

# Chicopee Academy



## Student Handbook

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## School Mission Statement

Chicopee Academy empowers students to overcome challenges, embrace learning, and build a future filled with possibilities. Through a culture of belonging, persistence, and student-centered learning, we provide the structure, support, and high expectations needed for every student to thrive. As Trailblazers, we commit to doing hard things, adapting to meet student needs, and ensuring every learner has the opportunity to succeed.

## School Vision Statement

Students will experience **culturally responsive, high quality** learning experiences that are grounded in **grade level instruction**. Instruction will include appropriate and **effective scaffolding** so that all students can meet or exceed grade level expectations. Learning will occur in supportive environments that foster positive behavior, social-emotional growth, and self-regulation, recognizing that these skills are essential to academic success.

## About Chicopee Academy

Chicopee Academy is a public, alternative school, serving middle and high school students seeking an exceptional educational environment. Our objective is to provide young-people with a unique experience that goes beyond conventional learning. Our emphasis is on creating an inclusive, supportive, and close-knit community that empowers students to excel academically and embrace their individuality. We recognize the importance of belonging and creating an environment where all students can flourish.

At Chicopee Academy, we understand that every student's journey is different. Therefore, we offer a distinctive approach to learning through individualized learning plans and credit recovery. One of our primary objectives is to assist students in their pursuit of a high school diploma.

Many students find their stride at Chicopee Academy and choose to remain, while others work with our committed faculty to transition back to their original schools. We are here to guide and support this process, ensuring a seamless return to their respective middle schools or high schools.

## CHICOPEE ACADEMY WEBSITE

You will find a lot of valuable information on our school website. We encourage you to visit it frequently as it is constantly updated. Please bookmark the following address for your easy access to our website:

[CLICK HERE](#) to go to the Chicopee Public Schools website

The school website includes the following information:

<a href="#">Grade Access: School Brains</a>	<a href="#">District Policies</a>
Bell Schedule	<a href="#">Year calendar</a>
Summer School Information	<a href="#">Lunch Menu</a>

# GENERAL INFORMATION

## ATTENDANCE

School hours are 7:41 A.M. to 2:08 P.M. Students are not allowed to leave school property without permission from staff or prior notification from parents.

EXPECTATION FOR ATTENDANCE	CORRECTIVE ACTION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Any student arriving later than 7:41 will be considered tardy.</li><li>Students that are tardy need to sign in at the main office.</li><li>A caregiver should notify the school when their student is absent.</li><li>It is expected that students attend school daily.</li></ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>Phone call home for each absence.</li><li>Attendance staff may conduct a home visit.</li><li>Students absent more than 16 days a year or 8 absences a semester will participate in a meeting and may lose credit.</li><li>Beginning with five (5) absences, parents/guardians will receive a letter from the school regarding a student's absences and the counselor will meet with the student.</li><li>After the 5th absence a letter will be sent home, 10th, and 13th absence a meeting with the student, caregiver and counselor will be scheduled.</li><li>Referral for the filing of a Child Requiring Assistance (CRA) application with the Juvenile Court</li></ol>

EXPECTATION FOR LEAVING CLASS/BUILDING WITHOUT PERMISSION	CORRECTIVE ACTION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>With teacher permission, students may leave the classroom to access the bathroom, nurse and student support services.</li><li>Students are allowed to leave the classroom only after receiving a pass through Smartpass.</li><li>Only one student may leave the classroom at a time.</li><li>Administrators will be notified about students leaving without permission.</li></ul>	<p>Responses to students leaving the classroom:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>A student/teacher conference</li><li>Teacher contacts caregiver</li><li>Teacher refers to VP. Student//VP conference.</li><li>Student lunch/after school detention.</li><li>VP contacts caregiver</li><li>Refer to administrator for planning.</li><li>The police may be notified if a student elopes from school grounds</li></ol>

## RETENTION OR LOSS OF CREDIT

Students with excessive absences may be considered for retention or loss of credit.

