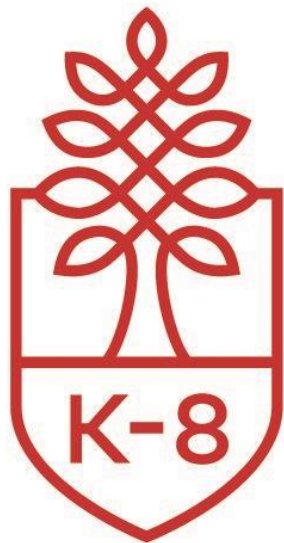


# Princeton Charter School

## Student and Parent Handbook

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2025-2026



Princeton  
Charter  
School

August 2025

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## School Learning Environment

Princeton Charter School is committed to a learning environment that is safe, respectful, compassionate, ethical, and equitable. We believe that our diverse community is one of our great strengths and we celebrate our differences. We are committed to the treatment of all people in a respectful manner. We strive for a community where individuals continue to grow and develop their own moral standards. We strive for a community that values diversity and approaches difference with openness and the desire to understand and embrace it. We strive for a community that seeks to help and support individuals through awareness and action. We strive for a community that speaks up in defense of principles and in support of individuals. We strive for a community characterized by kindness and care.

## Princeton Charter School Code of Conduct

The code of conduct guides the decisions and behaviors of students during their daily life, activities, and interaction with others within the school in order to (1) foster a safe, just, diverse, and supportive community committed to the pursuit of intellectual values and academic excellence, and (2) support the development of personal values for individual students at PCS. To achieve these goals, students will conduct themselves with integrity, and conscious effort informed by the awareness of others, and ownership of one's actions and their consequences.

**1. Safety:** PCS is committed to the safety of all members of the school community. Students are responsible for:

- a. Behaving in a manner that does not harm or endanger others whether or not that is the intended outcome.
- b. Respecting the physical space of others; keeping one's hands to oneself.
- c. Walking inside the buildings.

**2. Care of Community:** PCS is committed to a community where all members actively seek to care for one another, the school, and the broader community beyond its campus. Students are responsible for:

- a. Helping other students and modeling best behaviors and conduct.
- b. Respecting the property of others.
- c. Demonstrating care for school property and the campus.

**3. Integrity:** PCS is committed to a school community where all are expected to conduct themselves with integrity and honesty in all aspects of school life. Students are responsible for:

- a. Being truthful in communication with others
- b. Representing only one's own work on papers, projects, homework, and assessments.

**4. Respect:** PCS is committed to a community characterized by mutual respect for others. Students are responsible for:

- a. Demonstrating respect for teachers, classmates, and adults regardless of differences.
- b. Appreciating the differences that enrich our community.

- c. Listening to others and following the direction of adults.
- d. Speaking in a timely, appropriate, and courteous manner.

5. **Academic Excellence:** PCS is committed to a community where individuals contribute to a climate of academic excellence. Students are responsible for:

- a. Being on time, being prepared, and participating in class.
- b. Contributing to an environment that promotes academic achievement — not disrupting teaching and learning.
- c. Valuing the intellectual contributions of others.

## Civil Communication

Teachers and parents are critical pillars in the lives of students during the early developmental years in the K-8 grade span. A strong partnership between school and home is critical to help address the potential if not inevitable challenges that arise at some point during elementary and middle school.

These challenges can be stressful and we ask that parents support a strong partnership by maintaining a collaborative mindset when communicating and working with the teachers and administration:

- Reach out to the school to find out what is happening before coming to conclusions.
- Assume best intentions: Teachers are trying to do their best. Sometimes mistakes are made and sometimes young students are not the most accurate reporters of events.
- Refrain from accusations and harsh language when communicating with staff.
- Understand the scope of the school's influence: Sometimes parents attribute unrealistic ability to the school to alter events.

Try to keep the events that occur in the life of elementary and middle school students in a reasonable perspective: There are many bumps along the elementary and middle school road and these obstacles and challenges are important developmentally. Problem solving and conflict management are important skills. Students need to learn how to acknowledge their own needs and the needs of others. Teaching children competency skills in managing conflicts helps to develop healthy relationships with others.

## School Operations

### School Day

The school day is from 8:00 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. Students may be dropped off on campus starting at 7:30 a.m., but no earlier. Students will not be admitted to the buildings before 7:30 a.m. Students are expected to be prepared and in their assigned homerooms by 8:00 a.m. Students arriving in the building at exactly 8:00 a.m., but who are not at their desks and ready for attendance, will be marked tardy. This includes students who are at their lockers and cubbies.

### Arrival and Dismissal

Arrival:

- Grades K-2 7:35-7:45
- Grade 3&4 7:45-7:55
- Grade 5-8 7:45-7:55

Students who are dropped off before 7:30 a.m. will not be let into the building and will therefore be unsupervised.

**Dismissal:**

- Grades K-2 3:05-3:15
- Grades 3-4 3:10-3:15
- Grades 5-8 3:15-3:30

Parents with children in both divisions should arrive at the latest designated time for their oldest child. Lower School students who are dismissed before their older siblings will be supervised until they are picked up. If parents arrive early to pick up K-2 students, they will be asked to circle around to pick up their 5-8 child.

**Do not arrive early and wait.** Students take time to get out to pick up locations. When cars arrive early and students are not available for pick up, it causes a dangerous back up onto Bunn drive or Ewing Street.

**Late Arrival:**

If a student arrives at school at or after 8:00 a.m., the parent/guardian must report to the school office to sign in the child. If a student is repeatedly late for school, the family will be contacted, and the student may be subject to disciplinary action.

**Regular Dismissal:**

During dismissal, students will be supervised in the designated area until their bus or parent/guardian arrives to pick them up. The student may also be inside working with a teacher until his/her bus or parent/guardian arrives.

K-4 procedure: Students will stay in the designated supervised areas until pick-up or their buses arrive. The outside dismissal supervisor will call for students to be dismissed when he/she recognizes the parent/guardian. If he/she does not recognize the person picking up, that person must park, enter the building and present identification to the office.

5-8 procedure: Students will be dismissed to the supervised areas in the front of the school. Students who are walking home will leave the campus. Students who are leaving campus by car should be picked up between 3:15 pm – 3:30 pm. Once a parent or guardian has picked up a child, the student is considered under the supervision of the parent/guardian.

At 3:30pm, remaining students will be sent to Princeton Charter School's After School Program. *N.B.:* Parents and guardians will be responsible for all After School Program fees incurred.

**School Bus Information:**

Bus transportation is provided by the Princeton Public Schools district for students who live more than two miles from the school or who would have to follow a route that the Municipality of Princeton has designated as dangerous.

Safety is our main concern for students riding the school buses, and the following rules will be enforced. In addition, Princeton Charter School's Code of Conduct applies to the bus ride.

- Students are expected to sit at all times.
- Shouting, fighting, and putting hands, arms, or heads out of the windows is not permitted at any time.
- Princeton Public Schools district regulations do not allow students to ride on any bus other than their assigned bus. (A parent **may not** write a note allowing his or her child to ride a different bus.) Students may **never** ride home on any school bus other than the one to which they are assigned.
- Students are expected to walk to and from the bus stop, and while entering or exiting the bus.
- Riding the bus is a privilege, not a right. The bus driver and/or the school administrators may discipline students who misbehave on the bus. If the problem is severe or ongoing, the student could lose the privilege of riding the bus. Please discuss proper bus conduct with your child. If a child has a problem on the bus, he or she should inform the bus driver or a school administrator.

For more information about bus transportation, call the Transportation Coordinator for Princeton Public Schools at **609-806-4209**.

**Emergency Closings**

Should inclement weather force the cancellation of school, the decision to close will be made as early in the morning as possible. Since our students share buses with Princeton Public Schools, the Charter School will follow the closing decisions of the Princeton Public School system. Messages regarding school closing will be sent to telephones, cell phones, and email via our Student Information System (SIS). If it is announced that the Princeton Public Schools will be closed for the day due to travel safety concerns, Princeton Charter School will also be closed.

If inclement weather occurs on a day when Princeton Public Schools are not in session, Princeton Charter School will make its own announcement.

Please note that there may be rare occasions when the Princeton Public Schools would close, but Princeton Charter School would remain open. In this case, Princeton Charter School would make its own announcement via its website and the automated phone call system.

**Early School Closing:**

If it becomes necessary to close school during the day because of travel safety concerns or emergency situations, an announcement about early dismissal will be sent via the Student Information System system to telephones, cell phones, and email. You may also check Princeton Charter School or Princeton Public Schools district websites. Again, Princeton Charter School will dismiss early whenever the Princeton Public Schools dismiss early for travel safety concerns.

**Additional Drop-off and Pick-up Procedures:**

The school is committed to the safe and efficient operation of student drop-off and pick-up. Read the **attached guidelines in Appendix A** carefully and adhere to the guidelines when driving on campus and picking up or dropping off students.

By following these rules and cooperating as a collective community, we can maintain a safe and efficient process for dropping students at school and picking them up. The Charter School parking lots are very busy during drop-off and pick-up, and all members of the community must work together and follow all guidelines to ensure safety.

**School Building Entrances and Safety Precautions**

Entrances: On advice from the Princeton Police Department, we are using only one entry way into the K-4 school building, and one entryway to the 5-8 building. Students, visitors, and parents will access the school buildings through the main entrances only for each building.

Students will be instructed to not open doors for adults other than teachers or any unknown person at any time.

Check in: All visitors and parents must check into the division office upon entering the buildings.

Delivering items to your children or the office during school hours: In order to reduce the volume and better control entry into the school buildings, parents may leave any items for students at the designated drop off tables which will be located at the entrances to the school buildings.

**Walking to and from School:**

Students must cross the street at the marked crosswalk and obey all traffic signals. When students arrive, they should enter the building directly.

**Bicycles, Skateboards, Scooters:**

All traffic and safety rules should be obeyed when riding a bicycle to and from school. For safety reasons, students riding a bicycle should always **walk their bicycles, skateboards, or scooters** on the school grounds and in the parking lot. Bikes, skateboards, and scooters should be stored in the bike rack during the day.

It is recommended that students have chains and locks to secure their bikes. Helmets are mandatory in New Jersey. Princeton Charter School is not responsible for any damage to or theft of bicycles, skateboards, or scooters.

**Dogs on Campus:**

Dogs are not allowed on campus at any time. This includes the parking lot, sidewalk, and playground areas. (However, dogs may stay in a car when parents are picking up a child.)



