

ascend

PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS

Family Handbook

2022-2023

Dear Families and Guardians:

On behalf of the Board of Trustees and staff of Ascend Public Charter Schools, I extend a warm welcome! We recognize that you had a choice in where to enroll your student – one of the most important decisions you will make as a parent or guardian – and we are honored that you have selected Ascend Public Charter Schools. Your choice represents your faith in us, and we are firmly committed to maintaining your trust.

We look forward to working with you to fulfill our vision of educational excellence for every student, understanding that your support is crucial to our success. Research has revealed a clear link between family involvement and students' academic performance, and we seek to leverage that power to realize each child's full potential.

As a first step to building a strong community of students, we have prepared this Family Handbook, which details our expectations, policies, and procedures. Here, you will find important information about family participation, school rules and routines, our discipline and behavior management policies, and much more.



Holding all families and Ascend staff accountable to the high expectations outlined in this Handbook is essential to creating a safe and orderly learning environment, conducive to the highest academic standards. We ask you to read the Family Handbook carefully and contact your child's school with any questions you might have about our expectations for families, students, and Ascend Public Charter Schools staff.

Again, thank you for choosing Ascend Public Charter Schools. We have an exciting and productive year ahead of us!

Sincerely,

Danique Day
Chief Schools Officer

Table of Contents

All About Ascend	Page 4
Our Partnership and Commitments	Page 5
Uniforms at Ascend	Page 7
Our K - 12 Charter School Hours	Page 13
Attendance at Ascend	Page 14
Transportation at Ascend	Page 18
Health and Safety at Ascend	Page 21
Homework at Ascend	Page 22
Cell Phones and Personal Electronics at Ascend	Page 23
Family Involvement and Partnerships at Ascend	Page 23
All About Elementary School	Page 26
All About Middle School	Page 29
All About High School	Page 32
Our Philosophy of Discipline	Page 41
Code of Conduct	Page 42
Our K - 12 Policies and Procedures	Page 57
Technology at Ascend	Page 65

All About Ascend

Our Mission

Ascend is a network of K-12 schools that honor, nurture, and challenge the whole child. We foster critical thinking skills and a love of learning through our inquiry-based learning approach, Responsive Classroom model, and anti-racist education. We are deeply committed to advancing educational equity for all of our students.

Our Purpose

Ascend exists to serve every student — to help them embody their inherent excellence by providing rich, joyful learning experiences that unlock a life of boundless choice.

Our Values

Dreaming Audaciously	We are relentlessly bold. We dream wild futures inspired by our students' power and confidently act on our unwavering belief that together, we can bring these dreams to life.
Striving Joyfully	We are in love with learning. We embody the hard work, dedication, and tenacity that power our learning journey and believe that laughter, community, creativity, and curiosity strengthen us along the way.
Partnering Collaboratively	We are in this together. We thrive through strong relationships amongst our schools, our families, and our communities, becoming stronger by learning from and with each other.
Centering Justice	We are committed to shaping a more equitable future. We work endlessly to ensure an equitable and just education for our students that is rooted in anti-racism and advances equity in our schools and in our world.
Championing Belonging	We are a place for all people. We treat every person with dignity and respect, celebrating the many unique identities that add beauty, authenticity, knowledge, and depth to our community.

Our Partnership and Commitments

Ascend's Learning Contract

Ascend Public Charter Schools' Learning Contract details some of the most important responsibilities of being a member of the Ascend community. For students, the contract provides an overview of what it means to be an Ascend student. For families, the contract outlines some of the ways in which you can help support your child's growth at school. The contract also details each teacher's commitment to work tirelessly to provide students with a safe and orderly learning environment in which they can achieve academic success.

Student's Commitments and Responsibilities

1. **Attendance and Punctuality.** I will arrive to school on time every day. If I must be tardy or absent, I will make-up all missed assignments.
2. **Best Effort.** My education is important to me. I will always work, think, and behave in the best way I know. I will do whatever it takes to achieve. I will be the best "me" I can be at all times and will not make excuses for myself or my classmates.
3. **Homework.** I will finish all of my homework and reading every night to the best of my ability. I will not make excuses for failing to do so.
4. **Uniform.** I will wear my school uniform every day.
5. **Communication.** I will participate in class discussions and communicate with my teachers, classmates, and school leaders respectfully. I will listen carefully and follow directions. I will raise my hand to ask for help when I do not understand something or seek the help of my peers as appropriate.
6. **The School's Values and Rules.** I will follow the school's rules and respect the school's values. I will protect the safety, interests, and rights of all of my classmates. If I fail to honor these commitments, including if I break the school's rules, I understand that I may lose privileges at the school and/or face logical consequences.
7. **Respect and Support.** I will respect every student and adult in the school community by treating them with dignity and valuing who they are and the experiences they bring to the school, community, and world.
8. **Responsibility.** I am responsible for my own behavior and success. If I make a mistake, I will take responsibility for my actions and tell the truth.

Parent/ Guardian Commitments and Responsibilities

1. **Attendance.** I will make every effort to ensure my child is at school on time every day.
2. **Dismissal.** If my child is picked up from school, I will ensure that a responsible designated adult is there to pick my child up promptly at dismissal. If my child needs to stay after school for tutoring or to go to school on a Saturday, it will be my responsibility to arrange transportation for my child to and from school.
3. **Preparedness for School.** I will help my child demonstrate readiness to learn and respect for themselves and the school community by sending my child to school in an Ascend uniform that is clean and complete. If my child arrives at school without parts of their uniform, I understand that I may be asked to bring my child's uniform to school or that the school may lend my child the missing uniform piece. I will make sure my child is properly rested and ready for school.
4. **Homework and Quiet Space.** I understand that my child will have homework. I will check that my child has completed their homework to the best of their ability. I will seek to provide a quiet, dedicated space for my child to study every night, with no television, video games, or distractions.
5. **Daily Reading.** Every night, including weekends, my child will read, or I will read to them, for at least 30 minutes.
6. **Communication.** I will return phone calls from the school as soon as possible. I will provide the school with a working phone number and email address and will inform the school if my phone number, email address, or mailing address has changed. I will read all notices sent to me from the school and act on them.
7. **Parent Meetings.** I will attend all required parent meetings at the school or, in the event of a scheduling conflict, notify the school and make arrangements to acquire the information through alternate means.
8. **The School's Values and Rules.** I understand the school's values and will ensure my child upholds them. I know that my child must follow the rules to protect the safety, interests, and rights of all members of the school community. I will always support the school in its efforts to enforce high standards for behavior, citizenship, and academic learning. I know that my child will face appropriate consequences, if they violate the school's rules or fail to uphold its values.
9. **Respect and Support.** I will respect and support all students and faculty at Ascend Public Charter Schools. I will be a model for my child by respecting and supporting each individual in the school community at all times.
10. **Best Effort.** I will do whatever it takes for my child to learn, and I will help them, in the best way I know, to succeed in school. I will not make excuses for my child's academic work or behavior.
11. **Responsibility.** I will share responsibility for the success of my child with the school.

Teacher's Commitment and Responsibilities

1. **Attendance and Punctuality.** I will come to school every day on time. Every minute of instruction is precious. In instances where I must be late or absent, I will abide by procedures that support the school to ensure that every child receives excellent instruction every day.
2. **Mission.** I subscribe to the mission of the school and will work consistently to realize it. I am committed to preparing every student for admission to and success in college and beyond.
3. **Best Effort.** I will always offer my students the best I have as a teacher and will do whatever it takes for them to learn. I will not make excuses for myself, my students, or my colleagues.
4. **Preparation.** I will always submit lesson plans and other documents on time and will be fully prepared every day for my students and colleagues.
5. **Respect and Support.** I will appreciate, respect, and support all members of the school community. I will be a model for my students by respecting and supporting each individual in the school community at all times.
6. **Communication.** I will communicate regularly with parents or guardians about their children's progress and make myself available to my students and their families in person, by email, and by telephone. I will return all phone calls, texts, and emails from families as quickly as possible.
7. **The School's Values and Rules.** I will uphold the school's values and will enforce its rules consistently and fairly.
8. **Safe Community.** I will always protect the safety, interests, and rights of all students and members of the staff.

Uniforms at Ascend

Ascend is intentionally a uniform school because we believe uniforms support the development of a sense of community and belonging, a shared school identity, and help to disrupt potential bullying between students. Our uniforms are gender-neutral, and are focused on being comfortable and appropriate for the students' age and development.

The section outlines the uniform expectations for all Ascend students. Below is the guidance regarding your student's elementary, middle, and/or high school uniform.

Families can reach out to their student's school for uniform financial assistance as needed.

Ascend's Uniform Vendor List		
Schools	Vendors	Link
Brooklyn Ascend Lower School	The League Brand	stores.theleaguebrand.com
Brownsville Ascend Lower School	Ideal Uniform	idealuniform.com/shop-for-your-school
Bushwick Ascend Lower School	The League Brand	stores.theleaguebrand.com
Canarsie Ascend Lower School	S&D Kids, Cookies, Ideal Uniform	sndkids.com/collections/school-uniforms, cookieskids.com/Uniform.aspx, idealuniform.com/shop-for-your-school
Central Brooklyn Ascend Charter School	The League Brand	stores.theleaguebrand.com
Cypress Hills Ascend Lower School	The League Brand	stores.theleaguebrand.com
East Brooklyn Ascend Lower School	The League Brand	stores.theleaguebrand.com
East Flatbush Ascend Lower School	The League Brand	stores.theleaguebrand.com
Lefferts Gardens Ascend Lower School	The League Brand, Cookies, Ideal Uniform	stores.theleaguebrand.com, cookieskids.com/Uniform.aspx, idealuniform.com/shop-for-your-school
Brooklyn Ascend Middle School	The League Brand	stores.theleaguebrand.com
Brownsville Ascend Middle School	Land's End	landsend.com/co/account/school-uniforms
Bushwick Ascend Middle School	Cookies, Ideal Uniform	cookieskids.com/Uniform.aspx, idealuniform.com/shop-for-your-school
Canarsie Ascend Middle School	Ideal Uniform	idealuniform.com/shop-for-your-school
Central Brooklyn Ascend Middle School	The League Brand	stores.theleaguebrand.com
Brooklyn Ascend High School	Land's End	landsend.com/co/account/school-uniforms

Elementary School Uniform Guidance

All elementary school students should follow the uniform expectations for their specific school. All main uniform shirts are required to have the appropriate Ascend logo, which may be embroidered or an iron-on patch.

Elementary School Uniforms		
School	Main Uniform	Optional
Brooklyn Ascend Lower School	White Polo Navy Pants Navy Jumper/Skirt	Navy Cardigan, Fleece Zip Cardigan
Brownsville Ascend Lower School	White Polo Gray Pants Gray Jumper/Skirt	Maroon Sweater, Fleece Zip Cardigan
Bushwick Ascend Lower School	White Polo Gray Pants Gray Jumper/Skirt	Navy Cardigan, Fleece Zip Cardigan
Canarsie Ascend Lower School	White Polo Navy Pants Navy Jumper/Skirt	Navy Cardigan, Fleece Zip Cardigan
Central Brooklyn Ascend Lower School	White Polo Navy Pants Navy Jumper/Skirt	Navy Cardigan, Fleece Zip Cardigan
Cypress Hills Ascend Lower School	White Polo Gray Pants Gray Jumper/Skirt	Navy Cardigan, Fleece Zip Cardigan
East Brooklyn Ascend Lower School	White Polo Navy Pants Navy Jumper/Skirt	Navy Cardigan, Fleece Zip Cardigan
East Flatbush Ascend Lower School	White Polo Navy Pants Navy Jumper/Skirt	Navy Cardigan, Fleece Zip Cardigan
Lefferts Gardens Ascend Lower School	White Polo Navy Pants Navy Jumper/Skirt	Navy Cardigan, Fleece Zip Cardigan

Middle School Uniform Guidance

Middle school uniforms are specific to the grade and school. For the 2022-2023 school year, all students in grade 5 will have the same uniform and for the 2023-2024 school year, all students in grades 5 and 6 will have the same uniform.

Middle School Uniforms		
School	Main Uniform	Optional
Brooklyn Ascend Middle School	White Oxford or Polo Navy Pants/Skirt	Navy Tie/Bow Tie, Navy Cardigan, Vest or Blazer, Fleece Zip Cardigan
Brownsville Ascend Middle School	White Oxford or Polo Gray Pants/Skirt	Navy Tie/Bow Tie, Navy Cardigan, Vest or Blazer, Fleece Zip Cardigan
Bushwick Ascend Middle School	White Oxford or Polo Gray Pant/Skirt	Navy Tie/Bow Tie, Navy Cardigan, Vest or Blazer, Fleece Zip Cardigan
Canarsie Ascend Middle School	White Oxford or Polo Gray Pants/Skirt	Navy Tie/Bow Tie, Navy Cardigan, Vest or Blazer, Fleece Zip Cardigan
Central Brooklyn Ascend Middle School	White Oxford or Polo Navy Pants/Skirt	Navy Tie/Bow Tie, Navy Cardigan, Vest or Blazer, Fleece Zip Cardigan

High School Uniform Guidance

All high school students should adhere to the following uniform guidance.

