

**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
**Excel Academy**  
**Student Handbook**  
**2018-2019**



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[www.excelps.org](http://www.excelps.org)

Facebook, Twitter, Instagram: @ExcelAcademyPS

## **Excel Academy Creed**

I am a **scholar** because I love **learning**.

I am college bound because I work hard.

I am **proud** because I am a **girl**.

I am a **leader** because I have a **voice**.

I am **successful** because I **dream** big.

We are **strong** because we are **sisters**.

We **determine** our **destiny**.

We will **change** the **world**.

We will **EXCEL!**

Educate. Empower. EXCEL!

# District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) Mission and Vision

## Vision Statement

Every student feels loved, challenged, and prepared to positively influence society and thrive in life.

## Mission Statement

Our mission is to ensure that every school guarantees students reach their full potential through rigorous and joyful learning experiences provided in a nurturing environment.

## Tagline

Every Student, Every School, Every Day!

## Excel Academy Mission and Vision

### Our Vision

The vision of Excel Academy is to empower our scholars to be lifelong, innovative learners, productive competitors and leaders who make a positive impact globally.

### Our Mission

Excel Academy will offer a unique single-sex educational model for girls in the District of Columbia. The curriculum will focus on building student achievement in literacy, mathematics, science, technology, world languages and performing and visual arts, while strengthening the scholars' self esteem which empowers them to make positive ethical choices. The school will provide a myriad of opportunities to develop the young ladies academically, socially and emotionally in order to prepare them to be productive competitors in the 21st century.

### Excel Academy IDEALS

- **Integrity:** We are honest; we do what's right; and we refuse to compromise our values.
- **Discipline:** We have self-control, and we make good choices.
- **Enjoyment:** We bring joy to our learning, our school, and our community.
- **Achievement:** We work hard to exceed our goals.
- **Leadership:** We are influential, and we show the way.
- **Sisterhood:** We are united. We rise and fall together.

## **Student Handbook**

According to Title 5, Chapter 25 of the D.C. Municipal Regulations (DCMR), “It is the policy of the Chancellor that a safe environment conducive to learning shall be maintained in DCPS. To build and maintain this environment, DCPS shall provide students, families, and staff with clear expectations and rules for appropriate school behavior. These rules must balance the responsibilities and rights of the school community. These rules must reflect the individual’s responsibility for contributing to a safe environment conducive to learning and the need for mutual respect and cooperation among all segments of the school community.”

To achieve our mission and vision, Excel Academy has adopted the following goals:

- To have a school-wide plan in place for all staff, students and families to adhere to.
- All staff and students will be trained on the discipline system.
- All staff, students, and families understand clear expectations for student conduct.
- Structures will be in place to celebrate students who are practicing school values.
- Socio-emotional supports are provided to the most disruptive students.
- Systems are in place to collect and frequently review data on attendance, tardies, and office referrals.

### **Disclaimer**

It is expected that all staff members, parents/guardians, and community members exercise sound judgment in their actions and act in the best interest of all students at all times with total attention to the safety and welfare of everyone in the building.

It is understood that by receiving this handbook and being enrolled at Excel Academy, that all parents/guardians understand the expectations for all the policies and procedures listed in this guide. It is not possible to list everything that we might encounter, but it is expected that all staff, parents/guardians, and community members will support and follow all school-wide policies, and procedures at all times. All decisions, policies, and procedures will ALWAYS be in the best interest of all students at Excel Academy.

### **General School Information**

Office Hours: 8:00am - 4:30pm

Office: 202.373.0097 | Fax: 202.373.0477

Website: [www.excelps.org](http://www.excelps.org)

Facebook, Twitter, Instagram: @ExcelAcademyPS

School Hours:

Doors Open (Breakfast): 8:10 am

Academic Instruction: 8:45 am

Dismissal: 3:15 pm

## Arrival Policies

School starts at 8:45 am. Students arriving after 8:45 am are considered tardy and must go to the main office for a tardy slip.

- 7:00 am - 8:00 am: Before Care
- 8:10 am: Doors open for students eating breakfast
- 8:10 am - 8:35 am: Breakfast is served. Students in Pre-K and Kindergarten eat in the classroom and students in 1st through 8th grade eat breakfast in the cafeteria.
- 8:45 am: The school day begins.

Students should not arrive before 8:10 am unless enrolled in Before Care because supervision is not available. **During morning arrival, parents of scholars in Pre-K3 through Kindergarten can escort their scholars to their classroom. Parents and guardians of scholars in 1st through 8th grade are asked to drop off their scholars at the school entrances designated below and allow them to transition inside independently to facilitate a timely and smooth start of the school day.**

Entrances:

- Pre-K-3- Kindergarten enter MLK side street entrance
- Grades 1 - 3: Students enter front MLK street entrance
- Grades 4 - 8: Enter Back entrance to cafeteria

## Attendance Policy

Our goal is to ensure that every student attends school regularly and on time. Showing up for school has a huge impact on a student's academic success, starting in kindergarten and continuing through high school. Even as children grow older and more independent, families play a key role in making sure students get to school safely every day and understand why attendance is so important for success in school and in life.

We realize some absences are unavoidable due to health problems or other circumstances. But, we also know that when students miss too much school -- **excused or unexcused** -- they can fall behind academically. Your child is less likely to succeed if he or she is chronically absent -- which means missing 18 or more days in a school year.

Research shows that:

- Children that are chronically absent in kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade are much less likely to read at grade level by the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.
- By 6<sup>th</sup> grade, chronic absence is a warning sign for students at risk of dropping out of school.
- By 9<sup>th</sup> grade, good attendance can predict graduation rates even better than 8<sup>th</sup> grade test scores.

Students are expected to be in school except in cases of emergency, illness, or school-approved absence. Unexcused absences will be considered as trancies and will be addressed according to the district's truancy policy. The Excel staff supports the philosophy that the instructional program is a vital part of formal education. We further believe that it is necessary to require that students attend school a maximum number of days. Students are required to maintain a level of attendance which enables them to meet their responsibilities as learners. Students and their parents/guardians hold the

main responsibility for school attendance and for following the attendance policy. We ask for the cooperation of both students and parents in these matters so that the student can receive the best education possible.