### **Change in Regular Dismissal:**

Sometimes it is necessary to alter a child's regular dismissal routine. If a child is walking home to another child's house or is being picked up by another parent/guardian, the school office is to be notified in writing of the change.

If a student is to leave school with someone other than a parent or guardian, the school must receive written permission from the student's parent or guardian.

All changes in procedures for pick up of a student must be communicated to the school by 2:15 p.m.

### **Early Dismissal:**

It is highly recommended that dental and medical appointments be made after school hours. When picking a student up early, the parent/guardian must report to the school office to sign the student out. Study hall and end-of-the-day lessons have a purpose, so students should not be signed out early unless this is unavoidable. Unless prior arrangements are made with the office staff, a child will be released only to the custody of a parent/guardian. Students will be released from classrooms when the parent arrives in the office. If the student returns to school on the same day, the parent/guardian must report to the office to sign the student in.

### **Absences**

*Students are expected to be in school unless physical illness prevents their attendance or extenuating circumstances prevent them from benefiting from the instruction in school as per New Jersey state law. The Board Policy on Attendance is appended to this handbook for further information.*

If illness or an emergency prevents a child from attending school, the parent/guardian should call the Nurse's office, Ext. 2403 or email: [nurse@princetoncharter.org](mailto:nurse@princetoncharter.org) to notify the school of the absence before 8:00 a.m.

If the school does not hear from a parent before 9:00 a.m., the nurse will contact the parent at home, work, or via cell phone to verify the absence.

If a student needs to leave school early due to illness, the school nurse must dismiss the student, *i.e.* parents are not to make arrangements directly with the student via cell phone or office phone.

If a student is absent for more than three (3) days, the student must have a note from a physician verifying that the absence was due to illness and the student was under his/her care. This must be delivered to the nurse on the student's return.

*Students who have a pattern of between five and nine absences from school without verification of a doctor's care may be considered truant. Parents will be contacted by the relevant Division Head to determine the cause of absence and may be asked to meet to discuss the matter and its remediation as per the Board of Trustees' policy on absences. A copy of the Board policy on absences is attached to this Handbook under Appendix B.*

### **Homework when Absent:**

In order for the work to be available for K-2 parents to pick up at the end of the day, requests for daily assignments must be emailed to the student's individual teachers (first initial, last name @princetoncharter.org) by 9:00a.m.. Teachers will submit work to the front office by 3:00 p.m. for pick-up. Homework is to be picked up by a parent or designee, not the ill student. **Homework for students in grades 3-8 should be obtained from Schoology.**

If a child is too ill to complete homework while absent, upon return to school, he/she will need to meet with teachers to arrange any necessary work to be completed.

Whether work is requested during an absence or assigned upon the child's return, the student is responsible for completing all missed work.

In the case of unexcused planned absences (such as family day trips or vacations), students will be responsible for the work that is missed. Teachers are not required to have the work available prior to a planned absence, but may do so upon request as a courtesy.

If you know that your child will be absent from school, please let the school know in advance. Your child should also inform teachers of the absence.

#### Make-up Tests and Assessments:

Students who miss tests and assessments must report to the relevant teacher on the day they return and arrange to take the test. If the student missed only one day of school, the missed assessment can be given on the day he/she returns unless other arrangements are made with the teacher.

#### ***Participation in After-School Activities:***

In order to participate in sports, plays, or other extra-curricular activities, students must be in school by noon of that school day. Students with an after-school detention will have to serve this before they may participate in these activities.

#### **Vacations:**

Vacations should not be planned during the school year. If a vacation is planned during the school year, the absence will be unexcused, and the student is expected to complete missed classwork and homework assignments upon his or her return to school. Students may receive some general guidelines or supplemental work from the teacher, but they should not expect individual tutoring or assignments and tests ahead of time because of a vacation absence.

#### **Extended Leave:**

The enrollment status of students with lengthy planned absences such as sabbatical travel will be decided on a case-by-case basis by the Head of School and reviewed by the Board of Trustees, subject to enrollment requirements of state law and regulations. As much advance notice as possible is requested.

#### **Safety Drills**

We have one fire drill per month. When students hear the alarm, they must follow the instructions of the classroom teacher. All students, teachers, visitors, and other personnel must leave the building immediately. Silence is mandatory until everyone is outside and attendance is taken. A signal will be given to return to the building when it is deemed safe.

In addition to the required fire drill, Princeton Charter School is required by the State of New Jersey to have a shelter in place, active threat, or evacuation safety drill each month. These drills help to prepare staff and students for various emergency situations.

During either a drill or an actual emergency, it is essential for everyone's safety that students follow the directions of the teachers and administration. There are emergency plans in place for various contingencies and school personnel are trained for this purpose.

## **School Dress**

Recognizing that dress codes have the potential to reflect bias, PCS updated its dress code in the summer of 2018 with the goal of equality and inclusion in mind.

A student's dress is primarily the responsibility of his or her parents and the student himself/herself. However, the school does have its own requirements:

A student's clothing must be neat, clean, and not pose any safety risks to the student. Clothing should be appropriate for a school setting — including recess and gym — and in keeping with our school Code of Conduct. Apparel that is lewd, contains offensive terms, profanity, pornography, language or images that create a hostile or intimidating environment, or draws attention to an illegal substance is prohibited. Footwear must be worn in all parts of the school building for safety reasons: Students may not wear flip-flops.

Teachers and administrators will demonstrate respect and sensitivity when addressing any question regarding dress code with students. School administrators will make the final determination of whether or not a piece of clothing is appropriate when there is a question.

Students wearing inappropriate items will be asked to remove or replace them. When it is determined that students are in violation of these guidelines, they will be sent to the office where the division head will determine if the student needs a change of clothes or cover and will notify the parents.

*N.B.:* School administrators will have the final say about what is appropriate school attire and what is not.

## **Cubbies and Lockers**

K-5 students have cubbies where they can keep their school materials and book bags during the day. They will have limited opportunities to get their possessions out of their cubbies during the school day.

Students in grades 6-8 have lockers for their supplies, possessions, and backpacks. Because of time limitations, they will not be permitted to go to their lockers between each class. Instead, they should take all materials for two or three periods with them at one time. Students may find locker shelves helpful for organizing their belongings; however, shelves with expansion mechanisms are not permitted.

Students should not share their combinations with anyone and are prohibited from defacing lockers with stickers or markers. Improper use of lockers or dangerous, discourteous behavior around lockers is subject to disciplinary action from teachers or administration.

School lockers and cubbies are the property of the school and may be inspected by school officials in the interest of school safety, health and hygiene, enforcement of discipline, and other school regulations.

## **Lunch and Snacks**

Students may either bring a bag lunch or buy lunch at school provided that they have ordered it in advance. The school will provide fresh, nutritious meals.

Students in grades K-2 will order lunch using an online form that will be available on the school website.

Students in grades 4-8 will order in Homeroom each day.

Lunch payments will be made using PaySchools. Detailed information on Payschools is available on the School website under Quicklinks/lunch. All payments to maintain a balance in the student's lunch fund must be made by check and submitted to the division office, or via the online payment system. Checks should be made payable to Princeton Charter School. The amount of money owed by an individual student may not exceed \$20.

A child may be eligible for free or reduced cost lunches. Eligibility is determined after the appropriate form is completed. Application forms are sent home in the Back-to-School mailing in August, but a parent/guardian may request one at any time during the school year. All matters regarding free or reduced lunch are kept strictly confidential.

Food is to be eaten at lunchtime or during designated snack "break" time only. It is not allowed to be eaten in the hallways or while students are using computers. One food item and one drink per snack period are allowed.

### **Birthday Celebrations, Holidays, and Special Occasions**

Parents/guardians may provide individualized treats for students to take home in celebration of the special occasion. Please alert K-4 teachers in advance of the day.

*N.B.:* In the 5-8 building, all special occasion treats (including birthday treats, Valentine's Day, etc.) are distributed during lunch periods. Classroom celebrations (for example, Halloween and Valentine's Day) should encourage healthy choices and portion control and will take place during lunch periods. Please consider the restrictive diets and allergies of other students in the class. Please bear in mind that if birthday treats are distributed during lunch, they should be for the entire grade (50 students).

Invitations to a child's private birthday party, thank you notes, and all personal mail are not to be distributed to individual students unless the entire class is included. This guideline lessens the distress to those students who are not invited. Finally, if a child misses a birthday party, please do not send him or her to school with a present for the birthday child, because it may upset the children who were not invited to the party.

### **Wellness and Nutrition Policy**

Food of minimal nutritional value (FMNV) as defined by the US Department of Agriculture may not be served at school during school hours as provided in Princeton Charter School's Wellness and Nutrition Policy. The definition of snacks with minimal nutritional value includes soda, candy, gum, and similar items. A list is maintained in the office of each building that gives examples of snacks with minimal nutritional value. No food that lists sugar as the first ingredient is allowed. **Bake sales and candy sales during the school day are not permitted.** If you have additional questions, the Wellness and Nutrition Policy in its entirety is available for review in the Business Office.

### **Lost and Found**

"Found" articles will be placed in a designated area. If a student's name is on the article of clothing, notebook, or book cover, it can be returned directly to the owner. Unclaimed articles will be given to charity throughout the year. Please mark your child's name on every item that your child brings to school. This includes clothing, books, assignment pad, and notebooks. Small valuable objects (such as eyeglasses, phones, calculators, and jewelry) are usually held in the K-4 and 5-8 offices.

## **Pest Management Plan**

The school contracts with an outside provider for pest control services. In the past year, only “low impact” pesticides (such as permethrin) were used, and the school’s policy is to use the lowest impact control methods available. If you have additional questions, the Pest Control Policy, in its entirety, is available for review in the Business Office.

## **Student Behavior and Disciplinary Matters**

An orderly environment that is conducive to learning is key to the success of every school. We believe that learning personal responsibility, respect for others, and good citizenship will be essential to the future success of our students. But, we also recognize that K-8 students are in a period of great and rapid development and may make mistakes. As such, disciplinary consequences serve at least three purposes in a school community:

- They teach students ethical responsibility.
- They deter students from making mistakes.
- They vindicate the dignity of the victim.

