

# MARY MCLEOD BETHUNE ELEMENTARY CHARTER SCHOOL

THE BETHUNE WAY



## STUDENT & PARENT HANDBOOK

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2026-2027

PRE-K-GRADE 8

**Mary C. Haynes-Smith**  
Principal/CEO

**Dear Mary McLeod Bethune Elementary Charter Families,**

Welcome to the 2026–27 school year! We are thrilled to begin another year filled with high expectations, shared goals, and a deep commitment to student success. As always, our top priority is providing your child with an exceptional educational experience.

We recognize that strong family partnerships are key to a thriving school community. Your support and involvement, along with the dedication of our talented staff, play a vital role in helping every student reach their full potential. As a member of the Bethune Family, you are joining a team of highly qualified educators who are committed to monitoring student progress, ensuring consistent attendance, and delivering high-quality instruction.

We are proud of our school's future and deeply value the contributions of our families, staff, and community partners. Choosing the right educational environment for your child is an important decision, and we thank you for trusting us. We encourage you to stay engaged throughout the year—monitor your child's academic progress and participate in school events and activities.

This handbook has been thoughtfully prepared to help you become familiar with our school policies, procedures, and expectations. While it may not address every question, it serves as a helpful resource for both students and families. Please take time to review it carefully and keep it accessible for future reference.

Maintaining a strong school environment requires cooperation, communication, and shared responsibility. We invite you to connect with our teachers or staff members at any time for clarification or support.

We look forward to partnering with you for a successful 2026–2027 school year!

Sincerely,

Mrs. Mary Haynes-Smith

## ***The Faculty and Staff of Mary McLeod Bethune Elementary Charter School***

### **About the School**

Mary McLeod Bethune Elementary Charter School (Bethune) is a nonprofit public charter school located in the Gentilly neighborhood of New Orleans. Serving students in grades Pre-K through 8, Bethune is dedicated exclusively to the academic and personal development of its students. With an enrollment of approximately 635 students from across the Greater New Orleans area, Bethune operates as an open-enrollment school. All applications for admission must be submitted through the *OneApp* enrollment system.

### **General School Information**

- **Phone:** 504-324-7076
- **Fax:** 504-949-2665
- **Email:** [mmbec@bethunenola.org](mailto:mmbec@bethunenola.org)
- **Website:** [www.bethunenola.com](http://www.bethunenola.com)
- **Hours of Operation:** 7:30 AM – 3:45 PM

### **Our Mission**

**At Bethune, our mission is to promote academic excellence by supporting the educational development of all learners.**

### **Our Vision**

**Our vision is to empower students to become lifelong learners and productive citizens in a diverse and ever-evolving global society.**

### **Our Commitment to Students**

1. **All students will learn.**  
We believe every student is capable of academic excellence. Our educators uphold high standards for all learners.
2. **We are committed to teaching our students.**  
We foster a learning environment rooted in high academic expectations, positive reinforcement, and professional integrity.
3. **We will maintain a safe and orderly learning environment.**  
A safe, structured, and respectful atmosphere is essential for student success—and we expect all members of our school community to contribute to it.
4. **We will collaborate to ensure student success.**  
Staff, families, and the broader school community will work together to support academic achievement and promote global awareness.

### **Student Expectations – Bethune Eagles S.O.A.R.**

- Strive for Excellence
- Obey the Rules
- Act Responsibly
- Respect Others

#### Our Motto

***“Basic isn’t good enough—MASTERY must be pursued.***

## MARY MCLEOD BETHUNE ELEMENTARY CHARTER SCHOOL

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#### Student, Parent/Guardian, and School Compact

*Aligned with NOLA Public Schools Guidelines and Expectations*

We believe that a strong partnership between students, families, and the school community is essential for academic success. This compact outlines shared responsibilities to support student achievement and aligns with NOLA Public Schools' commitment to equity, engagement, and excellence

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#### **As a Student, I will:**

- Read (or be read to) for at least 15 minutes each day.
- Come to school prepared and ready to learn, with homework completed.
- Talk with my parent(s)/guardian(s) about what I am learning in school.
- Follow the Bethune Code of Conduct and school-wide expectations.
- Ask questions when I do not understand something.
- Use technology responsibly and limit screen time outside of schoolwork.
- Respect myself, others, and my school environment.

#### **As a Parent/Guardian/Advocate, I will:**

- Provide a quiet, well-lit space and consistent time for my child to study.
- Talk to my child daily about school experiences and learning progress.
- Reinforce school rules and behavioral expectations at home.
- Monitor my child’s academic progress by attending parent-teacher conferences, reviewing schoolwork, and communicating with teachers.
- Encourage a love of reading by reading to and with my child, and modeling positive reading habits.
- Ensure regular, on-time school attendance and notify the school of any absences in accordance with NOLA-PS policy.
- Support school recommendations, including participation in intervention programs, summer learning, and extended day opportunities when needed.
- Ensure my child gets adequate rest (minimum 8 hours of sleep) and eats a nutritious breakfast daily—either at home or through the school meal program.
- Stay informed by reading school communications and participating in school events.

**As a Teacher/School Staff Member, I will:**

- Provide a safe, inclusive, and engaging classroom that promotes academic and social-emotional growth.
- Clearly explain curriculum expectations, academic goals, and grading policies to students and families.
- Consistently implement the Bethune and NOLA-PS Codes of Conduct.
- Use instructional strategies that support diverse learning styles and individual needs.
- Maintain ongoing communication with parents/guardians through conferences, phone calls, and progress reports.
- Continue professional growth through training, collaboration, and reflection.
- Encourage family involvement and provide opportunities for parents to support their child's education.

**As the Principal, I will:**

- Oversee the implementation of a high-quality, standards-based curriculum aligned with NOLA-PS and state guidelines.
  - Ensure a positive, respectful, and equitable learning environment for all students.
  - Support staff in delivering engaging instruction and maintaining high expectations.
  - Provide timely updates to families regarding student progress, school policies, and academic initiatives.
  - Promote strong school-family-community partnerships to support student achievement. nsure compliance with all NOLA-PS
  - Ensure policies, including attendance, enrollment, discipline, and special education services.
- Together, we commit to supporting one another in the pursuit of educational excellence for every Bethune student

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**ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL**

Student arrival time is 7:50 AM. No student will be allowed into the school building before this time. Breakfast will be "grab and go" as students enter the building. The instructional day is from 8:00 AM - 3:30 PM.

**Morning Drop Off Procedures for Non-Bus Riding Students**

Students must exit vehicles in the right lane on the St. Roch St. side of the school. Carpool drop-off for all students begins at 7:50 AM. For safety reasons, all students must exit the vehicle from the right side only.

- **PreK - 8th**
  - Students enter the building at the main entrance.

**Afternoon Pick-Up Procedures for Carpool Students**

To promote a smoother and more timely dismissal process. Students will exit the building at two different locations based on their grades/sibling status.

- Students in grades Pre-K - 3 will be dismissed on the St. Roch side of the building. Parents are to use the carpool lane on St. Roch side.

- Students in grades 4 - 8 will be dismissed on the Humanity side of the building. They will be allowed to pick up siblings in Pre-K - 3.

**Early Release**

When you are picking up a student, please remember to bring your ID with you. Go to I-Dent-AKid visitor management system located on a desk in the outside foyer, click on the appropriate badge, and scan your ID.

**Please note:** All persons picking up students before the end of the day are required to be listed on the student's emergency card and must have proper ID. If you do not have an updated Emergency Card on file, please call Ms. Davis at 504.359.9611. Please remember students are not to be signed out after 2:45 PM.

**Dismissal**

**There will be no after care program.** All students must be picked up at dismissal.

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## **BUS TRANSPORTATION**

### **BUS PICK-UP OR DROP-OFF CHANGES**

If a student's address changes, it is the responsibility of the parent /guardian to contact the school and complete an updated change of address form. Parents should allow three days for address change requests to be processed.

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## **LATE BUSES**

If a school bus arrives late to school, students are not marked tardy. Please contact the school if your student's bus is running late, and the office will contact the bus dispatcher.

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## **ADULT PRESENCE AT BUS DROP-OFF**

For the safety of young students, families are required to have one adult present at the drop-off location of all students in grades Pre-Kindergarten- Third Grade, anyone under the age of 8. If an adult is not present at the drop-off when the bus arrives, the student will not be allowed off the bus and will be brought to the police station.

