



The Exploris™ School

Empowering Learners to Improve Our World

2023-2024

FAMILY & STUDENT HANDBOOK

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Elementary Campus**

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Section 1: Introduction to The Exploris School

Our History

Exploris opened as one of the first public charter schools in North Carolina in 1997. The school was attached to the Exploris Museum, an interactive museum with an international focus, and enrolled 53 sixth-grade students from Wake and Johnston counties in its first year and subsequently grew to a sixth through eighth grade middle school. As a Global Education school, its early mission was to help people of all ages learn to respect their differences and appreciate their similarities. Exploris was heralded as an adolescent-centered, self-directed learning environment that engaged students actively, taking an integrated approach to learning using major themes and projects. From its inception, the school sought to provide a nurturing and respectful atmosphere with high expectations for all learners. Keeping Exploris's mission at the forefront, the school expanded in YEAR to include elementary students in grades K - 5.

Exploris fosters a collaborative, real-world, approach to curriculum design and implementation. Using national and state standards as a jumping-off point, teachers work together to create a compelling lens that drives the development of content and skills. Teachers seek out university, governmental, and industry partnerships that add to the content-knowledge delivered to students. From these experts, teachers also learn of current, complex issues that help to contextualize student learning and make it relevant for students. By tackling current issues and working with experts to brainstorm solutions, students understand that they have something to offer the world. The work of Exploris students matters today.

Gone are the ringing bells, rows of desks, and fill-in-the-blank worksheets. For most of the day, students and teachers are engaged in challenging learning experiences that explore a topic or theme in depth. Their studies call for intellectual inquiry, physical exploration, and community service. On any given day, these explorations may take them outside the school building to do environmental research, conduct interviews in local businesses, or carry out other fieldwork assignments. Students work individually, in small groups, and as a member of their "crew" or class. Together they learn to draw on the strengths of a whole class.

Our Mission

The Exploris School is a diverse learning community that engages students in challenging, relevant, relationship-based education. Through experiential, project-based learning we empower students to foster a just and sustainable world.

Our Vision

Empowering learners to improve our world.

Core Values

Exploris has been serving students in the downtown Raleigh community for over 20 years and is committed to growing our school in size and diversity to expand support and opportunity for all students. Our educational program is built around 4 core pillars: Global Education, Project-Based Learning, Co-Teaching, and Responsive Classroom. The articulation of our core values ground the school in our educational approach and community partnerships.



INNOVATION - In a constantly changing world, the ability to approach challenges in a new way is vital. Exploris teachers and students approach the learning process through divergent thinking, creativity, ideation, and risk-taking.

SOCIAL EMPOWERMENT - Students learn best when they are exposed to meaningful, complex issues that are applicable to their own lives. Teachers engaged students in current, relevant issues by solving authentic problems that are being addressed beyond the four walls of the school building. Students realize that they have the power to change how their world works. They know how to navigate public systems, lobby public officials, and present their research and opinions as responsible citizens. Student work is tangibly connected not only to the local community but to other regions of the world and to past and future events.

RELATIONSHIPS - A nurturing school environment is one where students are encouraged to build and maintain positive relationships and collaborate with their teachers, parents, peers, and community. With a keen understanding of the unique development of the age group which they teach, teachers are intentional about the structures and relationship-building activities that they design. Positive relationships and collaboration result in a tapestry of learners who know they can depend on each other and work together in almost any situation. The end-product is deeper and Exploris students experience a collective sense of accomplishment and ownership.



REFLECTION - In an ever changing world of new ideas, the importance of reflecting on one's own thinking and the thinking of others cannot be underestimated. Exploris values the creation of time to slow down, to reflect, and to build connections.

CRAFTSMANSHIP - Producing an exemplary product is challenging. It takes attention to detail, grit, perseverance, revision, and tenacity. It takes a growth mindset and a dedication to competing with one's own personal best.

CURIOSITY - True knowledge does not occur without curiosity. Students are empowered to ask questions about the world around them and to explore possible answers.

RESPONSIBILITY - Students will take ownership of their learning and accountability for their actions and behavior. Students will recognize the importance of character, integrity, and honesty.

CONNECTIONS TO NATURE - When students witness the power and elements of the natural world through adventure and stewardship, they begin to view themselves as just one species within a larger system.

Commitment to Our Community

At Exploris, we learn through our commitment to our core values. Each student and family is part of our school community, bringing unique strengths and ideas to our school. Our school is stronger when families take an active role in our school community. As the African proverb states, "It takes a village to raise a child," and we believe it takes a community to help a school thrive. We encourage every family to share in this commitment to the school community through service.

Service to our school community looks different for each family. For some, a dedication to leading a neighborhood carpool enables other students to have safe and reliable transportation to and from school. For others, we welcome family members into our classrooms to support teachers and lead Explorations. Some families choose to engage in strengthening our community through service on our School Board, our Parent Teacher Organization, or the numerous working groups and committees that carry out the business of the school. For those with schedules that are unpredictable, active engagement with Crew Teachers and offers of support when possible are much appreciated and integral to the successful education of our students. However families can commit to serving our school community, we welcome you. We ask that each family please aim to join us in whatever way they can for at least five hours each month. Together, our combined efforts will help us grow as a school community and continue to provide the exceptional education we believe every child deserves.



Exploris Hallmarks

- Deep learning of state and national standards through the context of current, complex issues or community needs.
- Integrated use of computers and other technology to develop research and critical thinking skills.
- Field Experiences allowing students to learn about and provide service to their community.
- Adventure and environmental education to challenge students, foster teamwork, and nurture students' understanding of nature; including a culminating Outward Bound experience in the 8th Grade Year.
- Global Arts (including Art, Connected World, Health & Wellness/Movement, and Music (ES only) to further develop critical thinking, global awareness, empathy, and craftsmanship.
- Self-reflection through goal setting, student self-assessment, and student-led portfolio conferences.
- International exchanges of middle school students and staff with students in Hiroshima, Japan and Gefrees, Germany.
- Dedication to the environment by limiting the amount of student waste and energy produced.
- Our teachers and staff members go by their first names. This is part of our culture, which fosters respect within relationships and not necessarily by titles. Some of our students prefer to put Ms. or Mr. in front of our first names. We respect their desire to do so.
- Students and Teachers Often Dress Casually. Because we are a hands-on school, teachers and students need to dress appropriately for whatever activities are called for on a given day. We are often up to our elbows in goopy materials and the natural world. Appropriate dress for a visit to a museum, for science experiments and messy art projects, and for venturing to the river will vary. Families are asked to be knowledgeable about activities on a given day by reading the weekly grade-level letters to assure that their children are dressed appropriately for the weather and activities of the day.



Section 2: Curriculum & Design

A great deal of thought, research, and practice has gone into designing our school's structure. We haven't always made the same decisions that were made by the schools in our childhoods. Some of what you see at Exploris may look unfamiliar. You may be surprised that certain school pieces are missing. You may notice some unexpected new things. This section should explain some of these surprises.

Project-Based Learning

The Exploris curriculum is integrated around projects including the formal units we call Expeditions. The world is not compartmentalized into neat little boxes, but instead intertwines various content matter and skills. Science, language and communication, math, and social studies work together to paint a fuller picture of our world and are thus embedded in grade-level standards, community outreach and involvement, extensive collaboration, and a public culminating activity.

Our Classroom Space Is Used Flexibly

In an Exploris classroom, work areas are arranged to help students collaborate in both small and large groups. This requires group tables, breakout spaces, and workstations as opposed to rows of individual desks. Students may also use hallways and other spaces outside the classroom for learning.

Our Classrooms Have Ongoing Conversations and Are Full of Movement

Student conversation is the center of much of our learning here. We believe that deep learning takes place when children challenge one another, ask questions, share ideas, and build on one another's knowledge verbally. Throughout the day, students will be getting out of their seats to gather materials, consult with those around them, and gather resources around the classroom.

We Use Primary Sources as Much as Possible

We believe children can learn authentically by using authentic resources. Although they have access to some textbooks, students more often gather information from community experts, industry leaders, nonfiction and fiction trade books, publications, and the Internet. By exploring primary sources, children gain information-gathering skills that they use to independently problem-solve and conduct research in the real world.

Students are Responsible for Their Own Learning

We expect our students to be responsible for their own learning. Our teachers do not pour knowledge into passive students. Rather, they interact, question, prompt, and set up physical and



intellectual environments for students. Within this context, we expect students to explore, wonder, hypothesize, create, and discuss their ideas about the world. This is hard work. We want to hear families' perceptions about their children and their experiences at Exploris. We expect families to check in with their students' teachers and to be interested in their learning, but we do not expect families to complete work for students or to manage their child's learning. We want family feedback about our projects and our culture. We expect every member of the team to actively participate in the learning experience.

Revising Work Is a Habit Here

Students at Exploris normally aren't finished with a piece of work until they do multiple drafts of it. This expectation reaches across grades and disciplines. Improving on work again and again is common practice here. Teachers guide students from draft to draft. Students collaborate to assess the work of their peers. Rubrics set high standards for finished pieces and guide students as they strive to get their work to meet these high standards.

Learning is Public and Collaborative

Our students' work is often assessed by their peers. Students read their writing out loud, solicit comments, and present project drafts for formal peer critiques. We do public work just like in the real world. Having an authentic audience keeps us on our toes, supporting quality work with high standards.

Service and Social-Emotional Learning Are Part of Our Curriculum

We focus on social-emotional learning and service as well as academics. Quality academic work is mirrored by the quality of the ways in which we treat one another, our community, and our environment. Students are encouraged to be compassionate, disciplined, courageous, and responsible. For example, your student's crew may take time during the day to discuss why a crewmember has been mistreated. They may take twenty minutes to pick up litter at a neighborhood park. They may spend an hour a week visiting an aging community member. These types of activities are critical to our mission of engaging students to build a connected, just, and sustainable world.

Students Share Responsibility for our Community Spaces

As part of our desire to create a stronger school culture, students share responsibility for keeping our school clean and presentable. Student crews will be assigned duties during the week to clean tables, chairs, floors, windows, and to take garbage and compost out at the end of their lunch period to get the room ready for the next group of students.



Field Experiences and Service Learning

Field Experiences are Central to Our Curriculum

Learning extends beyond Exploris's walls; it connects to the world. Students work in the "field" sometimes once or twice a week. The field may be a wetland, a museum, a community garden, a science lab, a courtroom, a national forest, etc. Field experiences are deeply woven into each teacher's curriculum. Attendance is required on all field experiences just as it is in the classroom.

We ask that families sign one blanket field trip form (and Medical Release Form) that covers permissions for all trips within the Triangle area. Walking field experiences are part of our routine learning environment. Families will be notified through their class newsletter or website whenever field experiences that require transportation are planned. Your student must have this form on file to attend. Please return this form and any medication forms by the first day of school. Students arriving late (after class has left campus) or without a Medical Release Form will be placed in the care of another adult (either in another classroom or in the Director's or Counselor's office).

Field Experiences and Student Behavior or Disciplinary Issues

Students with behavioral needs or disciplinary issues that could put themselves or others at risk during a field experience may be offered a different educational experience from the planned field experience, subject to administrative review.

Families who opt out of a field experience for anything other than a medical reason should plan to keep their scholar home. The absence will be coded as an unexcused absence and no alternate curriculum will be provided.

Students who have a medical reason to miss a field experience will be offered an alternate assignment but should stay home that day, or the school will have a provision for onsite supervision if the trip is less than a half day in length. Directors reserve the right to consider the pattern of student behaviors or any recent major disciplinary issues as a reason to withhold a field experience. Families will be notified within a reasonable time frame, unless the disciplinary concerns are severe and emerge close to the time of the trip. In those cases, the absence will be considered an in-school or out of school suspension, and alternate work will be provided accordingly. Refunds will not be offered for any advance payment if a scholar is pulled from a field experience for disciplinary reasons.



Overnight Field Experiences

Each year, many grades will take an overnight trip. It will last 1-5 days, depending on the grade level. These field experiences are a big part of who we are as a school. They allow our crews to develop positive cultures, stretch students beyond their comfort level, and create opportunities for leadership and adventure. Students who are comfortable taking risks out of the classroom often gain the confidence to take bigger risks in the classroom, building confidence as leaders and collaborators. **Student attendance is NOT optional because the field experiences are part of our education curriculum.** Therefore, you must be willing to let your child participate in these overnight educational experiences. Overnight and field experiences outside of the Triangle area will require a separate permission slip.

Costs of overnight trips will be communicated to families as early as possible in the planning process. Scholarships are available for students who qualify. Scholarship applications are available from the crew teacher, school counselor, or in the front office.

Academic Accountability

Exploris strives to create an environment of academic rigor that will prepare students to excel in high school and in the world beyond schooling. Because Exploris utilizes standards-based and portfolio assessments as the primary means of evaluating student performance, it is imperative that all students complete classwork and homework in a timely manner. A comprehensive collection of completed work will be necessary to ensure that students are prepared to compile a portfolio that demonstrates their academic ability.

Portfolio Assessment and Student-Led Conferences

At Exploris, student portfolios are the place where students house evidence of intellectual achievement, academic growth, and responsibility for learning. Students use these portfolios to present their learning at student-led conferences throughout the year. These conferences not only tell you how your student is doing in school, but they help your student take responsibility for their own learning. Conferences provide an occasion for students to reflect on their progress, set goals for future work, and make a public presentation to the most important people in their lives. Students prepare for these conferences by choosing their best work, revising work, writing reflections on their learning, and practicing presentation skills. We expect families to come with their students for every teacher/family/student conference in the school year. Teachers analyze the portfolios and other classroom assessments to determine progress toward academic targets which they share in Achievement Reports. Portfolios and student-led conferences are crucial tools for revealing student growth. They help teachers and students notice missing links in a child's learning and acknowledge and celebrate a child's accomplishments. In the 8th grade students present a cumulative passage portfolio to school staff, family, and community members.



This culminating event helps determine a student's readiness for high school. Specific dates for student led portfolio conferences and for 8th grade Passage Portfolios are listed on the school calendar. Families should plan to attend these conferences and are discouraged from asking for a different date or time or treating these days as additional family vacation days. Requests for a change in date for a portfolio conference will be honored if possible; families are asked to recognize that requests to meet outside of these prearranged times can strain our staff and their availability may be limited.

