



Family Handbook

2018-2019

**NCSH Northwest
(Kindergarten-2nd Grade)**

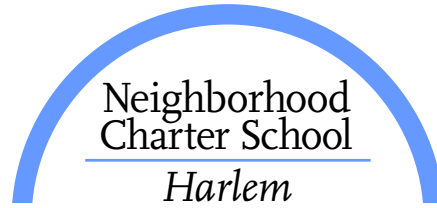
421 West 145th Street
New York, NY 10031

**NCSH Northwest Annex
(3rd Grade)**

500 West 138th Street
New York, NY 10031

**NCSH Central Harlem
(Grades 3-7)**

132 West 124th Street
New York, NY 10027



Dear NCSH Families,

The entire school community welcomes you to Neighborhood Charter School: Harlem. Our school was created by a dedicated group of individuals that seek to offer New York City families with strong options in free public education. Our commitment is to provide all of our students with a nurturing, orderly and academically rigorous environment. Our students will grow to enjoy studying, learning, making new friends and will become responsible and caring young people who are prepared to succeed in college and beyond.

The connection between home and school is an important one and when students and families work together students succeed. We hope that all of our families will become involved in the educational process.

We look forward to a productive year where your child's academic and social development is nurtured to its fullest potential.

If you ever have questions, now or in the future, do not hesitate to contact any member of the school community.

Warm regards,

Brett Gallini
Executive Director

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School/Family Contract

COMMITMENT TO OUR STUDENTS AND FAMILIES

Welcome to *Neighborhood Charter School: Harlem!* We are committed to providing our students with a safe, orderly and nurturing environment in which they enjoy studying, learning and making friends and where they will grow into responsible and caring young people who are prepared to succeed in college and beyond. We view families as critical partners in our students' educational success and ask that you support our efforts by agreeing to the following.

ATTENDANCE

- I will ensure that my child comes to school every day on time to begin school at 7:45 AM.
- I understand that if my child is absent more than 10 days within the school year, he or she may have to repeat his or her current grade.
- I will make sure that my child promptly makes up missed work following absences.
- I understand that an absence is excused only if I have contacted the school and written a detailed note regarding student illnesses, family emergency, or religious observance.
- I understand that my child will not earn credit for work missed after an unexcused absence.
- I understand that the school day ends at 4:00 p.m. (NCSH Northwest) and 4:15 p.m. (NCSH Central Harlem) and my child is required to remain in school for the entire day.

HOMEWORK

- I understand that my child will have homework every night and I will ensure that it is complete.
- I understand that I will be contacted every time that my child misses a homework assignment.
- I understand that my child cannot be excused from afterschool detention unless there is a family emergency or a student illness.
- I understand that if my child does not complete his/her homework I will be contacted.
- I understand that if my child misses three homework assignments within two weeks, I will be contacted by the school and required to attend a family conference with the administration.

CODE OF CONDUCT

- I agree to promote and support the rules of behavior as outlined in the Family Handbook, and accept responsibility as a partner in my child's learning.
- I understand that I will be notified if my child earns a detention.
- I understand that my child may be suspended from school if he/she misses detention and/or commits a suspension-level infraction.

- I understand that while my child is in school he/she is not permitted to use, or have out in plain sight, cell phones, iPods, music players, video game players, or other electronic devices. My child will have the opportunity to drop off electronic devices in the morning before school starts and pick them up again at the end of the day. All electronic devices must have names clearly labeled.
- I understand that the School has a zero tolerance for bullying and that if my child bullies another child, he/she will be disciplined accordingly which may result in loss of school privileges, detention and/or suspension from school.
- I understand that verbal and physical aggression will not be tolerated and that if my child demonstrates verbal or physical aggression toward classmates and/or school staff, he/she will be disciplined accordingly, which may result in loss of school privileges, detention, and/or suspension from school.

PROMOTION POLICIES

- I understand that my child needs to earn at least a Level 3 in all core subject areas or he/she may not be promoted to the next grade.
- I understand that my child will automatically be retained if he/she is absent without cause (unexcused absence) for more than 10 school days.
- I understand that it is mandatory to attend all family conferences to discuss the academic progress of my child.

SCHOOL DRESS CODE

- I will ensure that my child comes to school in uniform each day. Uniforms should be purchased through *Flynn & O'Hara* (1-800-441-4122) or www.flynnohara.com.
- I understand that if my child comes to school out of uniform that I will be contacted by the school and that my child may be excluded from class or may need to wait for the appropriate uniform to be brought in from home.

FAMILY SUPPORT

- I agree to support my child's academic work by communicating regularly with my child's teacher.
- I agree to pick-up my child's report card at Family Conferences.
- I agree to attend family meetings and other school-sponsored events on a regular basis.
- I agree not to send soda, candy or gum to school with my child since students are not allowed to have these items at school.
- I agree to respond to phone calls from school staff members promptly.

Code of Conduct and Student Discipline Policy

High Standards for Academics, High Standards for Behavior

Neighborhood Charter School: Harlem (the “School”) is committed to providing a safe, orderly and nurturing environment in which students can achieve academic excellence and flourish socially and emotionally. Having a firm, clear and consistently applied discipline policy allows students and teachers to maximize class time to promote student learning. We will use positive re-enforcements to encourage good behavior in our students. However, students whose behavior does not meet the School community’s clearly defined standards will not be permitted to disrupt the educational experience of others. Therefore, infractions of School standards will have consequences. This is the basis of our student Code of Conduct.

Definitions

For purposes of the code, the following definitions apply:

- 1) “School” is Neighborhood Charter School: Harlem.
- 2) “Parent” means that parent, guardian, or person in parental relation to the student.
- 3) “School premises” means on or within any building, structure, athletic playing field or playground used by the School.
- 4) “School property” means property belonging to or leased by the school.
- 5) “School function” means any school-sponsored extra-curricular event or activity.
- 6) “Violent student” means a student under the age of 21 who:
 - a. Commits an act of violence or uncontrolled behavior upon a school employee or attempts or threatens to do so.
 - b. Commits, while on school premises or at a school function, an act of violence or uncontrolled behavior upon another student or any other person lawfully on school premises or at the school function, or attempts or threatens to do so.
 - c. Possesses a weapon while on school premises or at a school function.
 - d. Displays what appears to be a weapon while on school premises or at a school function.
 - e. Threatens to use a weapon or replica of a weapon while on school property or at a school function.
 - f. Knowingly and intentionally damages or destroys school property.
 - g. Physically intimidates, threatens, or bullies others while on school property or at a school function.
- 7) “Weapons” includes but is not limited to:
 - a. A firearm, razor, air gun, mock gun, knife, box cutter, sling shot, martial arts instruments, deadly or hazardous chemicals, mace, pepper spray
 - b. Any other type of deadly or dangerous instrument

Prohibited Student Conduct

NCSH holds students accountable for their behavior. Infractions are grouped into five levels based on the severity of the infraction. Each level of infraction provides a set of possible disciplinary responses that may be imposed by the School.

