



BRANCH LINE
SCHOOL

2025-2026 FAMILY HANDBOOK

Dear Branch Line School Families,

On behalf of the staff at Branch Line School, we are happy to welcome you to our learning community! We are looking forward to a productive partnership with you. We recognize that in order to be successful in school, our children need support from both the home and school. We know a strong partnership makes a great difference in your child's education. As partners, we share the responsibility for our children's success and want you to know that we will do our very best to carry out our responsibilities.

We ask that you guide and support your child's learning by ensuring that he/she:

- 1) Attends school daily and arrives on time, ready for the day's learning experience
- 2) Completes assignments given by teachers
- 3) Reads daily to develop a love for reading and to improve literacy skills
- 4) Shares school experiences with you so that you are aware of his/her school life
- 5) Informs you if he/she needs additional support in any area or subject

Our weekly newsletter, called the Branch Line Express, and our official school website, www.branchlineschool.org, are valuable resources for families throughout the school year.

If you have any questions about the rules and expectations outlined in our handbook, please feel free to contact a member of our Leadership Team or discuss them with your child's teacher. It is very important that you and your child are fully informed regarding our standards for a safe and productive school year.

The wonderful Branch Line School staff feels privileged to be a part of this school family. We thank you for your support and look forward to learning together this year.

BRANCH LINE SCHOOL STAFF

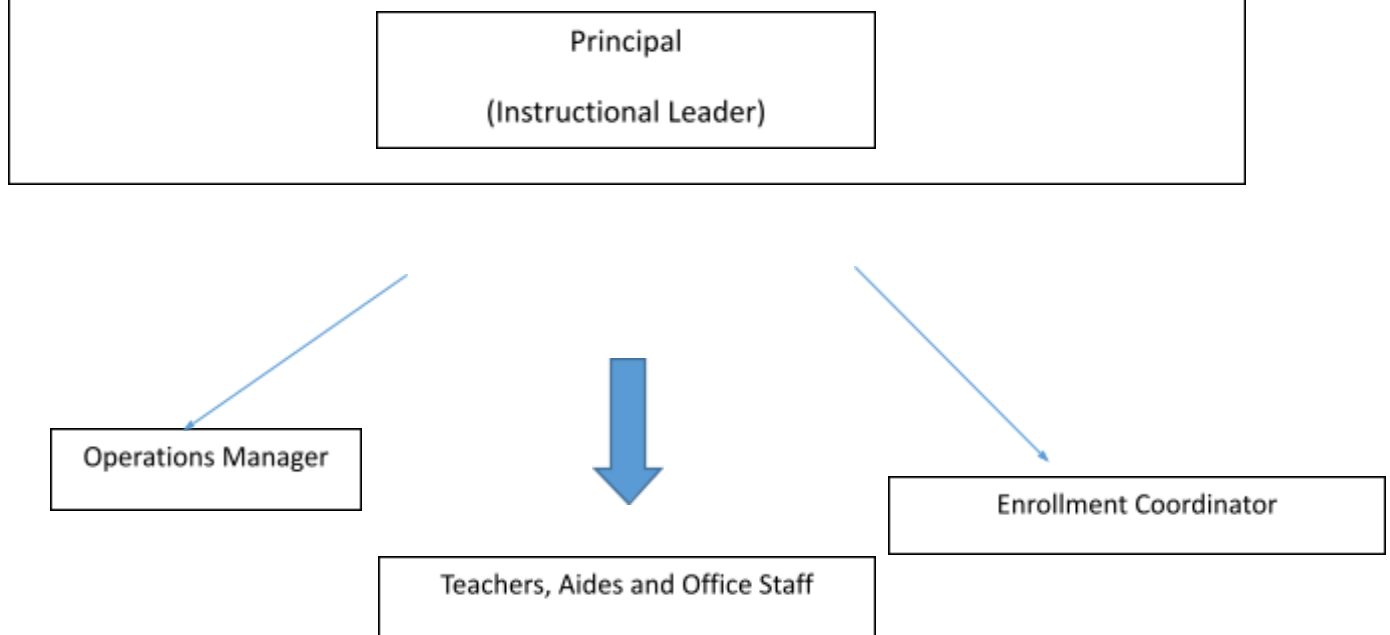


BRANCH LINE SCHOOL

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Branch Line School Organizational Chart



ACCESS TO STUDENT RECORDS

Branch Line School maintains many student records including both directory information and confidential information. Educational records of students at Branch Line School are safeguarded by policies of federal legislation entitled Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 and Michigan law.

Parents/Guardians may review their child's records and request amendments or changes to their student's file. Please contact the Operations Lead to begin this process and allow up to 45 days for the school to comply with your request. If Branch Line School receives a record request from another school we will send, without consent, personally identifiable student information to that school.

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Bullying is a form of harassment. For the purposes of this policy, "bullying" is defined as: "The repeated intimidation or emotional abuse of others by the infliction of harm of any kind to the person or property of others whether real or threatened, as transmitted verbally, in writing, or electronically transmitted (often referred to as "cyber bullying") either in or outside of school.

It may include, but not be limited to, actions such as verbal, written, or electronically transmitted taunts, name-calling and put-downs, including ethnically-based, religiously-based or gender-based intimidation, theft, extortion or attempted extortion of money or possessions, destruction of property, and systematic exclusion from peer groups within school."

Such conduct is disruptive to the educational process and, therefore, bullying is not acceptable behavior at Branch Line School and is prohibited.

Students who engage in any act of bullying while at school, at any school function, in connection to or with any school-sponsored activity or event, while en route to or from school, or outside of school hours if the action is likely to carry some connection to, or have an effect upon, the school environment, are subject to disciplinary action as outlined in the Branch Line School Code of Conduct, up to and including suspension or expulsion. As required by law, law enforcement officials shall be notified of bullying incidents.

This policy shall not be interpreted to prohibit a reasoned and civil exchange of opinions, or debate that is protected by state or federal law.

ATTENDANCE

It is very important that students arrive at school on time as well as attend school daily in order to fully maximize their learning potential. There are many learning experiences that are provided in the school setting that cannot be replaced through independent study.

School attendance is critical to successful school performance, and is a significant factor in keeping students successful. Developing habits of being on time and consistent attendance at school and work are important life lessons for our students.

It is our shared responsibility to ensure that every child is safe and accounted for on every school day. If your child is absent from school, it is essential that you either call Branch Line School at (734) 335-0663 x804 or email us at absence@branchlineschool.org before 8:45 am on the morning of your student's absence. Please state the child's full name, classroom, and reason for absence.

Branch Line School accepts only the following as excusable reasons for absences from school:

- Student illness or medical condition
- Student medical appointment (medical, dental, optometry, counseling)
- Student observance of a religious holiday
- Death in the student's family
- Mandated student court appearance
- Parents are encouraged to schedule medical, dental, legal, and other necessary appointments other than during the school day. Since this is not always possible, when a student is to be absent for part of the school day:
 1. the student shall have a statement to that effect from his/her parent/guardian;
 2. the student shall bring a signed statement from the doctor, dentist, lawyer, counselor, etc., to the effect that he/she reported promptly for the appointment;
 3. the student shall report back to Branch Line School immediately after his/her appointment, if school is still in session.

We strongly encourage families to take their family vacations during designated vacation breaks on the school calendar; we recognize that opportunities arise that necessitate a family trip during school time. Vacation days will be recorded as unexcused. In those situations, we ask parents to notify the school and teacher(s) of the trip at least one week in advance of departure so that arrangements can be made to provide the student with suggestions and materials that are educational in content to extend the learning of the student and to complete missed work during their absence from school.