### **Student Rules**

- Students are expected to attend school and all classes regularly and on time.
- Students may not deface school property either inside or outside the building. This includes writing in books, on desks, bathrooms, walls, etc.
- Students may not litter and are expected to pick up paper and litter in the classrooms, hallways and lunchroom. Students are expected to keep their lockers neat and clean.
- Students may never borrow, touch, or take another student’s property, food, or money without permission.
- Students may not sell anything in school.
- Students may not borrow money from other students in school.
- Students should not bring large sums of money, expensive jewelry, or other valuable property to school. The school will not assume responsibility in the event of their loss, damage, or theft.
- Students need to walk safely in the hallways and on school grounds. **There should be no running or jumping** when moving from activity to activity. Excessive noise is discourteous to other students.
- Chewing gum is not allowed in school for any reason.
- Students are expected to use courtesy words such as “please,” “thank you,” and “excuse me,” when appropriate.
- Students are not allowed to consume food or drinks in the hallways.
- If a student commits an act of vandalism (e.g. hitting and thereby knocking down an exit sign or damaging a Chromebook), the student may be liable for repairs.

### **Cell Phones and Smart Watches:**

Given the potential negative impact of smart phones and smart watches on the social and emotional development of students and our school mission, we have adopted the following rules for cell phones and smart watches during school hours:

1. All cell phones that are brought to school, must be stored securely during the school day in the students' lockers/cubbies. Students may not use their cell phones during the day to call, or text.\*
2. Use of Apple watches and other smart watches is not allowed during the school day. If a child brings a smart watch or cell phone to school, the device must be stored in a locker or cubby during normal school hours.\*
3. Students may use the office phone if communication with home is necessary.

\*The school is not responsible for the loss or theft of cell phones and/or smart watches.

Inappropriate Cell Phone Use During the School Day		
	Teacher Response	Student Consequence
1st offense	Teacher confiscates the cell phone and sends it to the K-4 or 5-8 office.	Students can retrieve cell phones from the K-4 or 5-8 office at 3:15pm or dismissal on a half day. Parents are notified.
2nd offense	Teacher confiscates the cell phone and sends it to the K-4 or 5-8 office.	A parent must retrieve the cell phone from the K-4 or 5-8 office.
3rd offense	Teacher confiscates the cell phone and sends it to the K-4 or 5-8 office.	A parent must pick up the cellphone from the K-4 or 5-8 office. Student receives after school detention.
4th offense and subsequent offenses	Teacher confiscates the cell phone and sends it to the K-4 or 5-8 office.	A parent must pick up the cellphone from the K-4 or 5-8 office. Failure to conform to the school rules may merit a suspension or afterschool detentions as determined by the division heads.

- During the regular school day (i.e. from 7:30am until 3:15PM on full days), students may not record, photograph, or videotape students, teachers, staff or the classroom setting without express permission from the teacher. Students may not use Skype, Zoom, or Facetime or use their phones or other devices to share what is happening in school without express permission from the teacher.
- Middle school students may not record K-4 students before or after school even if the student gives permission.
- Students who are participating in after-school sporting events (on campus or at another school) or who are participating in public events such as the Science Bowl competition do not have the expectation of privacy on the stage or on the soccer field. Under these circumstances, students

may share pictures or videos just as any member of the audience would. However, students in after-school activities should maintain an expectation of privacy in bathrooms, dressing rooms, and other environments where photographs and recordings would be prohibited.

### **Computer Use**

Princeton Charter School provides students with network access, Google Drive and email accounts, access to Chromebooks and tablets for the purpose of learning. Students in grades 6-8 are provided a Chrome book on a 1:1 basis for school use throughout the year.

Students are expected to adhere to the Code of Conduct and the school Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) when using Chromebooks and school devices.

Students and parents must sign the school's Acceptable Use Policy in order for students to have access to the school's network and devices.

Students who attempt to violate the guidelines stipulated in the Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) are subject to disciplinary action including, but not limited to, detention, suspension, and loss of tech privileges. Actions that violate these guidelines include but not limited to:

- Circumventing the school's Go Guardian system.
- Operating outside of the school's firewall.
- Willingly accessing sites and content that are not related to school activities.
- Downloading inappropriate content.
- Sabotaging another student's work/profile.
- Accessing other students' accounts.
- Impersonating other students through email, sms or google apps.
- Impersonating a faculty or staff member or classmate on social media.

In addition, Princeton Charter School's Code of Conduct and the Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying (HIB) policy and Artificial Intelligence Guidelines apply to students' online activities. Students must adhere to these guidelines in maintaining a safe, respectful, caring and ethical environment that strives for academic excellence.

Students are expected to treat school devices with proper care and consideration. Any loss of or damage to school devices as a result of mistreatment or neglect will require the family to pay for the repair or replacement of the device. The costs of replacement are updated annually in the Acceptable Use Policy (AUP).

### **Artificial Intelligence Guidelines**

Students at Princeton Charter School will learn to use Artificial Intelligence (AI) effectively within the framework of our code of conduct. It is essential that students understand the capabilities, benefits, and problems with the use of AI. Most importantly, the use of AI must not impede or prevent critical skill development and knowledge acquisition for our students. AI is a complex tool that students must learn to use effectively and ethically. The following rules and procedures will govern student use of AI at Princeton Charter school:

## AI Goals

- Students will understand the definition and full capabilities of AI and how it is impacting our daily lives.
  - Understand the different aspects and terminology for AI - e.g. machine learning (ML) and natural language processing (NLP).
  - Understand the environmental impact e.g. high electricity consumption.
- Students will develop the skill of determining situations in which use of AI is acceptable and advantageous to accomplish tasks - e.g. annotate, organize, produce, or refine.
- Students will develop the skill of effectively using AI to its fullest capabilities:
  - Refining AI prompts for efficiency and accuracy
- Students will develop their ability to assess information generated by AI for accuracy, relevance, and bias
- Students will learn how to attribute the use of AI in their work using proper citation techniques.
- Students will learn the importance of protecting personal information when using AI.

AI will not be used in a manner that will prevent or obviate critical skill development and knowledge acquisition.

**Permission to use AI:** Students should not use AI to plan, organize, produce, or refine material for any assignment unless such use is specifically noted as permissible by the teacher and/or in the assignment guidelines. Unauthorized use of AI is considered cheating, a Code of Conduct Violation.

**Acceptable platforms for use:** Students at Princeton Charter School may only use AI platforms approved for use by the school. Presently, Princeton Charter School will only use Gemini as the acceptable AI platform.

Teachers will include these requirements in their written statements and must reinforce the requirements verbally when introducing a related assignment.

1. Students must have permission to use AI for an assignment, or to prepare/assist in study.
2. Students must use permissible AI platforms - e.g. Only Gemini
3. Teachers will require students to provide full editing access to any electronic documents submitted so that the material's origins and development are apparent in the document's version history.
4. In situations where students are allowed to use AI in the completion of an assignment, they must be able to produce a transcript of their interaction with the AI upon request.

## Recess - (including lunch break )

Students should report to recess promptly and check in with the teacher supervising the break. Students should ask permission to go to the bathroom or meet with a teacher or the School Counselor. Students are expected to be outside with the entire recess group and remain in the area designated by the teacher supervising the break, i.e. if the group is at the basketball courts, some students may not go to the field. Students should ask permission to go inside. Students should stay within eyesight of the supervising teacher.



In the event that a ball goes over the fence into the parking lot, students should ask the supervising teacher to retrieve the ball.

Students should not deliberately disrupt the play of others. Students should not engage in any behaviors that are potentially dangerous or harmful to others or themselves. Students should cease activities and come inside when alerted that the recess break has ended.

## **Lunch**

At lunchtime, students are expected to use good manners within a friendly, informal atmosphere. We ask 5-8 students to use at least the first 15 minutes of the lunch period to eat their lunch. Talking with their classmates is permitted, but should not be loud or boisterous.

After 5-8 students finish eating, they will be dismissed to go outside in good weather. The students are expected to cooperate and to follow the rules of the school at this time. When the weather dictates, recess may be held inside.

All students are expected to dispose of their trash properly and to leave the area clean.

Students who do not follow the rules, may be required to forfeit their recess period. Any student who repeatedly causes disruptions in the lunch or play period will be subject to disciplinary action, and the parents/guardians will be notified of our concern.

## **Discipline**

Princeton Charter School strives to provide an orderly environment conducive to learning that is grounded in the principles of student involvement and participation, personal responsibility, respect for others, and good citizenship.

All students are expected to abide by the rules and the Code of Conduct of Princeton Charter School. Disciplinary consequences for violating the rules or Code of Conduct depend on whether the violation was “major” or “minor” and whether there is a pattern of repeated rule violations.

**Minor Offenses:** Teachers handle minor offenses that occur in the classroom and elsewhere in the school. Minor offenses include, but are not limited to, being uncooperative, causing a disruption in the class or during an outside activity, using a cellphone in class, making inappropriate responses to teachers or classmates, or engaging in rough-housing or other inappropriate behavior. Such offenses may result in being kept in from a break, a lunch period, or after school.

**Major Offenses:** In the event of major offenses, the Head or Assistant Heads of School will become involved. Major offenses normally constitute a student’s removal from class with orders to report immediately to the appropriate administrator’s office. The school’s administrator will be notified by the teacher of the major offense and discuss the problem with the offending student. The administrator will set an appropriate penalty and inform the student’s parents/guardians of the offense and penalty.

Major offenses include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Cyberbullying
- Hurting others by physical or repeated verbal abuse or harassment.
- Demonstrating conduct that constitutes a continuing danger to the physical well being of other pupils.
- Stealing or deliberate damage to PCS property or the property of others.

- Possession and or use of weapons, drugs, or alcoholic beverages.
- Disobedience, disrespect, or defiance of a faculty member.
- Repeated cursing or use of vulgar, offensive, or abusive language.
- Plagiarism, cheating, or lying.
- A major disruption of a class.
- A major disruption of a school event.
- A major disruption of the school environment.
- A repeated pattern of minor offenses.
- Inappropriate use of the computer, cell phone, or access to the Internet or other actions prohibited in the Acceptable Use Policy (AUP).

Any student who causes or commits a major offense may, at a minimum, be detained after school after notification of the parent/guardian or may be suspended from attending school for a time period deemed appropriate by the school administration.

