

CALIFORNIA ACADEMY OF LEARNING CHARTER SCHOOL



**PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK AND
CODE OF CONDUCT**

**2025-2026
ACADEMIC SCHOOL YEAR**

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I. General Information

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INTRODUCTION

Mission Statement

The mission of California Academy of Learning Charter School is to prepare all students for their individual capabilities to become lifelong learners ready to meet the challenges of the future. In partnership with families and the community, our goal is to create relevant learning experiences for each individual student that develop the knowledge, skills, and character necessary for a technically advanced future.

Vision

Our vision is an innovative educational experience designed for students as individuals that equips them with the skills and mindset to take on the world.

Core Values

CALIFORNIA ACADEMY OF LEARNING CHARTER SCHOOL



Our Core Values & Guiding Principles

C

COLLABORATION

We work together to solve problems, share ideas, and build community

A

ACCOUNTABILITY

We take responsibility for our actions, our growth, and our outcomes. We measure success by the impact we have on students and each other.

L

LEADERSHIP

We empower students and staff to lead with integrity, courage, and purpose—both in school and in life.

C

COMMUNITY FIRST

We cultivate a strong, welcoming school community where every voice is heard, and all members—students, families, and staff—are partners in learning.

H

HIGH EXPECTATIONS

We hold ourselves and our students to high standards—academically, socially, and behaviorally—because we believe in everyone’s limitless potential.

A

ADAPTABILITY

We embrace change and innovate when faced with new challenges or opportunities.

R

RESPECT

We honor the dignity and worth of every individual, creating a safe and welcoming environment for all.

T

TRUST THE PROCESS

We value growth over perfection. Through reflection, feedback, and perseverance, we get better together.

E

EMPATHY

We lead with compassion, seeking to understand before being understood, and support each other with kindness.

R

REFLECTION

We regularly pause to learn from experience and continuously improve.

Staff Directory

Rebecca Bedine	Kindergarten	berdiner@calcharteracademy.org
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Missy Beck	Cafeteria/custodial	beckm@calcharteracademy.org

Address/Telephone Changes

It is very important that every student maintain an up-to-date address and telephone number record at the school office. If you have a change in address, email, or telephone number during the school year, notify the school immediately to assure efficient communication between school and home and to update your child's transportation services. Emails are often not updated and lead to loss of electronic notifications if not maintained.

Arrival

Arrival Time of Elementary K-3 School:

Students are permitted in the building at 8:10 am and are late at 8:30 am. They are to report directly to their homerooms. Breakfast will be served in the cafeteria at 8:30 am if they wish to have breakfast. Students who arrive after 8:30 am must enter through the side / main doors of the Charter School and report to the office for a late admission slip. Students with four or more unexcused tardies may receive disciplinary

action and/or loss of privileges. Excessive tardies may result in further intervention and/or a citation to the magistrate.

Arrival Time of Phillipsburg 4-10 School:

Students are permitted in the building at 8:00 am and are late at 8:15 am. They are to report directly to the cafeteria area if they wish to have breakfast. Students who arrive late must report to the office for a late admission slip. Students with four or more unexcused tardies may receive disciplinary action and/or loss of privileges. Excessive tardies may result in further intervention and/or a citation to the magistrate.

Cancellations, Snow Days, Emergencies, or Delays:

The California Academy of Learning Charter School utilizes a notification system, which allows us to reach parents, students, and staff members instantly via ParentSquare. The school also urges parents to listen to or watch the following stations, rather than to call the school office: KDKA, WTAE, and WPXI for announcements of school closings or delays due to snow or inclement weather. Additionally, information will be posted on the school website and social media. Any parent who feels that local road conditions are not safe for travel should feel free to keep a child at home. Students may be excused from missing school in this circumstance, if approved by the principal.

Communication with Parents/Guardians:

Parents/guardians shall receive regular contact from teachers for every student relative to academic or behavioral occurrences. This correspondence can occur in person, by phone, email, ParentSquare, or letter.

Computer Use:

All students and parents must sign off on a separate Acceptable Use of Computer Agreement form each year, outlining in further detail the expectations of computer use at California Academy of Learning Charter School. Failure to return this form will result in loss of computer privileges. Computer misuse will result in disciplinary action. Information and programs stored on CAL computers, storage systems, or peripherals are the private property of the individual creator of California Academy of Learning Charter School, and shall not be duplicated.

Conferences

Parent Teacher conferences will be held five times throughout the school year. Two are pre-scheduled on our calendar, while the other three conferences will be

periodically held throughout the year. Information will be sent out prior to available conference dates for parents to electronically sign up for a conference if they feel it is necessary to have a conference with their child's teacher. Parents/guardians are also encouraged to arrange and attend conferences as necessary throughout the year. Please contact your child's teacher if a conference is needed outside of the five regularly scheduled conferences.

Custody/Court Orders

At times, there are legal papers in the form of custody agreements or court orders that pertain to students and their specific circumstances. Parents must provide custody agreements/court orders to the school office. If parents/guardians are aware of modification of existing paperwork, it is their responsibility to provide the updated paperwork to the school office. After the initial submission of this paperwork, any revisions to paperwork or newly issued documents must be presented to the school office. Paperwork that is on file in the school office will be considered up-to-date unless a parent presents new paperwork or revisions to these legal documents.

Dismissal Times:

Student dismissal times are as follows:

Secondary School: 2:40 pm

Elementary School: 2:50 pm

Students are not permitted to leave the building once they have entered nor will loitering be permitted in the halls. Students must be in attendance 4-1/2 hours to be considered present for a full day. Anything less than 4-1/2 hours is considered a half-day attendance unless prior arrangements have been made with the school administration.

Students requesting an early dismissal should stop in the main office when they arrive in the building to receive an early dismissal slip. No student may leave the building without written permission from parent/guardian. If it is necessary to be dismissed from school (other than a school related function), the student must have a written note that contains:

- Dismissal time
- Reason
- Parent phone number
- Parent signature

**We may contact parents or guardians for verification.*

FERPA Notification-Confidentiality of Student Records:

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age (“eligible students”) certain rights with respect to the student’s education records. These rights are:

- *The right to inspect and review the student’s education records within 45 days of the day the California Academy of Learning Charter School receives a request for access.* The parents/guardians or eligible students should submit to the building principal, or appropriate CAL official, a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The School official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
- *The right to request the amendment of the student’s education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student’s privacy rights under FERPA.* Parents or eligible students who wish to ask the school to amend a record should write to the school principal or appropriate school official, clearly identify the part of the record they want to be changed, and specify why it should be changed. If California Academy of Learning Charter School decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the school will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.
- *The right to privacy of personally identifiable information in the student’s education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.* One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the school as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the School Board; a person or company with whom the school has outsourced services or functions it would otherwise use its own employees to perform (such as an attorney,

auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee; or a parent, student, or other volunteer assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility. Upon request, the California Academy of Learning Charter School discloses education records without consent to officials of another school in which a student seeks or intends to enroll, or is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes of the student's enrollment or transfer.

- *The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the school to comply with the requirements of FERPA.*

The name and address of the federal office that administers FERPA are:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-8520

With concern or to register a complaint please contact:

California Academy of Learning Charter School
Attn: Mrs. Heather Nicholson
750 Orchard Street
California, PA 15419
724-963-9000

Financial Obligations:

The school believes that students must respect property and develop feelings of pride in community institutions. Any destruction, accidental or intentional, must be paid for by the family at the main office.

McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act

In compliance with the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, as reauthorized in 2015 by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), California Academy of Learning Charter School attempts to identify all children who may be experiencing homelessness.

Homeless children and youth are defined as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. This includes individuals:

- Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship or a similar reason
- Living in a motel, hotel, trailer park or campground due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters
- Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, bus or train stations or similar settings
- Living in substandard housing (no running water or working utilities, infestations, etc.)

Children who are experiencing homelessness may qualify for assistance with school supplies/materials, tutoring, and transportation so that they can remain in their school of origin throughout the duration of their homeless episode.

If you believe your child(ren) may qualify for this service, please contact Mrs. Katie Black, homeless liaison for the California Academy of Learning Charter School, at 724-963-9000 or blackk@calcharteracademy.org.