Each absence shall be documented on the official business or doctor letterhead in order to be considered excused. The documentation shall be submitted to the front office coordinator and filed as part of the student's school record.

CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM

Chronically absent is defined as students who missed 10 percent (18) or more of possible days during the scheduled school year. A student who attends fewer than 90% of scheduled school days is considered chronically absent by this federal definition. Chronic absenteeism can result in low test scores, poor grades and possible retention.

9 or fewer absences = Satisfactory

10-17 absences = Warning Signs

18 or more absences = Chronic absenteeism

How can parents help with Chronic Absenteeism?

- Set a regular bedtime and morning routine.
- Lay out clothes and pack backpacks the night before.
- Develop back up plans for getting your kids to school if something comes up.
- Communicate with the school.

TRUANCY

The basic tenets of our Truancy policy are:

1. Regular school attendance leads to higher academic achievement;
2. Education is a basic need for all children;
3. Education is the key to a successful future;
4. School attendance is mandatory; and,
5. **Parents of children who do not attend school as required by law will be petitioned to court for educational neglect if, despite these diversion efforts, attendance does not improve.**

The Truancy policy works as follows:

- When a child has four (4) absences (excused or unexcused), the school will notify the child's parent in writing.
- When a child has seven (7) absences the school will investigate and notify the child's parent of a school meeting.
- If the parent fails to attend this meeting or continues to not send the child to school, the school sends a Formal Notice by mail requiring the parent/guardian to send the child to school the next day.
- If the parent fails to comply with the Formal Notice letter and the ten (10) absences, the school makes a referral to the Livonia Police Department School Liaison Officer. The officer then sends a warning letter to the parent informing them of the Compulsory Attendance Act and possible criminal prosecution.
- If the parent still fails to comply with the above steps, the school files a formal complaint. The prosecutor will review and issue a warrant for the parent charging educational neglect.
- If the parent fails to appear to answer charges, local law enforcement will make an arrest. The misdemeanor case will then be handled in the local district court.

Any student arriving after 8:25 a.m. must be escorted into the school by a parent or guardian and properly registered in the office.

TARDIES

Students are expected to arrive at class no later than 8:25 a.m. We ask that parents make arriving on time a priority. Any student arriving after 8:25 a.m. must be escorted into the school by a parent or guardian and properly

registered in the office. Classroom teachers maintain daily attendance records for each of their assigned students. These records are reviewed by the office daily.

BACKGROUND CHECKS

In order to provide a safe environment for all Branch Line School students, volunteers (including parents) must be screened through the Internet Criminal History Access Tool (ICHAT) or other similar site for background checks prior to volunteer assignments.

Volunteers are required to submit a form and a copy of their driver's license for this purpose. Any placement decisions made by Branch Line School are final and are subject to the school's sole discretion.

CELEBRATIONS AND EVENTS

SCHOOL WIDE CELEBRATIONS

As a school community, we will host celebrations throughout the school year. The date and times of these celebrations will be determined by the BLS Leadership Team and announced in the *Branch Line Express*. These school-wide celebrations will typically include individual classroom activities that are typically designed for family participation; therefore parents, as well as siblings under their direct supervision, are welcome and invited to attend.

CULMINATING EVENTS

Individual cohorts will hold Culminating Events throughout school year. The purpose of these events is to demonstrate or highlight learning and quality work completed by your children. This is another form of reporting progress to parents. These events will be announced via the *Branch Line Express* and will usually occur during the classroom day.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Your child's teacher will be in touch with you as your child's birthday approaches to outline ways that birthdays are celebrated in his or her classroom. In awareness of food allergies/sensitivities, food should not be part of a classroom birthday observance.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are planned to coincide with topics of study. A field trip is an extension of the learning that takes place in school. Specific details about trips will be announced in the *Branch Line Express*. Teachers often ask for volunteers to help out during these trips, but siblings not enrolled at BLS do not regularly attend. All BLS discipline policies apply during a field trip. Volunteers need to submit a form and a copy of their driver's license in order to volunteer for field trips. Volunteers will be screened through the Internet Criminal History Access Tool (ICHAT) or other similar site for background checks prior to this type of volunteer assignment.

CHILD ILLNESS POLICY

Parents/guardians are responsible for informing the school when their child has been exposed to a communicable disease such as chicken pox, measles, pink eye, strep throat, etc. outside of Branch Line School. When a child is exposed to a communicable disease at school a notice will be sent home to parents/guardians of all students in the child's cohort, and the Public Health Department will be notified as required. A child will not be able to return to school after having contracted a communicable disease without a signed statement from a licensed physician indicating that the child is no longer contagious.

Branch Line School understands that it is difficult for a parent/guardian to leave or miss work; therefore it is suggested that alternative arrangements be made for occasions when children must remain at home or be picked up due to illness. Exclusion from school is sometimes necessary to reduce the transmission of illness or because the school is not able to adequately meet the needs of the child.

It is well known that mild illness is common among children. Because with many conditions, children spread infectious agents before showing any symptoms, exclusion serves no purpose as long as your child can participate comfortably in program activities throughout the day. These children do not represent any harm to other children.

Your child should be excluded from the school setting for the following reasons (this list covers most common illnesses, but is not inclusive of all reasons for exclusion):

- Illness that prevents the child from participating comfortably in program activities.
- Illness that results in a greater need for care than our faculty can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children.
- Fever - 100° auxiliary, 101° orally, 102° aural (ear)
- Any child with a fever of 105° will be excluded and should receive medical attention as soon as possible.
- Diarrhea – stools with blood or mucous, and/or uncontrolled, unformed stools.
- Vomiting – green or bloody and/or two or more times during the previous 24 hours.
- Mouth sores associated with fever and/or sore throat.
- Rash with fever and/or behavioral changes, unless a physician has determined it is not a communicable disease. A signed note from the physician is required.
- Purulent conjunctivitis (defined as pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow eye discharge), until on antibiotics for 24 hours.
- Impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment has begun.
- Strep throat, until 24 hours after treatment has begun.
- Head lice, until after treatment has begun and all nits are removed.
- Scabies, until 24 hours after treatment has begun.
- Chickenpox, until all lesions have dried and crusted (usually six days).
- Pertussis (whooping cough), until five days of treatment with appropriate antibiotics.
- Hepatitis A virus, until one week after onset of illness, after immune globulin has been administered.

If a child is suspected to have a communicable disease, parents will be notified using the phone numbers listed on their emergency forms for immediate pick-up. The health department's fact sheet on that suspected communicable disease will be sent home with the parent. This fact sheet typically provides information regarding the

communicable disease, its symptoms, and possible treatment options. The fact sheet will also be sent home to the students of the cohort where the communicable disease is suspected. If the student being excluded has attended before or aftercare, the students in those programs will also be sent home the health department's fact sheet. The school may, at its discretion, also send this information to a larger segment of the school population if deemed appropriate under the circumstances. Any questions on these notifications should be directed to school leadership. For your child's comfort and to reduce the risk of contagion, children are to be picked up within one hour of notification. You will be required to sign him/her out on the Student Sign-Out Sheet. Children need to remain home for 24 hours without symptoms before returning to school. In the case of a (suspected) contagious illness or continuing symptoms a doctor's note is required before returning.

Children who have been excluded may return to school when:

- Child is free of fever, vomiting and diarrhea for a full 24 hours.
- Child has been treated with an antibiotic for a full 24 hours.
- Child is able to participate comfortably in all usual program activities, including recess.
- Child must be free of open, oozing skin conditions unless:
 1. A health care provider signs a note stating that the child's condition is not contagious, and
 2. The involved areas can be covered by a bandage without seepage or drainage through the bandage.