A student who receives a detention will serve it from 3:15-4:15 p.m. These detentions will be scheduled by the Assistant Heads of School and may require work projects like cleaning the school or other service activities. The detention will take priority over practices, rehearsals, extracurricular activities, family business, etc. In the 5-8 building, these **major offense detentions** will take place on Monday afternoons. If Monday is a school holiday, the detention will take place on Wednesday afternoons. In some cases, after a student has committed a major offense, the parent/guardian may be asked to pick the student up from school during the day and to meet with the administration and faculty before the student may return to school and class.

At the discretion of the administration, after a major offense or a pattern of repeated minor offenses, a student may lose a leadership position or the privilege of attending school functions or trips.

### **Suspension and Expulsion**

Any student who is guilty of serious acts of misconduct or repeated acts of minor misconduct may be subject to suspension or expulsion from the school.

Any student who is guilty of a firearms violation shall be treated in accordance with the State of New Jersey's Zero Tolerance for Guns Act.

The Head and Assistant Heads of School, after appropriate consultation, may for good cause suspend a student for a period of up to 10 days. Any student who commits an assault upon another student, a teacher, administrator, or other employee of the Charter School shall be immediately suspended from school.

A student may be expelled by the Board upon recommendation of the Head of School, in consultation with the student's teachers.

The procedures used for suspension and expulsion of students shall be consistent with New Jersey Statute 18A, such that each student is assured a due process hearing.

### **Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying**

The Princeton Charter School Board of Trustees expects the members of the PCS community, including students, administrators, faculty and staff members and volunteers, to treat each other with civility and

respect. Expectations for student behavior are described in detail in the Code of Conduct and the School's Rules, published in the Parent and Student Handbook and on the school's website, [www.pcs.k12.nj.us](http://www.pcs.k12.nj.us).

Acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying by students, faculty or staff are prohibited, and are subject to disciplinary and remedial action. Such acts interfere with the learning process and undermine the provision of a safe, civil and respectful environment. Bullying takes many forms, from verbal cruelty or intimidation to physical aggression. For ease of reference, every use of the term "bullying" in this policy includes harassment, intimidation or bullying as defined below.

Since students learn by example, school administrators, faculty and staff members, and volunteers and peers should demonstrate appropriate behavior such as treating others with civility and respect, and refusing to tolerate harassment, intimidation, or bullying. The Board requests the commitment of every member of the PCS community to enforce this policy and thereby to foster an environment of safety, civility and respect.

The school's HIB policy

- Defines harassment, intimidation and bullying;
- Specifies both consequences and remedial actions;
- Describes the process for ongoing dissemination of the policy, including publication on the school website and notice of such publication;
- Requires staff and student education and training regarding the subject-matter; and
- Provides for annual review of the extent and characteristics of harassment, intimidation and bullying, with community involvement.

### **Definition of HIB**

In defining acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying (HIB), Princeton Charter School follows New Jersey statute 18A: 37-14

"Harassment, intimidation or bullying" means any gesture, any written, verbal or physical act, or any electronic communication, whether it be a single incident or a series of incidents, that is reasonably perceived as being motivated either by any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or a mental, physical or sensory disability, or by any other distinguishing characteristic, that takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, on a school bus, or off school grounds as provided for in section 16 of P.L.2010, c.122 (C.18A:37-15.3), that substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other students and that:

- a. A reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, will have the effect of physically or emotionally harming a student or damaging the student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm to his person or damage to his property;
- b. Has the effect of insulting or demeaning any student or group of students; or
- c. Creates a hostile educational environment for the student by interfering with a student's education or by severely or pervasively causing physical or emotional harm to the student.

As prescribed by law, behavior that meets this definition is subject to disciplinary and remedial action under this policy. This includes cyberbullying.

In cases in which a school employee is made aware, bullying between students that occurs outside the school environment also may be subject to disciplinary and remedial action by PCS, as prescribed by law:

- (a) If reasonably necessary for the affected students' physical or emotional safety or well-being or for reasons relating to the safety and well-being of other students, faculty or school facilities; or
- (b) If the conduct materially and substantially interferes with the requirements of appropriate discipline in the operation of the school.

#### Observations of Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying (HIB); Reporting Procedures and Investigation

All administrators, faculty, staff members and volunteers shall be alert to possible circumstances of bullying. An administrator, faculty or staff member or volunteer who detects bullying or planned bullying shall immediately inform those involved of the prohibition against bullying and direct them to cease all bullying behavior or intentions to bully.

Any student who believes that he or she is experiencing HIB, who has witnessed, or who has reliable information that a student has been subject to HIB, shall report the incident(s) to a supervising adult or one of the school administrators as soon as possible. Oral reports shall be considered official reports. Individuals may report HIB anonymously, and the administrator shall initiate further investigation of the complaint.

The school's policy on bullying, harassment and intimidation, adopted by the Board of Trustees, is available for review in the Business Office and on the school website.

Princeton Charter School now permits the use of a preliminary determination process for reports of HIB. The Head of School must annually report to the Board the number of times a preliminary determination was found to be outside the scope of HIB.

#### **Note:**

- (1) HIB between students that occurs outside the school environment also may be subject to disciplinary and remedial action by Princeton Charter School, as prescribed by law
- (2) Students are expected to report instances of Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying (HIB) and are expected not to participate actively or passively as an "audience," to HIB behavior initiated by others since such participation reinforces HIB behavior.

The School has established the following positions to assist in the prevention and response to incidents of HIB:

**School District Anti-bullying Coordinator (School Counselor):** The responsibilities of the district anti-bullying coordinator is as follows:

- Coordinate and strengthen the school district's policies to prevent, identify, and address HIB of students.
- Collaborate with school anti-bullying specialists in the district, the Board of Trustees, and the Head of School to prevent, identify and respond to HIB of students in the district.
- Provide data to the NJDOE regarding HIB of students.
- Execute such other duties related to school HIB as requested by the CSA.
- Meet at least twice a school year with the school anti-bullying specialists in the district to discuss and strengthen procedures and policies to prevent, identify, and address HIB in the district.

**School Anti-bullying Specialists (Division Heads):** The responsibilities of the school anti-bullying specialists are as follows:

- Chair the school safety team. as provided in N.J.S.A. 18A:37-21
- Lead the investigation of HIB in the school.
- Act as the primary school official responsible for preventing, identifying, and addressing incidents of HIB in the school.

**School Safety Team:** The school safety team. must meet at least two times per year. The responsibilities of the school safety team. are as follows:

- Receive any complaints of HIB of students that have been reported to the Head of School.
- Receive copies of any report prepared after an investigation of an incident of HIB.
- Identify and intervene with patterns of HIB of students in the school.
- Review and strengthen school climate and the policies of the school in order to prevent and intervene with HIB of students.
- Educate the community, including students, teachers, administrative staff, and parents, to prevent and intervene with HIB of students.
- Participate in the required HIB training required and other training which the Head of School or the district anti-bullying coordinator may request.
- Collaborate with the district anti-bullying coordinator in the collection of district-wide data and in the development of district policies to prevent and address the HIB of students.
- Execute such other duties related to HIB as requested by the Head of School or district anti-bullying coordinator.

**School District Anti-Bullying Coordinator:** Susan Kushner, [skushner@princetoncharter.org](mailto:skushner@princetoncharter.org)

**School Anti-Bullying Specialists:**

- For K-4 Building, Michelle Dowling - [mdowling@princetoncharter.org](mailto:mdowling@princetoncharter.org)
- For 5-8 Building, Lisa Eckstrom - [leckstrom@princetoncharter.org](mailto:leckstrom@princetoncharter.org)

**School Safety Team:** Larry Patton, Head of School; Michelle Dowling, Assistant Head of School; Lisa Eckstrom, Assistant Head of School; Susan Kushner, School Counselor.

### **Drugs, Smoking, and Alcohol**

Princeton Charter School adheres to the laws of the State of New Jersey. Illegal drugs and alcohol are not to be used by our students. Title 18A:40A-9 and other laws in New Jersey apply.

By state law and our commitment to health, no smoking or other use of tobacco products is permitted in our school buildings, school vehicles, or on the school's property. This prohibition includes vaping and "e-cigarettes." Students may not possess, use, consume, share, display, or sell any tobacco products, tobacco-related devices, imitation tobacco products, lighters, or electronic cigarettes at any time on school property or at off-campus, school-sponsored events.

## Emergency Information

It is required that each parent/guardian return the student health questionnaire and emergency information form in August before the start of school. If an accident or illness happens at school, first aid will be administered, and the parent/guardian will be notified. If the injury or illness is serious, appropriate intervention will be activated. Please let us know whom to contact if the parent/guardian cannot be reached.

## School Nurse

There is a Registered Nurse on campus every day that school is in session until 3:45pm on regular days and 12:00pm on half days. The Nurse's Office is located in the K-4 building. The nurse can be reached at [nurse@princetoncharter.org](mailto:nurse@princetoncharter.org) or by calling 609-924-0575, extension 1103.

*N.B.:* The nurse does not accompany PCS students to games or other events held off campus during the school day with the exception of *some* field trips. For more information about a particular field trip, please contact the Nurse or the teacher who is organizing the field trip directly.

In the event that the nurse is not in the infirmary during the school day (8:15 a.m. - 3:45 p.m.), sick or injured children should report to the school office so that the nurse may be contacted.

When a student feels ill or is injured, he/she should notify the nearest teacher who will fill out a permission form for the student to take to the nurse. The teacher will determine whether the student is at risk of fainting or further injury on the way to the nurse. If this is the case another student might be designated to accompany the student. If necessary, the nurse will be called to the student's location.

Students who feel ill and do not think that they should remain in school must be evaluated by the nurse. Students should not call the parent directly to request to be picked up. Once evaluated by the nurse, the nurse will call the parent and /or emergency contact.

## Illness

**Actively ill children do not belong in school.** Headache, nausea, diarrhea, and earache are signs that demonstrate that your child may need to spend a day recuperating at home. Sore throats, swollen glands, and skin rashes will probably need professional medical attention as well.

Please remember that your child's day includes outside breaks and recess. Students are to participate in outside time. The nurses can only accept a physician's note to exclude a student from outside breaks/recess. As parents, if you feel your child is too sick, or has a bad cold that would prevent participation in gym or outside play, then please do not send the student to school.

Any children who have symptoms of a potentially contagious illness (vomiting, diarrhea, temperature of 100.5° or above) will be sent home. If their temperature is slightly elevated but below 100°, they will be sent home if they exhibit other symptoms such as those listed above. Please have an emergency contact available to pick up your sick child if you are unable to do so. Injuries or illnesses incurred at home should be treated at home. Please call the school if a student is home with a contagious illness or condition such as chicken pox, measles, strep infection, conjunctivitis (pink eye), influenza, ringworm, impetigo, or head lice (pediculosis).