Infraction Levels

1. Level 1 - Engaging in Insubordinate and/or Disorderly Conduct
2. Level 2 - Engaging in Conduct that Engagers the Safety, Morals, Health, or Welfare of Self or Others
3. Level 3 - Engaging in Violent, Disruptive, and/or Threatening Conduct

Level 1 Infractions	Range of Possible Disciplinary Responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unexcused absence from school • Violating the dress code • Arriving late to school or class • Arriving to class unprepared • Failing to complete homework • Cutting school, class, detention, or mandatory school events • Misbehaving on school-provided transportation • Misbehaving inside or outside of class • Disrupting class or preventing teaching • Being disrespectful toward a staff member or his/her designee • Failing to comply with the directive of staff member or his/her designee • Being disrespectful toward a student • Using abusive or profane language or treatment • Selling, using or possessing obscene material • Forgery • Making unreasonable noise • Gum, food and beverages during unauthorized times • Possession of inappropriate property • Defamation • Cheating, plagiarism, or copying's other's work, or allowing others to copy work • Gambling • Failing to comply with School imposed-consequences • Body art/tattoos 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oral warning • Written warning • Written notification to parent/guardian • Conference with parent(s)/guardian(s) • Confiscation • Detention • In-school disciplinary action (e.g., exclusion and/or removal from a particular class or event) • Suspension from transportation • Short term in-school suspension
Level 2 Infractions	Range of Possible Disciplinary Responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theft, loss, or destruction of personal or School property 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conference with parent(s)/guardian(s)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mistreatment or inappropriate use of technology or School property • Violating the civil rights of others • Harassment/bullying and discrimination • Sexual harassment • Engaging in sexual activity or inappropriate touching • Lewd behavior • Hazing • Gang membership • Using or possessing drugs, alcohol, or tobacco products 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confiscation • Detention • In-school disciplinary action (e.g., exclusion and/or removal from a particular class or event) • Short term in-school suspension • Short term out-of-school suspension
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Level 3 Infractions	Range of Possible Disciplinary Responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committing a physical or emotional act of violence on self or others • Fighting or unwanted physical contact • Play fighting, threatening, bullying, and/or intimidating • Possessing, displaying, using, or threatening to use a weapon or dangerous object • Committing arson • Setting off a false alarm or making a threat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conference with parent(s)/guardian(s) • Confiscation • In-school disciplinary action (e.g., exclusion and/or removal from a particular class or event) • Short term in-school suspension • Short term out-of-school suspension • Long term out-of school suspension • Expulsion

Where and When the Discipline Code Applies

The standards set forth in the Discipline Code apply to behavior

- In school during school hours;
- Before and after school, while on school property;
- While traveling on vehicles funded by the NYC DOE;
- At all school-sponsored events;
- On other-than-school property when such behavior can be demonstrated to negatively affect the educational process or to endanger the health, safety, morals, or welfare of the School.

When misbehavior involves communication, gestures, or expressive behavior, the infraction applies to oral written or electronic communications, including but not limited to texting, emailing, and social networking.

Discipline Responses

Students who are found to have violated the School's Code of Conduct may be subject to the following penalties, either alone or in combination with another:

1. **Suspension from Transportation**

Students who do not conduct themselves properly on school transportation may have their riding privileges suspended temporarily or permanently by the Principal or his designee. In such cases, the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) will become responsible for seeing that his or her child gets to and from school safely.

2. **In-School Disciplinary Procedures**

When a student engages in behavior, which is substantially disruptive of the educational process or substantially interferes with a teacher's authority over the classroom, the student may be subject to disciplinary action of any of the following:

- Oral warning
- Written warning
- Written notification to parent/guardian
- Confiscation
- Detention
- Exclusion and/or removal from a particular class or event
- Suspension from cafeteria, commons, library, social, athletic, after-school, field trip, extracurricular or other activities or privileges.

3. **Short Term In-School Suspension: 10 Days or Less**

Because we believe that students can benefit from instruction in a school setting even when suspension is an appropriate disciplinary response, we provide alternative instruction for suspended students within the school setting unless the severity of the conduct leading to the suspension makes immediate return to school inappropriate or the School does not have adequate facilities or staff to provide a supervised alternative program. To the extent possible, the alternative in-school instruction program will be hosted at an offsite location with adequate facilities (e.g., a local library). The alternative program will provide similar academic curriculum that students would receive if attending regular classes. Alternative instruction will be provided for at least two hours per day.

4. **Short Term Out-of-School Suspension: 10 Days or Less**

If the School does not have adequate facilities for in-school alternative instruction or if for any other reason, the student's presence in the school causes a risk of continuing disruption or a risk of danger for the student or others, the Principal may direct that the alternative instruction be provided off-site.

5. **Long Term Suspension: 10 Days or More**

As with short-term suspension, alternative instruction may be provided in-school or outside of school, depending on the facilities in the school, the severity of the conduct which led to the disciplinary proceeding and whether return to school can be safely accomplished without continuing disruption or danger to the student or others.

6. **Expulsion**

Expulsion is reserved for extraordinary circumstances, including not limited to circumstances where a student's conduct posed or continues to pose a danger to the safety and well-being of other students, school personnel, or any other person lawfully on school property, attending a school function, or on school-provided transportation. The procedure for expulsion shall be the same procedure set forth for long-term suspension.

Procedures and Due Process for Short Term Suspension

The Principal may impose a short-term suspension and shall follow due process procedures consistent with federal case law pursuant to *Goss v. Lopez* (419 U.S. 565). Before imposing a short-term suspension, or other, less serious discipline, the Principal shall provide notice to inform the student of the charges against him or her, and if the student denies the charges, an explanation of the evidence against the student. A chance to present the student's version of events shall also be provided.

Before imposing a short-term suspension, the Principal shall immediately notify the parents or guardian in writing that the student may be suspended from school. Written notice of the decision to impose suspension shall be provided by personal delivery or express mail delivery within 24 hours at the last known address(es) of the parents or guardian. Where possible, notification also shall be provided by telephone. Such notice shall provide a description of the incident(s) for which suspension is proposed and shall inform the parents or guardian of their right to request an immediate informal conference with the Principal. Such notice and informal conference shall be in the dominant language or mode of communication used by the parents or guardian. The parents or guardian of the student and the student shall have the opportunity to present the student's version of the incident and to ask questions of the complaining witnesses. Such notice and opportunity for an informal conference shall take place prior to the suspension of the student unless the student's presence in the school poses a continuing danger to persons or property or an ongoing threat of disruption to the academic process, in which case the notice and opportunity for an informal conference shall take place as soon as possible after the suspension as is reasonably practicable.