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## **TRANSPORTATION ACCOMMODATIONS**

Special transportation service for students with disabilities is stated in their Individualized Education Plan(IEP). The school will accommodate all students in accordance with their documented plan.

### **Denial of Transportation**

At Bethune, the school bus is considered an extension of the classroom. As such, students are expected to follow the same behavioral expectations on the bus as they do within the school building.

All students and parents/guardians are required to sign the Bethune Bus Contract prior to riding the school bus. [\[Please click here to access the contract.\]](#)

Violations of the discipline code while on the bus may result in disciplinary action, including the temporary or permanent denial of transportation privileges. A loss of bus privileges does not excuse a student from attending school. Students are still expected to arrive at school on time and attend all scheduled days unless a separate school suspension has been issued.

Important: Parents/guardians are not permitted to board school buses or vans to confront the driver, monitor, or any student.

Any concerns should be reported directly to the school's front office. School administration will review and investigate all complaints and take appropriate action.

School buses and vans will drop students off at the school at 7:50 am in the morning and will bring students home starting at 3:30 in the afternoon. The buses and vans will drop off and pick up students in the bus zone on the side of the school. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, contact the main office at 504.324.7076.

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

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Attendance is one of the most significant requirements for student success. It is essential that students be present in school on a consistent basis in order to reach their full academic potential. The attendance policy at Bethune has been formed to ensure that this remains the case. Therefore, any student who misses more than 10 days of school will automatically be **recommended** for retention in their grade level. The school reserves the right to make exceptions to this policy in the instance of an extended absence due to medical reasons. The school is required to report students with excessive absences to a Truant Officer and Juvenile Court. Please click here for [NOLA-PS Attendance Categories](#)

### **Please remember the following:**

If your child is absent, please call the Main Office at (504) 324-7076 **BEFORE** 8:30 AM the day of the absence or the day before in order to inform the school of the status of your child. If a student is reported as absent a powerschool generated robo call will be sent.

Click here:[Student Absences and Excuses](#)

When a student returns from an absence he/she must bring a written note signed by the parent/guardian explaining the absence within 48 hours of the absence. This note must be given to the teacher. A doctor's, dentist's, or nurse practitioner's written statement of student's incapacity to attend school shall be required for those absences for three (3) or more consecutive days due to illness, contagious illness in a family, hospitalization, or accidents.

### Attendance Categories

**Absence**-Unexcused absences will result in the following consequences:

**3 times** - Parent/guardian must meet with School Social Worker.

**10 times** - Case may be referred to Children Services for “educational neglect”.

**10 times** - Student becomes “promotion in doubt” and may not advance to next grade level.

### Bethune’s Attendance Policy

## MAKE-UP WORK

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Students will be held accountable for school assignments missed due to suspension, vacation, or absences. School assignments may not be provided in advance of absences. When a student is out of school for an extended absence it is his/her or the parent’s responsibility to make arrangements for assignments with the teacher. Written assignments will be gathered during the absence and provided to the student upon his/her return to school. Please be aware that

some assignments/classroom activities consist of class participation, projects, discussion and practice that cannot be duplicated.

## TARDY POLICY

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### Late Arrival

If your child arrives after 8:15 AM, the student must report to the security desk and obtain a Tardy Pass before proceeding to the classroom. Your child will not be allowed to enter their classroom unless they have received a Tardy Pass. **Late arrivals disrupt class for all students in the class and therefore should be avoided if possible. Five late arrivals will count as the equivalent of one absence for the purposes of our attendance policy.**

Any questions regarding student attendance and attendance records should be directed to the school’s Data Manager.

## EARLY DISMISSAL POLICY

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To minimize disruptions to class, we ask that notification regarding early dismissals be made as far in advance as possible. We also ask that doctor and dentist appointments be limited to non-school hours to avoid students missing instructional time. The school will record dismissals before 12:00 PM as absences. In general, students must be present for at least ½ of the allotted instructional time on a given day in order to be considered present

Ident-A-Kid which keeps students’ attendance records up to date and will be used. The system is located at the front entrance security desk.

Please note: All persons picking up students before the end of the day are required to be listed on the student’s emergency card and must have proper ID. If you do not have an updated Emergency Card on file, please call Ms. Davis at 504.359.9611. Also, please remember students are not to be signed out after 2:45 PM

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## **WEATHER CLOSINGS**

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In the event of poor weather conditions such as severe weather or storms, please listen to your local television or radio stations for relevant information regarding school cancellation. The school will also notify parents of school closures via School Messenger.

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## **EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION**

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In the event of an emergency on campus that requires building evacuation where re-entry is prohibited, Bethune will make phone calls and/or send text messages to families regarding student safety and location. The school will also notify parents of emergencies via School Messenger, if possible.

### **TOYS and ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

Students will not have an opportunity to play with toys during the day so they should be left at home. Students who bring inappropriate items to school, including, but not limited to, toys, portable music devices, laser pointers, games, will have such items confiscated. These confiscated items will not be returned to students; a parent or guardian will be required to come to the school to retrieve them. Students are also not permitted to bring toys to recess.

### **Technology Devices**

**Headphones, AirPods, earbuds, and smartwatches are strictly prohibited inside the school building.** Any student found with these items will have them confiscated and sent to the main office.

**Cell phones are permitted, but must be powered off before entering the building and turned in to the homeroom teacher** for secure storage in a locked cell phone box. **Any phone not turned in as required will also be confiscated and taken to the office.**

**Please note**, as per the Leveled Infractions in the Student Code of Conduct, use of a cell phone during the school day is a Tier 2, suspendable offense.

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## **HOMEWORK**

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Homework is an important component of our instructional program. It is intended to reinforce, and review concepts learned at school. We ask that parents /guardians take an active role by providing each child with a quiet area in which to complete homework assignments and by reviewing assignments with children. Please check with your child's teacher to see what supplies may be needed at home to complete homework assignments.

### **Guidelines**

Teachers assign homework for a variety of reasons, including:

- To help students understand skills/concepts currently being learned.
- To help students review prior skills/ concepts learned.
- To assess student understanding.
- To instill good study and work habits.
- To develop independence and responsibility.

- To help students learn how to research and use information.
- To provide an important communication link between school and home that shows parents what children are learning.

Parents should offer supportive guidance and feedback as needed. Homework should never be completed by an adult. If your child is having difficulty completing homework, please contact your child's teacher. It is recommended that students in pre-kindergarten, kindergarten and first grade read with an adult every evening.

### **Homework Assistance**

The State Library of Louisiana offers a free educational service, Homework Louisiana, an online tool that connects Louisiana K-12 students to a live tutor online for one on one help with homework. Students can access

Homework Louisiana by going to [www.homeworkla.org](http://www.homeworkla.org). For more information go to <https://www.tutor.com/>.

## **UNIFORM POLICY**

We show respect for our appearance and our cohesion as a school community through our uniforms. Students in our community are expected to follow the school dress code every day. Students are required to wear the following uniform:

### **Pre-K - 5th Grade Mandatory Uniform**

| <b>Girls Boys</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                    |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| White OR Navy Blue Polo Shirt or White Blouse                                                                                                                                                                          | White OR Navy Blue Polo Shirt      |
| Khaki OR Navy Blue Jumper, Skirt, Pants or Shorts                                                                                                                                                                      | Khaki OR Navy Blue Pants or Shorts |
| All Students<br>Black OR white socks<br>Black Shoes or Black Tennis with white soles<br>Black Belt<br>Blue Jacket or Sweater ONLY (Students will be asked to remove jackets that do NOT adhere to the uniform policy.) |                                    |

### **6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Grade Mandatory Uniform**

| <b>Girls</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Light blue oxford shirt (short sleeves, with collar) (name and embroidery optional)</li> <li>• School tie (plaid cross tie)</li> <li>• Plaid trousers or plaid skirt (of an appropriate length)</li> <li>• Navy V-neck pullover sweater or cardigan sweater (name &amp; logo embroidery optional)</li> <li>• Shoes (blue/white or black/white oxford)</li> <li>• Socks (white)</li> <li>• Navy belt</li> </ul> |

| Girls                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Boys                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Light blue oxford (with short or long sleeves, with collar) (name &amp; logo embroidery optional) • School tie (solid Navy)</li> <li>• Trousers (grey)</li> <li>• Navy V-neck pullover sweater or cardigan sweater (name &amp; logo embroidery optional)</li> <li>• Shoes (black)</li> <li>• Socks (black)</li> <li>• Black belt</li> </ul> |

### Unacceptable Attire and Accessories

**Backpacks:** Students in grades 3–8 are required to use a clear backpack. Mesh backpacks are not permitted. Noncompliant backpacks may be held in the main office until picked up by a parent/guardian.