Achievement Reports

Teachers will provide formal, written Achievement Reports documenting student progress in the major areas of learning and development at the end of each trimester. Instead of evaluating students using letter grades (A, B, C, D, and F) or using a number scale (1, 2, 3, or 4), we assess our students' work in terms of individual progress towards achieving a standard. You will see words such as "Beginning," "Developing," or "Accomplished." We make these evaluations using rubrics, models, and exemplars based on state standards. Standards for high quality work are discussed, and sometimes created with students, before their work begins and throughout the process.

Standardized Testing

As a public school, Exploris is required to administer all standardized tests mandated by the NC Department of Public Instruction including EOG's for grades 3-8 and the EOC for Math I. Exploris considers data gleaned from these tests as one barometer of student learning but does not consider the results of this testing as the primary factor in assessing student growth or achievement. In an effort for students to do their "personal best" on these tests, there will be some specific test review, with an emphasis on activities meant to relieve student test anxiety. There will not be a great emphasis placed on "teaching to the test" prior to administration. In addition to state assessments, Exploris administers the MAP, Measure of Academic Progress, three times per year. This is a computerized adaptive test which helps teachers, parents, and administrators improve learning for all students and make informed decisions to promote a child's academic success. The mClass test is administered to assess the development of reading skills in early grades. Other school-based testing may be administered to contribute to the data-driven effort of educating your student.

Section 3: School Logistics

Family Communication

Families are integral partners and should feel comfortable contacting teachers with questions or concerns about their student's learning. Exploris teachers are with students for most of the day and planning instruction for the rest, therefore please allow 48 hours for staff to reply to emails or phone calls.

Please schedule an appointment in advance to meet with a teacher or administrator to ensure that they are available to discuss your questions or concerns and give you their undivided attention.

Your crew teacher will be your central point of contact for any school concern or question. Please reach out to them directly, and they can direct your concern to the best person on staff to provide a response.

School Hours

Elementary 8:30-3:15

Students can be dropped off beginning at 8:10 AM. For students needing supervision prior to that window, a Before School Care Program is available. More information and a fee schedule can be found on the school's website. **Students who enter the carpool line after 8:25 will be marked tardy and must report to the office to sign in and be accompanied by an adult. Students who are tardy are subject to consequences as outlined within the Code of Student Conduct.**

Middle 8:15-3:15

Students can be dropped off beginning at 7:55. For students needing supervision prior to that window, a Before School Care Program is available. More information and a fee schedule can be found on the school's website. **Students who arrive after 8:10 will be marked tardy and must report to the front office to sign in and are subject to consequences as outlined within the Code of Student Conduct.**

Before and After School Care

The only supervision before or after the school's official times are through the fee-based Before and After School Care Program. Any students arriving to school earlier than 20 minutes before the start time will be escorted to the Before School Care rooms and parents will be billed accordingly (please see our website for more details). Any students remaining at school after the end of dismissal will be sent to After School Care and families will be billed accordingly. We understand that occasional circumstances arise that make it difficult to arrive at school on time to



pick up your student . On these occasions, please notify the office in advance as soon as possible. The Student Code of Conduct and expectations for behavior apply for both before and after school care. Scholars who have repeated disciplinary issues during these programs can lose access to before or after school care.

Elementary Before Care: 7:15-8:10; Elementary After Care: 3:40-6:00

Middle Before Care: 7:00-7:55; Middle After Care: 3:30-6:00

See the school website for additional details.

Please keep in mind that children cannot wait alone outside the school since they will not be supervised. Please register your student for Before School Care if they need to be dropped off early or After School Care if they need to stay past dismissal.

Food and Snacks

Exploris strives to promote a dining experience that includes an aesthetic conducive to enjoying both one's food and the company of others. Because Exploris has no formal lunch program, families must provide lunch for their students on a daily basis. The school coordinates with a third-party lunch vendor to provide families with a nutritious, well-balanced option if they desire to order lunch for their student. The school will work with families to provide lunch for those students who qualify for the Free and Reduced Lunch Program and have met the requirements on the Economically Disadvantaged Student Form.

Exploris emphasizes the use of fruits, vegetables, or whole grains as the primary snack and water as the primary beverage. Refrigerators and Microwaves are not available for student lunches. Please be sure to send a reusable water bottle with your student each day. Nutritious foods fuel your student's work and play; however, sweets do not. Please limit the amount of sweets that you send to the school. Soft drinks, gum, and candy are not to be brought on the school's campuses. Additionally, we ask families not to bring in or send cupcakes, donuts, or other such treats for student birthdays. This is especially important for the safety of students with food allergies.

We cannot accept lunch deliveries from professional companies such as Grubhub, Uber Eats, or others. It creates a safety hazard to have other adults and cars not vetted by the school on our campus during the school day.

Food Allergies

In order to protect children or staff who have a life-threatening allergy we may have to ask the school community to refrain from bringing certain items on campus. Families should communicate with the school in a timely manner about any student allergies. School Leadership will communicate to all families any grade-level specific or campus-wide food restrictions that



must be considered by the Exploris community. Families and students are expected to follow all guidance from School Leadership regarding food allergies.

Waste-Free Lunch

At Exploris, all food and snack waste that is “packed in” will also be “packed out.” As a U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Award Winner, Exploris is committed to environmental stewardship. As such, we strive to make waste reduction a priority.

One of the best places to start is with lunch and snack waste. A waste-free lunch program is a process of educating students, families, and school staff about where our trash ends up and how we, as individuals, can reduce the amount of trash we generate. Waste-free lunch programs favor the use of reusable food containers, drink containers, utensils, and napkins. They discourage the use of disposable packaging, such as prepackaged foods, plastic bags, juice boxes and pouches, paper napkins, and disposable utensils.

A Waste-Free lunch not only helps to reduce waste at the school, it helps families to be aware of their child’s eating habits while at school. Please make sure to check your student’s lunch box each day and talk with your student about their food choices.

Transportation

At Exploris, we have chosen to focus our resources on teacher quality and a safe facility, rather than providing transportation for students on school buses. All families who can provide transportation to and from school are asked to do so.

Due to the school’s limited parking and queuing lanes, public transportation and carpooling are strongly encouraged. Exploris staff and the PTO will gladly help families form carpool groups. Watch for emails and communication on the PTO Blog beginning the week before school starts.

Parking

Elementary Campus:

It is important that families keep in mind that the elementary campus is temporarily located in a residential area that was not intended for heavy traffic. Please be respectful of our neighbors and help us to remain a welcome addition to the neighborhood.

Please DO NOT block driveways, park facing the wrong direction, or park in a way that prevents the smooth flow of traffic. Please park in the following areas:

- Marked parking spaces in the elementary school’s parking lot. Do not park along the queuing or driving lanes.



- ONLY along the Northbound traveling (or eastern side facing New Bern Ave.) on S. Swain Street.

Middle School Campus:

There is NO on-site parking available for families. Exploris's parking lots are reserved for staff parking ONLY. This includes those picking up for After School Care. Please be mindful that faculty and staff and employees of neighboring businesses must be able to enter and leave the parking lots whenever necessary. Please do not enter the parking lot until carpool has started so as to allow our neighbors and staff to exit if needed. Families must park in the appropriately labeled spaces on the street or in public parking lots. Cars parked on the Exploris Middle campus are subject to towing by our neighboring businesses and landlords.

Drop Off & Pick Up Safety Guidelines

Exploris is an urban school in busy neighborhoods with limited parking. To keep everyone safe, to get students into their classrooms on time, and to keep traffic flowing freely, we need to work together.

In addition, city construction projects near our campuses can sometimes close off lanes or direct drivers to detours. Please stay aware of any changes or signage in the carpool areas and follow posted directions.

Please make sure that all drivers who will be dropping off/picking up your child are aware of the following requirements:

Please use the Drop Off/Pick Up directions (below) for dropping off and picking up students. Do not pull over on the side of the street to pick up or drop off your child on the sidewalk or corner. Students should only exit and enter cars once the car has entered the designated parking lot and come to a complete stop.

In order to have a smooth drop off and pick up procedure, drivers/passengers may not get out of your car if you are in the queuing lanes. If you need to get out of your car for any reason, please park in designated areas and walk up.

DO NOT USE CELL PHONES at any time in the pick-up or drop-off lines. Cell phones distract drivers and lead to accidents. In the interest of safety, please refrain from using your phone.

DRIVE SLOWLY: Watch for children walking and biking. Be extra careful anywhere near the school.

ONLY TURN RIGHT out of school lots: This is a city requirement! As part of the school's approved transportation plan, the city required that only right-handed turns be allowed into and out of the parking lots during peak hours.



USE CROSSWALKS: Please DO NOT walk through the car lines! Exploris discourages jaywalking as it is extremely unsafe.

BUCKLE UP: Before pulling away, make sure your children are either safely on the sidewalk or buckled in their seat.

NO EARLY DISMISSAL after 2:45 p.m. After 2:45, your child will not be dismissed until the published dismissal times. During that time, all students should be dismissed via the walk-up or carpool lines. Please keep this guideline in mind when scheduling things like doctor and dentist appointments.

All Elementary campus students not picked up by TIME will be taken to After Care and a fee will apply. All Middle campus students not picked up by 3:30 p.m. will be taken to After Care and a fee will apply.

WALK OFF: Students may walk off campus at dismissal to meet a ride at a designated off-campus location. To avoid conflict with our established carpool patterns, we ask that this location is not at a place where your parked car would disrupt traffic flow and/or is at least two blocks away from the school. Once a student leaves for the day, they may not return to campus. For example, students may not go to a Food Hall and then return to Exploris to be picked up. Families are responsible for student safety and for following local traffic regulations and policies once students leave the Exploris campus.

Elementary Campus Drop-Off and Pick-Up

Rules For Car Line

Please make sure that all drivers who will be dropping off/picking up your child are aware of these requirements:

The Elementary School driveway is one-way. Please follow the signs indicating where to enter and exit the lot.

Never turn left when either entering or leaving the school's property. All vehicles dropping students off in the morning should approach the school from Hargett Street, turning right onto S. Swain Street, right into the school driveway, and driving around to the school's administrative building entrance. Adults will be in place to greet your students in the morning.

Whenever possible, we ask for students sitting in the back to exit from the driver's side. We know this is very different from what other schools do.

If entering or exiting from the passenger side, students should always walk in front of the vehicle that they are exiting or will be entering.



Do not store backpacks or other belongings in the trunk. Students should not walk behind your vehicle to retrieve items. This is unsafe as other cars are pulling in behind you.

Vehicles should then exit the school's drive by turning right onto S. Swain St. toward New Bern Ave. and then turn right on New Bern Ave.

Elementary Campus Dismissal

It would be helpful to display a paper with the names of the children you are picking up (first and last) typed in a font size that allows the text to take up most of the paper. A staff member will be standing in the lot with a walkie-talkie and will call your child's name to ensure your child is ready for loading.

If you have a special circumstance and need to pick up a child or children earlier than the above posted times, please contact the Elementary front office.

*All Elementary grades students not picked up by 3:40 will be taken to After School Care in the school's multipurpose room and a fee will apply.

Middle School Drop-Off and Pick-Up

Rules For Carpool Line Drop-Off

Drop off: All vehicles dropping students off in the morning should turn south onto Harrington St. from Hillsborough St., turn right into the rear parking lot of the school (next to Ugly Monkey) and pull in as far as possible before letting students out.

Students cannot exit their cars off along Hillsborough St. or in the lot by the main entrance. All students should wait until their car is fully pulled into the parking lot behind the school before exiting the vehicle. All cars should exit the back of the parking lot by turning right ONLY onto W. Morgan St.

Do not allow students to store backpacks or other belongings in the trunk. Students should not walk behind your vehicle to retrieve items. This is unsafe as other cars are pulling in behind you.

Students should be prepared to get out of cars in the parking lot quickly and enter the building. No vehicles should be left unattended in the parking lot.

Middle Campus Dismissal

Pick up all students between 3:15 and 3:30 p.m. in the Harrington Street (Ugly Monkey) lot.

Vehicles should turn south onto Harrington Street and turn right into the Harrington lot. Because of the amount of traffic on Hillsborough Street, please DO NOT approach from Hillsborough traveling east. We strongly recommend that families traveling east take Peace Street to N. West



to N. Harrington. Families traveling from the North, South, or West should travel to W. Edenton and then turn left on N. Harrington Street. Approach the school by turning right onto Harrington, turning right into the Ugly Monkey Parking Lot, then exiting by turning right onto Morgan Street. NO LEFT TURNS.

Pull into the lot as far as possible in order to get between 3 and 4 cars into the lot at one time. All vehicles exiting the Harrington lot should turn right onto W. Morgan Street. All middle grades students not picked up by 3:30 will be taken to after-school care and a fee will apply.

Field Experience/Field Trip Transportation

We need families' help both in transporting children on field trips and in chaperoning trips, but student safety has to remain our primary concern. Parents who agree to drive on field experiences are required to complete the **Vehicle Insurance Declaration** and the **Volunteer Transportation Assurance** form, which will be shared with families directly. Submit these forms annually to the front office along with a copy of your valid N.C. driver's license and insurance card. We ask that parents' cars are in good repair, with a current state inspection, and that parents have a cell phone to communicate with the school in the event of an emergency. You are encouraged to contact your insurance agent and inquire about obtaining additional coverage for transporting children other than your own.

All students must be properly restrained in cars. North Carolina law states that a properly used car seat or booster seat is required for children less than age 8 and less than 80 lbs.

The law does not specify which type of car seat can be used at any age or weight, only that the seat is used properly in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and meets all federal safety standards in place when the seat was manufactured.

When a child reaches age 8 (regardless of weight) or 80 pounds (regardless of age), a properly fitted seat belt can be used in place of a car seat or booster seat.

Booster seats can only be used with lap and shoulder seat belts. They can NEVER be used with a lap belt only. A child who weighs at least 40 pounds can legally be restrained using only a properly fitted lap belt if there is no lap and shoulder belt available for use with a booster seat, however this is not considered to be the safest option.

