaters, cardigans, or jackets in solid school colors (yellow, navy, or white) over their shirts.
    - Accessories: Simple accessories that do not cause distractions or safety concerns are permitted.

Hats and caps are not allowed indoors unless for religious or medical reasons.

General Guidelines

- Fit: Clothing should fit well, not be excessively tight or baggy, and allow for ease of movement during school activities.
- Condition: Uniforms should be clean and in good repair, free of tears or excessive wear.

The Wildflower New York Charter School uniform policy is designed to create a cohesive and respectful environment, supporting the school's educational mission while respecting individual student needs and cultural expressions.

Transparency and Communication

- The dress code policy will be posted on the school's website and made available to all students and families at the beginning of the school year.
- Regular updates and reports on dress code violations will be provided to ensure accountability and transparency.

Student Involvement

- The school encourages student participation in discussions about dress code policy to ensure it meets the needs and concerns of the student body.

- Feedback will be sought regularly from students and parents to refine and update the dress code as necessary.

Enforcement

- Dress code violations will be addressed in a manner that respects student dignity and promotes a positive school climate.
- Repeated or severe violations may lead to further discussion with parents or guardians to find a suitable resolution.

By adhering to these guidelines, Wildflower New York Charter School aims to create a welcoming and inclusive environment that respects the individuality of each student while maintaining a focus on education and community values.

Wildflower New York Charter School Distraction-Free Policy

Purpose and Rationale

Wildflower New York Charter School is committed to fostering a safe, supportive, and focused academic environment for all students. In alignment with New York State's recommendations for distraction-free schools, we are implementing a policy that limits the use of personal electronic devices during the school day. This policy is designed to reduce distractions, improve academic engagement, support student mental health, and promote positive social interactions in line with our Montessori approach to whole-child development.

Devices Covered and When the Policy Applies

During the school day—including classroom instruction, transitions, recess, lunch, and time spent in communal areas—students may not use personal internet-enabled devices. These include but are not limited to:

- Smartphones

- Smartwatches with communication features

- Personal tablets

- Gaming devices

All such items are not permitted on school grounds unless permitted by staff for an approved purpose.

Exceptions

Exceptions to this policy will be made for:

- Students with documented medical needs (e.g., glucose monitoring devices)

- Students with approved assistive technology in an IEP or 504 Plan

- English Language Learners who require translation support

- School-approved instructional activities under direct teacher supervision

Communication with Families During the School Day

Parents and guardians who need to reach their children during the school day should contact the school via Brightwheel or our main office at (718) 635-0474. If a student needs to reach a parent or guardian, they may request to use the school phone under staff supervision.

Response to Non-Compliance

In cases of non-compliance, the school will respond with a restorative, supportive approach:

- First Instance: Student receives a reminder; device held by the teacher until the end of the day

- Second Instance: Device is held in the main office and returned only to a parent or guardian

- Repeated Instances: A meeting with the family will be scheduled, and a personalized behavior plan may be developed

All consequences will be applied equitably and with care to support positive student behavior.

Supporting Student Engagement Without Devices

To support the goals of this policy, Wildflower NY Charter School will expand access to engaging, non-digital activities. Students will be encouraged to participate in:

- Outdoor play and nature-based learning

- Arts, music, and movement

- Group projects and cooperative games

- Mindfulness practices and reflection

These offerings align with our Montessori values and help cultivate focus, joy, and connection.

Implementation and Review

This policy will be communicated regularly to families through the school handbook, newsletters, and family events. Staff will receive training to ensure consistent implementation. We welcome ongoing family feedback and will review the policy annually to assess its impact on student well-being and classroom culture.

Wildflower New York Charter School After-School Policy

Wildflower New York Charter School offers an after-school program designed to provide academic support and enrichment activities for our students. Due to limited availability, participation in the program is determined through a lottery system. Below are the guidelines and policies for the after-school program.

I. Enrollment Process

1. **Interest Survey:**
    - Parents interested in enrolling their child in the after-school program must complete an interest survey. This survey is the first step in expressing interest and does not guarantee enrollment.
2. **Lottery System:**
    - Due to limited seats, a lottery will be conducted to determine enrollment in the after-school program. Completing the interest survey enters your child into the lottery.
3. **Additional Considerations:**
    - While completing the interest survey, parents may choose to share additional details—such as work schedules—to support the review process. Please note that this information will be taken into consideration but does not guarantee placement in the program.

II. Program Guidelines

1. **Attendance and Participation:**
    - After-school hours are Monday through Thursday from 3:00 PM to 4:40 PM.
    - Regular attendance is expected for all enrolled students to benefit from the program fully.
2. **Academic Expectations:**
    - Students enrolled in the after-school program are required to complete their weekly homework assignments. Failure to do so may result in removal from the program to ensure spaces are available for students who will benefit from the support.
3. **Underperforming Students:**
    - Separate from the general after-school program, students identified as underperforming or below grade level will be offered additional tutoring sessions. This initiative aims to provide targeted academic support to help these students improve.

III. Parent Responsibilities

1. **Timely Pickup:**
    - Parents are expected to pick up their children promptly at the end of the after-school program. Consistently late pickups will result in the loss of the after-school seat.
    - After three instances of late pickup, a child's seat in the program may be forfeited to accommodate other students.
2. **Communication:**
    - Parents should communicate any changes in pickup arrangements or attendance in advance with the after-school program coordinator.

IV. Program Removal and Re-enrollment

1. **Removal from Program:**
    - Students may be removed from the after-school program for not meeting academic expectations or for consistent late pickups by parents.
2. **Re-enrollment:**
    - If a student is removed from the program, re-enrollment will require completing a new interest survey and entering the lottery for future sessions.

V. Contact Information

For questions or concerns regarding the after-school program, please contact:

- **After-School Program Coordinator:** [Aura Cely]
- **Contact Email:** [aura@gloriaalstonclc.org]
- **Phone Number:** [718-635-0474]

Lost and Found

The school will keep a small lost and found box in the main office. Parents may come in any day between 3:40 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. to search the Lost and Found. At the end of every trimester, items left in the box may be donated to a local charity.

Student Learning

An Authentic Montessori Environment

The Montessori method emerges from the belief that children are naturally good, peaceful and curious and that in the context of a supportive environment, all children engage instinctively in the work of self-construction. Implementing with fidelity the Montessori method, Wildflower New York Charter School will deliver a century-old educational model that has proven successful in creating deeply personalized, self-directed and effective learning environments. High-quality Montessori classrooms have several common characteristics: a carefully prepared classroom environment of beautiful and organized materials; children in multi-age environments with a three-year age span; and, children in the classroom working at different levels with materials.

Wildflower New York Charter SchoolCharter School is committed to delivering authentic Montessori education characterized by:

Multi-Age Classrooms:

Wildflower New York Charter School will establish multi-age classrooms following the Montessori method. The primary program is for ages three to Kindergarten, lower elementary is for first through third grades and upper elementary is for fourth and fifth grades. Multi-age classrooms, paired with the Montessori practice of observation and inquiry, give teachers the flexibility to introduce concepts of increasing complexity when each child is ready to receive them, allowing children to advance past their same-age peers in some areas and get additional support and practice in others. Additionally, the multi-age classroom creates a more realistic preparation for life beyond school, where older children deepen their understanding of concepts by modeling for younger children, and younger children can observe older children practicing skills that they themselves are on the cusp of learning.

Student-Directed Work Cycles:

Montessori classrooms are often peaceful places with the goal of providing learning experiences for optimal student development. Students are free to interact with one another, and ongoing lessons produce a steady hum of purposeful activity. When activity is appropriately matched to interest and readiness, students display intense focus, persistence, and, most often, joy. In addition to being meticulously set up to meet the developmental needs of students at various stages, Montessori supports concentration through extended periods of individually-paced work, an environment that discourages interruption, and a focus on self-correction that allows students to explore, experiment and repeat work until they have mastered it.

Focus on Sensorial and Tactile Development:

Beginning with the sensorial exercises first offered to children between ages three and six and extending through the entire developmental continuum, Montessori education is grounded in exploration of concepts through hands-on learning.

Scaffolded Learning:
Montessori materials are engineered to be self-correcting and to support increasing complexity of concepts. If a child makes a mistake, she will be able to discover that and self-correct using the tools. This helps students develop problem-solving skills, perseverance, and independence. Also, as a child begins to master concrete tasks, she can naturally build on her learning with more abstract tools and ideas. The ability to manipulate at the foundational level establishes brain functional understanding for theoretical mathematical processing later on in a child's educational path.

Enriched, Orderly Learning Environment that Promotes Independence:
Independence is one of the most important outcomes of Montessori education. Independence does not mean working alone, though very young children often choose to do so. Rather, independence is evident in students who are able to navigate their space with confidence and self-regulation. In a fully implemented Montessori classroom, students exercise independence and responsibility as they choose their work and progress in their learning.

Collaborative Learning Environment:
Most meaningful work in the real world requires periods of both individual concentration and productive collaboration. With students moving through the work independently and grouping and regrouping freely, the Montessori learning environment looks more like an adult workplace than a conventional classroom. This is intentional. Montessori encourages collaboration through mixed-age groupings, environments that accommodate free movement, and assessment that emphasizes mastery over competition.

Teacher Demonstrations and Guidance:
Adults are integral to any Montessori environment – but their role differs quite substantially from what we normally think of as "teaching." A key premise of Montessori education is that knowledge is constructed from experience rather than delivered through direct instruction. The Montessori teacher prepares an environment that calls the child to engage, and then is responsible for assisting the child in making a constructive connection with the environment. To support education and development through the materials, Montessori teachers provide demonstrations to children on how to use the materials and care for them. Teachers also provide lessons that spark varying interests in children, meet their needs to progress in varying academic content areas and support social-emotional development. Teachers create morning and afternoon "work cycles" that encourage sustained concentration. They model rather than dictate positive behavior, and support curiosity and "friendliness with error" as part of the journey of learning. Through their Montessori training and WSF's supporting technology, teachers observe how students engage in the materials and adjust the environment as necessary.

Community Classrooms:
From the moment they enter their classroom, children come to understand that the classroom belongs to them. The inclusion of beautiful, enticing, and real materials in the Montessori classroom also help create a sense of ownership for students. The combination of students wanting to engage with the materials, and their understanding of the importance of the materials further enhance the student's experience in the Montessori classroom.

Montessori Classroom Materials:
The Montessori materials are used to implement the Montessori curriculum. Once in a WSF classroom, one can begin to appreciate just how different the materials are from a traditional classroom. Montessori materials are crafted to be intentionally appealing to all the senses in order to draw in the child to explore. Maria Montessori believed, and research has shown, that moving, feeling, hearing, smelling, and seeing are deeply connected to cognitive growth, and the Montessori materials reflect this.

Primary Curriculum (ages 3-6, preK-Kindergarten)

Montessori classrooms offer prepared environments in which children's natural curiosity draws them into work with the educational materials, in ways that are in alignment with each child's developmental stage. The sensitive period for language development and physical touch overlap in ages 3-6, so children use textured "sandpaper" letters and a "movable alphabet" to develop the foundations of writing. Anyone who has witnessed a five year-old's hunger for a precise sequence of activities at bedtime, or insistence that no items of food touch each other on a plate is witnessing the sensitive period for order. This creates ideal conditions for early numeracy exercises using wooden rods and golden beads, which leads into the use of longer bead chains, squares and cubes to teach place value. Eventually, children work with bead frames to teach addition and subtraction and the use of extended bead chains to teach "skip counting" as the gateway to multiplication. The entire method at this level is designed to work with the unconscious learning method (i.e., the absorbent mind) of children at this age. As noted above, the Primary materials and lessons cover all CCSS standards through work in five curricular areas: Practical Life, Sensorial, Geography/Science, Language and Mathematics:

Within this environment, the following four main areas are found:

1. Practical Life: These exercises are born from activities of everyday life. For instance, carrying glasses, vases, sweeping, polishing, dusting, setting the table, etc. Through these activities, the child fulfills his need to master and control his movements. The activities respect the child's sensitive period for movement by allowing liberty of action. The reality of these activities and the practical goal they strive towards, bring the child to a true inner cognitive development rather than an artificial intelligence.

2. Sensorial: These exercises help a child perfect his senses and as a result, they facilitate the child to gain a more profound contact with his environment. Each of these materials, through their use, allows the child to compare, pair, graduate and reason.

3. **Math:** these exercises are introduced to the child in two levels. They help the child with order, precision, exactitude and the knowledge of numbers. They allow for what Maria Montessori called "the formation of the mathematical mind."

4. **Language:** these exercises help fulfill the child's sensitive period for language. They give the child an array of nomenclature so the child can name his environment and dominate it. They also help establish the basis for reading and writing. Activities in Geography, Botany, and Science
are extensively found within this area.

5. **Science/Geography:** Science in Montessori classroom is known for introducing children to advanced scientific topics in the early years, preparing them for a lifetime of discovery. Topics range from nature studies, climate, environmental studies and zoology. At the same time, Geography is important both as a necessary conceptual framework and spatial orientation, and as a bridge to the development of the child's understanding and appreciation of the story of humankind and nature.

Elementary Curriculum (Ages 6-9, Grades 1-3)

In the lower elementary classroom (LE), student work is divided into Language Arts, Math, and Cultural Studies (which includes physical and social sciences). In the elementary Montessori classroom, children do a great deal of reading and become immersed in real literature. They build reading and writing skills by doing independent research, creative writing and letter writing.

- Introduction to letter sounds, vowels, consonants, reading
- Reading with comprehension questions
- Comprehension, fluency, and expression
- Class library (varying collections of children's literature)
- Literature groups
- EIR support materials
- Comprehension Toolkit
- Writing for content
- Writing process
- Grammar and spelling
- Introduction to research
- Creative writing

In Math, concrete materials (for example: golden beads, stamp game, bead frame, checkerboard, test tubes, 100 board, teens and tens board, snake game, bingo charts, finger charts, strip board) are used to represent all types of quantities as a child learns the basic mathematical operations. The aim of this sequence is to abstract the information—to be able to do math problems with a pencil and paper without using the "hands on" manipulatives.

- Numeration
- Addition
- Subtraction
- Multiplication
- Division
- Introduction to decimals
- Fractions
- Measurement (linear, temperature, liquids)
- Money
- Graphing
- Randomness and probability
- Roman numerals
- Problem solving
- Memorization of math facts (i.e. times table)

The Cultural Studies program has a foundation in evolution theory. Through the presentation of The Great Lessons and the use of timelines, students learn the concept of time (calendar, years, eras); scientific evolution (Big Bang theory, creation stories); history; political and physical geography (nation study); and geology (basic land and water forms). The timelines help to show how events build on one another and how humans meet their needs. It teaches that all humans have the same basic needs and the way they meet those needs depends on where and when they lived. One way students experience the curriculum is through individual and group research projects which are shared with the class.