In grades 1-8, students who accumulate more than eighteen (18) absences that count towards retention may be ineligible to move from one grade to the next unless there are extenuating circumstances.

In grades 9-12, students who have more than nine (9) absences that count toward loss of credit in a semester course or more than eighteen (18) absences that count toward loss of credit in a year-long course/class may not receive credit for that course. Each school will provide an appeal process with respect to absences and retention or loss of credit.

The following reasons for being absent **will not** count towards retention or loss of credit:

- extended illness (more than three (3) consecutive days for medical procedure, hospitalization, or illness requiring exclusion from school as documented by doctor/hospital)
- college visit (1)
- bereavement (to attend services due to a death in the family)
- external suspension
- personal business (required by state agency/entity: i.e., driver's test, court appearance)
- religious holiday

The following reasons for being absent **will** count towards retention or loss of credit but will be considered verified if documentation is submitted:

- medical appointment (physician, dentist, counselor, doctor, etc.)
- medical excuse (physician or school nurse documented)
- illness (parent/guardian documented)

The following reasons for being absent **will** count towards retention or loss of credit and will be considered undocumented and therefore truant:

- any absence without appropriate and approved documentation
- skipping school day or class after arriving at school

Students, under the age of 16, who are truant may be referred for the filing of a Child Requiring Assistance (CRA) application with the Juvenile Court. Additionally, students in grades 1-12 (referrals for grade K if the student turns 6 in the school calendar year) may be referred to the CPS Truancy Officers for intervention.

Students with a documented ongoing medical issue impacting attendance will be required to provide ongoing medical documentation that is subject to the requirements and review of a school-based team.

## BUS SCHEDULE

A bus schedule, indicating time and station, will be published in the local newspaper and on the school website before the opening of the school year. Students are to be at the bus stop **AT LEAST TEN MINUTES** before the scheduled pick up time.

[CLICK HERE](#) to see the bus schedules

## BUS SAFETY

Students utilizing Chicopee Public School transportation are expected to follow school rules. If riders are distracting or disrespectful, they may endanger the health and safety of other riders.

EXPECTATIONS	CORRECTIVE ACTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• stay seated</li><li>• keep the aisles clear</li><li>• follow the instructions of your driver</li><li>• refrain from throwing objects out the window</li><li>• refrain from yelling out out the window</li><li>• be on time for the bus, the driver will not wait.</li><li>• Keep your hands and feet to yourself</li><li>• Students will ONLY be allowed to ride their assigned bus</li><li>• Sit in assigned seat or section</li><li>• No smoking or drug use on the bus</li><li>• Keep the bus cleanAsk driver for permission to open a window</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Administration may withdraw the privilege of bus transportation from any student whose conduct is such that it is distracting to the bus driver.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ <u>First Offense</u> - 5 day bus suspension</li><li>○ <u>Second Offense</u> - 10 day bus suspension</li><li>○ <u>Third Offense</u> - removal from the bus for the remainder of the year</li></ul></li></ul>

## ENTERING THE BUILDING & STUDENT SEARCHES

- High School students will enter through the main entrance. Middle School Students will enter through door H.
- Student searches will be conducted.
  - Students and student property will be searched
  - All electronic devices including headphones and cell phones will be labeled and stored in a locked closet. (If Smartwatches are found to be an issue, they will be collected as well).
  - All items will be returned to the students at dismissal.
  - Students who set off the metal detector will be subject to an additional search. A caregiver will be contacted if concerns persist.
  - Any contraband found in a student's possession will be immediately confiscated. Items WILL NOT be returned to the student or their parent/ guardian.
  - Tardy students will enter through the main entrance. Students will then follow the search protocol and go directly to class.
- Breakfast/Morning Meeting
  - High school students will report directly to breakfast in the cafeteria.
  - Middle school students will report to room 211 for Morning Meeting followed by breakfast in the cafeteria.