High School Uniforms				
Category	Item	Color(s)	Monogrammed Logo	Mandatory
Tops	Poly Pique Polo*	Blue, Classic Navy or White	Yes	Yes
Bottoms	Blend Box Pleat Skirt*	Gray, Navy or Khaki	No	Yes
	Box Pleat Skirt*	Classic Navy or Large Plaid	No	
	Plain Front Dress Pants*	Gray, Navy or Khaki	No	
Outerwear	Lightweight Fleece Half-zip*	Classic Navy	Yes	No
	Fleece Jacket*	Classic Navy	Yes	No
Accessories	Leather Belt	Black	No	Yes

* Must be purchased through Land's End

High School Physical Education Uniform			
Item	Color(s)	Monogrammed Logo	Mandatory
Mesh Shorts*	Classic Navy or Stone Gray	No	Yes
Active Tee	Classic Navy, Gray Heather or White	Yes	<i>All students must wear a Land's End T-shirt or BAHS T-shirt for PE class</i>

Shoes

Lower School	Black shoes or sneakers. Ascend strongly recommends <u>laceless</u> black shoes.
Middle School	Black shoes or sneakers except for the last Friday of the Month and/or approved Spirit Days
High School	Black shoes or sneakers except for Spirit Days

- Shoes must be all black only - no stripes, patterns, designs, or colored laces
- All shoes should be flat: no high heels, princess heels or wedges
- During inclement weather (snow or rain), students may wear rain or snow boots but they must change into their uniform shoes upon entering class.

Head Coverings and Hair

Students are welcome to wear head coverings that reflect their religious and/or cultural observance. Hats, caps or other head coverings not worn for religious or cultural observance may not be worn.

Students are encouraged to wear hair styles that are consistent with their cultural, ethnic and racial heritage, identity or personal style.

Other Clothing and Accessories

Hooded Sweatshirts	Only BAHS-purchased sweatshirts permitted with the hoods off.
Zippered Jackets	Only BAHS-purchased fleeces are permitted.
Non-Sweater Vests	Not permitted to be worn in class.
Jewelry	Jewelry is permitted. For safety reasons, earrings that are larger than a quarter will be removed by students during physical education, dance, recess or anytime when students are engaged in a high level of physical movement. As there is limited and often no secure storage in gymnasiums or outdoors, we recommend that earrings larger than a quarter not be worn to school.
Nails	Students are permitted to wear nail polish. Nails must be of a length that students are able to easily type, complete classwork, and meet school-wide expectations for participation.
Makeup	Makeup is permitted. Students are not permitted to apply makeup during class or to travel to/from the bathroom for the purpose of applying makeup during class.

Uniform Specifics

Clothing should be sized appropriately to fit the student, recognizing that for growing children parents may at times opt to purchase uniforms that are 1-2 sizes larger. Students should not wear clothing with significant stains (e.g., large inkblots, food stains, etc.) or in poor condition (e.g., frayed pant cuffs).

During inclement weather, students who wish to layer clothing underneath their uniforms may do so. Clothing worn under the uniform may not hang out or be visible. If a student comes to school with a non-uniform shirt showing under their uniform, it will be treated as a uniform violation if it cannot be easily corrected, and the student may be asked to remove the non-uniform item.

Students may not alter their uniforms in any way (e.g., by writing/drawing, cutting, etc.). Items that are in disrepair for these reasons will be treated as a uniform violation and the student will be asked to remove the item and replace them with a loaner from the school.

Our K - 12 Charter School Hours

Ascend Schools	Monday-Thursday		Friday	
	Arrival Time	Dismissal Time	Arrival Time	Dismissal Time
Brooklyn Ascend Lower School	7:30 AM	3:45 PM	7:30 AM	12:30 PM
Brownsville Ascend Lower School	7:30 AM	3:45 PM	7:30 AM	12:30 PM
Bushwick Ascend Lower School	7:30 AM	3:45 PM	7:30 AM	12:30 PM
Canarsie Ascend Lower School	7:30 AM	3:45 PM	7:30 AM	12:30 PM
Central Brooklyn Ascend Lower School	7:30 AM	3:45 PM	7:30 AM	12:30 PM
Cypress Hills Ascend Lower School	7:30 AM	3:45 PM	7:30 AM	12:30 PM
East Brooklyn Ascend Lower School	7:30 AM	3:45 PM	7:30 AM	12:30 PM
East Flatbush Ascend Lower School	7:30 AM	3:45 PM	7:30 AM	12:30 PM
Lefferts Gardens Ascend Lower School	7:30 AM	3:45 PM	7:30 AM	12:30 PM
Brooklyn Ascend Middle School	7:30 AM	3:45 PM	7:30 AM	12:30 PM
Brownsville Ascend Middle School	7:30 AM	3:45 PM	7:30 AM	12:30 PM
Bushwick Ascend Middle School	7:40 AM	3:45 PM	7:40 AM	12:30 PM
Canarsie Ascend Middle School	7:30 AM	3:45 PM	7:30 AM	12:30 PM
Central Brooklyn Ascend Middle School	7:30 AM	3:45 PM	7:30 AM	12:30 PM
Brooklyn Ascend High School	7:35 AM	3:50 PM	7:35 AM	12:30PM

Attendance at Ascend

Ascend believes that each student is a valued member of our learning community. An important part of being a member of our community is committing to being at school on time every day. We value families as partners in supporting students to keep this commitment to be at school each day.

We recognize that there may be times when students may not be able to attend school. If your student needs to miss school, please follow the process below to inform the school of your child's absence.

What Do I Do if My Student Needs to Miss School?

- If a student will be late or absent, parents and guardians should contact the school as early as possible, but no later than 8:00 a.m.
- Absent students should return to school with documentation. Acceptable documentation must include:
 - The date of the absence
 - The reason for the absence
 - A phone number where a parent or guardian can be reached
 - The parent's or guardian's name, relationship to the student, and signature
- Please reach out to your Principal if you have any questions or concerns about your student missing school.

Reasons for Being Absent

- **Excused Absences:** When a student is absent due to the reasons provided below, their absence will be considered excused. These will be recorded in our system as "excused" and will not count in the number of absences recorded in report cards nor considered in retention decisions.
- **Unexcused Absences:** When a student is absent due to any reason not included in the excused absence list of reasons, their absence will be considered unexcused. These will be recorded in our system as "unexcused" and will both count in the number of absences recorded in report cards and may be considered in retention decisions.

Excused Absences

If a student is absent for any of the following reasons, it will be considered an excused absence.

Reason	Rationale
Death in the Family	
Religious and Cultural Observance	
COVID-19-related absence	The student will be excused after testing positive or needing to quarantine after being exposed to COVID-19. The school will provide guidance for the number of school days the student will miss based on local health agency guidelines. These guidelines are subject to change.
Illness or Injury	For a medically-related absence longer than 2 days, the parents or guardians should provide a doctor's note
Medical Appointments	Parents should try to schedule medical appointments outside of school time. The best times are on Friday (half-day dismissal), vacation days, and weekends. If an appointment must be scheduled during the school day, the student should not be absent for the entire day. It is expected that the student will come to school before and/or after the appointment.
School-Approved Educational Activities	Educational activities that are connected with school, including college campus visits and enrichment programs, where the student has permission from the Principal to attend.
Out-of-School Suspension	Students serving an out-of-school suspension if they report to school or other assigned locations for at least two hours of alternative instruction.

For absences related to illness and injury, families will need to provide the following information in addition to a note signed by the guardian:

- A letter from the medical practitioner will be required if a student is absent due to a medical appointment to ensure that the student is well enough to return to school.
- If a student is regularly absent from school due to illness or injury, with more than six absences in a term, the Principal may ask the family for more information, including a letter from a medical practitioner to confirm the student is well enough to be at school.

Unexcused Absences

All other absences will be considered unexcused absences. This includes students serving an out-of-school suspension, if they do not report to school or other assigned location for at least two hours of alternative instruction.

Attendance Communication Protocol

To help ensure that students do not accrue absences, Ascend has certain support policies in place, as detailed below. Please note:

- The goal of attendance family meetings and calls is always to uncover the root causes of missing school and to collaboratively problem-solve for ways to ensure that the student is in school on time daily.
- In cases of truancy (missing 20 days of school without providing a reason or context), school staff follow the guidelines below for reporting the student and/or family to the appropriate public agencies.
- Students who are absent from school may not attend or participate in any school-sponsored activities occurring on the day of the absence.

Instance	Action and Purpose
Each Absence	<p>Communication Between the Family and the School: The parent/guardian must report any absence via a phone call to the school by 8:00 a.m. on the day of the absence. If a student is absent without explanation, the school will contact the parent/guardian via phone by 10:00 a.m. to establish the reason for missed school and problem-solve with the family as needed.</p>
3rd Absence in the year	<p>Letter Home: After three absences, the school will send a letter home detailing the student's attendance record and the consequences of lost instructional time.</p>
5th <u>Consecutive</u> Undocumented Absence	<p>Report to the Administration for Children's Services (ACS): If the school is unable to make contact with the family after five days of consecutive, undocumented absences, the Principal - in conjunction with the school's clinician or other school official conducting attendance outreach - will report excessive absences and the possibility of a missing child to the ACS.</p>
6th Absence	<p>Letter Home and Parent/Guardian Conference: School will schedule a meeting with the parent or guardian to discuss excessive absences and collaborate around changed behaviors to support attendance. School will ensure the family is informed of the school's mandated reporting policy and practices.</p>
9th Absence	<p>Parent or Guardian Conference or Certified Letter Home (Signature Required): School will schedule a family meeting to discuss excessive absences and collaborate around changed behaviors to support attendance. School will ensure the family is informed of the school's mandated reporting policy and practices. During this meeting, a member of the school leadership team will ask the parent or guardian to sign a statement acknowledging the purpose and date of the meeting, and confirming comprehension of the law regarding school attendance as well as the consequences of school absences for the student.</p>
15th Absence	<p>Evaluation of Readiness for Promotion: The school reserves the right to retain any student who exceeds 15 absences in a year. The school will also schedule a family meeting as above to discuss excessive absences and the school's mandated reporting policy. In the event that the school is unable to make contact with the parent or guardian, the school will send a certified letter to the last known address.</p>
20th Absence	<p>Report to the Administration for Children's Services (ACS): The Principal in conjunction with the school's clinician or other school official attempting attendance outreach will report excessive absences to the ACS.</p>

Tardiness

Arriving at school on time ensures students are present for class with their peers and can take full advantage to maximize learning time.

Any student who eats breakfast at school should be in school by 7:50 a.m. to have time to eat before class. By 8:00 a.m. each student should have arrived at their homeroom, unpacked, and taken a seat, prepared for instruction.

Students who enter the building after 8:00 a.m. are considered tardy.

Please note: different clocks and watches vary. The determination of student lateness will be based on the clocks at the school to ensure consistency and fairness.

The process for late arrivals is as follows:

- The parent/guardian of any lower school student who arrives after 8:00 a.m. must escort the student to the security guard at the front desk. The parent/guardian must sign-in and retrieve a guest pass from the security guard, escort the student to the main office and provide an explanation for the tardiness, including any necessary doctors' notes. Lower school students who arrive late may not be left unaccompanied at the school entrance or with the security guard.
- The parent/guardian should not accompany the student to their classroom.
- The school records the student's name in the Late Arrival Log. At the time of late drop-off, the parent/guardian of any lower school student signs the log indicating that they have read and understands the school's attendance and tardiness policy.

School Closings and Late Starts

In the case of severe weather, a power outage, or other problems requiring school closure or a late start, the school will announce the closing or delay through ParentSquare and its robocall system. Announcements will typically start by 6 a.m. As a general rule, but not always, if the NYCDOE decides to close schools because of weather, Ascend Public Charter Schools will close as well. In extreme circumstances, school may be closed once students have arrived for the day. Please call your child's school if you have any questions.

Transportation at Ascend

At the beginning of the school year, it is critical that you tell the school of your child's transportation plans; specifically, whether your student will be picked up or take the bus. If your child's transportation plans change, please communicate these changes to the school in advance and in writing.

MetroCards

MetroCards are issued based on the distance between a student's home address and the school, and will be distributed by the school in September and February.

Students living within one mile of the school building are ineligible for a MetroCard. Students who live more than a mile from the school building will receive a MetroCard, which is valid for three free rides Monday-Friday between 5:30 a.m. and 8:30 p.m. This includes a free transfer between the subway and local, limited, and Select bus service, or a free transfer between buses.

There is also a four-trip student MetroCard for students whose trip to school requires more than one transfer each way. Please let the Assistant Principal of Operations at your school know what kind of MetroCard your student/s need.

MetroCards are valid for one semester. Students will receive the fall semester MetroCard in September and the spring semester MetroCard in February.

Your student's MetroCard is coded for your student and only your student. Students should not share their card or they could lose their card.

Yellow Bus Service - General Education Students

Yellow bus service is provided by the NYCDOE Office of Pupil Transportation. Eligibility is determined by several factors, including the student's grade and the distance between the student's home and the school. Yellow busing service is only available up to grade 6. Families should contact their student's school to determine eligibility.

