



# The Exploris™ School

*Empowering Learners to Improve Our World*

**2021-2022**

## **FAMILY & STUDENT HANDBOOK**

**The Exploris School  
Elementary Campus**

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# Section 1: Introduction to Exploris School

## **Our History**

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

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

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

## **Our Mission**

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

## **Our Vision**

Empowering learners to improve our world.

## **Core Values**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Section 2: Curriculum & Design

### **Project-Based Learning**

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

### **Exploris Hallmarks**

Deep learning of state and national standards through the context of current, complex issues or community needs

Integrated use of computers and other technology to develop research and critical thinking skills

Field Experiences allowing students to learn about and provide service to their community

Adventure and environmental education to challenge students, foster teamwork, and nurture students' understanding of nature; including a culminating Outward Bound experience in the 8th Grade Year

Global Arts (including Art, Connecting World/World Cultures, Health & Wellness/Movement, and Music (ES only) to further develop critical thinking, global awareness, empathy, and craftsmanship

Self-reflection through goal setting, student self-assessment, and student-led portfolio conferences

International exchanges of middle school students and staff with students in Hiroshima, Japan and Gefrees, Germany

Dedication to the environment by limiting the amount of student waste and energy produced

### **Field Experiences and Service Learning**

Field Experiences and Service Learning are essential components of our curriculum design, and students may be off campus frequently throughout the year. We ask that parents sign one blanket field trip form (Medical Release Form) that covers permissions for all trips within the Triangle Area. Walking field experiences are part of our routine learning environment. Parents will be notified through their class newsletter or website whenever field experiences that require transportation are planned. Your child must have this form on file to attend. Please return this form and any medication forms by the first day of school. Students arriving late (after class has left campus) or without a Medical Release Form will be placed in the care of another adult (either in another classroom or in the Associate Director's office).

### **Overnight Field Experience**

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

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

### **Academic Accountability**

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

### ***Portfolio Assessment and Student-Led Conferences***

At Exploris, student portfolios are the place where students house evidence of intellectual achievement, academic growth, and responsibility for learning. Students use these portfolios to present their learning at student-led conferences throughout the year. These conferences not only tell you how your child is doing in school, but they help your child take responsibility for their own learning. Conferences provide an occasion for students to reflect on their progress, set goals for future work, and make a public presentation to the most important people in their lives. Students prepare for these conferences by choosing their best work, revising work, writing

reflections on their learning, and practicing presentation skills. We expect parents to come with their children for every teacher/parent/student conference in the school year. Teachers analyze the portfolios and other classroom assessments to determine progress toward academic targets which they share in Achievement Reports. Portfolios and student-led conferences are crucial tools for revealing student growth. They help teachers and students notice missing links in a child's learning and acknowledge and celebrate a child's accomplishments. In the 8th grade students present a cumulative passage portfolio to school staff, family, and community members. This culminating event helps determine a student's readiness for high school.

### **Achievement Reports**

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

### **Standardized Testing**

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

### **Parent Communication**

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

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

## Section 3: Other Differences You'll See

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

### ***Our Classroom Space Is Used Flexibly***

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

### ***Our Classrooms Have Ongoing Conversations and Are Full of Movement***

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

### ***Field Experiences are Central to Our Curriculum***

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

### ***We Use Primary Sources as Much as Possible***

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

### ***Students are Responsible for Their Own Learning***

We expect our students to be responsible for their own learning. Our teachers do not pour knowledge into passive students. Rather, they interact, question, prompt, and set up physical and intellectual environments for students. Within this context, we expect students to explore, wonder, hypothesize, create, and discuss their ideas about the world. This is hard work. We want to hear parents' perceptions about their children and their experiences at Exploris. We expect parents to check in with their children's teachers and to be interested in their learning, but we do not expect parents to complete work for students or to manage their child's learning. We want parent feedback about our projects and our culture. We expect every member of the team to actively participate in the learning experience.

### ***Revising Work Is a Habit Here***

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

### ***Learning is Public and Collaborative***

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

### ***Service and Social Emotional Learning Are Part of Our Curriculum***

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

### ***Students Share Responsibility for our Community Spaces***

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

### ***We Are Strict About Safety***

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

### ***Students and Teachers Often Dress Casually***

Because we are a hands-on school, teachers and students need to dress appropriately for whatever activities are called for on a given day. We are often up to our elbows in goopy materials and the natural world. Appropriate dress for a visit to a museum, for science experiments and messy art projects, and for venturing to the river will vary. Parents are asked to be knowledgeable about activities on a given day by reading the weekly grade-level letters to assure that their children are dressed appropriately for the day.

### ***Our Staff Go by Their First Names***

We introduce ourselves to our students with our first names. This is part of our culture, which fosters respect within relationships and not necessarily by titles. Some of our students prefer to put Ms. or Mr. in front of our first names. We respect their desire to do so.

## Section 4: School Logistics

### **School Hours**

#### **Elementary 8:30-3:15**

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

#### **Middle 8:15-3:15**

**Students can be dropped off beginning at 7:55.** For students needing supervision prior to that window, a Before School Care Program is available. More information and a fee schedule can be found on the school's website. **Students who arrive after 8:15 will be marked tardy and must report to the front office to sign in and are subject to consequences as outlined within the Code of Student Conduct.**

### **Before/After Care**

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

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

See the school website for additional details.