In the event of absence or illness: Parents should call the school on the first day the student misses or send a note to the teacher stating the reason for absence. A doctor's statement may be required for extended illness. An official, signed note should be brought if the student can not go outside for recess or participate in physical education. Make-up work is required when applicable. Parents are encouraged to make dental and medical appointments after school hours. Extracurricular lessons, (piano, tennis, etc.) must be scheduled for after school hours.

### **Half Day**

Students who arrive between thirty-one (31) minutes and three and a half (3 ½) hours late will be considered a half-day (½) absence.

### **Full Day**

Students who are absent more than three and a half hours (3 ½) hours are considered a full day absence.

### **Early Departure Check**

Students who leave between one (1) minute and thirty (30) minutes early are considered to have left early.

### **Excused and Unexcused Absences**

**Excused absences** are when school-aged students are absent from school with a valid excuse and parental approval. Examples of excused absences include:

- Student **illness** (a doctor's note is required if a student is absent for more than five days);
- Death in the student's immediate family;
- Necessity for a student to attend a **judicial proceeding** as a plaintiff, defendant, witness or juror;
- Observance of a **religious holiday**;
- Temporary **school closings** due to weather, unsafe conditions or other emergencies;
- **Medical reasons** such as a doctor's appointment (a doctor's note is required);
- Failure of DC to provide transportation where legally responsible;
- Lawful suspension or exclusion from school by school authorities;
- Absences to allow students to visit their parent or legal guardian, who is in the military; immediately before, during or after deployment;
- **Emergency or other circumstances** approved by the Director of Attendance and Support Services or designee.

Excuse notes must be submitted by the parent/guardian within 5 days of a student's return to school after an absence. The note must include a written explanation of the reason for the student's absence. Parents/guardians may write their own note, or may use the DCPS template excuse note form obtained from the school.

**Unexcused absences** are when school-aged students are absent from school without a valid excuse, with or without parental approval. Examples of unexcused absences include:

- Babysitting
- Miscellaneous
- Extended travel (domestic or international)
- Oversleeping
- Cutting classes

**Students must be present 80% of the day to be counted as “legally present”.** When a student returns to school after an absence, a note should be sent to the teacher or attendance counselor. The note should include the date(s) of the absence and the reason. A doctor’s note should be provided if required. Student absences without notes will be marked unexcused. If absences are due to chronic health issues, i.e. asthma, the school nurse will develop an Individual Health Plan.

**Attendance Expectations:**

1. Arrive on time to school and to class each day.
2. Bring your books and materials to class.
3. Ask your teacher for missed work or make-up assignments for days you were absent.

**Ask school staff for help** if you have academic or other concerns (e.g. safety or lack of transportation) preventing you from coming to school.

**Students who cut class or are absent may be subject to the following responses:**

- Individual/group counseling to address attendance needs.
- Participation in the creation of, and adherence to, an attendance student support plan.
- Parents of students with **five (5) unexcused absences** will be requested to participate in a truancy conference and referred to the Student Support Team.
- Students with 7 unexcused absences will receive a Metropolitan Police Department/DCPS notification letter.
- Parents of students with **ten (10) total absences – excused or unexcused** may be requested to participate in an Attendance follow-up Conference (SST)
- Students ages 5-13 with **ten (10) unexcused absences** will be referred to the **Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA)** for suspected educational neglect.
- Students with **ten (10) unexcused absences** will be referred to the Office of State Superintendent of Education.
- High school students with **ten (10) unexcused absences** will be referred to the school’s Attendance Committee/the Student Support Team for follow-up.
- Students ages 14-17 with **fifteen (15) unexcused absences** will be referred to Court Social Services.
- Students ages 5-13 with **fifteen (15) unexcused absences** will be referred to Office of Attorney General.
- Course grades or year-end promotion may be affected by unexcused absences.

**Behavior Interventions**

Discipline Code: The DCPS discipline policy or “Chapter 25” addresses consequences for students who disrupt the educational process, which is posted on our website. Please be advised that Excel Academy has the responsibility and the authority to maintain a safe learning environment. To

maintain a safe learning environment, we have rules and regulations which, when violated, have consequences that are fair, appropriate for the grade level, and consistent. It is the belief of Excel Academy to resolve discipline problems by using meaningful interventions to address the misbehavior such as re-direction, mediation, parent involvement, counseling, or other appropriate alternatives to suspension, particularly when responding to non-violent negative behaviors. However, we will not tolerate unsafe behaviors such as fighting, assault, bullying, or other unsafe Tier 3-5 behaviors. Tier 3-5 behaviors are suspendable infractions based on DCMR Chapter 25. These behaviors will almost always result in out-of-school suspension or expulsion.

## **Birthday Celebrations**

Birthday parties at Excel Academy are prohibited. Birthday parties should take place outside of school.

## **Bullying**

### **School Bullying Policy**

According to the District of Columbia Law, bullying is the severe or repeated use by one or more students of verbal, written or electronic communication or a physical act or gesture, or exclusion, or any combination thereof, directed at another student that has the following effects:

- causes physical or emotional harm to the targeted student or damage to the targeted student's property;
- places the targeted student in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself or of damage to his or her property;
- creates a hostile environment at school for the targeted student;
- infringes on the rights of the targeted student at school; or
- materially and substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of the school.

In accordance with the District-Wide Bullying Prevention Policy; Excel Academy strives to provide students with optimal conditions for learning by maintaining a school environment where everyone is treated with respect and no one is physically or emotionally harmed. Acts of bullying by students are prohibited:

- a. On school premises;
- b. At any school-sponsored activity or event on and off DCPS grounds;
- c. On public and school transportation including stop locations;
- d. Using school property or equipment;
- e. Walking to and from school;
- f. Or, any other place where a student has access to technology.