## SECURITY OF BELONGINGS

- Students should not bring valuable personal belongings or large sums of money to school. The school is not responsible should any of these or other personal belongings be stolen.
- Skateboards, roller skates, roller sneakers, or scooters must be turned in at check-in. They will be placed in the student storage closet during the day, and returned upon dismissal.
- Bikes are to be locked on the bike rack outside. Students are responsible for their own locks.
- (Middle School) Snacks will be kept in the storage closet and provided to the student at lunch.

## AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

- School activities will be announced in morning announcements.
- Canceled activities will be announced by the end of the school day.
- Students enrolled in an after-school activity must be in the company of staff at all times and escorted out of the building following the activity.
- Students may lose the privilege of attending clubs as a consequence of poor behavior.

## EMERGENCY/SAFETY DRILLS

Chicopee Academy has a comprehensive safety plan, which outlines evacuation, fire, lockdown, and stay-in-place procedures. Staff reviews these procedures routinely to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all students. Multiple planned evacuation and fire drills are conducted each year. Directions for exiting the building are posted in each classroom. When a fire alarm sounds or a directive to evacuate is issued, all students must exit the building and move toward the designated assembly area. Students stay with their teachers until an announcement is made that it is safe to re-enter the building.

It is important and mandatory students follow orders from staff and emergency personnel to ensure each and everyone's safety. Failure to follow the safety drill guideline will result in a report to administration, and may lead to a suspension.

## GENDER IDENTITY STATEMENT

An Act Relative to Gender Identity (Chapter 199 of the Acts of 2011), which became effective on July 1, 2012, defines "gender identity" to mean *"a person's gender-related identity, appearance or behavior, whether or not that gender-related identity, appearance or behavior is different from that traditionally associated with the person's physiology or assigned sex at birth."*

*Gender-related identity may be shown by providing evidence including, but not limited to, medical history, care or treatment of the gender-related identity, consistent and uniform assertion of the gender-related identity or any other evidence that the gender-related identity is sincerely held as part of a person's core identity; provided, however, that gender related identity shall not be asserted for any improper purpose."*



Every student has the right to be addressed by a name and pronoun that corresponds to their gender identity. Chicopee Academy will respect student wishes to be referred to by a name and pronoun based on an affirmed change in gender identity, regardless of the student's assigned sex at birth. A court-ordered name or gender change is not required, and the student need not change their official records. The responsibility for determining a student's gender identity rests with the student or, in the case of young students not yet able to advocate for themselves, with the caregiver. As such, any student or caregiver, as appropriate, may inform a school staff member of their desire to be consistently recognized at school using their stated gender identity. Students may choose to involve their parents/guardians in their transition process, but parental participation is not required.

All students are entitled to have access to facilities that are sanitary, safe, and adequate, so they can comfortably and fully engage in their school program and activities. Students in the Chicopee Public Schools shall have access to restrooms, locker rooms, and changing facilities that correspond to their gender identity.

Whenever students are separated by gender in classes, classroom activities, extra-curricular activities or are subject to otherwise lawful gender-specific rules, policies, or practices, students in Chicopee Academy shall be permitted to participate in such activities or conform to such rules, policies, or practices in a manner consistent with their gender identity.

## **RIGHTS OF THE 18-YEAR-OLD**

The student who has reached the age of majority (18) has the right, provided by statute, to assume responsibility for their dealings with the school, unless a court has appointed guardianship to a parent or other adult. The student must sign a form obtained from the principal's office. The school will notify the caregiver of the student's decision to exercise these rights. Students assuming this responsibility should be aware that they are still bound by all school rules, including those relating to attendance and dismissal. Furthermore, the school will maintain contact with the student's caregiver.

Records of students in the Chicopee Public Schools may be reviewed by request in writing. Such a request should be directed to the principal of the school in which the student is enrolled. A parent/guardian or student 18 years of age may request to see their records. The Principal or the Principal's designee will be present during the viewing and can assist with interpreting the contents. Persons viewing records will sign a form indicating that the records were seen on a particular date.