**Please keep in mind that children cannot wait alone outside the school since they will not be supervised. Please register your child for before school if they need to be dropped off early or after school care if they need to stay past dismissal.**

### **Food and Snacks**

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

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

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

### ***Waste-Free Lunch***

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

One of the best places to start is with lunch and snack waste. A waste-free lunch program is a process of educating students, parents, and school staff about where our trash ends up and how we, as individuals, can reduce the amount of trash we generate. Waste-free lunch programs favor the use of reusable food containers, drink containers, utensils, and napkins. They discourage the

use of disposable packaging, such as prepackaged foods, plastic bags, juice boxes and pouches, paper napkins, and disposable utensils.

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

In general, Exploris has no formal lunch program that is provided by the school. Most of our students bring lunches and snacks from home on a daily basis. Our parents, through our active PTO, have worked to create a solution for parents wishing an alternative to packing daily meals.

### **Transportation**

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

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

### **Parking**

#### **ELEMENTARY CAMPUS:**

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

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

- Marked parking spaces in the elementary school's parking lot. Do not park along the queuing or driving lanes
- **ONLY** along the Northbound traveling (or eastern side facing NEW BERN) on S. Swain St
- In the parking lot of Treasuring Christ Church on Hargett St. The church staff has been nice enough to offer their lot to parents of Exploris students.
- After 3:00pm parents can also park in the Wake Young Men's Leadership Academy lot.

#### **MIDDLE SCHOOL CAMPUS:**

There is **NO** on-site parking available for parents. Exploris's parking lots are reserved for staff parking **ONLY**. This includes those picking up for After School Care. Please be mindful that faculty and staff and employees of neighboring businesses must be able to enter and leave the parking lots whenever necessary.

Parents must park in the appropriately labeled spaces on the street or in public parking lots.

### **Drop Off/Pick Up Safety**

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

Please use the Drop Off/Pick Up directions (below) for dropping off and picking up students. Do not pull over on the side of the street to pick up or drop off your child.

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

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

DRIVE SLOWLY: Watch for children walking and biking - be extra careful anywhere near the school

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

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

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

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

### ***Elementary Drop-Off and Pick-Up***

#### ***Rules for Car Line***

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In an effort to relieve congestion in the elementary carpool line the following dismissal guidelines will be followed. Please carefully review the instructions below:

Siblings of Middle School students will not be released until 3:35. If you have an elementary child who has an Exploris middle school sibling, ignore what is below and coordinate your pick up to arrive at the elementary at 3:35.

All other students will be dismissed as outlined below. Siblings should report with the youngest child.

3:15 - Kindergarteners and First Graders (k/1) and any older siblings or carpool riders

3:25 - Second and Third graders (2/3) and any older siblings or carpool riders

3:35 - Fourth and Fifth graders (4/5),any older siblings or carpool riders, and all siblings of middle school students

It would be helpful to display a paper with the names of the children you are picking up (first and last) typed in a font size that allows the text to take up most of the paper. A staff member will be

standing in the lot with a walkie-talkie and will call your child's name to ensure your child is ready for loading.

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

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

### ***Middle School Drop-Off and Pick-Up***

#### ***Rules for Car Line Drop-Off***

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

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

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

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

#### ***Middle School Dismissal***

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

Vehicles should turn south onto Harrington Street and turn right into the Harrington lot. Because of the amount of traffic on Hillsborough Street, please DO NOT approach from Hillsborough traveling east. We strongly recommend that families traveling east take Peace Street to No. West to N. Harrington. Families traveling from the North, South, or West should travel to W. Edenton and then turn left on N. Harrington Street.

Pull into the lot as far as possible in order to get between 3 and 4 cars into the lot at one time.

All vehicles exiting the Harrington lot should turn right onto W. Morgan Street.

\* All middle school students not picked up by 3:30 will be taken to after-school care and a fee will apply.

### **Field Experience/Field Trip Transportation**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Enrollment/Lottery Policy**

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

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

### **Class Requests**

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

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

Requesting a classroom has several other consequences as well, including:

- When one family's request is honored, it affects other families at that grade level. To accommodate one request, many students may have to be moved. This is unfair to parents who do not make requests.

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

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

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

### **Protocol for Requesting a Crew Change in Mid-Year**

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

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

After 30 days there will be a follow-up meeting between the parent /guardian and crew teacher to check in on progress. At that time there will be a decision to continue with the interventions, modify the interventions, or begin a more formal process of requesting a change of crew. If a change of crew is still being requested, the parent, crew teacher, and Associate Director will discuss issues and develop a further plan of action to resolve the situation within the current crew assignment. The new plan of action will be closely monitored for a month. If the situation is resolved, no further action will be taken. If the parent is still interested in a change of crew, there will be a meeting with the parent, crew teacher, the prospective crew teacher, and the Associate Director. This meeting would be to discuss the pros and cons of such a move. If this group decides that there are enough compelling reasons to move the student, a change of placement will occur.

## Section 5: Student Health & Safety

The overall health and safety of our students and staff is our first concern at Exploris. Supervision of students is a primary responsibility of our faculty, and we ask that parents support our efforts to establish and Implement safety guidelines. Please report all unsafe conditions immediately to your child's crew teacher or to the Associate Director.