The Ascend school year starts a few weeks before NYCDOE begins their school year. Yellow buses will not be provided during this time, so families will need to arrange alternative transportation until **[DATE THAT BUSSING STARTS]**.

Yellow Bus Service - Special Education Students

Yellow bus service is provided by the NYCDOE Office of Pupil Transportation. Eligibility is determined by the student's Individualized Education Plan. Families should contact their student's school to determine eligibility.

The Ascend school year starts a few weeks before NYCDOE begins their school year. Yellow buses will not be provided during this time, so families will need to arrange alternative transportation until **[DATE THAT BUSSING STARTS]**.

Transportation for Students in Foster Care

In conjunction with the NYCDOE Office of Pupil Transportation (OPT), the school follows the regulation set forth under McKinney Vento to properly identify and provide transportation for those in foster care placement. If the student is not already eligible by grade and distance from the foster home address, an application is filed with OPT, which makes best efforts to find a route for students, or provide a full fare MetroCard.

In some cases, interim transportation will need to be provided while the application is being reviewed. The school will work with the Administration for Children's Services (ACS) directly to support these requests. Alternatively, if OPT issues an exception for a MetroCard but public transportation is not an appropriate option for the child, the school will also work with ACS to obtain information about their private transportation reimbursement policy.

Behavior on the Bus

The school's expectation that students live the core values applies to school bus transportation. Students who take the school bus are expected to act responsibly and respectfully at all times.

Certain additional rules apply to the bus. These are enumerated in the busing contract that families riding the yellow bus must sign. Students must sit in assigned seats. An administrator meets the bus at arrival every morning. Misbehavior includes failing to be in the assigned seat, putting hands out of the bus, throwing things, using inappropriate language, yelling, and disobeying the bus driver. More serious misbehavior (e.g., fighting) shall be investigated and consequences applied as if such behavior happened on school grounds. Instances of misbehavior may result in the loss of bus privileges.

Families are strongly encouraged to reinforce the importance of proper bus behavior and the potential consequences of inappropriate behavior. Consequences for misconduct by students qualifying for special education who are required by their Individualized Education Plans to ride transportation other than the general school bus will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

Special Notes About All Bus Transportation

- Students are expected to behave appropriately on the bus.
- There are no adults on the bus except for the bus driver.
- Students who misbehave on the bus receive the same consequences as students who misbehave at school and may lose bus privileges for up to a year.
- It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to ensure that there is a designated adult at the bus stop to receive the child -- not the bus driver's or the school's.
- If no responsible adult is at the stop, multiple attempts will be made to contact a parent or authorized contact to meet the bus at its intended stop. If an authorized contact cannot be reached nor a school official, the matter may result in support from the local precinct.

Health and Safety at Ascend

Emergency Forms

Parents or guardians of all students are required to complete an emergency form that contains a medical release statement giving the school permission to seek medical attention for the student in case of an emergency. This information is kept in the main office, with the school nurse, and the homeroom teacher.

In the event of a school-wide emergency, the school uses a “one-call” system to notify families of any emergencies via phone or text. It is essential that parents or guardians notify the school immediately if their addresses or phone numbers change.

Accidents

The school notifies parents or guardians immediately of any accidents involving more than minor bruises or scrapes. Such accidents are recorded in an accident report form and filed in the school office for future reference. For minor injuries, a certified staff member administers first aid on site as appropriate. If it appears the accident is more serious, first aid will be administered immediately, and a school official will contact the student’s parent, guardian, or designated emergency contact to pick-up the student for medical care. In cases where the parents or guardians or the designated emergency persons cannot be reached and immediate medical attention is needed, a school official will call 911 for treatment and/or transportation to a hospital. A staff person will accompany the student and stay until the parent or guardian arrives. In some emergency situations, the staff may contact 911 before calling the parent or guardian.

Meals at Ascend

Breakfast and lunch are served daily. To protect the health of students with allergies, some of which are life-threatening, Ascend Public Charter Schools are nut-free schools, which means that no nut products are permitted in any of our schools at any time. When packing lunches for your child, please be aware that many processed foods contain nut products; read the labels of such foods carefully to ensure that your choices do not endanger a student with an acute allergy.

If your student has a food allergy, please contact the Principal, the Assistant Principal of Operation, and your child’s teacher immediately and in writing so they can take the necessary precautions.

Food Guidance

Research shows that a healthy and nutritious diet contributes to healthy academic and

social learning. Our nutrition program focuses on emphasizing a healthy, nutritious, and balanced diet. We encourage you to send your student to school with foods that will give them energy and contribute to a productive academic environment, such as:

- Yogurt
- Dried fruit
- Breakfast bars
- Baked potato chips
- Whole-grain chips (e.g., Sun Chips)
- Vegetable chips
- Plain or lightly buttered popcorn
- Pretzels
- Apples, sliced oranges, grapes, and other fruit
- Carrots, celery sticks, other vegetables
- Rice cakes

Please do not send your student with food that requires warming, as they will not have access to a microwave or other appliances. Please also do not send food to your child through a delivery service (such as GrubHub or UberEats) nor allow them to place such orders themselves. These practices do not allow for our lunch periods to operate on-time and infringe on instructional time.

Homework at Ascend

Homework is an independent activity designed for developing and maintaining mastery. Homework does not take the place of classroom instruction, but rather serves as a valuable extension of each student's efforts in the classroom. All homework must be fully completed. If you notice that your student is having difficulty with a specific concept, please note it for the teacher.

The parent or guardian can support their child's completion of homework by seeking to provide their child with a quiet workspace to complete their homework and checking that their child completes all assigned work. It is critical that family and friends refrain from helping a student complete homework assignments as such assistance makes it difficult for teachers to determine a student's true mastery of skills and concepts.

In addition to assigned homework, students should read or listen to books read aloud for 30 minutes or more (depending on grade level) every night, including weekends. Studies show that reading or listening to books for 30 minutes a day can significantly improve a student's academic outcomes.

Cell Phones and Personal Electronics at Ascend

No cell phones or other personal electronics should be used during the school day. Any electronic items should be placed in a student's backpack in their locker at the beginning of each day. If a student uses a cell phone or other personal electronic device during the school day, or if the item is discovered on their person, the item may be collected by staff and returned at the end of the day. If a student repeatedly violates this policy, they will have to check the cell phone or other electronic device at the beginning of the school day with a member of the leadership team or designee and retrieve it from them at the end of the day.

Please note that the school is not responsible for the loss, theft or damage to any electronic items brought to school.

Family Involvement and Partnerships at Ascend

Ascend is a school of choice, which means our success is dependent on family satisfaction. We recognize that you have chosen our school for your child, and thereby place your trust in us. We are dedicated to maintaining this trust by providing an outstanding education for your child and by fostering strong partnerships with you. We value the time and energy you put into your child's education and we welcome your active engagement both on-campus and off.

By embracing the high standards at the core of our program, you have taken a critical step in supporting your child's academic growth and development. We urge you to continue to support your child's learning by participating actively in the life of the school community and sharing your ideas and concerns openly.

Information Sharing

Ascend periodically sends newsletters to families, covering developments at each school, opportunities for families to get involved, and reminders of specific ways that families can support their children's academic success. Important notices from schools will be sent through ParentSquare, a centralized family communication app.

Occasional family forums are also scheduled at each school to inform parents or guardians about expectations, programs, policies, and procedures; to engage families in the creation of a strong school community and vibrant culture of achievement; and to afford family members an organized forum for sharing ideas and concerns and for problem-solving.

Ascend is committed to ensuring the effective handling of all communication received, family input, requests for information, and concerns are given the utmost attention.

Community feedback, critiques, and complaints, whether written or verbal, are likewise taken seriously by school administration and handled promptly. We make every attempt to return all calls within a 24-hour period, and handle calls involving emergencies immediately.

ParentSquare

In the 2022-2023 school year, Ascend is excited to launch ParentSquare, a world class family communication platform, as a new way to build stronger engagement between schools and families, and to help empower everyone in our community to stay connected and informed.

With ParentSquare, families will be able to:

- Set their own preferences to receive district, school, and classroom communication via email, text, or mobile app notifications in a translated language of their choice;
- View school and classroom calendars and RSVP for events;
- Easily chat with teachers and Ops staff;
- Receive urgent notifications via email, text, and robo-call.

Families will be invited via email or text, so be sure to have the most up-to-date contact information with your student's school.

Measuring Satisfaction

We are committed to constantly improving our schools. Ascend administers a family satisfaction survey at least once per year and participates in the NYCDOE learning survey environment as means for parents or guardians to indicate their satisfaction. We also ask parents or guardians who choose to remove their students from an Ascend school to participate in an exit interview or to complete a survey to determine the reasons for the child's removal.

Communication, Conferences, Report Cards

Frequent and open communication between the home and school helps bind the student, families, teachers, and school leaders into an effective and united team.

Family conferences with teachers are scheduled in the winter and spring. Conferences are opportunities for a teacher and family to share and learn from each other about their student. Parents or guardians are requested to attend all family conferences. Additional conferences may be held as needed at the request of the parent or guardian or the school.

Report cards are distributed two times a year at the end of each term, and progress reports are distributed two times a year in the middle of each term. The report card

includes the student's numerical grades for each subject, attendance records, and teacher comments. In addition, it includes a summative comment regarding the student's effort, progress, and behavior.

School Visits

At Ascend, our hope is that family members feel welcome and at ease in their student's school building, and we encourage families to participate actively in the life of the school. We gladly open our doors to visits by parents and guardians so long as public health and safety protocols allow.

To protect instructional time, we require advance scheduling if family members wish to visit a classroom while instruction is occurring, or to meet with a specific staff member. Scheduling can be done by contacting the school directly.

For reasons of safety and security, adults who are not members of the school's staff who visit the school during school hours must sign in at the security desk and state their business in the school. The security officer conveys this information to the school office; if approved, each such visitor receives a visitor's badge and is escorted to their destination. Calling in advance to clear such business is advised. Adults may not wander at will around the school at any time.

The Ascend Family Association

Family Associations at each Ascend school campus offer a range of opportunities for families to contribute their time and talents to their student's school, promote the school to the community, and conduct fundraising to advance the goals of the school. Members of the Family Association will help shape and improve their student's school. Families can contact their students' schools for more information on how to join.

The Family Association has four goals:

- To facilitate communication between parents/guardians and the school's leadership team by planning and overseeing evenings with the Principal, informal dialogues and discussions on a variety of topics planned by the Family Association.
- To provide social, cultural, and developmental opportunities for students by fundraising to offset some of the cost of after-school, weekend, and extracurricular activities such as family field trips and out-of-school volunteer opportunities.
- To facilitate interaction among families through social events, shared resources (i.e., carpools, emergency pick-ups, and cooperative babysitting during meetings and events).
- To provide a structure for family volunteers in roles such as school crossing guards, afterschool activity coordinators, and/or recess monitors.

All About Elementary School

Elementary School Calendar

Mon, August 22	First Day of School: Grades K-1
Thu, August 25	First Day of School: Grades 2-4
Mon, August 22 - Fri, September 2	12:30pm Dismissal
Mon, September 5	No School - Labor Day
Mon, October 10	No School - Indigenous Peoples' Day
Fri, October 28	No School - Wellness Day
Tues, November 8	No School - Election Day
Fri, November 11	No School - Veterans Day
Mon, November 21 - Fri, November 25	No School - Thanksgiving Break
Mon, December 19 - Mon, January 2	No School - Winter Break
Tues, January 3	No School - Teacher Development
Mon, January 16	No School - Martin Luther King Jr. Day
Mon, February 20 - Fri, February 24	No School - Mid-Winter Break
Mon, March 20 - Fri, March 24	No School - Spring Break
Fri, April 7 - Mon, April 10	No School - Wellness Day
Fri, April 21	No School - Teacher Development
Mon, May 29	No School - Memorial Day
Wed, June 14	Last Day of School: Grades K-4 (12:30pm Dismissal)

Elementary School Arrival

Students may enter the school building beginning at 7:30 a.m. Students are not permitted in the building prior to this time, and school staff members are not available before the time that doors open.

Breakfast ends at 7:50 a.m. Students arriving at school after 8:00 a.m. are marked tardy.

The school day begins with Morning Meeting, during which homeroom teachers communicate vital information about the day ahead and engage in community building activities. It is critically important that all students are in their seats and ready to learn no later than 8:00 a.m. as tardiness not only impacts their own preparedness but disrupts the classroom as well.

Elementary School Dismissal

The following dismissal procedures have been designed to transition students safely and efficiently.

Monday through Friday, students who are not enrolled in an afterschool tutoring or enrichment program will be dismissed at dismissal time.