The recommendation according to NC law is that all children less than 12 -13 years of age should sit in the back of the vehicle.

Drivers are expected to know and follow the laws and recommendations for proper restraint of children, use all cautionary measures when driving students to and from field experiences, and refrain from using a cell phone while driving.



Prior to departure, all drivers will be given clear and concise directions. These directions will include:

- Step-by-step directions from the point of departure to the point of arrival and the same directions in reverse.
- Map to the point of arrival (if available).
- Contact phone number of the destination point if applicable.
- Contact phone number for the Exploris leader in charge. Likewise, the chaperone should leave their cell phone number with the class leader.

We ask that volunteer drivers follow the route provided by the teacher and DO NOT make impromptu stops at fast food restaurants or other such detours.

Enrollment/Lottery Policy

All students entering Kindergarten-8th grade and who are residents of North Carolina are invited to apply for enrollment. Kindergarten students must have reached the age of 5 on or before August 31 of the year of enrollment. It is important to keep in mind that all students who are not currently enrolled must apply for admission, including siblings of currently enrolled students. Students are admitted through the lottery and offered a seat in a specific grade. If, after acceptance, a family wishes to request that the student be placed in a different grade based on their academic progress, that student would be placed on the waitlist for that newly requested grade.

More information on the school's lottery policy, procedures, and preference status can be found on our website on the Admissions page.

Class Requests

Every year we get many questions about class requests for the following year as students move from one crew to another. Our primary consideration in developing class lists is balance. We look at the students that are moving into or leaving each crew, and attempt to balance it with regard to grade level, gender, ethnicity, economic diversity, academic and behavioral needs, student relationships, etc. This is a collaborative process involving teachers and administrative staff. Often there are many unknowns, especially the new students who will be joining us in August.

In past years our efforts to honor family requests have made achieving the right balance more difficult. Multiple requests in a given classroom make the task even more complicated. Families are not aware of all issues as to placement and can't be told for reasons of confidentiality.

Requesting a classroom has several other consequences as well, including that when one family's request is honored, it affects other families at that grade level. To accommodate one request, many students may have to be moved. This is unfair to parents who do not make requests.



Though class requests are confidential, inevitably teachers may learn of them, which can contribute to poor morale.

Often a group of parents request one classroom due to student friendships. These requests are not practical to accommodate and may lead to negative feelings among families and toward office staff who develop the class lists. Exploris is fortunate to have incredibly talented and qualified teachers. While one teacher or classroom may seem to better “fit” a student, all of our teachers are fully capable of working with all students. Every year, classroom environments will change. One year a crew may seem ideal; and the next it may not. We all need to work together to encourage and support strong classrooms.

For the reasons given above, we strongly discourage classroom requests. Most requests will not be granted. If you feel strongly about requesting a classroom, you must submit a letter in the spring before the end of the school year. Please be sure to include your reasoning. You may be placed in the class of your choice for reasons not related to your request.

Protocol for Requesting a Crew Change in Mid-Year

Occasionally, a parent/guardian may want to request a change of crews for their student. Such changes are strongly discouraged by Exploris unless there are strong and compelling reasons to do so. In most circumstances there is no room in the other crew to accommodate such a change. If such a change is to be requested, the following protocol must be followed.

First, the parent/guardian must meet with the child's crew teacher to discuss concerns as to how and why the child's needs are not being met. Intervention strategies should be discussed and implemented.

After 10 school days there will be a follow-up conversation between the parent/guardian and crew teacher to check in on progress. At that time there will be a decision to continue with the interventions, modify the interventions, or begin a more formal process of requesting a change of crew. If a change of crew is still being requested, the parent, crew teacher, and Campus Director will discuss issues and develop a further plan of action to resolve the situation within the current crew assignment. The new plan of action will be closely monitored for an additional ten school days. If the situation is resolved, no further action will be taken. If the family is still interested in a change of crew, there will be a meeting with the family, crew teacher, the prospective crew teacher, and the Campus Director. This meeting would be to discuss the pros and cons of such a move. If this group decides that there are enough compelling reasons to move the student, a change of placement will occur. Campus directors reserve the right to modify this timeline depending on individual circumstances.

Section 4: Student Health and Safety

We Are Strict About Safety

Your student's safety is our top priority. Exploris follows safety measures conscientiously and always errs on the cautious side. Every precaution is taken to ensure your student's safety at all times. All of our teachers and staff are experienced and vigilant about high safety standards. Exploris has routine emergency drills and has established an Emergency Procedures Manual and Crisis Intervention Team so that we can effectively address any crisis that may arise.

We ask that families support our efforts to establish and implement safety guidelines. Please report all unsafe conditions immediately to your child's crew teacher or to a Director.

Building security

In conjunction with safety goals, Exploris will enforce our security measures during the school day. All exterior doors will be locked and remain so throughout the day. Exterior doors should never be propped open during the school day, and parents and visitors must enter the building and sign in at the main front office. Students may not use staff codes to enter the building. All visitors must ring the bell and enter through the main office. Students are not permitted to open the doors for parents and visitors as this is a safety concern.

Exploris uses limited video surveillance on both campuses as a security measure. Footage from the video surveillance system is subject to FERPA regulations on a case by case basis.

Emergency Contacts and Notification

During the course of normal activities for school, emergencies or accidents may occur. In the event of an accident or emergency, the school will contact you and/or your emergency contacts directly or through our electronic alert system via phone call, text, and/or email.

Families should assist the school and help ensure each child's safety and wellbeing by making sure that the office has your current contact information as well as additional emergency contacts.

Please make sure to let your contacts know that you have done this, because it is imperative that we are able to reach a responsible adult at all times when a student is involved in school activities.

Please notify your student's teachers and the office if any contact numbers change throughout the year. If you are requesting a change to the directory for which family members can be listed as primary contacts, we may ask for proof of custody to ensure that any changes in student contact information and family/guardian notification complies with legal custody and guardianship.



Inclement Weather / School Closings

The Exploris School will follow the Wake County Public School System for inclement weather closures and reserves the right to make an independent decision to close for weather related issues if the safety of staff and students might be affected. If Wake County Public School System has extended closures due to road conditions (for example, waiting to clear secondary roads) Exploris may decide conditions are clear enough around our campus to warrant a return to learning on the Exploris campus. For any WCPSS delayed openings or school closures that arise out of situations not related to inclement weather, the Exploris School will operate independently. Notifications will also be posted on Exploris social media and through assorted news outlets. If conditions allow, the school may designate a remote learning day if physical campuses are closed. On remote learning days, staff is providing instruction and students are completing work.

Weather Conditions & Outdoor Activities

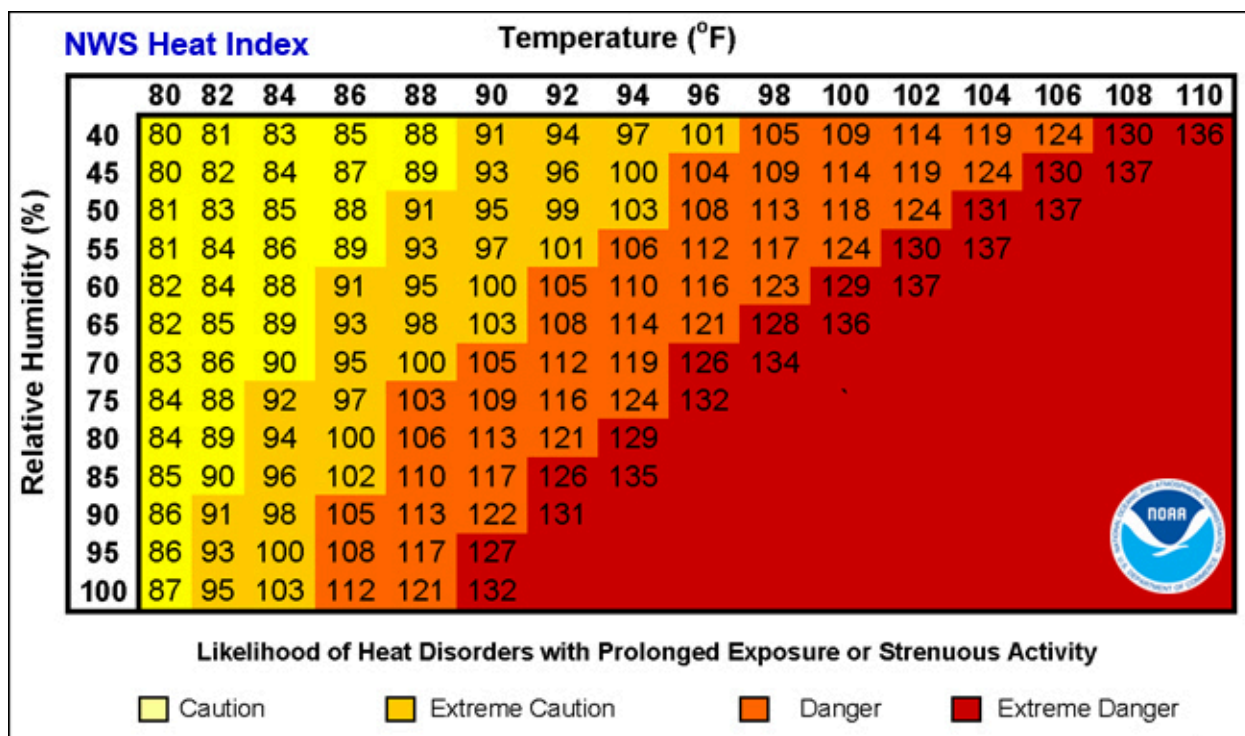
Families should be aware that Exploris students are often outside in all different weather conditions and should provide clothing that is appropriate for changing conditions, footwear that is appropriate for walking outside, rain gear as needed, and sunscreen as desired.

Time spent outdoors is an integral part of the school day. Properly clothed, school-aged children can participate in safe, vigorous play in an outdoor environment in most weather conditions. Exploris staff may limit a student's time outdoors if the student is not dressed appropriately for the weather, or may have the student complete an indoor activity instead.

Increased caution is necessary during extremes in heat and cold.

2.8a: Warm Weather Conditions

When temperatures are predicted to be 95°F or higher, student activity outside after 1:00 p.m. will be avoided or limited to 15-20 minutes at a time. When a day is designated as a Code Orange day, student activity outside will be limited to 15 minutes for the entire day. When a day is designated as a Code Red day, student activities will take place indoors only.



PRECAUTION	PROCEDURE	PRECAUTION	PROCEDURE
LIGHT YELLOW CAUTION	Observe students or staff members susceptible to heat illness (e.g., individuals who are obese or suffer from asthma, etc.). Water should be readily accessible to everyone.	ORANGE DANGER	All students and staff going outdoors should be under constant and careful supervision. Breaks from physical activity should be every 20-30 minutes with water readily accessible to everyone. Fluid replacement is vital!
YELLOW EXTREME CAUTION	Observe students or staff members susceptible to heat illness (e.g., individuals who are obese or suffer from asthma, etc.). Water should be readily accessible to everyone.	RED EXTREME DANGER	Postponing outdoor physical activities or moving physical activity to air-conditioned indoor settings is recommended for all students and staff. If outdoor activity is required, constant supervision is needed. Water must be readily available! Fluid replacement is vital!

References: State Climate Office of North Carolina http://www.nc-climate.ncsu.edu/climate/heat_index_climatology.php

Cold Weather Conditions

Increased caution is necessary when temperatures are below 32°F. Temperature plus wind velocity, or wind chill, is a prominent factor in determining cold weather safety. As the speed of



the wind increases, it carries heat away from the body more quickly. Staff will limit student outdoor time to under 30 minutes if the temperature is near or below freezing.

Severe Weather: Lightning

In cases where thunderstorms are bringing lightning into the area, staff will follow the 30-30 rule, which means waiting 30 minutes after the last lightning flash is seen or the last roll of thunder is heard to resume outdoor activity. It may seem safe to return to activity after the storm has passed, but lightning can and does strike at least 10 miles away from the storm even after the clouds have moved on. This phenomenon is known as a “bolt out of the blue.” Every time lightning is seen or thunder is heard, the 30 minute clock should be reset.

Air Quality Alert Days

Due to ground-level ozone and particulate levels being higher than usual, the National Weather Service may declare a Code Orange, Code Red, or Code Purple for air quality that is separate from alerts for temperature. On days that are designated as Code Orange for air quality (but not for temperature) staff should limit student outside time to 15-20 minutes at a time and watch for students or colleagues who may be sensitive to air quality and exhibit signs such as fatigue, trouble breathing, increased heart rate, and other signs of stress. If noticed, staff and students affected should return indoors, drink water, and call for assistance from administration to determine next steps for care. Inside, classroom air purifiers should be turned on to high and ionizer settings, and windows should remain closed.

On days that are designated as Code Red for air quality (but not for temperature) staff should severely limit time outside to short periods of 5 minutes for things like travel between buildings, and then apply the above guidelines for Code Orange days.

On days designated as Code Purple, no outside activities should be conducted. Students arriving early to school should immediately be allowed inside, and carpool riders should wait inside for their ride to be called. Administration will consider whether or not to cancel in person learning and move to a remote learning day based on this severe level of weather conditions and will notify staff and family of any decisions.

Dressing for Cold & Wet Weather

When colder temperatures and rain approach, please be reminded that it is very important for students to come to school every day with the appropriate winter clothing for outside activities. If you have a child in need of winter clothing or rain gear please let the school know so that they may help you find appropriate clothing for your student.

Exploris activities take place rain or shine, so being prepared with a sturdy rain poncho and shoes that are appropriate for the weather is important to consider each day.



Below please find guidelines to assist you in sending your child to school outfitted for outside activities in cold weather.