**“Bullying,”** means any severe, pervasive, or persistent act or conduct, whether physical, electronic or verbal that

- A. May be based on a student's actual or perceived race, color, ethnicity, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, intellectual ability, familial status, family responsibilities, matriculation, political affiliation, genetic information, disability, source of income, status as a victim of an intrafamily offense, place of residence or business, or any other distinguishing characteristic, or on a student's association with a person, or group with any person, with one or more of the actual or

perceived foregoing characteristics; and

B. Shall reasonably predicted to:

- a. Place a student in reasonable fear of physical harm to his or her person or property;
- b. Cause a substantial detrimental effect on the student's physical or mental health;
- c. Substantially interfere with the student's academic performance or attendance;
- d. Substantially interfere with the student's ability to participate in or benefit from school activities or services; or
- e. Materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Bullying also occurs when a student or group of students organize a campaign against another student or when a student or group of students maliciously spread rumors about another student. In most circumstances Bullying does not include a mutual fight between two students who are angry with each other. All references to bullying shall also be understood to include cyber bullying.

### **Electronic Communication**

The use of the Internet and mobile technology such as web pages, discussion groups such as instant messaging, SMS text, Instagram, or Facebook with the intent of intimidating, harassing, or harming another person.

### **Protection Against Retaliation**

Excel Academy will take appropriate steps to protect any person - student or non-student, accused or accuser, etc. - from retaliation when they report, file a complaint of, are the subject of a complaint, or cooperate in an investigation concerning a violation of the DCPS Bullying Prevention Policy. An employee, volunteer, or student who promptly and in good faith reports an incident of, or information on, bullying in compliance with this policy shall be immune from a cause of action for damages arising from the report. Threats or acts of retaliation, whether person-to-person, by electronic means, or through third parties, are serious offenses that will subject the violator to disciplinary and other corrective action, which could include long-term suspension, exclusion or expulsion.

All incidents of bullying should be reported the dean.

In accordance with The Office of Human Rights District-wide Bullying prevention Policy, Excel Academy will not tolerate any form of bullying, including cyber-bullying, nor will we tolerate retaliation against any student or other person who reports an incident of bullying, who participates in an investigation of a complaint of bullying, or who is a witness to, or otherwise has reliable information about, bullying. This policy applies to all of our students; it also may apply to a situation in which one of our students is subject to bullying by a former student who comes on school grounds or who engages in cyberbullying against one of our current students.

Bullying and cyber-bullying are prohibited on school grounds, on grounds adjacent to school grounds and at school-sponsored events and school-related activities, functions and programs, whether on or off school grounds. Bullying and cyber-bullying also are prohibited at bus stops, on school buses and other vehicles owned, leased, or used by the school, or through use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased, or used by the school (for example, a school computer or school-maintained network).

Bullying and cyber-bullying also are prohibited at a location, activity, function, or program that is not

school-related or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by the school, if the bullying or cyberbullying creates a hostile environment at school for a student, infringes on the rights of a student at school, or materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of the school.

### **Cyber-bullying**

Cyber-bullying is bullying through the use of technology or electronic devices such as a telephone, cell phone, computer, or the Internet. It includes, but is not limited to, email, an instant message, a text message, or an Internet posting, whether on a webpage, in a blog, on a social media page, or elsewhere.

### **Hostile Environment**

A hostile environment is a situation in which bullying (and/or cyber-bullying) causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule, or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive so as to alter the conditions of a student's education.

### **Retaliation**

Retaliation is any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a student who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bull

## **Cellular Telephone Policy**

**Excel Academy** understands that cell phones have become a common tool for communication. Nonetheless, they have comprised the safety of students and are a major distraction to the learning environment.

In an effort to promote appropriate use of technology while maintaining the integrity of teaching and learning, Whittier Education Campus will implement a new cell phone policy. The cell phone policy will require students to turn in their devices before the instructional day begins and retrieve their devices at the end of the day.

**Middle School Students:** Turn in their devices at the designated location upon arrival to school, and receive a ticket to retrieve the device at the end of the day.

**Elementary Students:** Turn in devices to their homeroom teacher and retrieve their device at the end of the day.

### **Failure to follow these rules will result in the following disciplinary actions:**

- **1<sup>st</sup> offense:** The device will be confiscated and returned to the student at the end of the school day. The student will be informed of the cell phone policy and progressive discipline steps. The student's parent will be notified.
- **2<sup>nd</sup> offense:** The device will be confiscated and submitted to school administration accompanied with a referral. Parents are required to attend a conference with school administration in order to retrieve the device, and review the cell phone policy and progressive discipline steps.
- **3<sup>rd</sup> offense:** The device will be confiscated and returned to the parent/guardian after the student has served detention and completed a restorative assignment.

**\*\*Students who refuse to surrender their device will be referred to school administration.**

Parents should contact the main office if there is an emergency that needs to be communicated to their child. We encourage students to leave their cell phones at home. The school will not be responsible for any lost, stolen, damage, confiscated phones, or usage fees.

### **Culture and Climate**

The Culture and Climate Committee is designed to be supportive of the educational and goals of the District of Columbia Public School System and Excel Academy. The Administrative Team and the Culture and Climate Committee will meet regularly to assess the effectiveness and fairness of its implementation will analyze the components of the program periodically. The underlying rationale of the program is to help students to make positive changes in their character development.

In order to measure the effectiveness of this program, comparisons from previous years will be made. Data on the frequency of different levels of infractions and their context will be analyzed for future program development. Data on the effectiveness of the character education program and other intervention strategies will also be gathered and analyzed for the same purposes.

### **Dismissal Procedure**

Please make arrangements for your scholar to be picked up on time. Scholars will be dismissed from designated locations at the campus dismissal times. All parents and guardians must present a picture ID to the classroom teacher to sign out their child.