The Principal's decision to impose a short-term suspension may be challenged by the parent(s) or guardian in accordance with the School's grievance policy.

Procedures and Due Process for Long Term Suspension

The Principal may impose a long-term suspension. Such a suspension may be imposed only after the student has been found guilty at a formal suspension hearing. In extreme circumstances, the Principal may expel the student from school. Upon determining that a student's action warrants a possible long-term suspension, the Principal shall verbally inform the student that he or she is being suspended and is being considered for a long-term suspension (or expulsion) and state the reasons for such actions. The Principal also shall immediately notify the student's parent(s) or guardian(s) in writing. Written notice shall be provided by personal delivery, express mail delivery, or equivalent means

reasonably calculated to assure receipt of such notice within 24 hours of suspension at the last known address. Where possible, notification also shall be provided by telephone if the school has been provided with a contact telephone number for the parent(s) or guardian(s). Such notice shall provide a description of the incident or incidents that resulted in the suspension and shall indicate that a formal hearing will be held on the matter that may result in a long-term suspension (or expulsion). The notification provided shall be in the dominant language used by the parent(s) or guardian(s). At the formal hearing, the student shall have the right to be represented by counsel, question witnesses, and present evidence.

If the Principal initiates the suspension proceeding, he or she shall personally hear and determine the proceeding or may, in his or her discretion, designate a hearing officer to conduct the hearing. The hearing officer's report shall be advisory only and the Principal may accept or reject all or part of it. The Principal's decision to impose a long-term suspension or expulsion may be challenged by the parent or guardian through an appeal process to the Executive Director, the details of which shall be determined. NOTE: In any instance where the Principal is directly involved in the instance(s) at issue for a suspension or expulsion, the Executive Director shall handle any investigation, hearing and determination.

Firearm Violations

Federal and New York law require the expulsion from school for a period of not less than one year of a student who is determined to have brought a firearm to the school, or to have possessed a firearm at school, except that the Principal may modify such expulsion requirement for a student on a case-by-case basis, if such modification is in writing, in accordance with the Federal Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994 (as amended). "Weapon," as used in this law means a "firearm," as defined by 18 USC § 921, and includes firearms and explosives. (New York Education Law §3214 effectuates this federal law.) The following are included within this definition: (a) Any device, instrument, material, or substance that is used for or is readily capable of causing death or serious bodily injury. Knives with a blade of two and half inches or more in length fall within this definition; (b) Any weapon (including a starter gun) which will or is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive; (c) the frame or receiver of any weapon described above; (d) Any firearm muffler or firearm silencer; (e) Any destructible device, which is defined as any explosive, incendiary, or poison gas, such as a bomb, grenade, rocket having a propellant charge of more than four ounces, a missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than one-quarter ounce, a mine, or other similar device.

The Principal shall refer a student under the age of sixteen who has been determined to have brought a weapon or firearm to school to a presentment agency for a juvenile delinquency proceeding consistent with Article 3 of the Family Court Act except a student fourteen or fifteen years of age who qualifies for juvenile offender status under Criminal Procedure Law § 1.20(42). The Principal shall refer any pupil sixteen years of age or older or a student fourteen or fifteen years of age who qualifies for juvenile offender status under

Criminal Procedure Law § 1.20(42), who has been determined to have brought a weapon or firearm to school to the appropriate law enforcement officials.

Provision of Instruction During Removal

HLA will ensure that alternative educational services are provided to a child who has been suspended or removed to help that child progress in the school's general curriculum. For a student who has been suspended, alternative instruction will be provided to the extent required by applicable law. For a student who has been expelled, alternative instruction will be provided in like manner as a suspended student until the student enrolls in another school for a reasonable period thereafter or until the end of the school year.

Alternative instruction will be provided to students suspended or expelled in a way that best suits the needs of the student. Instruction for such students shall be sufficient to enable the student to make adequate academic progress, and shall provide them the opportunity to complete the assignments, learn the curriculum and participate in assessments. Instruction will take place in one of the following locations: the child's home, a contracted facility (e.g., in the school district of location), or a suspension room or other room at the school. During any removal for drug or weapon offenses, additional services shall include strategies designed to prevent such behavior from recurring. Instruction will be provided by one or more of the following individuals who shall be certified or qualified in accordance with § 2854(3)(a-1) of the Education Law and the federal *No Child Left Behind*.

Freedom of Expression

Students are entitled to express their personal opinions verbally, in writing, or by symbolic speech. The expression of such opinions, however, shall not interfere with the freedom of others to express themselves, and written expression of opinion must be signed by the author. Any form of expression that involves libel, slander, the use of obscenity, or personal attacks, or that otherwise disrupts the educational process, is prohibited. All forms of expression also must be in compliance with the student disciplinary policy and the school dress code, violations of which are punishable as stated in the disciplinary policy.

Student participation in the publication of school-sponsored student newsletters, yearbooks, literary magazines and similar publications is encouraged as a learning and educational experience. These publications, if any, shall be supervised by qualified faculty advisors and shall strive to meet high standards of journalism. In order to maintain consistency with the school's basic educational mission, the content of such publications is controlled by school authorities.

No person shall distribute any printed or written materials on school property without the prior permission of the Principal. The Principal may regulate the content of materials to be distributed on school property to the extent necessary to avoid material and substantial interference with the requirements of appropriate discipline in the operation of the school. The Principal may also regulate the time, place, manner and duration of such distribution.

Off-Campus Events

Students at school-sponsored off-campus events shall be governed by all the guidelines of the school and are subject to the authority of school officials. Failure to obey the lawful instructions of school officials shall result in a loss of eligibility to attend school-sponsored off-campus events and may result in additional disciplinary measures in accordance with the student disciplinary policy.

Student Records

The School will maintain written records of all suspensions and expulsions including the name of the student, a description of the behavior engaged in, the disciplinary action taken, and a record of the number of days a student has been suspended or removed for disciplinary reasons. HLA will comply with NYSED's VADIR data collection requirements and disciplinary data and submit that information to NYSED by required deadlines.

Charter schools are subject to the federal Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) that requires a school to protect a student's privacy. HLA will not disclose any information from the student's permanent records except as authorized pursuant to FERPA, or in response to a subpoena, as required by law. The parent(s) or guardian(s) of a student under 18 years of age, or a student 18 year of age or older, is entitled to access to the student's school records by submitting a written request to the Principal. Further information concerning the disclosure of student information and limitations on such disclosure may be found in FERPA and the school's FERPA policy.