Keep all ill children at home for 24 hours following the establishment of a normal temperature or after 24 hours of an antibiotic, as directed by the child's physician. **The nurse must evaluate children who have**

**recovered from an infectious disease before returning to class.** Children with chickenpox must remain out of school for at least seven days. Students who have been found to have live lice or nits must be treated with an approved shampoo. The American Academy of Pediatrics and our school physician recommend a shampoo containing Permethrin 1%. This is available over the counter. You may consult with the student's primary care physician for any questions. Once the child has been shampooed, the remaining nits must be removed, using a fine-tooth comb. Before entering the classroom, the student must be evaluated by the nurse to determine if live lice are still present. Follow-up examinations for lice and nits are required. Parents should frequently check the student and other family members. Repeat shampoo may be required according to the directions on the shampoo.

## **Medication**

**Students are not allowed to carry their own medication, whether it is prescription or non-prescription medication.** It can only be kept and dispensed by the school nurse, her designee, or the parent/guardian. However, students may self-carry their asthma inhalers if they have a signed doctor's permission, but the physician must be the prescriber, not a parent who is a physician. Prescription medication will be dispensed in school if we have permission from the parent/guardian, the medication is in the original container, and we have a written statement from the physician which indicates the type of medication, the dosage, the time to administer the medication, and the purposes of the medication.

Non-prescription medication (i.e. over the counter medication) may only be given with the written permission of the parent or guardian, as per our over the counter medical policy. No student is allowed to share or dispense medication (prescription or over the counter) to another student.

If your child has a chronic condition like asthma or allergies, we recommend that you confer with the school nurse and that medication be kept at school.

Medication orders of any kind are only valid for the current school year. The parent at the beginning of each school year must obtain new orders. The nurse has all of the medication request forms, and can assist you with any questions.

## **Administration of Epinephrine for Unknown Allergic Reaction**

N.J.S.A. 18A:40-12.5 under P.L. 2015, c.13 requires each public school to maintain in a secure but easily accessible location a supply of epinephrine auto-injectors for the school nurse or a trained designee for administration to a student having an anaphylactic reaction. This applies to any student without a known history of anaphylaxis when the nurse or trained designee in good faith believes the student is having an anaphylactic reaction.

Our school physician, Dr. Robert Helmrich, has written guidelines to use when an allergic reaction is strongly suspected. If symptoms are determined to be severe by the school nurse or by a trained delegate who is a member of the PCS staff or faculty, epinephrine will be administered by injection (epipen), 911 will be called to transport the student to the hospital, and parents will be notified.

## **Injuries and Special Physical Needs**

Temporary or permanent physical needs that affect a child in school should be immediately reported to the nurse. Physical education or recess restrictions should be requested in writing, with the reason and time period included. Notes from the physician are required for injuries that involve casting, splinting, and

crutches. Generally, students who are well enough to return to school after an illness are well enough to participate fully in all school activities. Students who are unable to participate in school activities are also unable to participate in extracurricular activities. They must be in school by noon to participate in an extracurricular activity that day.

### **Physical Examinations**

NJ State law requires that all parents submit documentation of a student's health examination within 30 days of enrolling in school. This is true for new as well as transfer students. School policy requires subsequent medical examinations of the student at least once during each developmental stage (grades 3 and 6). History and Physical forms will be sent to applicable students, and are also available in the nurse's office and online.

### **Sports Physicals**

NJ State law requires that any student wishing to participate in interscholastic sports must have a physical examination conducted within 365 days prior to the first practice session for the sport. This physical examination must be documented on a NJ State Department of Education approved form which is available in the nurse's office and online. Prior to the student's examination, the parents must complete a Health History Questionnaire, also approved by the Department of Education. This questionnaire must be presented to the examining physician at the time of the visit.

The sports physical should be performed at the student's medical home so that his or her primary care physician can completely evaluate the student. If a student does not have a medical home, or cannot obtain the required examination prior to the start of practice for the sport, our school physician will be available on specific days to perform the examination.

Each student whose medical examination was completed more than 90 days prior to the first practice session shall provide a health history update of medical problems experienced since the last medical examination. This shall be completed and signed by the parent.

Prior to the start of each sport season, our school physician will review the documentation of the student's physical examination as well as the health history questionnaire. The school physician will then either approve or disapprove the student's participation in sports. The parent and the coach will be notified of this approval/ disapproval in writing

### **School Screenings**

The school nurse will be conducting the following health screening at some time during the school year:

- Screening for height, weight, and blood pressure will be conducted annually for each student.
- Screening for visual acuity will be conducted every other year for each student (grades K, 2, 4, 6, and 8).
- Screening for color blindness will be performed on 1st grade students.
- Screening for auditory acuity will be conducted annually for students in K through grade 3, and in grade 7.
- Screening for scoliosis will be conducted every other year for students once they reach the age of 10.

The school nurses will conduct all screenings. The student's privacy and confidentiality will be ensured.



Any parent who wishes a scoliosis screening to be performed by his or her primary care physician must obtain the required documentation form from the school nurse. This documentation must be provided before June 1 of the current school year in order to insure completion of records before the end of the school year.

Parents will be notified of any concerns or abnormalities found in the process of screenings. This will be a written notification. Parents must then have the required follow-up screening and documentation of findings returned to the nurse's office before June 1 of the current school year.

### **Immunizations**

NJ State Law requires that all students enrolled in school have the required immunizations against communicable diseases. Documentation of immunization is required upon enrollment to the school. Any child who does not have the required immunizations will be excluded from school. The school nurse or your primary care physician can provide you with a current list of required immunizations.

NJ state law allows exemptions only for medical or religious reasons, not for conscientious exemptions. The school nurse can provide you for the criteria for these exemptions.

Please provide the nurse's office with an updated immunization record whenever your child receives any new immunizations. This must be an official document from your child's medical home.

### **Student Support Services**

PCS is committed to supporting every enrolled student to be successful. The school has a number of professionals to manage different student support services: Learning Disabilities Teacher Consultant (LDTC), Rachaele Cianci; School Social Worker, Christa Wolski; and Guidance Counselor, Susan Kushner. There are various levels of student support.

**Response to Intervention (RTI):** As stated in our school's mission, integrated formal assessments take place regularly to confirm student progress, promptly identify situations that require intervention or greater challenge, and increase accountability of the school's role in student learning. The Response to Intervention (RTI) framework is a 3-tiered approach used to identify and help struggling learners before they fail. Once a student is identified at regularly scheduled grade level meetings, high-quality instruction, early intervention, and data collection assist in determining if a student needs to be referred to the Child Study Team. **Any requests must first go to the Division Head and need to be in writing or an email.**

**Child Study Team** Should a student continue to struggle with academic progress and be at risk of failing in one or more subject areas, the team may make the decision to refer the student to the Child Study Team for evaluation to determine if she/he qualifies for Special Education Services. Parents can also request an evaluation if they suspect their child may have a disability that is preventing him/her from making adequate progress. The Child Study Team consists of a Special Education teacher, General Education teacher(s), Division Head, School Social Worker, School Psychologist, the LDTC who is the case manager, and the Student Services Coordinator. The Supervisor of Student Services may also be involved. Should the student qualify, an IEP (Individualized Education Plan) will be written for her/him.

Students having difficulty with spoken language production or usage may qualify for speech services. Students of concern can be brought to the attention of the Coordinator of Student Services by either a parent or a teacher. After evaluation, should the student qualify for services, a speech IEP will be written.

Students new to the school who have an existing IEP, including those for speech services only, should submit the plan to the Supervisor of Student Services as soon as possible after admission.

**504 Plan** Sometimes a child may have a physical or mental impairment that interferes with his/her ability to access instruction as traditionally presented in the classroom, but may not qualify for special education services. A 504 plan will provide routine accommodations to the regular instructional process. In order to qualify for a 504 plan, a medical diagnosis of the impairment is required. Please contact either the K-4 or 5-8 Division Head who will guide you through this process.

**Social-Emotional Support** The school counselor conducts classes that help students understand and conduct healthy social relationships. Additionally she will work with small groups of students or individuals to further refine these skills or to help them in managing their emotions. If the problems are of long duration or are not improving, she may suggest the student see a private counselor outside of school hours, not furnished by the school. Parents or teachers may refer students to the school counselor.

**English as a Second Language (ESL)** The school has licensed teachers on staff to support learners who are still in the process of acquiring proficiency with the spoken and written English language. Should you or someone you know in the school need services, contact the appropriate division head.

## **Home-School Partnership**

### **Communication**

School-parent communication can be vital for a successful school year. To that end, we need to make sure that we have up to date contact information for parents, guardians, and for your designees (i.e. emergency contacts) in case we cannot contact you in case of an emergency. If your contact information changes, please update your contact information directly in PowerSchool. Examples of changes might include: email, mailing address, or work phone numbers.

**Weekly Newsletter:** A weekly newsletter is sent electronically each Tuesday. This newsletter will include information about school happenings, programs, meetings, and other pertinent information.

Parents/guardians should check this important school-parent/guardian communication for up-to-date information about school activities and events. Hard copies will be made available in the main office for parents/guardians who do not have access to the Internet.

**Parent-Teacher Communication:** If a parent/guardian has any questions or concerns about his or her child's classes or needs, the parent/guardian should email the teacher to obtain more information or request a conference. It is important that issues regarding a student's work or classroom decisions be discussed with the teacher first, in a scheduled private conference. Please refrain from informal conversations in the hallway or playground where confidential information about your child could be overheard, and where you may not have the teacher's most focused attention. These conversations may detain teachers from supervisory responsibilities or take their attention away from the goal of ensuring student safety. General issues should be directed to the Division Heads. Contact the appropriate division office to arrange for a conference or return phone call from a Division Head.

### **Involvement of Parents/Guardians**

Princeton Charter School values both formal and informal involvement of parents and guardians through a variety of activities and services requested by the teachers, Friends of Princeton Charter School, or the Administration. We often look for volunteers to act as chaperones, lecturers, substitutes, and leaders for after-school activities, coaches, or tutors. New ideas are welcome.

## Child Abuse

Princeton Charter School will strictly observe all laws, statutes, and regulations governing the reporting of suspected child abuse.