- Students will only be released to a guardian or designee listed on the Student Release Authorization Form.
- Middle School scholars may be dismissed independently with parent/guardian permission.
- The authorized person picking up student **MUST** enter the school to sign the student out. Calling to request student to be released is prohibited and will not be honored.

When your scholar enrolls or re-enrolls at Excel you will be asked to sign a walkers' release permission slip which allows your child to leave the building, on foot, at dismissal. This permission slip allows scholars in 4th through 8th grades, only, to walk home at the end of the school day. If a younger sibling is to be released to a walker in 4th through 8th grade their names will need to be included, on the walkers' release permission slip as well. If you have questions stop in the main office.

If a child is not picked up in a timely manner (10 minutes after dismissal) every effort will be made to contact the parent or the persons listed on the emergency card. There is no supervision provided for children after school unless they are in aftercare or participate in an extra-curricular activity. If no contact is made within 30 minutes utilizing the emergency numbers, your child will be referred to Child and Family Services.

### **Dress Code**

Excel has a uniform dress policy for all students. It is expected that uniforms be worn each day. Uniforms must be neat and clean. The uniform for girls consists of:

**Tops:**

- Pre-K - Kindergarten: Light Yellow polo, short or long sleeved, solid color.
- 1st - 4th Grade: Light Blue polo, short or long sleeved, solid color.
- 5th - 8th Grade: White polo, short or long sleeved, solid color.
- All Scholars: Navy Blue sweater or cardigan (optional)

**Bottoms:**

- Pre-K - Kindergarten - 4th Grade: Navy bottoms, jumpers, pants, shorts, skirts, or skorts (must reach the knee)
- 5th - 8th: Khaki bottoms, pants or skirt

**Excel Academy scholars are not permitted to wear:**

- Hooded sweatshirts and outerwear in the building.
- Scholars must remove coats, jackets, and non- uniform outerwear upon entering the classroom
- Denim of any color
- Tops or bottoms with patterns, designs, logos, stripes or polka dots
- Distracting jewelry or accessories including watches, bracelets, headbands with large flowers/fixtures, or oversized hair accessories, and hoop or dangling earrings (stud earrings allowed)
- Shoes with heels
- Non-religious headwear, hats, scarves or bandanas
- Make-up of any kind (including lip gloss)

At Excel Academy school uniforms are mandatory for students in grades Pre-K through 8<sup>th</sup>. We believe that the students should create a favorable image of both themselves and the school at all times. Excel Academy scholars are expected to adhere to the Dress Code. Students in the building or participating in off campus activities are expected to be in Dress Code, including school performances, field trips (unless otherwise indicated), or during after school events.

There will be a uniform bank located at the school. We encourage parents to donate uniforms that your child may have outgrown to the bank. Violation of the uniform policy is located in the DCPS Code of Student Discipline. The following consequences will be followed in violation of the code:

- Parents will be called when student is not compliant and asked to bring appropriate clothing to school.
- If parent cannot be reached within the first two hours of school, student will be issued clothing from the uniform bank with directions to return it clean the next day.

Parents will be notified if there are special circumstances that children are not required to wear uniforms.

### **Drug-Free School Policy**

Excel Academy complies with the policies of the District of Columbia regarding a NO drug policy for both students and staff. In addition, it has proclaimed the area around the school as a **Drug-Free Zone**. Excel Academy prohibits the illegal sale, purchase, use, or possession of any intoxicating substances. No student or non-student, including adults and visitors, shall possess, use, or distribute drugs on school grounds or school activities.

## Early Dismissal

In order to minimize classroom interruptions and ensure that students have the benefit of a full day of instruction, we ask that parents wait until the end of the day to pick-up scholars. Students with early dismissal miss valuable instructional time and interrupt the schedule of our community. More than one (1) early dismissals per month will initiate administrative follow-up by the Principal.

Students are dismissed through the school office. Students may not wait in front of the building or enter automobiles unless accompanied by a parent or guardian. These rules are necessary to ensure student safety. Parents/guardians must come to the office to sign a student out for early dismissal. Students may not be signed out by an unknown person unless that person's name is noted on the student's records. Classes end at 3:15 PM. Students should remain in class until the end of the day. Students who are picked up early miss important information and disrupt class. If a student is repeatedly picked up early, the following actions will be taken:

- **Student leaves early 3 days in a quarter (~7%)**
  - Teacher calls home and monitors situation.
  - Administrators track student's tardiness and communicate with family if lateness continues.
  
- **Student leaves early more than 6 days in a quarter (~13%)**
  - School requires medical documentation if a health problem is the cause of early dismissal. A family intervention meeting is arranged. Parents/guardians are advised that significant additional early dismissal for three quarters may be grounds for discontinuance from school the next academic year. A significant number of late arrivals may also be a factor in retention decisions. Problem-solving efforts and goal-setting continue.
  
- **Greater than 13% of school days student leaves early in the first three quarters of the school year**
  - **(13% equals 6 days per quarter)** A significant number of late arrivals may also be a factor in retention decisions.

If a parent needs to pick up a student prior to 3:15 pm, we ask to be informed by 12:00 pm, so that we will have students ready for the early release. We will not permit early releases after 2:30 pm, unless there is an emergency.

## Field Trips

Excel encourages field trips several times a year to complement classroom instruction. Signed parent permission slips are required for students to participate; please return these to teachers in a timely manner. Excel uses public transportation when appropriate; field trips to some locations may require chartered coach or school buses. Trips are generally organized by grade level by the classroom or specials teachers; all information, forms, and fees will be coordinated through your child's classroom teacher or room parents.

## **Health Policies**

A School Health Nurse is on duty regularly from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm in the Health Suite. The nurse is available for first aid, health screening, medication administration, and health education. Students must present a School Nurse Pass that has been filled out by the teacher before being seen.

### **Allergy**

If your child has a food or other allergy, you must report it to the school nurse with doctor's instructions on appropriate forms.