- **Picking-up Students at Dismissal:** For the safety of your child, the school releases students only to those people identified on the students' designated pick-up list as authorized for pick-up or to those otherwise authorized in writing by the parent/guardian prior to pick-up time. There are no exceptions to this rule. If you would like to add to the list of individuals approved to pick-up your child, please complete the Authorized Pick-up Form, sign it and return it to the main office. Please note that students are not permitted to depart campus with an individual who does not meet the minimum age requirement of 13. Individuals may be required to show identification or proof of age.
- **Students Walking Home Alone:** Students in grades K-4 are not allowed to walk home alone. If a student has an older sibling that attends an upper school, parents are still asked to submit a note granting permission for lower school students to be released to the sibling.
- **Late Pick-Ups:** At the conclusion of each school day, 15 minutes after dismissal time, the teacher records the names of students who have not been picked up in the Late Pick-up Log. These students are escorted to the late pick-up area. Parents are required to sign the Late Pick-up Log in recognition of their tardiness. Three late pick-ups within a term will require a conference with the parent/guardian to address the issue.

- Early Pick-Ups: Early pick-ups are disruptive to the learning environment and are therefore strongly discouraged. To ensure necessary order at the end of the school day, early pick-ups are not permitted when school buses are staging for dismissal. In an exceptional circumstance, please contact the school prior to arriving to remove your child from school early.

Grading and Promotion

Progress reports are given to all students and families every week. These reports provide useful and timely information about students' progress. Progress reports are especially valuable in alerting students and families to any areas in which students are falling short of the school's academic standards before problems take root. Progress reports also provide an excellent opportunity to acknowledge students who are doing outstanding work.

Promotional decisions are determined using a combination of factors, including but not limited to a student's (1) academic progress; (2) socio-emotional growth; (3) attendance. The school meets with families in the Fall and/or Spring to discuss student progress and parent collaboration. If the school feels that a student is not progressing appropriately, the school will send the parent a Promotion in Doubt letter identifying areas of concern. All final decisions regarding promotion and retention are made in June by the Principal, in consultation with school staff. Ascend will not re-evaluate students at the end of the summer to reconsider a decision to retain, but may promote a student if the student demonstrates exceptional growth at the beginning of the following school year.

All About Middle School

Middle School Calendar

Mon, August 22	First Day of School: Grades 5, 8
Thu, August 25	First Day of School: Grades 6, 7
Mon, August 22 - Fri, September 2	12:30pm Dismissal
Mon, September 5	No School - Labor Day
Mon, October 10	No School - Indigenous Peoples' Day
Fri, October 28	No School - Wellness Day
Tues, November 8	No School - Election Day
Fri, November 11	No School - Veterans Day
Mon, November 21 - Fri, November 25	No School - Thanksgiving Break
Mon, December 19 - Mon, January 2	No School - Winter Break
Tues, January 3	No School - Teacher Development
Mon, January 16	No School - Martin Luther King Jr. Day
Mon, February 20 - Fri, February 24	No School - Mid-Winter Break
Mon, March 20 - Fri, March 24	No School - Spring Break
Fri, April 7 - Mon, April 10	No School - Wellness Day
Fri, April 21	No School - Teacher Development
Mon, May 29	No School - Memorial Day
Mon, June 19	No School - Juneteenth
Wed, June 21	Last Day of School: Grades 5-8 (12:30 Dismissal)
Thu, June 22	Grade 8 Graduation

Middle School Arrival

Students may enter the school building beginning at 7:30 a.m. (7:40 for BWMS). Students are not permitted in the building prior to this time, and school staff members are not available before the time that doors open.

Breakfast ends at 7:50 a.m. Students arriving at school after 8:00 a.m. are marked tardy.

The school day begins with Advisory, during which homeroom teachers communicate vital information about the day ahead and engage in community building activities. It is critically important that all students are in their seats and ready to learn no later than 8:00 a.m. as tardiness not only impacts their own preparedness but disrupts the classroom as well.

Middle School Dismissal

The following dismissal procedures have been designed to transition students safely and efficiently.

Monday through Friday, students who are not enrolled in an afterschool tutoring or enrichment program will be dismissed at dismissal time.

- Picking-up Students at Dismissal: For the safety of your child, the school releases students only to those people identified on the students' designated pick-up list as authorized for pick-up or to those otherwise authorized in writing by the parent/guardian prior to pick-up time. There are no exceptions to this rule. If you would like to add to the list of individuals approved to pick-up your child, please complete the Authorized Pick-up Form, sign it and return it to the main office. Please note that students are not permitted to depart campus with an individual who does not meet the minimum age requirement of 13. Individuals may be required to show identification or proof of age.
- Students walking home alone: Students in grades 6 to 8 are allowed to leave school on their own. Grade 5 students are allowed to walk home alone once the school receives written permission from a parent or guardian. Parents are required to communicate transportation arrangements and expectations to their students in advance.
- Late Pick-ups: Fifteen minutes after dismissal each school day, school staff record the names of students who have not been picked up in the Late Pick-up Log. These students are escorted to the late pick-up area. Parents are required to sign the Late Pick-up Log in recognition of their tardiness. Three late pick-ups within a term will require a conference with the parent/guardian to address the issue. This late pick-up policy applies to students in grade 5 who are not permitted to walk home independently. It does not apply to students in grades

6 and higher.

- Early Pick-ups: Early pick-ups are disruptive to the learning environment and are therefore strongly discouraged. To ensure necessary order at the end of the school day, early pick-ups are not permitted when school buses are staging for dismissal. In an exceptional circumstance, please contact the school prior to arriving to remove your child from school early.

Grading, Promotion, and Graduation

Progress reports are given to all students and families every week. These reports provide useful and timely information about students' progress. Progress reports are especially valuable in alerting students and families to any areas in which students are falling short of the school's academic standards before problems take root. Progress reports also provide an excellent opportunity to acknowledge students who are doing outstanding work.

Promotional decisions are determined using a combination of factors, including but not limited to a student's (1) academic progress; (2) socio-emotional growth; (3) attendance. The school meets with families in the Fall and/or Spring to discuss student progress and parent collaboration. If the school feels that a student is not progressing appropriately, the school will send the parent a Promotion in Doubt letter identifying areas of concern. All final decisions regarding promotion and retention are made in June by the Principal, in consultation with school staff. Ascend will not re-evaluate students at the end of the summer to reconsider a decision to retain, but may promote a student if the student demonstrates exceptional growth at the beginning of the following school year.

Locker Policies

Each student is issued a locker at the start of the year. Students are responsible for their lockers at all times.

- The school is not responsible for items that are lost or stolen from student lockers.
- Students may not share lockers.
- Lockers must be kept clean.
- Students may go to their lockers before the school day, at the end of the school day, and with permission from a staff member.
- Lockers remain the property of the school, and the school may inspect or access student lockers at any time.
- Students do not have a right to privacy with regard to the contents kept in lockers.

All About High School

High School Calendar

Mon, August 22	First Day of School: Grades 9, 12
Thu, August 25	First Day of School: Grades 10, 11
Mon, August 22 - Fri, September 2	12:30pm Dismissal
Mon, September 5	No School - Labor Day
Mon, October 10	No School - Indigenous Peoples' Day
Fri, October 28	No School - Wellness Day
Tues, November 8	No School - Election Day
Fri, November 11	No School - Veterans Day
Mon, November 21 - Fri, November 25	No School - Thanksgiving Break
Mon, December 19 - Mon, January 2	No School - Winter Break
Tues, January 3	No School - Teacher Development
Mon, January 16	No School - Martin Luther King Jr. Day
Mon, February 20 - Fri, February 24	No School - Mid-Winter Break
Mon, March 20 - Fri, March 24	No School - Spring Break
Fri, April 7 - Mon, April 10	No School - Wellness Day
Fri, April 21	No School - Teacher Development
Mon, May 29	No School - Memorial Day
Mon, June 12	Grade 12 Graduation
Mon, June 19	No School - Juneteenth
Wed, June 21	Last Day of School: Grades 9-11 (12:30 Dismissal)

High School Arrival

Students may enter the school building beginning at 7:35 a.m. Students are not permitted in the building prior to 7:35 AM, and school staff members are not available before the time that doors open.

Breakfast ends at 7:50 a.m. Students must arrive by 7:55 a.m. to be marked on time to school. Every student is expected to be present and seated in advisory for the start of the academic day at 8:00 AM. Students arriving to advisory after 8:00 a.m. are marked late to class.

The school day begins with Advisory, during which homeroom teachers communicate vital information about the day ahead and engage in community building activities. It is critically important that all students are in their seats and ready to learn no later than the class start time listed above, as tardiness not only impacts their own preparedness but disrupts the classroom as well.

High School Dismissal

Monday through Friday, students who are not enrolled in an afterschool tutoring or enrichment program will be dismissed at dismissal time.

Locker Policies

Each student is issued a locker at the start of the year. Students are responsible for their lockers at all times.

- The school is not responsible for items that are lost or stolen from student lockers.
- Students may not share lockers.
- Lockers must be kept clean.
- Students may go to their lockers before the school day, at the end of the school day, and with permission from a staff member.
- Lockers remain the property of the school, and the school may inspect or access student lockers at any time.
- Students do not have a right to privacy with regard to the contents kept in lockers.

Late Homework in High School

Students should complete their work on time. We know students will miss assignments, and it is the goal of our school to have a policy that both penalizes students for late work and encourages them to complete the work. As such, work

may be submitted late and graded for a “step-down” within five school days. For example, if an assignment that would earn an A was due on Monday, but is turned in on Thursday, it would receive a B.

High School Office Hours

All students will participate in this additional programming to ensure that they are supported, while still on campus, to complete their schoolwork and access their teachers.

Office Hours are built into the academic day and are grade-specific, which allows all teachers to be available. Students have Office Hours Monday-Thursday for a total of 140 minutes per week.

Calculators in High School

Students are required to have their own Texas Instruments TI-84 or TI-84+ graphing calculator. Graphing calculators are required in all high school math and science courses, beginning with Algebra I and Physics. These calculators are allowed for Regents exams, Benchmark exams, the SAT, Advanced Placement tests, and are allowed at most universities.

During the second week of school, all math teachers will provide students with the official school calculator purchase form, which will allow students to purchase calculators for a discounted price. If a student needs to borrow a calculator, they may check one out so that they will be prepared for class. The calculator must be returned by the end of the class. To ensure this, each student must leave their ID card or other identification as collateral, which will be returned to the student when they return the calculator. This lending policy is not in effect during major examinations (Regents, Benchmarks, etc.) as the school will not have enough calculators to lend to everyone. Students are responsible for bringing their own calculators to examinations.

In specific courses, students must use four-function calculators in lieu of graphing calculators. Because these are not used regularly, the school will provide these whenever necessary for classwork or testing.

Calculator Use in High School

The use of the calculator for an individual course is at the discretion of the teacher. While a calculator is an invaluable tool for studying mathematics, there will be times when the instructor deems that a particular topic or skill is more appropriately investigated and assessed without the use of a calculator. Students

are expected to have their calculators on their desks at the start of every math class.

Similarly, students are expected to use their calculators to complete their homework assignments. Appropriate work, however, should still be shown in writing. As in all work, tasks performed on a calculator do not replace the expectation to show work on multi-step problems.

Students are expected to demonstrate the utmost personal integrity in using the calculator. Inappropriate uses of the calculator include, but are not limited to:

- Playing calculator games during class
- Storing formulas, notes, programs, and/or answers unauthorized by the teacher
- Sharing a calculator during a quiz, test, or final exam
- Using the calculator on an assessment not intended for calculator use

Inappropriate use may result in disciplinary consequences. The teacher reserves the right to take steps to avoid inappropriate use by clearing the memory of the calculator, trading a personal calculator for a school calculator, or other measures as necessary.

Calculator Safekeeping

As per our electronics policy, Ascend is not responsible for personal electronic devices. Therefore, students are solely responsible for the security of their own calculators. They should not leave it unattended during the school day. Lockers should remain locked at all times when they contain a calculator. Ascend will etch student names into the calculators to ensure proper identification. Students who bring in their own calculators must have it etched by a school official. Similarly, students should not at any time take or borrow a calculator belonging to someone else or the school without the owner's permission.

Textbooks in High School

Students and parents are responsible for returning all textbooks and other learning materials distributed to the student during the course of the year in the same condition in which they were distributed, excluding any normal wear and tear. Students are strongly advised to store all textbooks in their lockers if they are not being used. Ascend reserves the right to withhold report cards and student records and to delay the processing of transfer requests until all textbooks have been returned and unpaid fees have been satisfied in full. The cost of any unreturned or damaged textbooks must be paid before the student receives a final report card.

Grading, Promotion, and Graduation

Progress reports are given to all students and families every week. These reports provide useful and timely information about students' progress. Progress reports are especially valuable in alerting students and families to any areas in which students are falling short of the school's academic standards before problems take root. Progress reports also provide an excellent opportunity to acknowledge students who are doing outstanding work.

BAHS runs a series of four family progress monitoring conferences throughout the year. Students passing all classes or failing one meet with their advisors. Students failing two or more classes meet with either the Principal or the Assistant Principal.

Promotional decisions are determined using a combination of factors, including but not limited to a student's (1) academic progress; (2) socio-emotional growth; (3) attendance. The school meets with families in the Fall and/or Spring to discuss student progress and parent collaboration. If the school feels that a student is not progressing appropriately, the school will send the parent a Promotion in Doubt letter identifying areas of concern. All final decisions regarding promotion and retention are made in June by the Principal, in consultation with school staff. Ascend will not re-evaluate students at the end of the summer to reconsider a decision to retain, but may promote a student if the student demonstrates exceptional growth at the beginning of the following school year. Parents may appeal retention decisions in writing to the Principal.