Discipline of Students with Special Needs

In addition to the discipline procedures applicable to all students, the School shall implement the following disciplinary policy procedures with respect students with disabilities. A student not specifically identified as having a disability but whose school district of residence or charter school, prior to the behavior which is the subject of the disciplinary action, has a basis of knowledge—in accordance with 34 CFR 300.527(b)—that a disability exists may request to be disciplined in accordance with these provisions. HLA shall comply with sections 300.519- 300.529 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) and the following procedures, except that in the event that the following procedures are inconsistent with federal law and regulations, such federal law and regulations shall govern.

If a student violates the School's discipline code and is being considered for a suspension or removal, the School must ensure the following due process protections are provided to the student and to the student's parent(s) in addition to those set forth in the regular education discipline code. For suspensions of five school days or less, the student's parent(s) or guardian must be provided with a written notice, and a follow up telephone call if possible, within 24 hours of the incident leading up to the suspension which describes the basis for the suspension and explains that the parent or guardian has the right to request an informal conference with the Principal and appropriate staff to discuss the incident and

question any complaining witness against the student. For suspensions in excess of five consecutive school days, the student's parent(s) or guardian must be provided with a written notice which indicates that the district proposes to suspend the student from school in excess of five consecutive school days, describes the basis for the proposed suspension, explains that the student has an opportunity for a fair hearing conducted by the Principal or his or her designee at which the student will have a right to question any witnesses accusing him/her of committing the misconduct charge and to present witnesses on his/her behalf. Where possible, notification must also be provided by telephone. In addition, the School must provide alternative education to the student during the suspension as set forth below, including any special services required by the Individualized Education Program (IEP) prepared by the Committee on Special Education (CSE) where the school is located. Final determination on a suspension or removal of a student, following due process, shall be made by the Principal.

The School shall maintain written records of all suspensions and expulsions of students with a disability including the name of the student, a description of the behavior engaged in, the disciplinary action taken, and a record of the number of days a student has been suspended or removed for disciplinary reasons.

Students for whom the IEP includes a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) will be disciplined in accordance with the BIP. If the BIP appears not to be effective or if there is a concern for the health and safety of the student or others if the BIP is followed with respect to the infraction, the matter will be immediately referred to the CSE where the school is located for consideration of a change in the guidelines.

If a student identified as having a disability is suspended during the course of the school year for total of eight days, such student will immediately be referred to the CSE where the school is located for reconsideration of the student's educational placement. Such a student shall not be suspended for a total of more than ten days during the school year without the specific involvement of the CSE where the school is located prior to the eleventh day of suspension, because such suspensions may be considered to be a change in placement. In considering the placement of students referred because of disciplinary problems, the CSE where the school is located is expected to follow its ordinary policies with respect to parental notification and involvement.

The School shall work with the district to ensure that the CSE where the school is located meets within 7 days of notification of any of the following: (1) The commission of an infraction by a student with a disability who has previously been suspended for the maximum allowable number of days; (2) The commission of any infraction resulting from the student's disability; (3) The commission of any infraction by a disabled student, regardless of whether the student has previously been suspended during the school year if, had such infraction been committed by a non-disabled student, the Principal would seek to impose a suspension in excess of 5 days.

Also, the School will ensure that when the suspension or removal of a student with a disability will constitute a disciplinary change of placement, the CSE will be immediately notified so that the CSE can meet its required obligations to:

1. Convene a CSE meeting within 10 school days to make a manifestation determination
2. Convene a CSE meeting within 10 business days to develop a plan to conduct a functional behavioral assessment or review an existing functional behavioral assessment or behavioral intervention plan.
3. Provide the student's parent with a copy of their procedural due process rights
4. Work closely with the CSE where the school is located in determining education services or the interim alternative educational setting consistent with the FAPE requirements.

Provision of Services During Removal

Those students removed for a period fewer than ten days will receive all classroom assignments and a schedule to complete such assignments during the time of his or her suspension. Provisions will be made to permit a suspended student to make up assignments or tests missed as a result of such suspension. The School also shall provide additional alternative instruction with the reasonable promptness and by appropriate means to assist the student, so that the student is given full opportunity to complete assignments and master curriculum, including additional instructions, phone assistance, computer instruction and/or home visits and one-on-one tutoring.

During any subsequent removal that, combined with previous removals equals ten or more school days during the school year, but does not constitute a change in placement, services must be provided to the extent determined necessary to enable the child to appropriately progress in the general curriculum and in achieving the goals of his or her IEP. In these cases, school personnel, in consultation with the child's special education teacher, shall make the service determination.

During any removal for weapon, drug or infliction of serious bodily injury-related offenses pursuant to 34 CFR §300.530(g)(1), (2) and (3), respectively, services will be provided to the extent necessary to enable the child to appropriately progress in the general curriculum and in achieving the goals of his or her IEP. These service determinations will be made by the CSE where the school is located. The school will place students in interim alternative educational settings as appropriate and mandated by the IDEA.

During any subsequent removal that does constitute a change in placement, but where the behavior is not a manifestation of the disability, the services must be provided to the extent necessary to enable the student to appropriately progress in the general curriculum and in achieving the goals of his or her IEP. The CSE where the school is located will make the service determination.

CSE Meetings

Meetings of the CSE where the school is located to either develop a behavioral assessment plan or, if the child has one, to review such plan are required when: (1) the child is first removed from his or her current placement for more than ten school days in a school year; and (2) when commencing a removal which constitutes a change in placement. The student's special education teacher (or coordinator) and the general classroom teacher will attend all meetings regarding the student initiated by the CSE where the school is located.

Subsequently, if other removals occur which do not constitute a change in placement, the School will work with the CSE where the school is located to review the child's assessment plan and its implementation to determine if modifications are necessary. If one or more members of the CSE where the school is located believe that modifications are needed, then the CSE is expected to meet to modify the plan and/or its implementation.

Due Process

If discipline which would constitute a change in placement is contemplated for any student, the following steps shall be taken: (1) not later than the date on which the decision to take such action is made, the parents of the student with a disability shall be notified of that decision and provided the procedural safeguards notice described in 34 CFR §300.504; and (2) immediately, if possible, but in no case later than ten school days after the date on which such decision is made, the CSE where the school is located and other qualified personnel shall meet and review the relationship between the child's disability and the behavior subject to the disciplinary action.

If, upon review, it is determined that the child's behavior was not a manifestation of his or her disability, then the child may be disciplined in the same manner as a child without a disability, except as provided in 34 CFR §300.121(d), which relates to the provision of services to students with disabilities during periods of removal.

Parents may request a hearing to challenge the manifestation determination. Except as provided below, the child will remain in his or her current educational placement pending the determination of the hearing.

If a parent requests a hearing or an appeal to challenge the interim alternative educational setting or the manifestation determination resulting from a disciplinary action relating to weapons or drugs, the child shall remain in any interim alternative educational setting pending the decision of the hearing officer or until the expiration of the time period provided for in the disciplinary action, whichever occurs first, unless the parent and the School agree otherwise.