- The wearing of hats, bandanas, scarves, wave caps, or bonnets is NOT permitted. If students wear headbands, ONLY blue, black, or gray are to be worn.
- If earrings are worn, they must be simple studs only (NO large, hoop, or dangling earring)
- Jackets, overcoats, or any clothing tied around the waist or neck is not permitted.
- Only blue or black tights may be worn under skirts.

## HALLWAY BEHAVIOR

Hallways are shared spaces and carry noise. We ask that all students and adults using the hallway during the school days keep in mind that classes are disrupted by hallway noise. Classes should transition from one space to another silently, at a level 0 in a single file line, with their hands to their sides and not touching the wall, and towards the right side of the hall. Students in the hallway without permission will be reprimanded. No student will be allowed in the hallway without a pass.

## BATHROOM BEHAVIOR

When it is necessary for students to use the bathroom during class time, students should follow their individual class's protocol for receiving bathroom permission.

Bathrooms are shared spaces, and students should treat their bathroom space with pride. Students should pick up after themselves, flush the toilets, and ensure that no paper products are left on the floor. Students should not bring anything with them to the bathroom, including writing instruments. Students who do not behave appropriately in the bathrooms will be reprimanded accordingly.

## **ASSESSMENTS**

In addition to traditional classroom assessment measures, we use a uniform assessment system to determine students' performance levels. The Benchmark Assessments will be administered three times a year. This assessment gives teachers and parents important information regarding students' progress as well as informs teachers of the students' strengths and challenges throughout the year.

## **PROGRESS REPORTS, REPORT CARDS, AND FAMILY-SCHOOL MEETINGS**

Progress reports will be generated through PowerSchool every two weeks, and report cards will be issued quarterly. Families should review PowerSchool regularly to monitor grades, celebrate progress, and address concerns before report cards are issued. There will be report card conferences during the school year, and parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to participate.

### **GRADING POLICY**

| Letter Grade | Percentage Scale GPA |
|--------------|----------------------|
| A            | 100 - 90- 4.0 – 3.5  |
| B            | 89- 80- 3.4 – 2.5    |
| C            | 79- 70- 2.4 – 1.5    |
| D            | 69 - 60- 1.4 – 1.0   |
| F            | 59 - 0- 0.9 – 0.0    |

### **Behavior Grading Policy**

|   |                   |
|---|-------------------|
| O | Outstanding       |
| G | Good              |
| S | Satisfactory      |
| N | Needs Improvement |
| U | Unsatisfactory    |

## **PROMOTION POLICIES**

Three factors are considered in promotion decisions: attendance, overall reading level, and grade-level standard mastery, as cited on the report card.

Students who accumulate more than 10 absences during the school year will be considered for retention in their current grade-level. Please refer to the attendance policy section of this handbook for more details on this policy. Please note that absences resulting from out-of-school suspensions are not excused.

Parents of students who are in jeopardy of being retained will receive notice of this possibility in writing at the end of the second quarter. Promotion recommendations are made by classroom teachers, and final promotion decisions will be made by the Student Assistance Team. The school reserves the right to make exceptions to this policy given special circumstances. The school will make every effort, with your support, to provide remediation in getting these students back on grade level in order to prevent retention.

## **BETHUNE'S CODE OF CONDUCT & DISCIPLINE POLICY**

Mary McLeod Bethune Elementary Charter School adopts the policies and procedures set forth by the Orleans

Parish School Board Student Code of Conduct.

### **Purpose of the Code of Conduct**

- Create a consistent set of expectations for student behavior
- Reinforce positive behavior and provide students with opportunities to develop appropriate social skills
- Outline the interventions and consequences for students who engage in inappropriate behavior
- Explain the rights and responsibilities of all members of the school community relative to student behavior
- Engage students in a safe, positive, and supportive learning environment

## **BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Responsibilities of School Administrators**

- Distribute the Student Code of Conduct to students, parents/legal guardians, and all school personnel

Implement the Student Code of Conduct in a fair and consistent manner

- Based on school data, identify appropriate training and resources as needed to implement *PBIS*
- Require a team of at least three (3) staff be trained in *CPI* procedures. These team-members are the only personnel permitted to use the full continuum of *CPI* Non-violent Crisis Intervention procedures in situations that warrant use of physical restraint.
- Use research-based practices to prevent minor incidents from becoming major challenges
- Ensure accurate and timely entry of *discipline* referrals into the Student Information System (*SIS*) and maintain compliance (e.g. students with disabilities and qualified 504 students ten (10) day removal rule)
- Review discipline referrals and determine appropriate intervention(s) or consequence(s)

Enforce corrective strategies which are grade level and age appropriate

**Responsibilities of Students**

- Be in attendance **EVERY** school day scheduled by the Bethune
- Follow the Student Code of Conduct
- Follow the school's expectations and rules
- Follow the school's dress code
- Respect school property and the property of others
- Work hard and do your best
- Ask teachers, school social workers, professional school counselors, parents/legal guardians, school administrators, and other adults for help to solve problems
- Report bullying and cyber bullying

**Responsibilities of Parents/Legal Guardians**

- Read, discuss and support the Student Code of Conduct
- Understand your child's rights and responsibilities
- Teach your child to respect the rights of others
- Make sure your child comes to school every day on time and ready to learn
- Teach your child to respect school property and the property of others
- Recognize that school personnel must enforce the Student Code of Conduct
- Seek available resources to assist and support your child within the school and the community

**Responsibilities of Teachers**

- Use appropriate classroom management strategies to maintain a learning environment that supports academic success
- Teach and positively reinforce the Student Code of Conduct
- Address infractions through a variety of interventions such as *Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports (PBIS)* and *Response to Intervention (RTI)*, including alternatives to *suspension* and *expulsion*
- Provide corrective instruction to students who demonstrate challenging behavior • Use professional judgment to prevent minor incidents from becoming major challenges • Request additional professional staff development and/or training as needed

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## BEHAVIOR INFRACTIONS

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Students who do not follow the school's rules and expectations will receive consequences appropriate to the severity of their infractions. The following pages list examples of infractions and appropriate responses for school officials to take.

*Discipline* incidents will be classified as Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3 Infractions.

**Level 1 Infractions: Non-Suspendable Offenses**

*Discipline* incidents that can be handled by the teacher and do not warrant a *discipline* referral to the principal or designee. Any behavior that is of low level intensity, passive in nature and/or of a non-threatening manner is a Level 1 Infraction.

**Level 2 Infractions: Suspendable Offenses**

*Discipline* incidents that interfere with anyone's safety and learning, are of a threatening or harmful nature, legal violations and warrant administrative interventions. Such behaviors should be considered Level 2 Infractions.

**Level 3 Infractions: Expellable Offenses**

*Discipline* incidents that severely interfere with anyone's safety and learning, are of a threatening or harmful nature, are legal violations and warrant immediate response from administration, crisis team, entire staff, and/or community support are Level 3 Infractions.

Please note that there are three tiers of Level 3 Infractions, as detailed in the Level 3 section.

Because every behavior infraction cannot be listed in advance, school principals may decide if an unlisted infraction is a Level 1 or Level 2 offense. **Students may only be expelled for infractions that are described in Level 3.**

**Level 1 Infractions**

- Horseplay
- Entering an off-limits or restricted area in the classroom
- Habitual tardiness and/or absenteeism
- Eating/drinking during prohibited times
- Dress code violation violations, it becomes a Tier 2 offense
- Not having proper materials or supplies for class
- Not participating in class
- Littering
- Failing to do or complete homework
- ID violation (if applicable)
- Refusing to sit in the assigned seat
- Talking in class at inappropriate times
- Any other infraction that the principal or designee deems similar in severity to other level 1 infractions

**Consequences for Level 1 Infractions do NOT include an out-of-school suspension. Teachers are responsible for the consequences of students with Level I infractions using Bethune's Discipline Flowchart**

**Habitual Level 1 Behaviors become a Level 2 Infraction****Level 2 Infractions**

- Intentionally or habitually failing to attend detention or in-school suspension
- Possessing or using tobacco and/or possession of a lighter/vapor
- Using or possessing alcohol
- Leaving the school bus without permission
- Using objects dangerously or inappropriately to harm others or damage property
- Vandalism to school property or a school bus
- Leaving school and/or the classroom without permission
- Skipping class
- Entering an off-limits or restricted area
- Gambling
- Extortion (blackmail, etc.)