If a child is excluded because of a reportable communicable disease, a doctor's note stating that the child is no longer contagious and may return is required. The final decision whether to exclude a child will be made by the school.

EPINEPHRINE AUTO-INJECTORS

Michigan Law allows Branch Line School to maintain a supply of emergency epinephrine auto-injectors to be used during emergency situations where a student, not previously diagnosed with known allergies, may suffer a life-threatening allergic reaction or anaphylaxis. BLS staff members are properly trained in the use of epinephrine.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN TRANSITION

It is the policy of Branch Line School to ensure that students who meet the Federal definition of children and youth in transition have equal access to the same free, appropriate public education as provided to other students. In addition, these students are given meaningful opportunities to succeed at Branch Line. The Board annually appoints a Homeless Liaison to perform all duties as legally required.

Branch Line School is committed to ensuring that there is no barrier to enrollment, attendance, or the success of children and youth in transition. In addition, children and youth in transition will not be discriminated, stigmatized or segregated on the basis of their status.

Branch Line School's Homeless Liaison collaborates and coordinates with state coordinators, community service providers, and school personnel responsible for the provision of education and related services to homeless children and youth.

COMMUNICATIONS POLICY (SCHOOL TO HOME)

In order to ensure that information from Branch Line School is delivered to parents/caregivers in a timely, cooperative, and inclusive manner, all communication within the school and between the school and our families must be sanctioned by the leadership team.

This policy seeks to maintain and improve the current channels of communication among the school community so that students and families benefit from a continuity of approach, support and management between school and home. Having one “gatekeeper” ensures that our aims, values, and mission are constantly engaged as we inform families about Branch Line School.

DISCIPLINE

Branch Line School’s discipline policies reflect our goals of creating an environment built on safety, responsibility and respect. As partners, teachers, staff, and students co-create expectations within classrooms to foster inclusivity in learning and inspire engagement. We define discipline as helping children develop self-control and self-motivation as we keep our community safe for all members. We work to maintain an environment where children and grown-ups can safely ask questions and be heard, we learn and improve together, where there is mutual respect among all students and staff.

As teachers and staff of Branch Line School, we understand and honor that we must:

- Be aware that behavior equals communication
- Be specific in identifying desired classroom behaviors
- Be respectful, yet firm, in presenting rules and consequences (done without shaming)
- Be thoughtful, patient, and controlled to ensure that consequences are related to the offense (by investigating the intention of the behavior). Consequences are reasonable (by investigating the intensity of the behavior).

Students of Branch Line School are expected to understand and honor that they must:

- Be committed to the safety of themselves and those around them in the Branch Line community
- Be engaged in our community academically and socially
- Take responsibility for their own behavior and learning
- Demonstrate respect for themselves, other members of our school community, and the school environment
- Behave in a manner that respects the rights of others, including the right to learn

Our Code of Conduct provides a framework for when behaviors and actions exceed the bounds of the above expectations, including behavior that is insubordinate or disrupts order within the school community; unwanted threatening or hurtful behavior or physical contact; or illegal acts.

Our behavior expectations for our Branch Line community:

Be Safe

Be Kind

Be Respectful

Violations of behavioral expectations are (but not limited to)...

- Keep hands, feet, and everything else to yourself.
- Use walking feet.
- Behaviors which result in aggression toward other individuals and/or damage to the building or property will be subject to one or more consequences.
- Pushing, fighting, throwing objects, writing on walls or desks, breaking or destroying belongings, stealing, and slamming doors.
- Profanity, threats, name-calling, yelling or screaming, rude or questionable hand gestures, and deliberately causing another individual mental or emotional distress.
- Ignoring a request, refusing to comply, mumbling under one's breath, rolling one's eyes, responding with a disrespectful tone of voice, and dismissive statements such as "whatever."
- Failing or refusing to do all or part of an assignment, completing an assignment in a substandard manner, and permitting another student to complete all or part of one's assignment.

BEHAVIOR REFLECTION FORM

At times, students need time to cool down and reflect on what happened before they are ready to talk about the situation. In that case, students are asked to complete a behavior reflection form with the adult involved and support, if required, from the leadership team and/or additional resources. This form will also be sent home for a parent signature.

Even with all of these systems in place, there are times when students engage in behaviors that are unsafe and cannot be tolerated at school. In these instances, the Code of Conduct will be employed and an appropriate consequence will be determined by the classroom teacher and a member of the leadership team.

Most disciplinary issues will be handled proactively or directly through routine classroom management techniques by classroom adults. Even within the disciplinary responses below, there may be gradients based on the individuals involved and the developmental level of the student. For issues that are persistent or that reach Level III, consultation will be sought with the School Administrator and outside resources when needed.

CONSEQUENCES

Consequences for poor behavior choices will be assigned at the discretion of the teacher, staff member, and/or school leadership in the event that a child commits a behavioral transgression such as those described above. The assigned consequences will take into consideration the child's age, developmental level, history, special needs, and special challenges. The nature of the consequence and specific expectations will be set at the discretion of school leadership.

DUE PROCESS RIGHTS

All students suspended and/or expelled will be provided notice and an opportunity to be heard in accordance with a student's due process rights under the law.

Within the classroom setting, day-to-day classroom management will call upon conflict resolution techniques, Restorative Justice and/or restitution to resolve behaviors that do not require enforcement of the Code of Conduct. These techniques, as outlined below, may or may not require the consultation and support of the Leadership Team.

The following behaviors shall be considered Step I behaviors	First Level	Second Level	Third Level	Further Behaviors
(1) Attending class without required class materials or assigned work; (2) Off-task behaviors that demonstrate disengagement from classroom learning; (3) Behaviors that disrupt or interfere with classroom teaching and learning; (4) Non-compliance with dress expectations as outlined in BLS Family Handbook; (5) Inappropriate displays of affection such as kissing, inappropriate touching, etc; (6) Excessive noise in the classroom, hall, or school building; (7) Running in the classroom, hall, or school building; (8) Communicating with staff and peers in a manner that is not polite, courteous, or respectful; (9) Refusal to comply with staff instructions, or classroom or school rules; and (10) Any behavior or other conduct not specifically enumerated in any other tier that is insubordinate or causes minor disruption to the academic environment but does not involve damage to school property or harm to self or others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Verbal redirection or reprimand Apology offered between peers or to staff person 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff/student conference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflection Form Phone call home or teacher/ student/ parent conference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other school-based consequences as approved by BLS Leadership Team

Step II behaviors are those behaviors not specifically enumerated in any other tier in this chapter that cause disruption to the academic environment, involve damage to school property, or may cause minor harm to self or others. Step II behaviors result in school-based and administrative disciplinary responses.

The following behaviors shall be considered Step II behaviors	1 st Level	2 nd Level	3 rd Level	Further Behaviors
(1) Using computer/office equipment without permission; (2) Intentional Misuse of School Equipment/Supplies/Facilities; (3) Unauthorized use of portable electronic devices during school hours (e.g. tablet, ipads, cameras, cell phones); (4) Leaving classroom without permission; (5) Unauthorized presence in hallway during class time (6) Inappropriate or disruptive physical contact between students; (8) Directing profanity or obscene/offensive gestures toward peers and staff; (9) Directing profanity or obscene/offensive gestures toward staff;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Verbal redirection or reprimand; Staff/ student or administrator/ student conference Apology offered between peers or to staff person 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apology offered Restorative Justice intervention Parental contact by phone or in person 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administrator/ parent conference Temporary Removal of Student from Classroom 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-school disciplinary action or out-of-school suspension as approved by a person designated by the Leadership Team Further behaviors result in increased days

(10) Throwing objects that may cause injury or damage to property; (11) Any behavior or other conduct not specifically enumerated in any other tier in this chapter that causes disruption to the academic environment, involves damage to school property, or may cause minor harm to self or others; and (12) Documented Pattern of Persistent Step I Behavior. (13) Obscene, seriously offensive, or abusive language or gestures. (14)Stealing from peers, school staff or school. (15) Trespassing. (16) Lying or giving misleading information to school staff.				suspended
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Step III behaviors are those behaviors not specifically enumerated in any other tier in this chapter that cause significant disruption to the academic environment or cause harm to self or others. In addition to lesser consequences, Step III behaviors may result in either on-site or off-site suspension.