- History
- Time
- Political and physical geography (social studies)
- Science
- Astronomy
- Biology (Botany and Zoology)
- Geology
- Geography
- Physics
- Weather
- Engineering

Elementary Curriculum (Ages 9-12, Grades 4-5)

In the upper elementary classroom (UE) the curriculum is again divided into Language Arts, Math, and Cultural Studies. The language curriculum at the UE level begins with the analysis of words and sentences. Students are introduced to the study of etymology, which involves examining the root and parts of a word to discover its origin and meaning. Working with etymology increases a child's vocabulary and can be incorporated into both the culture (discovering the geographic origin of a word) and mathematics (analyzing geometry terms) curricula.

- Writing
- Spelling
- Advanced grammar (particles, gerunds)
- Sentence analysis (direct object, indirect object, predicate, etc.)
- Word study (antonym, synonym, prefix)
- Vocabulary
- Etymology
- Research projects Creative writing, journal writing, letter writing
- Reading
- Oral book reports
- Poetry study
- Reading with comprehension quiz
- Comprehension Toolkit Lessons
- Junior
- Great Books

Students continue to use Montessori math manipulatives at the Upper Elementary level, reinforcing the concrete understanding of the mathematical process. Children in these grades can understand and use abstract mathematical concepts, and depending on their level of understanding, are guided by the teacher toward that goal. Topics in UE math include basic math operations as well as understanding decimals and fractions, estimation and rounding, and further exploration of geometry.

- Mathematics
- Addition
- Subtraction
- Multiplication
- Division
- Fractions
- Multiples
- Factors
- Graphing
- Addition, subtraction, multiplication and division operations with mixed numbers
- Decimals:
- Naming, forming, symbolizing
- Addition, subtraction, multiplication, division
- Rounding
- Powers and exponents
- Percentages
- Randomness and probability
- Graphing
- Measurement
- Study of Polynomials
- Multiplying, Squaring, Algebraic
- Study of integers
- Cross multiplication
- Short and group division
- Square root
- Cubing and cube root
- Geometry
- Detailed knowledge of geometric figures
- Concepts of congruence
- Similarity and equivalence
- Ratios and proportions
- Insets of equivalence
- Theorem of Pythagoras
- Study of area
- Study of circle
- Study of volume

In Cultural Studies, the Upper Elementary student, now familiar with The Great Lessons from their Lower Elementary classroom, will be reintroduced to The Great Lessons in greater detail and encouraged to delve deeper into the questions they engender. Pondering these questions will provide students with an understanding of how history has had an impact on human cultures and how we might impact the future ourselves.

- History
- Timeline of life
- Early humans
- Ancient civilizations
- United States History
- Political and physical geography
- Science
- Astronomy
- Biology
- Botany
- Ecology/biomes
- Geology
- Earth systems
- Living systems
- Zoology

Continuation of ELA into Middle School

The Middle School English Language Arts (ELA) Program at Wildflower New York Charter School is designed to cultivate articulate, thoughtful, and globally minded readers and writers. Grounded in Montessori principles, our approach centers on student agency, inquiry, and the belief that language is a powerful vehicle for personal expression, collaboration, and civic participation. As a public Montessori school rooted in the Bronx, our ELA program not only reflects our local community's vibrancy but also prepares students to engage meaningfully on a global stage.

A defining feature of our ELA sequence is the Montessori Model United Nations (MMUN), which serves as a core component of the curriculum and a capstone experience for our middle school learners. Through MMUN, students research global issues, study world cultures, write position papers, draft resolutions, and engage in formal debate. This immersive experience elevates the purpose of literacy: students learn to read critically, analyze complex international challenges, and communicate their ideas with clarity, diplomacy, and confidence. MMUN invites our Bronx-based Montessori students into a worldwide dialogue — giving them the opportunity to showcase their scholarship, advocacy, and leadership among peers from across the globe.

Across Grades 6–8, the ELA scope and sequence offers a rigorous and developmentally aligned progression of reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. Students explore diverse literature and informational texts, building foundational comprehension and writing structures in Grade 6; deepening literary analysis and research in Grade 7; and advancing toward independent interpretation, argumentation, and long-form writing in Grade 8. Texts are curated to reflect multiple perspectives, global themes, and the lived experiences of middle schoolers, helping students see themselves within literature while expanding their understanding of the broader world.

Writing is treated as a dynamic process of inquiry and expression, with students engaging in narrative, expository, persuasive, and research-based writing. Explicit instruction in grammar, structure, revision, and rhetorical craft

helps students refine their voice. Seminar discussions, debates, storytelling, and public presentations build confidence and fluency — culminating in the formal speaking, negotiation, and diplomacy demanded by MMUN participation.

Ultimately, the Middle School ELA Program at Wildflower fosters critical thinking, empathy, global consciousness, and empowered communication. Through the integration of MMUN and a rich Montessori-informed literacy framework, our students learn not only to interpret texts, but to understand the world, advocate for change, and contribute their voices on both local and global stages.

Continuation of Mathematics into Middle School

As students continue in middle school at Wildflower New York Charter School math is designed to cultivate confident, flexible thinkers who can reason mathematically, solve real-world problems, and understand the deep patterns that structure our world. Grounded in Montessori principles, our approach emphasizes conceptual understanding, hands-on materials, student agency, and the belief that mathematics is both a creative and logical human endeavor.

Across Grades 6–8, students engage in a coherent, developmentally responsive progression of mathematical ideas — building from foundational number sense, ratios, and pre-algebra in Grade 6; to expressions, equations, geometry, and proportional reasoning in Grade 7; and into algebraic thinking, linear functions, data analysis, and readiness for high school mathematics in Grade 8. This sequence ensures that learners develop fluency, procedural skill, and, most importantly, deep conceptual insight.

Montessori math materials and visual models remain central in middle school, allowing students to explore abstract concepts through concrete representations. Students work collaboratively and independently, moving at a pace that is appropriately challenging while still allowing for inquiry, reflection, and mastery. Mathematical understanding is strengthened through real-world applications, interdisciplinary projects, micro-economy activities, and opportunities to mathematically model scientific, environmental, and social phenomena.

The program fosters problem-solving, persistence, and mathematical communication, encouraging students to articulate their reasoning, test their ideas, and engage in productive struggle. As they progress through the sequence, students learn to analyze data, interpret graphs, generalize patterns, and use algebraic thinking to make predictions and decisions.

Ultimately, the Middle School Math Program at Wildflower NY Charter School prepares students not only for success in high school mathematics, but also for a life in which mathematical reasoning supports informed decision-making, creativity, and empowered participation in their community and world.

Topics in these grades include:

- Ratios as fractions, decimals, percents

- Percents as a number
- Proportion
- Construct, read and interpret: tables, graphs of all kinds
- Mean/Median/Mode/Range
- Frequency and tree diagrams
- Powers of Numbers
- Squares and Cubing
- Exploration of other number bases
- Squaring and cubing of binomials
- Squaring and cubing of trinomials
- Pre-Algebra
- Square roots
- Integers: scientific notation and rational numbers
- Problem solving and logical
- Reasoning
- Algebra
- Negative numbers
- Translations, slides, reflections, symmetry, tessellations, graphs and other displays, coordination of graphs and equations
- Identify prefixes that label polygons
- Understands similar, congruent and equivalent
- Interpret movements of figures on coordinate planes
- Applies knowledge about polygons to derive perimeter
- Area formulas for polygons
- Derive pi, circumference and area for circles
- Applies knowledge of area to derive volume
- Understand Pythagorean theorem

Using tools like the NWEA MAP Math Assessment, Khan Academy and IXL, we ensure that our Montessori math curriculum is robust and aligns with NY State standards while meeting the diverse needs of our students. We will also have our students participate in math olympiads and other local and national competitions.

Science

Wildflower New York Charter School's science curriculum is designed to foster a deep understanding and appreciation of the natural world through an interdisciplinary approach that integrates physical and life sciences, biology, zoology, botany, and scientific experimentation. From the earliest stages, students explore science through hands-on demonstrations and experiments, both virtually and in-person, allowing them to engage with scientific concepts in a tangible and meaningful way.

***Experiential Learning*:** Science in our Montessori classrooms is not taught in isolation; instead, it is woven into a broader interdisciplinary framework that includes lessons in astronomy, earth sciences, biology, history, and geography. This approach helps students understand the interconnectedness of various scientific disciplines and their relevance to the world around them. For example, students learn to consider the formation of the universe, the development of planet Earth, the delicate relationships between living things and their physical environment, and the balance within the natural world.

***Reading, Research, and Experiential Learning*:**
A significant component of our science curriculum and instruction involves reading, research, and experiential learning. Students engage with a variety of texts that complement their hands-on activities, allowing them to explore scientific concepts more deeply. Research projects are an integral part of their learning, encouraging them to investigate scientific questions independently and collaboratively. This combination of reading, research, and experiential learning ensures that students not only acquire scientific knowledge but also develop critical thinking skills and a lifelong curiosity about the natural world.

***Computer Science and Computational Thinking*:**
As a supplement to our science education, Wildflower New York Charter School students engage in a comprehensive exploration of computer science, using Montessori-inspired materials developed by TWF partners and MIT's Media Lab. This exploration occurs without the immediate use of computers, allowing students to grasp the foundational logic behind how computers work. The computer science curriculum addresses a broad range of computational concepts.

History, Cosmic Education and The Great Lessons:
By the time our students enter the Elementary classroom, they are well-prepared to build on the scientific knowledge they have gained. Montessori elementary education introduces students to what Dr. Maria Montessori termed "Cosmic Education," a holistic approach that presents the child with keys to understanding the universe. Our science curriculum is ignited by the Five Great Lessons, which serve as the springboard for the entire Montessori elementary curriculum. These lessons cover:

- The beginnings of the universe,
- The origins of life,
- The evolution of humans,
- The development of language, and
- The history of mathematics.

These stories are presented every year, and as the children mature and grow, they revisit these concepts with increasing levels of comprehension. Through Cosmic Education, students develop a profound understanding of the interconnectedness of all life and the physical aspects of the universe. This understanding is further enhanced as they progress to the Upper Elementary levels, where their scientific inquiry becomes more complex and sophisticated.

Continuation of Science into Middle School

At Wildflower NY Charter School, our Middle School Science Program (Grades 6–8) is designed to nurture curious, independent, and globally conscious young scientists. Rooted in the educational philosophy of Montessori and the concept of cosmic education, our program emphasizes deep understanding of the natural world, the interrelatedness of systems, and the responsibility humans bear as stewards of Earth.

Our scope and sequence offers a progressive, spiral curriculum — building from foundational scientific thinking and Earth-system awareness in Grade 6, to cellular life, genetics, chemistry, ecology in Grade 7, and advancing to physics, astronomy, global systems, and sustainable engineering in Grade 8. Through this progression, students develop a robust understanding of matter, energy, life, and planetary systems, while gaining tools to analyze, question, and design.

Central to our program is student agency and real-world relevance. Students learn scientific inquiry through hands-on experiments, fieldwork, ecosystem studies, environmental observation, and community-based projects. Each year invites increased independence: by Grade 8, students lead investigations, design and build models or solutions, and explore long-term environmental and societal challenges. We will use the NWEA Map Growth Science assessment to monitor student success.

Beyond textbooks and labs, our science curriculum fosters interdisciplinary thinking and global citizenship. Science is interwoven with math, humanities, social responsibility — reinforcing the idea that scientific knowledge connects with human history, ecology, ethics, and community. Students carry forward a sense of wonder about the universe, a commitment to sustainability, and the confidence to contribute meaningfully to their community.

In short, the Middle School Science Program at Wildflower is not only about learning scientific facts and theories — it's about cultivating thoughtful, empowered learners who understand their place in the web of life and are equipped to act as informed stewards of the Earth.

Grade 6: Foundations of Scientific Inquiry & Earth Systems

Scientific Inquiry & Skills:

- Introduction to the scientific method
- Observation techniques, measurement, and data recording
- Lab safety and equipment basics
- Designing simple experiments

Graphing and interpreting data:

- Earth & Space Sciences
- Structure of Earth (core, mantle, crust)

- Plate tectonics and continental drift
- Rocks and minerals; geologic timescale

Weather vs. climate:

- Water cycle and Earth's energy balance
- Earth–Moon–Sun relationships (seasons, tides, lunar cycles)

Life Science:

- Characteristics of living organisms
- Cell structure and function (microscope studies)
- Classification of life and kingdoms
- Basic ecology: food webs, ecosystems, biomes
- Interdependence and symbiosis

Physical Science (Introductory Concepts):

- Matter: properties, states, and particle model
- Simple physical and chemical changes
- Energy types (light, heat, sound, mechanical)
- Forces and motion (introductory Newtonian concepts)

Engineering / Applied Science:

- Intro to engineering design process
- Simple machines
- Environmental stewardship projects (composting, soil testing)

Examples of Key Montessori Projects:

- Biome creation and research
- Mineral and rock identification lab
- Water cycle field observations
- School ecosystem mapping

Grade 7: Life Science, Matter, and Human Systems

Scientific Inquiry & Skills:

- Formal experimental design
- Independent variable manipulation
- Statistical reasoning (mean, median, variability)
- Scientific writing: lab reports, research summaries

Life Science (Deepening):

- Photosynthesis & cellular respiration
- Human body systems and homeostasis
- Genetics & heredity (Mendelian patterns)
- DNA structure and introduction to molecular biology
- Evolution and natural selection
- Populations and carrying capacity

Physical Science: Matter & Chemistry:

- Atomic theory and structure
- Periodic table basics
- Elements, compounds, and mixtures
- Chemical reactions & equations (conceptual)
- Heat transfer and thermal energy

Earth & Environmental Science:

- Renewable vs. nonrenewable resources
- Human impact on ecosystems
- Soil science; erosion & deposition
- Atmosphere composition & air quality

Engineering / Applied Science:

- Introductory chemistry investigations (acids, bases)
- Human-environment design challenges
- Renewable energy models (solar, wind, hydro)

Example of Key Montessori Projects:

- Scientific research applying the scientific method
- Microscope lab: plant vs. animal tissues
- Renewable energy prototype build

Grade 8: Physical Science, Astronomy, and Global Systems

Scientific Inquiry & Skills:

- Advanced experimental design
- Multi-variable investigations
- Use of digital sensors and data loggers
- Peer review & scientific argumentation

Physical Science (Physics Emphasis):

- Force, mass, acceleration (Newton's Laws)
- Momentum and collisions
- Work, mechanical advantage, and energy transfer
- Electricity and magnetism
- Waves: sound, light, electromagnetic spectrum

Earth & Space Sciences (Advanced):

- Universe structure & Big Bang (cosmic perspective)
- Star life cycles
- Solar system formation and planetary science
- Climate systems and climate change science
- Natural hazards and risk mitigation

Life & Environmental Science (Integration):

- Biodiversity & conservation biology
- Human ecological footprint
- Sustainability systems (food, water, waste)
- Community environmental research project

Engineering / Applied Science:

- Robotics or circuitry projects
- Engineering design challenge: solving a local ecological or social problem
- Long-term field research project (watershed, soil, biodiversity, etc.)