Weather Conditions and Clothing Recommendations

- Mild (45-55 degrees): Lightweight Coat & Hat
- Moderate (35-44 degrees): Heavy Coat, Hat, Gloves or Mittens, Closed Toe Shoes, and Scarf
- Cold (34 degrees or below): Heavy Coat, Hat, Gloves or Mittens, Closed Toe Shoes, and Scarf
- Snow: Heavy Coat, Hat, Gloves or Mittens, Closed Toe Shoes or boots, and Scarf
- Soggy, Wet Conditions: Coat, Hat, Closed Toe Shoes or rain boots, waterproof poncho

Health and Medical

Medications

Students who need to receive medication (prescription or over-the-counter) during the school day or during a field experience must have a medical release on file. The medical release is completed as part of the Enrollment Forms each year. To update the medical release for a student, please contact the Crew Teacher, who will direct you to the appropriate team members for documentation purposes. The front office has a locked storage location for medication and distribution of medication is tracked on a daily log.

In order for The Exploris School to administer medication to your child during the school day, the following conditions must be met:

1. Medication (both prescription and over-the-counter) must be in the ORIGINAL packaging with administration directions clearly viewed on the packaging. If a prescription, the prescription date on the packaging must be within date (not expired) and include clear directions for administration from the prescribing doctor. Please send enough medication for the number of days needed.
2. Medication must be given to school personnel. Students ARE NOT allowed to carry medicine with them, not even a cough drop. The only exceptions are for students needing to carry a prescribed asthma inhaler or epipen.

Health Forms

Before the first day of school, all students must submit a North Carolina Health Assessment Form, signed by a physician, that identifies any health issues important for the school to know about and certifies that your child has all required immunizations. North Carolina state law requires that documentation of immunization be provided to the school within 30 days of a student's first day of school. Parents who do not wish to have their child immunized based on



religious beliefs or advice from the doctor that immunizations pose a risk to their student's health, must submit their request for a waiver in writing, including their physician's statement. Parents must also complete the Medical and Emergency Release form for each child each year.

Health Plans

Consistent with the State Board of Education policy GCS-G-006, school personnel shall be made aware of the existence of health problems including asthma, diabetes, seizure disorder, and life-threatening allergies (anaphylactic reaction) for the purpose of emergency care as well as daily programming. In these cases a copy of the student's healthcare plan will need to be provided. This plan is created in conjunction with the family and their designated healthcare provider.

Illness

If your child contracts a communicable illness, please inform Exploris staff immediately so that we may inform other parents of their child's possible exposure and help parents make informed decisions about their child(ren)'s health.

If your child has a fever, vomiting, diarrhea or other adverse symptoms, please keep your child at home to recover for at least 24 hours. We require that they be free of such symptoms without the aid of medication or fever reducer before they return to school. If such symptoms develop at school, you will be asked to pick up your child. Before sending your child to school, be sure they feel well enough to have a positive, productive day in a manner considerate of the health of others.

COVID-related Illness

Students who present with any of the common symptoms of COVID-19, including runny or stuffy/congested nose, coughing, upset stomach, and/or fever, will be asked to show results of a negative COVID test before returning to school. If a student tests positive, they will be asked to stay home for at least 5 days, be free of fever without the use of fever-reducing medication, and have other symptoms improving. In addition, they will be asked to wear a face mask that covers their mouth and nose for 5 calendar days at all times while participating in indoor or outdoor school activities.

Concussion

The Exploris School utilizes a multidisciplinary team approach to support students suffering with concussion issues. The team at the school level includes appropriate Exploris staff, parents, students, and healthcare providers, all focusing on student wellbeing during and after the injury.



Lice, Scabies, Ringworm, and Other Conditions Transmitted through Physical Contact

If live lice are discovered on a student, the child's parent/legal guardian will be notified that day by telephone. The family is asked to pick up the child as soon as possible, treat the child's hair/scalp for lice, and remove as many nits (eggs) as possible. After treatment, the child may return to school the following day. An Exploris staff member will assist families by rechecking a child's head after proper treatment.

Exploris does not have a “no nit” policy. The American Academy of Pediatrics states that “no nit” policies in schools are detrimental, causing lost time in the classroom, inappropriate allocation of the health service team’s time for lice screening, and a response to infestations that is out of proportion to the medical significance. Children should not be allowed to miss valuable school time because of head lice.

Head lice should never be associated with poor hygiene, dirty hair, or lack of parental care. Washing hair does not kill head lice, as they can survive underwater for several hours. Anyone, whether their hair is long or short, clean or dirty, can get head lice.

Removing the nits and live lice with a special fine-tooth comb, though time-consuming, is the most effective way to get rid of lice. You can remove any remaining lice and nits manually with your fingernails. They do not wash out.

In the case of physical conditions like scabies or ringworm or other conditions that are transmitted by physical contact, the student must have confirmation of the condition by a medical professional and remain out of school for at least 24 hours after treatment has started. After that period, they may return to school and should cover the affected area with clothing such as long sleeves or appropriate bandages to reduce possibility of transmission.

Student Safety, Emotional Health, and Wellbeing

At the Exploris School we are committed to working with families, community organizations, and law enforcement agencies to ensure student safety and wellbeing. In cases where a child welfare is in question (e.g. suspected physical abuse, self-harm, substance abuse, sexual assault, suicidal ideation, etc.) staff will immediately inform a school administrator. In all cases the priority will be the child's immediate safety and taking actions in alignment with mandatory reporting laws. Once the immediate situation is diffused the school will work with families and local agencies to create an ongoing support plan.



Student Supervision

Our faculty provides supervision of students when they are on campus during the normal school day or when they are participating in a school-related field experience. Many of the faculty are trained in basic first-aid techniques and CPR. In addition, teachers are required to carry cell phones or school-issued communication devices like walkie-talkies to any off-site activity so that they can consult with the appropriate resources needed in the event of an emergency.

In emergency situations, our goal is to provide immediate and appropriate care for the student by:

- Preventing further harm to the student or other students which may include moving the student.
- Providing comfort care and urgent care in situations involving breathing or bleeding.
- Referring immediately to the parent and/or medical professionals.

When an accident happens at school that results in serious injury, the school staff will use information from the Medical Release Form to contact parents or the person(s) they have designated. If needed, we will call 911 while we are still trying to reach a parent. We will make every attempt to call families as soon as possible to involve them in the decision-making process, unless time and urgency are issues. If the injury is minor, the classroom teacher will exercise their judgment in making a decision to call the family. In most cases, families will be alerted so they will have the option of viewing the injury themselves.

Search of Student's Person or Belongings

In any case where there is reasonable suspicion a student may be intending harm to self or others, the student's person and belongings may be searched. Reasonable suspicion is satisfied when two conditions exist: (1) The search is justified at its inception, meaning that there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that the search will reveal evidence that the student has violated or is violating the law or school rules or that the student may have the means and intent to do harm to self or others, and (2) The search is reasonably related in scope to the circumstances that justified the search, meaning that the measures used to conduct the search are reasonably related to the objectives of the search and that the search is not excessively intrusive in light of the student's age and sex and the nature of the offense. School officials and sworn law enforcement officers may conduct a search without reasonable suspicion or probable cause if the student voluntarily consents to the search. Voluntariness is determined on the basis of the circumstances—including the student's age, education level, and mental capacity—and the context of the search. School officials may conduct random or blanket searches not because of individualized suspicion, but as a preventive measure. This type of search will not be utilized by school officials if any type of suspicion is present.



Anything found in the course of a search can be used as evidence against the student. The evidence may be:

1. Seized and admitted as evidence in any suspension or recommendation for expulsion proceeding.
2. Returned to the parent or guardian of the student.
3. Destroyed, if it is of no significant value.
4. Given to a law enforcement officer if applicable.

Background Checks for Employees

It is the policy of the Exploris school not to employ or to continue the employment of classified, professional, or administrative personnel who may be deemed unsuitable for service by reason of arrest and/or criminal conviction. While an arrest or conviction of a crime, in and of itself, may not be an automatic bar to employment, if an arrest or conviction relates to suitability of the individual to perform duties in a particular position, such person may be denied employment or in the case of current employees, may face disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Accordingly, a criminal records check will be conducted of applicants and/or newly hired employees, including substitutes. If an applicant is hired prior to the completion of the criminal records check, the employment shall be considered conditional pending a review of the results of the check.

Volunteer Expectations and Confidentiality

Exploris is a cooperative enterprise: Our families, teachers, Board, and administrative staff share the responsibilities and rewards of operating our school. Our families experience firsthand the school environment, become advocates for their children, and enrich the school community with their ideas, interests, talents, and resources. There are significant opportunities for involvement: Volunteering in our K-8 Explorations classes, helping with off-site fieldwork trips, serving on our PTO board, supporting the office, chaperoning overnight trips, etc. Parents are always welcome to visit the school and join their child's class, but we ask you to plan your visit with your child's teacher. Planned, organized visits support instruction and help ensure the safety of all students and staff. Please keep in mind that visitors can sometimes distract students and inadvertently disrupt the learning environment. It is difficult for teachers to stop and instruct/prepare for volunteers while they are teaching, and advance notification is required to make the most of your contribution. All parents and volunteers should sign in at the front office before proceeding to the classroom.



The Directors may place limits on the frequency or conditions of school visits or communication by parents or other visitors to avoid disruption and to ensure that a positive, safe, and constructive educational environment is maintained for all.

Remember that the teacher's first responsibility during class hours is to teach students. Therefore, we ask that you refrain from engaging in conversation about your child's progress when assisting in the classroom or during field experiences. If you would like to discuss your child's individual progress, teachers are happy to set up an appointment to meet with you outside of the normal school day. When you volunteer in school-related events, you may be exposed to sensitive issues involving students and families other than your own, including academic and social/disciplinary challenges. Just as you would like for adults who interact with your child to be sensitive to issues of confidentiality, we ask that you treat information about all students with care.

If you have particular concerns about children that stem from your observations during school activities, please consult that student's classroom teacher. Always refrain from inappropriate interactions with students and other parents that breach these confidentiality guidelines.

As family volunteers, we ask that you respect the direction and/or guidelines established by the sponsoring teacher in a given activity or the school's Directors. Although employees are open to the ideas and feedback of parents who are involved in an activity or outing, it is the school employee who must make a final decision in the event of an emergency or difficult situation. Please note that we are a drug, alcohol, and tobacco-free campus. This policy applies to staff and parents volunteering or attending any school sponsored event or trip in which students are present and is essential to our continued participation in federal grant programs.

Background Checks for Volunteers

Exploris supports and encourages volunteers in our schools. Volunteers work in cooperation with the school to help in meeting the needs of children and the school staff. The school's Directors hold the sole responsibility for the recruitment, monitoring, and/or dismissal of community and parent volunteers.

Any family member or volunteer who participates in school-related activities and may have an opportunity to be alone with a student as part of that activity will be asked to complete a Federal and State background check. If two or more non-related adults work together with students, or if Exploris staff continually and directly supervises the volunteer, the Directors may determine a background check unnecessary.

Field Experience Chaperones

Opportunities exist for parents/guardians to accompany on field experiences, and in fact, we depend on your help for safe transportation and supervision. If you have signed up to participate



as a class chaperone, you will be agreeing to stay with the group, monitor children, and make decisions in the best interest and safety of the children. While we encourage your involvement, volunteers must keep in mind that the purpose of fieldwork is educational, not recreational, and class trips should not be a substitute for a family outing. Chaperones will be expected to remain with the class at all times and should not remove their child from the group for side trips or to leave early. Chaperones are expected to support teachers' disciplinary and behavior guidelines, to uphold grade-level rules, and to treat all children with fair and equal consideration. Siblings or family pets will not be permitted on trips, so that chaperones can be fully attentive to the needs of the students and provide the safety needed. If a trip should lend itself to involvement of siblings, this will be communicated to families.

All chaperones must follow school rules. On overnight trips, and at all times, chaperones must abstain from using tobacco and alcohol products. Teachers reserve the right to designate an appropriate number of chaperones for their group and to establish rules specific to the activities of the fieldwork. These rules, along with directions and emergency contact numbers, will be communicated to families in writing in advance of the trip. Failure to adhere to these guidelines may result in a parent or volunteer not being allowed to chaperone on future fieldwork experiences. As is the case with any classroom activity, teachers will make final decisions on chaperones and trip organization.

Student Sleeping Accommodations for Overnights

In order to assure appropriate privacy during an overnight excursion, the Exploris school will take the following precautions:

1. Sleeping arrangements will be made that clearly separate male and female students. Exceptions may be made for children who are brother and sister and have an adult family member staying with them. Exceptions may also be made depending upon the programming of partner organizations (i.e. Heifer International groups students co-educationally.)
2. No sleeping arrangement can be made that would place only one adult with one or more children unless all are members of the same family.
3. No sleeping arrangement can be made that would place an adult with children of the opposite sex unless they are members of the same family.

It is expected that all overnight field experience participants agree to act courteously and responsibly, will comply with all regular Exploris rules and policies, and comply with any additional rules set forth by the grade-level team applicable to the overnight trip. Violations of these rules and policies will result in immediate dismissal from the excursion. In the event of a dismissal, parents/guardians are responsible for making transportation arrangements to pick up their student in the field.



2023-2024

Family & Student Handbook



Section 5: The Code of Student Conduct

Our Exploris Philosophy

We use a responsive classroom approach that focuses on the strong relationship between academic success and social emotional learning. To be successful in and out of school, students need to learn a set of social and emotional competencies such as relationships, collaboration, responsibility, empathy, and reflection. They also need to learn a set of academic competencies such as academic mindset, perseverance, learning strategies, and academic behaviors.

The purpose of the code of student conduct is four-fold:

1. To illustrate expected student behaviors
2. To describe violations of the Student Code of Conduct and associated interventions and consequences that may be enforced
3. To outline student rights, privileges, and responsibilities
4. To provide information about how to get help from school personnel

Equally important to sharing what is expected of students is that Exploris policies and practices support social emotional learning and positive behavior choices. Developing positive and effective student behaviors requires collaborative efforts from school, home, and community organizations and agencies.

Families should note that enrolling at The Exploris School means acceptance of school policies and the student code of conduct. Families are responsible for reading the Family and Student Handbook and being aware of expectations and policies for student conduct.

Expected Student Behavior

We believe everyone deserves a safe, supportive, and orderly learning environment. We encourage appropriate behaviors by teaching, guiding, directing, and providing opportunities for new learning to occur. We create opportunities for students to practice and succeed in making responsible and effective choices in order to reach their social, emotional, and academic potential and contribute to the school community. Our mission is to empower learners to improve our world.