## **WORK PERMITS**

- In order to obtain a job, part-time or full-time, students between the ages of 14 – 18 must have a work permit.
- All work permits are obtained through the main office.
- Students under the age of 16 must first get a paper (available in the office) to be filled out and signed by the employer and physician.
- Students between the ages of 16 – 18 must first get a paper (available in the office) to be filled out and signed by the employer.

- The completed papers are to be returned to school with proof of age, and then a permanent pass will be issued.
- If you are between 16 -18 present your ID card or birth certificate and a work permit will be issued.

## STUDENT SUPPORT ROOM (SSR)

The SSR serves as a space where all students can receive active supervision in order to maintain safety, work quietly and self-regulate. The student support room staff will work to de-escalate students sent to the SSR and determine a plan to help students return to the general classroom setting. Therefore, students are expected to follow the rules and expectations of the student support. Persistent failure to comply with these expectations may result in a parent all and removal for the day along with other reasonable consequences.

The Student Support Room provides a space to facilitate restorative processes for students who need a break to refocus or who are not meeting academic or behavioral expectations. In this space, staff assist students and guide them to redirect, recover, and/or return to an internal state conducive to learning.

The space is intentionally calming in design and has sensory tools for students to utilize while refocusing. The Student Support Room is integral to positive behavior support and provides structure and support to students. It is utilized to hold students accountable for their actions and learning, while also helping them develop tools in coping, reflection, and practice that will ultimately help them succeed in reaching their academic, career, and life goals. Staff in the Student Support Room use academic planning resources, restorative practices, crisis intervention strategies, and trauma informed tools, such as mindfulness, to help empower students to cope, refocus, and problem solve so that they are better equipped to self-regulate and be self-directed learners.

**Students access the Student Support Room** through a documented intervention plan or with approval from a counselor or administrator. Teachers will not send students directly to the SSR without appropriate approval. Students may request to go to the SSR; however they will also need prior approval.

# **CODE OF CONDUCT**

Chicopee Academy prides itself on maintaining an atmosphere in which all members of the community are treated with dignity and respect. The school has established high expectations for student behavior in order to provide all students with a safe and secure learning environment. The Code of Conduct is intended to cover disciplinary infractions that occur on school grounds or at school-sponsored events (on and off school grounds) OR for disciplinary infractions that occur off school grounds but substantially disrupt the educational environment or create a hostile environment at school.

## **VIOLATIONS AND CORRECTIVE ACTION**

The Code of Conduct is based on a system of progressive discipline with a goal of limiting the use of out-of-school suspensions as a corrective action for student misconduct. The administrator will exercise discretion in the interpretation of rules and the imposition of consequences. In determining the severity of the corrective action or suspension, particular attention will be paid to the context of an infraction and the individual needs of the students involved. Relevant factors may include, but are not limited to:

- the student's age
- the student's disability
- the student's previous disciplinary record
- the severity of the disruption of the educational process
- the degree of danger to self, others, and the school in general
- the student's willingness to be honest and accountable for their actions
- the student's level of remorse and willingness to repair any damage caused by their behavior
- whether alternative consequences are appropriate to re-engage the student in learning

Upon consideration of such factors, the administration will issue a fair and appropriate response. Responses may include, but are not limited to:

- verbal warnings and student conferences
- conferences with teachers
- conferences with caregivers
- meetings with a school counselor
- Teacher, lunch, and/or office detentions;
- in-school suspensions; out-of-school suspensions; police involvement
- community service; restitution; reparation
- Accountability project assigned
- BASE education platform

Alternative consequences may include the use of evidence-based strategies and programs such as mediation, conflict resolution, restorative practices, collaborative problem solving, and positive behavioral interventions and supports.