Appeals Process for Disciplinary Consequence

The following protocol has been established should a parent/guardian wish to appeal a disciplinary consequence:

- **Level 1:** Appeal the decision with the staff member that assigned the disciplinary action
- **Level 2:** Appeal the decision with the Principal
- **Level 3:** Appeal the decision with the Executive Director
- **Level 3:** Appeal the decision with the Board of Trustees in accordance with Complaints Policy below.
- **Level 4:** Appeal the decision to the School's Authorizer, the New York State Education Department in accordance with the Complaints Policy below.

Additionally, before a child is returned to class, a family member will be required to attend a post-suspension conference with the Principal or his designee.

Student Searches

The School authorizes the Principal, Assistant Principals, Director of Operations, and Dean, or their designee to conduct searches of students and their belongings if the authorized school official has reasonable suspicion to believe that the search will result in evidence that the student violated the law or the School's Code of Conduct or otherwise constituted a threat to the health, safety, welfare or morals of the School, other students, school personnel, or any other person lawfully on school property or attending a school function.

An authorized school official may search a student or the student's belongings based upon information received from a reliable informant. Individuals, other than the School's employees, will be considered reliable informants if they have previously supplied information that was accurate and verified, they make an admission against their own interest, they provide the same information that is received independently from other sources, or they appear to be credible and the information they are communicating relates to an immediate threat to safety. School employees will be considered reliable informants unless they are known to have previously supplied information that they knew was not accurate.

Before searching a student or the student's belongings, the authorized school official should attempt to get the student to admit that he or she possesses physical evidence that they violated the law or the school code, or get the student to voluntarily consent to the search. Searches will be limited to the extent necessary to locate the evidence sought.

Whenever practical, searches will be conducted in the privacy of administrative offices and students will be present when their possessions are being searched.

Students have no reasonable expectation of privacy rights in school lockers, cubbies, desks, or other school storage places. The School exercises overriding control over such school property, which may be opened and subjected to inspection at any time by school officials.

Bullying

NSCH promotes a nurturing school culture that has respect for diversity among students and between students and staff. We provide all students with a supportive and safe environment in which to grow and thrive academically and socially. The ability of students to learn and meet our high academic standards and our ability to educate our students are compromised when students engage in discrimination or harassment, bullying, or intimidating behavior toward other students.

Bullying and harassment can take many forms and includes behavior that targets students because of their actual or perceived race, color, national origin, ethnicity, citizenship/immigration status, religion, creed, disability, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, or weight.

School employees who witness harassment/bullying or discrimination, or receive oral or written reports of such acts, must promptly orally notify the Principal no later than one school day after the employee witness or receives such acts. The Principal or their designee will lead or supervise a thorough investigation of all reports of harassment/bullying and discrimination, and ensure the investigation is completed in a timely manner.

When an investigation verifies a material incident of harassment/bullying or discrimination, the Principal or designee will take prompt action, reasonably calculated to end the harassment/bullying or discrimination, eliminate any of the hostile environment, create a more positive school culture and climate, prevent recurrence of the behavior, and ensure the safety of the student or students against whom such behavior was directed.

The Principal or designee will promptly notify the appropriate local law enforcement agency when it is believed that any harassment/bullying or discrimination constitutes criminal conduct.

Retaliation by any school employee or student is prohibited against any individual who, in good faith, reports or assists in the investigation of harassment/bullying or discrimination.

Student Dress Code

In order to improve the school's educational environment, promote a more effective climate for learning, foster school unity and pride, and allow students to focus solely on learning and not on attire, the school has a dress policy for students that applies to school days and school-sponsored events.

All shirts must have the School's imprinted logo. The school uniform can be purchased directly through *Flynn & O'Hara* by calling 1-800-441-4122.

Daily Dress

BOYS	GIRLS
Navy blue pants	Navy blue pants
Baby blue oxford shirt with school logo: long or short sleeve	Navy blue jumper
No polo shirts for boys. Either short or long sleeve oxford shirts.	Navy blue skirt
Navy blue tie (clip-on or traditional) or bow tie	Baby blue polo shirt and/or oxford shirt with school logo: long or short sleeve
Navy blue v-neck sweater or cardigan with school logo	Navy blue v-neck sweater or cardigan with school logo
Brown, black, or blue belt (required)	Brown, black, or blue belt (required)
Black shoes with velcro (rubber soles preferred, sneakers permitted)	Black shoes with velcro (rubber soles preferred, sneakers permitted)
Black or blue socks	Black or blue socks

Lateness

When students arrive late for school they miss valuable education time and disrupt the educational process for others. Excessive lateness will result in mandatory family meetings. When students arrive late they should go to the Main Office to sign-in and submit homework before proceeding to their classroom. The School policy is 4 tardy arrivals equal one unexcused absence.

Early Dismissal Policy

Unless a parent or guardian has contacted the School in advance and provided a signed note to the School explaining the situation, and the School has granted permission, no student will be dismissed early from school. In addition, the parent or guardian must sign the student out in the Main Office before removing the student from the school grounds. Students will not be dismissed unless the parent or guardian has physically come to the Main Office.

In order to minimize disruption for teachers and students, we ask that notification regarding early dismissals be made as far in advance as possible but not later than 7:45 AM on the day of the early dismissal. We also ask that all doctor and dentist appointments be limited to non-school hours.

In the Classroom

Student Expectations and Classroom Procedures

The School is committed to helping all of our students achieve academic and social excellence. Below are certain expectations that we have created to ensure success.

Attendance Policy

It should go without saying that students can only be successful if they are present and prepared in school every day. At the School, excessive absences will not be tolerated. If a student is absent with or without an excuse for more than 10 days of the school year, the student may have to repeat his current grade.

Parents and guardians are expected to call the School as early as possible, but by no later than 7:30 a.m., if their child will not be attending school for any reason. Earlier, written permission is both welcomed and appreciated. Calls should be made as far in advance as possible and can be left on the School's main voicemail if necessary. If a student is not in class and the School has not been notified, his or her parent or guardian will be called at home and/or work. In phone calls, voice mails, and notes, please leave or list your child's name, your relationship to the child, the day(s) on which the child will be absent and the reason for the absence.

All questions regarding student attendance and attendance records should be directed to the School's main office.

A student is considered absent with excuse when the student's family has contacted the School regarding student illness, family emergency or religious observance. All other absences will be considered unexcused, including but not limited to, family vacation, participation at sports tournaments, attendance at entertainment events, or when the family has not contacted the School with a satisfactory reason.

Work will not be provided in advance of unexcused absences and may not be provided even in advance of excused absences. Any class work, homework, projects, quizzes, or exams missed during unexcused absences will be counted as a zero and cannot be made up.