The Code of Student Conduct shall apply to all students engaged in or traveling to or from school or school-sponsored activities at all times on all school grounds, public spaces, spaces owned or operated by community partners, vehicles, field experiences, and school events, including cases where student behavior off campus violates this code of conduct and has a negative impact on the school's reputation or learning environment.



I will maintain a positive relationship with myself by:

- Attending school regularly and being on time.
- Following rules and directions of adults.
- Doing my schoolwork and homework with craftsmanship.
- Practicing positive behavior choices.
- Remaining within my designated school area/classroom unless I have permission to leave my assigned area.
- Learning from the consequences of my behavior.
- Choosing not to bring tobacco, alcohol, other drugs or weapons to school.
- Dressing in a way that is appropriate for the learning environment and planned activities.

I will maintain a positive relationship with others by:

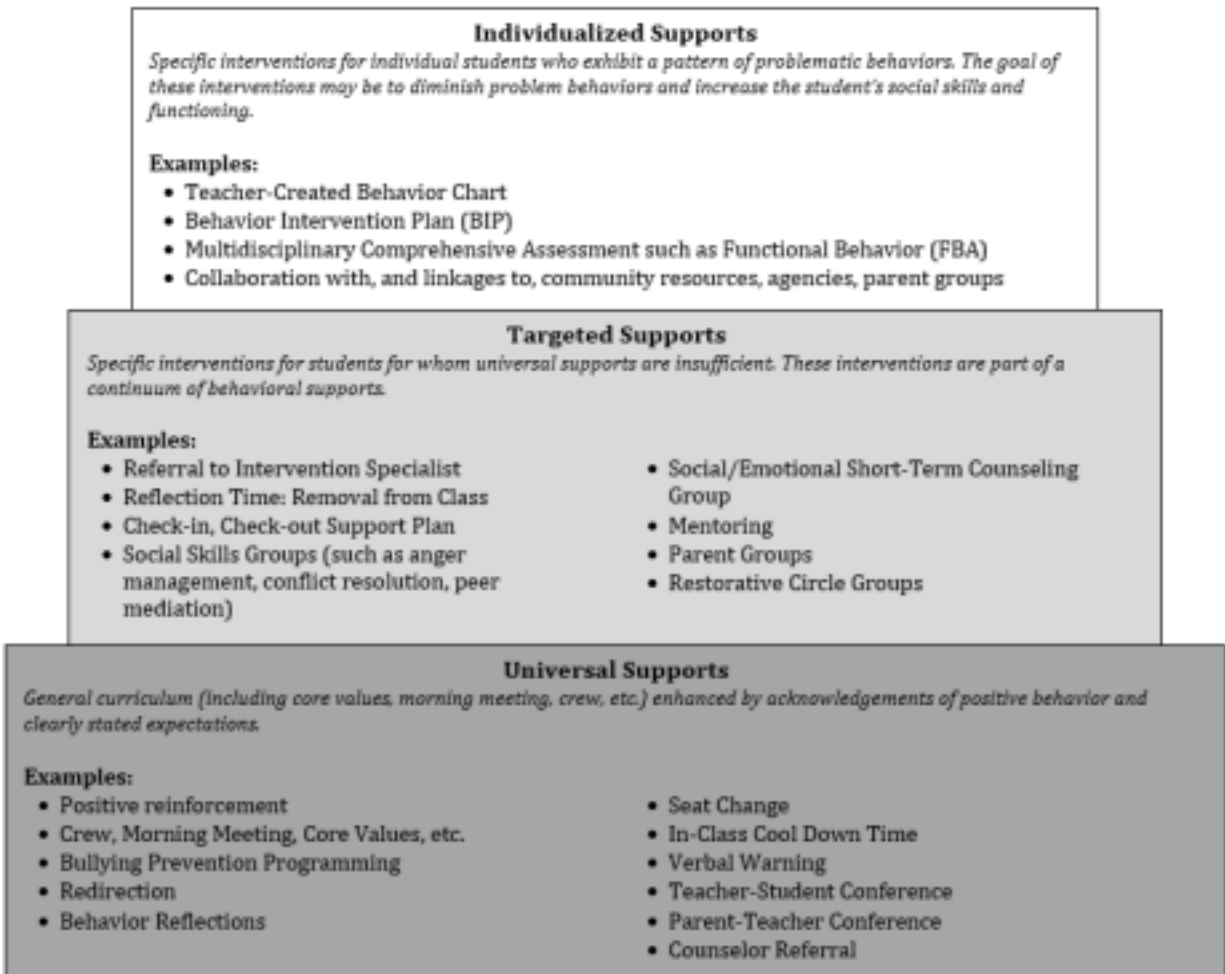
- Being understanding of others feelings.
- Using positive words with others (no put downs).
- Treating others like I want to be treated.
- Being an upstander for others and not bullying or threatening.
- Being honest by telling the truth and taking responsibility.
- Working with others in a positive and inclusive way.
- Keeping my hands and body to myself.
- Using appropriate language at school.
- Working with others to manage negative behaviors and emotions.
- Using respectful, positive, and considerate tone of voice and body language when I am speaking to others.
- Listening when others are speaking.

I will maintain a positive relationship with my school environment by:

- Taking care of things in my school and on school grounds.
- Not bringing dangerous or distracting things, such as matches, lighters, toys, fireworks, alcohol/tobacco/other drugs, medicine not prescribed for me, etc.
- Using school materials or classmate's materials for their intended purpose.
- Using computers as directed by adults (see Acceptable Use Policy).
- Conducting myself in a safe and considerate way that reflects a positive image.
- Leaving spaces as they were or better. I will clean up and participate positively in cleaning tasks. I will not engage in defacing, removing, digging, destroying, or disturbing the features of private and public spaces.

The Three Levels of Supports

Supports may include (but are not limited to) the examples below:



Levels of Interventions and Consequences for Violations of the Code of Student Conduct

As with any incident of student behavior, school administrators must exercise informed judgment as to whether a student's actions constitute a violation of the school policies and/or the Code of Student Conduct. The levels, shown on the following page, guide administrators to use progressive interventions to impact student behaviors. The administrator will use their discretion and apply interventions and consequences appropriate to the situation. Restitution for loss or damage could be required in addition to any other prescribed consequences.

The following chart is intended as a guide to determine appropriate consequences. **Repeated chronic or cumulative offenses may require higher levels of intervention/consequences.** For serious violations, interventions/consequences may begin at a higher level and/or be reported to local law enforcement agencies. Incidents involving suspected harm of a child may be reported to Child Protective Services.

Levels of Consequences

Level	Disciplinary Option
1- Teacher managed	Warning Letter of apology Loss of privileges Use of Student reflection/problem-solving worksheet Seat change Teacher conference with student behaviors Mentoring In-class time-out (take a break) Time out in another classroom setting Reinforcement of appropriate behaviors Student email to parent Confiscation of item by teacher Redirection and reteaching expected behaviors
2- Teacher Managed	Parent/guardian involvement required Confiscation of item (pick up in office) Supervised time-out outside of classroom Conference with parent/guardian Behavior Contract Teacher and/or administrator conference with student and/or parent Monitored/Limited transitions Parent contract Parent or guardian accompany student to school, classes or on field experience Conflict resolution Peer mediation Working Lunch/Lunch Detention Required help hall (before or after school) Community service assignment, as a form or restitution
3- Administrator Managed (considered an office referral)	Parent/guardian notification required Suspension (1-5 days) Reteaching expected behaviors Alternative school-based program Parent contract Parent or guardian accompany student to school, classes or on field experience Conflict resolution Peer mediation



	Restricted Activity or Use of Technology Working Lunch/Lunch Detention Detention (before/after school or lunch) Required help hall (before or after school) Community service assignment, as a form or restitution
4- Administrator Managed (office referral)	Parent/guardian notification required Restricted activity Modified school day Suspension (5-10 days) Restricted use of technology
5-Administrator Managed (office referral)	Parent/guardian notification required Extended Suspension (10+ days)
6- Administrator Managed (office referral)	Expulsion (to be considered only in the most extreme cases, which could be a single incident or multiple repeated violations of school policy and behavior codes.). More serious offenses may result in recommendation for expulsion following due-process procedures. Please note that under charter school law, other North Carolina public schools, including Wake County Public Schools, will not accept students suspended or expelled from The Exploris School for the duration of their suspension or Expulsion.

Definitions for Problem Behavior and Consequences for Students

Offense/Violation
<u>Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs (including unauthorized prescription drugs), drug paraphernalia</u> Level: 3, 4, 5, 6 Definition Alcoholic substances, tobacco, inhalants or other intoxicants, and controlled dangerous substances, including prescription drugs, over the counter medications, look-alikes, and substances represented as controlled substances, and drug paraphernalia. Possession The student has on his/her person, or within the student's personal property, or has under the student's actual or constructive control, any of the substances listed in this offense. Consumption/Use The student has consumed, ingested, assimilated, inhaled, or injected any of the substances listed in this offense. Distribution/Sale A student has disseminated or transferred any of the substances listed in this offense with or without compensation. Possession with Intent to Distribute The student has in his/her possession, as previously defined, any of the substances listed in this offense in a



quantity or packaging to indicate intent to distribute or transfer to another person/people with or without compensation.

Arson/Fire**Level: 3, 4, 5, 6****Definition:**

Attempting to, aiding in, or setting any fire on school property. This includes unauthorized possession of a flammable liquid or materials with the intent to set fire

Assault on a Student**Level: 3, 4, 5, 6****Definition:**

Causing or attempting to cause physical injury to another student. For the purposes of this policy serious physical injury shall refer to any significant or aggravated bodily injury, including but not limited to broken bone(s), loss or chipping of teeth, loss or impairment of vision, loss of consciousness, internal injuries, scarring or other disfigurement, significant bleeding, lacerations resulting in sutures, significant bruising, severe or prolonged pain, any injury requiring hospitalization for any period of time, and/or any injury resulting in medical treatment beyond simple first aid procedures.

Assault on School Personnel or Other Adult**Level: 3, 4, 5****Definition:**

Causing or attempting to cause physical injury to any school employee or other adult.

Assault involving weapon/dangerous instrument/substance**Level: 3, 4, 5, 6**

Causing or attempting to cause serious physical injury to another student, school personnel or other adult by using a weapon, dangerous instrument, or dangerous substance.

Filming an Assault or Inappropriate Act**Level: 3, 4, 5, 6**

Students who record video of any physical altercations or other inappropriate acts at school or at school events will have their phones confiscated and could face disciplinary consequences including suspension. Any student who refuses to disperse while witnessing an incident is subject to suspension.

Bomb Threat**Level: 3, 4, 5, 6****Definition:**

The making of threats or providing false information concerning the presence of explosive material or devices on school property without cause in writing, in person, or by phone

**Bullying/Harassment****Level: 3, 4, 5****Definition:**

Any repeated, systematic pattern of gestures or written, electronic, or verbal communications, or any physical act or any threatening communication on school property; at any school sponsored function that places a student or school employee in actual and reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property; or creates or is certain to create a hostile environment by substantially interfering with or impairing a student's educational performance, opportunities, or benefits. A hostile environment means that the victim subjectively views the conduct as bullying or harassing behavior and the conduct is objectively severe or pervasive enough that a reasonable person would agree that it is bullying or harassing behavior.

Harassing or bullying behavior includes, but is not limited to, acts reasonably perceived as being motivated by any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, socioeconomic status, academic status, gender identity, physical appearance, sexual orientation, or mental, physical, developmental, or sensory disability, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics (additional information regarding this policy can be found in the Student Code of Conduct).

Contamination**Level: 3, 4, 5, 6****Definition:**

Putting any substances in another person's food or drink or on their body, which poisons or contaminates that food, drink, or person's body.

Destruction of Property/ Vandalism**Level: 1, 2, 3, 4****Definition:**

Damage, destruction, or defacement of property belonging to the school or others. The level of the offense may depend on whether the property is damaged by the student's action/s that was

Completely accidental

Unintentional but impactful (roughhousing, "playing")

Negligent (threw something intending for the trashcan but hit and broke a laptop, for example)

Intentional w purpose to cause harm or damage

Disrespect**Level: 1, 2, 3, 4****Definition:**

Inappropriate comments or physical gestures to others.

Disruption to Classroom/School**Level: 1, 2, 3, 4****Definition:**

Behavior (including possession of toys) that interferes with instruction, learning, and a safe and orderly environment, which includes, but is not limited to: chronic talking, throwing objects, horseplay, teasing, refusal to remain in seat, selling items without permission, rude noises, etc.



Dress Code Violation

- **1st offense:** Teacher conference with student
- **2nd offense:** Director conference with student
- **3rd offense:** Director meets with student and family to discuss behavior and expectations

Definition:

Clothing should cover the torso, midriff, and backside. It should have straps or sleeves. Clothing, imagery, and accessories that display or promote negative messages or that disrupt the school's educational environment are not permitted. These could include drugs, weapons, alcohol, or tobacco-related information, obscenities, put-downs, innuendo, polarizing political messages, or offensive graphics/words. If a teacher questions the appropriateness of a student's dress, the student will be referred to an administrator. If the administrator determines that the student is inappropriately dressed, the student will be given the opportunity to call home and have other clothing delivered (additional information regarding this policy can be found in the Student Code of Conduct).

Electronic Devices:

Level: 1, 2, 3, 4

Personal technology devices (including but not limited to smart phones, tablets, laptops, etc.) may be used by students for instructional purposes with the permission and under the supervision of the teachers and in compliance with the Acceptable Use Policy as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct. Possessing or using devices outside of this guidance can be subject to disciplinary consequences.

Failure to Report a Firearm or other weapon

Level: 3, 4, 5

Any student who has knowledge that another student possesses or intends to bring a firearm or other weapon on any school campus or to any school activity shall report this information to school or law enforcement authorities immediately



Exploris believes that gangs and gang-related activities pose a serious safety threat to students and staff members and can significantly disrupt the educational environment.