If your living situation changes during the school year, and you and your children become homeless, please be sure to contact the school. We will work with you so that your child(ren)'s education is disrupted as little as possible.

Media:

Throughout the school year, the news media may have an occasion to visit the building. They may ask students questions or take pictures or a video of the school for their use. If a parent or guardian does not want their son or daughter involved with the media, a letter must be sent to the Office Administrator requesting that this not occur. If a letter is not received, it will be assumed that this will not be a problem and permission therefore will be granted.

Parents' Rights

General

California Academy of Learning Charter School is required each year to provide you with notice of your rights with respect to your child's educational records. The purpose is to advise you of the types of information that may be disclosed to the public throughout the course of the school year. The following information may be disclosed to the public:

- Academic Honors
- Students of Honor
- Other Academic Accolades

You will be sent a letter notifying you of your rights. This letter will also advise you of your right to review your child's educational records pursuant to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Should you have any questions regarding the information contained in the letter, please feel free to call the office.

Directory Information:

During the course of the school year, directory information (defined below) relating to California Academy of Learning Charter School students may be disclosed to individuals and/or the media. For example, individual and/or group interviews, photographs or videos of the students may be taken for use by the school in various publications, or for use in local newspapers. This publicity provides the community with information about various school programs and achievements. "Directory information" means information contained in an education record of a student, which would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed.

The school may also disclose additional directory information relating to students for various reasons throughout the school year without prior parental consent. Interviews, photographs, and videos, as described above, are also considered to be directory information. (34 CFR §99.3). Directory information does not include disciplinary information, medical records, evaluation records, grades, special education records, or other information that would be considered private in nature.

You have the right to refuse to let the school release directory information pertaining to your child. **If you refuse to permit the school to release any or all directory information pertaining to your child, your objection must be in writing. Telephone calls or voice messages will not be sufficient. Should you desire to exercise this right, please write a letter indicating your objection to your school's office within 14 calendar days of the date of this notification.** If you do not provide other written objections, directory information as identified above may be released.

PBIS

The Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports Program provides realistic expectations necessary to take a proactive rather than a reactive approach when responding to behavioral and social issues. We maintain an inclusive environment for all students. Expectations are taught, modeled, and communicated to all students throughout the school day:

PBIS Expectations

Area	Safe	Organized	Accountable	Respectful
Hallways & Stairs	- Hands to yourself - Walk at all times - One stair at a time	- Walk on the right side - Keep all belongings together	- Go directly to your destination - Keep school clear of trash	- Inside voices - Quiet feet - Quietly wait in line to go into classroom
Assemblies	- Hands to yourself - Walk to seat - Sit in seat appropriately	- Sit in designated area - Raise hand for assistance	- Follow directions of adults - "Let's Get Set"	- Listen attentively - Voices off - Stay in personal bubble - Wait your turn to share
Bus	- Sit properly in designated seat for the entire ride - Hands to yourself - Walk when exiting or entering - Keep the bus ride calm and quiet	- Keep all belongings in backpack - Backpack stays in seat or between your feet	- Report unsafe behaviors to bus driver at safest opportunity	- Use inside voices - Listen to bus driver instructions - Use appropriate and kind words
Dismissal	- Walk directly to destination - Follow hallway & stairs procedures - Hands to yourself	- Be packed and ready to go - Keep materials in backpack until you get home	- Listen attentively for your transportation method to be called - Get activity pass before dismissal if needed	- Inside voices - Follow adult directions - Maintain personal space
Recess	- Inform adult of any unsafe or suspicious behaviors - Stay in sight of an adult - Pause and look both ways before crossing street - Keep shoes on your feet	- Put equipment away when finished - Establish and follow game rules	- Report any stray animals or unsafe objects - Line up quickly when called - Listen for instructions - Be responsible for jackets and belongings	- Respect school and community properties - Share equipment - Show good sportsmanship - Use kind words and keep hands to yourself
Restroom	- Use restrooms appropriately - Keep water in the sink - Walk at all times - One person in bathroom at a time	- Wait in main hallway when restroom is full - Return to classroom if 3 people are waiting	- Dispose of waste properly - Flush toilet - Wash hands - Report any problems to an adult - Return directly to class when finished	- Respect others' privacy - Lock doors before use and unlock before exiting - Hands to yourself in waiting area - Quietly wait for your turn
Cafeteria	- Hands to yourself - Walk at all times - Raise hand for assistance - Eat only your food	- Stay seated at table until called for the line - Only 3 people per side of table - Stay in cafeteria at all times - Use downstairs restroom only	- Follow directions of adults - Use table manners - Clear up after yourself - Ask teacher to use the restroom	- Inside voices - Listen attentively - Follow directions promptly

Students receive "SOAR Tickets" after being recognized by a staff member.

Parents are integral in the process. Parents will be notified of positive behaviors. They will also be notified when behavior does not conform to expectations.

Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA)

The Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) is a criterion referenced test used to measure students' progress toward mastering the Pennsylvania Academic Standards in grades 3 through 5. The academic standards identify proficiency levels in English Language Arts (ELA) and Math for grades 3 through 5; and starting 2024-25 school year, Science in grade 5. The dates for the PSSA tests are listed in the school calendar, and notifications will be sent from the school. Students must be in school during the district assessments and PSSA testing, except in cases of illnesses. As these tests are important, vacations will rarely be approved for the weeks of these tests. Due to the necessity to complete the tests within a given window for all students as mandated by the Pennsylvania State Department of Education, make-ups will occur for students during instructional time if missed.

School Counseling and Social Work Services:

Counseling services are part of the regular educational program for all California Academy of Learning Charter School students. Students are supported either individually or in small groups. Students receiving counseling are assisted in making decisions, setting goals to improve class performance, and discussing personal or social issues. The School Counselor and the Social Worker work closely with teachers, parents, and other school staff. They may also work with people from other local agencies. The goal of the counseling staff is to make school experiences rewarding and meaningful.

Student Assistance Program (SAP)

Students may be referred to Student Assistance Program (SAP) if they experience behavioral difficulties that impede their learning or the learning of others. When appropriate, referrals of a student to SAP may result in the SAP team assisting the classroom teacher in developing individualized positive behavior interventions.

Visitors

The only daytime entrance to school is the main office entrance. All other doors are locked during the school day. All visitors must provide a driver's license or some form

of identification to enter the building. Visitors must buzz in through the office and receive a “Visitor’s Badge.” Visitors must wear their badge prominently and must remember to sign out in the office and return their badge when exiting.

To ensure the safety of the children, visitors will not be permitted to wander through the building. Messages for students or teachers may be given to the secretary in the office so that classroom instruction is not interrupted. No one will be permitted to go to a classroom unless prior arrangements have been made with the classroom teachers and school office.

Volunteer Clearances

All volunteers must have current clearances. Clearances must be updated at least every five (5) years. The following clearances are required under law:

- Criminal Record Clearance
- Child Abuse Clearance
- FBI Criminal History Record Information

The FBI clearance may be waived for a prospective volunteer if they have been a resident of Pennsylvania during the entire last ten-year period. In order to obtain a waiver of the FBI clearance, the volunteer must “swear and affirm in writing” that they have not been convicted of any crime (reportable offense) by signing the PA Disclosure Statement Affidavit. This Affidavit must be signed in the school office with a witness present.

A volunteer may locate applications for clearances on the following websites:

- Pennsylvania Child Abuse (Act 151)
– <https://www.pa.gov/agencies/dhs/resources/keep-kids-safe/child-abuse-clearances/pa-child-abuse-history-clearance>
- Criminal Record (Act 34)
<https://www.pa.gov/agencies/dhs/resources/keep-kids-safe/child-abuse-clearances/criminal-background-check>
- Federal Criminal History (Act 114) – <https://identigo.com> School Code: IKG6Y3
(Additional information at <https://www.pa.gov/agencies/dhs/resources/keep-kids-safe/child-abuse-clearances/fbi-fingerprinting>)

Clearances will be kept on file in the school offices. Copies must be provided to the school office. A computer-generated badge will be distributed to visitors upon checking into the office. Any volunteer who does not have their badge will not be permitted to gain access to the school.