Examples of Key Montessori Projects:

- Model electromagnets / simple motors
- Night sky observation journal

- Climate action capstone project

Homework

Each grade level will have homework that is appropriate for the children's ages and abilities, and supports their academic development. Please support your child by ensuring that they complete homework each night and that they have a calm, quiet place to work.

Homework is sent home so that students can practice the skills that were acquired during the day. Students will be assigned homework every night and our motto is quality not quantity. Each Monday a comprehensive calendar will be sent home that outlines homework for the entire week. A student is expected to complete all of his or her assigned homework on time every day. A family member must sign off that the work has been completed. Students will be assigned homework in all core content areas. All homework is collected at 8:00 a.m. and will be checked each day. Students who fail to satisfactorily complete their homework will be provided with written notification that must be signed by a parent and returned to the classroom teacher no later than the next day. If a student misses three or more assignments in a two-week period, the parent/guardian must meet with a member of the school leadership team.

Assessments

Our general approach to assessment is to recognize the value of assessment tools to inform parents, teachers, and children about skill levels and rates of progress. Our students will be assessed so that our teachers can tailor instruction and provide academically rich lessons thatwill promote sustained growth. Students will be assessed in Reading and Mathematics. Information about assessments will be communicated to families. Assessments are always shared at family conferences but family members can make appointments to review assessment data at any time.

During a normal academic school year, WNYCS administers the following assessments:

1. NWEA MAP (NWEA) — *MAP Growth is the most trusted and innovative assessment for measuring achievement and growth in K–12 math, reading, language usage, and science. It provides teachers with accurate, and actionable evidence to help target instruction for each student or groups of students regardless of how far above or below they are from their grade level.*

2. Fountas & Pinnell (F&P) — F&P *accurately and reliably identify each child's instructional and independent reading levels according to the F&P Text Level GradientTM, A–Z and document their progress through one-on-one formative and summative assessments. The Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment Systems provide teachers with precise tools and texts to observe and quantify specific reading behaviors, and then interpret and use that data to plan meaningful instruction.*

3. Minnesota Executive Function Scale (MEFS) — *The Minnesota Executive Function Scale (MEFS AppTM) is a standardized assessment of EF skills designed for children ages 2 and up with child-friendly graphics, avatars, and child-directed instructions.*

4. Montessori Reading Remediation Pathway — *Montessori For All, a public Montessori school in Austin, Tx blended its knowledge from high-performing public schools with its deep roots in Montessori to design an accelerated Montessori Reading Remediation Pathway to help kindergartners read at a 1st grade level by the end of kindergarten. The Montessori Reading Remediation Pathway incorporates phonics-based research with Montessori principles to offer a systematic, streamlined curriculum to move children from letter sounds to reading books in ten months or less. At the Lower Elementary level children can enter the pathway at their exact level and expect to growth 1.5 years in a single school year.*

5. Amplify Reading — is a digital literacy program grounded in the Science of Reading that helps students build essential reading skills such as phonics, decoding, vocabulary, and comprehension through adaptive, personalized instruction. The program includes a range of embedded assessments that support both teaching and learning, beginning with a placement assessment to identify each student's skill level, followed by ongoing formative assessments and progress monitoring tools that track growth over time. These assessments are seamlessly integrated into the program, providing real-time data and reports that help teachers tailor instruction, address skill gaps, and ensure students are developing as confident, proficient readers.

Progress Reports

All parents will receive a Progress Report 4 times a year, at the end of each quarter. The Progress Report is designed to inform parents about how their child is doing in all subject areas and will include the child's attendance and lateness. One Progress Report will be given to the parents in the fall and spring during the Parent/Teacher Conferences. The other four Progress Reports will be given to the students to bring home. After receiving the report, all parents are asked to sign and return it to school to ensure you have both received it and reviewed it with your child. Parents may feel free to make appointments with their child's teacher to discuss their child's grades. The exact dates of Progress Report distribution will be provided to you by your classroom's teacher.

Conferences

Report cards will be distributed at the end of each quarter (every 10 weeks) in the months of November, February, April, and June. Report card distribution will coincide with the two mandatory Parent Teacher Conferences scheduled in November and February. Parents or adult guardians must attend the conferences in order to receive

the report card, unless under extreme circumstances where the report card will be reviewed virtually. The last report card of the year will be sent home with children in June.

Promotion and Retention

The promotion policy at Wildflower New York Charter School is designed to align with our mission to have our students develop strong academic foundations and skills in the areas of critical thinking, collaboration, creativity and communication, and grow into curious, capable contributors to their communities and the world. Students will enter Wildflower New York Charter School with varying levels of academic preparation and may enter at various times throughout the academic year. Wildflower New York Charter SchoolSchool's multi-age classes of Primary, Lower Elementary and Upper Elementary and Middle School classrooms are equipped with instructional materials that support struggling and advanced students.

Student promotion will be viewed from a holistic approach, and will be mindful of social and emotional as well as cognitive development in executive function. Teacher Leaders will make a recommendation for each child's promotion, based upon many factors that include:

- Attendance
- Reading, Math and ScienceLevel
- Formative and standardized assessments

Children will need to demonstrate proficiency in the areas of ELA, math and Science as well as in the area of social and emotional development to be promoted.

Students at risk of retention will be identified before the second parent teacher conferences are held and families will be notified by Wildflower New York Charter SchoolTeacher Leaders in order to develop an improvement plan for those students.

Special Education Promotion Criteria:

In compliance with IDEA, all students with IEPs or 504s will need to meet all promotion criteria for Wildflower New York Charter School unless their IEP indicates separate goals in particular content areas. If this is the case, satisfactorily meeting those goals will satisfy that component of the promotion criteria of Wildflower New York Charter SchoolSchool.

Student Support Services

Wildflower New York Charter SchoolCharter School is committed to the following processes to best support students in their varying learning journeys with additional services and processes.

English Language Learners/Multilingual Learners Support Services:

Wildflower New York Charter School Charter School celebrates and promotes the diversity of languages and cultures that our families and children bring to our school community. WNYCS also understands the importance of English language proficiency necessary for our student's academic success and access to competitive higher educational opportunities. Therefore, WNYCS ensures that English Language Learners (ELLs)/Multilingual Learners (MLLs) receive equal access to all educational programming and extracurricular opportunities. Upon enrollment parents are provided the Home Language Survey and if a student is identified as potentially ELL/MLL after this home language survey and informal interview, WNYCS will proceed with administering the New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners (NYSITELL). Students identified as having Limited English Proficiency are provided with sheltered instruction in the form of the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP), to help ELLs/MLLs master core content and develop English language proficiency. Students who are at entering (beginning), emerging (low intermediate), or transitioning (intermediate) levels of language proficiency will also receive explicit English language instruction from trained professionals. Our school also implements a pedagogical approach that structures immersion learning for students. All instruction in an immersion strategy program is in English and teachers throughout the year undergo training in meeting the needs of ELLs/MLLs, to support the foundational linguistic growth of students' primary language.

Response to Intervention Model (RtI):
Wildflower New York Charter School's Response to Intervention (RtI) model is a multi-tier approach to the early identification and support of students with learning and behavior needs. The RtI process begins with high-quality instruction and universal screening of all children in the general education classroom. Struggling learners are provided with interventions at increasing levels of intensity to accelerate their rate of learning. These services may be provided by a variety of personnel, including Teacher Leaders, special educators, and specialists. Progress is closely monitored to assess both the learning rate and level of performance of individual students. Educational decisions about the intensity and duration of interventions are based on individual student response to instruction. RtI is designed for use when making decisions in both general education and special education, creating a well-integrated system of instruction and intervention guided by child outcome data.

The following essential components will be part of the Wildflower New York Charter SchoolRtI process:

High-quality, scientifically based instruction: All students receive high-quality, research-based instruction in the general education setting.

Ongoing student assessment: Universal screening and on-going progress monitoring will occur to provide information about a student's learning rate and level of achievement. This data will then be used when determining which students need closer monitoring or intervention. Throughout the RtI process, student progress will be monitored frequently to examine student achievement and gauge the effectiveness of the curriculum. Decisions made regarding students' instructional needs are based on multiple data points taken in context over time.

Tiered instruction: A multi-tier approach is used to efficiently differentiate instruction for all students. The model incorporates increasing intensities of instruction offering specific, research-based interventions matched to student needs.

Parent involvement: The school will provide parents information about their child's progress, the instruction and interventions used, the staff delivering the instruction, and the academic or behavioral goals for their child.

Tier 1: *High-Quality Instruction, Screening, and Group Interventions*

Tier 1 supports are in-class accommodations or mild modifications that are minimally intrusive. Within Tier 1, all students receive high quality, scientifically based instruction provided by qualified personnel to ensure that their difficulties are not due to inadequate instruction. All students are screened on a periodic basis to establish an academic and behavioral baseline and to identify struggling learners who need additional support. Students identified as being "at risk" through universal screenings and/or results on state-or district mandated assessments receive supplemental instruction during the school day. The length of time for this step can vary, but it generally should not exceed 8 weeks. During that time, student progress is closely monitored using a validated screening system. At the end of this period, students showing significant progress are generally monitored in the general education program. Students not showing adequate progress are moved to Tier 2.

Tier 2: *Targeted Interventions*
Students not making adequate progress with the supplemental instruction provided in Tier 1 are provided with increasingly intensive instruction. Tier 2 supports are more individualized, targeting specific student needs, and they can be provided in the context of the classroom (e.g., modified work plan, specific seating needs, additional time on tests or assignments, etc.). The instructional strategies matched to their needs on the basis of levels of performance and rates of progress. Intensity varies across group size, frequency and duration of intervention, and level of training of the professionals providing instruction or intervention. Students who continue to show too little progress at this level of intervention are then considered for more intensive interventions as part of Tier 3.

Tier 3: *Intensive Interventions and Comprehensive Evaluation*
At this level, students receive individualized, intensive interventions from either the school psychologist or the special education teacher that target the students' skill deficits. Tier 3 interventions may utilize the school's curriculum, along with 1:1 support for students, or additional intervention curriculum, as necessary. Students who do not achieve the desired level of progress in response to these targeted Tier 3 interventions are then referred for a comprehensive evaluation and considered for eligibility for special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The data collected during Tiers 1, 2, and 3 are included and used to make the eligibility decision.

At each step of the Intervention program, WNYCS will work closely with families to develop student support plans. Every family who has a student referred to Tier 2 and 3 intervention will receive a phone call and written letter home, that includes the student's data and details about the intervention plan. Families will continue to receive weekly reports home on their child's academic and behavioral progress. They will also receive a progress report that will inform the family of the student's new data and whether they will continue in their current intervention for another six weeks or be moved up or down an intervention level. All students who require behavioral intervention will have a family conference to discuss their student's intervention plan, as well as a mid-point and final conference. Families will be informed about the student's plan at school, as well as given strategies for how they can support their students at home.

It should be noted that at any point in an RtI process, IDEA allows parents to request a formal evaluation to determine eligibility for special education. A RtI process cannot be used to deny or delay a formal evaluation for special education.

Students with Disabilities:

Wildflower New York Charter School Charter School will abide by all IDEA assurances found in Appendix B.

Identification:
As part of Montessori teacher training, Teacher Leaders develop a deep understanding of children's development, including typical and atypical development. Montessori teachers are trained observers who regularly document their observations in order to assess and best support the needs of students under their care. Formative assessment is one of the hallmarks of Montessori teaching. Through these formative assessments, the Montessori classroom is carefully designed to meet the diverse educational needs of the individual students.

The School's RtI process will drive all decisions around supporting student performance. By employing this method, we will be able to use this cycle to identify students who may qualify for special education services. Wildflower New York Charter School will request any and all existing records for incoming students and the special education teacher will review all files to identify any students with existing IEPs. Those documents will then be analyzed in order to determine any mandated services, as well as the School's ability to meet those requirements and any adjustments Wildflower New York Charter School may need to make to its staffing.

The Child Study Team (CST) will review all student referrals and recommend any evaluations needed for students. The CST members will include: the Teacher Leader and special education teacher.

A referral to the Committee on Special Education (CSE) of a student's district of residence will be considered only after RtI strategies have proven insufficient to address the student's needs. The School will use the following procedures to initiate referral for a student suspected of having a disability to the Chairperson of the CSE.

School Initiated Referrals: Informed by assessment and classroom data, the Teacher Leader and special education teacher will confer and complete a written request for an initial evaluation to the Chairperson of the CSE. The purpose of this request is to: A) Clearly outline difficulties the student is having in the classroom; B) Describe Tier 1 and 2 interventions and supports provided to the student; and C) Describe the extent of parental involvement prior to the referral request.

Parent Initiated Referrals: Wildflower New York Charter School will provide support and guidance to parents who wish to independently initiate a referral of their child to CSE. Parents will be given a copy of procedural safeguards and a sample letter that outlines necessary information to be contained in a request for referral and initial evaluation. If requested by the parent, the School will write a request on their behalf and obtain the parent signature.

Obligations and Assurances for Referrals: Wildflower New York Charter School assures that it will comply with its obligations under the Child Find requirements of IDEA including 34 CFR 300.111, and will provide appropriate notification to parents.

Once a student is found to qualify as a student with a disability, the school will work with the CSE to adhere to all applicable laws and regulations regarding implementation of services, including regular review of the IEP and student progress towards these goals. If a review reveals that the student's IEP is no longer appropriate to the child's needs, the CST will work with the CSE to review, reevaluate, or adapt the IEP in order to best serve the student. The CST will communicate all findings, recommendations, or changes in intervention with the child's family.

Strategies and Resources, including Personnel:
Wildflower New York Charter School will hire experienced, certified, and highly qualified special education staff to meet the needs of all students with disabilities.

The special education teacher will provide special education services. This person will serve as the primary manager of all services for students with special needs, act as the liaison with the CSE, and support compliance with all city and federal guidelines regarding serving students with special needs. They will coordinate with all related service providers and support organizations that serve students and their families. They will provide staff professional development around serving students with special needs, develop and review IEPs, keep all files related to supporting this population, and coordinate with staff to support accommodation in classes.

Wildflower New York Charter School will meet the needs of students with disabilities by providing all mandated services, including SETTS, and supplement when necessary for Counseling, Speech, Occupational Therapy, and Physical Therapy. The special education teacher will provide push-in and pull-out support for students' behavioral and academic advances based on IEP requirements and collaborate with general education teachers. The special

education teacher will coordinate with the CSE to assist families in the Related Service Authorization (RSA) process, allowing families to have a choice of providers if necessary.

Service Delivery:

Wildflower New York Charter School will offer varying service delivery models to provide specially designated instruction to students with disabilities. The School will take direction from the CSE in determining the areas of exceptionality and work from a strength's based perspective in order to decide what instructional support is needed in order for the student to participate successfully in the general education curriculum. Other services and supports will be offered, such as accommodations and modifications that are directly designed to support the student in his/her general education class. The School will deliver specially designated instruction and related services to address specific skill deficits. Others may or may not be provided in settings with nondisabled peers, depending on the needs of the student. Placement options will be directly related to LRE placement decisions.