No student shall participate in any gang-related activities. For purposes of this policy:

- i. A gang is any ongoing organization, association, or group of three or more persons, whether formal or informal, having as one of its primary activities the commission of criminal acts, and having a common name or common identifying sign, colors or symbols.*
- ii. Gang-related activities are any activities engaged in by a student on behalf of an identified gang; to perpetuate the existence of an identified gang; to effect the common purpose and design of an identified gang; or to represent gang affiliation, loyalty, or solidarity.*

Conduct prohibited by this policy includes:

- i. Wearing, possessing, using, distributing, displaying, or selling any clothing, jewelry, emblems, badges, symbols, signs, visible tattoos and body markings, or other items, with the intent to convey or promote membership or affiliation in any gang;*
- ii. Communicating either verbally or non-verbally (gestures, handshakes, slogans, drawings, etc.), with the intent to convey or promote membership or affiliation in any gang;*
- iii. Tagging, or otherwise defacing school or personal property with symbols or slogans intended to convey or promote membership or affiliation in any gang;*
- iv. Requiring payment of protection, money or insurance, or otherwise intimidating or threatening any person in connection with gang-related activity;*
- v. Inciting other students to intimidate or to act with physical violence upon any other person in connection with gang-related activity;*
- vi. Soliciting others for gang membership;*
- vii. Committing or conspiring to commit illegal acts in connection with gang-related activity.*

Hazing

Level: 3, 4, 5

Definition:

An act that subjects a student to potential harm and is affiliated with initiation into a student organization or team. Hazing may involve an act committed against a student or a situation in which a student is coerced into committing an act.

Inappropriate Language

Level: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Definition:

Using vulgar, abusive, or threatening spoken or written language or gestures, such as use of profanity, making "finger guns," and sexual innuendo. Hate speech, defined as derogatory language directed at another person verbally or in writing and based on race, religion, sexuality, ability, country of origin or appearance will automatically trigger a level 3 consequence or above.

Inciting or Participating in a School Disturbance

Level: 3, 4, 5

Definition:

Intentionally participating in or recruiting others to cause a disruption to the school atmosphere

Indecent Exposure/Sexual Behavior

Level: 3, 4, 5, 6

Engaging in behavior which is indecent, consensual, overly affectionate, or of a sexual nature, including



possessing or transmitting sexually explicit images

Insubordination (Uncooperative Behavior)

Level: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Definition: Refusing to follow a reasonable request to a specific direction/instruction of an adult through disobedience, defiance, unruliness, or noncompliance which includes, but is not limited to, walking away when an adult is talking to you, talking back to an adult, refusal to work in class, refusal to turn off or put away an electronic device, or refusal to report to the office

Integrity

Level: 1, 2, 3, 4

Engaging in or attempting to engage in cheating, plagiarism, counterfeiting, falsification, violation of software copyright laws, or violation of computer access shall be subject to disciplinary action. The following actions are specifically prohibited:

- Cheating- giving or receiving of any unauthorized assistance on academic work
- Plagiarism- copying the language, structure, or idea of another and representing it as one's own work.
- Falsification- verbal or written statement of any untruth.
- Violation of software copyright laws- unauthorized duplication of computer software (computer piracy), printed material related to computer software, and/or the use of pirated computer software.

Leaving an Area and/or Leaving Class

Level: 1, 2, 3, 4

Definition:

Leaving the classroom or other assigned area on or off campus without permission from the adult in charge.

Matches/Lighter(s)

Level: 2, 3

Definition

Possession of matches or lighter(s) without attempting to use them. Using them falls under fire/arson.

Non-Compliance

Level: 1, 2, 3

Definition:

Student engages in a low or high intensity of failure to comply with adult requests. Individualized consequences may be stated in a behavior contract.

Physical Aggression/ Fighting

Level: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Physical Aggression: Taking any action or making comments or written messages that might reasonably be expected to result in a fight or physical altercation. **Fighting (physical altercation).** Fighting and physical altercation will automatically be moved to a level 3 or more.



School/Class Attendance

Level: 1, 2, 3

Being tardy to class, skipping class/school, leaving campus without permission, or being in an unauthorized area is prohibited. Out of school suspension should be used as a last resort as a consequence for violation of this rule

Sexual Assault

Level: 4, 5, 6

Definition: Physical sexual attack on school system staff, or another student

Sexual Harassment

Level: 3, 4, 5, 6

Definition:

Unwelcome sexual advances, sexual comments on physical appearance, unwanted touching, requests for sexual favors, and/or other inappropriate verbal, written, or physical conduct of a sexual nature, directed toward others. Includes "sexting" and sharing or asking for sexually explicit images. "Pantsing" "bra snaps" and other attempts to remove another person's clothing constitutes sexual harassment.

Stealing/Theft

Level: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Definition:

Taking, obtaining, or attempting to take property of another person or institution without permission or knowledge of the owner.

Trespassing

Level 3, 4, 5

Definition:

Being on school property without permission, including while suspended or expelled; includes breaking and entering.

Unsafe Actions

Level: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

Definition:

Any action that has the potential to cause danger or physical harm to self or others; including but not limited to reckless behavior in a vehicle or on a field experience, with or without intent to harm.



Weapons (including look-a-like and toy items)

Level: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

Definition:

A weapon is, by way of illustration and without limitation, one of the following:

Possession and/or use of:

Firearms

A firearm as defined in 18 U.S.C. 921 of the federal code. Examples include handguns, rifles, shotguns, and bombs. Refer to the federal code for the complete definition.

Knife

*This shall include, but is not limited to, switchblade knife, hunting knife, star knives, razors (including straight or retractable razor) **Gun** (including look-a-like gun)*

Any gun of any kind, loaded or unloaded, operable or inoperable, including any object other than a firearm which is a look-a-like of a gun. This shall include, but is not limited to, pellet guns, paintball guns, stun guns, tasers, BB guns, flare guns, nail guns, and airsoft guns.

Other Weapons

Any implement which could cause, or is intended to cause bodily harm, other than a firearm, gun or knife. Including but not limited to explosives, laser pointers, brass knuckles, box cutters, nunchaku, spiked gloves, spiked wristbands, any mace derivative, tear gas device, or pepper spray product.

Acceptable Use of School Technology

Students will have the opportunity to use The Exploris School's computer resources, which includes access to the Internet. Student use of technology develops skills in defining, accessing, managing, integrating, evaluating, creating, and communicating information. For computers that are accessed by minors, and in accordance with the Children's Internet Protection Act (federal law enacted December 2000), The Exploris School implemented technology protection measures to block or filter Internet access to pictures and sites that: (a) are obscene, (b) are child pornography, or (c) are harmful to minors. We are committed to providing safe and quality instructional opportunities for all students. The student is responsible for appropriate behavior while using computer resources, including the internet. Teachers monitor student activities while online for appropriateness and instructional relevance.

Students shall:

- Use the provided school network account in an ethical, responsible, and legal manner for school-related tasks only.
- Communicate with others using appropriate language in a courteous and respectful manner.
- Maintain the privacy of their personal information, such as name, address, phone number, account passwords, social security numbers, and respect the privacy of others.
- Use only user accounts and passwords provided by the school.
- Comply with copyright laws and intellectual property rights of others.
- Keep their screen easily visible to adults at all times.

Students shall not:

- Seek to override or bypass computer or network security provisions, including but not limited to turning off Hapara, Gaggle, or other school approved monitoring programs during school hours and on school devices.
- Use any network account for non-school related activities or to create accounts for personal use on websites.
- Access or attempt to access networks other than those approved
- Conduct unauthorized copying of licensed software; download or copy files without permission; or install personal software on computers.
- Plagiarize online content.
- Create fake accounts or attempt to impersonate others online
- Read, send, or forward personal email, chat messages, or instant messages.
- Use or import offensive, obscene, libelous, disruptive, or inflammatory language, pictures, or other material on any school computer or network.
- Remove or damage computer components.
- Knowingly access unauthorized computer workstations or software to tamper with or destroy data.
- Use electronic resources for commercial, personal purchasing, or illegal purposes.
- Use electronic resources for personal social media including blogging, social network sites, gaming, or to conduct cyber bullying.
- Share user account information or passwords with others.

Directed Internet use

- Requires appropriate adult supervision (i.e., staff members or their adult designees are present to the extent that active monitoring of student access to the Internet occurs).
- Internet use is permitted at all levels and in compliance with above stated conditions.
- Internet searches will be conducted using The Exploris School approved search engines and sites.

Penalties for Misuse of Technology

Consequences for violations of the Acceptable Use Policy for School Technology are addressed in the Code of Student Conduct (Computer Misuse).

Attendance & Tardies

All students are expected to attend school on all days of the established school calendar as approved annually by the Exploris Board of Directors and in compliance with North Carolina school attendance laws. The entire process of education requires a regular continuity of instruction, classroom participation, learning experiences, and study in order to reach the goal of



maximum educational benefits for each individual child. It is particularly true in a project-based environment that regular attendance is vital to achieving high academic outcomes given the rich educational discussions, fieldwork, and visiting experts that are a part of the day-to-day experience. Since many classroom activities are collaborative experiences, when one student is absent, the whole group is affected. Students who are frequently absent find it difficult to keep up. Missing a day of school means missing a crew activity that cannot be replicated at home.

If a student is absent from school, parents **must** contact their Crew Teacher through email stating the child's full name, the reason for the absence, and the presumed return date to school. All absences from school are considered unexcused until a written or emailed excuse is received from the parent/guardian. Upon receipt of written notification, absences may be considered excused for only the following reasons, in accordance with Exploris School Board policy and state law:

- Illness or Injury
- Quarantine
- Death in the Immediate Family
- Religious Observances
- Medical or Dental Appointments (with a note from the doctor)

In accordance with North Carolina's compulsory attendance law, G.S. 115C-378 parents will be notified after a student has accumulated 3 unexcused absences. Parents will be notified in writing when a student has accumulated 6 unexcused absences. If a student accumulates 10 unexcused absences, parents will be called to attend a Truancy Hearing. For more information on the Board's Absentee and Tardy policy, please go to the "Policies" section on our school website, found within the Family Resources menu.

Likewise, tardiness and early dismissals disrupt the learning process, for both the tardy student and his/her classmates. Please do all that you can to make sure your child is in class to the greatest extent possible. Please schedule family trips, appointments, etc. after school hours or during breaks as identified on the school calendar. Students arriving after the start time are considered tardy and must sign in at the school office. Disciplinary consequences may apply if tardiness is excessive.

If an emergency arises, and a parent/guardian needs to check a student out, it is important that the parent/guardian communicates with the child's crew teacher in case an off-campus trip is scheduled for that day. If someone other than a parent or legal guardian is to pick up a child during the school day, the parent/guardian must provide information to the Exploris teachers in writing about whom, when, and why that person will be picking up the child. **Except for emergency situations, the office will NOT send messages to students about pick-up, nor are students allowed to have cell phones on during the school day. Please make arrangements ahead of time.**

There will be NO EARLY DISMISSAL after 2:45 p.m. After 2:45, your child will not be dismissed until the published dismissal times. During that time, all students should be dismissed via the walk-up or carpool lines.

Bullying Policy & Procedure

State Law regarding bullying

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school-aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time.

In order to be considered bullying, the behavior must be aggressive and include:

- An Imbalance of Power: Kids who bully use their power—such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity—to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.
- Repetition: Bullying behaviors happen more than once and create a pattern of behaviors. Some specific examples of behavior that could be considered bullying include, but are not limited to; teasing, slurs, innuendo, derogatory remarks, name calling, spreading rumors, and circulating written materials or pictures that are either derogatory or insulting to an individual or group.

Reporting Harassing and Bullying Behavior

1. Any student who believes that he or she has been harassed or bullied in violation of this policy should report such behavior immediately to a teacher, counselor, or administrator.
2. A school employee who has witnessed or has reliable information that a student has been subject to any act of harassing or bullying behavior shall report the incident asap to the director on site
3. Any person may report an act of harassment or bullying anonymously using the [“Say Something” state-wide anonymous reporting system](#) or [“Anonymous Bullying Report Form,”](#) which is a direct link from the menu on The Exploris School website. However, disciplinary action may not be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

Investigation of Bullying

Reports of bullying activity will be investigated by the Director on site and staff. Parents of the participants and victims will be notified. If warranted, formal disciplinary action will be taken by the Director on site as outlined in the level of consequences.



Cyberbullying

Instances of reported cyberbullying during the school day, on school grounds and over school devices will be handled in the manner described above. If the school is informed of inappropriate online comments/postings by students that happen outside of the school day, outside of the school network, or off the school campus, the following guidelines will apply:

- It is beyond our scope to police all online content.
- We will offer support to the student/family who reports, which may include consultations with our counseling staff, recommendations on tools to block and limit access to specific sites or tools, and recommendations on how to contact the hosting platform to report comments and activities.
- We will notify all parties as a courtesy, with the understanding that we do not evaluate, investigate, authenticate, follow up, or discipline such reports.
- We will follow up to see if the behaviors are carrying into the school environment.
- We will help students clarify the difference between bullying, which is behavior that is sustained, organized, creates a hostile environment, and random instances of unpleasant social media comments or conflicting political or social opinions.

Corporal Punishment / Physical Restraint

Corporal punishment is defined as action taken by school employees to spank or otherwise physically handle a student in any way to purposely inflict punishment. **No corporal punishment will be administered to students by anyone in the school.** Physical restraint is reasonable and appropriate physical intervention or force by trained staff may be employed as necessary for the following purposes:

- To quell a disturbance threatening physical injury to others
- To obtain possession of weapons or other dangerous objects upon a student or within the control of a student
- For the purpose of self-defense
- For the protection of persons or property
- Any such acts are not in conflict with the legal definition of child abuse and will not be construed to constitute corporal punishment within the meaning and intention of this policy.

Dress Code Policy and Procedures

Throughout our world, cultures set standards and norms for dress. Context is one factor that determines the appropriateness of clothing choices. The standard for what's acceptable when attending a sporting event is typically different from what's acceptable in a workplace. What's acceptable at a shopping mall is typically different from what's acceptable at a wedding or in a

place of worship. In addition to being a place of learning and work, Exploris serves as a demonstration site for educators from around the world. As such, Exploris's expectations for student dress reflects that context. Students should wear clothing that is well-suited to the school environment.