II. Health, Safety, and Security

Anti-Bullying Policy:

The California Academy of Learning Charter School believes that all students have the right to a safe and healthy school environment. We promote mutual respect, acceptance, and tolerance, and will not permit behavior that infringes upon these principles. No student shall harass, intimidate, or verbally abuse another student. Hitting, shoving, teasing, name-calling, manipulating, or shunning other students is prohibited. This policy is in effect when a student is at school, en route to or from school, or at any school-sponsored event. Also prohibited is behavior that occurs outside of school that the school reasonably believes would materially interfere with or substantially disrupt the educational process or program in the school, and the outside-of-school conduct does in fact materially interfere with or substantially disrupt the educational process or program in the school."

Complaints of harassment shall be investigated promptly, and corrective action will be taken when allegations are substantiated. Confidentiality of all parties shall be maintained, consistent with the school's legal and investigative obligations outlined in Unlawful Harassment Policy.

Staff and administration will contact and show support to families in the event that a student has been hurt either by physical or emotional aggression while in school. The counselor, social worker, administrators, teachers, and/or other staff members will follow-up as necessary with families/students to ensure a level of comfort and a safe environment for students who have been bullied or physically hurt.

Asthma Inhalers/Epinephrine Auto-Injectors:

Students may possess and self-administer asthma inhalers and epinephrine auto-injectors in compliance with state law and board policy # 210.1. Written requests for such medications from the parent/guardian and the licensed medical personnel are required to be submitted annually to the nurse's office.

Emergency Drills

Emergency drills will be held on a regularly scheduled basis during the course of the school year. The following is a listing of drills and their scheduled frequency:

- Fire Drills - Monthly
- Emergency Weather Drill – Annually
- Lockdown Drills - Semester
- Bus Evacuation Drill - August and March

The Standard Response Protocol (SRP) is based on the response to any given situation using common clear language - not codes or code words.

The following are common vocabulary terms and symbols used by staff, students, parents, and emergency responders:

- **Hold** is a response that would clear the hallways, close and lock doors until the situation has been cleared.
- **Secure** is a safety response that brings everyone inside the building and the perimeter is secured. No one is permitted in or out of the building during this time.
- **Lockdown** is a safety response procedure that contains students and staff in safe locations within the building in the event of a threat to safety.
- If there is a need to **Evacuate** the building, several locations are identified pending the emergency situation. Procedures are in place.
- **Shelter** is used in situations like weather related incidents such as tornadoes or earthquakes.

IN AN EMERGENCY TAKE ACTION



HOLD! In your room or area. Clear the halls.

STUDENTS

Clear the hallways and remain in room or area until the "All Clear" is announced
Do business as usual

ADULTS

Close and lock the door
Account for students and adults
Do business as usual



SECURE!

Get inside. Lock outside doors.

STUDENTS

Return to inside of building
Do business as usual

ADULTS

Bring everyone indoors
Lock outside doors
Increase situational awareness
Account for students and adults
Do business as usual



LOCKDOWN! Locks, lights, out of sight.

STUDENTS

Move away from sight
Maintain silence
Do not open the door

ADULTS

Recover students from hallway if possible
Lock the classroom door
Turn out the lights
Move away from sight
Maintain silence
Do not open the door
Prepare to evade or defend



EVACUATE! (A location may be specified)

STUDENTS

Leave stuff behind if required to
If possible, bring your phone
Follow instructions

ADULTS

Lead students to Evacuation location
Account for students and adults
Notify if missing, extra or injured students or adults



SHELTER! Hazard and safety strategy.

STUDENTS

Use appropriate safety strategy for the hazard

Hazard

Tornado
Hazard
Earthquake
Tsunami

Safety Strategy

Evacuate to shelter area
Seal the room
Drop, cover and hold
Get to high ground

ADULTS

Lead safety strategy
Account for students and adults
Notify if missing, extra or injured students or adults

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Medication:

The California Academy of Learning Charter School recognizes the need for medications to be provided to students when prescribed by a licensed professional. To avoid any possible misinterpretation of this need, the following provisions shall be followed:

- All medications should be given by the parent whenever possible.
- It is the parent's responsibility to inform the school of any medication that must be brought to or taken in school.
- School personnel in school may give prescription medication only when instructions for administration and possible side effects are on file with the school nurse. The parent shall be responsible for supplying the labeled medication in its original container. When the nurse is not available, the responsibility for such will be delegated by the CEO.

School Security:

California Academy of Learning Charter School maintains a safe environment for students, staff, and community. Security cameras are installed in public areas to alert administration of any potential misconduct. A School Security Personnel is on site daily to address security.

Outside doors, other than the main entrances, must remain closed/locked during the school day. Visitors must enter only through the main entrance and must provide identification.

III. Student Policies and Procedures

Academic Dishonesty:

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism and cheating on examinations and individual/group submitted work. Plagiarism is the unacknowledged borrowing of another's words or ideas. Whether such borrowing is intentional or unintentional, it constitutes plagiarism.

There are three common forms of plagiarism:

- The duplication of an author's words without quotation marks or proper footnotes or other appropriate reference.
- The duplication of an author's words or phrases with footnotes (or other appropriate reference) but without quotation marks.
- The use of an author's ideas in paraphrase without proper footnotes or other appropriate reference.

A student who helps another student cheat, or provides answers, is considered equally guilty and will be subject to appropriate discipline. Any student caught cheating on a test or assignment will receive a grade of "zero" for that test or assignment.

Details of the incident will be submitted by the teacher to the administration. Parents will be notified. Restorative Practice/Disciplinary action will be taken.

After School Programs

California Academy of Learning Charter School and California Area School District offer several after-school programs for students. For these programs, students will be called to their assigned area at dismissal. Transportation home is *a/ways* the responsibility of the family. Information regarding these programs will be shared from the school.

Backpacks

Students are permitted to carry back-packs. All backpacks and student belongings are subject to search.

Bus Behavior

Proper behavior is an absolute necessity while riding on the school bus. The bus driver is in charge and will enforce discipline on the bus. Students involved in misconduct, including showing disrespect for the driver or fellow students, and/or causing damage to the bus, may lose their bus riding privileges. California Academy of Learning Charter School has established the following rules to maintain bus safety.

Students' responsibilities are as follows:

1. Report to your bus stop no earlier than 5 to 10 minutes before the bus is scheduled to arrive.
2. While waiting for the bus, stay a safe distance from the roadway. Inappropriate behavior at the bus stop will not be tolerated.
3. Board the bus in a safe, orderly manner and go directly to your seat.
4. Cross fifteen feet in front of the bus only when the red lights are flashing and traffic has come to a complete stop.
5. Never cross behind or reach under a bus. Remain visible to the driver at all times. Stand clear of the danger zone.
6. Talk in a normal tone of voice so the driver can concentrate and hear warning sounds.
7. Ask the driver for permission to open windows. You must keep your entire body and all objects inside the bus at all times.
8. Eating, drinking, smoking, or chewing gum is prohibited on the bus.
9. Help keep your bus clean. No littering. Throwing objects inside or outside is prohibited.
10. When the bus arrives at school, exit in an orderly fashion and go directly to your assigned area.

NOTE: Students must ride their assigned bus. If a one-time change is necessary due to an emergency situation, please contact the school office.

Any request for a permanent change of a bus stop must be approved through the Office Administrator.

Students may be given assigned seats on the bus. Changes to the seating chart can be made by the driver or principal.

Bus Discipline

Bus discipline is a topic of serious conversation at California Academy of Learning Charter School. When a child acts inappropriately on a school bus, the safety of every person on the bus is in jeopardy. Discipline will depend on the seriousness of a child's inappropriate behavior. For example, first time offenders may receive more than a warning from the bus driver, bus monitor, or administrator. Should he/she continue to misbehave, the transportation privilege which is normally extended to CAL Charter's students will be revoked for that child.

First Offense - Warning

Second Offense - Detention

Third Offense - Parent/Guardian Conference

Fourth Offense - Bus Suspension* - 5 days

Fifth Offense - Bus Suspension* - semester

Sixth Offense - Bus Suspension* - rest of the year

**A conference between administrator, parent, driver, and child is required.*

Nothing in this policy requires that the school follow a progressive discipline model. Serious infractions may result in suspension conferences for the first offense.