Coordination, Progress Monitoring and Evaluation:

The special education teacher(s) will monitor and evaluate the efficacy of our special education programming based on student performance in relation to their IEP goals, and by tracking their mastery of grade level standards as compared to their general education peers. The special education teacher will monitor the student culture and the implementation of student behavior plans and will work with Teacher Leaders to ensure that Wildflower New York Charter School is in compliance with all LEA requirements and federal laws and guidelines governing students with special needs, including regular IEP reviews. The special education teacher will also oversee and evaluate the professional development of staff in regard to serving students with special needs, monitor the collaboration between the special education and general education staff, and observe classroom practices/review discipline data to ensure that all students with special needs are receiving adequate support. The population of students with special needs will be monitored by individual progress, type of disability and type of service provided, to ensure that all students are being appropriately served. Wildflower New York Charter School will use this information to determine student progress as compared to not only IEP goals or level of English language acquisition, but against the School's overall accountability goals.

Compliance with Section 504

If a student is not eligible for special education services as defined by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), they may be eligible for appropriate educational services designed through Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504). The School will address the needs of students who are considered to have a disabling condition under Section 504 but are not necessarily eligible for special education. The School will provide Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), which consists of the provision of regular or special education and related aids and services designed to meet the student's individual education needs as adequately as the needs of their nondisabled peers are met.

Definition:

Disability. Under Section 504, an individual with a disability (also referred to as a *student with a disability* in the elementary and secondary education context) is defined as a person who: (1) has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity; (2) has a record of such an impairment; or (3) is regarded as having such an impairment.

The determination of whether a student has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity (and therefore has a disability) must be made on a case by case basis. In addition, when determining if someone meets the definition of a disability, the definition must be understood to provide broad coverage of individuals.

Physical or mental impairments. Section 504 defines a physical or mental impairment as any

- physiological disorder or condition,
- cosmetic disfigurement, or
- anatomical loss affecting one or more of the following body systems: neurological; musculoskeletal; special sense organs; respiratory, including speech organs; cardiovascular; reproductive; digestive; genito-urinary; hemic and lymphatic; skin; and endocrine.

The Section 504 definition of physical and mental impairment also includes any mental or psychological disorder. The definition does not include all specific diseases and conditions that may be physical or mental impairments because of the difficulty of ensuring the completeness of such a list.

The Section 504 school team includes the student's teacher, the student's parent, the 504 Coordinator (also WNYCS Special Education Coordinator), the school leader, school nurse, and social worker if applicable. The Section 504 school team will meet to determine the impact of a disability on any major life activity or major bodily function(s). The team will determine the services and accommodations needed, in each individual case, to ensure students receive FAPE.

The 504 Identification Process is as follows:

1. Teacher or parent requests referral for 504 Accommodations

School-based 504 Coordinator contacts parents to discuss referral and process. Log into Infinite Campus under parent contacts.

2. Seek permission for evaluations and inform parents of rights and non-discrimination within 5 school days

School-based 504 Coordinator coordinates permission for evaluations.

School-based 504 Coordinator sends home non-discrimination and parental rights summary.

Either of the following can occur:

- Evaluations, observations and other data do not suggest the need for a special education referral. (See step 3).
- Evaluations, observations and other data suggest the need for a special education referral because of an adverse impact on education. (Refer to CSE Identification/ Referral process).

3. Schedule and convene within 30 school days a 504 Meeting

School-based 504 Coordinator compiles evaluations and other data for the 504 Meeting. School-based 504 Coordinator should give parents at least 5 days notice for the 504 Meeting.

Either of the following can occur:

- If the 504 Team determines that the child does have a disability which substantially impacts educational attainment, then the child qualifies for 504 accommodations. (Proceed to step 4)
- If 504 Team determines that the child does not have a disability or that the disability does not substantially impact education, then the child does not qualify for 504 accommodations.

4. Write the 504 Eligibility and Accommodation Plan

The 504 Team can use accommodation examples to complete the 504 Plan.

5. Document and ensure 504 Accommodation Plan

School-based 504 Coordinator records 504 Accommodation Plan and 504 Team ensures that 504 Accommodation Plan is implemented.

6. 504 Team is reconvened yearly to determine continued eligibility

Either of the following can occur:

- If no changes are needed in a child's 504 Accommodation Plan, then a parent may sign the continuation request template and receive a new copy of the 504 Accommodation Plan.
- If a 504 Accommodation Plan is no longer needed, then the School-based 504 Coordinator will change the 504 status in Infinite Campus to "no" but will keep the 504 fields populated.

Parent Responsibility:

Parents/ Guardians have the responsibility to inform WNYCS staff if their child has any special medical conditions so that we can provide appropriate care and support. Parents/guardians will be asked to share any existing IEP or 504 plan with us. Please inform us if your child has a disability or special need and is one or more of the following:

- Receiving services through the local school district and has an Individual Educational Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan

- Determined by a licensed physician, psychiatrist, psychologist or consulting psychologist to have a condition related to physical, social or emotional development.

Access to Student Records:
Except for WNCYS teacher leaders, health personnel, and local and state health department personnel, no third party shall have access to information in or from a student record without the specific, informed written consent of the parent or legal guardian of the student whose records are being requested. Any person, except for WNYCS's staff and specific local or state health department personnel, who request access to student records must follow WNYCS's FERPA policy and records request protocol. Please see Appendix B for WNYCS's FERPA policy and records request protocol. Note that submission of a request does not guarantee access to any part of a student's records.

School Culture

Parent Involvement
Wildflower New York Charter School is committed to partner with families to support each child's development, growth, and success. As parents are a child's first and most important teachers, children will receive the best possible education when their family and their school work together. Wildflower New York Charter School encourages alignment between the home and school environments. We see our work as a partnership with parents and families: we value their wisdom, invite their engagement, and enthusiastically share with them our Montessori methods. Similarly, Wildflower New York Charter School parents see their roles as active supporters of the School and Teacher Leaders, rather than its customers. We invite all parents to co-create the education we provide to children. We welcome families to engage, participate, and lead activities with our children through volunteering, classroom support, community organizing, and more. To best support the development of their child during their time at Wildflower New York Charter School, families are expected to make the following commitments:

- **Attend parent-teacher conferences.** Conferences are held twice a year and are mandatory for each family. Conferences are an opportunity to discuss the child's social and academic development, and work together to develop goals and help the child reach her/his potential.

- **Attend parent meetings.** Each meeting will focus on a different topic such as language development, mathematics, nutrition, or the transition to elementary school. Parent meetings are mandatory and provide important information for families to support the child's development and growth. Parent meetings are also an excellent opportunity to get to know WNYCS faculty, staff, and other WNYCS families.

- **Have children at school on time.** Children need to be here on time to start the day with the rest of the class.

- **Have children attend school regularly.** Children who miss school frequently often fall behind their peers academically and have a difficult time integrating socially. Regular attendance is required.

- **Make sure children have adequate sleep.** Sleep will assure that children are physically prepared to learn and retain what they learn each day.

- **Parents are expected to follow the rules of respect** for self, others, materials, and the environment. Parents should be respectful with staff, children, and other families. Language and actions used in the building should be respectful and appropriate. Please bring conflicts to the attention of the teachers.

Parent Responsibilities

Supporting a child's education in elementary school is crucial for their academic success and overall development. Research has shown that active parental involvement can significantly enhance a child's learning experience. Here is a list of responsibilities and activities that parents can undertake, backed by research evidence, to support their child's education:

1. Reading to Children Daily

- **Action:** Read to your child for at least 30 minutes a day.
- **Research Evidence:** Reading aloud to children helps them acquire vocabulary and language skills. According to a study by Mol and Bus (2011), children who are read to regularly tend to have better language and literacy skills, which lays a strong foundation for reading comprehension and academic success.

2. Establishing a Homework Routine

- **Action:** Create a consistent time and place for your child to complete homework each day.
- **Research Evidence:** A study by Xu and Corno (2003) found that children who have a structured homework routine develop better study habits and time management skills, leading to improved academic performance.

3. Communicating with Teachers

- **Action:** Maintain regular communication with your child's teachers to stay informed about their progress and any areas needing attention.
- **Research Evidence:** Parent-teacher communication has been linked to higher academic achievement. Research by Kraft and Rogers (2015) indicates that when parents engage with teachers, students are more likely to improve their performance and behavior in school.

4. Encouraging a Growth Mindset

- **Action:** Encourage your child to view challenges as opportunities to learn and grow.
- **Research Evidence:** Carol Dweck's research on growth mindset shows that children who believe their abilities can be developed through effort and persistence are more likely to succeed academically and enjoy learning (Dweck, 2006).

5. Monitoring Screen Time

- **Action:** Limit and monitor your child's screen time to ensure it does not interfere with homework and physical activity.
- **Research Evidence:** Excessive screen time has been associated with negative impacts on children's attention spans and academic performance (Kardefelt-Winther, 2017). Setting limits helps children focus more on educational activities and physical play.

6. Promoting Healthy Sleep Habits

- **Action:** Ensure your child gets sufficient sleep each night, following age-appropriate guidelines.
- **Research Evidence:** Adequate sleep is vital for cognitive functioning and learning. A study by Dewald et al. (2010) found that children who get enough sleep perform better academically and have better concentration and memory.

7. Providing a Nutritious Diet

- **Action:** Offer balanced meals and snacks that support your child's physical and cognitive development.
- **Research Evidence:** Nutrition plays a critical role in brain development and academic performance. Florence et al. (2008) found that students who consume a nutritious diet tend to have higher academic achievement and cognitive functioning.

8. Encouraging Physical Activity

- **Action:** Promote regular physical activity through sports, play, or family exercise routines.
- **Research Evidence:** Physical activity is linked to improved concentration and academic performance. A review by Fedewa and Ahn (2011) indicates that children who engage in regular physical activity show enhanced cognitive function and academic outcomes.

9. Supporting Emotional Well-being

- **Action:** Provide emotional support and encourage open communication about feelings and experiences.
- **Research Evidence:** Emotional well-being is crucial for academic success. A study by Roeser et al. (2000) suggests that students who feel emotionally supported at home are more motivated and engaged in school.

10. Participating in School Activities

- **Action:** Attend school events, parent-teacher conferences, and volunteer opportunities.
- **Research Evidence:** Active participation in school activities helps parents understand the school environment and fosters a sense of community. Henderson and Mapp (2002) found that parental involvement in school activities is associated with higher student achievement and better social skills.

Volunteering

Volunteer opportunities allow families to contribute to Wildflower New York Charter SchoolCharter School in important ways.

Volunteer opportunities include classroom materials making; cleaning and building/garden maintenance; event set-up and/or clean-up; food preparation for parent meetings or community celebrations; and others. Families will receive invitations for volunteer opportunities as they arise throughout the school year.

Parent Chaperoning

At our school, we value family involvement as an important part of our community. Parent and guardian volunteers play a meaningful role in supporting classroom experiences, field trips, and school events. To ensure the safety, consistency, and integrity of our learning environment, all individuals serving as chaperones must meet the following requirements:

1. Required Training

All parents/guardians must complete the school's designated chaperone training prior to volunteering. This training is mandatory and is designed to ensure that all volunteers understand:

Student safety expectations and supervision responsibilities
School policies and procedures
Confidentiality and professional boundaries
Montessori-aligned practices that support student independence and respect

Only individuals who have successfully completed this training will be permitted to serve as chaperones.

2. Clearance and Approval

Chaperones must be approved by the school administration before participating in any school activity. This may include completing necessary documentation, background checks (if applicable), and signing required agreements.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

Chaperones are expected to:

1. Actively supervise and support students at all times

2. Follow the guidance of the lead teacher and school staff
3. Maintain a respectful, calm, and supportive presence
4. Encourage student independence rather than direct intervention, in alignment with Montessori principles

4. Professional Conduct
While volunteering, chaperones must:

1. Maintain confidentiality regarding all students
2. Use appropriate language and behavior at all times
3. Avoid the use of personal devices except in emergencies or with staff permission
4. Refrain from disciplining students; concerns should be directed to school staff

5. Attendance and Commitment
Chaperones are expected to arrive on time and remain for the full duration of the activity. If a volunteer is unable to attend, advance notice should be provided to the school.

6. Compliance
Failure to complete required training or adhere to school expectations may result in removal from volunteer opportunities.

Parent Observation Policy

We are honored to welcome you into our classroom. Observation is a foundational practice in Montessori education—it allows us to truly see the child, understand their development, and appreciate the environment that supports their growth. Wildflower New York Charter School will open parent observation after 14 weeks of instruction and communicate with parents on the schedule via Brightwheel.

Why does observation matter?

In Montessori education, observation helps us understand:

- The child's interests and developmental needs
- How independence is nurtured at Wildflower New York Charter School
- The role of the environment in learning
- The balance between freedom and responsibility

Observation Guidelines:

In order to protect the children's concentration and respect the classroom community, we ask that you:

- Arrive on time for your scheduled observation
- Observe silently and limit conversation
- Do not interact with the children (no talking, waving, or assisting)
- Silence your phone and avoid photos or videos
- Remain in your designated observation area
- Do not share children's names or personal information
- Only one adult per scheduled observation (no children allowed)

Encouraging Positive Student Behavior, Behavior Intervention & Discipline

Restorative Justice

Restorative justice views misconduct as a violation against people and damaging to relationships that affect both individuals and the larger school community. It focuses on problem-solving through the expression of feelings and strategies to address problems in the future. In this model accountability is defined as understanding the impact of actions, taking responsibility for choices, and suggesting ways to repair harm to others and the community. Restorative justice practices at WNYCS include:

- Developing trusting and caring relationships between adults and students.
- Fostering skills in conflict resolution, such as listening, empathy, critical thinking, and self-control.
- Determining what has happened and why by asking questions and listening to answers.
- Maximizing student involvement in deciding how to resolve problems.
- Resolving problems with open-ended questions, exploring different responses, reflecting on motives, and allowing for disagreement.
- Assisting students in considering ways to make amends for misbehavior, such as replacing, repairing, cleaning, or apologizing.
- Following up to determine whether the problem was solved or more work needs to be done.
- Encouraging reflection.
- Allowing flexibility for different students, needs, and situations.
- Minimizing the punitive impact when control is necessary to repair the relationship and address underlying issues.

Conscious Discipline

To support classroom culture as described above, the Wildflower model includes an approach to student discipline known as Conscious Discipline. Conscious Discipline is a comprehensive classroom management program and a social-emotional curriculum based on current brain research, child development information, and developmentally appropriate practices. Because it organizes schools and classrooms around the concept of a School Family it marries well with the Montessori philosophy. It has been specifically designed to make changes in the lives of adults first.

The adults, in turn, change the lives of children. Each member of the family—both adult and child—learns the skills needed to successfully manage life tasks such as learning, forming relationships, communicating effectively, being sensitive to others' needs and getting along with others.