### **Food allergy**

This information should be documented on a Dietary Accommodations Form ([dcps.dc.gov/publication/dietary-accommodations-instructions-and-forms](http://dcps.dc.gov/publication/dietary-accommodations-instructions-and-forms)); the nurse will send the completed form to DCPS Food and Nutrition Services. In addition, please report the condition to your child's teacher and to your room parents for coordination of special events.

### **Other allergy**

If your child needs medication in the event of an allergic reaction, please see Medication (next page) for forms and medication requirements.

### **Illness**

Parents are requested to report immediately if their child has an infectious illness (e.g. strep throat, chicken pox, lice, etc.) to their teacher and the nurse. Children with a temperature over 100.2 F, sore throat, or who have had recent episodes of vomiting or diarrhea should be kept home. Students may return to school after being fever-free or vomit/diarrhea-free for 24 hours without medication. Children diagnosed with a contagious illness such as strep throat or pink eye should be kept home until completing the first 24 hours of antibiotics. Parents should send documentation of results to the nurse.

Students with possible eye or skin infections, lice, or other contagious illnesses will be removed from class. Parents will be notified to pick up the child for further diagnosis.

### **Chronic illness**

Parents of children with a chronic illness (e.g. asthma) that may affect school performance should contact the school nurse to develop an individual health plan, and to find out if any other documentation may be required.

Sudden illness or accident.

The school nurse will contact parents to advise them in case of illness or accident. Please keep contact information current. The school must also have the number of a relative, friend, or neighbor in case parents cannot be reached. If emergency transportation is required, a student will be accompanied by a staff member if the parent is not present.

### **Nurse/Medication**

If a student needs (or may need) medication during school hours, DCPS policy requires that forms be completed by both parent and physician before any prescription or over-the-counter medication can be administered to a child. Parents must submit a Medication Plan, Asthma Action Plan, or Action Plan for Anaphylaxis, along with the required medication in a box labeled by a pharmacy.

Over-the-counter medications require a doctor's order and sealed medication (no pharmacy label required). Information and forms available from the nurse or at: [dcps.dc.gov/health](http://dcps.dc.gov/health).

Medications should always be delivered by a parent or authorized adult, who must sign medication into health suite. For the safety of all students, no child is permitted to carry medications with the exception of an albuterol inhaler, which requires authorization from a physician and an assessment by the school nurse. If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to the nurse.

## **Home Visits and APTT**

Excel Academy recognizes the critical role that parents and families play in the education of their scholars. Through a partnership with the Flamboyan Foundation, we will continue to partner with families through home visits and **Academic Parent Teacher Team (APTT)** meetings. APTT meetings will serve as an opportunity for parents to discuss their scholars' progress with the teacher based on specific math and literacy skills. Parents will also have the opportunity to create a "Make-and-Take" project that can be used at home for additional practice. APTT meetings will be held in a whole-group setting with opportunities to speak one on one with teachers.

Home visits serve as an opportunity to meet with your scholar's teacher to become more familiar with our academic program and discuss any specific goals you may have for your scholar. Home visits can be scheduled with your scholar's teacher for weekday afternoons and evenings. Home visits can also be scheduled outside of the home in a neutral location such as a coffee shop or library. The expectation is that all families will receive a home visit.

## **Lockers**

Lockers are school property and are subject to inspection by Administration at any time. The lockers are made available for student use in storing supplies and personal items necessary for use at school. Students are only permitted to go to locker before at 8:45am, before and after lunch and at dismissal.

- Locker should be kept clean.
- All backpacks, outerwear, hats, toys, electronic devices or other items not needed in the classroom should be put away in your locker when students enter the building until they leave at the end of the day.
- Excel Academy is not responsible for the loss, theft, or breakage of valuable items.

## **Parent Responsibilities**

### **Parents Are Teachers**

**Parents are their children's first and most influential teachers.  
What parents do to help their children learn is more important  
to academic success than how well off the family is.  
(What Works, 1986)**

Parents are encouraged to participate in the education of their children. Without the cooperation and partnership between parents and school staff, we cannot effectively help a student reach his or her full potential. The major role of parents is to continually show the child that they are interested and

supportive of how their child is doing in school. By working together, parents and staff can help the student learn behaviors that will increase chances of success.

In order to ensure your child's success in school, **we ask that parents do the following:**

- Make sure your child has adequate rest.
- Provide a nutritious breakfast for your child or make sure they are at school by 8:15 to receive breakfast.
- Make sure your child comes to school in complete uniform.
- Have your child arrive to school no later than 8:45am.
- Make sure your child is picked up promptly at 3:15pm unless they are enrolled in an after school program.
- Check your child's folder/backpack daily for school communications and homework.
- Help your child establish good study habits by providing an appropriate time and place for completing homework.
- Read to your child or provide a quiet place for your child to read at least 30 minutes per day.
- Check your child's teacher regarding any questions or concerns.
- Make sure your child leaves all items not school related at home (e.g. toys, games, sports equipment, trading cards, jewelry, make-up, iPods, Gameboys, etc.)
- Praise/reward your child for following the rules at Excel Academy.
- Establish and maintain solution-centered family and school partnerships.
- Ensure that students take advantage of tutoring, enrichment and extracurricular activities.
- Communicate any unique difficulties, situations to the school in a timely fashion.
- Attend parent and teacher conferences.
- Support the parent and teacher association and other school-wide initiatives.

### **Pick-up List Policy**

Excel Academy teachers and staff will not remove custodial parents from the pickup list without written legal documentation. All family members and persons authorized to pick up students must provide a government issued identification. Pick-Up List: All names of those that can pick up your child need to be on the registration form in the main office, please update that list as needed. If someone not on the list needs to pick up a child- please inform the homeroom teacher, and send a written note to the main office. The adult picking up the student will need ID. With safety as our top priority, we will not let students leave with others unless the aforementioned procedure has been followed. All family disputes regarding this issue should be handled outside of school.

### **Restrooms**

The restrooms will be a safe environment where students will use them appropriately and leave them clean.