Cell Phone/Smartwatch/Headphones (Earbuds):

While we recognize that cell phones are an important part of students' lives and can be valuable tools for learning and communication, we have found that frequent phone usage during instructional time has led to distractions, impacting academic performance and engagement, and contributing to unwanted behaviors. To address this issue, the following enforcement measures will be used:

Cell Phone Usage During School Hours:

Students are expected to keep their phones off and out of sight at all times. Phones should not be visible or in use anywhere within the school building.

Consequences for Non-Compliance:

If a student is found using a phone, the following consequences will be enforced:

- **First offense:** The phone will be confiscated by the staff member and returned at the end of the day.
- **Second offense:** The phone will be confiscated, and a parent or guardian will be required to pick it up from the school. Detention will also be assigned.
- **Third offense:** The phone must be turned in upon entry to school for 1 month.
- **Fourth offense:** Loss of privileges to bring a phone to school.

Nothing in this policy requires that the school follow a progressive discipline model. Serious infractions may result in suspension conferences for the first offense.

Students are encouraged to leave valuable possessions (such as cell phones, smart watches, headphones, earbuds, etc.) at home. The school assumes no responsibility for lost, stolen, or damaged devices. Photo, video, and audio recording (for any reason) using electronic devices is strictly prohibited. The usage of social media on personal devices during school hours is prohibited.

Emergency Situations:

We understand there may be times when students need access to a phone for urgent matters. In such cases, students are encouraged to communicate with their teacher or school staff, who can facilitate access to a phone when necessary.

Students who require a medical accommodation to carry and access a phone or smartwatch (e.g., to monitor blood sugar) must request the accommodation from the administration.

Dress Code:

The Dress Code Policy is intended to support the creation of an educational environment promoting self-respect while not inhibiting self-expression. Faculty and administration have the right to question a student's dress if perceived as inappropriate and/or offensive. Dress should be appropriate for a school environment as preparation for appropriate dress in the workplace.

Parents will be notified and be required to bring a change of clothing if the student cannot make adequate adjustments. Classes missed by the student as a result of the dress code violation will count against the school's attendance/discipline policy.

Students are not permitted to wear sunglasses in the building during the school day. No clothing, including coats, which interferes with the function of the class is to be worn.

Clothing that is obscene and vulgar or promotes the use of illegal substances (alcohol, drugs, tobacco, guns and/or gangs/violence), contains sexual innuendo or promotes discrimination may not be worn.

Tops exposing the chest or a bare midriff are not permitted. Tops must meet the top of the student's pants, shorts or skirt while standing up. Shorts and skirts must be of a length that does not expose the buttocks.

It is strongly suggested that students not wear flip-flops. Slippers are not permitted to be worn. Flip-flops and slippers are unsafe footwear for the halls, stairs, buses, and playground.

Students who, for medical or religious reasons, require an adjustment to the Dress Code must request an accommodation from the administration.

Lockers:

For those buildings that have lockers, the lockers are the property of the school. Therefore, students should have no expectation of privacy regarding items placed in school lockers. The California Academy of Learning Charter School will not be held responsible for articles missing from or destroyed in/from a student's locker.

The administration reserves the right to open and search lockers in case of an emergency or reasonable suspicion. School officials may conduct random, periodic sweeping searches, including canine drug searches of all lockers. In non-emergency situations, students will be notified and may be present when their lockers are searched.

The main office will assign lockers to students in their first period class/homeroom. No trash is to be stored in lockers. Accumulation of trash will result in a loss of locker privileges. The administration will not tolerate entering, destroying or stealing from lockers. Any student entering a locker, other than their own, destroying locker contents and/or stealing will be prosecuted to the fullest limit of the law. Action will be taken by the administration through the local police department.

Personal Search:

The California Academy of Learning Charter School recognizes that all people want and expect the security and privacy of their persons, that there should be clear and good reasons to violate this expectation, and that the violation should be as unobtrusive as possible to protect the safety and order of the schools.

Pennsylvania Code Title 22, Chapter 12.14 allows schools to adopt reasonable policies and procedures regarding student searches. Searches will be conducted when the school determines through reliable information that a student had or has illegal or prohibited material on school property or on his/her person.

Any personal search will be reasonable (that is, it will not be more invasive than necessary) relative to the reason for the search. The school must be able to articulate the need for the search, and the search will not be retaliatory, discriminatory, or capricious. The administration will develop standardized search procedures taking into account the age, needs and personal dignity of students. Any person authorized to conduct searches will receive appropriate training in how to do so.

In no circumstance will a school employee searching a student reach under the student's clothing to such an extent that the searcher comes in contact with the student's bare skin or undergarments or expose the student's bare skin or undergarments above the knees and/or below the neck.

Student Driving:

At the High School level, if students drive themselves anywhere while on school time, the following must be secured by the principal and available on file in the principal's office:

- Administrative permission.
- Parental permission form.
- Forms verifying current automobile liability insurance coverage.
- Student's drivers license (copy)

The California Academy of Learning Charter School regards the student use of motor vehicles for travel to and from school as a privilege for which full responsibility must be assumed by both the families and the student. The use of such must follow the

guidelines set by each building principal and in accordance with the expectations of the school.

The Pennsylvania Vehicle Code will be enforced while vehicles are on school property. The parking privilege of any students may be withdrawn by the administration for violation of the expectations or regulations established at the respective buildings. Additional disciplinary measures may be imposed upon the student who refuses to comply with building policies concerning driving to school. This may include the assistance of the local police department or school resource officer.

No student is to park in the spaces designated for the handicapped, for visitors, or for the staff. School officials may search a student vehicle on school property if they have a reason related to the health, safety, and/or welfare of students or staff, and to enforce school board policies and procedures. A student has the option to be present if his or her vehicle is searched.

Student drivers are responsible for all items in the vehicles they drive to and park on school property. Vehicles are subject to search by administration if there is reasonable suspicion that a search of the car would uncover evidence of contraband or disciplinary violations. Police canine units may search inside a student's car only if they have probable cause.

Student Injuries:

If a student is injured during the school day, the school nurse will be notified to provide treatment and make decisions about the medical care of a student. If the school nurse is out of the building, another building nurse will be notified and/or an Emergency Medical Services will be called for assistance. Students are reminded to report all injuries to the school nurse, teacher (if the injury occurs in a school room), and/or coach (if the injury occurs during practice or at a sporting event).

Student Privileges:

If appropriate, the administration may revoke some or all of the following student privileges: parking in school lots, use of hall passes, use of student restrooms, participation in activities (including, but not limited to dances, athletic events, field trips, performances, homecoming, and prom).

Student Rights and Responsibilities:

The Board has the authority and responsibility to establish reasonable expectations and regulations for the conduct and deportment of school students. At the same time, no student shall be deprived of equal treatment and equal access to the educational program, due process, a presumption of innocence, and free expression and association, in accordance with Board policy and school expectations.

Valuables:

Students are cautioned not to bring large amounts of money or other personal valuables, including cell phones to school. Students, not the school, are held responsible for the loss of their personal property.

IV. Attendance

Attendance

The parent or guardian is responsible for ensuring their child's regular attendance and appropriate behavior while enrolled at California Academy of Learning Charter School. Students will only be released during the school day following direct communication with a parent or an authorized guardian.

Consistent attendance and active participation are essential to the learning process. Patterns of absenteeism, unexcused absences, or tardiness become part of a student's permanent academic record. Families and students will receive notification—either by letter or deficiency notice—if attendance issues arise that may result in academic penalties in accordance with school policy.

Students are required to attend school each day in the designated instructional format assigned to them. This may include virtual or in-person attendance, depending on the student's enrollment and the instructional options made available by the school. Regular and punctual attendance at school is important to a successful school career.