High School Report Cards and Conferences

Report cards: Report cards are published four times a year following the end of each quarter. Report cards are available for pick-up during conferences or mailed home. Report cards will include the percent earned by term, as well as the year-to-date average.

Comments: Comments on report cards are invaluable for students, parents, and administrators to understand the rationale behind the grade that was assigned. All teachers are required to provide a minimum of two strengths and weaknesses per student. In addition, if a student has failed to complete a major assessment or requirement for the course, it must also be indicated in the comments.

Conferences: Conferences will be held over two days at two points in the school year for all students. Some students will have a third conference depending on their rate of progress. Students and families will meet with their advisors, and then have the option to meet with other teachers or staff. Following the first term, all students at risk of failing two or more courses must meet (along with a family member) with an assigned member of the leadership team. Following the second term, all students at

risk of failing two or more courses must meet (along with a family member) with the Principal, student services coordinator and/or the leader of the college counseling department.

GPA

A grade point average (GPA) is an indicator of a student's academic achievement in all their classes at Ascend. GPAs are often used by colleges for acceptances and scholarship opportunities. Due to the rigorous curriculum and instruction in AP courses, the GPA for those classes are weighted. The grading scale below is for both general (unweighted) and AP courses (weighted):

GPA Table			
%	Letter Grade	Unweighted GPA	Weighted GPA
97-100	A+	4.0	4.5
93-96	A	4.0	4.5
90-92	A-	3.7	4.2
87-89	B+	3.3	3.8
83-86	B	3.0	3.5
80-82	B-	2.7	3.2
77-79	C+	2.3	2.8
73-76	C	2.0	2.5
70-72	C-	1.7	2.2
67-69	D+	1.3	1.8
65-66	D	1.0	1.5
55-64	F	0.0	0.0

Honor Roll in High School

Ascend recognizes students who excel academically with the following designations:

- Honor Roll - To be placed on Honor Roll, students must receive all As and Bs in their courses.
- High Honor Roll - To be placed on High Honor Roll, a student must receive all As in their courses.

Note that courses on a Pass/Fail scale are not counted towards Honor Roll.

Class Rank

Ascend's class ranking will take into account both the degree of difficulty of the courses a student is taking (AP or regular courses) and the grade the student earns. The compilation of courses and grades is converted to an overall GPA, and the higher the GPA, the higher the student's class ranking.

Graduation Requirements in High School

In our mission as a college-preparatory school, Ascend Public Charter Schools expects its students to exceed minimum state requirements for graduation, which are listed below:

- 44 credits (One credit is earned per semester for each full-time course that receives a passing grade of 65 or higher, and a specific amount of credits are needed in each subject area.)
- Regents 4+1 requirements (pass 4 Regents exams in ELA, Math, Science and Social Studies + 1 additional flexible exam catered to the student's interest)
- 50 hours of community service

Credits		
Subject	Regents Diploma	Advanced Regents Diploma
English	8	8
Math Including at least 2 credits of advanced math (e.g. Geometry or Algebra II)	6	8
Science (including lab) Life Science Physical Science Life Science or Physical Science	6	6
Social Studies Global History (4) US History (2) Government (1) Economics (1)	8	8
Visual arts, music, dance, and/or theater	2	2
Electives	7	3
Health	1	1
Physical Education	4	4

Regents 4+1 Requirements

Students must pass these four Regents exams: English Language Arts, any mathematics, any science, and any social studies Regents exam and earn 44 required course credits. For their fifth required assessment, or +1 option, students may now pass any of the following exams:

- One additional Department-approved alternative in a different course in English language arts; OR
- One additional Regents exam or Department-approved alternative in a different course in social studies; OR
- One additional Regents exam in a different course in mathematics; OR
- One additional Regents examination in a different course in science; OR
- One additional CTE exam from the approved list for students who complete a CTW sequence at a State-approved CTE program only

Please see the link here for approved exams:

<http://www.nysed.gov/curriculum-instruction/multiple-pathways>

Regents Diploma	Advanced Regents Diploma
<p>Students must achieve a score of 65 or higher on these five Regents exams:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● English Language Arts (ELA) ● Any mathematics exam (Algebra I, Geometry, or Algebra II/Trigonometry) ● Any social studies exam (Global History and Geography or U.S. History and Government) ● Any science exam (Living Environment, Chemistry, Earth Science, or Physics) ● Any additional Regents exam or assessment approved by the State for this purpose 	<p>Students must achieve a score of 65 or higher on these nine exams:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● English Language Arts (ELA) ● Three mathematics exams (Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II/Trigonometry) ● Any social studies exam (Global History and Geography or U.S. History and Government) ● Two science exams (Living Environment and one of these: Chemistry, Earth Science, or Physics) ● Any additional Regents exam or assessment approved by the State for this purpose ● Any NYC Languages Other Than English (LOTE) exam

Community Service in High School

Community Service at Ascend Public Charter Schools serves as a vehicle for change and character development in a number of ways. The purpose of any service organization is to give students an opportunity to get involved in improving their community. At Ascend Public Charter Schools, participating in service not only gives students opportunities to better their own neighborhoods but also exposes them to larger societal issues, allowing them to develop a connection to and concern for those issues. Moreover, by volunteering, students are often able to learn more about themselves.

Our program includes hands-on service, as well as critical reflection periods and conversations. Students have the opportunity to become involved in service in a number of different ways. All high school students must complete 50 hours of community service to graduate. Due to lack of opportunity because of COVID-19, the next three graduating classes have a reduced number of required volunteer hours:

- Class of 2023: 12.5 hours of community service
- Class of 2024: 25 hours of community service
- Class of 2025: 37.5 hours of community service

Promotion Criteria in High School

The following chart shows the promotional criteria mandated by the NYCDOE. Students at risk of not meeting promotion standards will be notified in January or February. Students who do not meet promotion requirements in June have the opportunity to attend summer school and be promoted in August if promotion standards are met at that time.

Grade Level	Minimum Cumulative Credits
9	8
10	20, including 4 in English and 4 in Social Studies
11	30
12	44 credits in required subject areas

Our Philosophy of Discipline

When many hear the word “discipline”, they think of punishment. At Ascend, we believe that the purpose of discipline is to teach, not punish. A punitive approach to discipline does not lead to knowledge of social skills, confidence, nor character. Furthermore, a punitive approach to discipline that is rooted in the command and control of one’s body, words and actions is problematic; such a method upholds the values of white supremacy culture and views the students, who in Ascend schools are largely black and brown students, as objects to be controlled. Our students do not need to be controlled. They are and must continue to be free to think and thrive on their own with the knowledge, confidence, and character to succeed in college and beyond

We believe that all children inherently want to make good choices and to reach meaningful goals. To achieve those goals, they must have the discipline to do so. Exercising discipline can lead to the development of strong habits, and our approach to student culture creates the conditions for our children to be their best selves, both academically and socio-emotionally.

As we teach our expectations, we keep the thinking work on our students. Their thinking and their voices must be part of the creation of our learning culture. This student-centered inquiry-based approach to discipline signals high expectations for children and our belief that they can meet them.

We base our philosophy of discipline on the principles, tools, and strategies employed by Responsive Classroom and Restorative Justice, as they are highly aligned with our values at Ascend and center on the student – their identity, values, ideas, and the impact of their actions on the community:

- Responsive Classroom is an evidence-based approach to teaching and discipline that focuses on engaging academics, positive community, effective management, and developmental awareness.
(www.responsiveclassroom.org/about)
- Restorative Justice brings persons together in dialogue that aims to build understanding, explore how the actions have impacted those involved and develop agreements for what will be done to make things right.
(<https://www.restorativeresources.org/>)

We expect every member of the Ascend community, whether staff member, student, or family member, to treat every person at Ascend schools with dignity and respect. We are dedicated to creating secure school environments in which each student's behavior supports high-level academic achievement, as well as personal growth and development.

Code of Conduct

Every student has the right to learn in a safe, respectful, and nurturing environment. The actions of one student must never be permitted to undermine the intellectual, emotional, and social development of their peers. Ascend Public Charter Schools' Code of Conduct offers students and their parents or guardians a guide to the consequences of unacceptable behaviors. Ascend school leaders, faculty, and staff rigorously enforce the Code in the interest of the entire school community.

The Code of Conduct establishes reasonable boundaries for students and provides clear, fair, and predictable consequences for breaking the rules. We expect students to make good choices. In cases where mistakes happen, we expect them to accept responsibility and learn from the experience.

Student disciplinary offenses are those actions or inactions that violate Ascend's Code of Conduct or interfere with the delivery of educational services; jeopardize the health, safety, and well-being of any member of the school community; or threaten the integrity and stability of the school itself.

The following list is not exhaustive but provides examples of violations of the Code that may result in disciplinary consequences which are explained in more depth following the list of violations. Ascend may modify the list of behavior violations and consequences from time to time with notice to students and families.

Category I Behavior Violations

The following behaviors may result in consequences determined by the child's teacher or additional afterschool support. Repeated Category I violations, based on severity, may be treated as Category II violations. Category I behaviors can lead to consequences up to and including suspension.

Behavior	Description of Behavior
1.1 Failure to Follow Directions	Each student must not ignore or refuse the directions of any adult in the school, including administrators, teachers, educational assistants, secretaries, custodians, lunchroom workers, and security guards.
1.2 Behaving in a Manner Which Disrupts the Education Process	Students must not cause disruption by talking, making noises, throwing objects, or otherwise distracting classmates or the teacher.
1.3 Uniform Violation	Students must not violate the school uniform policy each school day.
1.4 Academic Integrity	Students must not engage in academic cheating. Cheating includes, but is not limited to, the giving or receiving of any unauthorized aid or the giving or receiving of unfair advantage on any form of academic work. Students must not engage in plagiarism, which includes the copying of language, structures, ideas and/or thoughts of another person and representing it as one's own original work. A student must not unlawfully duplicate, reproduce, retain, or use copyrighted material.
1.5 Electronic Media and Communication Devices	Students may not use electronic media and/or communications devices without permission. Should a student use such a device at school without permission, in addition to other consequences deemed appropriate by school staff, the item may be confiscated and held until an adult picks it up.
1.6 Engaging in or Causing Disruptive Behavior on the School Bus	Students must follow the bus rules, and not engage in disruptive behavior or language. Serious behavior violations may be categorized as a Category II or III violations and treated as such.

Category II Behavior Violations

The following behaviors may result in suspension or other disciplinary consequences, depending on the circumstances. Repeated Category II violations may be treated as Category III violations. Students who repeatedly engage in Category II behaviors or have serious offenses in Category II behaviors may also be subject to long-term suspension or expulsion.

Behavior	Description of Behavior
2.1 Truancy and Cutting	Any full-day or part-day absence from school that is not excused by a parent or legal guardian is considered truancy. Being absent from one or more classes during the school day without the permission of school staff is "cutting" and is not allowed.
2.2 Profanity or Obscenity	Students must not say or write inappropriate words or make obscene gestures. Students must not draw or show sexually explicit pictures to anyone at school. Cursing or swearing is also strictly prohibited.
2.3 Play Fighting and Threatening	Students may not play-fight and/or threaten others as such behavior compromises the safety of the community.
2.4 Smoking	Smoking and possession of any kind of tobacco at school, on school grounds, or at any school-related activity are prohibited.
2.5 Alcohol, Drugs, and Drug Paraphernalia	Students must not bring alcohol, drugs, or any drug paraphernalia to school. They must not manufacture, sell, handle, possess, use, deliver, or be under any degree of influence of any alcoholic beverage, intoxicant, or drug (legal intoxication is not a requirement). Students must not inhale any substance for the purpose of becoming intoxicated or under the influence. Prescribed medication must be delivered to the school by the parent or guardian with the written authorization of a physician. All prescribed medication must be administered at school by the school nurse. As described below, the possession of narcotics with the intent to sell or distribute is a Category III violation and may lead to immediate suspension, a recommendation for expulsion, and a police referral.
2.6 Pornographic Material	The possession, distribution, or creation of pornographic material is not tolerated.