If notification of the reason for an absence has not been provided in advance, a student returning from an absence is required to bring, on the day of his/her return or immediately afterwards, a signed note from his or her parent or guardian explaining in detail the reason for the absence. If the student made a medical visit, a note from his or her doctor is required.

Since repeated absences means missing class, and missing class affects academic achievement and part of a student's grade is based on his or her performance in class, excessive absences will result in lower class grades. Therefore, it is imperative that students are at school, on time, every day.

If a student is absent for the first five days of school, or five consecutive days or more during the school year, and there has been no successful contact between the family and the School to explain his or her absence, that student will lose his or her seat at the School and will be considered un-enrolled from the school.

Homework

Homework is sent home so that students can practice the skills that were acquired during the day. Students will be assigned homework every night and our motto is quality not quantity. Each Monday a comprehensive calendar will be sent home that outlines homework for the entire week. A student is expected to complete all of his or her assigned homework on time every day. A family member must sign off that the work has been completed. Students will be assigned homework in all core content areas.

All homework is collected at 8:00 a.m. and will be graded each day. Students who fail to satisfactorily complete their homework will be provided with written notification that must be signed by a parent and returned to the classroom teacher no later than the the next day. If a student misses three or more assignments in a two-week period, the parent/guardian must meet with a member of the School leadership team.

Assessments, Exams and Quizzes

Time for teaching and learning is extremely valuable and there is no time to waste teaching material that students already know. Therefore, our students will be assessed often so that our teachers can tailor instruction and provide academically rich lessons that will promote sustained growth. Students will be assessed in Reading, Writing, Mathematics, Social Studies and Science every six weeks. Information about assessments will be communicated to families. Assessments are always shared at family conferences but family members can make appointments to review assessment data at any time.

Report Cards and Family Conferences

We believe in transparency and keeping our families very much involved in the educational process. Therefore, report cards and family conferences will take place several times during the year. Attendance is mandatory and if parents are unable to attend a scheduled conference they should speak with the classroom teacher to arrange a time convenient for both the family and the school. The family conference schedule will be communicated to families at the beginning of every school year.

Report Card Grades

Report card grades are calculated by adding all grades on classwork and translated into a proficiency score.

Proficiency Standards

Proficiency Standard	Percentage	Description	Traditional Grade
4	90%-100%	Above Grade Level	A
3	80%-89%	Grade Level	B
2	70%-79%	Below Grade Level	C
1	60%-69%	Far below Grade Level	D
0	68%-Below	No Credit	F

Class Grades

Class grades are calculated by percentage and traditional letter grade. Families should look for percentages and letter grades on class assignments such as projects, quizzes and unit tests.

Promotion Criteria

In order for a student to be promoted to the next grade, the following must be achieved:

- Proficiency level of 3 or 4 in all areas, including attendance and homework.

Essential School/Student Procedures

Arrival

- Students are to enter the school building through the main entrance and will be greeted by a staff member.
- Students who are eating breakfast may arrive between 7:15 a.m. – 7:30 a.m.
- Students who are not eating breakfast may arrive between 7:30 a.m. -7:45 a.m.
- **Any student arriving after 7:45 AM will be marked late.**
- Students are to report to the Homework Collection table in the cafeteria to submit their homework and then get on line for breakfast.
- At 7:45 AM morning exercises will begin. These include:
 - Morning news
 - Calendar
 - Virtue of the Day
 - School Pledge
 - Fun Facts and Songs

Snack

Students will have snack each day. Healthy snacks will be provided for students. The School believes in teaching our students to live a healthy life including making healthy eating decisions. Families may choose to send a snack with their child but it is not necessary. Please do not send unhealthy snacks such as candy, soda or other sugary items.

Lunch and Recess

Students will be provided with a healthy, catered lunch each day. The Athletic Coach will oversee recess.

The School will provide a free breakfast and lunch to all students, regardless of a family's eligibility to participate in the National School Lunch Program. However, in order for the School to seek at least partial reimbursement, each family will be asked to complete an eligibility application. We urge families—regardless of whether they think will officially qualify—to return the form, as very important school funding decisions are made by the state depending on the totality of responses.

Dismissal

Dismissal is at 4:00 p.m.

- Students will be dismissed from their classroom each day.
- Our School Safety Agent will open the school doors at the appropriate time and parents may walk to their child's classroom
- The parent/guardian or an adult on the pick-up list must sign out all students.
- Under no circumstances are students permitted to walk home on their own or be released to someone who is not listed in the child's records.
- All students are to be picked up promptly.

After-School Program

We have a limited number of seats for our after-school program which begins in August and ends in June. Admission is by lottery. The lottery for our after school program will be held by early August. Please contact the Director of Operations to apply for the after-school program.

Students who gain admission to the after-school program may remain at school until 5:30 p.m. Students must be signed out by 5:30 p.m. by a parent or guardian. The after-school program will follow the following schedule.

For more details about our after school program, please visit www.NCSchools.org/our-schools.

Classroom Behavior and Expectations

The Neighborhood Charter School of Harlem seeks to instill in our students a love of **LEARNING, INTEGRITY** (honesty, keeping your promise, doing things that promote health, not harm to our body and mind), **GOOD CITIZENSHIP** (being a responsible member of a community, concern for others, respect for the world, seeing what needs to be done and doing it, peace-making, fairness, sharing, compassion, understanding, forgiveness and loyalty), **HARD WORK** (perseverance, initiative, optimism, willingness to try something new) and **TEAMWORK** (working together, cooperation, flexibility). We use the acronym *LIGHT* as a shorthand for these values and we expect our students to exhibit them at all times.

Learning
Integrity

Good Citizenship
Hard Work
Teamwork

All students have a right to learn and socialize in a safe environment. Bullying, name-calling and other intimidating behaviors will, under no circumstances, be tolerated.

During class there are certain necessary behaviors that must be in place in order for effective learning to take place. These include:

1. **Listen, Contribute and Track:** Students are expected to listen to their teacher and other classmates at all times. Learning cannot take place when students are not actively participating. Therefore, everyone is encouraged to contribute; we value the input of all of our students. Students should always track the person speaking.
2. **Raising Hands:** Students should know that if they would like to participate in class discussions, they should raise their hands to offer a question or comment. Students are not permitted to call out of turn.
3. **Eating:** Eating is only permitted during snack time and/or lunch. In an effort to promote nutritional awareness, soda, and candy are not permitted in school.
4. **Gum Chewing:** Gum chewing is not allowed in school.
5. **Bathroom Procedures:** There are times during the day when students are permitted to use the restroom such as breakfast, lunch and breaks. If students have an emergency they will always be permitted to leave the classroom to use the restroom.

School Environment

Open Classroom

Families are important to us and children learn better when their families are involved in the educational process. Throughout the school year, parents/guardians are invited to attend *Open Classroom*. A schedule will be distributed at the beginning of the school year.