Rules and Expectations:

- Students will use restrooms before school and after recess.
- All classes should have scheduled restroom times.
- If restrooms must be used during class, students must have a restroom pass.
- Students will: respect privacy of others, use whisper voices, use equipment properly, use toilet paper in toilets, wash hands and turn off water, and throw all trash in trash cans.

## Rewards and Recognition

At Excel Academy, we will teach the advantages of good citizenship to all students. Each time we discipline children, it is another opportunity to capture a “teachable moment” wherein we can remind the children on ways to manage conflicts without violence or being hurtful.

One of our main goals is to empower students to be successful. When students feel good about themselves they will become better citizens of their school and communities by growing to be both scholars and ambassadors of goodwill.

Students who are outstanding citizens of the school, such as student of the month and/or who are recognized for exhibiting the School’s character traits will be rewarded with special activities and incentives. Some of these incentives include having their name announced over the PA system, students’ pictures displayed in various places of the school, and certificates and recognition at the award assemblies, etc.

It is the expectation of classroom teachers to have positive incentive programs in their individual classrooms that recognized students who follow the student’s code of conduct.

## Student Discipline

Safety, order, and student discipline are fundamental to the learning at Excel Academy. In addition to a challenging curriculum, dedicated teachers, and proper materials, a safe and orderly learning environment is vital to the academic success of every scholar. Therefore, Excel Academy is committed to maintaining a safe school environment in which each scholar has an equal educational opportunity. At Excel Academy, we use our behavior tracking systems to support school wide rules and expectations. These rules and expectations are taught to scholars by school staff members to prevent initial occurrences of challenging behaviors. We expect scholars to demonstrate the Excel Academy **IDEALS**:

**Integrity** - We are honest; we do what’s right; and we refuse to compromise our values.

**Discipline** - We have self-control, and we make good choices.

**Enjoyment** - We bring joy to our learning, our school, and our community.

**Achievement** - We work hard to exceed our goals.

**Leadership** - We are influential, and we show the way.

**Sisterhood** - We are united. We rise and fall together.

## Infractions and Penalties

The school maintains a points system for student disciplinary issues. Students who exhibits disruptive, disrespectful and/or defiant behavior, or who engage in more serious misconduct while on school property or participating in school activities, will receive points. Students exhibiting such behaviors will receive on a progressive basis the following consequences:

- (1) Student Conference
- (2) Parent Contact
- (3) Detention
- (4) Parent Conference/Behavior Contract

- (5) In-School Intervention
- (6) Off-site Suspension

## Infraction Tiers

<b>Tier 1 Behaviors (Classroom Management)</b>
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Tier I behaviors include those behaviors that may be disruptive in the academic environment but do not harm others. Tier I behaviors receive classroom level consequences that may be elevated to administrative intervention if they are not successfully abated by the teacher or the appropriate school level committee.

**The following behaviors are Tier 1 behaviors:**

- 1.1 Refusal to present school-issued identification upon request;
- 1.2 Noncompliance with dress code;
- 1.3 Attending class without required class materials or assigned work
- 1.4 Disengagement from classroom learning;
- 1.5 Behaviors that disrupt or interfere with classroom learning;
- 1.6 Unexcused lateness for school or class;
- 1.7 Inappropriate displays of affection
- 1.8 Excessive noise in the classroom, hall, or school building;
- 1.9 Running in the classroom, hall or school building;
- 1.10 Communicating with staff and peers in a manner that is not polite, courteous, or respectful;
- 1.11 Directing profanity or obscene/offensive gestures towards peers;
- 1.12 Refusal to comply with staff instruction, or classroom or school rules; and
- 1.13 Any other conduct that may be disruptive in the academic environment but does not harm others.

**Disciplinary responses for Tier 1 behaviors shall include:**

- First Offense – Verbal redirection or reprimand
- Second Offense – Teacher/student conference
- Third Offense – Parent contact by teacher
- Fourth Offense – Teacher/parent conference
- Fifth Offense – Behavior contract/or progress report
- Sixth Offense – Referral to Counselor/Mental Health Team
- Seventh Offense – Office Referral

<b>Tier 2 Behaviors</b>
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Tier II behaviors include those behaviors that may be disruptive in the academic environment, involve school property, or may cause minor harm to other. Tier II behavioral infractions result in school-based interventions and administrative consequences.

**The following behaviors shall be considered Tier II behaviors:**

- 2.1 Using computer/office equipment without permission;
- 2.2 Intentional misuse of school equipment/supplies/facilities;
- 2.3 Unauthorized use of portable electronic devices during school hours (e.g. Mp3 players, iPods, cell phones);
- 2.4 Disruptive behavior on school bus or public transportation (metro bus/rail) directly on the way to or from school
- 2.5 Leaving classroom without permission;
- 2.6 Unexcused absence from class (cut);
- 2.7 Unauthorized presence in hallway during class time;
- 2.8 Unexcused absence from school (cut);
- 2.9 Inappropriate or disruptive physical contact between students;
- 2.10 Directing profanity or obscene/offensive gestures toward staff;
- 2.11 Throwing objects that may cause injury or damage to property;
- 2.12 Any behavior or other conduct that may be disruptive in the academic environment, involve school property, or may cause minor harm to others; and
- 2.13 Documented pattern of persistent Tier I behavior.

**Disciplinary responses for Tier II behaviors shall include:**

- First Offense – Verbal direction or reprimand
- Second Offense – Teacher/student conference
- Third Offense – Parental contact by teacher
- Fourth Offense – Behavior contract
- Fifth Offense – Referral to Counselor/Mental Health Team
- Sixth Offense - Administrator conference

<b>Tier 3 Behaviors</b>
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Tier III behaviors include those behaviors, which have the potential to disrupt the school environment, cause harm to self or others, or destroy school property. In addition to lesser consequences, Tier III behavioral infractions may result in suspension.