Attendance Policy

In Pennsylvania, school attendance is mandatory for students from at least 6 years of

age until the child reaches 18 years of age, unless the child has graduated from a regularly accredited, licensed, registered or approved high school or meets one of the exceptions in the Pennsylvania School Code. When a student misses school, they must bring a written note from a parent/guardian or medical professional or complete the Student Attendance Excuse Form within 3 days of their return to school

If a written excuse is not turned in within 3 days of a student's return to school or the reason for the absence is not among the listed acceptable excuses, then the absence will be recorded as unexcused. The school will send a written notice home once a student accumulates three (3) unexcused absences. If a student accumulates six (6) unexcused absences, then they are considered, by law, to be habitually truant. A "Student Attendance Improvement Plan" must then be put into place that clearly outlines consequences for further absences. Consequences may include loss of credit or a citation to the magistrate.

According to California Academy of Learning Charter School Policy, once a student accumulates 10 absences (whether they are excused or unexcused), medical excuses are required for any further absences. If a student has a planned trip, an approved absence form must be completed and turned in to the main office BEFORE they leave. Students must have a healthcare provider's excuse upon return if he/she is out for more than three (3) consecutive days. If a note is not received within three days, all days out will be considered unexcused.

Every effort should be made to schedule medical or dental appointments during non-school hours. If appointments must be made during school hours, the student must present a signed parental note or email (with phone number of where parents can be reached) prior to being excused. **Students must check out in the main office before leaving in order for an early dismissal to be excused. Failure to do so will result in consequences for cutting class or leaving school grounds without permission.** Students are responsible for all class work missed due to an appointment.

Absences fall into one of two categories: EXCUSED and UNEXCUSED.

Absences, tardies or early dismissal are **EXCUSED**, as determined by the PA School Code, for the following reasons:

- Personal: Student's own illness or quarantine; death in family
- Tutorial programs and/or counseling programs, which are not available in the school and which do not conflict with the regular school program
- Observance of religious holidays

- Educational tours and trips conducted under the supervision of an adult acceptable to the superintendent/designee and to the parent or guardian.
- Suspension
- Medical/dental appointments
- Preplanned education tours or trips (including college visits). One (1) week advance notice is required. Educational Trip/Tour forms are available in each building office or on the school website

Unless legally required, no absences will be approved during standardized testing windows.

To request approval for a Family Educational Trip, parent(s)/guardian(s) must submit a written request for excusal at least five (5) school days prior to the absence and the absence must be for 10 or less school days. Students who will be participating in an extended absence due to a request for an educational tour or trip for more than 10 days will be withdrawn after the tenth consecutive day (on day 11) and the withdrawal date will be dated the first day of the consecutive absence. These days are considered legal absences when approved.

Absences, tardies or early dismissals are **UNEXCUSED**, for the following reasons:

- Missed Bus
- Oversleeping/missed alarm
- Childcare for another sibling and/or family member
- Frequent/excessive transportation issues (transportation not provided by School)

V. Discipline

Philosophy of Discipline and Student Conduct

At CAL Charter, we hold that the highest aim of education is to cultivate responsible, respectful, and productive citizens. To give every learner the chance to grow intellectually, creatively, emotionally, socially, and physically, we insist on a positive, respectful school climate.

Throughout their time with us, students are guided toward self-discipline and accountability. Courtesy, respect, and consideration form the bedrock of healthy relationships, and students are expected to model these qualities each day.

Actions that harm others, damage property, or disrupt learning violate our standards and will be addressed according to the school's discipline guidelines.

Families are crucial partners in student success. We ask parents and guardians to affirm the value of education, reinforce respectful behavior, ensure prompt, regular attendance, and support students as they complete assignments, prepare for assessments, and conduct themselves appropriately at school and in the wider community.

Discipline guidelines apply during the school day, on campus, on school transportation, and at all school-sponsored events. Discipline guidelines also will apply to off-campus and/or out of school behavior (such as cyberbullying) that affects the educational experience of students or interferes with the ability of the faculty and staff to perform their duties. The principal retains final authority over disciplinary actions and may refer serious cases to the Chief Executive Officer or Board of Trustees. Major offenses can lead to legal action or expulsion.

Every situation is reviewed individually. Our restorative, progressive discipline system—where successive infractions carry increasingly serious consequences—aims to foster rehabilitation, self-control, and intrinsic motivation. Penalties are applied fairly and consistently, with regard to each student's age and behavior record. Nothing in the policy, however, requires the school to follow progressive discipline if the infraction is serious enough to require more serious consequences. Questions about the discipline system may be directed to the principal.

Restorative Practice:

Restorative practice seeks to repair relationships. Restorative practice is a strategy that seeks to repair relationships that have been damaged, including those damaged through bullying. It does this by bringing about a sense of remorse and restorative action on the part of the offender and forgiveness by the victim. Restorative Practices can be assigned by teacher, principal, or a member of our Student Services team.

Detention Policy and Procedures:

All school personnel have the authority to assign detention to students for infractions

in accordance with the school's discipline policy. Detentions may be assigned for a single day or multiple days, depending on the nature and frequency of the behavior.

When a detention is assigned, staff are required to notify the student's parent or guardian by phone. If phone contact is unsuccessful, a written notice or an email will be sent home with the student. Parents or guardians must acknowledge the detention by contacting the school to confirm receipt and address any concerns.

Detention Schedule

- After-School Detention: Held on Tuesdays from 2:40 PM to 3:30 PM.
- Saturday Detention: Held at the Phillipsburg building from 8:00 AM to 11:00 AM. Saturday detention may be used as a progressive disciplinary measure for recurring behavior.

Procedures Once Parental Contact Is Made

- Students must report to detention on time—by 2:40 PM for after-school detention.
- Parents are responsible for arranging transportation. Any transportation hardships should be communicated directly to the principal.
- Detention must be served within one week of the assigned date. Failure to do so, without approved arrangements from the principal, may result in additional detentions or in-school suspension.
- Students assigned multiple detentions are expected to serve them on consecutive days. Skipping days may result in in-school or out-of-school suspension.
- Disruptive behavior during detention will not be tolerated. Students who disrupt the environment may be asked to leave, and the detention will be rescheduled.

Detention Activities

During detention, students may be assigned restorative or constructive tasks, which may include:

- Assisting with school cleanup
- Picking up trash in the neighborhood
- Meeting with a social worker or counselor to address behavior
- Other activities deemed appropriate by administration

Discipline Infractions and Penalties

Level I: Level I offenses impede classroom procedures, infringe upon the rights of others to learn, and interfere with the orderly operation of the school. Classroom teachers, substitute teachers, principal and other school personnel may assign Level I consequences. If the student's misbehavior is chronic and/or does not cease with initial corrective actions, the teacher may then send the student to the principal. If the behavior persists, consequences from Level II can be assigned and enforced.

A. Level I student misconduct includes but is not limited to the following:

Misconduct	Possible Disciplinary Options
Classroom disturbance	Warning
Cheating and/or lying	Confiscation of non-instructional items
Failure to complete assignments	Personal conference
Unprepared for class	Communication with parent/guardian
Failure to follow reasonable directions	Loss of privileges

Loud, boisterous noise Minor defacing that can be removed easily Possession of non-instructional items Running (not as part of instruction) Sleeping Violation of classroom rules Eating/drinking in unauthorized areas Minor disrespectful speech or actions	Classroom isolation/change in seating Detention
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Level II: Level II infractions typically arise when Level I misbehaviors persist despite previous interventions. These infractions require administrative involvement, as initial disciplinary measures have proven ineffective. They also include behaviors that significantly disrupt the school's orderly environment and therefore demand corrective action by the principal.

A. Level II student misconduct includes but is not limited to the following:

Continued, unmodified Level I behaviors. Overt/Continued disrespectful speech or actions. Throwing objects Failure to follow established procedures in the library, cafeteria, hallways, field	All Level I options may be considered Parent conference Referral to Student Assistance Team Referral to outside agency Hall pass restriction
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trips, assemblies, etc.	
Horseplay In off-limit areas in and around school without a hall pass	See Tardiness under the Attendance Policy
Skipping class/leaving class without permission	In-School Suspension
Inappropriate/obscene language	Out-of-school suspension
Possession of a lighter	

Level III: Level III infractions are sometimes the result of the continuation of Level I and/or Level II misbehaviors. Acts against persons and/or property are also included. Since some of these infractions have consequences that might endanger the health or safety of others in school, they are considered serious and most frequently result in the immediate attention of the principal.