<p style="text-align: center;">2.7 Stealing</p>	<p>Students must not take without permission anything that does not belong to them or have in their possession anything that has been stolen.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">2.8 Aggressive Disruptive Conduct</p>	<p>Students must not, by any type of conduct (including but not limited to violence, force, noise, coercion, threat, intimidation, or fear), cause the disruption, disturbance, or obstruction of any school function, activity, or event. Students may not coerce other students to engage in conduct that interrupts the academic process.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">2.9 Gang Activity</p>	<p>Students must not wear or display any clothing, jewelry, colors, or insignia that a teacher or administrator may reasonably perceive as evidence of membership in or affiliation with a gang or that otherwise symbolizes support of a gang. Students must not use any word, phrase, written symbol, or gesture that intentionally identifies them as members of a gang or otherwise symbolizes support of a gang, nor try to recruit others to gangs.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">2.10 Defacement or Destruction of Property</p>	<p>Students must not mark, damage, break, or destroy school property or anything that belongs to someone else. Students who destroy or vandalize school property are required to pay for losses or damages, in addition to other consequences deemed appropriate by school staff.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">2.11 Sexual Misconduct or Inappropriate Touching</p>	<p>Students are prohibited from engaging in acts of sexual harassment, including but not limited to physical touching or offensive sexual comment.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">2.12 Teasing</p>	<p>Students must not make fun of, provoke, or disturb others playfully or maliciously.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">2.13 Lookalike Weapons</p>	<p>Students must not possess, handle, or transmit any object or instrument that is a "look-alike" weapon or instrument (e.g., rubber knife, or toy gun).</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">2.14 Abusive or Profane Language or Treatment</p>	<p>Students may not use abusive, threatening, vulgar, coarse, or degrading language (including racial, sexist or homophobic remarks).</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">2.15 Engaging in Inappropriate Use of Social Media</p>	<p>Students must not engage in online conduct or communication that may harass or intimidate others, or reasonably lead to a disruption of the educational environment.</p>

Category III Behavior Violations

Any student who engages in any of the behaviors in this category may be suspended or expelled from the school.

Behavior	Description of Behavior
<p>3.1 Committing Assault</p>	<p>Students may not commit assault, including sexual assault, or assault and battery on a student, school employee, or another person. Assault is an attempt or threat to physically harm another person; assault does not require physical contact.</p>
<p>3.2 Intimidation or Bullying (Including Cyber-Bullying)</p>	<p>Bullying is defined as a series of acts or a single negative act (depending on severity) that involves a real or perceived imbalance of power, i.e., where a more powerful (whether real or perceived) individual student harasses another student less powerful or perceived to be less powerful. Bullying can take many forms, including but not limited to: (1) physical, e.g., hitting, kicking, spitting, pushing, and taking personal belongings; (2) verbal, e.g., taunting, malicious teasing, name-calling, making threats; and (3) psychological, e.g., spreading rumors; manipulating social relationships; or engaging in social exclusion, extortion, or intimidation. Cyber-bullying involves the use of information technology, including e-mail, instant messaging, blogs, chat rooms, pagers, cell phones, and gaming systems in the deliberate harassment, threatening, or intimidation of students. Examples include sending mean, vulgar, or threatening messages or images; posting sensitive, private information about another person (including "sexting"); and impersonation.</p>
<p>3.3 Extortion</p>	<p>Students must not coerce a person – through intimidation, threat, or force – into doing anything that person does not wish to do. Students must not engage in the act of securing or attempting to secure money or other items of value from an unwilling person.</p>
<p>3.4 Harassment</p>	<p>Harassment of any type, including hazing and discriminatory harassment, is prohibited. Students must not make unwelcome sexual advances or requests for</p>

	<p>sexual favors; or engage in other verbal or physical conduct relating to a person's sex, race, color, national origin, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, height, weight, marital status, or disability (e.g., sexual or racial comments, threats or insults, or unwanted touching). Students may not engage in the harassment of students off school property under circumstances where such off-campus conduct: (1) affects the education process; (2) actually endangers the health and safety of our students; or (3) is reasonably believed to pose a danger to the health and safety of our students. This includes written and/or verbal harassment, including cyberbullying, which materially and substantially disrupts the work and discipline of the school and/or which school officials reasonably forecast as being likely to materially and substantially disrupt the academic work and culture of the school.</p>
<p>3.5 Actions Against Staff Members</p>	<p>Harassing (verbal or written abuse or disrespect), intimidating, threatening, or physically abusing a staff member is not allowed.</p>
<p>3.6 Weapons</p>	<p>Students must not possess, handle, transmit, or use as a weapon any instrument that can be used to harm another person. Weapons include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Firearms: Any weapon (including a starter gun) that is designed to, or may readily be converted to, expel a projectile by the action of an explosive ● Explosives: Any substance or prepared chemical that can explode or is capable of inflicting bodily injury or is reasonably likely to cause physical discomfort to another person, including fireworks and firecrackers ● Knives: Any knife or blade of any size ● Chemicals such as mace, pepper gas, or like substances ● Stun gun; brass knuckles; or blackjack ● Dangerous items: Prohibited items not designed as weapons that can be used or perceived as such, including but not limited to razors, box cutters, hammers, baseball bats, and metal combs of any length with a sharpened handle

<p style="text-align: center;">3.7 Possession of Narcotics with Intent to Distribute or Sell</p>	<p>The possession of narcotics with the intent to distribute or sell may be cause for immediate suspension, a recommendation for expulsion to the school’s Board of Trustees, and referral to law enforcement officials.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">3.8 False Fire Alarms or Bomb Reports</p>	<p>Students must not break or pull the fire alarm at any time unless there is an emergency, nor make bomb threats.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">3.9 Starting a Fire</p>	<p>Starting a fire or conspiring to start a fire on school property is strictly prohibited.</p>

Gun Free Schools

Federal and state laws 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).

Any such expulsion must be consistent with the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and its implementing regulations, for a student with or presumed to have disabilities.

“Firearm,” as used in this law, is defined by 18 USC §921(a), and includes firearms and explosives.

The definition of “firearm” includes but is not limited to:

- 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
- The frame or receiver of any weapon described above
- Any firearm muffler or firearm silencer
- Any destructive 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 devices

The Principal shall refer to the criminal justice or juvenile delinquency system any student who brings a firearm or weapon to the school. “Weapon” as used in this context shall mean any device, instrument, material, or substance that is used for or is readily capable of causing death or serious bodily injury, except that such term does not include a pocket knife with a blade of less than two and a half inches in length.

Disciplinary Actions

School leaders will use their professional judgment to apply Ascend's philosophy of discipline when determining which disciplinary action(s) will be most effective in dealing with the student's behavior, taking into account the following factors and other relevant issues:

- The student's age and maturity level
- The nature and seriousness of the behavior and the circumstances that led to it
- The effectiveness of other forms of discipline
- Information from parents or guardians, teachers and/or others, as appropriate

When a student does not meet behavioral expectations and violates Ascend's Code of Conduct, there will be clear and consistent disciplinary action.

Progressively more serious disciplinary consequences shall be imposed upon any student who repeatedly commits one or more disciplinary offenses.

Discipline for Students with Disabilities

In addition to the discipline procedures applicable to all students, the following procedures are applicable to 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 §300.534—that a disability exists shall also be disciplined in accordance with these provisions. Ascend shall comply with sections 300.530-300.536 of the Code of Federal Regulations 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.

Ascend 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 whose 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 immediately be referred to the appropriate Committee on Special Education (CSE) for any consideration of changes.

If a student identified as having a disability is suspended during the course of the school year for a total of ten days, such student will immediately be referred to the CSE of the student's district of residence for reconsideration of the student's educational placement.

In considering the placement of students referred because of disciplinary problems, the CSE of the student's district of residence is expected to follow its ordinary policies with respect to notification and involvement of the parent(s) or guardian(s).

Ascend will ensure that the special education coordinator or special education teachers and/or the general classroom teacher will attend all meetings regarding their students initiated by the CSE from the student's district of residence. These meetings could be relating to the development and implementation of behavioral intervention plans, initial referrals, change in service, or annual review, Manifestation Determination Reviews (MDRs), among other things.

Provision of Services During Removal

Service requirements for students with disabilities removed for a period of fewer than ten cumulative days during the school year are the same as they are for nondisabled students - students will receive all classroom assignments and a schedule to complete such assignments during the time of their suspension. Provisions will be made to permit a suspended student to make-up assignments or tests missed as a result of their suspension.

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 progress appropriately in the general curriculum and achieve the goals of their Individualized Education Program (IEP). In these cases, school personnel, in consultation with the child's special education teacher, shall make the service determination.

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 progress appropriately in the general curriculum and in achieving the goals of their IEP. The CSE of the student's district of residence will make the service determination.

During any removal for drug, weapon, controlled substance and/or serious bodily injury offenses pursuant to 34 CFR §300.530(g), services will be provided to the extent necessary to enable the child to progress appropriately in the general curriculum and in achieving the goals of their IEP. These service determinations will be made by the CSE of the student's district of residence.

Additional Due Process (Manifestation Determination Review - MDR)

If discipline that would constitute a change in placement is contemplated for any student with a disability, the following steps shall be taken: (1) not later than the date

on which the decision to take such action is made, the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the student with a disability shall be notified by the school 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 of the student's district of residence and other qualified personnel shall meet and review the relationship between the student's disability and the behavior subject to the disciplinary action.

If, upon review, it is determined that the student's behavior was not a manifestation of their disability, then the student may be disciplined in the same manner as a student without a disability, except as provided in 34 CFR §300.530(d), which relates to the provision of services to students with disabilities during periods of removal.

A student's parent(s) or guardian(s) may request a hearing to challenge the manifestation determination. Except as provided below, the student will remain in their current educational placement pending the determination of the hearing officer.

If a parent or guardian 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, drugs, or serious bodily injury, the student shall remain in the 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 or guardian and school agree otherwise.

Students with a 504 Plan and "Deemed to Know" Students

With regard to disciplinary actions, including suspension or expulsion, the Section 504 rights of charter school students with disabilities are the same as other students with disabilities.

When addressing discipline for students with disabilities, including students with 504 plans or those who are "presumed to have a disability," Ascend will comply with applicable legal requirements governing the discipline of a student for misconduct.

Corporal Punishment

No employee or agent of Ascend shall inflict corporal punishment upon a student as a penalty for unacceptable conduct. The term "corporal punishment" means any act of physical force upon a student for the purpose of punishing that student. The term does not mean the use of reasonable physical force by a teacher to protect themselves from physical injury; to protect another person from physical injury; to protect property, or to restrain or remove a student whose behavior is interfering with the orderly exercise and performance of school functions, powers or duties, if that pupil

has refused to comply with a request to refrain from further disruptive acts, and provided that alternative procedures and methods not involving the use of physical force cannot reasonably be employed to achieve these purposes.

Search Procedures

For the safety of students and everyone in the Ascend community, school property that is assigned to students, including lockers, coat racks, cubbies, and desks, remain the property of Ascend. Students have no expectation of privacy in these areas.

The Principal or their designee will make an individual search of a student's bag, desk, cubbies, lockers, and person when there is reasonable suspicion to believe that a student is in the possession of an item which is prohibited on school property or which may be used to disrupt or interfere with the educational process.

Searches will be conducted under the authorization of the Principal or their designee. At least two school staff members will be present during the search. Items that are prohibited on school property, or which may be used to disrupt or interfere with the educational process, may be removed from students' desks, bag, backpack, cubbies, lockers and person by school authorities. Parents or guardians will be informed that a search of their child will take place prior to the search when possible; otherwise, parents or guardians will be informed after the search.

Students may be subject to unannounced metal detection scanning searches from time to time in accordance with Ascend's search and seizure policy, which may be obtained by contacting the main office. This would include a metal detector scan or a scan by means of a hand-held detector.

Academic Integrity and Scholastic Dishonesty

Effective teaching and learning depend upon the ability of members of the academic community to trust the integrity of work that is submitted for academic credit or review by peers or teachers.

Such an atmosphere of mutual trust fosters the free exchange of ideas and enables all members of the community to achieve their highest potential.

In all academic work, the ideas and contributions of others must be appropriately acknowledged and work that is presented as original must be, in fact, original. Faculty, students and staff all share the responsibility of ensuring the honesty and fairness of the intellectual environment at Ascend Public Charter Schools.

While "scholastic dishonesty" is a Category I behavior violation (Violation 1.4 in the Code of Conduct), this should not be misunderstood to mean that Ascend does not take this action seriously. In fact, as our core mission is to prepare students to thrive

in college and beyond, behaviors related to academic integrity will receive the highest levels of scrutiny, especially as students mature to high school age. Please note that depending on the age, maturity level and nature of the offense, violations in this category could lead to longer-term suspension.

Classroom Consequences

When students need support meeting Ascend's Code of Conduct, teachers support them. Continued misbehavior results in more severe consequences, including referral to the Assistant Principal or Principal.

When students break the rules, one of the ways teachers respond is with logical consequences. Logical consequences are non punitive. They help students recognize the effects of their actions and fix any problems their actions may have caused. Logical consequences are respectful of the student, relevant to the mistake, and reasonable for the teacher to implement and the student to carry out.

There are three types of logical consequences: loss of privilege, break it/fix it and space and time. All logical consequences will usually fall into one of these categories--which type is used will depend not only on the situation but on what is known about the student developmentally, academically and socially.

- **Loss of Privilege:** A privilege is an opportunity for students to learn to be responsible when acting autonomously, such as choosing a partner or using classroom equipment. When a student struggles to manage that responsibility the privilege is removed for a brief period of time, generally a class period or a day.
- **Break It, Fix It:** This type of consequence gives students the opportunity to fix or clean up something they've broken or spilled, whether on purpose or by accident. It reinforces the fact that we all make mistakes and when we do, it's our responsibility to clean up after ourselves.
- **Positive Time Out (lower schools)/Space and Time (upper schools):** This logical consequence lets a student who is losing focus or having trouble controlling their words or actions go to a designated space in the classroom to calm down and refocus.