## School Visitors

The K-4 and 5-8 buildings will be locked between 8:00 a.m. and 3:15 p.m. each day.

Parents/ Guardians: Parents or guardians must report to the school office upon arrival in the building, sign in, and obtain and wear a nametag or visitor badge while on school premises.

Parent/Guardian visits to classrooms may be disruptive to the learning environment. Therefore, any requests will be reviewed by and subject to the approval of the administration.

Student Visitors: Students are usually not expected to bring visitors to school. However, if they are expecting a visitor from out of state, they may request the Assistant Head of School's permission to bring the visitor to school. The request should be made in writing and include the visitor's name, age, and place where he/she lives. Visits are limited to a ½ day. Visitors must leave before lunch. This request to the Assistant Head should be made **prior to the date of the visit**.

## Academics

### Back to School Night

Back to School Night is held early in the year. Parents/Guardians will have the opportunity to meet their child's teachers and other school staff. Teachers will give an overview of the curriculum and discuss other classroom procedures and homework policies. This is not a time for discussing individual students.

### Homework

Faculty members in all subject areas may assign homework as needed to support Princeton Charter School's dedication to delivering a program of the highest quality in all academic areas. Each teacher will give guidelines concerning the nature and quantity of homework on Back to School Night. In general, students should not require the assistance of parents/guardians or friends in completing these assignments.

If a child *consistently* has difficulty with assignments, parents/guardians are requested to confer with the teacher.

Princeton Charter School views nightly homework (with exceptions at the teacher's discretion) as essential in English, mathematics, and world language, and regular homework (especially reading) as important for history and science.

Princeton Charter School cannot establish precise guidelines as to the total homework load for individual students: Homework may vary during the year to meet the needs of the academic program and some students may take longer to complete homework than other students. Accelerated programs (especially in mathematics) may require lengthier assignments. With these caveats in mind, the following rough guide represents the expected homework load at Princeton Charter School in minutes of work. (End-of-week homework should be comparable in volume to that assigned on other weeknights.)

If your child is having great difficulty completing homework assignments, please address the issue with the relevant teacher.

Grade	Mathematics	English	World Language	History	Science	Computer Science
1	10	10				
2	10	10	10			
3	20	20	10	10	10	
4	20	20	15	15	15	
5	25	25	15	15	15	10
6	25	25	15	20	20	10
7	30	30	15	20	20	10
8	30	30	15	20	20	10

### Homework Free Dates for 2025-26

Holiday	Date	Day of the Week
Rosh Hashanah	September 23, 2025	Tuesday
Yom Kippur	October 2, 2025	Thursday
Diwali	October 10, 2025	Friday
Thanksgiving Recess	November 27 - 30, 2025	Thursday - Sunday
Winter Break	December 20, 2025 - January 5, 2026	N/A
Lunar New Year	February 2, 2026	Monday
Eid al Fitr	March 20, 2026	Monday
Spring Break	March 30 - April 6, 2026	N/A

### Extra Credit Guidelines

Teachers may offer *subject-related* extra credit to encourage engagement and interest in a particular discipline. However, extra credit may not be offered for non-academic activities. Extra credit should not substantially impact a student's overall trimester grade. It cannot exceed the equivalent of a 1% increase to the end of the trimester grade.

### Report Cards, Interim Reports, and Grades

Teachers may email or phone parents on occasion to alert parents to a problem with a student's work in a particular class. But parents should check Schoology on a regular basis to stay informed about the academic progress of individual students.

Report cards will be sent home three times a year. The grades are based on the following numerical equivalents:

A+	97–100	C+	77-79
A	93-96	C	73-76
A-	90-92	C-	70-72
B+	87-89	D+	67-69
B	83-86	D	63-66
B-	80-82	D-	60-62
		F	under 60

Effort grades are given based on the following scale:

E	Excellent
S	Satisfactory
N	Needs Improvement
U	Unsatisfactory

Final grades are averaged from all marking periods. In grades 6-8, the final grade is averaged from all marking periods and includes a separate final exam grade.

### **Study Hall and Reading Period**

**Study halls** are a time for students to do homework, study, read, or meet with a teacher; they are not free periods for students to talk or fool around.

A sustained silent **reading period** is part of the charter of Princeton Charter School. Students are to read silently or be outside the room working with another teacher. Students are not to be doing homework, talking, working in groups, etc. They are to be reading an age appropriate book that they bring to reading period with them. Reading periods are not study halls.

### **Conferences**

Parent-teacher conferences are held twice a year, in the fall and spring, to help answer questions about your student's progress. All parents/guardians are expected to schedule an appointment via Virtual Paragon and to attend the conference. At other times, special conferences may be held upon the request of the teacher or parent/guardian should either deem it necessary. These should be scheduled in advance to ensure adequate time for discussion of the student's progress and to prevent disruption of classroom instruction.

### **Standardized Tests**

Students in grades 3-8 take the Educational Records Bureau (ERB) standardized test each year in the fall as a way to determine whether they need additional work in reading, writing, or mathematics.

Parents/Guardians should not make doctors' appointments for their child on the testing days and should make sure that their child goes to bed early on those nights and eats a good, healthy breakfast.

Each spring, on dates specified by the New Jersey Department of Education, students in grades three through eight will take New Jersey Student Learning Assessments (NJSLA) in English and mathematics. In addition, students in grades five and eight will take the New Jersey Student Learning Assessment - Science (NJSLA-S). All NJSLA tests are mandated by the State of New Jersey. Any student who misses a section of either of these tests will be required to do a makeup test. Therefore, do not schedule appointments for students during these important state tests and please make every effort to have your child at school before attendance at 8:00 a.m.

#### **Formal Review Period for Students in Grades 6 – 8:**

Students in grades 6–8 take final exams in all of the major academic disciplines. A review period schedule gives 6-8 students one weekend and 4 class days during which no new graded material is introduced: There will be no tests or quizzes or projects due with the exception of graded review materials. But, a teacher could assign a review packet and grade it.

Classes that do not have exams (art, drama, music, and computer science) may have end-of-the year projects during the Review Period.

The 2025-26 finals schedule will be as follows:

2025-26 Finals Schedule (June 2026)				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
3	4	5	4 Review Period Day # 1	5 Review Period Day # 2 & Review Period Weekend
08 Review Period Day # 3	09 Review Period Day # 4	10 English Final	11 World Language Final	12 Math Final
15 History Final Half-day	16 Science Final Half-day	17 Graduation/Last Day of School		

#### **School Records**

Student records are maintained which include name, address, birth date, attendance, health history, academic performance, and other pertinent information about the student. The parent or guardian upon request may review these records. The Head or Assistant Heads of School or a staff member will explain and help you to interpret these records.

## **Computer Policy**

Computers will be available to provide resources and information to the school community, students, staff, and parents/guardians. Computers at Princeton Charter School will support the instructional, research, and administrative activities of the school.

The use of the computer services by faculty, staff, and students should be consistent with the educational and institutional objectives of our school. All users must adhere to the same code of ethics that governs every aspect of life at our school. Therefore, all school rules, particularly those pertaining to privacy, safety and security, academic honesty, plagiarism, and copyright laws, are applicable.

At the beginning of the year, each student and a parent or guardian will be asked to read and sign an Acceptable Use Policy (AUP). Students will not be permitted to use school computers until this policy is signed and returned to the school. Students will then be taught how to log on, how to save documents in their own file, and how to log off the computer.

Anyone who changes the control panels, manipulates the functioning of the computer, or misuses the Internet will be subject to school disciplinary measures and will lose computer privileges for a period of time.

## **Field Trips**

Some out-of-school experiences and activities will take place throughout the year. Teachers will send permission slips home for a parent or guardian to sign whenever a bus trip off the school grounds is planned. In addition, a blanket permission slip will be sent out at the beginning of the year to cover some local field trips. Should additional adult chaperones be desired, the teachers will request volunteers to help. If you are interested in chaperoning, please let the head room parent or Division Head know.

## **Trustees & Administrators, 2025-26**

### **Board of Trustees**

Anita Misri, Board President

Rupal Kothari, Vice President

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### **Administration**

Lawrence Patton, Head of School

Michelle Dowling, Assistant Head: K-4; RTI Coordinator

Lisa Eckstrom, Assistant Head: 5-8; Affirmative Action Officer; Title 9 Officer; Homeless Liaison  
Brian Falkowski, School Business Administrator, Board Secretary  
Patrick Byrne, Facilities Manager  
Jeff Madia and Anna Burd, Athletic Directors  
Lindsey Donaldson, Administrative Assistant to the Head of School  
Kelly Byrne, Admissions Coordinator, Administrative Assistant K-4  
Sally Simpson, Registrar, Administrative Assistant 5-8  
Kalpana Mehta, Business Office Assistant / Staff Accountant

### **Princeton Charter School Friends, 2025-26**

#### **Board Officers:**

President: Maryam Simon  
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## **Appendix A: Guidelines for drop off and pick up procedures.**

### **Drop-off and Pick-up for 2025-26 School Year**

We are committed to the safe operation of student drop-off and pick-up. By following these rules as a collective community, we can maintain an efficient process at dismissal. The Charter School parking lots are very busy, and all members of the community must follow all guidelines to ensure safety.

Read these guidelines carefully.

**New for 2025-26:** Parents should not use the gravel road behind the Gym. Any cars that enter the parking lot from the gravel road must yield to traffic entering from Bunn Drive. We have installed a stop sign and a sign indicating priority from Bunn Drive. This is a dangerous situation as cars have been unable to enter the parking lot, blocking on-coming traffic from Bunn Drive. We appreciate everyone's compliance with this new procedure.

### **School Building Entrances**

**Entrances:** Students, visitors, and parents will access the school buildings through the main entrances only for each building.

**Check in:** All visitors and parents must check in at the division office upon entering the buildings.

**Delivering items to your children or the office during school hours:** In order to reduce the volume and better control entry into the school buildings, parents are asked to leave any items for students at the designated drop off tables which will be located at the entrances to the school buildings.

### **Driving on campus guidelines (13 MPH)**

When driving on campus, all vehicles must maintain an appropriate speed and safety standards to insure the well-being of all individuals on campus (13 miles per hour). Consider that there are 474 students and staff on campus during the day, entering the buildings and walking through the parking lots in the mornings and in the afternoons.

Parents should always follow the direction of the staff who are supervising the space.