**The following behaviors shall be considered Tier III behaviors:**

- 3.1 Inappropriate use of DCPS computer or network (restricted websites, offensive emails);
- 3.2 Sale or distribution of any item without authorization;
- 3.3 Possession or distribution of obscene or pornographic material on school premises;
- 3.4 Possession or distribution or use of tobacco;
- 3.5 Use of alcohol;
- 3.6 Use of marijuana, controlled dangerous substances, imitation control substances, inhalants, other intoxicants, or drug paraphernalia;
- 3.7 Unauthorized possession, use, or distribution of over the counter medication;
- 3.8 Verbal, written, or physical threat to person or property (including intimidating postures);
- 3.9 Obscene, seriously, offensive, or abusive language or gestures;
- 3.10 Causing disruption on school property or at any DCPS-sponsored or supervised activity;
- 3.11 Gambling;
- 3.12 Communicating slurs based on race, ethnicity, color, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or disability, including derogatory sexual language;
- 3.13 Engaging in sexual acts on school premises or at school-related functions;

- 3.14 Leaving school without permission;
- 3.15 Academic dishonesty;
- 3.16 Forgery;
- 3.17 Lying to or giving misleading information to a school staff;
- 3.18 Posting or distributing material or literature that is disrespectful, demeaning, humiliating, or damaging to student and/or staff. This includes posting material on Internet or sending material electronically (via email or cell phone);
- 3.19 Engaging in behavior that demonstrates gang/neighborhood crew affiliation (displaying clothing or gestures associated with gangs);
- 3.20 Hazing;
- 3.21 Bullying, or using humiliating or intimidating language or behavior, including Internet bullying;
- 3.22 Possession of tools or instruments, which school administrators deem, could be used as a weapon;
- 3.23 Engaging in reckless behavior that may cause harm to self or others;
- 3.24 Extortion;
- 3.25 Fighting where there is no injury and or weapon;
- 3.26 Any behavior or other conduct which has the potential to disrupt the school environment, cause harm to self or others, or destroy school property; and
- 3.27 Documented pattern of persistent Tier II behaviors.

**Disciplinary responses for Tier III behaviors shall include:**

All Tier III behaviors shall be directly referred to the behavior team. The school reserves the right to weigh and consider a student’s entire disciplinary record and circumstances when issuing discipline. Points will be assigned for each infraction in order to implement progressive discipline. Tier III behaviors may result in automatic suspension.

Students will receive points for Tier II and Tier III behaviors that do not result in automatic suspension.

<b>Tier 4 Behaviors</b>
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Tier IV behaviors included those behavior which cause significant disruption to the school environment, cause harm to self or other, or destroy school property. Tier IV behaviors result in off-site suspension.

**The following behaviors shall be considered Tier IV behaviors:**

- 4.1 Acts of vandalism, destruction of property, or graffiti (tagging);
- 4.2 Documented theft of school or personal Property without force;
- 4.3 Interfering with or disrupting school programs;
- 4.4 Trespassing;
- 4.5 Tampering with changing, or altering an official record or document of a school;
- 4.6 Persistent harassment based on race, color, national origin, sex, real or perceived gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, or disability;
- 4.7 Lewd or indecent public behavior or sexual misconduct;
- 4.8 Sexual harassment;
- 4.9 Retaliation for reporting harassment and sexual harassment;
- 4.10 Fighting which creates substantial risk or results in minor injury;

- 4.11 Inciting others to violence or disruption;
- 4.12 Activating false alarm;
- 4.13 Contaminating food;
- 4.14 Possession of a replica or imitation of a weapon (including water guns);
- 4.15 Using an article that is not normally considered a weapon to intimidate or threaten another individual;
- 4.16 Any behavior or conduct which causes significant disruption to the school environment, causes harm to self or other, or destroys school property; and
- 4.17 Documented pattern of persistent Tier III behavior.

**Disciplinary responses for Tier IV behavior:**

All Tier IV behaviors shall be directly referred to the behavior team. Tier IV behaviors will result in automatic suspension.

<b>Tier 5 Behaviors</b>
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Tier V behaviors included those behaviors which are illegal, cause substantial harm to self or others, or cause major disruption to the school environment. Tier V behaviors result in suspension or expulsion.

**The following behaviors shall be considered Tier V behaviors:**

- 5.1 Acts of exception misconduct at other schools;
- 5.2 Vandalism/destruction of property over \$500;
- 5.3 Selling or distribution of marijuana, prescription drugs, controlled dangerous substances, imitation controlled substances, inhalants, other intoxicants, controlled or drug paraphernalia;
- 5.4 The possession or distribution of alcohol;
- 5.5 The possession of drug paraphernalia or controlled substance, irrespective of the amount or type, pursuant to the criminal statutes of the District of Columbia;
- 5.6 Causing serious disruptions or damage to school’s computer systems, electronic files, or network;
- 5.7 Possession of firework or explosives;
- 5.8 Theft or attempted theft using force, coercion, intimidation, or threat of violence;
- 5.9 Assault or physical attack on student or staff;
- 5.10 Fighting which results in serious physical injury;
- 5.11 Participating in a group fight, which has been planned, causes major disruption to the school day, or results in substantial bodily injury;
- 5.12 Using an article that is not normally considered a weapon to injure another individual;
- 5.13 Use, threatened use, or transfer of any weapon;
- 5.14 Use, possession or bringing to school a loaded or unloaded firearm, including but not limited to pistols, blank pistols, starter pistols, revolvers, rifles, and shotguns;
- 5.15 Any behavior that violates the Guns-Free Schools Act;
- 5.16 Deliberate acts that cause severe physical injury to another person(s);
- 5.17 Assault with a weapon;
- 5.18 Commission or attempted commission of any act of sexual assault or sexual aggression;
- 5.19 Arson;
- 5.20 Biohazard;
- 5.21 Bomb threat;

- 5.22 Any other intentional use of violence, force, coercion, threats, intimidation, or other comparable conduct which causes or attempts to cause severe physical injury, substantial disruption, or obstruction of any lawful mission, process, or function of the D.C. Public Schools;
- 5.23 Any other behavior that is illegal, causes substantial harm to self or others, or causes major disruption to the school environment; and
- 5.24 Documented pattern of persistent Tier IV behavior.