Removals from the Classroom and Referrals to School Administrator

Egregious behaviors, including continual disruption, extreme disrespect to the teacher or others, or any physical altercation, may result in removal from the class and referral to a school administrator, followed by a phone call home and/or suspension.

Additional Afterschool Support

At the discretion of the school, students may be assigned afterschool support to re-teach, practice or research expected behaviors. The afterschool support will take place following dismissal and will be assigned to students as the result of but not limited to the following:

- Excessive tardiness
- Excessive uniform violations
- Excessive incomplete or missing homework or classwork
- Category I or II behavior violations (see below)

Afterschool support may be assigned on the same day as the infraction, but the school will notify parents/guardians prior to assigning this logical consequence. Systemic detention practices are not in place at Ascend; afterschool support should be individualized and targeted to the problem behavior to be effective.

Suspensions

Ascend has dramatically reduced the number of suspensions issued over the last five years by implementing logical consequences. However, at times, student conduct has so violated the norms of the community that a period away from the community is required to support the child's eventual reintegration to the community and the repair of harm done. Suspensions at Ascend are a consequence of last resort.

Half-Day Suspension

If a student needs to go home because of a behavioral infraction, a parent/guardian must come to the school and remove the student from school grounds. Students sent home for behavioral infractions are not dismissed unless the parent, guardian, or authorized adult has personally arrived at the school.

Procedures and Due Process for Short-Term Suspensions

A short-term suspension refers to the removal of a student from the school for disciplinary reasons for a period of up to ten days.

The Principal may impose a short-term suspension and shall follow due process procedures consistent with applicable federal case law. Before imposing a short-term suspension, the Principal shall notify the student orally how their actions violated the code of conduct and that disciplinary action is being taken. If the student denies the misconduct, the Principal must provide an explanation of what they believe occurred.

The student shall be given an opportunity to deny or explain their alleged violations of the code of conduct that led to the suspension.

The Principal shall immediately notify the parent(s) or guardian(s) in writing that the student may be suspended from school. The written notice shall be provided by personal delivery (email, by hand) or express mail delivery within 24 hours of the decision to impose suspension at the last known address(es) of the parent(s) or guardian(s). The notification shall also be provided by telephone if the school has been provided with a telephone number(s) for the purpose of contacting the parent(s) or guardian(s).

The notice shall provide a description of the incident(s) for which suspension is proposed and shall inform the parent(s) or guardian(s) of their right to request an immediate informal conference with the Principal. Both the notice and informal conference shall be in the primary language of the family/ guardian, as noted in student records. At the conference, the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the student and the student shall have the opportunity to present the student's version of the incident and to ask questions of observers under such procedures as the Principal may establish. The notice and opportunity for an informal conference shall take place before the student is suspended unless the student's presence in 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.

An appeal of the decision of the Principal may be made to the Chief Schools Officer of Ascend Learning. All appeals must be in writing and submitted to the Chief Schools Officer within ten calendar days of the date of the Principal's decision unless the parent(s) or guardian(s) can show that extraordinary circumstances precluded them from doing so. The Chief Schools Officer will issue a written decision within ten business days of receiving the appeal. The final decision of the Chief Schools Officer may be appealed to the Board of Trustees (and thereafter to the school's authorizer and then the Board of Regents).

Procedures and Due Process for Long-Term Suspensions or Expulsion

A long-term suspension refers to the removal of a student from the school for disciplinary reasons for a period of more than ten days. Expulsion refers to the permanent removal of a student for disciplinary reasons.

Upon determining that a student's action warrants a possible long-term suspension or expulsion, the following procedure, consistent with applicable federal case law, will be followed:

If necessary, the student shall immediately be removed from class and/or school.

The Principal shall verbally inform the student of how their actions violated the code of conduct and any associated evidence of those actions; where applicable, the student will have the opportunity to explain their side of the events. The Principal shall immediately notify the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the student, in person or on the phone.

The Principal shall provide written notice that the school is going to commence a disciplinary hearing to the student and their parent(s) or guardian(s) by personal delivery or express mail delivery as soon as possible to the last known address of the parent(s) or guardian(s). Such notice shall provide a description of the incident or incidents and shall state that a formal hearing will be held on the matter which 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) if it is known by Ascend to be other than English. The notice will state that at the formal hearing, the student shall have the right to be represented by counsel (at the family's expense), present and question witnesses, and present evidence.

The school will set a date, time, and place for the formal hearing, which shall be set forth in the written notice described above.

The school will send the parent(s) or guardian(s) the evidence on which the school intends to rely and a list of witnesses it is considering calling. The parent(s) or guardian(s) should notify the school in a reasonable time in advance of the hearing if they seek any other potentially relevant documents.

The school reserves the right to make changes to both its witness list and the evidence it introduces.

An audio transcript of the formal hearing will be created and made available to all parties upon request.

For a long-term suspension hearing, the Chief Schools Officer or their designee, shall serve as the hearing officer and preside over the hearing. For an expulsion hearing, the hearing officer will be a board member or their designee. A written decision will be issued within five school days after the formal hearing to the student and their parent(s) or guardian(s).

An appeal from the written decision may be made to the Board of Trustees, which will make its decision based solely upon the record before it. All appeals to the Board must be in writing and submitted to the Board within ten calendar days of the date of the written decision unless the parent(s) or guardian(s) can show that extraordinary circumstances precluded them from doing so. The Board of Trustees will issue a written decision within ten business days of receiving the appeal. The final decisions of the Board of Trustees may be appealed to the school's authorizer.

The school will ensure that alternative educational services are provided to a student who has been suspended or removed to help that student progress in the general curriculum of the school. Alternative instruction for suspended students will be of sufficient duration to enable a student to cover all class material, take all tests and quizzes, keep pace with other students, and progress to the next grade level. All suspended students are entitled to receive alternative instruction commencing within 24 hours of the suspension or expulsion. Alternative instruction dates and times will be listed on the student's suspension letter. All students will be provided with a minimum of two hours per day of alternative instruction.

For a student who has been expelled, alternative instruction will be provided in the same manner as a suspended student until the student enrolls in another school or until the end of the school year, whichever comes first.

Instruction will take place in one of the following locations: the student's home, a contracted facility or a suspension room at another Ascend school. One or more of the following individuals will provide instruction: teacher, teacher aide, or a tutor hired for this purpose. Please note that whoever administers this instruction will meet all certification requirements as stipulated in Section 2854(3)(a-1) of the New York State Education Law.

Re-entry procedure: Upon suspension, families will be informed of the re-entry process before the student returns to school.

Our K - 12 Policies and Procedures

Compliance with The Child Find Requirements of IDEA

Ascend will comply with the federal Child Find requirements (34 CFR §300.111), which require schools to have in place a process for identifying, locating and evaluating students with disabilities. Students enrolling for the first time in a New York public school will be screened by a team of teachers (including both regular and special education teachers) to identify any possible indication that the child may need a specialized or Individualized Education Program or referral to the CSE of the student's district of residence. Other students will be brought to the attention of the team if they are demonstrating difficulty within the regular classroom environment. Strategies will then be implemented to address any identified special needs of the student. Should the problems persist and a disability is suspected, the student will be referred to the CSE of the student's district of residence for an evaluation.

Non-Discrimination Policy

Ascend Public Charter Schools welcomes all students equally. All students will be treated as individuals and different treatment based on actual or perceived race, color, ethnicity, national origin, citizenship status, sex, sexual orientation, gender, disability, religion or any other characteristic protected by local, state, or federal law will not be tolerated. Anyone who feels that they have been treated differently on any such basis should speak with a counselor/social worker, who will apprise the Principal of all reports. Anyone who raises any concerns of discrimination on any basis will be free from retaliation for raising such a concern.

Dignity For All Students Policy

Ascend Public Charter Schools is committed to providing safe and productive learning environments in which all students are treated with respect and dignity. In accordance with New York State's Dignity for All Students Act, each school will promptly address all incidents of harassment and/or discrimination of or by any student enrolled at an Ascend school. This includes bullying, taunting, or intimidation in all its forms.

Students' Rights. No student shall be subjected to harassment or bullying by employees or students on school property or at a school function. Additionally, no student shall be subject to discrimination based on the student's actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender, or sex, by school employees or students on school property or at a school function. Harassment may include, among other things, the use, both on and off school property, of information technology such as email, instant messaging, blogs, chat rooms, pagers, cell phones, gaming systems and social media websites to harass or threaten others. This type of harassment is referred to as cyber bullying, and it is considered a form of harassment, like bullying.

Further, each school reserves the right to discipline students, consistent with our Code of Conduct, who engage in the harassment of students off school property under circumstances where such off-campus conduct: 1) affects the educative process; 2) actually endangers the health and safety of Ascend students; or 3) is reasonably believed to pose a danger to the health and safety of our students within the educational system. This includes written and/or verbal harassment, including cyber bullying, which materially and substantially disrupts the work and discipline of the school and/or which school officials reasonably forecast as being likely to materially and substantially disrupt the academic work and culture of the school.

Dignity Act Coordinator (DAC). Each school has a designated Dignity Act Coordinator (DAC). The DAC is trained to handle human relations in the areas of race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender, and sex. The DAC will be accessible to students and employees for consultation and advice. Contact information for each school's DAC will be posted on ParentSquare.

Curriculum. Each Ascend charter school shall conduct bullying and cyberbullying education as part of its character education curriculum in every grade. The instruction is age appropriate, and is intended to support maintenance of an environment that is free of bullying, harassment, and discrimination.

Professional Development. Each school shall provide annual professional development to all employees on the Dignity for all Students Act and this policy, which shall address the social patterns of harassment, bullying, and discrimination, including but not limited to those acts based on a person's actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender, or sex; the identification and mitigation of harassment, bullying and discrimination; and strategies for effectively addressing problems of exclusion, bias, and aggression in educational settings.

Reporting and Investigating. All staff members are responsible for reporting harassment of which they have been made aware of to their immediate supervisor or the Principal within one school day, and must file a written report within two school days of the notification.

Any student who believes that they are being subjected to harassment, as well as any other person who has knowledge of or witnesses any possible occurrence of harassment, shall report the harassment to any staff member, the DAC, or to the Principal. A staff member who witnesses harassment or who receives a report of harassment shall inform the Principal.

The Principal shall promptly investigate the complaint and take appropriate action which may include, if necessary, referral to the Board of Trustees or a board designee. Follow-up inquiries, discipline, and/or appropriate monitoring of the alleged harasser and victim shall be made to ensure that harassment has not resumed and that those involved in the investigation of allegations of harassment have not suffered retaliation.

Material incidents of discrimination and harassment on school grounds or at a school function will be reported to the State Education Department as required by law.

No Retaliation Policy

Ascend Public Charter Schools prohibits retaliatory behavior directed against complainants, victims, witnesses, and/or any other individuals who participate in the reporting and investigation of allegations of harassment. All complainants and those who participate in the investigation of a complaint in conformity with state law and this policy, who have acted reasonably and in good faith, have the right to be free from retaliation of any kind.

Supporting Transgender & Gender-Expansive Student Policy

The policy is underpinned by legislative and policy frameworks and supports Ascend to meet its legislative requirements and commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and anti-racism.

Ascend is committed to providing an environment where all members of the Ascend community feel safe and respected and are treated with dignity. All members of the Ascend community have the right to have their sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, and gender expression recognized and respected by their school and Ascend Learning community.

Every member of the Ascend community is responsible for developing and maintaining a safe, inclusive, and welcoming school environment for all members of the community, including LGBTQIA+ students. Ascend has zero tolerance for all forms of discrimination, harassment, and bullying. Instances of discrimination, harassment, and bullying will be addressed in accordance with the non-discrimination and Dignity for All Students policy.

Enrollment and Withdrawal Policy

Students may withdraw from an Ascend charter school at any time based on a written request by the student's parent or guardian. Such notice will typically take the form of a records request from the student's new school, or a withdrawal form. Absent these forms, the school will require evidence of arrangements to enroll the student in a new school to process the withdrawal. After a student has withdrawn, the seat is offered to another student on the waitlist. To re-enter the school, students must apply as a new student. If the family of a student believes that the withdrawal was in error, or was involuntary, or believes another special circumstance exists, the family may make a request to the Principal to re-enroll the student. The Principal will make a final determination in conjunction with the network enrollment team.

Health Policies and Procedures

Ascend Public Charter Schools complies with New York State laws governing students' health, immunization, and health records. New York State law requires every student to be vaccinated against certain diseases unless such student has a valid medical exemption in accordance with New York State law. Please note that as of June 2019, religious exemptions from school vaccination requirements have been removed from New York State law and are no longer allowed.

Each school must have on file a completed and signed Child & Adolescent Health Examination Form (CH205) completed by a New York State licensed physician, for each student, by the fourteenth day from the first day of school, unless such student

has a valid medical exemption to such immunization requirements in accordance with New York State law. The Principal may extend this 14-day period to thirty days under limited circumstances. A student who does not provide sufficient proof of immunization in compliance with these legal requirements will be excluded from school until such requirements are met in accordance with Public Health Law 2164.