**Decorum and Communication:** We ask that parents communicate in a respectful and calm manner with each other or not at all. If there are any issues in the parking lot it may be better to bring the issue to the school administration rather than attempt to communicate with other parents.

Follow the direction of traffic as indicated:

- The back road along the back of the Campus Center is one way only from Ewing to Bunn during drop-off and pick-up.
- All cars should enter through the upper parking lot on Bunn Drive
- All cars should exit from the lower exit on Bunn Drive.
- Never exit from the upper parking lot onto Bunn Drive.
- Right Turn Only: During drop-off and pick up, the exit at Bunn is right turn only, i.e. NO left turn onto Bunn Drive.

### **Drop-off and Pick-up**

Children should know clearly whether they are getting picked up, taking the bus, staying late for an activity, or walking home. Communicate early with the school if there is a change in procedures and be clear with your child what the plan is or if there is a change in the plan.

Follow the direction of the staff who are on duty for drop-off or pick-up.

**School Bus:** The most efficient way for your child to travel to and from school is on the school bus provided by Princeton Public Schools Transportation Department. We urge you to take advantage of this free service. Any questions or problems should be directed to Princeton Public Schools Transportation at 609-806-4209.

NOTE: Students may only ride their assigned bus. A student may not board a different bus to go home with a friend.

We recognize that the buses may arrive very early in the morning, but it is also an option to take the bus home in the afternoon only. Parents may want to consider using buses on the way home only as an option.

**Key Factors:** During drop-off and pick-up, we have identified two key factors in order to maintain a safe and efficient operation.

First Key Factor - keeping the roadway clear of any blockage- cars must always be able to move through the lanes. To accomplish this:

- Do not park in the school bus/fire lanes.
- Do not “block the box” at the merge at the top of the parking lot.
- Do not leave cars unattended in the bus/fire lanes, no exceptions.
- Do not double park when waiting for students at pick-up (Pull into a lined space.)
- Do not make a left turn onto Bunn drive during pick-up and drop off.

Second Key Factor — the speed at which students load into and unload from the vehicle.

- Children should be ready to enter and exit the car quickly.
- Do not keep backpacks in the trunk as this causes a delay and a traffic back-up.
- Please stop your car only long enough to drop the student off.
  - Communicate any messages before dropping off.
- If you need to get out of the car, the car must be parked in a lined parking space.
- Do not leave your car unattended if you are not parked in a lined parking space..
- Students should enter and exit on the sidewalk side of the vehicle for safety

Drop-off

Congestion occurs when too many cars arrive in the parking lot at the last minute, i.e. 7:59 AM. Parents end up rushing, driving too quickly, students start their day in a stressful mode. It is important to drop students off early enough to allow time to get to their homeroom, visit their lockers, etc. Drop-off is very calm and smooth from 7:40-7:50 which is a nice time to target. After 7:55 AM it can become backed up and busy.

**K-4 stay left :** At drop-off (or pick-up) for a K-4 student, enter the opening at the northmost point of the school and stay to the left. Use the left lane to pass cars dropping off for grades 5-8. Look to carefully cross over to the right at or just before the middle portion of the walk that runs along the front of the school, i.e., the portion just before the main K-4 front doors. All K-4 students will be dropped off in this middle section.

Do not block the left lane when pulling over to the right. If needed, pull forward and wait to pull in rather than block the left lane for exiting 5-8 cars.

**5-8 stay right:** At drop-off ( or pick-up) for a 5-8 student, enter the opening at the northmost point of the parking lot and stay immediately to the right. Proceed to the drop off area at the path to the main entrance of the 5-8 building.

## LOCATIONS

Drop-off and pick-up will be at the walkway to the main entrance of the K-4 or the main entrance to the 5-8 building. We will have signs indicating these locations.

Students are to be dropped at the curb at any point reasonably close either before or beyond the 5-8 entrance path. We will set out cones indicating the point at which cars can unload students.

Students should be ready to disembark immediately and as quickly as possible. This is not the time to don masks, put on coats, stow books and toys, or finish eating. Backpacks should be in the car cabin as getting them from the back of the car is time consuming and dangerous.

Students should not exit their vehicle on Bunn Drive, or at the upper end of the parking-lot. It is tempting to disembark while waiting at the top of the parking lot, but invariably, the cars in front move forward while students are disembarking and it causes a back up onto Bunn Drive; wait until the car is in the drop-off area.

Students should not get out of the driver side of the vehicle as cars may be passing at close proximity.

Late Arrival: Parents must escort students to the office after 8:00 AM in order to sign in as late. Parents must park in a space when escorting children into the building.

## **Pick-up**

In order to facilitate a speedy and efficient process during pick-up, please follow these guidelines:

**NO STANDING:** Cars may not double park and wait for students to arrive for pick up. (You will be asked to move/drive around the block if your child is not available at time of pick up.) Cars that arrive early create the backup and problem for the entire school.

**Park if early:** If cars arrive early for pick-up, which is defined as “any time before the students are available or dismissed for pick-up,” parents must park in a lined space, or pull around and return once students have been dismissed, i.e. no waiting for students to come out of the building.

**Do not block the left lane:** The left lane must always be open, i.e. you may never wait in the left lane for students or to merge.

**Do not block the upper intersection:** The entrance intersection at the top of the parking lots must always be kept clear for cars to pull in. All cars blocking this area must move. There is no standing in this area.

**Pull all the way down:** Students should not load into cars high up in the parking lot. This leads to back up and congestion.

**Load quickly:** As mentioned above, students should enter cars quickly, do not load backpacks into the trunk, etc.

**Car Morning Drop-Off and Afternoon Pick-Up Times:**

**Arrival:**

- Grades K-2                      7:35-7:45
- Grade 3&4                      7:45-7:55
- Grade 5-8                      7:45-7:55

Students who are dropped off before 7:30 AM will not be let into the building and will therefore be unsupervised.

**Dismissal:**

- Grades K-2                      3:05-3:15
- Grades 3-4                      3:10-3:15
- Grades 5-8                      3:15-3:30

Buses usually begin arriving for pick-up at Charter at 3:30 PM according to the end of their previous route.

## Appendix B: Board of Trustees Policy on Absences

PRINCETON CHARTER SCHOOL POLICY MANUAL  
Princeton, New Jersey

FILE CODE: 5113

  X   Monitored

  X   Mandated

  X   Other Reasons

Policy

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### ATTENDANCE, ABSENCES, AND EXCUSES

The Princeton Charter School Board of Trustees believes that the regular attendance of students in each class and in school in general is critical to its educational mission. Continuity of instruction is an essential element in student performance and allows students the greatest opportunity to succeed at meeting the state learning standards in the Core Curriculum Content Standards. The Head of School shall oversee the development of effective strategies that maximize student attendance at all scheduled periods of actual instruction or supervised study activities and strive to:

- A      Encourage good attendance;
- B      Discourage unexcused absences;
- C      Identify patterns of absence, tardiness and early departures from school; and
- D      Intervene to prevent and correct problems with attendance.

### Definitions

A      "Attendance" is a student's presence in school and in the classroom to which he or she is assigned at the times scheduled for instruction or other school activities. A school day shall consist of not less than four hours of actual instruction. An approved kindergarten school day shall consist of at least one continuous session of 2 1/2 hours.

The mere presence of a student at roll call shall not be regarded as sufficient to be considered in attendance for a school day. A student shall be present at least one hour during both the morning and afternoon in order to be recorded as present for the full day. In a school which is in session during either the morning or the afternoon, a student shall be present at least two hours in the session in order to be recorded as present for the full day.

A student not present in school because of his or her participation in an approved school activity, such as a field trip, meeting, cooperative education assignment, or athletic competition will be considered to be in attendance.

B      "Excused absence" is a student's absence from school for a full day or a portion of a day for one or more of the following reasons:

- 1    The student's illness;
- 2    Requirements of a student's individual health care plan;

- 3 A death or critical illness in the student's immediate family, or others with permission of assistant head of school;
- 4 Quarantine;
- 5 Observance of the student's religion on a day approved for that purpose by the State Board of Education;
- 6 The student's suspension from school;
- 7 Requirements of the student's Individualized Education Program. (IEP);
- 8 Alternate short or long term accommodations for students with disabilities;
- 9 The student's required attendance in court;
- 10 Interviews with an admissions officer of an educational institution;
- 11 Necessary and unavoidable medical or dental appointments that cannot be scheduled at a time other than the school day.
- 12 Such good cause as may be acceptable to the assistant head of school.

Attendance need not always be within the school facilities. A student will be considered to be in attendance if he/she is present at any place where school is in session by authority of the board. The board shall consider each student assigned to a program. of independent study, with parent/guardian permission, to be in regular attendance for that program, provided that he/she is under the guidance of a staff member so assigned, reports daily or weekly, as prescribed, to such staff member the place in which he/she is conducting his/her study, and regularly demonstrates progress toward the objectives of his/her course of study.

C "Unexcused absence" is a student's absence for all or part of a school day for any reason other than those listed in paragraph "Excused Absences" above. Absence is expressly not excused for any of the following purposes (this list is intended to be illustrative and is not inclusive):

- 1 Family travel;
- 2 Performance of household or babysitting duties; and
- 3 Other daytime activities unrelated to the school program..

### Tardiness

The orderly conduct of class activity depends upon the prompt and precise beginning of the program. Tardiness hinders the proper conduct of school activity. Students are expected to arrive at school and class on time. A student who is tardy to any class will be subject to disciplinary action as outlined in board policy 5131 Conduct and Discipline and the student code of conduct. Consequences for accumulated occurrences of tardiness may include detention, loss of credit and an unexcused school day absence.

### Attendance

In order for the board of trustees to fulfill its responsibility for providing a thorough and efficient education for each student, the complete cooperation of parents/guardians and students is required to maintain a high level of school attendance.

The frequent absence of students from classroom learning experiences disrupts the continuity of the instructional process and limits the ability of students to complete the prescribed curriculum requirements successfully. The following rules shall apply for student absences:

A A student shall be considered absent from class for tardiness in excess of one half of the total class period.

B A student shall be considered absent from school for participation in less than four instructional hours during the school day.

A student must be in attendance in order to be considered to have successfully completed the instructional program requirements of the grade/course to which the student is assigned.

A waiver of these attendance requirements may be granted for good cause by the Assistant Head of School upon recommendation of a review committee, appointed by him/her, and consisting of representative staff, including student service personnel and classroom teachers.