- Willful disobedience to authority figures that substantially interferes with the learning of others or threatens the safety of others
- Using profanity and/or obscene language
- Instigating or participating in fights (one-on-one or in groups)
- Bullying\*
- Causing a false fire alarm
- Intentionally causing a major, unnecessary disturbance in the classroom/school campus
- Improper use of a cell phone and/or electronic devices
- Engaging in inappropriate public displays of affection(**holding hands, kissing, hugging, etc.**)
- **Inappropriate bodily contact or harassment**
- Improper use of the computer: Viewing obscene, pornographic, violent, or sexually harassing material, or information on the manufacturing of weapons
- Making an unfounded charge against authority
- Forging a signature on documentation required by the school, cheating, or lying to school personnel about academic matters
- **Habitual level 1 behaviors**
- Any other infraction that the principal deems to be similar in severity to other level 2 infractions

**The consequence for Level 2 infractions is a suspension**

**of 1–5 days. Level 3 Infractions**

- Distributing, selling, giving, or loaning any controlled dangerous substance governed by the Uniform Controlled Dangerous Substance Law, or any prescription drug
- Carrying, possessing, or using a firearm, knife with a blade of two inches or longer, or any other instrument the purpose of which is lethal force
- Sexual assault and other sexual acts where one party is non-consenting
- Intentional battery or assault on any individual using a weapon or which causes serious, documentable injury that necessitates medical care
- Engaging in a student-initiated intentional physical altercation with a member of the school staff
- Assault or threat with a weapon
- Possessing any controlled dangerous substance governed by the Uniform Controlled Dangerous Substance Law, or any prescription drug, or unmarked medication
- Possession or use of any implement/substance with the ability to seriously harm another person
- Robbery of an individual on school property or at any activity of which the school has jurisdiction
- Unauthorized entry of school property, or any space which the school has jurisdiction, with evidence of theft or vandalism
- Engaging in consensual sexual acts on school property or at any activity of which the school has jurisdiction
- Engaging in nonconsensual exposure of body parts in a sexual manner to another
- Assault (threat) of an individual with a dangerous substance or implement
- Well-documented and ongoing commission of serious acts that threaten the safety of others
- Well-documented and ongoing behaviors that threaten, intimidate, or bully another individual, including the use of any electronic device to threaten, intimidate, or bully
- Sharing sexually explicit material, including through the use of an electronic device
- Theft of school property or the personal property of individuals on school property or at any activity of which the school has jurisdiction
- Being under the influence of any controlled dangerous substance governed by the Uniform Controlled Dangerous Substance Law, any prescription drug not prescribed to the accused student, or any chemical substance that affects the central nervous system and produces stimulant, depressant, euphoric, or hallucinogenic effects to the mind or body

**Consequences for Level 1 Infractions do NOT include an out of school suspension. Level 2 Infractions**

- Intentionally or habitually failing to attend detention or in- school suspension
- Possessing or using tobacco and/or possession of a lighter
- Using or possessing alcohol
- Leaving school bus without permission
- Using objects dangerously or inappropriately to harm others or damage property
- Vandalism to school property or school bus
- Leaving school and/or classroom without permission
- Gambling
- Extortion (blackmail, etc.)
- Willful disobedience to authority figures that substantially interferes with the learning of others or threatens the safety of others
- Using profanity and/or obscene language
- Instigating or participating in fights (one-on-one or groups)
- Bullying\*
- Causing a false fire alarm
- Intentionally causing a major, unnecessary disturbance in classroom/school campus •
- Improper use of a cell phone and/or electronic devices
- Inappropriate bodily contact or harassment
- Improper use of computer: Viewing obscene, pornographic, violent, or sexually harassing material; or information on manufacturing of weapons
- Forging a signature on documentation required by the school, cheating, or lying to school personnel about academic matters
- Habitual level 1 behaviors
- Any other infraction that the principal deems to be similar in severity to other level 2 infractions

**The consequence for Level 2 infractions is suspension for 1 – 5 days.**

**Level 3 Infractions**

- Distributing, selling, giving, or loaning any controlled dangerous substance governed by the Uniform Controlled Dangerous Substance Law, or any prescription drug
- Carrying, possessing, or using a firearm, knife with a blade of two inches or longer, or any other instrument the purpose of which is lethal force
- Sexual assault and other sexual acts where one party is non- consenting
- Intentional battery or assault on any individual using a weapon or which causes serious, documentable injury that necessitates medical care
- Engaging in student-initiated intentional physical altercation with a member of the school staff
- Assault or threat with a weapon
- Possessing any controlled dangerous substance governed by the Uniform Controlled Dangerous Substance Law, or any prescription drug, or unmarked medication
- Possession or use of any implement/substance with the ability to seriously harm another person
- Robbery of an individual on school property or at any activity of which the school has jurisdiction

- Unauthorized entry of school property, or any space which the school has jurisdiction, with evidence of theft or vandalism
- Engaging in consensual sexual acts on school property or at any activity of which the school has jurisdiction
- Engaging in nonconsensual exposure of body parts in a sexual manner to another
- Assault (threat) of an individual with a dangerous substance or implement
- Well-documented and on-going commission of serious acts that threaten the safety of others
- Well-documented and on-going behaviors that threaten, intimidate, or bully another individual, including the use of any electronic device to threaten, intimidate, or bully
- Sharing sexually explicit material, including through the use of an electronic device
- Theft of school property or the personal property of individuals on school property or at any activity of which the school has jurisdiction
- Being under the influence of any controlled dangerous substance governed by the Uniform Controlled Dangerous Substance Law, or any prescription drug not prescribed to the accused student, or any chemical substance that affects the central nervous system and produces stimulant, depressant, euphoric, or hallucinogenic effects to the mind or body.

**Level 3 infractions may result in recommended expulsion by the school administration.**

When a student is recommended for expulsion after a conference and investigation, the case is referred to the Student Hearing Office, and the school will proceed according to the procedures outlined in the Student Hearing Office Manual for Disciplinary Procedures. **Expulsion determinations are made by the Student Hearing Office. A student may be recommended for suspension for some Level 3 infractions if the school believes a suspension would be more appropriate than a recommendation for expulsion.**

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## **POSITIVE BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION SUPPORT:**

Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS) –PBIS is a research-based framework that can help schools design, implement and evaluate their approach to school discipline. Under the PBIS framework, we will: 1) use data to make decisions and solve problems, 2) focus on both prevention of problem behavior and positive interventions, such as counseling, mediation, and other interventions that focus on building positive relationships, 3) model and teach behavior expectations and positive skills among students, and 4) continuously monitor implementation and adjust approaches as necessary. PBIS uses a three- tiered approach to preventing and intervening in problem behavior. Tier 1 focuses on supports for all students in the classroom and school-wide to prevent problem behavior. Tier 2 focuses on “specialized” supports tailored to target groups of students who engage in misbehavior. Tier 3 provides highly individualized responses for those students who continue to face disciplinary problems despite the presence of Tier 1 and 2 supports. PBIS is meant to work collaboratively with specific practices to promote positive behavior in classrooms and on school campuses.

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## **CULTURE OF POSITIVE BEHAVIOR**

A clear and consistently implemented Code of Conduct is essential to providing students with the necessary academic and character foundation necessary to be successful in middle school, high school, college and life. At Bethune, we will strive to build a school-wide culture that teaches and rewards positive behavior. Additionally, it is important that a common

language is used to teach expectations to ensure consistency of expectation and discipline policies school-wide. This includes classroom, hallway, cafeteria, playground, and assembly expectations.

All students will be required to adhere to the values and behavior expectations of the school.