### **Building security**

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

### **Emergency Contacts and Notification**

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

How can families assist the school and ensure each child's safety and well-being?

Make sure that the office has your current contact information as well as additional emergency contacts.

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

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

### **Inclement Weather /School Closings**

When there is inclement weather, Exploris will open late or close in line with the Wake County Public School System (WCPSS). Parents are asked to tune in to any of the local network TV stations for the latest school closure information. School closure information will also be available on the Exploris School website and through the school's One Call Now alert system.

If WCPSS closes for any reason other than inclement weather, Exploris may not follow suit, so parents should always defer to communication provided from the Exploris School. In addition circumstances on one or more of our campuses may warrant a closing for safety reasons, whether weather or facilities related. In those cases, families will be notified through the One Call Now system.

If circumstances allow, Exploris may convert an in-person learning day that is canceled due to weather or facilities conditions to a remote learning day. On remote learning days, students will be completing work and receiving instruction remotely.

### **Medications**

Students who need to receive medication (prescription or over-the-counter) during the school day or during a field experience must have a “medical release” form turned in to the office.

Prescription medications must be in their original containers with dosage procedures clearly indicated. Medications should be turned in to the front office and may not be kept with the child.

The front office has a locked storage location for medication and distribution of medication is tracked on a daily log. The only exception allowed will be for students approved by their doctor to carry their asthma inhalers or epi-pens.

### **Health forms**

Before the first day of school, all students must submit a North Carolina Health Assessment Form, signed by a physician, that identifies any health issues important for the school to know about and certifies that your child has all required immunizations. North Carolina state law requires that documentation of immunization be provided to the school within 30 days of a student's first day of school. Parents who do not wish to have their child immunized based on religious beliefs or advice from the doctor that immunizations pose a risk to their student's health, must submit their request for a waiver in writing, including their physician's statement. Parents must also complete the Medical and Emergency Release form for each child each year.

### **Health Plans**

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

### **Illness**

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

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

### **Concussion**

The Exploris School involves a multidisciplinary team approach to support students suffering with concussion issues. The team at the school level includes appropriate Exploris staff, parents, students, and healthcare providers - all focusing on student well-being during and after the injury. Clear guidelines and procedures based on the Gfeller Waller Concussion Awareness Act (GWCA), are outlined in the Exploris School Return to Learn Plan.

### **Lice**

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

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

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

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

### **Student Safety, Emotional Health, and Well-Being**

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

### **Student Supervision**

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

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

- Preventing further harm to the student or other students which may include moving the student.
- Providing comfort care and urgent care in situations involving breathing or bleeding.
- Referring immediately to the parent and/or medical professionals. When an accident happens at school that results in serious injury, the school staff will use information from the Medical Release Form to contact parents or the person(s) they have designated. If needed, we will call 911 while we are still trying to reach a parent. We will make every attempt to call parents as soon as possible to involve them in the decision-making process, unless time and urgency are issues. If the injury is minor, the classroom teacher will exercise their judgment in making a decision to call the parent. In most cases, parents will be alerted so they will have the option of viewing the injury themselves.

### **Extended Care**

The only supervision before or after the school's official times are through the fee-based Extended Care Programs. Any students arriving to school earlier than 20 minutes before the start time will be escorted to the Before School Care rooms and parents will be billed accordingly (please see our website for more details). Any students remaining at school after the end of dismissal will be sent to After School Care and parents will be billed accordingly. We understand that occasionally circumstances arise that make it difficult to arrive at school on time to pick up your children. On these occasions, please notify the office in advance as soon as possible.

### **Background Checks for Employees**

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

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

### **Volunteer Expectations and Confidentiality**

Exploris is a cooperative enterprise: our families, teachers, Board, and administrative staff share the responsibilities and rewards of operating our school. Our families experience firsthand the school environment, become advocates for their children, and enrich the school community with their ideas, interests, talents, and resources. There are significant opportunities for involvement: volunteering in our K-5 Explorations classes, middle school electives, helping with off-site fieldwork trips, serving on our PTO board, supporting the office, chaperoning overnight trips, etc. The Exploris School asks that each family volunteers eight hours each month with ample opportunity to participate. Enrollment at Exploris carries with it an obligation for family involvement in your child's education in order to ensure success.

Parents are always welcome to visit the school and join their child's class, but we ask you to plan your visit with your child's teacher. Planned, organized visits support instruction and help ensure the safety of all students and staff. Please keep in mind that visitors can sometimes distract students and inadvertently disrupt the learning environment. It is difficult for teachers to stop and instruct / prepare for volunteers while they are teaching, and Advance notification is required to make the most of your contribution. All parents and volunteers should sign in at the front office before proceeding to the classroom.

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

Remember that the teacher's first responsibility during class hours is to teach students; therefore, we ask that you refrain from engaging in conversation about your child's progress when assisting in the classroom or during field experiences. If you would like to discuss your child's individual progress, teachers are happy to set up an appointment to meet with you outside of the normal school day. When you volunteer in school related events, you will be exposed to sensitive issues

involving students and families other than your own, including academic and social/disciplinary challenges. Just as you would like for adults who interact with your child to be sensitive to issues of confidentiality, we ask that you treat information about all students with care.