The following behaviors shall be considered Step III behaviors	Disciplinary responses for Step III behaviors shall include
(1) Inappropriate Use of BLS computers or network (restricted websites, offensive emails); (2) Possession or Distribution of obscene or pornographic material on school premises; (3) Possession or Use of tobacco including vaping (4) Use of alcohol; (5) Use of marijuana, controlled dangerous substances, imitation controlled substances, inhalants, other intoxicants, or drug paraphernalia; (6) Unauthorized Possession, Use, or Distribution of over-the-counter medication; (7) Verbal, written, or physical threat to person or property (including intimidating postures); (8) Causing disruption on school property or at any BLS-sponsored or supervised activity; (9) Gambling; (10) Communicating slurs based on actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, personal appearance, sexual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Off-site Medium-Term Suspension (3-5 days), or • Off-site Long-Term Suspension (5-10 days) • Other school-based consequences as approved by a person designated by the Leadership Team

<p>orientation, gender identity or expression, familial status, family responsibilities, matriculation, political affiliation, genetic information, disability, source of income, status as a victim of an intra-family offense, or place of residence or business, including derogatory sexual language;</p> <p>(12) Leaving school without permission;</p> <p>(13) Academic Dishonesty;</p> <p>(14) Forgery;</p> <p>(15) Posting or distributing material or literature that is disrespectful, demeaning, humiliating, or damaging to students and/or staff. This includes posting material on internet or sending material electronically (via email or cell phone);</p> <p>(16) Hazing;</p> <p>(17) Bullying, or using humiliating, or intimidating language or behavior, including internet bullying through social media, texting or email;</p> <p>(18) Possession of weapons, tools, or instruments which school administrators deem could be used as weapons;</p> <p>(19) Engaging in reckless behavior that may cause harm to self or others;</p> <p>(21) Extortion;</p> <p>(22) Fighting even where there is no injury and no weapon;</p> <p>(23) Any behavior or other conduct not specifically enumerated in any other tier in this chapter that causes significant disruption to the academic environment or causes harm to self or others;</p> <p>(25) Documented Pattern of Persistent Step II Behavior</p>	
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CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Students at Branch Line School are introduced to the SOS technique, where they are encouraged to use “I” statements (for example, “I need more space than you are giving me now”) and work collaboratively with peers to come up with a **Story** that outlines the problem, **Options** for rectifying the situation, and a workable **Solution** that is agreeable for all parties involved.

The following steps are worked through by a BLS community adult and the children involved in a classroom conflict:

- Restate the problem
- Investigate (who was involved, what happened, when did it happen, where did it happen and why did it happen?)
- What is our goal in this meeting?
- Redesign the problem into a question
- Identify limits
- Determine authority
- Decide how a decision will be made
- Collaborate for solutions
- Evaluate impact of resolution on others in the community
- Communicate resolution to those impacted

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

Restorative Justice Techniques are characterized by the use of classroom circles to build/rebuild relationships, create shared values and guidelines, and promote restorative conversations following behavioral disruption. The goal is to build a caring, intentional, and equitable community with conditions conducive to learning.

The use of restorative processes such as mediation, or family- group conferencing may be employed to respond to

disciplinary issues in a restorative manner. This process addresses the root causes of the harm, supports accountability, and promotes healing for all sides of a conflict, including the school community.

RESTITUTION

Within Restitution, we recognize that behavior is influenced by our five basic needs:

- Belonging - the need to feel connected to others through family, friendship and groups
- Power - the need to feel competent, capable and in control of ourselves
- Freedom - the need to experience freedom to make choices
- Fun - the need to enjoy life and learning
- Survival - the need for food, shelter and safety

Restitution helps us understand how our basic needs impact behavior. When children exhibit behaviors that don't fit within our classroom expectations, we talk with them about what need they were trying to meet. These discussions help students to develop their own sense of self-discipline. While these discussions take more time than simply imposing a consequence, Branch Line School is committed to facilitating techniques to help students to be better able to resolve conflicts independently.

REFLECTION FORMS

At times, students need time to reflect on what happened before they are ready to consider consequences. In that case, students are asked to complete a reflection form with the adult involved and support, if required, from the leadership team and/or additional resources. The form outlines our overarching rules of Branch Line: Be Safe, Be Kind, Be Respectful. This form will be sent home for a parent signature, then added to the BLS reflection form file.

Even with all of these systems in place, there are times when students engage in behaviors that are unsafe and cannot be tolerated at school. In these instances, the Code of Conduct will be employed and an appropriate consequence will be determined by the classroom teacher and a member of the Leadership Team.

APPLICATION TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

All discipline policies shall be applied in a manner consistent with the rights secured under Federal and State law to students who are determined to be eligible for special education programs and services. Branch Line School will comply with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 when disciplining students. Behavioral interventions will be used with students with disabilities to promote and strengthen desirable behaviors and reduce identified inappropriate behaviors. .

No special education or Section 504 student will be expelled if the student's misconduct is a manifestation of his/her disability as determined through a manifestation hearing. However, Branch Line School can decide unilaterally to remove a student from his/her educational placement to an interim alternative educational setting, even when the student's behavior was found to be a manifestation of the student's disability, in the following circumstances as defined by federal law:

- The student carries a weapon to or possesses a weapon at Branch Line School or at a school-sponsored function.
- The student knowingly possesses or uses illegal drugs, or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance while at Branch Line School or at a school-sponsored function.

- The student has inflicted serious bodily injury upon another person while at Branch Line School or at a school-sponsored function.

DRESS EXPECTATIONS

Students at Branch Line School are expected to dress comfortably and in a manner that supports learning activities. All students are expected to participate in outdoor activities such as recess, physical education and environmental education and should dress appropriately for weather conditions.

Students should wear clothes that do not distract themselves from learning. Students will be asked to change or cover up inappropriate clothing (examples include adult logos, clothing that is too short, or skimpy, clothing that includes inappropriate language, disrespect or intimidation as well as clothing that requires kids to adjust or fix excessively.)

DRUG-FREE/ALCOHOL-FREE ENVIRONMENT

In line with the Safe and Drug Free School Policy, it is the belief of Branch Line School that drug and alcohol abuse in any school is a threat to the safety and health of students, staff and the school community as a whole. It is the policy of Branch Line School to take positive action through education, counseling, parental involvement, medical referral, and police referral in the handling of incidents violating this policy.

Disciplinary action includes, but is not limited to substance abuse assessment, participation in a substance abuse rehabilitation program, drug and alcohol prevention activities, suspension and/or expulsion.

When handling violations of this policy, school leadership will take into account all of the circumstances surrounding the incident, including but not limited to:

- nature, severity and frequency of the misconduct;
- type of substance;
- the context in which the alleged incident occurred;
- past incident or continuing pattern of behavior

Branch Line School prohibits the use, possession, sale, or distribution of alcohol, drugs, and/or any mind altering substances (whether illegal or not) and/or related paraphernalia on school property or at any BLS-sponsored event. This prohibition includes prescription drugs in violation of our medication policy.