**SOAR character foundation values:**

- **Strive for excellence**
- **Obey all Rule -OWN YOUR ACTIONS**
- **Act Responsibly -**
- **Respect yourself and others -READY to LEARN**

## BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE

- 1) Teacher teaches and models positive behavior.
2. Teacher clearly communicates the explicit directions they need the student to follow.
- 3) Teacher utilizes a strategy called “positive framing” to provide positive support to students who are complying with the directions.
- 4) Teacher takes immediate and corrective action when students are not complying with directions given directions.

### Suspension Procedures

An out-of-school suspension, in which the student is not allowed to attend school for a designated period of time, is a consequence which a school may utilize if a student commits a Level 2 or Level 3 infraction. For a student to be suspended, the following procedures must be followed:

- 1) First, the principal or designee will meet with the student. At this student meeting, the student will be advised of the behavior infraction and given the opportunity to explain his or her version of the facts. 2) If, after the student meeting, the principal still chooses to suspend the student, the principal or designee will contact the student’s parent/guardian by phone, email, or mail. The principal will give notice of the suspension, the length of the suspension, the reason for the suspension, the appeals process, and the date of the readmission conference. The principal must attempt to give this information to the parent/guardian in writing.
- 2) If a minor, the student shall remain in school until the end of the school day unless released into the care of his/her parent/guardian. However, if the student poses a danger to himself/herself or others, the principal may remove the student from the school immediately. After the student’s removal, the school will follow the regular suspension process as soon as is practicable. **No student shall be sent home without the school properly documenting the reason for the suspension.**
- 3) Students suspended three (3) or more consecutive days shall be provided schoolwork during their suspension, which must be picked up by the parent/guardian at the school. A student suspended less than three (3) consecutive days will receive the assignments on return from suspension.
- 4) Before a minor student returns to school, the parent/guardian (or their pre-determined adult designee) must participate in the scheduled readmission conference. This conference can be held in person or by phone. If a parent refuses to respond, the principal may choose not to readmit the student until the parent, guardian, or other adult designee responds, and the school social worker may refer the student to

Municipal Court for truancy. **If it is the student's first suspension of the school year, the principal may readmit the student if it is in the best interest of the student, even if the parent does not attend the readmit conference.**

### **Expulsion Recommendation Procedures**

Expulsion is defined as "a removal from all regular school settings for a period of not less than one school semester." Any student, after being suspended for committing an expellable offense, may be expelled upon recommendation by the school principal and approval by the Student Hearing Office (SHO). The principal may immediately suspend and recommend for expulsion a student who commits one or more of the following expellable offenses:

- Distributing, selling, giving away, or loaning any controlled dangerous substance governed by the Uniform Controlled Dangerous Substances Law, or any prescription drug not prescribed to the accused student, or any chemical substance that affects the central nervous system and produces stimulant, depressant, euphoric, or hallucinogenic effects to the mind or body
- Carrying, possessing, or using a firearm, knife with a blade of two inches or longer, or any other instrument of which the purpose is lethal force
- Sexual assault and other sexual acts where the ability of one party to consent is compromised by age, intellectual ability, intoxication, or incapacitation
- Intentional battery or assault on any individual using a weapon, or which causes serious, documentable injury that necessitates medical care
- Engaging in an intentional physical altercation with a member of the school staff that does not rise to the level of battery, does not involve using a weapon, and does not result in serious, documentable injury necessitating medical care
- Possessing any controlled dangerous substance governed by the Uniform Controlled Dangerous
- Substances Law, or any prescription drug not prescribed to the accused student, or any chemical substance that affects the central nervous system and produces stimulant, depressant, euphoric, or hallucinogenic effects to the mind or body.
- Possession or use of any implement/substance with the ability to seriously harm another person • Robbery of an individual on school property or at any activity over which the school has jurisdiction • Engaging in consensual sexual acts on school property or at any school-sponsored activity • Well-documented and on-going commission of serious acts that threaten the safety of others • Sharing sexually explicit material, including through the use of an electronic device • Theft of school property or the personal property of individuals on school property or at any activity over which the school has jurisdiction

### **Due Process Procedures for Suspensions and Expulsions**

A principal cannot expel a student. A principal can recommend a student for expulsion. If a principal recommends a student for expulsion the student will be suspended pending a hearing for a recommendation for expulsion. The student will then have an expulsion hearing, in which the Student Hearing Office will determine if the recommendation for expulsion is upheld, reversed, or modified.

Students with disabilities have the same rights and responsibilities as other students, and may be disciplined for the same behavioral offenses listed above. If a student with disabilities has an IEP that includes disciplinary guidelines, then that student will be disciplined according to those guidelines, as required by IDEA. Students for whom the IEP does not include specific disciplinary guidelines may be disciplined in accordance with the standard school policy listed above.

A student's family may elect to appeal a decision to impose a long-term suspension or expulsion to the Student Assistance Team and may elect to appeal a decision by the Student Assistance to the Board of Directors. The family may make a final appeal to the Board of Directors. The family may bring counsel with them if they so desire. In all events of expulsion, the School Leader of Bethune will work in conjunction with the family to find the best possible alternative educational setting.

## **BULLYING**

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Mary McLeod Bethune Elementary Charter School believes that all students have a right to a safe and healthy school environment. We have an obligation to promote mutual respect, tolerance, and acceptance among students, staff, and volunteers. A student shall not bully or intimidate any student through words or action. All students, teachers, and other school employees shall take responsible measures within the scope of their individual authority to prevent violations of this policy. Bethune strictly prohibits bullying and/or harassment, as defined herein. This policy applies to students on school grounds, while traveling to and from school, or a school-sponsored activity, and during school-sponsored events.

Bullying is a pattern of any one or more of the following:

- gestures, including but not limited to obscene gestures and making faces;
- written, electronic, or verbal communications, including but not limited to calling names, threatening harm, taunting, malicious teasing, or spreading untrue rumors;
- electronic communication includes but is not limited to a communication or image transmitted by email, instant message, text message, blog, or social networking website through the use of a telephone, mobile phone, pager, computer, or other electronic device;
- physical acts, including but not limited to hitting, kicking, pushing, tripping, choking, damaging personal property, or unauthorized use of personal property;
- repeatedly and purposefully shunning or excluding from activities; and
- where the pattern of behavior as provided above is exhibited toward a student, more than once, by another student or group of students and occurs, or is received by, a student while on school property, at a school-sponsored or school-related function or activity, in any school bus or van, at any designated school bus stop, in any other school or private vehicle used to transport students to and from schools, or any school-sponsored activity or event.

The pattern of behavior as described above must have the effect of physically harming a student, placing the student in reasonable fear of physical harm, damaging a student's property, placing the student in reasonable fear of damage to the student's property, or must be sufficiently severe, persistent, and pervasive enough to either create an intimidating or threatening educational environment, have the effect of substantially interfering with a student's performance in school, or have the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

The victim of bullying, anyone who witnessed the bullying, and anyone who has credible information that an act of bullying has taken place may file a report of bullying.

All students and/or staff shall immediately report incidents of bullying, harassment or intimidation to the school administration. School staff members are expected to immediately intervene when they see a bullying incident occur. Each complaint of bullying shall be promptly investigated. This policy applies to students on school grounds, while traveling on a school bus to and from school, or a school-sponsored activity, and during a school-sponsored activity. Bullying and intimidation will not be tolerated. Disciplinary action will be taken following each confirmed incident of bullying.

Teachers will be trained and required to take a school wide safety course which includes anti bullying courses to ensure school wide consistency.

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## **FIELD TRIPS**

The school's curriculum may sometimes require outside learning experiences. During these activities, it is important for all students to be responsible for their behavior since the site of the activity is a temporary extension of the school grounds. A permission slip that allows students to attend each school field trip will be sent home prior to the trip and should be signed by a parent or guardian. Students who fail to return the signed slip – or who are not permitted to attend the trip as a result of a loss of privileges – will not be eligible to participate and will be required to remain in another classroom during the field trip. Appropriate behavior must be maintained when attending school-sponsored events, and riding on school-provided transportation. Inappropriate behavior may result in community violations, suspension, or loss of field trip privileges.

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## **FORGERY**

Shared information and constant communication among teachers, students, and parents are crucial to the success of the school. Progress regarding academic and behavioral performance will be conveyed through a variety of means, including progress reports to be brought home by students, signed by parents, and returned by students the next school day. Students, who forge their parent or guardian's signature, or forge parental or guardian approval on any official or unofficial school communication, including community violations, may face an out-of-school suspension.