A. Level III student misconduct includes but is not limited to the following:

Continued, unmodified Level I and/or Level II behaviors	All Level I and Level II options may be considered.
Use of a cell phone to video/take photos, and/or share video/photos with the intent to threaten or harass another student or staff member	Temporary removal from class
Fighting	School-based anger management (individual or group)
Refusal to surrender electronic devices, including cell phones upon staff request	Confiscation of electronic devices including cell phones
	Withdrawal of privileges including extra-curricular activities

Bullying or cyberbullying Instigating an altercation or fight between students Attempting to engage another student in an altercation/fight Insubordinate behavior Failure to serve detention Failure to report to the office as directed by staff Disrespectful or confrontational behavior Inappropriate behavior at school-sponsored events Vandalism (minor to moderate) Smoking, including e-cigarettes or vaping (subject to \$50.00 fine under the Drug & Alcohol Policy) Possession and/or use of tobacco products Stealing or theft (under a certain monetary value) Gambling Unacceptable public displays of affection	Restitution of property and damages Charges filed with the California Police Department/District Magistrate
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Level IV: Infractions under Level IV misbehavior could result from the continuation of Levels I through III. Acts that result in violence to another person(s) or property, and that pose a direct threat to the safety to others, are also included. These acts are clearly criminal in nature and are so serious that they always require administrative action resulting in the immediate removal of the student from school. The intervention of the California Police Department may also be warranted.

All Level IV consequences are in the form of out-of-school suspension (OSS). Most violations under Level IV are five (5) days but can extend to nine (9) days in extreme cases or per specific policy guidelines.

A. Level IV student misconduct includes but is not limited to the following:

Continued, unmodified Level I, Level II, and/or Level III behaviors	All Level I, II and III options may be considered
Fighting	Charges filed with the California Aliquippa Police
Possession/use (under the influence)/furnishing/selling of controlled substances	Immediate removal from class
Possession/use (under the influence)/furnishing/selling of alcohol as per Drug and Alcohol Policy	Referral to an Administrative Review Board
Vandalism of the personal property of school personnel	Referral to the Superintendent
Assault on another student and/or school personnel	Formal hearing with the Board of Education
Sexual harassment/assault	
Racial intimidation/threat to a student	

and/or personnel	Alternative school placement
Unwarranted pulling of a fire alarm.	Expulsion
Bomb threat	
Arson	
Possession of a weapon or look-a-like weapon as per Weapons Policy	
Any criminal conduct (as defined by the state criminal code) on school property (at any time) or at a school sponsored activity	

Important Definitions Relating to the Discipline Procedures:

Aggravated Assault: An unlawful attack by one person upon another in which the offender uses a weapon or displays it in a threatening manner; or the victim suffers obvious severe bodily injury such as broken bones, loss of teeth, possible internal injury, severe lacerations, or loss of consciousness.

This also includes assault with disease when the offender knows that he/she is infected with a disease and intentionally bites, spits, etc.

Assault: An unlawful attack by one person upon another. The act intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly causes bodily injury or serious bodily injury upon another person.

Bullying/Cyberbullying: An intentional , written, oral, mental or physical act or series of acts directed at another student or students, which occurs in and/or outside of the school setting, that is severe, persistent or pervasive, and has the effect of doing any of the following: (a) substantially interfering with a student's education; (b) creating a threatening and hostile learning environment; and/or (c) substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school. Cyberbullying involves the use of electronic media (including but not limited to social media) to bully as defined above. Bullying/cyberbullying can also involve one or more students acting with the intent to intimidate or overpower other student(s).

Disorderly Conduct: An intentional act(s) intended to cause public inconvenience, annoyance or alarm, or recklessly creating a risk to the orderly

operation of the school environment. Disorderly conduct includes engaging in fighting, threatening, or violent or tumultuous behavior; making unreasonable noise; using obscene language or making an obscene gesture; or creating a hazardous or physically offensive condition by an act which serves no legitimate purpose.

Fighting (Mutual Altercation): A student confrontation with another student in which the altercation is mutual, requiring physical restraint or resulting in injury or property damage. The physical contact may consist of punching, hitting, slapping and/or kicking with the willful intent to mutually harm one another. While students have the right to defend themselves from being assaulted, once they become an active participant, they are considered a combatant.

The use of fighting words, such as racial, cultural, or ethnic slurs, or other confrontational language associated with hate speech, or used to instigate or provoke a physical response will be treated in the same manner as physically participating in a fight.

Harassment: An intentional unwelcome act(s), usually based on race, color, religion, sex (including sexual orientation, transgender status, or pregnancy), national origin, or disability, designed to annoy or alarm another person. Harassment can be in the form of any of the following: unwelcome physical contact, or threats to do the same; following the other person in or about the school building/school grounds with the intent to intimidate; engaging in a course of conduct or repeatedly committing acts that serve no legitimate purpose; communicating to or about other persons any lewd, threatening or obscene words, language, or drawings; communicating repeatedly in an anonymous manner or at inconvenient hours with the intent to annoy or frighten.

Hazing: Behavior that happens when someone joins a group, such as a sports team, club, or school organization; typically characterized as an initiation process. Hazing behavior can include making the person do something embarrassing or dangerous, or can include physical violence. Hazing may create a risk of putting someone under physical or emotional duress.

Minor Altercation: A disagreement or dispute, often involving heated words or a physical tussle, but without significant injury. It can be a verbal dispute or a physical one where contact is made, but no serious harm results. Examples include tripping or bumping.

Public Displays of Affection: Acts of physical intimacy between two people that are visible to others in public spaces. These acts can range from simple gestures like holding hands and hugging to more intimate actions like kissing or cuddling.

Kissing and close physical contact are examples of behavior prohibited at school.

Reasonable Force: The amount of physical force that is deemed necessary and appropriate to protect oneself, others, or property from harm or a threat, and is not excessive or disproportionate to the situation. There are circumstances in which employees are permitted to use reasonable force in order to maintain a safe and orderly school environment, to administer first aid, and to attend to health needs. Typical examples of reasonable force include: intervening in fights, preventing accidental injury, protecting oneself, providing care to disabled students, and moving through a crowd to address an emergency.

Sexual Assault: An unauthorized and unwanted, intentional, or forcible touching of a sex organ of a person of either sex. Sex organs are the breasts of females and the genital areas of males and females. This includes unwanted kissing, forcibly and intentionally grabbing the clothed or unclothed breast or genitals of a person without their consent.

Sexual Harassment: Unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that is severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive, and which effectively denies a person equal access to an educational program or activity. Sexual harassment includes quid pro quo harassment, where an employee conditions educational benefits on participation in unwelcome sexual conduct. Sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking are also forms of sexual harassment.

Tobacco and Smoking Policy (PA Act 145 of 1996):

Smoking and use of tobacco or nicotine products (including smokeless tobacco products, pipes, cigars, lighters, vaping mods/pens, e-cigarettes, vaping oils/liquids/juice) will not be permitted in any building, indoor or outdoor school area, stadium and field areas, or any school property, including busses and bus stops. "School property," as used here, includes property owned, leased or under the control of the school. This restriction applies to students, employees, and all school facilities users..

Once Administration has determined that a student has used or is in possession of an item in violation of this policy, the prohibited items will be confiscated and given to the local police department. As some of these items can be a means to use illegal substances, the School Resource officer may test the confiscated item(s) for the presence of such a substance. If such a substance is detected, then the Drug & Alcohol Policy will apply.

If no illegal substance is indicated, then the following consequences will apply:

First Offense: Mandatory attendance at an educational, restorative program approved by the school. A citation will be filed with the Magistrate (to include fine and court costs). In the event students fail to complete the mandatory educational, restorative program students will be required to attend lunch detention and/or mandatory after school academic support.

Second Offense: Citation filed with the Magistrate, three (3) days out of school suspension, and a referral to Student Assistance Program

Third Offense: Citation filed with the Magistrate, ~~and~~ three (3) days out of school suspension, and an informal hearing will be held with the Principal, the student, and the student's parents within five (5) days of the suspension. At the informal hearing, consideration will be given to the nature of the offense and any mitigating or compounding circumstances, including other contemporaneous violations by the student of school policy and the Pennsylvania School Code, a student's prior disciplinary record, and a student's cooperation through an investigation. Following the informal hearing, a suspension may be extended by the building Principal but not to exceed a total of ten (10) school days.