Possession includes, but is not limited to, alcohol, illegal drugs or any other mind altering substances (whether illegal or not) including, but not limited to prescription drugs, bath salts, K-2, etc... and/or related paraphernalia found on the student's person, purse, backpack, locker, vehicle, etc. Any searches will be conducted as outlined in the Search and Seizure section in the Student Handbook.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Students are encouraged to leave electronic devices at home as Branch Line School is not responsible for lost or damaged devices.

Students may not use cell phones, personal tablets, or gaming devices at school. Cell phones must be turned into the classroom teacher for the day. During the school day, phones are available for student use, with permission of a staff member. Parents wishing to communicate with their child during the school day may do so through the front office.

Students who need to bring an electronic device to school for use after school hours may sign the “Use of Electronic Devices Form” and turn their device in to the front office or their teacher upon arrival and pick it up at dismissal. Consequences will be given for students who do not follow this policy.

Students with IEP adapted technology aids are exempt from this rule.

EQUAL EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY

It is the policy of Branch Line School to provide an equal education opportunity for all students.

Any person who believes that she/he has been discriminated against on the basis of his/her race, color, disability, religion, gender, or national origin, while at the school, or a school-sponsored activity, should immediately contact a member of the Leadership Team.

Complaints will be investigated in accordance with the administration guidelines, established by the Leadership Team. Any student making a complaint or participating in an investigation will be protected from any threat or retaliation. The Leadership Team can provide additional information concerning equal access to educational opportunity.

HARRASSMENT

Branch Line School prohibits any type of harassment. Harassment includes, but is not limited to, conduct reasonably perceived as being motivated by any actual or perceived differentiating characteristics such as an individual’s race, color, national origin, sex, disability or religion.

Harassing conduct is not limited to in-person activity; it may include the use of cell phones or the Internet. Such behavior may take many forms including, but not limited to, derogatory comments, slurs, threats, name calling, taunts, graphic and written statements, or the actual or threatened extortion of money or possessions from another.

Harassment does not have to include intent to harm, be directed at a specific target or involve repeated incidents. Harassment creates a hostile environment when the conduct is sufficiently severe, pervasive or persistent as to interfere with or limit a student’s ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities or opportunities offered by a school.

All administrators, staff, parents, volunteers, and students are expected not to tolerate bullying and harassment and to demonstrate behavior that is respectful and civil.

Since bystander support of bullying and harassment can encourage these behaviors, BLS prohibits both active and passive support for acts of harassment or bullying. Such active and passive support can result in disciplinary action.

HAZING

Hazing activities of any type are inconsistent with the educational process and the philosophy and mission of Branch Line School and are prohibited.

For purposes of this policy, hazing is defined as performing any act or coercing another, including the victim, to perform any act of initiation into any class, group, or organization that causes, or creates a risk of causing, mental, emotional, or physical harm. Permission, consent, or assumption of risk by an individual subjected to hazing does not lessen the prohibitions contained in this policy.

Hazing involves conduct such as, but not limited to, the following:

- Illegal activity, such as drinking or drug use
- Physical punishment or infliction of pain
- Intentional humiliation or embarrassment
- Dangerous activity
- Activity likely to cause mental or psychological stress
- Forced detention or kidnapping and/or
- Undressing or otherwise exposing the person being hazed

All hazing incidents shall be reported immediately to Branch Line School leadership. Anyone within the school community who fails to abide by this policy may be subject to disciplinary action and may be held personally liable for civil or criminal penalties.

HOMEWORK AT BRANCH LINE SCHOOL

Branch Line School recognizes the important role that homework, or academic practice, plays in the enhancement of a child's overall education. However, we also recognize that these benefits must be weighed against legitimate family concerns and desires to have their child(ren) participate in after-school activities, or religious and family events, as well as much-needed leisure and downtime. Studies have shown that any activity, no matter how rewarding, can only be rewarding for a limited time.

If a child spends too much time on academics, both in or out of school, they may become bored and/or frustrated, and any benefits of homework will be lost. Therefore, the Branch Line School homework policy strives to create a balance between the benefits of academic practice and the needs of the family and child. For these reasons, "homework time" has been built into the school day. There are times when, in order to tailor a curriculum that meets each child's specific needs, or when a school-to-home project will help educate a family about the workings of the classroom, teachers may assign homework in accordance with a child's level within the class.

Our students shine:

- Because we make efficient use of the school day, focusing on those subjects which are most essential to the overall development of the child
- Because we give students careful supervision in the development of academic skills

- Because we present the material in a careful, systematic, hierarchical manner, one which allows the child to grasp and keep the knowledge presented
- Because the result of all of this is intelligent, driven students who love to learn

IMMUNIZATIONS

Students must be current with all immunizations required by law or have an authorized waiver from State immunization requirements. If a student does not have the necessary immunizations or waiver, the School Leader may remove the student or require compliance with a set deadline. This is for the safety of all students and in accordance with State law. Any questions about immunizations or waivers should be directed to the front office.

INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

The Americans with Disabilities Act (A.D.A.) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act provide that no individual will be discriminated against on the basis of a disability. This protection applies not just to the student, but to all individuals who have access to Branch Line School's programs and facilities.

A student can access special education services through the proper evaluation procedures. Parent involvement in this procedure is required by Federal (IDEA) and State law.

LOCKERS

Each K-8 student is assigned a locker at the beginning of the school year. This is a place where the student can store backpacks, lunch bags, outdoor clothing, and materials for the school day.

Please help Branch Line in exercising consideration to keep locker areas clean. Lockers may not be locked and remain the property of Branch Line School.

LUNCHES AND SNACKS

Branch Line School does not offer a traditional hot lunch program. Students bring their own lunches and snacks from home to school. We occasionally have a "pizza day" where a pizza lunch is available for sale on a prearranged order system. Information on these programs is available through the *Branch Line Express*.

In respect of our families and to ensure the safety of our students we do not encourage or allow students to share or trade snack/lunch items with each other. Outside of lunch time, students are encouraged to have their own, labeled, water bottle for their use exclusively. All cohorts allow for a fruit or vegetable snack time during the classroom day.

MANDATED REPORTING

Branch Line School administrators, teachers, and all sub-contracted counselors and social workers are required by law to immediately report any and all suspected cases of child abuse or neglect to Children's Protective Services at the Department of Human Services.

MEDICATION POLICY

No staff member at Branch Line School shall be responsible for the diagnosis and treatment of student illness. The administration of prescribed medication and/or medically-prescribed treatments to a student during school hours

will be permitted only when failure to do so would jeopardize the health of the student, the student would not be able to attend school if the medication or treatment were not made available during school hours, or the child is disabled and requires medication to benefit from his/her educational program.

For purposes of this policy, *medication* shall include all medicines including those prescribed by a physician and any non-prescribed (over-the-counter) drugs, preparations, and/or remedies and performance-enhancing drugs as defined in AG 2431C. *Treatment* refers both to the manner in which a medication is administered and to health-care procedures that require special training, such as catheterization.

Before any prescribed medication or treatment may be administered to any student during school hours, the school shall require the written prescription from the child's physician and the written authorization of the parent.

Before any non-prescribed medication or treatment may be administered, the school shall require the prior written consent of the parent. Medications will be administered by the school in accordance with the School Leaders' procedures.

Only medication in its original container that is labeled with the date (if a prescription), the student's name, and exact dosage may be administered. Parents, or students authorized in writing by their physician and parents, may administer medication or treatment.