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## **VISITOR POLICY**

All visitors are required to utilize the visitor control tracking system, Ident-A-Kid, which keeps visitors records up-to date. This easy-to-use system scans each visitor's ID, and prints him or her a badge. The system is located at the front entrance security desk.

### **STUDENT SEARCHES -[State Statute 17:416.3](#)**

In order to maintain the security of all its students, Bethune reserves the right to conduct searches of its students and their property. If searches are conducted, the school will ensure that the privacy of the students is respected to the extent possible, and that students and their families are informed of the circumstances surrounding and results of the search.

School cubbies and desks remain the property of Bethune and students should, therefore, have no expectation of privacy in these areas. Such areas are subject to canine searches and to random searches by school officials at any time.

## **FIRE SAFETY PROCEDURES**

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In case of an emergency – if a staff member sees fire or smells smoke—he or she should close the door and pull the fire alarm located at either end of the corridor. Upon hearing the alarm, school staff will assemble students in their rooms and proceed out of the building according to the **fire evacuation plan posted in each room**. Students should follow the direction of the staff, who will verify the safety of the stairwells and lead students outside the building to the designated locations, where school staff will line up students by class and take attendance. During the first month of school, and frequently throughout the school year, students and staff will participate in fire drills to ensure that the entire school community is familiar with the appropriate response in the event of an emergency.

## **STUDENT PHONE USE**

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The office phone is a business phone and should be used by students for emergencies only. The phones may not be used by students to arrange for delivery of any items, including signed progress reports, or missing homework assignments. If parents need to leave a message for their child, they should call the office, not the teacher's personal phone, to leave a message. Students will not be called from class to the office to speak with a parent except in case of an emergency. Students may not use the telephone in the office unless granted permission by a staff member.

## **FAMILY COMMUNICATION**

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It is vitally important that the school always has methods of contacting parents or other family members. This is of critical importance in case of emergency, illness, or behavior requiring immediate family contact. Parents are advised to notify the office of moves, changes of home or emergency telephone numbers, and/or places of employment.

In case of an emergency, parents or guardians should contact the Main Office either by phone or in person. Under no circumstances should parents or guardians contact students in their classrooms or attempt to withdraw students from the building without notifying and receiving permission from staff members in the Main Office.

## **FAMILY INVOLVEMENT**

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Parental involvement in a child's educational life is critical to a child's success. We encourage parents to develop strong positive partnerships with the school. Research has shown that children whose parents are involved at school perform better academically.

## **MEETING WITH A TEACHER**

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If you need to meet with a teacher we ask that you make an appointment. An appointment can be made by calling the main office. Parents should not expect to meet with a teacher without a prior appointment. Whenever possible, appointments should not take place during the instructional day. They will need to take place during the teacher's planning period.

**Classroom Observations:** Parents/guardians requesting a classroom observation must provide at least 24 hours' notice. Observations are limited to 30 minutes and must be conducted silently, without interaction, recording, or disruption. Visitors must follow confidentiality expectations and school dress requirements.

## **LOST AND STOLEN PROPERTY**

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We strongly encourage families to ensure that children do not bring valuable objects to school. Any items that students bring to school that may cause disruption will be confiscated at the school. We make every reasonable effort to return all personal property to the appropriate parent; however, the school is not responsible for replacing lost or stolen property, or compensating the family for the value of that property.

## **SCHOOL BREAKFAST & LUNCH**

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The school participates in the National School Breakfast and Lunch Program, which provides free or reduced-price meals to eligible students. Breakfast is served at 7:50.

Students are welcome to bring lunch from home. They will not have access to a microwave to heat any lunches. Soda and candy are never permitted at school, even in lunches brought from home.

## **FOOD ALLERGIES**

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The school will make all reasonable efforts to accommodate students with food allergies. Parents are required to inform the school of all food allergies and their severity. Once parents have informed the school, school officials will meet with the family to develop an Individual Health Care Plan. Sharing or trading of food is prohibited for all students.

### **K-2nd Grade BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS**

We cannot allow birthday parties to interrupt the academic day or allow birthday parties at lunch. Parents are only allowed to bring cupcakes, ice-cream cups, and juice to celebrate their child's birthday. Consult with your child's teacher regarding class size and scheduling of birthday treat.

## **IMMUNIZATIONS**

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At the start of each school year the nurse is responsible for reviewing all vaccination records for entering Pre Kindergarten, Kindergarten and new students and for all updated vaccination records for returning students. The school works closely with the State Department of Health, utilizing the Louisiana Immunization Network for Kids Statewide (LINKS) database. Immunization information is entered into the state immunization database and reports are generated that show which immunizations are due. Parents should update immunization records for students as needed. Immunization records can be left for the nurse at the front office.

## **MEDICAL INFORMATION**

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At the start of each school year, parents are responsible for submitting a health information form for each child attending Mary McLeod Bethune Elementary Charter School. Students with chronic conditions that require medical treatment or adaptations during the course of the school day may sign a release of medical information form to access medical records. Parents who wish the nurse to administer any treatments or medications (including over the counter medications) must submit a medication administration order form signed by their Louisiana physician. All forms can be retrieved from the school nurse.

## **HEALTH RECORDS**

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It is essential that parents cooperate with the main office in bringing all medical records up to date. Children whose records are not up to date in accordance with state law will be excluded from school. Thank you in advance for your cooperation in helping us to protect your child.

## **ILLNESS**

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Parents will be contacted immediately for any child who is at school with any of the following symptoms:

- Fever
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Uncontrolled Asthma
- Ringworm
- Unspecified Rashes
- Pinkeye
- Head Lice
- Infectious Disease
- Moderate Trauma

Scrapes and minor bruises will be attended to at school and the child will return to class. Children with the above symptoms must be picked up within a reasonable amount of time. Return to school will require a physician's release note. Students seen by the nurse will have an assessment or referral note sent home in their folder. The nurse will call parents with health findings and recommendations as needed.

## **CHRONIC ILLNESS/ALLERGIES**

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All students with chronic conditions such as: asthma, allergic reaction, diabetes, respiratory distress, seizure disorder, urinary frequency or incontinence must meet with the nurse at the beginning of the school year to discuss a health/emergency care plan which must accompany orders signed by the child's physician for medication or treatment in school. The nurse will communicate with the school administrative team as necessary to implement the plan. Food Services will be notified in writing of any students with food allergies or intolerance. The front office will be notified of students that may present with medical emergencies so that swift intervention may be implemented.

## **EMERGENCY PROCEDURE/SEVERE INJURY POLICY**

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A student sustaining severe or life-threatening injury or illness at school will be triaged by the nurse and transported to an appropriate medical facility. Parents will be notified prior to transfer and the students will be accompanied by trained school personnel if the parent is not available immediately. In the event a parent is unavailable to ride in an ambulance with the child, the parent is expected to meet staff at the respective hospital.

## **INCIDENTS**

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Incident reports will be generated for all injuries that occur on school property. A copy of the incident report or a nurse's note detailing the incident will go home with the child. All accidents involving disciplinary measures will be addressed by administration.

## **COMMUNICABLE DISEASE**

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Any student suspected of having any of the above will be excluded from school until satisfactory treatment has been given. Discretion is used to check other students in classes where there is an outbreak. Written notice will be sent home regarding the incidence. Medication cannot be administered or consumed at school unless both a doctor and a parent/guardian have completed the appropriate forms. Bethune strongly encourages families to dispense both temporary and maintenance medications outside of school hours. Ask your physician for a medication schedule that will accomplish this. In those few cases where this is not possible, please bring in the medication to the nurse office.

The medication needs to be in the original container with the appropriate prescription label (including the name of the student, the name of the medicine, the date, the dosage information, and directions for administering the medication) and the appropriate Student Health Authorization for Administration of Medication Form.

We store and administer the medicine in a secure location. Please be aware that the medication cannot travel back and forth to school – once it's given to us for your child's use, it must remain with us until it needs to be refilled. Therefore, we strongly encourage you to ask for two separate prescriptions when at the doctor's office with your child. Students are not allowed to have medication (prescription or non-prescription) of any kind in their possession at school and it should not be placed in their book bags. Adults should bring the medication to the nurse. For further information on medication or any health-related issues please contact the school.