Fourth and Subsequent Offenses: Citation filed with the Magistrate, ~~and~~ immediate 3 days out of school suspension and an informal hearing will be held with the building Principal, the student, and the student's parents within five (5) days of the suspension. At the informal hearing, consideration will be given to the nature of the offense and any mitigating or compounding circumstances, including other contemporaneous violations by the student of school policy and the Pennsylvania School Code, a student's prior disciplinary record, and a student's cooperation through an investigation. Following the informal hearing, a suspension may be extended by the building Principal but will not exceed a total of ten (10) school days. The student may be recommended to the Administration and School Board for other further discipline, including expulsion or alternative placement.

Alcohol and Drug Policy:

The California Academy of Learning Charter School Board of Trustees recognizes the abuse of alcohol and/or chemical substances as a serious problem with legal, physical, emotional and social implications for the whole

school community and adopts the position that a student must be free of illegal and harmful substances.

These substances include, but are not limited to beer, wine, liquor, any other alcoholic beverages, anabolic steroids, marijuana, hashish, narcotic drugs, hallucinogenic drugs, opioids, chemical solvents, look alike substances, paraphernalia, and any capsules or pills not registered with the nurse and/or given in accordance with school policy.

The school's policy is to prevent and prohibit the possession, use and/or mimic of use, sale and/or mimic of sale, distribution of any illegal or controlled mind-altering chemical medication or chemical substance not approved by the nurse's office, on school property, at school-sponsored events or functions including athletic events (even at another school), on school buses, en route to and from school by any mode of travel. This policy applies anywhere that students are under the jurisdiction of the school. If a violation occurs at a school event, the student involved may be prohibited from attending any extracurricular or co-curricular school activities to include, but not limited to clubs, sports, tutoring and theater production and rehearsals, for a specified amount of time, determined by administration.

In the event of any violation of this policy, the School Resource Officer will be notified, as well as police from the Municipality in which the school event takes place. Charges may be filed on any student involved in the violation. During an investigation, students will be asked to complete a written student statement. This statement will be requested by Administration and/or the Resource Officer/police. The student/parent/guardian will receive written notice (by regular mail, electronic mail and/or hand delivery) of the suspension and the scheduling of an informal hearing.

Possession/Use/Under the Influence First Offense:

A student possessing, using, consuming, or under the influence of alcohol or controlled substance(s) shall be initially suspended by the building Principal or Administrator on site for a period of not less than three (3) school days and not more than ten (10) days. If a suspension, either by way of initial imposition or extension, exceeds three days, an informal hearing will be held with the administration, the student, and the student's parents within five (5) days of the suspension. At the informal hearing, consideration will be given to the nature of the offense and any mitigating or compounding circumstances, including other contemporaneous violations by the student of school policy and the Pennsylvania School Code, a student's prior disciplinary record, and a student's

cooperation through an investigation. Following the informal hearing, a suspension may be extended by the building Principal but not to exceed a total of ten (10) school days. Also, in addition to the minimum requirements applicable for a 1st offense violation, the student may be recommended to the Administration and School Board for other further discipline.

Mandated minimum requirements of student for 1st Offense violation:

- Drug and alcohol evaluation by a licensed practitioner who specializes in drug and alcohol evaluations and treatment; at cost of student and/or family
 - Compliance with all recommendations of the drug and alcohol evaluation
 - Verification to the California Academy of Learning Charter School Administration-confirming drug and alcohol evaluation was performed.
 - Verification to the California Academy of Learning Charter School Administration that student completed recommendations of drug and alcohol evaluator.
 - Verification will NOT include protected information such as diagnosis. It will confirm only that the student has been evaluated and that the student has completed (or failed to complete) the recommendations.
 - If recommendations require ongoing participation, verification will be provided at least monthly that the student is in compliance.
- Educational Teen Outreach Program (or other consistent program approved by Administration); at cost of student and/or family.
- Referral to the Student Assistance Program Team
- Referral to the Magistrate's Office for Citation

A transition team meeting will occur prior to the student's return from suspension and participation in any extracurricular or co-curricular school activities to include, but not limited to clubs, sports, tutoring and theater production and rehearsal.

Academic work will be completed for credit while suspended, but students must coordinate that work with teachers. Students may not be on school grounds during the suspension. Exclusion from all school activities is a

condition of suspension.

The above mandated minimum requirements for a first violation of the drug and alcohol policy does not limit or preclude the imposition of further discipline. As stated above, other contemporaneous violations by the student of school policy and/or the Pennsylvania School Code, a student's prior disciplinary record, and a student's cooperation through an investigation may lead to further disciplinary actions, including expulsion.

Subsequent Drug & Alcohol Offenses:

If a student violates the drug and alcohol policy more than once, the student will be suspended for 10 days and an informal hearing will be held with the administration, the student, and the student's parents within five (5) days of the suspension. The student will be recommended for expulsion to the Board of Trustees.

Distribution:

In the case of drugs and alcohol distributed by a student through sale, exchange or other consideration, a recommendation will be made to the School Board for possible expulsion. If a student is apprehended distributing drugs or alcohol at school or at a school-sponsored event, but does not receive something of value in exchange, the process and discipline relating to a student possessing, using, consuming, or under the influence of alcohol or controlled substance(s) will apply, as set above, with such distribution being an additional factor as to the scope of disciplinary action.

Bullying and Harassment:

The Board declares it to be the policy of this school to provide an equal opportunity for all students to achieve their maximum potential through the programs and activities offered in the schools regardless of race, color, age, creed, religion, gender, gender identification, sexual orientation/identity, ancestry, national origin or handicap/disability.

Bullying, as defined above, is an intentional act or series of acts directed at another student or students, which interferes with a student's education, creates a threatening and hostile learning environment; and/or disrupts school operations. Bullying behavior can occur in the school, on school grounds, in school vehicles, at a designated bus stops or at any activity sponsored, supervised or sanctioned by the school, including activities that occur off school property.

Complaints of bullying will be investigated promptly, and corrective action will take place when allegations are verified. Students who have violated this policy will be subject to disciplinary action that may include, but is not limited to, mandatory counseling, parental conference, loss of school privileges, detentions, exclusion from school or school-sponsored activities (including bus transportation), or referral to law enforcement.

Harassment, as more fully defined above, means intentional unwelcome act(s), usually based on race, color, religion, sex (including sexual orientation, transgender status, or pregnancy), national origin, or disability, designed to annoy or alarm another person.

Sexual harassment, as more fully defined above, means unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that is severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive, and which effectively denies a person equal access to an educational program or activity.

Complaints of harassment or sexual harassment shall be investigated promptly, and corrective action will be taken when allegations are substantiated. Confidentiality of all parties shall be maintained, consistent with the school's legal and investigative obligations. Staff and administration will contact and show support to parents/guardians in the event that a student has been hurt either by physical or emotional aggression while in school.

Counselors, administrators, teachers and/or other staff members will follow-up as necessary with parents/guardians/students to ensure a level of comfort and a safe environment for students who have been bullied, harassed, or sexually harassed.

Vandalism:

Students who willfully or carelessly damage school property (books, equipment, lockers, school buses) will first be required to attempt to restore the damage done, if possible. If there is a financial cost associated with the vandalism, the student will be assessed the cost of the repair. School records will be withheld until all debts resulting from damage or destruction are paid.

Weapons Policy:

No person shall possess, handle or transmit any knife, cutting instrument or tool, brass or metal knuckles, cane, machete, firearm, shotgun, rifle, B.B. or pellet gun,

look-alike gun, chemical agent, explosive device, and/or other tool, instrument or implement capable of inflicting serious bodily injury in any school building, on any school premises, or on any school bus, on or off the school grounds at any school activity, event or function.

Any person discovered to have any weapon or other prohibited item in violation of this policy in his/her possession (including locker or car) or who threatens to use a weapon on another person shall not be permitted to remain in any school building, or on any school bus, or at any school activity, event or function. Where any person violates this policy, the police department of the appropriate jurisdiction shall be notified.