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

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

### **Background Checks for Volunteers**

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

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

### **Field Experience Chaperones**

Opportunities exist for parents /guardians to accompany on field experiences, and in fact, we depend on your help for safe transportation and supervision. If you have signed up to participate as a class chaperone, you will be agreeing to stay with the group, monitor children, and make decisions in the best interest and safety of the children. While we encourage your involvement, parents must keep in mind that the purpose of fieldwork is educational, not recreational, and class trips should not be a substitute for a family outing. Chaperones will be expected to remain with the class at all times and should not remove their child from the group for side trips or to leave early. Chaperones are expected to support teachers' disciplinary and behavior guidelines, to uphold grade-level rules, and to treat all children with fair and equal consideration. Siblings or family pets will not be permitted on trips, so that chaperones can be fully attentive to the needs

of the students and provide the safety needed. If a trip should lend itself to involvement of siblings, this will be communicated to parents.

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

### **Student Sleeping Accommodations for Overnights**

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

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

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

## **Section 6: The Code of Student Conduct**

### **Our Exploris Philosophy**

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

*such as academic mindset, perseverance, learning strategies, and academic behaviors.*

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

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

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

### **Expected Student Behavior**

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

**The Code of Student Conduct shall apply to all students at all times on all school grounds, public spaces, vehicles, and field experiences.**

#### ***I will maintain a positive relationship with myself by:***

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

#### ***I will maintain a positive relationship with others by:***

- Being understanding of others feelings
- Using positive words with others (no put downs)
- Treating others like I want to be treated
- Being an upstander for others and not bullying or threatening
- Being honest by telling the truth, and taking responsibility

- Working with others in a positive and inclusive way
- Keeping my hands and body to myself
- Use appropriate language at school
- Working with others to manage negative behaviors and emotions
- Using respectful, positive, and considerate tone of voice and body language when I am speaking to others
- Listening when others are speaking

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

- Taking care of things in my school and on school grounds
- Not bringing dangerous or distracting things, such as matches, lighters, toys, fireworks, alcohol/tobacco/other drugs, medicine not prescribed for me, etc.
- Using school materials or classmate's materials for their intended purpose
- Using computers as directed by adults (see Acceptable Use Policy)
- Conduct myself in a safe and considerate way that reflects a positive image
- Leaving spaces as they were or better: clean up and participate positively in cleaning tasks no defacing, removing, digging, destroying or disturbing the features of private and public spaces

# The Three Levels of Supports

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

## Individualized Supports

*Specific interventions for individual students who exhibit a pattern of problematic behaviors. The goal of these interventions may be to diminish problem behaviors and increase the student's social skills and functioning.*

### Examples:

- Teacher-Created Behavior Chart
- Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)
- Multidisciplinary Comprehensive Assessment such as Functional Behavior (FBA)
- Collaboration with, and linkages to, community resources, agencies, parent groups

## Targeted Supports

*Specific interventions for students for whom universal supports are insufficient. These interventions are part of a continuum of behavioral supports.*

### Examples:

- Referral to Intervention Specialist
- Reflection Time: Removal from Class
- Check-in, Check-out Support Plan
- Social Skills Groups (such as anger management, conflict resolution, peer mediation)
- Social/Emotional Short-Term Counseling Group
- Mentoring
- Parent Groups
- Restorative Circle Groups

## Universal Supports

*General curriculum (including core values, morning meeting, crew, etc.) enhanced by acknowledgements of positive behavior and clearly stated expectations.*

### Examples:

- Positive reinforcement
- Crew, Morning Meeting, Core Values, etc.
- Bullying Prevention Programming
- Redirection
- Behavior Reflections
- Seat Change
- In-Class Cool Down Time
- Verbal Warning
- Teacher-Student Conference
- Parent-Teacher Conference
- Counselor Referral

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

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

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

## Levels of Consequences

Level	Disciplinary Option	
<b>1- Teacher managed</b>	Warning Letter of apology Loss of privileges Use of Student reflection/problem-solving worksheet Seat change Teacher conference with student	Mentoring In-class time-out (take a break) Time out in another classroom setting Reinforcement of appropriate behaviors Student email to parent Confiscation of item by teacher Redirection and reteaching expected behaviors
<b>2- Teacher Managed</b>	<b>Parent/guardian involvement required</b> Confiscation of item (pick up in office) Supervised time-out outside of classroom Conference with parent/guardian Behavior Contract Teacher and/or administrator conference with student and/or parent Monitored/Limited transitions	Parent contract Parent or guardian accompany student to school, classes or on field experience Conflict resolution Peer mediation Working Lunch/Lunch Detention Required help hall (before or after school) Community service assignment, as a form or restitution
<b>3- Administrator Managed (considered an office referral)</b>	<b>Parent/guardian notification required</b> Suspension (1-5 days) Reteaching expected behaviors Alternative school-based program Restricted Activity or Use of Technology Detention (before/after school or lunch)	Parent contract Parent or guardian accompany student to school, classes or on field experience Conflict resolution Peer mediation Working Lunch/Lunch Detention Required help hall (before or after school) Community service assignment, as a form or restitution
<b>4- Administrator Managed (office referral)</b>	<b>Parent/guardian notification required</b> Suspension (5-10 days) Restricted use of technology	Restricted activity Modified school day
<b>5-Administrator Managed (office referral)</b>	<b>Parent/guardian notification required</b> Extended Suspension (10+ days)	
<b>6- Administrator Managed (office referral)</b>	Expulsion (to be considered only in the most extreme cases). More serious offenses may result in recommendation for expulsion following due-process procedures. Please note that under charter school law, other North Carolina public schools, including Wake County Public Schools, will not accept students suspended or expelled from The Exploris School for the duration of their suspension or Expulsion.	