The seven basic skills of Conscious Discipline are:

1. Composure - Becoming the person you want your children to be
2. Encouragement - Building a school family
3. Assertiveness - Respectfully setting limits
4. Choices – Building self-esteem and willpower
5. Positive Intent - Creating teachable moments, turning conflict into cooperation
6. Empathy - Handling the fussing and the fits
7. Consequences - Helping children learn from their mistakes

These skills change how adults respond to conflict in such a way as to facilitate the development of the frontal lobes in children. Through the Powers and Skills, adults stay in control of themselves and in charge of children. As adults begin to change their attitudes and behaviors, so will the children in their care.

Code of Conduct

Based on the model of functional behavior assessment, WNYCS teacher leaders seek to understand the purpose of misbehavior in order to respond in constructive ways that both protect the learning environment and allow students to correct their behaviors. Consequences will never be merely a response to conflict and will never be used simply to make a teacher leaders' job easier or get a student or parent's attention. The goal is to make problem behavior less effective, efficient and relevant, and desired behavior more functional.

The creation of a safe, secure and supportive learning environment is critical to the mission of WNYCS. To that end, this Code of Conduct is designed to explain our approach to building a culture that respects each community member's right to learn and work and the consequences of breaching our community's trust. This Code of Conduct is designed to accomplish two things:

Accountability:
By joining WNYCS every student and teacher leader becomes responsible for the health of the community. This is best accomplished when everyone holds themselves accountable for their own behavior and takes accountability when their behavior negatively affects others or their own success.

Community Safety:
Teaching and learning requires a safe environment where every community member feels free to share his or her ideas in a productive and non-threatening manner. Everyone should feel physically, socially and emotionally safe at WNYCS. Focusing on the creation of strong relationships will enhance community

safety for all. Respect for ourselves and for the members and resources of our School community will be reflected in the actions of teacher leaders and students; and Integrity will be at the foundation of all decision-making processes.

Expectations for Adults:
WNYCS expects all stakeholders to commit to each other and the mission of the school.

Parents/Guardians/Person in Parental Relationship are Expected To:

1. Recognize that the education of their children is a joint responsibility of the parents and the school community.
2. Set an example of respecting the worth of other persons.
3. Send their children to school, on time, ready to participate and learn.
4. Ensure absences are excused for legal reasons only.
5. Help their children understand that in a democratic society appropriate rules are required to maintain a safe, orderly environment.
6. Know and support school rules and help their children understand them.
7. Cooperating with school officials when discipline is necessary.
8. Build good relationships with teachers, other parents and their children's friends.
9. Help their children deal effectively with peer pressure.
10. Inform teacher leaders of changes in the home situation that may affect student conduct or performance.
11. Provide a place for study and ensure homework assignments are completed.
12. Provide their current address and telephone number to the school and alternate/emergency contacts.
13. Attend conferences and meetings when requested.
14. Comply with all communication processes: e.g. notes, forms, consents, emergency cards, etc.
15. Use school computers, fax equipment, or other electronic devices, including personal electronic devices, appropriately

Teachers Leaders Are Expected To:

1. Receive ongoing training, in conscious discipline, restorative justice and culturally responsive/sustaining pedagogy, and anti-bias, and anti-racist training.
2. Maintain a climate of mutual respect and dignity, which will strengthen students' self-concept and promote confidence to learn.
3. Be prepared to guide/teach.
4. Demonstrate interest in teaching and concern for whole child wellbeing including student academic achievement and social emotional wellbeing.
5. Know school policies and rules and enforce them in a fair and consistent manner.

6. Establish positive classroom procedures and practices to support effective teaching and maximize student learning.
7. Communicate to students and parents: Montessori scope and sequence, testing requirements and state standards; Assessments and marking/grading procedures; Assignment deadlines; and Expectations for students.
8. Communicate regularly with students, parents and other teachers concerning growth and achievement.
9. Use school computers, fax equipment, or other electronic devices including personal electronic devices, appropriately.
10. Help their students understand that in a democratic society appropriate rules are required to maintain a safe and an orderly environment.
11. Resort to discipline only when all other avenues of behavior modification have been explored and a multidisciplinary team has assessed the context of the situation.
12. Build good relationships with teachers, parents guardians and their students.
13. Help their students deal effectively with peer pressure.
14. Schedule a conference when information has been received regarding changes in the home situation of a student that may affect student conduct or performance.

Student Disciplinary Code

Overview

While WNYCS is committed to being an environment where each student's freedom is respected and valued, there are certain non-negotiable rules that all students are expected
to abide by without exception. These include:

Physical Contact:

Fighting, play fighting and other inappropriate physical contact or threat of physical
contact or harm is not allowed and will not be tolerated. Students must learn to find better ways to solve disputes other than inappropriate physical means.

School Property:

All members of the school community must respect the shopfront in which they learn and
the personal property of others. Stealing, defacing, or breaking the property of the school is strictly prohibited.

Bullying:

All members of the community must feel safe, and bullying of any kind, including cyberbullying, is strictly prohibited.

Student Disciplinary Interventions

At WNYCS the purpose of discipline is to maintain a safe environment for learning to take place. Consequently, a range of interventions are available in consideration of the nature, frequency, and effects of the offense.

Self-Fixes:
Students will be taught strategies, such as de-escalation and calming techniques, for reflecting on behavior and given the opportunity to adjust it themselves with adult guidance.

Reparations:
Students will always be given the opportunity to address the harm they have caused, even if it appears only to affect themselves. Part of being a responsible member of a community is understanding that harming oneself harms the group. The nature of reparations will be at the discretion of the teacher leaders, but to the extent possible should involve the victim in discussion of the chosen remedy. Examples of reparations include replacing, fixing or cleaning damaged property; service or assistance to make up for lost learning time; or written or verbal apologies to the individual or group harmed or to the whole school community.

Conflict Resolution and Mediation:
WNYCS will provide students with time and space to resolve conflicts in productive manners using restorative justice practices. This may involve individuals or groups. Student involved in the conflict will engage in conflict resolution activities as an effective means to repair strains on relationships.

Exclusion:
WNYCS does not frequently employ suspension or expulsion as a means of discipline. The schools are designed and staffed to provide a range of supports to address any misbehavior that might disrupt learning or create an unsafe environment. Teacher leaders will play a primary role in addressing these behaviors and the school culture will reinforce Conscious Discipline (CD), Positive Behaviors Intervention and Support (PBIS) and Restorative Justice (RJ) approaches.

Levels of infraction, corresponding interventions and commensurate consequences are detailed in Appendix A: Levels of Infractions, Guidance, and Discipline, below.

Progressively more serious disciplinary consequences shall be imposed upon any student who repeatedly commits one or more disciplinary offenses. Repeated violations of the code of conduct, even for offenses not generally punishable by suspension or expulsion if committed on their own, may be punishable by suspension or expulsion when taken together with other offenses previously committed.

<u>Student Disciplinary Actions</u>

For purposes of this Code:

- "**Short-term suspension**" refers to the removal of a student from School for disciplinary reasons for a period of ten or fewer days;
- "**Long-term suspension**" refers to the removal of a student from School for disciplinary reasons for a period of more than ten days; and
- "**Expulsion**" refers to the permanent removal of a student from School for disciplinary reasons.

Alternative Instruction

Students may not be penalized academically during the suspension or removal period. Students are permitted to take any Internal, Citywide or State examinations that are administered during the period of their removals or suspensions for which no make-up examination is permitted by the testing authority, as well as to make up school examinations (e.g. assessments, midterms, finals), which may affect their academic records.

During the period of their removal or suspension, students will be provided with alternative instruction, which includes, but is not limited to, reflection assignment, class work and homework assignments. The instruction must provide the student with an opportunity to continue to grow academically, socially and emotionally and must be appropriate to the individual learning needs of the student. WNYCS will ensure that alternative instruction will include 120 minutes of live instruction, and will be designed to keep pace with regular class activities to meet grade-level graduation requirements.

Short Term Suspensions

WNYCS shall follow due process procedures consistent with Goss v. Lopez, 419 U.S. 565 (1975) for suspensions of 10 days or less. A decision to impose a short-term suspension may be challenged by the parent(s) or guardian in accordance with the charter school's complaint process, pursuant to Education Law § 2855(4).

If necessary, the student is immediately removed from class and/or school.

- The student is informed of the charges against him or her and will be given the opportunity to present the student's side of the matter.
- Upon determining that a student's behavior warrants a possible short-term suspension, the Teacher Leader will verbally inform the student that he or she is being suspended and state the reasons for this action.
- The parent/guardian is notified in writing by WNYCS. Written notice will be provided by personal delivery or express mail delivery to the student's last known address. Where possible, notification also shall be provided by email and/or telephone if the School has been provided with that contact information for the parent(s) or guardian(s). Such notice shall provide a description of the incident or incidents which resulted in the suspension. The notification provided shall be in the dominant language used by the parent(s) or guardian(s) if it is known to be other than English.

Long Term Suspensions

If a student commits an offense that calls for long-term suspension (more than 10 days) or expulsion, the following steps are taken:

- If necessary, the student is immediately removed from class and/or school.
- The student is informed of the charges against him or her and will be given the opportunity to present the student's side of the matter.
- Upon determining that a student's behavior warrants a possible long-term suspension, the Teacher Leader shall verbally inform the student that he or she is being suspended and is being considered for a long-term suspension (or expulsion) and state the reasons for such actions.
- The parent/guardian is notified in writing by WNYCS. Written notice shall be provided by personal delivery or express mail delivery to the student's last known address. Where possible, notification also shall be provided by email and/or by telephone if the School has been provided with that contact information for the parent(s) or guardian(s). Such notice shall provide a description of the incident or incidents which resulted in the suspension and shall indicate that a formal hearing will be held on the matter which may result in a long-term suspension (or expulsion). The notification provided shall be in the dominant language used by the parent(s) or guardian(s) if it is known to be other than English. The notice will state that at the formal hearing, the student shall have the right to be represented by counsel, present and question witnesses, and present evidence.
- The school sets a hearing date. The student and/or his/her parent/guardian are notified in writing of the charges and a statement of the evidence date, time and place of a hearing notice of the right at the hearing to be represented by legal counsel (at the student's/parent's own expense) present evidence and question witnesses.
- After the Teacher Leader, the Board or a hearing officer designated by either of them hears the case, the Teacher Leader or the Board issues a written decision to be sent to the student, the parent/guardian, the school's Board of Trustees, and the student's permanent record.
- The decision to impose a long-term suspension/expulsion upon a student may be challenged by the parent(s) or guardian in accordance with the charter school's complaint process, pursuant to Education Law § 2855(4).

NYCS will abide by the federal Gun-free Schools Act and its regulations (20 U.S.C. 7961) in any instances where a student brings a weapon to school prohibited under that Act. A firearm shall be defined as set forth in 18 USC 921(a), and shall be construed in a manner consistent with the IDEA. Violations of that law carry a penalty of a one-year mandatory suspension that can be modified by the Teacher Leader on a case-by-base basis in writing. Consistent with applicable law, the school will make referrals to an appropriate criminal justice or juvenile delinquency agency.

Student with Disabilities

Students with disabilities have the same rights and responsibilities as other students and may be disciplined for the same behavioral offenses using the same procedures described above. If a student identified as having a disability is

removed from his or her usual placement during the course of the school year for a total of eight days, such student will immediately be referred to the Committee on Special Education (CSE) of the student's district of residence for reconsideration of the student's educational placement. Such a student shall not be removed from placement for a total of more than 10 days during the school year without the specific involvement of the CSE of the student's district of residence prior to the 11th day of removal, because such removal may be considered to be a change in placement. If, upon review, it is determined that the student's behavior was not a manifestation of his or her disability, then the student may be removed in the same manner as a student without a disability, except as relates to the provision of services to students with disabilities during periods of removal. Parents may request a hearing to challenge the manifestation determination. Students for whom the Individualized Education Program (IEP) includes specific disciplinary guidelines (e.g., a Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA), Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP) or goals and objectives related to student behavior) will be disciplined in accordance with those guidelines.

Discipline of Students with Disabilities

Generally

Wildflower New York Charter School applies the same spirit of restorative vs. punitive justice and conscious vs. coercive discipline for students with disabilities as for other members of the learning community. In addition to the procedures applicable to all students, the following procedures are applicable to students with disabilities. A student not specifically identified as having a disability but that Wildflower New York Charter School, prior to the behavior which is the subject of the disciplinary action, has a basis of knowledge—in accordance with 34 CFR §300.534 —that a disability exists may request to be disciplined in accordance with these provisions. Wildflower New York Charter School will comply with sections §§300.530 through 300.536 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) and the following procedures, except that in the event that the following procedures are inconsistent with federal law and regulations, such federal law and regulations shall govern.

Wildflower New York Charter School shall maintain written records of all suspensions and expulsions of students with a disability including the name of the student, a description of the behavior engaged in, the disciplinary action taken, and a record of the number of days a student has been suspended or removed for disciplinary reasons.

It is Wildflower New York Charter School's intention to create intentionally restorative practices and partnerships across the learning community to prevent escalation to exclusionary practices like suspension. If a student identified as having a disability is suspended during the course of the school year for a total of eight days, such student will immediately be referred to the CSE of the student's district of residence for reconsideration of the student's educational placement. Such a student shall not be suspended for a total of more than ten days during the school year without the specific involvement of the CSE of the student's district of residence prior to the eleventh day of suspension, because such suspensions may be considered to be a change in placement.

In considering the placement of students referred because of disciplinary problems, the CSE of the student's district of residence is expected to follow its ordinary policies with respect to parental notification and involvement regarding:

1) The commission of an infraction by a student with a disability who has previously been suspended for the maximum allowable number of days.
2) The commission of any fraction resulting from the student's disability.

Provision of Services During Removal

As part of our value of *connection,* Wildflower New York Charter School will build relationships with families of all children, and communicate the community-wide expectations in student and family friendly language. Any student removed from the learning community for a period of fewer than ten days will receive all classroom assignments and a schedule to complete such assignments during the time of his or her suspension. Provisions will be made to permit a suspended student to make up assignments or assessments missed as a result of such suspension. Wildflower New York Charter School will also provide additional alternative instruction within the ten days and by appropriate means to assist the student, so that the student is given full opportunity to complete assignments and master curriculum, including additional instructions, phone assistance, computer instruction and/or home visits and one-on-one tutoring. WNYCS will ensure that alternative instruction includes 120 minutes of live instruction, and will be designed to keep pace with regular class activities and meet grade-level graduation requirements.

During any subsequent removal that, combined with previous removals equals ten or more school days during the school year, but according to the CSE does not constitute a change in placement, services must be provided to the extent determined necessary to enable the student to appropriately progress in the general curriculum and in achieving the goals of her IEP. In these cases, School personnel, in consultation with the student's special education teacher, will make the service determination.