**Disciplinary responses for Tier V behaviors include:**

All Tier V behaviors shall be directly referred to Dean Magby. Tier V behaviors result in automatic long-term suspension or expulsion.

**Suspensions and Expulsions**

Students who have been suspended or expelled shall not be eligible to participate in any school function for the duration of their suspension or expulsion. The only exceptions may be authorized by the Chancellor or his or her designee shall be for system-wide testing, or College Board or admission examinations.

Parents/guardians will be notified of suspensions or expulsion after the incident is investigated. Parents and guardians have the right to a conference with the school official responsible for making or approving the disciplinary action. They also reserve the right to appeal suspensions no later than two days after receiving the notice of disciplinary action. Students will be provided with a work packet from their teachers to complete on suspension. Parents must escort students to school after the suspension has been served.

All long-term suspensions or expulsions will result in a hearing conducted by the Office of Administrative Hearings.

**Alternatives to formal discipline**

While formal disciplinary measures will be required in some cases, teachers and other school personnel are encouraged to develop and make use of informal correction and guidance strategies where appropriate. These strategies may include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Behavior Contract
- (b) Counseling Sessions
- (c) Daily Conduct Sheet (Signed by Parent/Guardian)
- (d) Parent Contact
- (e) School Based Community Service
- (f) After School Detention
- (g) Recess Detention
- (h) Teacher/Student Conference
- (i) Counselor/Student Conference
- (j) Reflective Essays

*At any time the Discipline Committee reserves the rights to modify this plan in accordance with Title 5, Chapter 25 of the D.C. Municipal Regulations (DCMR) with the approval of the Principal.*

**Student Records**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law that affords parents the right

to have access to their children's education records, the right to seek to have the records amended, and the right to have some control over the disclosure of personally identifiable information from the education records. When a student turns 18 years old, or enters a postsecondary institution at any age, the rights under FERPA transfer from the parents to the student ("eligible student"). The FERPA statute is found at 20 U.S.C. § 1232g and the FERPA regulations are found at 34 CFR Part 99.

Per the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), all student records are treated as confidential and kept under restricted conditions. Parents may request to review their child's records at any time, or to be informed of the information contained therein. Parents may request that Excel corrects records which they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. Parents may request photocopies of their child's records but files may not be removed from the school location where they are maintained. When requested by a parent, it may take up to 48 hours to get copies of the file(s).

Excel reserves the right to disclose student records without parental consent to the following parties:

- School officials with legitimate educational interest;
- Other schools to which a student is transferring;
- Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
- Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
- Accrediting organizations;
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena
- Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law

### **Student Responsibilities**

As students, you share the responsibility to improve academic achievement by:

- Completing homework assignments daily.
- Paying attention in class.
- Asking for help when needed.
- Reading at least 30 minutes per day outside of school.
- Coming to school on time daily.
- Coming to school dressed in uniform daily.
- Leaving all items not school related at home (e.g. toys, games, sports equipment, trading cards, jewelry, make-up, iPods, Gameboys, etc.)
- Showing respect for adults and peers at all times.
- Giving your parents or the adult responsible for your welfare, all notices and information received at school daily.
- Following the rules and procedures outlined in the discipline policy.

### **Truancy**

Truancy is defined as the willful absence from school by a minor (5–18 years of age) with or without parental approval, knowledge, or consent. A truant is a minor (5–18 years of age) who, without a valid reason and with or without parental knowledge or consent, does not attend school. A truant is defined as any student who accumulates 10 or more unexcused absences in one school year. Students between the ages of 14 and 18 who accumulate 15 or more absences will be referred to DC Court Services for truancy. Students under the age of 14 will be reported to CFSA, per District of Columbia policy.

### ***Truancy Enforcement***

All uniformed law enforcement officers in the District are responsible for truancy enforcement.

- If the police pick up a truant, she will be transported in a police vehicle to the school.
- Parents/guardians are notified of the student's truancy status.
- Parents/guardians and students may be required to attend a truancy conference.

### **Updated Parent and Student Information**

It is very important that the school has current and up-to-date information on your child. In case of emergencies, we must be able to contact parents/guardians in a timely manner. *If your contact information changes, please inform the school immediately. This information should go to the registrar in the main office.*

### **Visitor Policy**

Parents are a vital part of the Excel community and are welcomed to visit. All visitors must, however, present ID, check-in, and sign in at the front desk. At Excel Academy, we ask that all visitors are appropriately attired and that they refrain from using profanity. Visitors, who are not able to meet these requirements, will be asked to leave the facility. Failure to meet this standard may result in further action up to and including being banned from the school.

Visitors must be escorted to their destination in the building. All visitors wishing to meet with an Excel employee, are encouraged to schedule an appointment to ensure staff availability. Visits to classroom should be pre-arranged with the classroom teacher.

# FORMAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT OF THE FAMILY HANDBOOK

## Parent Agreement

We, the undersigned, understand that this handbook contains important information for parents, guardians and students. We acknowledge that we have received a copy of Excel Academy Student Handbook. We are aware that this handbook contains information and policies for our review. We have reviewed the information and policies contained in this handbook.

We understand that:

- o All parents, guardians and students will be held accountable for their behavior and that failure to abide by the guidelines can result in the consequences outlined in this handbook.
- o Failure to return this acknowledgment form does not excuse any individual from complying with the provisions of the Family Handbook, Excel Academy policies, regulations and guidelines.

### ***Directions for return of this form throughout the school year:***

- 1) Student and Parent/Guardian review handbook.
- 2) Parent/Guardian sign and date handbook acknowledgement below.
- 3) Remove this page from handbook
- 4) Student returns this page to homeroom teacher by **the first day of school**. New and transfer students registering after the start of the school year must return this acknowledgement page within one week after receipt.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please sign and return this sheet to your child's teacher.*