Families are required to provide a new physical examination form (CH 205) every one year for elementary aged children and every two years for middle and high school, even if no new immunizations are required, to ensure that schools have current information on their students' health.

Illness and Exclusion Policy

If a student shows any symptoms of illness, such as a high temperature, nausea, diarrhea, sore throat, or rashes, they should not come to school until the seriousness of the condition has been determined or the symptoms have disappeared. Such precaution hastens the student's recovery and helps reduce the spread of infections at school.

The nurse removes any student who shows such symptoms from class, and contacts the parent or guardian to make arrangements for the student to be picked-up as soon as possible. If the parent or guardian cannot be reached, the school will call the person(s) designated as the emergency contact(s). An ill or injured student must be picked up within one hour of our call.

If a student's condition warrants immediate medical attention, the school would contact the student's healthcare provider or call 911.

Communicable Diseases

The parent or guardian must notify their student's school immediately if a student has contracted a communicable disease (such as strep throat or pink eye) so that the school may take action to protect other students by notifying families of those potentially at risk. If more than one case of a communicable disease occurs in a single homeroom, the school would contact our consultant from the local health department to seek advice and ensure that appropriate actions are taken. In the event of an epidemic, special precautions or exclusion policies may be necessary.

Contact your doctor about when it is appropriate to return to school if your student has a communicable disease. The doctor's note returning the student to school should identify when the student is allowed to come back.

Ascend Administration of Medication

Ascend Public Charter Schools does not issue any form of medication to students, including over-the-counter drugs such as aspirin or Tylenol, except as described below. As a singular exception, parents or guardians may sign a permission slip giving a school the right to administer Syrup of Ipecac to induce vomiting in case of accidental poisoning.

A nurse must administer all medication and only when the following requirements are met:

- The school has received written authorization from the parent or legal guardian for each medication in the form of a completed and signed Medical Administration Form (MAF).
- The school has received a doctor's written permission to administer prescribed medication. (For prescription medication, the pharmacy label serves as the doctor's permission.)
- The medication label states all of the following: the student's name, directions for use, the name of the drug, the physician's name, the prescribed dosage, and the expiration date.
- Medication is stored in its original container in the nurse's office and is accompanied by the signed Medical Administration Form (MAF).
- Epinephrine auto-injectors or emergency asthma medication may be stored in other locations within the school to facilitate the most effective emergency response, by prior arrangement with the Assistant Principal of Operations and the school nurse.
- The school does its best to follow the medication instructions provided, but cannot be held responsible for forgetting or delaying the provision of medicine.

Self-Administration of Medication

Ascend understands that some students may be self-directed by their physician in taking medications (i.e., be able to identify the following: that the medication is the correct one; what the medication is for; that the correct dosage or amount is being administered; when the medication is needed during the school day; describe what will happen if it is not taken).

If the child is able to self-administer the medication, the parent must initial the appropriate area on the physician-approved Medication Administration Form (MAF). Those students are then permitted to carry and self-administer ONLY those medications that are necessary during the school day without supervision; however, students are never permitted to carry controlled substances.

Parents must remember to attach a small current photograph of their child to the

upper left corner of the Medication Administration Form (MAF) for proper identification.

Students may not otherwise self-medicate.

Students in Temporary Housing

Ascend is committed to ensuring that students who are homeless or in temporary housing receive the same programs and services as their peers in permanent residences.

In accordance with the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act and Education Law Section §3209, a student is eligible for the support outlined in this policy if they lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence. This includes a student who:

- Is living with a friend, relative or someone else because their family lost their housing due to economic hardship, or a similar reason, or is living in a motel, hotel, trailer park, or camping ground due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations, or
- Is living in a shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations (including commercial hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for the mentally ill), or
- Is living in a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation, or
- Is living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations or similar settings.

Each school's McKinney-Vento liaison helps students enroll or transfer schools and obtain transportation assistance and other services for which they are eligible. Ascend takes steps to affirmatively identify all students in temporary housing, and school staff who become aware of a student in temporary housing will contact the McKinney-Vento liaison.

A student identified as living in temporary housing is entitled to the following rights as related to enrollment:

- The student may attend the school of origin (the school they attended when permanently housed or the school in which they were last enrolled) or the school of current location (the school zoned for the address at which the student is now living).
- The school will immediately enroll the student, even if the parent is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment. The school's enrollment team will assist parents in obtaining such documents. If immunization records cannot be obtained, the parent will be referred to a walk-in immunization clinic. The student will immediately be admitted to school while proof of birth,

immunization, and other school records are located or verified.

- Within five days of receipt of a new school's request for school records, the current school will forward, in a manner consistent with state and federal law, a complete copy of the student's records.
- If the student changes schools while in the process of a special education evaluation or review, the school where the student is currently registered should complete the evaluation or review.
- As families move into permanent housing, students have the right to stay in their current school through the terminal grade.

A student identified as living in temporary housing is entitled to the following educational rights:

- All students living in temporary housing are eligible for free transportation.
 - Parents of students in grades K-6 who receive a MetroCard are eligible for 14-day MetroCards to accompany their children to/from school. The Assistant Principal of Operations will provide this card to parents upon request.
- All students at Ascend receive free breakfast and lunch. Students living in temporary housing will not be asked to complete a free or reduced-price meal application.
- Regular school attendance is of paramount importance, and the school must make every effort to ensure regular attendance. If a student has sporadic attendance, the school will contact the parent to identify needed services.
- Students living in temporary housing, including students with disabilities, must be provided with services comparable to services offered to other students in the school. However, if space in a particular program has been capped for all students, exceptions will not be made for homeless students.
- Information about a student in temporary housing's living situation will be treated as a confidential student education record. It will not be deemed directory information under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Reporting Suspected Child Abuse and Mandated Reporting Policy

Employees of Ascend are mandated reporters. If an Ascend employee has reasonable cause to suspect that a student enrolled is being abused, maltreated, or neglected, the employee is required by law to call the Mandated Reporter Hotline and file a report. All members of the faculty take this responsibility seriously and are committed to executing their legal obligations accordingly.

Technology at Ascend

Acceptable Use of Technology and Internet

In general, acceptable use of technology means respecting the rights of computer users, the integrity of the physical facilities, and all pertinent license and contractual agreements.

Acceptable use of the network includes activities that support learning, teaching, and communication. Students and faculty are encouraged to explore and develop new ways of using technology to support Ascend's teaching and learning objectives.

Internet Usage

Ascend Public Charter Schools is not liable for the actions of anyone connecting to the Internet; all users shall assume full liability, legal, financial or otherwise, for their actions. Further, each school takes no responsibility for any information or materials transferred through the Internet and makes no guarantees, implied or otherwise, regarding the reliability of the data connection. Ascend is not liable for any loss or corruption of data while users are on the Internet. Ascend reserves the right to examine all data stored in the computers with Internet capability to ensure that all users are in compliance with all applicable rules and regulations.

Student Accounts

Internet access at Ascend Public Charter Schools is controlled through individual accounts and passwords. It is each student's responsibility to keep credentials private and to maintain and safeguard password-protected access to both personal and confidential files and all electronic resources provided.

Internet Filtering

Ascend complies with the Children's Internet Protection Act through a CIPA-compliant web filter. This web filter is a technology protection measure that blocks Internet sites that are deemed inappropriate in content, graphic, message, or intent (i.e. obscene websites, pornography, or harmful to minors). Although the web filter is continuously updated, it is not a guaranteed security from all inappropriate sites.

Unacceptable Use of Technology

Students shall only engage in appropriate, responsible, ethical, and legal use of the network's technology resources.

Unacceptable use of technology includes, but is not limited to:

- Using network credentials that belong to someone else.
- Violating the rights to privacy of students or employees of Ascend Public Charter Schools or others outside of the Ascend community.
- Using educational technology products that are not pre-approved by Ascend Public Charter Schools or approved through the review process.
- Using the network to harass or bully others.
- Using profane or obscene language that may be offensive to another user.
- Plagiarism and/or copying materials in violation of copyright law.
- Using the network for financial gain or for any commercial or illegal activity.
- Acting in a manner that degrades or disrupts system performance or unauthorized entry to and/or destruction of computer systems and files.
- Excessive bandwidth usage that impacts the network or Internet performance of others.
- Re-posting personal communications without the author's prior consent.
- Accessing, downloading, storing or printing files or messages that are illegal, obscene or that offend or degrade another.
- Using BitTorrent or other peer-to-peer methods as a means to unlawfully download copyrighted material such as movies, music, games, programs, etc.
- The use of any technology or device to disable, bypass, or otherwise attempt to circumvent Ascend's security policies, firewall systems or other network devices. This would include personal routers, Internet Connection Sharing, Proxies, Anonymizers, VPNs, or other devices and methods.

Parents and guardians of minors are ultimately responsible for setting and conveying the standards that their children should follow when using digital media, technology, and information sources.

Damage, Loss, and Theft

Staff and students are stewards of Ascend technology and may be held financially responsible for damage, loss, or theft due to negligence. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Damage as a result of leaving Ascend technology in a vehicle or other location that is exposed to heat, cold, or moisture
- Damage due to spilled beverages or food or damaged from being dropped
- Theft as a result of leaving Ascend technology unattended or in an unsecured location

Ascend makes no express or implied warranty for the Internet access it provides or the resources available through the use of our network. We cannot completely eliminate access to information that is offensive or illegal and residing on networks

outside of Ascend campuses. Ascend does not guarantee the availability of access to the Internet and will not be responsible for any information that may be lost, damaged, or unavailable due to technical and/or other difficulties.

Failure to Adhere to Technology Guidelines

Any use of technology or behavior that does not follow the guidelines may result in disciplinary action. Students may lose their access to Ascend's information resources as well as be subject to standard disciplinary procedures. Additionally, students may be billed if hardware and/or software need to be repaired, restored, or replaced due to irresponsible use. Disciplinary procedures resulting from inappropriate use of technology may include:

- Temporary or permanent revocation of access to some or all computing and networking resources and facilities;
- Disciplinary action according to Ascend's discipline code; and/or
- Individuals are also subject to federal, state and local laws governing many interactions that occur on the Internet

These policies and laws are subject to change as state and federal laws develop and change.

Monitoring

Ascend may monitor any Internet activity occurring on Ascend equipment or accounts. If Ascend discovers activities that do not comply with applicable law or departmental policy, records retrieved may be used to document the wrongful content aligned with our code of conduct.

Monitoring Reminders

- Remember that there is no privacy online. Do not send anything that you would not be happy to see posted or shared with your parents.
- Items posted online stay there and are infinitely replicable even after you think they have been deleted. Do not post anything that you would not want future college administrators or employers to see.
- Ascend cannot protect students from all inappropriate or illegal materials. If you are sent anything inappropriate, offensive, or illegal, it is your responsibility to report it to a teacher, Assistant Principal, or technology staff.
- When visiting sites that may be viewed by people outside of the Ascend community, do not communicate your full name, age, phone number, or other personal information about yourself or others. A non-Ascend email is recommended for all non-school use.

- Students should email teachers and staff through Ascend email only.
- To report tech abuse, contact a school administrator or Assistant Principal.

Email

Over time, students may access their school's e-mail system through a universal school password; however, the system belongs to Ascend and all email messages are school records. No student should have any expectation of privacy relative to their use of the Internet or email. Ascend reserves the right, for legitimate school purposes, to access the contents of students' electronic communications without regard to content, and to conduct periodic, unannounced inspections of e-mail communications.

Social Media

Social networking has become an integral part of many lives, and we recognize and respect the value of such outlets for receiving and sharing information and developing personal and professional connections. Should students engage in social networking outside of school, they should espouse the same values and behaviors online as offline in the school building:

- Be a friend, not a bully, and keep things positive
- Be honest
- Accept responsibility for mistakes and try to make them right
- Remember that quality matters and it is difficult, if not impossible, to erase an online footprint fully
- Think about the consequences of your actions, including your posts

All members of the Ascend community are asked to abide by the following guidelines in the use of social media:

- Be clear that you are speaking for yourself, and not on behalf of Ascend
- Respect copyright, fair use, and other disclosure laws
- Use respectful language, and be careful to avoid language that could be viewed as insulting by readers
- Do not share confidential or proprietary information of Ascend
- Do not share any information about students, including photographs, contact information, names of family members, or anything else specific to any student enrolled in the network
- Do not disparage the Ascend community

General Protections

- Staff members are not permitted to “friend” or “follow” students via social media.
- Students should bear in mind the risks of the online realm, never share secrets online, and keep passwords and all personal information private.

There are two important federal laws designed to protect children online. The Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) was enacted in 1998 to protect students under 13 from having their personal information collected without the consent of a parent or guardian. COPPA is the reason many social networking sites require participants to be 13 or older. The Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) was enacted in 2000, and it requires that schools provide Internet filtering to prevent student access to offensive content. Ascend Public Charter Schools has installed such a filter and has adopted a CIPA-compliant Internet safety policy. For a copy of the policy, please contact your student’s school office.

www.ascendlearning.org

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