Staff members are to administer medication or treatment only in the presence of another adult, except in the case of an emergency that threatens the life or health of the student. Staff licensed as professional registered nurses are exempt from this requirement.

All medication shall be kept in a locked storage case in the school office.

Branch Line School shall permit only trained staff to administer any medication requiring intravenous or intramuscular injection or the insertion of a device into the body when both the medication and the procedure are prescribed by a physician.

Students who may require the administration of an emergency medication may have such medication in accord with School Leader's procedures.

Student may possess and self-administer a metered dose or dry powder inhaler for relief of asthma (or before exercise to prevent onset of asthma symptoms), while at school, on school-sponsored transportation, or at any school-sponsored activity in accordance with Administrative Procedures, if all of the following conditions are met:

- A. There is written approval from the student's physician or other health care provider and the student's parent/ guardian (if student is under eighteen (18) to possess and use the inhaler (Form 5330 F1c), and,
- B. The School Leader has received a copy of the written approvals from the physician and the parent/guardian, and,
- C. There is on file at the student's school a written emergency plan prepared by the licensed physician in

collaboration with the student and his/her parent/legal guardian. The plan shall contain specific instructions on the student's needs including what to do in the event of an emergency. Students with a need for emergency medication may also be allowed to self-possess and self-administer such medication, provided that they meet the same conditions established above. Students who are prescribed epinephrine to treat anaphylaxis shall be allowed to self-possess and administer the medication if they meet the conditions stated above.

This policy and the Administrative Procedures developed to establish appropriate procedures shall be implemented in such a manner to comply with Branch Line School's obligations and the student's needs under and Individualized Education Plan, Section 504 Plan, or other legally required accommodation for individuals with disabilities.

The School Leader shall prepare Administrative Procedures to ensure the proper implementation of this policy.

NOTIFICATION OF RIGHTS UNDER FERPA

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students who are 18 years of age or older ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days after the day Branch Line School ("School") receives a request for access.

Parents or eligible students who wish to inspect their child's or their education records should submit to the school leader [or appropriate school official] a written request that identifies the records they wish to inspect. The school official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

2127761800. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA.

Parents or eligible students who wish to ask the [School] to amend their child's or their education record should write the school leader [or appropriate school official], clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it should be changed. If the school decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the school will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment.

Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

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

One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. The criteria for determining who constitutes a school official and what constitutes a legitimate educational interest must be set forth in the school's or school district's

annual notification for FERPA rights. A school official typically includes a person employed by the school or school district as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel) or a person serving on the school board. A school official also may include a volunteer, contractor, or consultant who, while not employed by the school, performs an institutional service or function for which the school would otherwise use its own employees and who is under the direct control of the school with respect to the use and maintenance of PII from education records, such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist; a parent or student volunteering to serve on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee; or a parent, student, or other volunteer assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official typically has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

[Optional] Upon request, the school discloses education records without consent to officials of another school or school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll, or is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes of the student's enrollment or transfer. [NOTE: FERPA requires a school or school district to make a reasonable attempt to notify the parent or student of the records request unless it states in its annual notification that it intends to forward records on request or the disclosure is initiated by the parent or eligible student.]

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

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

[NOTE: In addition, a school may want to include its directory information public notice, as required by § 99.37 of the regulations, with its annual notification of rights under FERPA.]

[Optional] See the list below of the disclosures that elementary and secondary schools may make without consent.

FERPA permits the disclosure of PII from students' education records, without consent of the parent or eligible student, if the disclosure meets certain conditions found in § 99.31 of the FERPA regulations. Except for disclosures to school officials, disclosures related to some judicial orders or lawfully issued subpoenas, disclosures of directory information, and disclosures to the parent or eligible student, § 99.32 of the FERPA regulations requires the school to record the disclosure. Parents and eligible students have a right to inspect and review the record of disclosures. A school may disclose PII from the education records of a student without obtaining prior written consent of the parents or the eligible student –

- To other school officials, including teachers, within the educational agency or institution whom the school has determined to have legitimate educational interests. This includes contractors, consultants, volunteers, or other parties to whom the school has outsourced institutional services or functions, provided that the conditions listed in § 99.31(a)(1)(i)(B)(1) - (a)(1)(i)(B)(3) are met. (§

99.31(a)(1))

- To officials of another school, school system, or institution of post-secondary education where the student seeks or intends to enroll, or where the student is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes related to the student's enrollment or transfer, subject to the requirements of § 99.34. (§ 99.31(a)(2))
- To authorize representatives of the U. S. Comptroller General, the U. S. Attorney General, the U.S. Secretary of Education, or State and local educational authorities, such as the State educational agency (SEA) in the parent or eligible student's State. Disclosures under this provision may be made, subject to the requirements of § 99.35, in connection with an audit or evaluation of Federal- or State-supported education programs, or for the enforcement of or compliance with Federal legal requirements that relate to those programs. These entities may make further disclosures of PII to outside entities that are designated by them as their authorized representatives to conduct any audit, evaluation, or enforcement or compliance activity on their behalf, if applicable requirements are met. (§§ 99.31(a)(3) and 99.35)
- In connection with financial aid for which the student has applied or which the student has received, if the information is necessary for such purposes as to determine eligibility for the aid, determine the amount of the aid, determine the conditions of the aid, or enforce the terms and conditions of the aid. (§ 99.31(a)(4))
- To State and local officials or authorities to whom information is specifically allowed to be reported or disclosed by a State statute that concerns the juvenile justice system and the system's ability to effectively serve, prior to adjudication, the student whose records were released, subject to § 99.38. (§ 99.31(a)(5))
- To organizations conducting studies for, or on behalf of, the school, in order to: (a) develop, validate, or administer predictive tests; (b) administer student aid programs; or (c) improve instruction, if applicable requirements are met. (§ 99.31(a)(6))
- To accrediting organizations to carry out their accrediting functions. (§ 99.31(a)(7))
- To parents of an eligible student if the student is a dependent for IRS tax purposes. (§ 99.31(a)(8))
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena if applicable requirements are met. (§ 99.31(a)(9))
- To appropriate officials in connection with a health or safety emergency, subject to § 99.36. (§ 99.31(a)(10))
- Information the school has designated as "directory information" if applicable requirements under § 99.37 are met. (§ 99.31(a)(11))
- To an agency caseworker or other representative of a State or local child welfare agency or tribal

organization who is authorized to access a student's case plan when such agency or organization is legally responsible, in accordance with State or tribal law, for the care and protection of the student in foster care placement. (20 U.S.C. § 1232g(b)(1)(L))

- To the Secretary of Agriculture or authorized representatives of the Food and Nutrition Service for purposes of conducting program monitoring, evaluations, and performance measurements of programs authorized under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act or the Child Nutrition Act of 1966, under certain conditions. (20 U.S.C. § 1232g(b)(1)(K))

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Branch Line School believes that the education of all students should be a partnership between the school and the parent community. Both Branch Line School and the parent community play an essential role in the success of all students.

BLS, in collaboration with parents in the community, will develop a parent involvement plan that reflects practices that enhance parent and community involvement and reflect the specific needs of our school.

1. Communication: Branch Line School and the parent community will communicate regularly and clearly about academic opportunities, school performance, student progress, and parent/guardian activities.

Communication Activities:

- Student-Led Parent Teacher Conferences twice a year
 - Weekly School and Classroom Newsletters via the *Branch Line Express*
 - District and School Annual Education Reports
 - School and Classroom Websites
 - Remind (Text communication sent from staff)
2. Parenting: Branch Line School and the parent community will work together to support parenting skills and activities that prepare children for school and support ongoing achievement.