## LIST OF INFRACTIONS

The list of infractions presented in the Code of Conduct is not to be considered all-inclusive. The administration reserves the authority to discipline for other violations not listed. As such, students who engage in behavior that is contrary to the mission and values of Chicopee Academy, whether or not specifically listed in the Code of Conduct, subject themselves to disciplinary action.

## STUDENT DRESS

Responsibility for student attire rests with the students and their caregivers. We expect that students will dress appropriately to the setting. Student attire must assure the health and safety of themselves and others.

MGL c. 71, § 82 Right of students to freedom of expression *"The right of students to freedom of expression in the public schools of the commonwealth shall not be abridged, provided that such right shall not cause any disruption or disorder within the school."*

MGL c.71, § 83 *"School officials shall not abridge the rights of students as to personal dress and appearance except if such officials determine that such personal dress and appearance violate reasonable standards of health, safety and cleanliness."*

INFRACTION	CORRECTIVE ACTION
<p><b><u>Students may NOT wear the following clothing or accessories</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• clothing displaying words or designs that are obscene, lewd, or vulgar;</li><li>• clothing with words or designs intended to harm, harass, threaten, intimidate, or demean others because of gender, color, race, religion, disability, ethnicity, sex, national origin, or sexual orientation.</li><li>• clothing which promote alcoholic beverages, tobacco products, gang activity, illegal drugs, guns, or weapons.</li><li>• Sunglasses or headwear that conceals the students face. Students with special circumstances may seek approval from a medical provider or administration.</li><li>• Slippers or barefeet. (Footwear with hard soles must be worn at all times). Sneakers are needed for PE</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Change into suitable clothing</li><li>• Caregiver contact</li><li>• Student refusal will result in a caregiver meeting.</li></ul>

## WEAPONS/VIOLENCE

Students and families should expect that all weapons, or items perceived as weapons by administration will be confiscated and discarded or turned over to the police, as appropriate. The school will not return any contraband to students or families. All infractions will be subject to an investigation to determine the nature, severity, and possible corrective actions.

INFRACTION	CORRECTIVE ACTION
Hate Language or Verbal Attack toward staff	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Lunch detention</li> <li>2. After school detention</li> <li>3. Structured Day</li> <li>4. Accountability Project</li> <li>5. Community Circles</li> </ol>
Violence (unsolicited attacks) and Threats of Violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suspension</li> <li>• Accountability project</li> <li>• Begin return day in SSR: Re-entry plan w/ student (parent invited)</li> </ul>
Fighting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suspension</li> <li>• Mediation (if appropriate)</li> <li>• Begin day in SSR- Re-entry plan w/ student (parent invited)</li> </ul>
Play Fighting	(Progressive Discipline resets each week) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Lunch detention</li> <li>2. After school detention</li> <li>3. Structured Day</li> <li>4. Accountability Project</li> </ol>
Skipping Class (don't show up or 15 minutes or more late)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Detention: make up time and work after school               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Admin calls caregiver</li> <li>• Stays after school until all work is completed.</li> <li>• Work submitted to teacher till by detention staff</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Restorative Meeting w/ Teacher and Student</li> <li>3. Restorative meeting w/ teacher, student, caregiver</li> <li>4. Accountability Project</li> <li>5. Escorts and Pass restriction</li> </ol>
Substance Use at School	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Med. Evaluation, Sent Home, Referral to counselor</li> <li>2. Meet w/ SRO</li> <li>3. Parent Meeting, Accountability project</li> <li>4. Fine</li> </ol>
Bullying & Harassment?	Formal investigation

**OLD**

INFRACTION	CORRECTIVE ACTION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Possession of a weapon</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Suspension</li><li>• Expulsion</li><li>• Possible police involvement</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Threats of violence including bomb threats and false fire alarms.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Suspension</li><li>• Expulsion</li><li>• Possible police involvement</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Arson</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Suspension</li><li>• Expulsion</li><li>• Possible police involvement</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Physical violence towards students or staff: Including but not limited to, hitting, punching, pushing, slapping, shoving, grabbing, kicking, choking, hair pulling, biting, throwing things, restraining, or pinning.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Suspension</li><li>• Expulsion</li><li>• Possible police involvement</li></ul>