## **STUDENT RECORDS**

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Parents of current Bethune students may access their children's file by checking in with the Data Manager in the main office. The Data Manager will then give the parent the file to view in the office, but the file may not leave the office. Student records, including final report cards, will not be transferred at the end of the year until all student fees, when applicable, have been paid.

## **STUDENT PRIVACY**

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Mary McLeod Bethune School will comply with all Louisiana state regulations regarding student privacy. We respect the privacy of all parents and students regarding student records.

## **NONDISCRIMINATION**

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Bethune does not discriminate in admission to, access to, treatment in, or employment in its services, programs and activities, on the basis of race, color or national origin, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI); on the basis of sex, in accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; on the basis of disability, in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA); or on the basis of age, in accordance with the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1974 (ADEA).

## **HARASSMENT**

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Bethune is committed to maintaining a school environment free of harassment based on race, color, religion, national origin, age, gender, sexual orientation, or disability. Harassment by administrators certified and support personnel, students, vendors and other individuals at school or at school-sponsored events are unlawful and is strictly prohibited. Bethune requires all employees and students to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner with respect to their fellow employees, students and all members of the school community.

### **Definition of Harassment**

*In General.* Harassment includes communications such as jokes, comments, innuendoes, notes, display of pictures or symbols, gestures, or other conduct that offends or shows disrespect to others based upon race, color, religion, national origin, age, gender, sexual orientation, or disability.

By law, what constitutes harassment is determined from the perspective of a reasonable person with the characteristic on which the harassment is based. What one person may consider acceptable behavior may reasonably

be viewed as harassment by another person. Therefore, individuals should consider how their words and actions might reasonably be viewed by other individuals. It is also important for individuals to make it clear to others when a particular behavior or communication is unwelcome, intimidating, hostile or offensive.

### **Harassment and Retaliation Prohibited**

Harassment in any form or for any reason is absolutely forbidden. This includes harassment by administrators, certified and support personnel, students, vendors and other individuals in school or at school related events. In addition, retaliation against any individual who has brought harassment or other inappropriate behavior to the attention of the school or who has cooperated in an investigation of a complaint under this policy is unlawful and will not be tolerated.

Persons who engage in harassment or retaliation may be subject to disciplinary action, including, but not limited to reprimand, suspension, termination/expulsion or other sanctions

as determined by the school administration and/or Advisory Board, subject to applicable procedural requirements.

### **INTERNET ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY**

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Significant Educators provides its students the privilege of accessing the Internet over the Mary McLeod Bethune computer network. The computer network is intended to promote educational excellence and to locally and globally share educational resources. Students shall access and transmit information over the Internet or network for educational purposes. It is the intent of the Significant Educators Board to:

1. Prevent the transmission of or access to inappropriate material by means of Internet, electronic mail, or other forms of electronic communications;
2. Prevent unauthorized and malicious attempts to access valuable network resources;
3. Prevent unauthorized disclosure, use and dissemination of personal identification information regarding minors; and
4. Abide by the rules established in the *Children's Internet Protection Act* and other pertinent federal and state laws

Acceptable use of these resources shall be consistent with the philosophy, goals and objectives of the Significant Educators.

Age and grade appropriate classroom instruction shall be provided regarding Internet and cell phone safety. Such instruction shall include appropriate online behavior, interacting with other individuals on social networking websites and in chat rooms, and cyberbullying awareness and response, as well as areas of concern as authorized in state and federal law.

In addition, the School Board, in conjunction with local law enforcement agencies, shall develop and distribute age and grade appropriate information to each student regarding Internet and cell phone safety and online content that is a threat to school safety. The information shall include the following:

- Instruction on how to detect potential threats to school safety exhibited online, including posting on any social media platform.
- Visual examples of possible threats.
- The process for reporting potential threats, which shall be in accordance with the procedures referenced in policy *EBBB, School and Student Safety*.

Such information shall be either distributed to or explained to students and school personnel at the beginning of each school year and shall be posted on an easily accessible page of the School Board's website and the website of each school.

If information reported to a school is deemed a potential threat to school safety, the school shall present the written form and any further evidence to local law enforcement.

### **ACCESS TO INAPPROPRIATE MATERIAL**

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The School Board shall incorporate the use of computer-related technology or the use of Internet service provider technology designed to block access or exposure to any harmful materials or information, such as sites that contain obscene, pornographic, pervasively vulgar, excessively violent, or sexually harassing information or material.

Sites which contain information on the manufacturing of bombs or other incendiary devices shall also be prohibited. However, the School Board shall not prohibit authorized employees or students from having unfiltered or unrestricted access to Internet or online services, including online services of newspapers with daily circulation of at least 1,000, for legitimate scientific or educational purposes approved by the School Board.

Authorized personnel may disable or minimize technology protection measures for bona fide research or other lawful purposes.

### **CONDITIONS OF USE**

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While using the computer network, students:

1. Shall not give out names, phone numbers, addresses or any personal information about themselves or others.
2. Shall not engage in activities that initiate or participate in any activities that are prohibited by local, state or federal laws.
3. Shall not use the Internet to send or receive messages that discriminate against others.
4. Shall not use abusive language or profanity over the Internet.
5. Shall not participate in any activities that can be construed as cyber-bullying of other students, faculty, staff, or community members in or out of the school network.
6. Shall always be polite and respectful of others.
7. Shall immediately report any activities about which they become aware that can be construed as cyber-bullying of other students, faculty, staff, or community members in or out of the school network
8. Shall communicate with caution, keeping in mind:
  - privacy cannot be guaranteed in a network environment.
  - the student cannot see the person with whom he/she is communicating.
  - the student cannot tell the age or the sex of the person with whom he/she is communicating. •
  - the student cannot always be sure he/she is being told the truth
  - the student should think carefully about what to say and how to say it.
9. Shall report any problems to his/her teacher.

### **INAPPROPRIATE NETWORK USAGE**

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Accessing the Internet through the Significant Educators' network is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate network usage shall result in disciplinary actions. The Significant Educators shall take actions to uphold the safety and security of users on the Significant Educators' network.

Any student can be found in violation of acceptable network usage if he or she:

1. Uses the Internet or network for illegal, inappropriate, or obscene purposes, or supports such activities. Illegal activities shall be defined as those which violate local, state, and/or federal laws.
2. Violates copyrights, license agreements or other contracts.
3. Intentionally disrupts information network traffic or crashes the network and connected systems.
4. Uses Significant Educators' Internet or network for commercial or financial gain, fraud, political campaigning or solicitation.
5. Steals or damages data, equipment, or intellectual property.
6. Gains or seeks to gain unauthorized access to the network system.
7. Forges electronic mail messages or posts anonymous messages.
8. Uses an account owned by another user or invades the privacy of individuals.
9. Changes or deletes another user's account information.
10. Discloses personal information about anyone.
11. Participates in any behaviors that can be construed as cyber-bullying of other students, faculty, staff, or community members in or out of the school network

Students shall be made aware that any use of the network or of personal digital devices while on school property or at school events, regardless of whether the device is owned by the School Board, the school, or by the individual user, is subject to all the provisions of this and other policies of the Significant Educators. At no time within any property of the School Board, school, or off premises but engaged in activities connected to the educational efforts of the School Board, or school, is any student to violate the provisions of this or other policies of the School Board.

Consequences of network use violations include but are not limited to:

1. Suspension or revocation of network privileges;
2. Suspension or revocation of computer access;
3. School suspension or expulsion;
4. Legal action and prosecution by the authorities.

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## LEGAL ISSUES

- Copyright/Trademark - According to the Copyright Act of 1976, *Fair Use* means that a user may freely use any information that he/she legally finds on the network as long as he/she does so only for scholarly purposes.
- Plagiarism - *Plagiarism* is "taking ideas or writings from another person and offering them as your own." Credit should always be given to the person who created the

article or the idea. The student who leads readers to believe that what they are reading is the student's original work when it is not is guilty of plagiarism.

Students shall be advised that they are subject to all federal, state, and local laws if they access the computer network for inappropriate or illegal purposes.