Parenting Activities:

- Curriculum/Open House Nights
 - PTO Programs
 - School Parent Workshops/Evenings
 - Parent Orientation Presentations
 - Family Activity Nights
3. Student Learning: Branch Line School will encourage parents to support the academic achievement of their children.

Student Learning Activities:

- Continuous communication on academic progress
- Student presentations of project work

- Student-Led, Portfolio-based Conferences
 - Curriculum Nights
4. Volunteerism: Branch Line School will encourage parents and community members to volunteer to support school improvement and student success.

Volunteer Activities:

- PTO and other parent support groups
- Classroom Helpers
- Mentoring Students via Project-Based Learning project work
- School Committees
- Chaperoning Activities

5. School Decision Making: Branch Line School will encourage parents and community members to collaborate on educational decisions that affect students and schools.

Decision Making Activities:

- School Improvement Committees
- School Advisory Groups
- Parent Advisory Boards
- Parent feedback/input on current/new programs, Initiatives and practices

6. Community Collaboration: Branch Line School will encourage collaboration with local community organizations, local governments, businesses, members of the community, and other agencies to improve the academic achievement of all students.

Community Collaboration Activities:

- Facilitate Community members as volunteers in the school
- Collaborate with local businesses to co-sponsor events and programs
- Promote governmental service activities and programs for students
- Encourage business partnerships with the school

PESTICIDE NOTICE

Branch Line School is required by Michigan Regulations 637, Rule 14, PA 171 to maintain an effective pest control program for our building. As part of an effective pest management program, school buildings and grounds may be treated as needed to control or eliminate pests. The least hazardous methods will always be incorporated to remove pests as per the Michigan Pesticide Control Act. Under most circumstances chemical treatments will be a last resort.

Only a licensed person or company shall be allowed to apply commercial grade pesticides or herbicides. Advance notice of the pesticide application will be given at least 48 hours before the application. Notices of the application will be posted at the main entrance and in the *Branch Line Express*.

In addition, parents may request in writing to receive written notification at least three (3) day prior to the pesticide application. In case of an emergency, pesticides may be applied without prior notice. BLS will provide notice of the emergency application as soon as possible.

If you have any questions or wish to request prior notification of pesticide application, please see our Operations Lead.

PETS

Due to allergy and health considerations, family pets are not permitted in the school building or on the school campus/playground. Pets that are in a vehicle during drop-off or pick up or in a parked vehicle must remain in the vehicle while on Branch Line School property.

PHOTOGRAPH AND PUBLICITY RELEASE FORM

At the beginning of each school year, families are required to complete a *Photograph and Publicity Release Form* for their family to grant or deny consent.

PLACEMENT, PROMOTION, AND RETENTION

Branch Line School believes that children should be placed in the educational setting most appropriate to their needs at the various stages of their growth.

Parents/guardians will be informed about their child's progress, or lack thereof, through parent/teacher conferences, and report cards throughout the school year. Additional conferences may be scheduled with parents/guardians to discuss the areas of challenge and an academic intervention plan may be created.

Administration at BLS has the authority to determine the grade placement, promotion and retention of all students under the following guidelines:

1. Grade Placement

Branch Line School's administration shall determine the appropriate placement for students at the time of enrollment. After 90 days of enrollment, administration will determine if this trial placement in a class is appropriate or if a change in placement is necessary. The following is a partial list of data that may be utilized in determining placement:

- Previous and/or current placement
- Previous school records
- Parent request
- Attendance (or lack thereof)
- Testing results
- Grades
- Overall physical, emotional, social and academic maturity of the individual student

2. Class Size

The class size for any class is ultimately determined by the administrator or his/her designee. The administrator shall determine class size in a manner that is consistent with the optimal educational

achievement of all students.

3. Promotion to the next grade is based on the following criteria:

- Current level of achievement
- Potential for success at the next grade level
- Emotional, physical and social maturity
- A passing grade

4. Retention

Students may be retained if it is her/his best interest. A student may not be ready to proceed to the next grade for any of the following reasons:

- Lack of emotional growth
- Lack of social growth
- Lack of academic growth
- Lack of sufficient attendance
- Inadequate progress in their core academic classes

5. Parents/guardians shall have the right to appeal any placement, retention or promotion decision according to the following procedures:

- Any appeal should be submitted in writing to Branch Line School administration within 10 days of the decision
- A committee that includes the student's current teacher, a representative from our SPED services provider, an administrator and other personnel as designated by the school administrator will conduct an investigation into the appropriate placement of the student based on the factors listed above.
- After completion of that investigation, the Branch Line School administrator will give a written decision to the parents/guardians and the reasons for that decision. All decisions at this level are final.

PLAYGROUND USE

Students and their families may use the Branch Line School playground before and after school. To ensure their safety as well as that of students in after school programs, please follow these guidelines:

- All children must be supervised by their parent/guardian. The supervising parent/adult and the student(s) must abide by the After Care program playground rules and follow the direction of After Care staff.
- No glass containers are allowed on or around the playground.
- Dispose of all trash.

All students will treat one another with the same courtesy and respect that is expected and demonstrated in the classroom. Students making harmful or disrespectful choices may be required to leave the playground. The action taken in response to an unsafe situation is at the discretion of the BLS staff member handling the situation.

Expectations of General Behavior:

Students will:

- Stay in the boundaries of the playground

- Leave food, paper, pencils and other objects in the classroom
- Leave rocks, tree bark, sticks, and other dangerous objects on the ground
- Not throw snow balls
- Not play tackle games
- Not use inappropriate, hurtful or foul language

Winter Playground Activities:

- Outdoor recess during the winter months is encouraged, within safety limits of temperature (20 degrees or higher with wind chill) and conditions.
- Participation in outdoor winter playground activities requires appropriate outerwear (i.e., hats, mittens, boots, coats, snow pants).

PUBLICATIONS/COMMUNICATIONS

An individual or organization wishing to submit information for publication in the *Branch Line Express* must submit the information to the school office for review at least one week prior to publication due date. Branch Line School reserves the right to review and determine content over school sponsored publications. BLS does not solicit business for non-school related functions and/or organizations.

REVIEW OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS AND ACTIVITIES

Parents have the right to review any instructional materials being used in the school. They also may observe instruction in any classroom. Any parent who wishes to review materials or observe instruction must contact the school office prior to coming to the school. Parents' rights to review teaching materials and instructional activities are subject to reasonable restrictions and limits.

SCHOOL HOURS

Our Before Care program is available to pre-registered students and begins on campus at 7:00 am. Students are welcomed into our school building and classrooms beginning at 8:15 prior to our starting time of 8:25 a.m.

Class schedules, including recess and lunch, vary by cohort grouping.

End of day pick up begins at 3:30 pm. All students who remain at school after 3:40 pm will be escorted to our After Care program and all applicable fees apply (pre-registered or drop-in).

SEARCH AND SEIZURE

All lockers, cubbies, and other storage places assigned to students are the property of Branch Line School. At no time does BLS relinquish its exclusive control of these storage places. Students have no expectation of privacy in lockers, cubbies or other school-supplied storage areas. Students are prohibited from placing locks on any locker. A member of the School Leadership Team or designee may search lockers, locker contents, cubbies or other school-supplied storage areas, as well as open lockers for repairs, at any time, without notice and without parental/guardianship or student consent.

Branch Line School assigns lockers, cubbies, and other storage places to its students for the student's convenience and temporary use. Students are to use these storage areas exclusively to store school-related materials and authorized personal items such as outer garments, footwear, grooming aids, or lunch.