During any removal for drug or weapons or serious bodily injury offenses for up to 45 days pursuant to 34 CFR §300.530(g), services will be provided to the extent necessary to enable the student to appropriately progress in the general curriculum and in achieving the goals of her IEP. These service determinations will be made by the CSE of the student's district of residence. The School will place students in interim alternative educational settings as directed by or with input from the CSE and consistent with the requirements of 34 CFR §300.530(g).

During any subsequent removal that does constitute a change in placement, but where the behavior has been determined by the CSE to not be a manifestation of the disability, the services will be provided to the extent necessary to enable the student to appropriately progress in the general curriculum and in achieving the goals of her IEP. The CSE of the student's district of residence will make the service determination.

Due Process

If discipline which would constitute a change in placement is contemplated for any student, the following steps will be taken: (1) not later than the date on which the decision to take such action is made, the parents of the student with a disability will be notified by the School of that decision and provided the procedural safeguards notice described in 34 CFR §300.504 and 300.530(h); and (2) the CSE and other qualified personnel will meet and review the relationship between the student's disability and the behavior subject to the disciplinary action (subject to CSE's availability).

If, upon review, it is determined that the student's behavior was not a manifestation of his or her disability, then the student may receive the same consequences through conscious discipline and restorative justice as a student without a disability, except as provided in 34 CFR §300.530(d), which relates to the provision of services to students with disabilities during periods of removal.

Parents may request a hearing to challenge the manifestation determination. Except as provided below, the student will remain in her current educational placement pending the determination of the hearing.

If a parent requests a hearing or an appeal to challenge the interim alternative educational setting or the manifestation determination resulting from a disciplinary action relating to dangerousness, weapons or drugs, the student shall remain in the interim alternative educational setting pending the decision of the hearing officer or until the expiration of the time period provided for in the disciplinary action, whichever occurs first, unless the parent and the School agree otherwise.

Dignity for All Students Act Policy

WNYCS will provide a safe and productive learning environment for all students. In accordance with the New York Dignity for All Students Act (DASA). WNYCS will promptly address all incidents of harassment and/or discrimination of students that impede students' ability to learn, including any form of bullying, cyber-bullying, taunting or intimidation. No student shall be subjected to harassment by employees or students on school property or at a school function and WNYCS reserves the right to discipline students, consistent with this Discipline Policy, who engage in harassment of students off of school property under circumstances where such off-campus conduct 1) affects the educative process; 2) actually endangers the health and safety of WNYCS students within the educational system; or 3) is reasonably believed to pose a danger to the health and safety of our students. This includes written and/or verbal harassment that materially and substantially disrupts the work and discipline of the school and/or which school leaders reasonably forecast as being likely to materially and substantially disrupt the work and discipline of the school.

Anti-Discrimination/Anti-Harassment

The community of Wildflower New York Charter School is committed to creating an environment free of bias, prejudice and harassment. The School specifically notes that any verbal, physical or visual harassment – based on an individual's race, color, religion, nationality, ancestry, age, physical or mental ability, marital status, medical condition, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, veteran status or any category protected by law – is incompatible with our norm of kindness and is not acceptable. Similarly, any behavior that has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment is strictly prohibited. Harassment may include epithets, slurs, stereotyping, threatening or intimidating acts, including acts purported to be 'pranks' or 'jokes', and written material that denigrates or shows hostility towards another community member in any of the above groups.

Reporting Responsibilities

All School employees are mandated to report suspected child abuse or neglect. We need not be sure that abuse/neglect is happening; it is enough to suspect it. In addition, employees are mandated to report suspected abuse in an "educational setting", meaning any school building or vehicle that is being used to transport students to school, or any school event.

Health, Safety & Security

Access to Student Records

Except for WNCYS teacher leaders, health personnel and local and state health department personnel, no third party shall have access to information in or from a student record without the specific, informed written consent of the parent or legal guardian of the student whose records are being requested. Any person, except for WNYCS's staff and specific local or state health department personnel, who request access to student records must follow WNYCS's FERPA policy and records request protocol. Please see Appendix B for WNYCS's FERPA policy and records request protocol. Note that submission of a request does not guarantee access to any part of a student's records.

Confidentiality Policy

All Wildflower New York Charter School employees are required to protect the confidentiality of any and all records containing information pertaining to students. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), and state privacy laws and regulations, protect the confidentiality of student records. Any disclosure by an employee of confidential student information requires the expressed consent of the person holding the Confidentiality Coordinator role, and must be permitted by law.

All records will be kept in a safe and locked location, and only individuals who are granted access for legitimate reasons will be permitted to see these records – with access determined by the person holding the Confidentiality

Coordinator role. In addition, employees with access to the social security numbers of school employees are required to keep this information confidential, except for legitimate business reasons.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

FERPA is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights, described below, transfer to the student when she or he reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students."

- Parents/Guardians or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents/guardians or eligible students to review the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies.

- Student records or other identifiable information are maintained in a secure location to ensure confidentiality. Records that are no longer required or that do not need to be maintained will be disposed of in a manner that ensures confidentiality and security.

- Parents/Guardians or eligible students have the right to request that a school correct records, which they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent/guardian or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent/guardian or eligible student has the right to place a statement within the record setting forth her or his view about the contested information.

- Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent/guardian or eligible student in order to allow anyone to review information from a student's education record or release any information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions:

    - School officials with legitimate educational interest;
    - Other schools to which a student is transferring;
    - Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
    - Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
    - Accrediting organizations;
    - Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
    - Accrediting organizations;
    - To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;

- Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
- State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law.

Schools may disclose, without consent, "directory" information such as a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However, schools must tell parents/guardians and eligible students about directory information and allow parents/guardians and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them. If you wish to keep your child's directory information confidential, please notify your child's Teacher Leader in writing. Schools must notify parents/guardians and eligible students annually of their rights under FERPA. The actual means of notification (special letter, inclusion in a PTA bulletin, student handbook, or newspaper article) is left to the discretion of each school.

For additional information on FERPA and accessing education records for students, please utilize these resources: Advocates for Children's Guide to Education Records, found here: http://www.advocatesforchildren.org/sites/default/files/library/school_records_guide.pdf?pt=1.

You may also contact the U.S. Department of Education for additional information or technical assistance by either calling (202) 260-3887 or TDD (202) 260-8956 or sending correspondence toFamily Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue. S.W., Washington, D.C. 20202-4605.

Freedom of Information Law (FOIL)

WNYCS complies with the New York State Freedom of Information Law (Article 6 of the New York Public Officers Law). This means certain school records can be made available to the public upon request because WNYCS is a publicly funded school. Copies of our school's FOIL Policy are available in the Teacher Leader's office. For more information about the process for requesting records please contact your child's Teacher Leader who serves as the school's Records Access Officer.

Parent's Right to Know

Parents may request, and WNYCS will provide in a timely manner, information regarding the professional qualifications of their child's classroom teachers, including, at a minimum, the following:

- Whether the teacher has met state qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction
- Whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which state qualification or licensing criteria have been waived.
- The baccalaureate degree major of the teacher and any other graduate certification or degree held by the teacher, including the field of discipline of the certification or degree

- Whether the child is provided services by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications

WNYCS shall provide to each individual parent/guardian:

- Information on the child's level of achievement in each of the state academic assessments as required under Title I
- Timely notice that the child has been taught for four or more consecutive weeks by a teacher who does not meet highly qualified requirements

Health and Wellness

An updated immunization and physical form (including up-to-date shots) is due at the beginning of each school year and immediately after a child's birthday for students in grades Pre-k, K, and 1. Students who have not been immunized or exempted will be barred from school after 14 days. WNYCS will immediately notify you if your child becomes sick or has an accident that requires medical attention. If your child is sent to the school nurse and it is determined that he/she has a fever, is contagious, or otherwise cannot remain in school for the remainder of the day, parents will be contacted to pick up their child as soon as possible. If your child is injured during the school day, a staff member will complete a Student Injury Report that will be kept on file at
school.

Parents may also request a copy of the report for their records. Parents should notify Teacher Leaders of ongoing medical issues that require special attention. Parents are responsible for notifying WNYCS of any allergies or medication that needs to be administered on a regular basis. This information will be relayed to Staff and Teachers Leaders, as well as the school nurse.

WNYCS is committed to providing the support necessary to students with asthma to ensure optimal health and safety during the school day and after school hours. WNYCS requires all families, staff and scholars to comply with the following asthma administration procedures:

1) Any WNYCS family that has a child with diagnosed asthma must submit an updated Medication Administration Form at the start of each school year. This form must indicate whether or not a child may self-administer asthma medication and must be signed by a medical professional. The Medication Administration Form will be kept on file in the nurse's office.

2) Any WNYCS family that has a child with diagnosed asthma must provide WNYCS with an asthma pump in its original packaging. WNYCS requests that families also provide a spacer and mask. Asthma pumps, spacers and masks will be stored in the nurse's office. WNYCS requires expired medication to be replaced immediately and for all medication to be labeled with the child's name and date prescribed.

In the case that a student has lice or other similar issues, the family affected will be notified immediately. Students found to have live head lice will be excluded from school and not allowed to return until they are lice-free. Students will be reexamined in 14 days to confirm that they have remained lice-free. Students with nits and no evidence of live head lice will not be excluded from school. If other families have the possibility of being affected, then WNYCS will send a notification home. WNYCS takes every effort to ensure the health and safety of all students.

WNYCS partners with 1332 Fulton Daycare to provide a school nurse to our students. We follow all regulations and procedures of the Department of Health. WNYCS is subject to DOH regulations, that all students must be up to date with their immunizations. It is mandated that each student renew their physical and immunizations before the beginning of each school year and upon their birthdays.

Procedures for Administration of Prescription and Non-Prescription Medications:
As part of the enrollment process, WNYCS requires each student who requires medication during the school day to provide an up-to-date, completed Medical Administration Form (MAF). This form must be returned to WNYCS at the beginning of the school year, if it has not been provided during the enrollment process. Without this form, students may not take medicine while in school. Only the school nurse may dispense over-the-counter medications such as acetaminophen (i.e., Tylenol), or ibuprofen (i.e., Advil), and only if there is an up-to-date MAF on file. In such cases, the school nurse will only distribute medicine to students with updated MAFs as called for by the MAFs submitted by/for those students. The school does not stock any cold remedies such as cough drops or vitamins. No student is permitted to carry any over-the-counter or prescription medications, including cough drops, on their person or in their school bag during the school day. Prescription inhalers for asthma and an injection of epinephrine for anaphylaxis are the exceptions to this rule; only students who are medically required to carry these medicines and who have an up-to-date, complete MAF may carry these medicines with them during the school day. WNYCS's nurse may store extra emergency medication for any student who requires such medicine during the school day. To store this medicine, the school requires an up-to-date, completed MAF on file. Parents/guardians should contact the school prior to arrival on the first day if they have any specific medical questions or their children have a condition that requires management at school. If a student requires prescription medication during the school day, such medication must be supplied by the student or her/his family, and will be dispensed per WNYCS's Medication Administration Plan.

First Aid:
In the event of any injury or illness, appropriate first aid will be administered by trained teacher(s)/staff. If the teacher(s)/staff decide this is an emergency situation, 911 will be contacted to provide emergency first aid. If necessary, the emergency medical service/ambulance will transport your child at your expense to a medical facility as designated by emergency services and/or the hospital you specified on the Emergency Contact List. A parent or alternate listed on the Emergency Contact list will be contacted as soon as possible. An attempt to contact your child's source of health care may also be made. Staff will not transport children.

Any questions or concerns about the school nurse should be directed to the following Teacher Leaders:

Mario Benabe
Primary School Leader
E. mario.benabe@wildflowernewyorkcharterschool
P. (718) 635-0474

Aura Cely
Elementary School Leader
E. aura@gloriaalstonclc.org
P. (718) 635-0474

Mandated Reporting, Child Abuse and Neglect

Under NY State law, the reporting of suspected physical abuse, sexual abuse and neglect are required of educational and health care professionals. All of WNYCS's staff members are mandated reporters and will comply with all applicable reporting laws. Abuse encompasses the most serious injuries and/or risk of serious injuries to children by their caregivers. An abused child is one whose parent or other person legally responsible for his or her care inflicts serious physical injury upon the child, creates a substantial risk of serious physical injury, or commits a sex offense against the child. Abuse also includes situations where a parent or other person legally responsible knowingly allows someone else to inflict such harm on a child. Maltreatment means that a child's physical, mental or emotional condition has been impaired, or placed in imminent danger of impairment, by the failure of the child's parent or other person legally responsible to exercise a minimum degree of care by:

- ❏ Failing to provide sufficient food, clothing, shelter, education; or
- ❏ Failing to provide proper supervision, guardianship, or medical care (refers to all medical issues, including dental, optometric, or surgical care); or
- ❏ Inflicting excessive corporal punishment, abandoning the child, or misusing alcohol or other drugs to the extent that the child was placed in imminent danger.
- ❏ Poverty or other financial inability to provide the above is not maltreatment.

All suspected cases of abuse or neglect are immediately documented and reported to the New York Statewide Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment (SCR). The Mandated Reporter line is (800) 635-1522 ; Public Hotline is (800) 342-3720 and For Abuse by Institutional Staff the line is (855) 373-2122.

Shared Space, Building Security, and Facilities Accessibility & Access for Visitors

Wildflower New York Charter School is co-located with 1332 Fulton Daycare at 1332 Fulton Avenue. The facility includes shared common areas such as an open rooftop learning environment (5,348 square feet) and a community space (2,400 square feet). WNYCS Teacher Leaders collaborate closely with the Heads of School at 1332 Fulton Daycare to coordinate the safe, organized, and purposeful use of these shared spaces.

The building has two designated entrances. The main entrance is located at the front of the building, and a secondary entrance on the left wing is fully wheelchair accessible for students, staff, and families. The site is staffed by full-time security personnel and is equipped with a smart technology video intercom system to monitor and control access to the building.

For the safety of all occupants, entry to the building is restricted to authorized staff, parents/guardians, and students. All visitors are required to sign in upon arrival, state the purpose of their visit, and remain in the lobby until escorted by a staff member from one of the micro-school sites.

Student dismissal procedures are designed to ensure safety and accountability. All students must be picked up by an authorized adult who is 18 years of age or older. Individuals picking up a child must present valid government-issued identification. Identification may be scanned and securely stored for emergency pickup authorization purposes. Only individuals listed on a student's approved pickup list will be permitted to sign out a child unless prior written authorization has been provided by a parent or guardian.

Families are responsible for ensuring that pickup arrangements are communicated clearly to the school. Any changes to authorized pickup individuals must be submitted in writing in advance. In the event of an emergency pickup, identification verification will be strictly enforced.