#### **OFF-CAMPUS TECHNOLOGY USE**

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Students may be subject to discipline for off-campus speech, Internet activities, or use of off-campus computer and/or electronic systems that may cause a substantial disruption of the educational environment, interfere with the rights of others or can be considered a threat of violence to students, employees or others, according to the consequences set forth in this policy for violation of network use.

## **INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLANS (IEPS) AND SPECIAL EDUCATION**

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Mary McLeod Bethune Elementary Charter School is founded in the belief that all students will learn. Bethune's academic program is designed to support students with a variety of learning needs toward academic, social/ emotional, and behavioral success. Our school environment supports the holistic needs of all students, including students with exceptionalities through our strong special education program, staff, and services. Our special education program offers a continuum of resources to serve the needs of both struggling students, as well as those students officially identified as exhibiting the need of special education services courtesy of an Individual Educational Plan (IEP). An Individual Educational Plan (IEP) solidifies compliance with all federal, state and local special education laws and regulations.

Parents of new students should advise the school of any previous IEPs or special services their child received in the past. If a teacher believes a student should be evaluated for an IEP, the teacher will submit a referral to our Student Assistance Team to initiate the Response to Intervention (RTI) process. The Response to Intervention (RTI) process is a three tiered process that provides high-quality, research-based instruction & interventions that are matched to a student's academic, social/ emotional, and behavioral needs. Additional essential components include monitoring academic, social/ emotional, and behavioral interventions, collecting data on their effectiveness or lack thereof, and making data-driven decisions about the instructional pathway in which a student should move forward navigating for the present point in time.

When executed, the final stage of the RTI process involves receiving parental permission before any formal evaluation is undertaken. The formal evaluation involves an in-school committee consisting of the Principal, a certified special education teacher, a regular teacher, the referring teacher, and the parent, as well as a licensed psychologist, various related service providers, etc. Depending upon the results of the formal evaluation, a student may be eligible for special education services, and receive an Individual Education Plan (IEP) that addresses the comprehensive individual needs of the student.

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## GRIEVANCE POLICY

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**Purpose:**

Mary McLeod Bethune Elementary Charter School (Bethune) acknowledges the rights of parents and students to seek redress for any perceived school policies or behaviors of school employees that are in conflict with applicable state or federal law or that affect the well-being of students. It shall be the policy of Bethune to assure that any parent or student filing a complaint or grievance shall be free from restraint, interference, coercion, discrimination, or reprisal with respect to filing the complaint or grievance. The following terms and procedure shall be used as the mechanism to enable parents or students to exercise this right.

**Definitions:**

A grievance is an alleged violation or misapplication of a state or federal law, written administrative regulation, or school policy or one's perception of a wrong committed against him as a result of a management decision or employee's behavior. Specific applicable laws include Title IX which prohibits discrimination based on sex of any education program, Section 504 which prohibits discrimination because of disability, and Chapter 622.

A "grievant" means any student, parent, individuals from the general public, or employee filing a grievance.

The term "days" means any calendar day, except Saturday, Sunday or legal holidays.

Grievance Procedure: The following actions must be taken to resolve a grievance or complaint.

Step 1. The grievant shall present a grievance/complaint to the administrator, teacher, or employee who allegedly violated a law or policy or student right within five (5) working days of the time the grievant knew or should have known of the grievance. The administrator, teacher, or employee shall schedule a conference with the grievant within two (2) working days of the grievant's notice. If the conference does not resolve the complaint, the grievant shall submit the grievance/complaint in writing to the Bethune CEO/Principal.

Step 2. A grievant shall present the written grievance/complaint to the Bethune CEO/Principal or designee within two (2) working days of the time the grievant met with the administrator, teacher, or employee. The Bethune CEO/Principal shall schedule a conference with the grievant within three (3) working days of receiving the written grievance and prepare a written disposition of the grievance.

Step 3. If the grievance is not resolved at the CEO/Principal's level, the grievant may file the grievance with the Significant Educators Board President. The Board President shall confer with the grievant within five (5) working days after receiving the grievance. The Board President will prepare a written disposition of the grievance.

Step 4. If the grievant cannot resolve the grievance through the above steps in the process, the grievant may submit the grievance to the Orleans Parish School Superintendent.

**Mary McLeod Bethune Elementary Charter  
School Grievance Form  
Parents, Students, Others**

**Complete this document for presentation to the CEO/Principal or Significant Educators Board Chairperson.**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Person Submitting the Grievance: \_\_\_\_\_

Address:

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Alleged Grievance: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of the Person Committing the Grievance: \_\_\_\_\_

When and Where did the incident occur?: \_\_\_\_\_

Did anyone observe the incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe the incident in detail:

\_\_\_\_\_

This grievance is filed based on my honest belief and I hereby certify that the information I have stated in this grievance is true, correct, and complete to the best of my knowledge. I am requesting corrective action. Signature of

Person Filing the Grievance: \_\_\_\_\_

**Mary McLeod Bethune Elementary Charter School 2026-27 Student Fee and School Supplies Policy**

This policy governs the assessment, collection, and use of required curricular and co-curricular fees charged to students, their parents or their legal guardians, as well as the requesting of school supplies.

For the purposes of this policy:

1. "Fees" shall mean any monetary payment or supplies required as a condition of a student being enrolled in school or participating in any curricular or co-curricular activity.
2. A "curricular or co-curricular activity" is any activity that is relevant, supportive, and an integral part of the program of studies in which the student is enrolled, and that is under the supervision and/or coordination of the school instructional staff.  
Co-curricular activities normally supplement the curricular program, but do not include other school- related activities, such as proms and dances, entrance fees to after-school activities, school rings, class trips, and items purchased through third-party vendors.
3. "School supplies" are those items that teachers may request, but not require, of students to purchase or provide that are beneficial to the students directly, more so than general school or classroom supplies.
4. The preferred method of fee payment shall be in cash and or money order for which the collector of a fee shall give a receipt to the student, parent, or guardian and who shall remit the payment to Roland Major, Business Manager.
5. Payment is to be at or before the beginning of the activity for which a fee is assessed or requested, unless other arrangements have been made or requested.
6. The assessment of a curricular or co-curricular fee not authorized by this policy is prohibited.  
Any required fee may be payable later or in installments, may be reduced or may be waived for economically disadvantaged students and students whose families are experiencing economic hardship and are unable to pay them timely, fully, or at all. Eligibility for delayed payment, or for reduced, or waived fees includes, but is not limited to, those families receiving unemployment benefits or public assistance (including Temporary Assistance for Needy Families-TANF, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program - SNAP, Supplemental Security Income - SSI or Medicaid), workers' compensation benefits, foster families caring for children in foster care, families that are homeless, families where the student's parent(s) or legal guardian(s) are serving in, or within the previous year has served in, active military service, or the student is an emancipated minor.

Any student, parent or guardian seeking a delayed or reduced fee payment or a fee waiver should submit on or before the beginning of the covered activity, his/her written request for such relief to the Business Manager for resolution. Any student who is denied an economic hardship request and wishes to appeal the denial should submit to the School Principal within seven (7) school days of denial by a written appeal, containing the reason(s) why the economic hardship waiver, delay, or reduction should be granted.

The School Principal will respond to the appeal in writing within seven (7) school days of receipt of the written appeal.

All records associated with a fee waiver, delay, or reduction request due to economic hardship shall not constitute a public record but may be audited to ensure compliance with this policy. A student's personally identifiable information with such a waiver shall not be made public.

The failure to pay any required fee shall not result in the withholding of a student's educational record. School supplies requested by classroom teachers of a student's parent or guardian shall not exceed the published amount per student per school year, as determined by this Board of Directors. The school principal shall approve all school supplies requested by classroom teachers. Prior to establishing a fee for school supplies or developing a school supply list, the school principal shall consider the existing school supply inventory. A student shall not be denied the opportunity to participate in a classroom activity due to his or her inability to provide requested school supplies.

Source: La. R.S. 17:177; 17:178

LDE "Guidance on Student Fees" – August 2017 Bulletin 129, Section 1410 ( LAUGH ). 29

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## STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING

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***Mary McLeod Bethune Elementary Charter School***

I have received and read a copy of Mary McLeod Bethune Elementary Charter School Family Handbook for

2026-2027 and understand the rules, regulations, and procedures of the school. I understand that if I ever have any questions regarding school policies, I can always ask any member of the school community for a further explanation.

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_