Learning at Exploris often happens off campus and may involve long walks or experiences in natural environments, in workplace settings, or even on religious sites. As such, shoes and clothing should be chosen carefully so that students are prepared to engage in these experiences and follow the requests and guidelines from any host site. The appropriateness and safety of footwear and clothing for a particular activity will be determined by the child's supervising teacher. If it is determined that a student is not appropriately dressed for the activity, the parent will be contacted for a change of clothing/shoes. If alternate clothing/shoes are not available, the student may miss out on the activity.

Clothing should cover the torso and backside. Clothing, imagery, and accessories that display or promote negative messages are not permitted. These could include drug, weapon, alcohol, or tobacco-related information, obscenities, put-downs, innuendo, political messages, or offensive graphics/words. If a teacher questions the appropriateness of a student's dress, the student will be referred to an administrator. If the administrator determines that the student is inappropriately dressed, the student will be given the opportunity to call a parent and have other clothing delivered. If the parent/guardian cannot be reached the school will provide clothing for the student when possible. Habitual violations will be considered willful disrespect and non-compliance on the part of the student and formal disciplinary action will be taken:

- **1st offense:** Teacher conference with student
- **2nd offense:** Director on site conference with student
- **3rd offense:** Director on site meets with student and parent to discuss behavior

Colognes, Perfumes, Body Lotions, and Sprays

Students should not bring cologne, perfume, scented lotions, and spray deodorant products to school. These items and their aerosol propellants can trigger asthma and other allergic reactions in sensitive individuals. If they are found at school, they may be confiscated under the guidelines above. If they are applied at home before arriving at school, they should be applied sparingly with a reminder that our classrooms and hallways are crowded and students often work in close quarters with one another. Sunscreen, solid, and roll-on deodorant are exceptions.

Drugs and Alcohol

The possession and use of illicit substances is illegal and harmful. The Exploris School and Board of Directors prohibits the unlawful possession, use, or distribution of illicit substances on school premises or as part of any school activities. Compliance with drug and alcohol laws is



mandatory for all parents, students, and staff. Information on drug and alcohol counseling is available to all students upon request from the school counselor. Students who are caught with drugs, alcohol, and vapors are subject to drug testing to ensure the safety of the student. The Exploris School will provide the cost, location and procedures necessary to the parent/guardian for the student to return to school and ensure safety of the student.

Extended Suspension for Students with Disabilities

When the school system seeks to suspend students with disabilities for more than ten days, the Individual Education Program (IEP)/504 team must meet within ten days of the student's removal from school. The purpose of this meeting is to determine whether or not the behavior was a manifestation of the student's disability.

If the IEP/504 team determines that the behavior is related to the student's disability, the student is returned to school immediately.

For students with IEPs:

- Regardless of whether the conduct is related to the disability, if the incident for which the student is being disciplined involves a dangerous weapon, a controlled dangerous substance, or serious bodily injury, the school system can unilaterally place a special education student in an alternative education setting for up to 45 days.
- If the IEP team determines that the conduct is not related to the disability, the student is subject to the regular discipline procedures explained herein.

Student Conflict/Peer Mediation

Students are encouraged to work with one another, teachers, the counselor, and administrators to resolve conflicts and prevent hostility. Peer mediation is a student-based, voluntary process for resolving conflict among students, grade kindergarten through 8th grade. The school counselor or Directors can assist with this process. Peer mediation supports safe teaching and learning environments by increasing student responsibility for behavior and decreasing time spent on discipline. In some cases, students may be given the option to meet with mediators or other outside consultants who are trained and meet with individuals or groups of students in pairs. The goal is to repair relationships and reduce negative peer interactions that interfere with the learning environment.

Items from Home

Students should only bring appropriate academic-related items to school. Unrelated magazines, toys, trading cards, etc. should remain at home. Any items **(including cell phones)** that disrupt



the learning environment in any way or present a safety hazard will be confiscated according to the following guidelines:

- **1st offense:** Teacher will collect and return to the student at the end of the school day on the first occasion (Warning)
- **2nd offense:** Items will be held in the office until a parent/guardian can pick them up on the second occasion and their after. (Family Involvement)
- **3rd offense:** Item will be held in the office. Director meets with the student and parent to discuss the behavior. (Office Referral)
- **Additional offenses:** Items will be held in the office and additional consequences will be applied as outlined in the code of student conduct.

Cell phones must be turned off when school is in session and during before/aftercare. Cell phones are not to be used during the school day except when requested by their teacher for educational purposes. Teachers may require students to place cell phones in grade level designated areas.

Responsibility for Personal Property

All personal property, including personal computers, brought to school is brought at the owner's risk. The Exploris School cannot assume responsibility for any property belonging to students. Distracting or inappropriate objects will be taken from a student and returned at the end of the day. Repeated violations will require a parent conference. Students should not bring large sums of money to school. If it is necessary to bring a large sum of money, that money should be taken to the office. Please note that in recent years the rise in popularity of AirPods and other in-ear Bluetooth devices has also corresponded with a rise in loss and theft of these small and hard-to-distinguish items. Students are encouraged to leave these items at home or secured in their bookbags during the day. It is also best practice to label all personal items in a permanent manner so as to distinguish them from other similar items if the need arises.

School visits and Classroom Observations:

Federal Law under IDEA and ESSA mandate that parents have the right to schedule an observation as part of their meaningful participation in determining their child's educational placement. These observations can help parents gather key information about their child's behavior, classroom dynamics, and the appropriateness of a placement.

Observations may not interfere with the delivery of instruction or disrupt the learning environment. Any Exit conferences with the teacher or campus director/designee must occur at a prescribed time away from students and after instructional time.

Visitors may not take photos, take video, or audio recordings while in the classroom observing. Any notes taken during the visit are the presumed opinion of the observer and are not considered an accurate written record of the classroom environment or events.



Upon arrival, visitors must follow established procedures for entering the main building including but not limited to: Signing in, presenting a photo ID, and wearing a visitors' badge. The visitor badge must be worn at all times and placed in a visible location. Visitors are to be escorted to the classroom by a staff member prior to the start of class. At the conclusion of the observation a staff member should be called to escort the parent/guardian back to the office.

Parents/guardians may not have access to student performance or behavioral records outside of their own child's. In addition, the campus director and/or their designee should discuss with the parent/guardian the importance of maintaining confidentiality regarding observations of other students within the classroom

School Counselor

The Exploris school counselor serves as a resource to students, staff, and community. The school counselor's duties range from counseling individual students, to working with parents and outside agencies to secure and promote the social and emotional health of our students. Additionally, the school counselor works closely with teachers, instructional support staff, and administrators to help identify and support students that may have unique learning needs.

Confidentiality in Counseling:

When a student indicates that he or she is thinking about hurting himself or herself or other students, school personnel are required to take action to ensure the safety of the student or other students. This action may include sharing of information with the school principal, parents, and other outside agencies. No statement, oral or written, made by a student seeking counseling for any form of drug abuse may be used as admissible evidence against him/her in any proceedings.

Section 6: School, Parent, and Student Rights and Responsibilities

McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and Policy

The [McKinney-Vento Act \(42 U.S.C. § 11431 et seq.\)](#) is a federal law that addresses the needs of children and youth experiencing homelessness. The law defines homeless to include the following temporary living situations due to hardship:

- Living with a friend, relative, or other person
- Hotel or motel
- Shelter or transitional housing
- Car, park, or other public place
- Campground or inadequate home
- Youth living on their own, runaway youth, or youth kicked out of the home

The McKinney-Vento Act addresses educational challenges created by homelessness and guarantees students the right to enroll, attend, and succeed in school. The law places the responsibility for guaranteeing the rights of students experiencing homelessness in states and school districts (NCHE, 2014).

As a requirement of the federal law, all public school districts in the United States must appoint a liaison that will ensure compliance with the federal law. For more information, contact Exploris's McKinney-Vento Coordinator at counselor@exploris.org and click on the links below to learn more about parent rights, student rights, and the dispute resolution process.

- [Parent Rights, Student Rights, Dispute Resolution Policy](#)
- [Dispute Resolution Form](#)

Non-Discrimination / Non-Harassment of Students and Staff

It is the policy of The Exploris School to maintain a safe and supportive school environment for all students and staff, free from harassment, intimidation, and/or bullying and free from discrimination due to actual or perceived race, color, creed, ethnicity, national origin, citizenship/immigration status, religion, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, disability, or weight. The school also extends all programs and activity possibilities to students based upon their individual interests and potential without discrimination according to handicapping conditions.

Discrimination means any act or failure to act that unreasonably and unfavorably differentiates treatment of others based solely on their membership in a socially distinct group or category, such as race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or gender identity or by association with a



person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics. Discrimination may be intentional or unintentional.

Harassment, including sexual or gender-based harassment, is not limited to specific situations or relationships. It may occur between fellow students or co-workers, between supervisors and subordinates, between employees and students, or between non-employees, including visitors and volunteers, and employees or students. Harassment may occur between members of different genders or the same gender. Complaints alleging discrimination or harassment based on a person's biological or gender identity must be handled in accordance with procedures outlined in our bullying and harassment policy.

Right to Confidentiality of Access to Student Records

The *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)* guarantees to parents/guardians of students under 18 and the eligible student (18 and older) the right to:

- Inspect and review the educational records of the student within 45 days after the day The Exploris School receives a request for access.
- Request the school to disclose information in the educational records to persons/agencies outside the school.
- Request the amendment of the educational records to ensure that the records are not inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the privacy or other rights of the student.
- File with the US Department of Education a complaint concerning alleged failures by the school to comply with the requirements of FERPA.

Parents/Guardians or eligible students who wish to inspect educational records should submit a written request to the Director Team that identifies the records they wish to inspect. One of the directors will make arrangements for access and notify the parent/guardian or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

Parents/Guardians or eligible students who wish to amend the education record should write to the Director Team and clearly identify the part of the record they want changed and specify why it should be changed. If the school decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent/guardian or eligible student, the school will notify the parent/guardian or eligible student of the decision and of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent/guardian or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

The right to provide written consent before the school discloses personally identifiable information (PII) from the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official includes a person employed by the school as an administrator, educator, or support staff member, or a person serving on the School Board. A school official also may include a volunteer, contractor, or consultant who, while not employed by the school, performs an institutional service or function for which the school would otherwise use its own employees and who is under the direct control of the school with respect to the use and maintenance of PII from education records, such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist. A school official typically has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

Upon request, the school discloses education records without consent to officials of another school or school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll, or is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes of the student's enrollment or transfer. The Exploris School will forward such records on request.

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

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

Rights under the No Child Left Behind Act

Parents and Students have the right to the professional qualifications of the school's classroom teachers. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 governs elementary and secondary education, allows for parents to ask for certain information about their child's classroom teachers, and requires the school to give this information to parents in a timely manner if they ask for it.

[Specifics regarding Parents Rights to Know.](#)

Section 504

As a parent/guardian, if you believe there might be a disability, please reach out to your child's crew teacher or our 504 coordinator (Exploris School Counselor) by contacting the school.

Many students have conditions or disorders that are not readily apparent to others. They may include conditions such as specific learning disabilities, diabetes, epilepsy and allergies. Hidden disabilities such as low vision, poor hearing, heart disease or chronic illness may not be obvious, but if the disabilities are not properly diagnosed and they substantially limit that child's ability to receive an appropriate education as defined by Section 504, they may be considered to have an

“impairment” under Section 504 standards. As a result, these students, regardless of their intelligence, will be unable to fully demonstrate their ability or attain educational benefits equal to that of non-disabled students (The Civil Rights of Students with Hidden Disabilities under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973). For more information about protecting students with disabilities please visit [US Dept of Education- Office of Civil Rights](#).

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a national law that protects qualified individuals from discrimination based on their disability. The nondiscrimination requirements of the law apply to employers and organizations that receive financial assistance from any Federal department or agency. It is a civil rights legislation for persons with disabilities, designed to prevent any form of discrimination based on disabilities, who are otherwise qualified or protected. For more information [click here](#). If a student qualifies, then a 504 plan is created.

A Section 504 Plan is a legal document falling under the provisions of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. It is designed to plan individualized services to assist students with disabilities who are in a regular education setting. A 504 Plan is not an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) as is required for exceptional students. However, if the student no longer needs special instruction and is moving to a regular education placement s/he could be placed under a 504 Plan.

How Does an Individual Qualify as Disabled Under Section 504?

There is no specific mention of learning disabilities in Section 504, however the law defines a person as disabled if he or she:

- has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities,
- has a record of such an impairment, or
- is regarded as having such an impairment. 28 CFR Sec. 36.104.

Learning, speaking, seeing, walking, and hearing among others listed in The Americans With Disabilities Amendments Act are all considered major life activities. As a general rule, if a child is [eligible for services under IDEA](#) (Individuals With Disabilities Education Act) he or she qualifies for protection under Section 504. However, not all students covered by Section 504 are eligible for IDEA-related services. Section 504 has a broader definition of “disability” as compared to the disabilities covered under IDEA and so it pertains to many more people.

Section 504 requires that school districts provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to qualified students in their jurisdictions who have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, regardless of the nature or severity of the disability. Under Section 504, FAPE means providing regular or special education and related aids and services designed to meet the student’s individual educational needs as adequately as the needs of nondisabled students are met.



Resources and Dispute Procedures for Section 504:

- [National Center for Learning Disabilities- 504](#)
- [Parent and Educator Resource Guide for Section 504](#)
- [Section 504 Overview](#)
- [Section 504 Parent and Student Rights](#)
- [Non-Discrimination/Non-Harrasment of students and staff](#)
- [Procedural Safeguards](#)
- [Formal Grievance Procedure](#)

Special Education: Child Find for Students with Disabilities

The Exploris School is required to locate and identify young people with physical, emotional or intellectual disabilities who may be in need of special education and related services. Parents of children aged two years old or younger who may be in need of such services should contact the Exceptional Children Coordinator or School Counselor so that we may assist you in contacting Head Start.

The *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004* ensures that all eligible children with a disability who are in need of special education receive a free appropriate public education. IDEA mandates that eligible students receive individualized instruction specially designed to meet the unique needs of the learner.