Field Trips/End-Of-Year Events

The school's curriculum includes outside learning experiences and special school events. During these activities - which are a privilege and not a right - it is important for all students to be responsible for their behavior since the site of the activity or event is a temporary extension of the School. A permission slip that allows students to leave the building on field trips will be sent at the beginning of each school year. This slip must be signed and returned or students will not be permitted to leave the building. Families will always be notified before a field trip.

If parents or other volunteers assist with such trips or events, students must afford these chaperones the same respect they would provide to the teachers. Appropriate behavior must be maintained when attending school-sponsored events, and riding on school-provided transportation. The use of portable electronic devices is prohibited on field trips unless the staff chaperones indicate otherwise.

Parent Association

Parent Association is an opportunity to work with other parents to support your school and your child's education. The Parent Association will hold meetings and work on special projects. Parent Association meetings are also a great opportunity to voice your suggestions or concerns and to help other families solve problems. All parents and guardians are automatically members of the Parent Association and are welcome to attend meetings. Here are ways to get involved with the Parent Association.

- **Run for an elected position:** The school will announce when elections will take place a few weeks in advance. Elected positions include: President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary.
- **Attend a Parent Association meeting:** Meetings are usually held after school and sometimes on Saturdays. A schedule will be distributed at the beginning of the school year.
- **Volunteer to help with an event or project:** Ask one of your elected officers or attend a meeting to find out how you can help.

Communication

The School will communicate with parents in multiple ways:

- Each week classroom teachers will send home a weekly homework calendar.

- Each month classroom teachers will send home a monthly newsletter.
- Our website www.NCSchools.org will be updated often with school happenings. Please be sure to frequently check this site.

Each month a newsletter will be sent home to keep parents informed about events and the latest news in our school.

School Closings

In the event of a school closing due to emergency or poor weather conditions such as heavy snow, please listen to your local television or radio stations, or call 311 for relevant information regarding school cancellation. The School follows the same cancellation policies, as the New York City Department of Education so if New York City public schools are closed for emergency or weather, so is the School.

Health, Safety, And Security

There are a number of basic requirements that the School has in order to ensure the safety and security of its students and staff. Cooperation on everyone's part will go a long way in guaranteeing that the business of the School—teaching and learning—can take place.

Medical Records and Health Services

The School provides the health services required by law. Students with serious injuries are taken to the hospital for emergency medical care and the parent(s) or guardian(s) are notified immediately.

If a student requires medication of any kind (including Tylenol, or asthma inhalers), the student's parent/guardian must submit an Authorization to Dispense Medication form and must give the medication in the original container to the nurse or Main Office.

The parent/guardian of any student who is required to carry an asthma inhaler must provide an Authorization to Dispense Medication form specifying that the student needs to carry the inhaler with him/her and a second inhaler that is kept in the nurse's office.

The School abides by all New York State immunization requirements. Each new student must have a certificate of immunization at the time of registration or not later than the 14th day of school. Parent(s) or guardian(s) must present documentation showing that their children have received all required doses of vaccines or are waiting to receive the subsequent doses at the appropriate time intervals. Parents seeking to waive the immunization requirements should submit their request in writing to the school nurse or Main Office.

School Safety Agent

Northwest Campus

For the protection of our students and staff, we have installed a comprehensive security system that includes a video door entry system.

Northwest Annex Campus

There will be a school safety agent stationed on the first floor of our building while scholars are present.

Central Harlem Campus

There will be a school safety agent stationed on the first floor of our building while scholars are present.

Visitors to the School

The School encourages parent(s)/guardian(s) and other members of the school community to visit the School's classrooms to observe the work of students, teachers and other staff.

The Principal is responsible for all persons in the building and on the grounds. For these reasons, the following rules apply to visitors of the school.

1. Anyone who is not a regular staff member or student of the School will be considered a “visitor.”
2. All visitors to the School must sign in and report to the Main Office. Visitors will be given a pass that must be kept with them at all times.
3. Teachers are not permitted to take class time to discuss individual matters with visitors.
4. Any unauthorized person on school property will be reported to the Principal. Unauthorized persons will be asked to leave the building. NYPD will be called if the situation warrants.
5. All visitors are required to abide by the rules for public conduct on school property.

The School is committed to providing an orderly, respectful environment; therefore, it is necessary to regulate public conduct on school property and at school functions.

Emergencies

In case of an emergency, parents or guardians should contact the Main Office either by phone or in person.

Fire Safety and Evacuation Procedures

Please note that some procedures may change once the school year has officially begun. Students will be notified of and trained if there are any significant changes.

In case of an emergency, if a student or staff member sees fire or smells smoke, he or she should close the door. Upon hearing an alarm, school staff will assemble students in their rooms and proceed out of the building according to the fire evacuation plan posted in each room. Students should follow the direction of staff members who will verify the safety of the stairwells and lead students outside the building to the designated locations where school staff will line up students by class and take attendance.

Frequently throughout the school year, students and staff will participate in fire drills to ensure that the entire school community is familiar with the appropriate response in the event of an emergency.

In case of a more serious emergency, should it be necessary to evacuate the School, before, during, or after the school day—and it appears that we will be unable to return to the school for an extended period of time or for the rest of the day--school staff and students will evacuate according to the school’s evacuation plan. Staff will line up students in a safe and orderly fashion on the sidewalks outside of the evacuation site. After staff takes attendance, should conditions permit, all students will return promptly to the school.

Transportation

Student transportation will be provided by the Office of Pupil Transportation (OPT).

The table below shows how the Office of Pupil Transportation (OPT) determines student eligibility for busing and MetroCards. It based on grade level and the distance between the student’s residence and the school. Please note eligibility is **not** determined by NCSH.

Grade	Distance Code A Less than 0.5 mile	Distance Code B 0.5 mile or more, but less than 1 mile	Distance Code C 1 mile or more, but less than 1.5 miles	Distance Code D 1.5 miles or more
Kindergarten- 2nd Grade	Half-fare MetroCard	School Bus or Full-Fare MetroCard	School Bus or Full-Fare MetroCard	School Bus or Full-Fare MetroCard
Grades 3-6	Not Eligible	Half-fare MetroCard	School Bus or Full-Fare MetroCard	School Bus or Full-Fare MetroCard
Grades 7-8	Not Eligible	Half-fare MetroCard	Half-fare MetroCard	School Bus or Full-Fare MetroCard

Criteria for Busing Eligibility

- The student must be eligible for full fare transportation as shown in the chart above.
- The student’s residence must be in the same borough as the school. For example, if a child attends Neighborhood Charter School: Harlem, they must reside in Manhattan.
- Students **MUST** use the same stop in the morning and the afternoon.

Conduct Aboard Busing

For the safety of all children on the bus, it is essential that parents advise their scholars to obey the following rules. Misconduct on the bus can and will lead to disciplinary action.