### Definitions for Problem Behavior and Consequences for Students

## Offense/Violation

### Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs (including unauthorized prescription drugs), drug paraphernalia

Level: 3, 4, 5, 6

#### **Definition**

*Alcoholic substances, tobacco, inhalants or other intoxicants, and controlled dangerous substances, including prescription drugs, over the counter medications, look-alikes, and substances represented as controlled substances, and drug paraphernalia.*

#### **Possession**

*The student has on his/her person, or within the student's personal property, or has under the student's actual or constructive control, any of the substances listed in this offense.*

#### **Consumption/Use**

*The student has consumed, ingested, assimilated, inhaled, or injected any of the substances listed in this offense.*

#### **Distribution/Sale**

*A student has disseminated or transferred any of the substances listed in this offense with or without compensation.*

#### **Possession with Intent to Distribute**

*The student has in his/her possession, as previously defined, any of the substances listed in this offense in a quantity or packaging to indicate intent to distribute or transfer to another person/people with or without compensation.*

### Arson/Fire

Level: 3, 4, 5, 6

#### **Definition:**

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

### Assault on a Student

Level: 3, 4, 5, 6

#### **Definition:**

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

### Assault on School Personnel of Other Adult

Level: 3, 4, 5

#### **Definition:**

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

### Assault involving weapon/dangerous instrument/substance

Level: 3, 4, 5, 6

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

### Bomb Threat

Level: 3, 4, 5, 6

**Definition:**

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

**Bullying/Harassment**

**Level: 3, 4, 5**

**Definition:**

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

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

**Contamination**

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

**Definition:**

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

**Destruction of Property/ Vandalism**

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

**Definition:**

*Damage, destruction, or defacement of property belonging to the school or others.*

**Disrespect**

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

**Definition:**

*Inappropriate comments or physical gestures to others.*

**Disruption to Classroom/School**

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

**Definition:**

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

**Dress Code Violation**

- **1st offense:** Teacher conference with student
- **2nd offense:** Associate Director conference with student

- **3rd offense:** Associate Director meets with student and parent to discuss behavior

**Definition:**

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

**Electronic Devices:**

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

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

**Failure to Report a Firearm**

**Level: 3, 4, 5**

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

**False Fire Alarm**

**Level: 3, 4, 5**

**Definition:**

*Pulling a fire alarm or reporting a fire or other dangerous situation without valid cause.*

**False Information/Accusations**

**Level: 1, 2, 3**

**Definition:**

*Willfully or maliciously giving false information, record or accusation against school personnel or other students.*

**Fireworks/Explosives**

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

**Definition:**

*Combustible or explosive substances or combination of substances or articles, including firecrackers, smoke bombs, and flares.*

**Gambling**

**Level: 2, 3, 4**

**Definition:**

*Wagering money or property*

**Gang and Gang Related Activity**

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

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

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

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

*Conduct prohibited by this policy includes:*

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

### **Hazing**

**Level: 3, 4, 5**

**Definition:**

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

### **Inappropriate Language**

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

**Definition:**

*Using vulgar or abusive spoken or written language or gestures, such as cursing and sexual innuendo.*

### **Inciting or Participating in a School Disturbance**

**Level: 3, 4, 5**

**Definition:**

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

### **Indecent Exposure/Sexual Behavior**

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

*Engage in behavior which is indecent, consensual, overly affectionate, or of a sexual nature*

### **Insubordination (Uncooperative Behavior)**

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

**Definition:**

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

**Integrity**

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

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

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

**Leaving an Area and/or Leaving Class**

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

**Definition:**

*Leaving the classroom or other assigned area without permission from the adult in charge.*

**Matches/Lighter(s)**

**Level: 2, 3**

**Definition**

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

**Non-Compliance**

**Level: 1, 2, 3**

**Definition:**

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

**Physical Aggression/ Fighting**

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

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

**School/Class Attendance**

**Level: 1, 2, 3**

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

**Sexual Assault**

**Level: 4, 5, 6**

**Definition:**

*Physical sexual attack on school system staff, or another student.*

**Sexual Harassment**

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

**Definition:**

*Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and/or other inappropriate verbal, written, or physical conduct of a sexual nature, directed toward others.*

**Stealing/Theft**

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

**Definition:**

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

**Trespassing**

**Level 3, 4, 5**

**Definition:**

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

**Unsafe Actions**

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

**Definition:**

*Any action that has the potential to cause danger or physical harm to self or others; including but not limited to reckless behavior in a vehicle or on a field experience*

**Weapons (including look-a-like guns)**

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

**Definition:**

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

Possession and/or use of:

**Firearms**

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

**Knife**

*This shall include, but is not limited to, switchblade knife, hunting knife, star knives, razors (including straight or retractable razor)*

**Gun (including look-a-like gun)**

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

**Other Weapons**

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

**Acceptable Use Policy for School Technology**

Students will have the opportunity to use The Exploris School’s computer resources, which includes access to the Internet. Student use of technology develops skills in defining, accessing, managing, integrating, evaluating, creating, and communicating information. For computers that

are accessed by minors, and in accordance with the Children’s Internet Protection Act (federal law enacted December 2000), The Exploris School implemented technology protection measures to block or filter Internet access to pictures and sites that: (a) are obscene, (b) are child pornography, or (c) are harmful to minors. We are committed to providing safe and quality instructional opportunities for all students. The student is responsible for appropriate behavior while using computer resources, including the internet. Teachers monitor student activities while online for appropriateness and instructional relevance.