To the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or other educational facilities, are to be educated with children who are not disabled. In addition, to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities are to participate with non-disabled peers in both non-academic and extracurricular activities. Unless the individualized education program for the child with disabilities requires some other arrangement, the child is to be educated in the school that they would attend if they were not disabled. Special classes, separate schools or removal of children requiring special education from the regular educational environment shall occur only when the needs of a child are such that education in the regular classes cannot be accomplished satisfactorily.

What do I do if I think my child might need specially designed instruction?

At Exploris, we provide special education and related services according to the federal mandates of the [Individual with Disabilities Education Act \(IDEA\)](#) and the regulations of the North Carolina Public School Law, Article 9.

If you would like to request that your child be evaluated for special education services or if you have questions regarding your child's IEP and services please contact your child's teacher of record or our Exceptional Children Coordinator.



Resources and Dispute procedures for IDEA

- [Parent Rights and Responsibilities](#)
- [Garantias de Procedimiento Manual de Derechos de los Padres](#)
- [North Carolina Dept. Public Instruction Dispute Resolution](#)
- [Formal Grievance Procedures](#): See The Exploris School Grievance Procedure

Student Rights & Supports

School Problems

If a student has a problem related to discipline, security, personal safety or welfare, or vandalism, the student should:

1. Tell the nearest teacher, adult, or staff member.
2. Talk with the director on site or counselor right away.
3. Express feelings. It is natural to feel worried and upset. Talk to someone who will listen and understand perhaps your crew teacher and/or counselor. It is important to talk with a trusted adult.
4. Ask to talk with the school counselor, who can help students learn ways to deal with problems so that they may feel safer and more comfortable when faced with a similar problem in the future.
5. In addition to alerting school personnel, a student should tell their parent/guardian about the problem.

Personal Problems

For help with personal problems which may affect a student's school life or activities:

1. If possible, discuss the problem with parents/guardians.
2. If a student and their parents/guardians cannot solve the problem. The student may speak with a teacher with whom they feel comfortable.
3. The school counselor is trained to offer help with personal problems. The counselor can also lead students/families to other resources that they may not be aware of.
4. The Campus Director will also be able to discuss the problem with the student and attempt to work on a solution. If they are unable to do so, they will seek additional assistance.

[Gender Support Guidelines](#): These guidelines are intended to help our school promote the educational and social integration of transgender, non-binary and gender non-conforming students and ensure a safe learning environment free from discrimination and harassment. While inadvertent slips and honest mistakes may occur from time-to-time, the intentional and persistent

refusal to respect a student's gender identity or chosen name and pronoun is prohibited and may constitute discrimination, harassment, or bullying.

Title I and Federal Programs

***What is Title I, Part A?** Title I, Part A (Title I) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) provides financial assistance to local educational agencies (LEAs) and schools with high numbers or high percentages of children from low-income families to help ensure that all children meet challenging state academic standards. Federal funds are currently allocated through four statutory formulas that are based primarily on census poverty estimates and the cost of education in each state.*

In support of strengthening student academic achievement, The Exploris School receives Title I, Part A funds and therefore must jointly develop with, agree on with, and distribute to parents and family members of participating children a written parent and family engagement policy, agreed on by such parents, that shall describe the means of carrying out the requirements of The Every Students Succeeds Act (ESSA) Section 1116.

Please click on this link to access the policy: [Parent Family Engagement Policy](#) | [Parent Family Engagement Policy \(Español\)](#)

School-Parent Compact and Parents Right to Know

In order to fulfill the requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA) of the Elementary and Secondary Act (ESEA), The Exploris School agrees to implement the formation of a partnership between the home, school, and community; recognizes that the family is the child's first and most important teacher; and provide students with the skills to meet the challenging academic standards required by the North Carolina State Department of Public Instruction.

- Each year, The Exploris School will ensure the School-Parent Compact is updated in collaboration with stakeholders and provided to all parents to review and sign.
- As a parent you have the right to request information regarding student participation in state-required assessments [in accordance with ESSA's Parents Right to Know](#).
- Each year, The Exploris School shall provide notice to parents of the school's written parent and family engagement policy and parents' right to know.



Appendix I: The Exploris School Grievance Policy

Includes Grievance Procedure for Section 504 and Special Education (*Individuals with Disability Education Act*):

Article I: Introduction and Values

The Exploris School seeks to promote harmony among its employees, faculty, students, and family members and to encourage equitable solutions to problems arising among them. The School believes that most concerns and differences are best addressed through open and honest communication conducted in an informal, respectful, and civil manner and that effective resolution depends on direct, prompt and constructive dialogue. The following procedures are adopted to meet these goals.

This policy utilizes the term “family member” to denote a parent or guardian with direct custodial responsibilities for a student, and is meant to include adult family members with formal or informal guardianship responsibilities of the student.

Those seeking to submit a formal grievance are required to first consult with the Family and Employee Liaison (see Article III, Section 2 of this policy). The Family and Employee Liaison’s role is to impartially facilitate the grievance process set forth in Article II of this policy, as well as support the family member or employee in producing the required documents and adhering to required timelines.

Definition of a Grievance: A grievance is a formal complaint regarding specific decisions made in violation of school policy by school personnel that alleges that such decisions have adversely affected the person making the complaint or the dependent of the person making the complaint. A grievance can be made when a student or parent believes that school and board policy or law has been misapplied, misinterpreted, or violated. The term “grievance” does not include any matter for which the method of review is prescribed by law, for which there is a more specific board policy providing a process for addressing the concern, or upon which the board is without authority to act.

Article II: Parent Grievance Procedures

Section 1: Responsibility and Authority of the School Leadership Team

The Board recognizes that effective school governance requires that the primary responsibility for issues involving student discipline, curriculum, assessment and promotion, and other day-to-day decisions regarding school management lies with the faculty, staff, and Leadership Team of the School and these individuals are best suited to resolve conflicts that arise with respect to these issues. The Board has the authority to appoint, employ, and remove the Director



Team, but primary responsibility and authority over faculty, staff, and volunteer organizations of the School are vested in the Director Team. The Board, therefore, will exercise any authority in this policy conservatively and narrowly so as not to usurp the authority granted to the Director Team.

Section 2: Informal Procedures

A family member should first attempt to resolve any grievance through discussion with the relevant teacher(s) or other involved persons. If the family member's concern is not adequately addressed through an informal discussion with the teacher and/or staff involved, the family member should next attempt to resolve the grievance with the appropriate Director, if applicable. If a grievance cannot be resolved in an informal manner, the family member may initiate a formal grievance procedure.

Section 3: Formal Procedures

In instances where informal means are ineffective or otherwise not feasible, the School offers these more formal grievance procedures. Grievance proceedings and information shall be kept confidential at all levels to the extent possible and permitted by law. A family member grievance is a formal written claim by a family member or group of family members (including from multiple families) identifying the concern, identifying the individual or group's resolution attempts, and identifying any law, policy, or practice that is implicated by the concern. No one shall retaliate against a family member who files a grievance under this policy (or against a student whose family member files a grievance) in good faith.

Level One – Supervisor Request and Conference. A family member may, by written request, seek a formal conference with the relevant supervisor to address an unresolved grievance. The request shall succinctly describe the specific grievance(s) and related details, and shall identify any specific policy, rule, regulation or law believed to have been violated, and shall provide other relevant information to help the supervisor adequately understand the nature of the grievance.

1. The request shall be filed within fifteen (15) business days of the most recent incident(s) or last informal attempt to resolve the grievance, provided that such attempt was made within ten (10) business days of the last incident.
2. Following receipt of the written request, the supervisor shall, whenever possible, conduct a conference with the aggrieved family member(s) within ten (10) business days of receipt of the written request. Within five (5) business days following the conference, the supervisor will state in writing his or her decision with regard to the grievance and a copy will be given to the family member.



Level Two - Appeal to the Director Team. If the grievance is not resolved, the family member(s) may appeal the supervisor's decision in writing to the Director Team if the entirety of the Director Team was not involved in the Level One Conference.

1. The appeal must be made within five (5) business days following receipt of the supervisor's written Level One response to the grievant. The Director Team will review the grievance and conduct an informal investigation as necessary.
2. The Director Team shall issue a written response to the family member and the Level One supervisor/staff within ten (10) business days following receipt of the written appeal.
3. Decisions of the Director Team are final and not subject to further appeal, except in the following instances:
 - a. Decisions involving an alleged violation of a contractual right;
 - b. Decisions involving an alleged violation by the School of state or federal law including Section 504, special education, or IDEA;
 - c. Decisions based on allegations of conduct by the Director Team in violation of law or school policy.
4. The Board of Directors, through its Grievance Committee, retains discretion to determine whether an alleged violation involves a “final” or “appealable” decision by the Director Team. The Grievance Committee may consider all the available evidence in the record established at the time of the decision and any other evidence it deems necessary for consideration. In addition, the Grievance Committee has the authority to grant a discretionary appeal in exceptional circumstances.

Level Three - Appeal to the Board Grievance Committee (Third Party Representation):

Appeal of Rights and Discretionary Appeals. If a family member is not satisfied with the disposition of the grievance at Level Two, they may, within five (5) business days of receiving notice of the decision of the Director Team submit a written request to the Grievance Committee Chairperson to appeal the Director Team decision and to request a formal hearing.

1. Within five (5) business days of receiving the written request for appeal, the Grievance Committee Chairperson shall issue a written notice to the parent and the Director Team indicating whether the Director Team determination is “final” in nature or whether the Board, in its discretion or by right of appeal, shall grant a hearing. The notice shall also specify, if a hearing is granted, the time it will occur and guidelines by which it will be conducted.
2. When a hearing is granted, a panel of the Grievance Committee consisting of at least three people shall hear the grievance within ten (10) business days of the date the Chairperson’s notice is issued to the family member.
3. The Grievance Committee panel may affirm, reverse, or modify the decision of the Director Team or refer the grievance to the full School Board. The decision of the Grievance Committee or the full Board is final.



4. Following the hearing, the family member and the Director Team shall be informed in writing of the panel's decision within five (5) business days after the hearing, whenever feasible.

Article III: Grievance Committee Structure and Rules

Section 1: Composition of the Grievance Committee

The Grievance Committee shall consist of no fewer than three members of the Board of Directors, appointed by the Chairperson of the Board of Directors and confirmed by a vote of the full Board. One member of the Grievance Committee shall be designated by the Chairperson of the Board of Directors to serve as the Chairperson of the Committee.

Section 2: Family and Employee Liaison

Annually at a meeting of the Board, one member of the Board of Directors shall be appointed by the Chairperson of the Board of Directors and confirmed by a vote of the full Board to serve as Family and Employee Liaison. This individual shall not sit on the Grievance Committee. His or her primary role will be to help family members and employees understand the grievance procedures and to provide process guidance to aggrieved parties. Those who approach other members of the Board of Directors with grievances will be referred to the Family and Employee Liaison.

Section 3: Training

On an annual basis, all members of the Grievance Committee and the Family and Employee Liaison will receive training provided by an attorney or other qualified individual with regard to confidentiality, impartiality, and other topics relevant to effective execution of their duties.

Section 4: Timelines

Failure of a family member or employee to comply with the procedural timelines listed in this policy may result in denial of a grievance request. Extensions in timelines may be granted if the relevant decision-maker determines there is a reasonable need for such extension. Similarly, the timelines for actions to be taken by school personnel or Board members may be extended, with notice to the aggrieved party, when there is a reasonable need for extension or extension is in the best interest of an effective process.

Section 5: Forms

The Director Team or Board may develop one or more grievance forms to facilitate and document the various steps of the grievance process.



2023-2024

Family & Student Handbook



Appendix II: Acceptable Use Policy for School Technology

We expect students to use all electronic resources, laptops, and other handheld devices brought from home (including phones) for educational purposes only as approved by the teachers while on the school's campus. If you choose to bring a personal device to use at school you may be required to install school approved monitoring software, programs, browsers, or extensions for school use. Access is a privilege, not a right. As a technology user, students are expected to act in a considerate and responsible manner. Misuse of the network resources or internet will result in consequences for the inappropriate behavior, and access may be restricted.

Students (if able) should read the following rules of network etiquette and then electronically sign the corresponding section of the re-enrollment form to show that you understand your responsibilities. Family members should read this section aloud to students who are unable to read it to themselves.

While using the Exploris network resources, technology, and the internet on school properties:

- I will communicate politely. I will treat others with respect. I will not harass or attack others, or use expressions of bigotry, racism, sexism, or other types of hurtful language, pictures, or expressions. I will not send, display, or use profanity, obscenity, sexually explicit, or offensive material.
- I will use my school email account for schoolwork and educational purposes only. I will not use that email address to set up other accounts unless given explicit direction from a teacher to do so.
- I will protect privacy and safety by not disclosing private or personal information about myself and or others on the Internet. I will never falsify my identity.
- I will keep my password private and will not attempt to use another person's password.
- I will use the network/Internet and other school-given electronic resources for school-related, educational activities as assigned by my teachers. This also means that I will not attempt to use the computer to buy or sell any products, for illegal activity, or for political purposes.
- I will not tamper with or change a computer file that isn't mine, copy or download files or programs, or modify the computer's settings without permission from my teachers.
- I will recognize and respect the intellectual property of others by not plagiarizing or using copyrighted materials from the Internet without permission of the author. I will cite the source when appropriate.
- I will respect the integrity of the Exploris network system. I will enter authorized systems only. I will never try to circumvent security measures on either Exploris's Network or computers at any remote site. I will not tamper with or alter the system in such a way that would disrupt the network.



- I will use equipment responsibly. I will not attempt to damage or vandalize the computer hardware, electronic systems, software, or networks.
- I will not make, or attempt to make, any malicious attempt to harm or destroy data of another user, including the uploading, downloading, or creation of computer viruses.
- I will not turn off or circumvent any school monitoring programs such as Hapara or Gaggle.

Consequences for Unacceptable Use of the School Technology

If I violate any part of this policy, the school administrator will evaluate the severity and level of the violation and determine the appropriate level of consequence warranted. Consequences will be assigned in accordance with our school Code of Conduct outlined in the Family and Student Handbook.