Additional expectations to support a safe and orderly environment include:

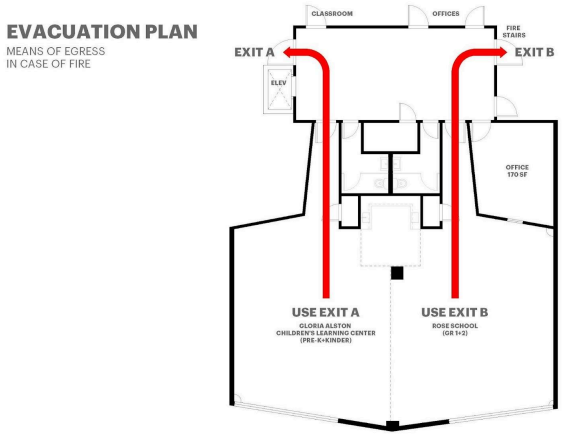
- Prompt arrival and pickup to avoid disruptions to the school day and dismissal process
- Adherence to all security procedures, including use of the intercom system
- Respect for shared spaces and coordination protocols established with 1332 Fulton Daycare
- Compliance with staff directions during arrival, dismissal, and movement throughout the building

Failure to follow these procedures may result in delays, additional verification steps, or restricted access to the building to ensure the safety of all students and staff.

Fire Safety and Evacuation Plan

Our site has a central fire alarm system connected directly to the FDNY. In the case of an emergency, school staff will assemble students in their rooms and proceed outof the building according to the fire evacuation plan (*see below*). The fire evacuation plan will be posted in each room. Students should follow the direction of staff members

who will verify the safety of the stairwells and lead students outside the building to the designated locations where school staff will line up students by multi-grade classrooms and take attendance.



APPENDIX A: Levels of Infractions, Guidance and Discipline

Level 1

INFRACTIONS – UNCOOPERATIVE/ NONCOMPLIANT BEHAVIOR	GUIDANCE INTERVENTIONS	RANGE OF POSSIBLE DISCIPLINARY RESPONSES TO BE USED IN ADDITION TO GUIDANCE INTERVENTIONS
1. Unexcused absence from school 2. Being late for school or class 3. Bringing items to or using items in school in violation of school policy 4. Behaving in a manner which disrupts the educational process (e.g., making excessive noise in a one-roomed shopfront, library or hallway) 5. Engaging in verbally rude or disrespectful behavior 6. Posting or distributing material on school premises in violation of written school policy and/or school rules 7. Using school computers, fax machines, telephones or other electronic equipment or devices without appropriate permission	• Parent outreach • Intervention by counseling staff • Guidance conference(s) • Restorative Approaches • Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) • Individual/group counseling • Peer mediation • Mentoring program • Conflict resolution • Collaborative problem solving • Development of individual behavior contract • Short-term behavioral progress reports • Community service (with parental consent) • Referral to a Community-Based Organization (CBO) • Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA)/Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP)	A. Admonishment by pedagogical school staff B. Student/teacher conference C. Reprimand by teacher leaders D. Parent conference E. In-school disciplinary action (e.g., formal restorative conference, detention, community separation, exclusion from extracurricular activities, or communal lunchtime) F. Removal from classroom by teacher (After a student is removed from any classroom by any teacher three times during a semester, a suspension must be sought if the student engages in subsequent behavior that would otherwise result in a removal by a teacher.) G. Temporary removal from recess

Level 2

INFRACTIONS – DISORDERLY	GUIDANCE INTERVENTIONS	RANGE OF POSSIBLE

BEHAVIOR		DISCIPLINARY RESPONSES TO BE USED IN ADDITION TO GUIDANCE INTERVENTIONS
8. Smoking and /or use of electronic cigarettes and/or possession of matches or lighters 9. Gambling 10. Using profane, obscene, vulgar, or lewd language, gestures, or behavior 11. Lying to, giving false information to, and/or misleading school personnel 12. Misusing property belonging to others 13. Engaging in or causing disruptive behavior on the school bus 14. Inappropriate use of electronic technology (e.g., unauthorized audio/video recording) 15. Leaving or running out of class or school premises without permission of supervising school personnel	● Parent outreach ● Intervention by counseling staff/teacher leader ● Guidance conference(s) ● Restorative Approaches ● Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) ● Individual/group counseling ● Peer mediation ● Mentoring program ● Conflict resolution ● Collaborative problem solving ● Development of individual behavior contract ● Short-term behavioral progress reports ● Community service (with parental consent) ● Referral to a Community-Based Organization (CBO) ● Referral to appropriate substance abuse counseling services ● Referral to counseling services for youth relationship abuse or sexual violence ● Referral to counseling services for bias-based bullying, intimidation, or harassment ● Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA)/Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP)	A. Admonishment by pedagogical school staff B. Student/teacher leader conference C. Reprimand by teacher leader D. Parent conference E. In-school disciplinary action (e.g., formal restorative conference, detention, exclusion from extracurricular activities, community separation or communal lunchtime) F. Removal from classroom by teacher (After a student is removed from any classroom by any teacher three times during a semester, a suspension must be sought if the student engages in subsequent behavior that would otherwise result in a removal by a teacher.) G. Temporary removal from recess

Level 3

INFRACTIONS – DISRUPTIVE		
	serious physically aggressive behavior, see 30)	or part, the contents of an unadministered assessment; substituting for another student or

BEHAVIOR

16. Defying or disobeying the lawful authority or directive of school personnel or school safety agents in a way that substantially disrupts the educational process and/or poses a danger to the school community (this behavior does not include Level 1 or 2, uncooperative/ noncompliant or disorderly behavior, such as using profane language, 11; or bringing prohibited items to school, 3)

17. Entering or attempting to enter a school building without authorization or through an unauthorized entrance

18. Using slurs based upon actual or perceived race, ethnicity, color, national origin, citizenship/ immigration status, weight, religion, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, or disability

19. Shoving, pushing, hitting, biting or engaging in an altercation or similar physical confrontational behavior towards students or school personnel (e.g., pushing past another person), or throwing an object (e.g., chalk) or spitting at another person (for more

20. Bringing unauthorized persons

to school or allowing unauthorized visitors to enter school in violation of written school rules

21. Tampering with, changing or altering a record or document of a school by any method, including, but not limited to, computer access or other electronic means

22. ***Engaging in vandalism, or other intentional damage to school property or property belonging to staff, students or others

23. Knowingly possessing property belonging to another without authorization

24. Violating the school's Internet Use Policy (e.g., use of the school's system for non-educational purposes, security/privacy violations)

25. Engaging in scholastic dishonesty which includes

but is not limited to:

a. Cheating (e.g., copying from another's work; using material during an assessment which is not authorized by the person giving the assessment; collaborating with another student during the assessment without authorization; knowingly using, buying, selling, stealing, transporting, or soliciting, in whole

permitting another student to substitute for one's self to take an assessment; bribing another person to obtain an assessment that is to be administered; or securing copies of the assessment or answers to the assessment in advance of the assessment)b. Plagiarizing (appropriating another's work and using it as one's own for credit without the required citation and attribution, e.g., copying written work from the Internet, or any other source)

c. Colluding (engaging in fraudulent collaboration with another person in preparing written work for credit)

26. Posting or distributing libelous material or literature (including posting such material on the Internet)

GUIDANCE INTERVENTIONS

- Parent outreach
- Intervention by counseling staff
- Guidance conference(s)
- Restorative Approaches
- Referral to counseling services for bias-based bullying, intimidation, or harassment
- Functional Behavioral Assessment

D. Parent conference

E. In-school disciplinary action

(e.g., formal restorative conference, detention, exclusion from extracurricular activities,

- Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)
- Individual/group counseling
- Peer mediation
- Mentoring program
- Conflict resolution
- Collaborative problem solving
- Development of individual behavior contract
- Short-term behavioral progress reports
- Community service (with parental consent)
- Referral to a Community-Based Organization (CBO)
- Referral to appropriate substance abuse counseling services
- Referral to counseling services for youth relationship abuse or sexual violence

(FBA)/Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP)

- Supports for Students Transitioning from Suspension: WNYCS must provide appropriate support services to students returning from suspension to maximize their ability to meet social and academic standards within the school community. Support services may include any of the range of guidance interventions or a combination of services as best meets the needs of the individual student

RANGE OF POSSIBLE DISCIPLINARY RESPONSES TO BE USED IN ADDITION TO GUIDANCE INTERVENTIONS

A. Admonishment by pedagogical school staff

B. Student/teacher leader conference

C. Reprimand by teacher leader

community separation or communal lunchtime)

F. Removal from classroom by teacher (After a student is removed from any classroom by any teacher three times during a semester, a suspension must be sought if the student engages in subsequent behavior that would otherwise result in a removal by a teacher.)

G. Temporary removal from recess

F. Short Term Suspension for 1-10 days

Level 4

INFRACTIONS – AGGRESSIVE OR INJURIOUS/HARMFUL BEHAVIOR

27. Engaging in sexual conduct on school premises or at school-related functions (D-I only)

28. Making sexually suggestive comments, innuendos,

32. **Engaging in or causing disruptive behavior on the school bus which creates a substantial risk of or results in injury

33. Engaging in harassing, intimidating and/or bullying behavior, including using electronic communication to engage in such behavior (cyber-bullying); such

seeking to coerce or compel a student or staff member to do something; hazing; taunting; exclusion from peer groups designed to humiliate or isolate; using derogatory language or making derogatory jokes or name calling to humiliate or harass.

34. Possessing controlled substances or prescription medications without appropriate authorization, illegal drugs,

propositions or similar remarks, or engaging in non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature (e.g., touching, patting, pinching, lewd or indecent public behavior, or sending or posting sexually suggestive messages or images)

29. Posting, distributing, displaying, or sharing literature or material containing a threat of violence, injury or harm, or depicting violent actions against or obscene, vulgar or lewd pictures of students or staff, including posting such material on the Internet

30. Engaging in physically aggressive behavior other than minor alterations as described under 19, which creates a substantial risk of or results in minor injury

31. Engaging in an act of coercion or threatening or instigating violence, injury or harm to another or others

behavior includes, but is not limited to: physical violence; stalking; verbal, written, or physical conduct that threatens another with harm; seeking to coerce or compel a student or staff member to do something; hazing; taunting; exclusion from peer groups designed to humiliate or isolate; using derogatory language or making derogatory jokes or name calling to humiliate or harass.

Engaging in harassing, intimidating and/or bullying behavior, including using electronic communication to engage in such behavior (cyber-bullying) based on an individual's actual or perceived race, weight, religion, religious practices, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, or disability; such behavior includes, but is not limited to: physical violence; stalking; verbal, written, or physical conduct that threatens another with harm;

synthetic hallucinogens, drug paraphernalia, and/or alcohol

35. Falsely activating a fire alarm or other disaster alarm

36. Making a bomb threat

37. Taking or attempting to take

property belonging to another or belonging to the school without authorization, without using force or intimidating behavior. (D-J only)

38. Creating a substantial risk of serious injury by either recklessly engaging in behavior, and/

or using an object that appears capable of causing physical injury (e.g., lighter, belt buckle, umbrella, or laser pointer) (D-M)

39. Causing a serious injury by either recklessly engaging in behavior, and/or using an object that appears capable of causing physical injury (e.g., lighter,

belt buckle, umbrella, or laser

pointer)

40. Inciting/causing a riot (G-M

only)

41. **Possessing or selling any weapon

42. Using controlled substances or prescription medication without appropriate authorization, or using illegal drugs, synthetic hallucinogens, and/or alcohol.

GUIDANCE INTERVENTIONS

- Parent outreach
- Intervention by counseling staff
- Guidance conference(s)
- Restorative Approaches
- Referral to counseling services for bias-based bullying, intimidation, or harassment
- Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA)/Behavioral

community separation or communal lunchtime)

F. Removal from classroom by teacher (After a student is removed from any classroom by any teacher three times during a semester, a

- Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)
- Individual/group counseling
- Peer mediation
- Mentoring program
- Conflict resolution
- Collaborative problem solving
- Development of individual behavior contract
- Short-term behavioral progress reports
- Community service (with parental consent)
- Referral to a Community-Based Organization (CBO)
- Referral to appropriate substance abuse counseling services
- Referral to counseling services for youth relationship abuse or sexual violence

Intervention Plan (BIP)

- Supports for Students Transitioning from Suspension: WNYCS must provide appropriate support services to students returning from suspension to maximize their ability to meet social and academic standards within the school community. Support services may include any of the range of guidance interventions or a combination of services as best meets the needs of

the individual student

RANGE OF POSSIBLE DISCIPLINARY RESPONSES TO BE USED IN ADDITION TO GUIDANCE

INTERVENTIONS

D. Parent conference

E. In-school disciplinary action

(e.g., formal restorative conference, detention, exclusion from extracurricular activities,

suspension must be sought if the student engages in subsequent behavior that would otherwise result in a removal by a teacher.)

G. Short Term Suspension for 1-10 days

H. Suspension that results in immediate reinstatement

I. Long Term Suspension

M. Expulsion

Level 5

INFRACTIONS – SERIOUSLY DANGEROUS OR VIOLENT BEHAVIOR

43. Starting a fire

44. Threatening to use or using force to take or attempt to take property belonging to another

45. Using force against, or inflicting or attempting to inflict serious

school personnel, students, or others

54. **Using any weapon, other than a firearm, to inflict injury upon school personnel, students, or

others

55. **Possessing or using a firearm

- Referral to counseling services for youth relationship abuse or sexual violence
- Referral to counseling services for bias-based bullying, intimidation, or harassment
- Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA)/Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP)

injury against school personnel

46. Using extreme force against or inflicting or attempting to inflict serious injury upon students or others

47. Planning, instigating, or participating with another or others, in an incident of group violence

48. *Engaging in threatening, dangerous or violent behavior that is gang-related

49. Engaging in physical sexual aggression/compelling or forcing another to engage in sexual activity

50. Selling or distributing illegal drugs or controlled substances and/or alcohol

51. Possessing or selling any weapon, other than a firearm

52. Using any weapon to threaten or to attempt to inflict injury upon school personnel, students, or others

53. **Using any weapon, other than a firearm, to threaten or to attempt to inflict injury upon

GUIDANCE INTERVENTIONS

- Parent outreach
- Intervention by counseling staff
- Guidance conference(s)
- Restorative Approaches
- Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)
- Individual/group counseling
- Peer mediation
- Mentoring program
- Conflict resolution
- Collaborative problem solving
- Development of individual behavior contract
- Short-term behavioral progress reports
- Community service (with parental consent)
- Referral to a Community-Based Organization (CBO)
- Referral to appropriate substance abuse counseling services
- Supports for Students Transitioning from Suspension: WNYCS must provide appropriate support services to students returning from suspension to maximize their ability to meet social and academic standards within the school community. Support services may include any of the range of guidance interventions or a combination of services as best meets the needs of the individual student

RANGE OF POSSIBLE DISCIPLINARY RESPONSES TO BE USED IN ADDITION TO GUIDANCE INTERVENTIONS

I. Long Term Suspension

j. Expulsion

Appendix B: FERPA Policy and Records Request Protocol

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

FERPA is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights, described below, transfer to the student when she or he reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students."

- Parents/Guardians or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents/guardians or eligible students to review the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies.