***Students shall:***

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

***Students shall not:***

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

**Directed Internet use**

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

**Penalties for Misuse of Technology**

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

### **Attendance & Tardies**

All students are expected to attend school on all days of the established school calendar as approved annually by the Exploris Board of Directors and in compliance with the North Carolina school attendance laws. The entire process of education requires a regular continuity of instruction, classroom participation, learning experiences, and study in order to reach the goal of maximum educational benefits for each individual child. It is particularly true in a project-based environment that regular attendance is vital to achieving high academic outcomes given the rich educational discussions, fieldwork, and visiting experts that are a part of the day-to-day experience. Since many classroom activities are collaborative experiences, when one student is absent, the whole group is affected. Students who are frequently absent find it difficult to keep up. Missing a day of school means missing a crew activity that cannot be replicated at home.

If a student is absent from school, parents **must** contact the office by calling or emailing **attendance@exploris.org** and their crew teacher stating the child's full name and the reason for the absence, and the presumed return date to school. All absences from school are considered unexcused until a written excuse is received from the parent/guardian.

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

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

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

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

## **Bullying Policy & Procedure**

### **State Law regarding bullying**

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

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

- An Imbalance of Power: Kids who bully use their power—such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity—to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.
- Repetition: Bullying behaviors happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once.

Some specific examples of behavior that could be considered bullying include, but are not limited to; teasing, bullying slurs, innuendo, derogatory remarks, name calling, spreading rumors, and circulating written materials or pictures that are either derogatory or insulting to an individual or group.

### **Reporting Harassing and Bullying Behavior**

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

### **Investigation of Bullying**

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

### **Cyberbullying:**

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

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

that is sustained, organized, creates a hostile environment, and random instances of social media comments or conflicting political or social opinions

### **Corporal Punishment / Physical Restraint**

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

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

### **Dress Code Policy and Procedures**

Throughout our world, cultures set standards and norms for dress. Context is one factor that determines the appropriateness of clothing choices. The standard for what's acceptable when attending a sporting event is typically different from what's acceptable in a workplace. What's acceptable at a shopping mall is typically different from what's acceptable at a wedding or in a place of worship. In addition to being a place of learning and work, Exploris serves as a demonstration site for educators from around the world. As such, Exploris's expectations for student dress reflects that context. Students should wear clothing that is well-suited to the school environment.

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

Clothing should cover the torso, midriff, and backside. It should have straps or sleeves. Clothing, imagery, and accessories that display or promote negative messages are not permitted. These could include drug, weapon, alcohol, or tobacco-related information, obscenities, put-downs, innuendo, or offensive graphics/words. If a teacher questions the appropriateness of a student's dress, the student will be referred to an administrator. If the administrator determines that the student is inappropriately dressed, the student will be given the opportunity to call a parent and have other clothing delivered.

If a staff member determines that a student is in violation of dress code standards for the school environment, the student will be given the opportunity to call a parent and have other clothing

delivered. If the parent/guardian cannot be reached the school will provide clothing for the student when possible. Habitual violations will be considered willful disrespect and non-compliance on the part of the student and formal disciplinary action will be taken:

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

### **Drugs and Alcohol**

The possession and use of illicit substances is illegal and harmful. The Exploris School and Board of Directors prohibits the unlawful possession, use, or distribution of illicit substances on school premises or as part of any school activities. Compliance with drug and alcohol laws is mandatory for all parents, students, and staff. Information on drug and alcohol counseling is available to all students upon request from the school counselor. Students who are caught with drugs, alcohol, and vapors are subject to drug testing to ensure the safety of the student. The Exploris School will provide the cost, location and procedures necessary to the parent/guardian for the student to return to school and ensure safety of the student.

### **Extended Suspension for Students with Disabilities**

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

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

*For students with IEPs:*

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

### **Student Conflict/Peer Mediation**

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

### **Items from Home**

Students should only bring appropriate academic-related items to school. Unrelated magazines,

toys, trading cards, etc. should remain at home. Any items (**including cell phones**) that disrupt the learning environment in any way or present a safety hazard will be confiscated according to the following guidelines:

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

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

### **Responsibility for Personal Property**

All personal property, including personal computers, brought to school is brought at the owner's risk. The Exploris School cannot assume responsibility for any property belonging to students. Distracting or inappropriate objects will be taken from a student and returned at the end of the day. Repeated violations will require a parent conference. Students should not bring large sums of money to school. If it is necessary to bring a large sum of money, that money should be taken to the office.