In recommending the granting of a waiver of this attendance requirement, the review committee shall consider the nature and causes of all absences rather than only those in excess. Documentation of the nature and causes of these absences shall be the responsibility of the student and parent/guardian.

Parents/guardians are responsible for notifying the school early in the day when a child will be absent and for informing the school of the reason for the absence.

#### Unexcused Absences

When a student fails to report to class or school accumulating up to four unexcused absences, the school shall:

A Make a reasonable attempt to notify the student's parents/guardians of each unexcused absence the day of the unexcused absence;

B Attempt to contact the parents/guardians by telephone, email and/or cellular phone to determine the cause of the unexcused absence;

C Develop an action plan to assist the student to return to school and maintain regular attendance.

If contact through these means is unsuccessful the school may follow-up with another attempt to contact the parents/guardians or send a letter reporting the unexcused absence and requesting the parent/guardian to contact the school.

If at any time it is suspected that there is a potential of abuse, neglect and/or a student is potentially missing the school shall implement all procedures required by law including reporting protocols, notification of parents/guardians and cooperation with law enforcement and other authorities and agencies, as appropriate.

#### Persistent Absences

If the pattern of unexcused absences continues and five to nine unexcused absences are accumulated the school shall:

- A Make a reasonable attempt to notify the student's parents/guardians of each unexcused absence the day of the unexcused absence;
- B Attempt to contact the parents/guardians by telephone, email and/or cellular phone to determine the cause of the unexcused absence;
- C Conduct a follow-up investigation by contacting the student's parents/guardians in writing to determine the cause of each unexcused absence;
- D The assistant head of school or his or her designee shall schedule a meeting with the parent/guardian and the student.

The purpose of this meeting shall be to evaluate the appropriateness of the action plan to assist the student to return to school and maintain regular attendance. The plan shall be reviewed and revised in coordination with the parent/guardian and may include the participation of the classroom teacher, school nurse, guidance counselor, assistant head of school or other appropriate staff. The plan shall establish outcomes based upon the student's needs and specify the interventions for achieving the outcomes and supporting the student's return to school and regular attendance. That plan may include any or all of the following:

- 1 Referral or consultation with the school's Intervention and Referral Services team.;
- 2 Testing, assessments or evaluations of the student's academic, behavioral and health needs;
- 3 The consideration of an alternate educational placement;
- 4 Referral to a community-based social and health provider agency or other community resource;
- 5 Referral to the court program. designated by the New Jersey Administrative Office of the Courts;
- 6 The implementation of all required procedures for potential abuse, neglect or missing child including cooperation with law enforcement and other authorities and agencies, as appropriate.

### Discipline

All discipline regarding the attendance of students shall be consistent with the board policy 5131 Conduct and Discipline and the code of student conduct. Consequences for absences may include:

- A Students may be denied participation in co-curricular activities if their attendance fails to meet the standards set forth herein;
- B Students may be denied participation in athletic competition if their attendance fails to meet the standards set forth herein;
- C Loss of partial or total course credit;
- D Detention or suspension.



No student who is absent from school for observance of a religious holiday or other excused absence shall be disciplined and/or deprived of any award or of eligibility for or opportunity to compete for any award because of the absence.

### Truancy

For cumulative unexcused absences of 10 or more, the student between the ages of six and 16 is truant, pursuant to law. The school shall:

- A        Make a mandatory referral to the court program. required by the New Jersey Administrative Office of the Courts;
- B        Make a reasonable attempt to notify the student's parents of the mandatory referral;
- C        Continue to consult with the parent and the involved agencies to support the student's return to school and regular attendance;
- D        Cooperate with law enforcement and other authorities and agencies, as appropriate;
- E        Follow all procedures required by N.J.S.A. 18A:38-28 through 31, Article 3B, Compelling Attendance at School and other applicable state and federal statutes.

### Unexcused Absences for Students in Special Education

The attendance guidelines, discipline and remedial measures set forth in this policy shall apply to classified students where appropriate and in accordance with the student's:

- A        Individualized Education Program. (IEP);
- B        Procedural protections set forth in N.J.A.C. 6A:14;
- C        Alternate short or long term accommodations for students with disabilities as required by law;
- D        Requirements of a student's individual health care plan.

### Regular Release of Students Before the End of the Normal School Day

There are varying situations which may justify release of certain students from school before the normal time for closing. Such situations are justifiable only if the release does not jeopardize the student's educational program. and the reasons for such release can be shown to have positive benefits for the student.

### Late Arrival and Early Dismissal

The Board of Trustees recognizes that from time to time compelling circumstances will require that a student be late to school or dismissed before the end of the school day.

As agent responsible for the education of the children of the school, the Board of Trustees shall require that the school be notified in advance of such absences by written request of the student's parent/guardian, which shall state the reason for tardiness or early dismissal. Justifiable reasons may include:

- A Medical or dental appointments which cannot be scheduled outside of school hours;
- B Requirements of a student's individual health care plan;
- C Requirements of the student's Individualized Education Program. (IEP);
- D Alternate short or long term accommodations for students with disabilities;
- E Medical disability;
- F Family emergency;
- G Court appearance;
- H Such good cause as may be acceptable to the administration.

No student in grades kindergarten through twelve shall be permitted to leave the school before the close of the school day unless he/she is met in the school office by his/her parent/guardian or a person authorized by the parent/guardian to act in his/her behalf.

Tardiness not covered by the causes listed shall be cumulative, and may affect course credit.

#### Legal Custody

A record shall be kept indicating the legal custodian of each student. Such custodian shall be responsible for informing the board of any change in the student's custodian. The assistant head of school may take such steps as seem necessary to ensure that the child is released only to the proper legal custodian.

#### Potentially Missing Children

- A If daily attendance records indicate a child is absent, and the parent/guardian has not called, a designated person shall attempt to contact them.
- B If no telephone contact can be made, the attendance officer shall investigate.
- C If the attendance officer cannot locate the child, he/she shall inform the assistant head of school, who shall inform the appropriate local authorities.
- D If a child who was present in the morning is absent after lunch, the same procedure shall be followed.

#### Marking Missing Child's School Record

Whenever the Head of School receives notice from the Princeton Police Department that a child has been reported missing, he/she shall mark the child's records in such a way that whenever a copy of or information regarding the record is requested, school personnel will be aware that the record is that of a missing child. If a copy of a marked school record is requested, the Head of School shall supply the record

to the requestor without alerting him/her to the fact that the record has been marked, according to the provisions in code and statute on accessing student records (see policy 5125 Student records). After the Head of School has complied with the request for copies of records or information, he/she shall immediately report the inquiry or any knowledge as to the whereabouts of the missing child to the Police Department.

### Regulations

The Head of School shall develop procedures for the attendance of students which:

- A      Ensure a school session which is in conformity with the requirements of the rules of the state board;
- B      Identify potentially missing and/or abused students;
- C      Govern the keeping of attendance records in accordance with the rules of the state board at N.J.A.C 6A:16-1.1 et seq. including students serving in or out of school suspensions, or excluded for health and cleanliness reasons;
- D      Impose on truant students such disciplinary measures as may be appropriate for infractions of school regulations, but no such penalty may have an irredeemable negative effect on the student's record of achievement beyond that which naturally follows his/her absence from school activities;
- E      Identify the habitual truant, investigate the causes of his/her behavior, and consider modification of his/her educational program. to meet his/her particular needs and interests;
- F      Address tardiness and class cutting in terms of the intent of this policy;
- G      Ensure that students absent for any reason have an opportunity to make up work they missed;
- H      Recognize exemplary attendance.

### Dissemination and Implementation

The Head of School shall take all necessary steps to publicize this policy and may include these rules in school handbooks and/or on the school website. Parents/Guardians and students shall be notified annually of the attendance policy.

The Head of School shall ensure that the rules for this policy are applied consistently and uniformly, and that all disciplinary sanctions are carried out with necessary due process.

The board shall review the attendance policy on a regular basis.

NJSBA Review/Update:      November 2010  
Adopted:                      October 10, 2012

### Key Words

	<b><u>Legal References:</u></b>	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:11 1 General mandatory powers and duties
		<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:35 4.9 Student promotion and remediation; policies and procedures
<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:36 14, -15, -16		Religious holidays; absence of students on; effect ...
<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:36 19a		Newly enrolled students; records and identification
		<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:36 24 through 26 Missing children; legislative findings and declarations ...
children between six and 16;	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:38 25	Attendance required of exceptions
	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:38 26	Days when attendance required; exceptions
	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:38 27	Truancy and juvenile delinquency defined
<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:38 31		Violations of article by parents or guardians; penalties
	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:38 32	District and county vocational school attendance officers
	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:40 7	Exclusion of students who are ill
	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:40 8	Exclusion of students whose presence is detrimental to health and cleanliness
	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:40-9	Failure of parent to remove cause for exclusion; penalty
	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:40 10	Exclusion of teachers and students exposed to disease
	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:40 11	Exclusion of students having communicable tuberculosis
	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:40-12	Closing schools during epidemic

N.J.S.A. 18A:54 20  
Powers of board (county

vocational schools)

N.J.S.A. 52:17B-9.8a

through -9.8c  
school record

Marking of missing child's

N.J.A.C. 6A:11-4.3

Charter Schools; student attendance

N.J.A.C. 6A:16-1 et seq.

Programs to support student development

N.J.A.C. 6A:32-8.1 et seq.

Student Attendance and Accounting

N.J.A.C. 6A:32 8.3

Student attendance

Wetherell v. Board of

Education of Township of Burlington, 1978 S.L.D. 794

Wheatley v. Board of Education of City of Burlington, 1974 S.L.D. 851

C.R., on behalf of J.R., v. Board of Education of the

Scotch Plains Fanwood

Regional School District, 1988 S.L.D. (June 22)

Student Attendance Policies and Procedures

Compliance Checklist, New Jersey

Department of Education

### **Possible**

#### **Cross References:**

- \*5020 Role of parents/guardians
- \*5111 Admission
- \*5114 Suspension and expulsion
- \*5124 Reporting to parents/guardians
- \*5125 Student records
- \*5141.2 Illness
- \*5141.4 Child abuse and neglect
- \*5142 Student safety
- \*6146.2 Promotion/retention
- \*6147 Standards of proficiency
- \*6147.1 Evaluation of individual student performance
- \*6154 Homework/makeup work
- \*6171.4 Special education
- \*6173 Home instruction

\*Indicates policy is included in the Critical Policy Reference Manual.