## PROPERTY DAMAGE and VANDALISM

The school building and surrounding grounds deserve the same care and respect as our own private property. Vandalism is considered the defacing or damaging school or personal property

INFRACTION	CORRECTIVE ACTION
Vandalism includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• breaking of glass, breaking doors, writing on desks/ walls,</li><li>• destruction of bathrooms,</li><li>• breaking of desks,</li><li>• destruction of learning materials,</li><li>• throwing food,</li><li>• breaking of electronic devices (Chromebook, iPad, etc).</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Restitution will be required for all damages to public and others' personal property. This can include restorative practices and/or financial compensation.</li><li>• Detention</li><li>• Potential suspension</li></ul>

## SUBSTANCE USE/MISUSE

Students and families should expect that all banned substances and related paraphernalia (including alcohol, marijuana, edibles, cigarettes, lighters, e-cigarettes, and e-liquid) will be confiscated and discarded or turned over to the police, as appropriate. The school will not return any contraband to students or families.

## STUDENT SUSPECTED TO BE UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF SUBSTANCES

- Teachers and other school staff are obligated to report any suspicion of substance use to an administrator as soon as possible.
- If administration is not available, the school nurse or adjustment counselor should be notified immediately.
- Staff should stay with the student until a designated staff member removes the student from the class. The student should not be sent to the office.
- Administration will evaluate the student and consult with the school nurse when applicable. The school nurse will make an assessment of the student, which may include vital signs, medical history, coordination, and reaction of pupils.
- The administrator may conduct a search of the student's belongings and general person.
- Caregivers will be notified of the search after it has been conducted.
- If a student is deemed unable to participate in school instruction/activities, the caregiver will be contacted and asked to pick up the child.

INFRACTION	CORRECTIVE ACTION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Possession of drugs, drug contraband, nicotine, or alcohol on school property is not permitted at anytime.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Confiscation</li><li>• Notify Caregiver</li><li>• Appropriate recommendations and referrals will be made based on the findings and the</li></ul>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unlabelled medicine will be treated as contraband. If the medicine is prescribed to the student, a parent will be notified for clarification.</li> </ul>	<p>student's individual situation (meet with school counselor, district substance-use counselor, out-patient referrals).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BASE</li> <li>Detentions</li> <li>Suspensions</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Being under the influence or use of drugs or alcohol on campus.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Distribution, sale or intent to distribute alcohol, nicotine, or drugs on school property or at a school-sponsored event</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Suspension</li> <li>Expulsion</li> <li>Parent Contact</li> <li>Police Involvement</li> </ul>

## HARASSMENT/DISCRIMINATION BULLYING

**Bullying** is defined as the repeated use by one or more students or School staff members of a written, verbal, or electronic expression, or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, directed at a Target.

**Cyber-bullying** means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but shall not be limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature.

INFRACTION	CORRECTIVE ACTION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property;</li> <li>Places the Target in reasonable fear of harm to him/herself, or of damage to their property;</li> <li>Creates a hostile environment at school for the Target;</li> <li>Infringes on the rights of the target at school; or</li> <li>Materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school</li> <li>creation of an electronic medium in which the creator assumes the identity or impersonates of another person</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Administration will conduct an investigation to determine the nature, severity, and consequences for reports of potential bullying.</li> </ul>

## **HORSEPLAY/ DANGEROUS BEHAVIOR**

Behavior that might endanger persons or property including threats of physical violence, disrupting the atmosphere of the classroom or the school, horseplay is considered a behavior not done in a malicious manner.

<b>INFRACTION</b>	<b>CORRECTIVE ACTION</b>
Horseplay or play-fighting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Meet with counselor or administration</li><li>• Lunch/after-school detention</li><li>• Caregiver contact</li><li>• BASE</li></ul>