- Student records or other identifiable information are maintained in a secure location to ensure confidentiality. Records that are no longer required or that do not need to be maintained will be disposed of in a manner that ensures confidentiality and security.

- Parents/Guardians or eligible students have the right to request that a school correct records, which they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent/guardian or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent/guardian or eligible student has the right to place a statement within the record setting forth her or his view about the contested information.

- Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent/guardian or eligible student in order to allow anyone to review information from a student's education record or release any information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions:

    - School officials with legitimate educational interest;
    - Other schools to which a student is transferring;
    - Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
    - Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
    - Accrediting organizations;
    - Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
    - Accrediting organizations;
    - To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
    - Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
    - State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law.

Schools may disclose, without consent, "directory" information such as a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However, schools must tell parents/guardians and eligible students about directory information and allow parents/guardians and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them. If you wish to keep your child‘s directory information confidential, please notify your child’s Teacher Leader in writing. Schools must notify parents/guardians and eligible students annually of their rights under FERPA. The actual means of notification (special letter, inclusion in a PTA bulletin, student handbook, or newspaper article) is left to the discretion of each school.

For additional information on FERPA and accessing education records for students, please utilize these resources: Advocates for Children's Guide to Education Records, found here: http://www.advocatesforchildren.org/sites/default/files/library/school_records_guide.pdf?pt=1.

You may also contact the U.S. Department of Education for additional information or technical assistance by either calling (202) 260-3887 or TDD (202) 260-8956 or sending correspondence toFamily Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue. S.W., Washington, D.C. 20202-4605.
Freedom Of Information Law (FOIL): WNYCS complies with the New York State Freedom of Information Law (Article 6 of the New York Public Officers Law). This means certain school records can be made available to the public upon request because WNYCS is a publicly funded school.

Denial of Access to Records

(a) The school may deny requests to access records or portions thereof as contemplated by the Public Officers Law, including, but not limited to, §87(2) thereof.

(b) Any person denied access to records may appeal within 30 days of a denial.

(c) Denial of access to records shall be in writing, state the reason therefore and advise the requester of the right to appeal to the Teacher Leader. The appeal shall be addressed to:

Wildflower New York Charter SchoolCharter School
1332 Fulton Avenue
Bronx, NY 10456
(718) 635-0474

(d) If requested records are not provided promptly, such failure shall also be deemed a denial of access.

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[1] For additional information on FERPA and accessing education records for students, please utilize these resources: Advocates for Children's Guide to Education Records, found here: http://www.advocatesforchildren.org/sites/default/files/library/school_records_guide.pdf?pt=1.
You may also contact the U.S. Department of Education for additional information or technical assistance by either calling (202) 260-3887 or TDD (202) 260-8956 or sending correspondence to Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue. S.W., Washington, D.C. 20202-4605.

Appeal Process for Denial of Access to Records

(a) The Teacher Leader shall determine appeals regarding denial of access to records under the Freedom of Information Law.

(b) Any person denied access to records may appeal within 30 days of a denial.

(c) The time for the Teacher Leader to decide an appeal shall commence upon receipt by the Teacher Leader of a written appeal identifying:

I. The date and location of requests for records;
II. A description, to the extent possible, of the records that were denied; and
III. The name and return address of the person denied access.

(d) A failure to determine an appeal within ten business days of its receipt by granting access to the records sought or fully explaining the reasons for further denial in writing shall constitute a denial of the appeal.

(e) The Teacher Leader shall transmit to the Committee on Open Government copies of all appeals upon receipt of appeals. Such copies shall be addressed to:

Committee on Open Government
Department of State One Commerce Plaza
99 Washington Avenue, Suite 650
Albany, NY 12231

(f) The Teacher Leader shall inform the appellant and the Committee on Open Government of its determination in writing within ten business days of receipt of an appeal. The determination shall be transmitted to the Committee on Open Government in the same manner as set forth in subdivision (e) of this section.

Copies of our school‘s FOIL Policy are available in the Teacher Leader’s office. For more information about the process for requesting records please contact your child‘s Teacher Leader who serves as the school‘s Records Access Officer.

Procedure for Accessing Student Records

1. A parent/guardian of a WNYCS student or an eligible student who attends WNYCS may request to review her or his child’s student file or, in the case of eligible students, her or his own file. Such records will be made available to parents/guardians or eligible students within 45 calendar days of the day WNYCS receives a written request for access.

2. WNYCS may deny access to requested records or portions thereof as contemplated by the Public Officers Law, including, but not limited to, §87(2) thereof. Denial of access to records shall be in writing, state the reason therefore, and advise the requester of the right to appeal to the Teacher Leader. Such appeals shall be addressed to:

Wildflower New York Charter SchoolCharter School
1332 Fulton Avenue
Bronx, NY 10456
(718) 635-0474

3. WNYCS shall have the authority to redact portions of a paper record, and may do so prior to disclosure of the record by making a photocopy from which the proper redactions are made. Please note that WNYCS will not disclose any information from a student's permanent record except as authorized pursuant to the Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act, in response to a subpoena as required by law or as may otherwise be permitted under the law. The parents or guardians of a student who is not an eligible student are, or an eligible student is, entitled to access to the student's school records by submitting a written request to the Teacher Leader.

4. To request copies of student records for inspection, parents/guardians or eligible students must complete and submit to the Teacher Leader a Student Record Access, Review, Amendment Form. The request must identify the record(s) desired for review.

5. The Teacher Leader will review the request and determine whether to release the information to the requestor. Except as required or permitted by law, if the requestor is not a parent/guardian or eligible student, then the parent/guardian of the student whose information is being requested or eligible student whose information is being requested must also complete and submit a Consent for Release of Student Information form before any information is released.

6. If the request is approved, the Teacher Leader will then make arrangements to copy or provide access to records, and to notify the parent, guardian, eligible student or other requestor of the time and place where the records may be inspected. For records that include information on more than one student, a parent, guardian or eligible student will be limited to reviewing information pertaining only to that student.

7. Once permission is granted to review a student's file, the requestor must sign the Record of Access form in the student folder. If a student has an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), the requestor must also sign the Confidential File Access Log form in the student folder.

Procedure to Amend or Appeal Student Records

1. If a parent, guardian, or eligible student believes the education records relating to the student contain information that is inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of the student's right to privacy, the parent, guardian, or eligible student may ask that the record be amended. Parents, guardians or eligible students must send the request for amendment in writing to the Teacher Leader using the Student Record Access, Review, Amendment form. If necessary, additional pages may be added to the form to provide additional room to explain the requested amendment. At minimum, the written request for amendment must contain the following:

    a. Date of request for amendment;

    b. Description of the information that is claimed to be inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of the student's privacy rights;

    c. Specific indication of the records in which the parent/guardian or eligible student believes the information is contained;

    d. Brief explanation of the basis for the claim (i.e., why she or he believes the information is inaccurate, etc.);

    e. The parent's, guardian's, or eligible student's proposed change(s).

2. The Teacher Leader will then review the request.

3. The Teacher Leader will review the request and make a determination within 15 school days of the school receiving the letter. The Teacher Leader will provide the parent, guardian or eligible student with a written response to the request and explain the reason for her/his decision. If an amendment is warranted, the school may decide to remove, modify, or expunge the contested information in the record. Removing, modifying, or expunging an entry shall not constitute an admission that the entry was improper or that any school employee acted improperly by including the entry in a student's record.

4. If the request is denied or no ruling is made in the allotted time, the parent, guardian or eligible student has the right to appeal the decision to WNYCS's Board of Trustees within 20 school days of the Teacher Leader's decision or failure to rule. In the case of such an appeal, the NYS Charter Schools Act gives the power to hear such complaints to the school's Board of Trustees, though the Board of Trustees may delegate that power to another party.

5. A hearing will be held within 20 school days after the parent, guardian or eligible student files the request with the Board in writing, and the parent, guardian or eligible student will be given sufficient advance notice of date, place, and time of the hearing.

6. At the hearing, the parent, guardian or eligible student will be given the opportunity to present her/his appeal to the Board or Board-appointed person or group and may be assisted or represented by individuals of her or his choice and at her or his own expense. The decision that results from this appeal process will be based solely on the evidence presented at the hearing. The decision resulting from this hearing will be final.
7. A written report containing a summary of the evidence and the reasons for the decision will be issued within 14 calendar days from the conclusion of the hearing. If necessary, the Board or Board-appointed person or group will direct the Teacher Leader to amend the records accordingly and inform the parent, guardian or eligible student of the amendment in writing.

8. If the parent, guardian or eligible student does not agree with the decision, the parent, guardian or eligible student has the right to place a written statement in the student's record commenting on the contested information or stating why she or he disagrees with the decision of the Board or Board-appointed person or group, or both.

9. If, after following the above-described process and allowing a reasonable amount of time for responses from the school, its Board of Trustees, and the Board-appointed person or group, the person requesting the amendment or lodging the appeal is not satisfied with the response to their request for amendment of a student record, the person may appeal to WNYCS's authorizer.
   State University of New York Charter School Institute per the process described here:
   https://www.newyorkcharters.org/wp-content/uploads/Complaints-Guidance-1.pdf

10. If a parent, guardian or eligible student has any questions regarding the procedure for accessing student records, please contact WNYCS at (718) 635-0474

Consent for Release of Student Information form

Dear Parent/Guardian/Eligible Student:

The person/group noted below has requested access to education records related to your daughter/son. To protect her/his privacy and in order to comply with the requirements of the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), Wildflower New York Charter SchoolCharter School (WNYCS) requires your permission to provide access to or copy the educational records listed below and provide the party named below with an appointment to review those documents or receive copies those documents. Please note that you are under no obligation to release these records to any person or group requesting access to your child's educational information. If, after reviewing the information in the request, you agree to release the documents named below from your child's records to the person or group named below, **please sign the bottom of this form and return it to WNYCS's Teacher Leader.** You may request a copy of this signed form for your records.

Requestor information:

Name of Requestor: _____ Student Name: _____

Education records being requested (use the back of this form for additional space):

(1) _____
(2) _____
(3) _____

Purpose of the records (to be completed by the requestor):

_____
_____
_____

By signing below, I consent to the release of the above-noted education records for my child to the above-noted person/group.

_____ _____
Parent/Guardian/Eligible Student Name (print) Date

_____ _____
Parent/Guardian/Eligible Student Name (Signature) Date

Student Record Access, Review, Amendment Form

I am applying for:

____ Access to student records
(visual inspection only, no copies)
____ Copies of student records
____ Amendment of selected student records

WNYCS staff member receiving this form:

_____
(Name)

_____
(Date)

By submitting this request, I affirm that I understand that submission of this request is no guarantee of approval of such a request. I also affirm that I have received a copy of, and that this request is subject to, WNYCS's FERPA policy, WNYCS's Procedure for Accessing Student Records, and WNYCS's Procedure to Amend or Appeal Student Records.

To request access to or copies of student records, please provide the following information:	
Name of person requesting access, copies, or amendment of student records	
Name of student whose records are being requested	
Relationship of requestor to student	
Purpose of request	

To request an amendment of student records, please provide the following information:	
Date of amendment request	
Identify the record to be amended	
Describe the requested amendment	

Appendix C: WNYCS Complaint Policy

Complaint Policy

Wildflower New York Charter School (WNYCS) is committed to maintaining a strong partnership and ongoing dialogue between its teachers, staff, students and families. WNYCS complaint policy is in accordance to New York State Education Law § 2855(4), which is part of the New York Charter Schools Act of 1998 (as amended, the "Act"). The Act provides a parent, as well as any other individual or entity (such as a contractor, employee or school district), who believes that a charter school has violated a term of its charter or any applicable law, an opportunity to make a formal complaint to the charter school education corporation's board of trustees to seek relief. The Executive Committee of the Board will consider any formal complaints brought to the Board.

The process for bringing a concern to the Board's Executive Committee will be as follows:

I. A parent, guardian, employee, individual or organization (i.e. the complainant) may bring a concern to a member of the school administration in the form of an informal complaint. It is not necessary for a complainant to make an informal complaint before bringing a formal concern to the Board of Trustees. Informal complaints may be brought first to the Principal, Director of Operations, a teacher or, in the case of employees, to an immediate supervisor. Informal complaints will be documented by the person who received and/or acted upon the complaint and, on request by the
complainant, the decision or resolution will be in writing.

II. If the complainant is not satisfied with the response to the informal complaint—or if the complainant elects to bring a formal complaint to the Board without first seeking an informal resolution—then the complainant will put the concern in writing and send or give it to the lead Teacher Leader at his or her work address, who will forward it to members of the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees.

III. The Executive Committee will send a written acknowledgement of receipt of complaint within five business days of receiving the complaint.

IV. The Executive Committee will investigate the concern and respond to the complainant in writing. The Executive Committee will provide the Board of Trustees with a report at the next Board of Trustees meeting or the meeting thereafter.

V. The Executive Committee will respond in writing with a decision regarding any written complaint they receive within 45 business days from receipt of the complaint.

Upon resolution of a complaint, Wildflower New York Charter School will provide to the complainant:

- Its written determination and any remedial action thereto;
- A written notice to the complainant that he or she may appeal the determination of the school to the Board of Trustees of the State University of New York (SUNY Trustees); and
- A copy of the SUNY Trustees' Grievance Guidelines (as they are posted on the website of the SUNY Charter Schools Institute, http://www.newyorkcharters.org/contact/)

Appeal of Decision

Appeals of decisions made by the Wildflower New York Charter School Board of Trustees may be made first to the SUNY Trustees via the SUNY Charter Schools Institute and then to the Board of Regents through the New York State Education Department. Only decisions regarding formal complaints can be appealed to the SUNY Trustees. Both the SUNY Charter Schools Institute and the Board of Regents can issue school remedial orders to remedy complaints. A copy of this Complaint Policy will be distributed to the parents and/or guardians of students and made readily available to all others requesting a copy in the School's main office, and will also be provided to the Trustees.

Formal Complaints vs. Informal Complaints

Formal Complaints:

A formal complaint involves an alleged violation of the law generally, the Act or of the education corporation's charter including its provisional charter or certificate of incorporation.

Informal Complaints:

Many types of complaints do not involve violations of law or the charter; rather, they are informal complaints. Informal complaints will be handled by school staff, not by Wildflower New York Charter School's board of trustees. Unlike the formal complaint process, a multi-tiered review process is acceptable for informal complaints. For example, an informal complaint may be handled in the first instance by a teacher, then a director, and then the principal.

The following instances are examples of informal complaints:

- "Michael pulls my daughter's hair. Can't she move seats?"
- "I have a health and safety concern at the school."
- "I think my child deserves a better grade in their class."

Family Handbook Acknowledgment Form

I acknowledge that I have received and thoroughly read the Family Handbook. I understand the policies, procedures, and expectations outlined within and agree to abide by them.

I understand that it is my responsibility to stay informed of any updates or changes to the handbook throughout the year.

If I have any questions or need clarification, I will contact the school for further information.

Child's Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

Second Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

Thank you for your partnership and support.