### **Search and Seizure**

To maintain order and discipline in the school and to protect the health, safety and welfare of all students and school personnel, there are times that searches may be deemed necessary. School authorities may search a student's person and/or personal property, cell phone, desk area, storage area, backpack, or parent/guardian automobile whenever a school authority has reasonable suspicion to believe that a student is in possession of illegal or unauthorized materials.

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

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

### **School Counselor**

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

**Confidentiality in Counseling:**

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

## Section 7: School, Parent, and Student Rights and Responsibilities

### **McKinney–Vento Homeless Assistance Act and Policy**

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

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

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

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

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

### **Non-Discrimination / Non-Harassment of Students and Staff**

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

Discrimination means any act or failure to act that unreasonably and unfavorably differentiates treatment of others based solely on their membership in a socially distinct group or category, such as race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or gender identity or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics. Discrimination may be intentional or unintentional.

Harassment, including sexual or gender-based harassment, is not limited to specific situations or relationships. It may occur between fellow students or co-workers, between supervisors and subordinates, between employees and students, or between non-employees, including

visitors and volunteers, and employees or students. Harassment may occur between members of different genders or the same gender. Complaints alleging discrimination or harassment based on a person's biological or gender identity must be handled in accordance with procedures outlined in our bullying and harassment policy.

### **Right to Confidentiality of Access to Student Records**

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

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

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

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

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

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

Upon request, the school discloses education records without consent to officials of another school or school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll, or is already enrolled if the

disclosure is for purposes of the student's enrollment or transfer. The Exploris School will forward such records on request.

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

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

### **Rights under the No Child Left Behind Act**

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

[Specifies regarding Parents Rights to Know](#)

### **Section 504**

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

Many students have conditions or disorders that are not readily apparent to others. They may include conditions such as specific learning disabilities, diabetes, epilepsy and allergies. Hidden disabilities such as low vision, poor hearing, heart disease or chronic illness may not be obvious, but if the disabilities are not properly diagnosed and they substantially limit that child's ability to receive an appropriate education as defined by Section 504, they may be considered to have an "impairment" under Section 504 standards. As a result, these students, regardless of their intelligence, will be unable to fully demonstrate their ability or attain educational benefits equal to that of non-disabled students (The Civil Rights of Students with Hidden Disabilities under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973). For more information about protecting students with disabilities please visit [US Dept of Education- Office of Civil Rights](#)

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

A Section 504 Plan is a legal document falling under the provisions of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. It is designed to plan individualized services to assist students with disabilities who are in

a regular education setting. A 504 Plan is not an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) as is required for exceptional students. However, if the student no longer needs special instruction and is moving to a regular education placement s/he could be placed under a 504 Plan.

#### How Does an Individual Qualify as Disabled Under Section 504?

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

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

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

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

#### **Resources and Dispute Procedures for Section 504:**

[National Center for Learning Disabilities- 504](#)

[Parent and Educator resource guide for Section 504](#)

[Section 504 Overview](#)

[Section 504 Parent and Student Rights](#)

[Non-Discrimination/Non-Harrasment of students and staff](#)

[Procedural Safeguards](#)

[Formal Grievance Procedure](#)

#### **Special Education: Child Find for Students with Disabilities**

At The Exploris School are required to locate and identify young people with physical, emotional or intellectual disabilities who may be in need of special education and related services. Parents of children aged two years old or younger who may be in need of such services

should contact the Exceptional Children Coordinator or School Counselor so that we may assist you in contacting Head Start.

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

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

About 90% of students with disabilities are served by special education services in the school to which they are assigned by the Office of Student Assignment. These are known as base programs. Wake County also has service delivery/program options for children whose IEP requires a more specialized service. About 10% of students require these regional programs.

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

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

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

#### **Resources and Dispute procedures for IDEA**

[Parent Rights and Responsibilities](#)

[Garantias de Procedimiento Manual de Derechos de los Padres](#)

[North Carolina Dept. Public Instruction Dispute Resolution](#)

[Formal Grievance Procedures](#): See The Exploris School Grievance Procedure

[Formal Grievance Procedures: Spanish](#)

#### **Student Rights & Supports**

##### School Problems

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

1. Tell the nearest teacher, adult, or staff member

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

### Personal Problems

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

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

[Gender Support Guidelines](#): These guidelines are intended to help our school promote the educational and social integration of transgender, non-binary and gender non-conforming students and ensure a safe learning environment free from discrimination and harassment. While inadvertent slips and honest mistakes may occur from time-to-time, the intentional and persistent refusal to respect a student's gender identity or chosen name and pronoun is prohibited and may constitute discrimination, harassment or bullying.

### **Title I and Federal Programs**

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

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

**Please click on this link to access the 2020-2021 policy:** [Parent Family Engagement Policy](#)

### **School- Parent Compact and Parents Right to Know**

In order to fulfill the requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA) of the Elementary and Secondary Act (ESEA), The Exploris School agrees to implement the formation

of a partnership between the home, school, and community; recognizes that the parents is the child's first and most important teacher; and provide students with the skills to meet the challenging academic standards required by the North Carolina State Department of Education.

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

## **Appendix I**

### **The Exploris School Grievance Policy**

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

#### **Article I: Introduction and Values**

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

The following procedures are adopted to meet these goals.