Students shall not use these storage areas for any other purpose, unless specifically authorized by board policy or the School Leadership Team or designee, in advance of students bringing the items to school. Students are solely responsible for the contents of their lockers, cubbies and other storage places and must not share these storage areas with other students. The locations at which searches of students and student property may be conducted are not limited to the school building or property, but may be conducted wherever the student is involved in a school-sponsored function.

A member of the School Leadership Team or designee may search a student and/or a student's personal items in the student's possession (such as but not limited to purses, backpacks, lunch boxes, book bags, etc.) when there is a reasonable suspicion that the search will produce evidence that the particular student has violated, is violating, or is about to violate either state law, Board policies or BLS rules. A student's failure to permit searches and seizures as provided in this policy will be considered grounds for disciplinary action.

The search will be conducted in a manner that is reasonably related to the objective of the search and not excessively intrusive given the student's age, gender and the nature of the infraction. If a pat down search of a student's person is conducted, it will be conducted in private by a school official of the same sex and with an adult witness of the same sex present. Strip searches are prohibited.

Computers, software and internet access are school property. Students are only authorized to use school computers and other similar educational technology consistent with the educational mission of Branch Line School. School officials may search school computers, software and internet access records at any time for any reason and without student consent.

A member of the School Leadership Team or designee shall not be obligated, but may request the assistance of a law enforcement officer in conducting a search. The School Leadership Team member or his/her designee shall supervise the search. In the course of a search, the School Leadership Team member or his/her designee shall respect the privacy rights of the student regarding any items discovered that are not illegal or against BLS policy and rules.

When conducting searches, the School Leadership Team member or his/her designee may seize any illegal or unauthorized items, items in violation of board policy or rules, or any other items reasonably determined to be a potential threat to the safety or security of others. Such items include, but are not limited to the following: firearms, explosives, dangerous weapons, flammable material, illegal controlled substances or controlled substance analogues or other intoxicants, contraband, poisons and stolen property.

Law enforcement officials shall be notified immediately upon seizure of such dangerous items or seizure of items that schools are required to report to law enforcement agencies under the Statewide School Safety Information Policy. Any items seized by the School Leadership Team member or his/her designee shall be removed and held by school officials for evidence in disciplinary proceedings and/or turned over to law enforcement officials. The parent/guardian of a minor student shall be notified by the School Leadership Team member or his/her designee of items removed from the storage area.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Branch Line School is committed to providing for its students an educational environment that is respectful of human dignity and free from sexual harassment. Abuse of the dignity of any student by means of sexist slurs,

sexually oriented, obscene, lewd, vulgar, unwanted, offensive, or indecent language or images will not be tolerated. Sexually derogatory or objectionable conduct, including, but not limited to, unwanted or offensive touching and physical contact will also not be tolerated.

Any student who feels he or she is being sexually harassed by any other student or students shall report such incidents to a teacher or school leader. Such reports shall be reported to and investigated by the school leader and/or designee. Any student who is determined to have committed sexual harassment will be subject to disciplinary action, based upon the severity and frequency of the offense(s) in accordance with our Code of Conduct.

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The rules and procedures of Branch Line School are designed to allow each student to obtain a safe, orderly and appropriate education. Students can expect their rights to freedom of expression and association and to fair treatment as long as they respect those rights for their fellow students and the staff. Students will be expected to follow teachers' directions and to abide by all BLS rules, procedures and our code of conduct.

Parents have the right to know how their child is succeeding at BLS and will be provided information on a regular basis and as needed when concerns arise.

Parents are encouraged to build a two-way link with their child's teachers and support staff by informing the staff of suggestions or concerns that may help their child better accomplish his/her education goals.

PROHIBITION OF TOBACCO USE

Branch Line School prohibits the use of any tobacco product on school grounds or at any school sponsored event. In addition, any tobacco advertising or promotion is strictly prohibited. Violation of this policy could result in suspension or expulsion.

This prohibition includes the smoking of electronic, "vapor," or other substitute forms of cigarette, clove cigarettes or other lighted smoking devices for burning tobacco or any other substance.

TECHNOLOGY AND MEDIA USE FORM

All families are asked to sign a Technology and Media Use form upon enrolling at Branch Line School. If at any time you choose that your child will opt out of using technology or allowing the school to use photographs or videos on our website, social media or other media sources, please send a notification stating that choice to the school leader.

TRANSFERRING OUT OF BRANCH LINE SCHOOL

Parents must notify the front office in writing about plans to transfer their child to another school. Transfer will be authorized only after the parent and/or student has completed the arrangements, returned all school materials, and paid any fees or fines that are due. School records may not be released if the transfer is not properly completed.

When transferring student records, school officials are required to transmit disciplinary records including suspension and expulsion actions against the student.

Receipt of a request of records from another school is a statement from the parent/guardian confirming that their child is removed from Branch Line School enrollment and their child's placement is no longer reserved at Branch Line School.

VOLUNTEERS AT BRANCH LINE SCHOOL

Branch Line School welcomes and encourages parents to volunteer. The teachers appreciate this adult help and have prepared in advance specific tasks that can be readily assigned to their classroom volunteers.

The role of the parent volunteer in the classroom is to assist the teacher(s) in facilitating the learning activities that occur throughout the day. To provide such assistance will require the full attention of the classroom volunteer, and a willingness to work cooperatively with the classroom teacher(s) on behalf of the students in the classroom.

The following guidelines serve as a framework for volunteers in the classroom; we expect that all volunteers will abide by these important guidelines:

- It is preferred that classroom volunteers make advance arrangements with the teacher(s) regarding date(s), time, and length of service in the classroom whenever possible.
- Ahead of the first volunteer day, parents will meet with the School Leader to go over aspects of our Volunteer Handbook.
- In order to provide a safe environment for all Branch Line School students, volunteers (including parents) must be screened through the Internet Criminal History Access Tool (ICHAT) or other similar site for background checks prior to volunteer assignments.
- Volunteers are required to submit a form and a copy of their driver's license for the purpose of a background check.
- To optimize the assistance provided to the teacher and students, parents are not permitted to bring younger siblings/children during their volunteer time.
- The classroom volunteer must be willing and prepared to:
 - a. Engage with, and assist any student, or group of students as directed by the classroom teacher(s).
 - b. Learn and support classroom procedures, social protocols, and routines.
 - c. Engage in a positive manner with all students, and refer all incidents of injury and/or medical issues to the classroom teacher, as well as any incidents of disruption, non-compliance, or concerning student behavior. Volunteers should not engage in disciplinary action with students.
- If there is more than one parent volunteer in the classroom at the same time, their full attention must be given to assisting the teacher and supporting the students. If the volunteers wish to chat with each other, they must do so outside of the classroom.
- Do not use cell phones and other electronic devices in the classroom.
- Photographs and video recordings (including cell phone recordings) taken on school property or at any BLS-sponsored activity or event shall not be published without the expressed prior consent by a member of the BLS Leadership team.

The purpose of these guidelines is to insure that the learning environment is optimized for students. We appreciate

the cooperation of parents in following these important guidelines, and we are very appreciative of those parents who are able and willing to dedicate their time to supporting the education of all students.



Branch Line School Family Handbook
Acknowledgement Form

School Year: _____

Please complete this form with applicable signatures and return to the front office at Branch Line School.

Student name: _____

Cohort Level:

____ Junior Explorers

____ Explorers

____ Investigators

____ Navigators

____ Innovators

Our signatures below indicate that we have reviewed and understand the Family Handbook and that we agree to all policies, procedures and rules as outlined within the handbook. We understand that the handbook is available for review on our website or in the school office during regular business hours. We also know that we have the opportunity to request a hard copy in writing.

Student Signature: _____

Date: _____

Parent/Legal Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____