- All children must be seated on the bus at all times, with a seat belt fastened.
- Children are not permitted to lean out bus windows; hands and heads must be kept inside the bus at all times.
- Children should speak quietly on the bus and should not speak to the driver when the bus is in motion.
- Children should not throw objects inside the bus or out of the bus windows.
- No hitting, spitting, or fighting is allowed on the bus; no shoving is allowed when boarding or leaving the bus.
- Children shall board and leave the bus one at a time.

There are consequences for breaking the rules aboard the bus depending on the severity of the scholar’s actions. Consequences may include:

- Parent one-on-one meeting
- Suspension from the school bus for a set number of days
- Termination of busing rights

- Expulsion from school

Busing FAQs

1. Which bus route has my child been assigned to?

You may get this information from the school, by calling OPT or online. To access your child's bus stop assignment online ([click here](#)).

2. The school bus is late. Whom do I call?

Please contact OPT directly at 718-392-8855. Status reports on buses behind schedule can also be accessed online ([click here](#)).

3. How can I change my child's method of transportation (e.g., switch from busing to a MetroCard)?

Please contact the main office at 646-701-7117 if you would like to change your child's type of transportation service. It will take approximately two weeks for the change to be honored. Please plan accordingly for that transition.

Criteria for MetroCard Eligibility

- Full-fare MetroCard
 - Any student who is eligible for full fare transportation may be issued a full-fare student MetroCard if that student requests a card or if yellow bus transportation is not available for that student.
 - Full fare MetroCards are valid on MTA subways and buses; students do not pay any fare
 - Full fare MetroCards are only active on school days from 5:30am - 8:30pm.
- Half-fare MetroCard
 - Students not eligible for full fare transportation may be issued a half-fare student MetroCard.
 - A half fare student MetroCard allows an eligible student to travel to and from school and school-related activities on buses only and is only valid for three trips per day. After dipping the card in the fare box, students pay half the current fare.

Metro Cards FAQs

1. What if my scholar loses or misplaces their MetroCard?

A new card will be issued once the lost or stolen card is deactivated. Please contact the main office at 646-701-7117 if you need a replacement card or stop by during office hours. Replacement cards are ordered from OPT and will be available after three weeks.

Can parents use the student MetroCard?

The card is Only for use by the student to whom it was issued

If you have additional questions about transportation services, please contact the Director of Operations.

General School Information

	Northwest (K-2)	Northwest Annex (3 rd Grade)	Central Harlem (3-7)
Contact Information	421 West 145 th Street New York, NY 10031	500 W 138 th Street New York, NY 10031	132 West 124 th Street New York, NY 10027
Leadership Team	Michael Renda, Principal: mrenda@ncschools.org Nicholas Carton, AP: ncarton@ncschools.org Michelle Santos, DOO: msantos@ncschools.org	Michael Renda, Principal: mrenda@ncschools.org Leonardo Coello, Site Coordinator: lcoello@ncschools.org Michelle Santos, DOO: msantos@ncschools.org	Michael Renda, Principal: mrenda@ncschools.org Jared Quiza, AP: jquiza@ncschools.org Morgan Jenkins, DOO: mjenkins@ncschools.org

We are committed to establish and maintain an open and respectful line of communication between families and School staff, each of whom has their own cellular phone and email address. Families should contact staff directly by calling their cellular phones or emailing staff members. Staff email addresses use first initial and last name. For example: Joe Smith: jsmith@ncschools.org. All calls and e-mails will be returned within 24 hours. If a parent wishes to speak with a staff member more immediately, the parent should report to the Main Office, which will facilitate the earliest possible contact.

Chain of Command

- The Principal is in charge of the building at all times;
- In the absence of the Principal, the Assistant Principal is in charge of the school;
- In the absence of the Principal and the Assistant Principal, the Director of Operations is in charge of the school;
- In the absence of the Principal, Assistant Principal and Director of Operations, the Dean will be in charge of the School.

School Website

Families should regularly check the school's website at www.NCSchools.org for recent news, updates, and upcoming events. We encourage you to regularly view the school calendar on the website for an up to date list of events and school closings.

In addition, we urge families to regularly check with their children (and in their book bags) to see if any notices have recently been distributed to bring home (including school newsletters). At the start of the school year, every student is given a specific folder to use to bring home letters and updates from the school.

Nondiscrimination Policy

The Neighborhood Charter School of Harlem does not discriminate in admission to, access to, treatment in, or employment in its services, programs and activities, on the basis of race, color, or national origin, in accordance with the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI); on the

basis of sex, in accordance with the Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; on the basis of disability, in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA); or on the basis of age, in accordance with the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1974 (ADEA). In addition, no person shall be discriminated against in admission to NCSH on the basis of race, sex, color, creed, sex, ethnicity, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, age, ancestry, athletic performance, special need, proficiency in the English language or a foreign language, or prior academic achievement.

The Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA) is a Federal law designed to protect the privacy of a students' education records. FERPA gives parents rights with respect to their children's education records. Those rights include:

- Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review all of the student's education records maintained by the School . For records including information on more than one student, parents will be limited only to information pertaining to his/her child. Schools are not required to provide copies of materials in education records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible students to inspect the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies.
- Student records or other identifiable information are maintained in a secure location to ensure confidentiality. Records that are no longer required or need to be disposed will be done so in a manner that ensures confidentiality and security.
- Parents and eligible students have the right to request that a school correct records believed to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record commenting on the contested information in the record.
- Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student before releasing any information from a student's record. However, the law allows schools to disclose records, without consent, to the following parties:
 - School officials with legitimate educational interest;
 - Other schools to which a student is transferring;
 - Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
 - Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
 - Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
 - Accrediting organizations;
 - To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
 - Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
 - State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to a specific State law.

Schools may also disclose, without consent, “directory” type information such as a student’s name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However, schools must tell parents and eligible students about directory information and allow parents and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them. Schools must notify parents and eligible students annually of their rights under FERPA. The actual means of notification (special letter, inclusion in a PTA bulletin, student handbook, or newspaper article) is left to the discretion of each school.

Complaints Policy

Complaints should be addressed initially to the Principal. If the complaint involves the Principal or if the Principal does not provide a satisfactory response, a complaint may be escalated to the Executive Director. If the Executive Director does not provide a satisfactory response, a complaint may be addressed by the Board of Trustees.

Any such complaint must be in writing, addressed to the Chair of the Board of Trustees. On receipt of any complaint, the Chair will take such action as he or she think fit to resolve the complaint, including appointing a committee of the Board to investigate the complaint. The Chair will promptly communicate his or her findings and the results of any investigation to the person making the complaint.

If the person making the complaint is not satisfied with the resolution of the complaint, he or she may address a complaint to the School’s Authorizer, the New York State Education Department. The complaint should be addressed to the Charter School Office.