#### **Article II: Grievance Committee Structure and Rules**

**Section 1: Composition of the Grievance Committee** – The Grievance Committee shall consist of no fewer than three members of the Board of Directors, appointed by the Chairperson of the Board of Directors and confirmed by a vote of the full Board. One member of the Grievance Committee shall be designated by the Chairperson of the Board of Directors to serve as the Chairperson of the Committee.

**Section 2: Parent Liaison** – One member of the Board of Directors shall be appointed by the Chairperson of the Board of Directors and confirmed by a vote of the full Board to serve as Parent Liaison. This individual shall not sit on the Grievance Committee. His or her primary role will be to help parents understand the grievance procedures and to provide process guidance to aggrieved parents. Parents who approach other members of the Board of Directors with grievances will be referred to the Parent Liaison.

**Section 3: Training** – On an annual basis, all members of the Grievance Committee and the Parent Liaison will receive training provided by an attorney or other qualified individual with

regard to confidentiality, impartiality, and other topics relevant to effective execution of their duties.

**Section 4: Timelines** – Failure of a parent or employee to comply with the procedural timelines listed below may result in denial of a grievance request. Extensions in timelines may be granted if the relevant decision maker determines there is a reasonable need for such extension. Similarly, the timelines for actions to be taken by school personnel or board members may be extended, with notice to the aggrieved party, when there is a reasonable need for extension or extension is in the best interest of an effective process.

**Section 5: Forms** – The Leadership Team or Board may develop one or more grievance forms to facilitate and document the various steps of the grievance process.

**Section 6.** These current structures and processes are under review in the 2021-2022 school year and recommendations for changes and updates may be made and brought to the School Board for approval.

### **Article III: Parent Grievance Procedures**

**Section 1:** The Board recognizes that effective school governance requires that the primary responsibility for issues involving student discipline, curriculum, assessment and promotion and other day-to-day decisions regarding school management lies with the faculty, staff and Leadership Team of the School and these individuals are best suited to resolve conflicts that arise with respect to these issues. The Board has the authority to appoint, employ, and remove the Leadership Team, but primary responsibility and authority over faculty, staff and volunteer organizations of the School are vested in the Leadership Team. The Board, therefore, will exercise any authority in this policy conservatively and narrowly so as not to usurp the authority granted to the Leadership Team

**Section 2: Informal Procedures:** A parent should first attempt to resolve any grievance through discussion with the relevant teacher(s) or other involved persons. If the parent's concern is not adequately addressed through an informal discussion with the teacher and/or staff involved, the parent should next attempt to resolve the grievance with the appropriate supervisor, if applicable. If a grievance cannot be resolved in an informal manner, the parent may initiate a formal grievance procedure.

**Section 3: Formal Procedures:** In instances where informal means are ineffective or otherwise not feasible, the School offers these more formal grievance procedures. Grievance proceedings and information shall be kept confidential at all levels to the extent possible and permitted by law. A parent grievance is a formal written claim by a parent or group of parents identifying the concern, identifying the individual or group's resolution attempts, and identifying any law, policy, or practice that is implicated by the concern under. No one shall retaliate against a parent who files a grievance under this policy (or against a student whose parent files a grievance) in good faith.

**Level One** – Supervisor Request and Conference. A parent may, by written request, seek a formal conference with the relevant supervisor to address an unresolved grievance.

The request shall succinctly describe the specific grievance(s) and related details, and shall identify any specific policy, rule, regulation or law believed to have been violated, and shall provide other relevant information to help the supervisor adequately understand the nature of the grievance.

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

**Level Two** - Appeal to the Leadership Team. If the grievance is not resolved, the parent(s) may appeal the supervisor's decision in writing to the Leadership Team if the Leadership Team was not involved in the Level One Conference.

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

**Level Three** - Appeal to the Board Grievance Committee (Third Party Representation): Appeal of Rights and Discretionary Appeals. If a parent is not satisfied with the disposition of the grievance at Level Two, the parent may, within five (5) business days of receiving notice of the decision of the Leadership Team submit a written request to the Grievance Committee Chairperson to appeal the Leadership Team decision and to request a formal hearing.

1. Within five (5) business days of receiving the written request for appeal, the Grievance Committee Chairperson shall issue a written notice to the parent and the Leadership Team indicating whether the Leadership Team determination is “final” in nature or whether the Board, in its discretion or by right of appeal, shall grant a hearing. The notice shall also specify, if a hearing is granted, the time it will occur and guidelines by which it will be conducted.
2. When a hearing is granted, a panel of the Grievance Committee consisting of at least three people shall hear the grievance within ten (10) business days of the date the Chairperson’s notice is issued to the parent.
3. The Grievance Committee panel, a third party representative, may affirm, reverse, or modify the decision of the t Following the hearing, the parent and The Leadership Team shall be informed in writing of the panel's decision within five (5) business days after the hearing, whenever feasible.
4. The decision of the Grievance Committee panel is final OR the decision of the Grievance Committee panel may be appealed to the full Board of Directors.

## Appendix II

### **Acceptable Use Policy for School Technology**

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

Students (if able) should read the following rules of network etiquette and then sign the last page of this handbook to show that you understand your responsibilities. Parents should read this section allowed to students who are unable to read it to themselves.

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

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

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

***Consequences for Unacceptable Use of the School Technology***

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