As required by state law, the school shall expel for a period of not less than one (1) calendar year any student who violates this weapons policy. Such expulsion shall be given in conformance with formal due process proceedings required by law. The state also requires schools to maintain records on acts of violence and weapons possession, and the school must forward student discipline records should a student transfer to another school. Any violation of this weapons policy will result in an initial exclusion from school.

Wellness:

California Academy of Learning Charter School recognizes that student wellness and proper nutrition are related to students physical well-being, growth, development, and readiness to learn in accordance with federal and state laws.

Student Acceptable Use Policy: Access & Use of Technology Systems Policy:

Users are expected to act in a responsible, ethical and legal manner in accordance with school policy, accepted rules of network etiquette, and federal and state law. Specifically, the following uses are prohibited:

1. Illegal activity
2. Commercial or for-profit purposes
3. Non-work or non-school related work
4. Product advertisement or political lobbying
5. Bullying/Cyberbullying
6. Hate mail, discriminatory remarks, and offensive or inflammatory communication.
7. Unauthorized or illegal installation, distribution, reproduction, or use of copyrighted materials.
8. Accessing, sending, receiving, transferring, viewing, sharing or downloading

- obscene, pornographic, lewd, or otherwise illegal materials, images or photographs.
9. Access by students and minors to material that is harmful to minors or is determined inappropriate for minors in accordance with Board policy and the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA).
 10. Inappropriate language or profanity.
 11. Transmission of material likely to be offensive or objectionable to recipients.
 12. Intentionally obtaining or modifying of files, passwords, and data belonging to other users.
 13. Impersonating another user, posting anonymously, or using pseudonyms.
 14. Fraudulent copying, communications, or modification of materials in violation of copyright laws.
 15. Loading or using unauthorized games, programs, files, or other electronic media.
 16. Disrupting the work of other users.
 17. Destruction, modification, abuse or unauthorized access to network hardware, software and files.
 18. Accessing the Internet, school computers or other network resources without authorization.
 19. Disabling or bypassing the Internet blocking/filtering software without authorization.
 20. Accessing, sending, receiving, transferring, viewing, sharing or downloading confidential information without authorization.

VI. APPENDICES & FORMS

The use of video conferencing can help connect teachers to their students while learning from home. California Academy of Learning Charter School teachers will be using this resource to meet with classes, small groups, and individual students. The school is using two video conferencing platforms: Google Hangouts/Meet. The school has taken several precautions to ensure the privacy of these video conferences, but we rely on our partnership with parents to ensure these tools are used appropriately by students while they learn from home. Students and parents are expected to follow these video conferencing guidelines:

- Students' ability to use video conferencing with or without parents' direct supervision is a decision parents need to make based on the age and independence of the child. For example, while K-3 students may require an

adult's direct assistance while using video conferencing tools, older students may be able to use these learning resources independently.

- Parents/guardians should be mindful of the family activities and images that are or heard/seen during a student's use of video conferencing. Please have your children use these tools in a space that you can monitor, that is also private enough for them to minimize distractions from household activities.
- Students need to ensure that video conferencing devices are fully charged in advance of the video conference session, and they should know how to turn off the camera or microphone as needed.
- Please remind students to dress and behave appropriately when video conferencing. The same expectations of conduct and behavior that apply to the classroom apply to video conferencing. Please refer to the School's Code of Conduct to review behavior expectations.
- Students/parents/guardians are not permitted to take photos, screenshots, or recordings of any video or audio from these video conference sessions. Participants do not have permission to do so and should be aware that this is a violation of the Student Acceptable Use of Technology policy. Such recordings may also violate state law.
- Teachers may choose to record instructional video conferencing sessions and share them with students who cannot attend the live session. Recordings of sessions will not be publicly available and will only be shared within a secure resource such as Google Classroom or Seesaw, or as a link in an email to the class or individual students. Students and parents are not permitted to share links provided by teachers with anyone. Faculty will announce their intention to record the session giving students/parents/guardians the opportunity to turn off their camera and/or microphone if privacy is of concern.

STUDENT DEVICE USER AGREEMENT

The purpose of this document is to delineate the terms and responsibilities for families taking possession of a California Academy of Learning Charter School issued device. Although families will take temporary possession of the device, the device remains the property of the California Academy of Learning Charter School. All equipment must be returned or made available to California Academy of Learning Charter School upon request or upon the student's separation from California Academy of Learning Charter School, including graduation or withdrawal. The option to purchase insurance for the device will be made available annually, at the beginning of the school year, through the school.

Students in the California Academy of Learning Charter School are being provided access to technology for educational purposes. Students must follow the California Academy of Learning Charter School Code of Conduct and Acceptable Use Policy for responsible use of technology in order to maintain the privilege of accessing such technology. The student and parent/guardian(s) will be responsible for taking the necessary precautions to safeguard the device. If the California Academy of Learning Charter School determines that loss and/or damage is the result of negligence, the parent/guardian(s) may be held financially responsible for the repair or replacement of the device. California Academy of Learning Charter School reserves the right to review, monitor, and restrict information stored on or transmitted via the California Academy of Learning Charter School owned device and to investigate inappropriate use of resources. The school will provide filtered Internet access to its students in compliance with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA). Students will be educated in the proper use of the device and options for data storage.

This information is provided to make all users aware of the responsibilities associated with efficient, ethical, and lawful use of the school's technological resources. If a student violates the California Academy of Learning Charter School Code of Conduct or Responsible Use Policy, privileges may be denied and appropriate disciplinary action shall be applied. Violations may result in disciplinary action up to and including suspension/expulsion for students. When applicable, law enforcement agencies may be involved.

2025–2026 Student & Parent Technology Agreement

California Academy of Learning Charter School

Student Information:

Last Name: _____ **First Name:** _____

Homeroom/Teacher: _____ **Grade:** _____

Technology Use Agreement

I, _____, agree to the following:

(Please print student's first and last name)

- I have read the CALCS Internet Acceptable Use Policy and understand that I must follow all school rules when using school technology.
- I will use my school-issued iPad or laptop and the internet for learning and school-related activities only, and I will use them responsibly.
- I understand that I need to take good care of the iPad, charger, and any accessories. If the device is lost, stolen, or damaged—whether at school, at home, or somewhere else—I may be responsible for the cost to repair or replace it.
- I know that the iPad belongs to the school and that anything on it may be reviewed by the school at any time.
- If something happens to the device (it breaks, is lost, or is stolen), I will let the CALCS Technology Team know right away.
- I agree to return the iPad when the school asks for it, when I leave CALCS, or by the collection date at the end of the school year.
- I understand that if I don't return the iPad or it is intentionally damaged, the device may be locked and I may need to pay a fee.
- I understand that even if I don't sign and return this form, I am still responsible for giving back all school-owned technology if I leave the school or graduate.

Student Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Please return this completed page to the **California Academy of Learning Charter School**.

The Student and Parent/Guardian signature signifies that the student will:

- Use the device in a responsible and ethical manner that upholds the standards of California Academy of Learning Charter School.

- Understand that the device is at all times the property of the California Academy of Learning Charter School.
- Not uninstall, disable and/or modify any hardware or software installed on the device or install new or additional programs on the device.
- Not permit individuals, other than California Academy of Learning Charter School administrators or authorized California Academy of Learning Charter School IT Department personnel, to access, repair or service the device.
- Adhere to the California Academy of Learning Charter School Acceptable Use Policy found in the *Code of Conduct*. Devices used off school property are subject to all applicable California Academy of Learning Charter School Board Policies, expectations, and regulations.
- Understand the device will not be used for personal and/or private purposes and is to be used for the student's educational use and school responsibilities.
- Report loss and/or damage of the device to the California Academy of Learning Charter School IT Department. If the loss and/or damage is a result of negligence, the student/parent(s) or guardian(s) may be held financially responsible.
- Adhere to this Student Device User Agreement in the event the student is issued a "loaner" device during service.
- Notify the administration immediately if a student should receive an electronic communication containing materials that may be unlawful, inappropriate, affected by a virus, and/or a potential violation of the Code of Conduct.
- Not share login credentials and log off and secure their device to protect their work and information.
- Have a fully charged device prior to the start of the school day.

California Academy of Learning Charter School

Request for Excused Absence from School
for a Pre-planned Educational Tour or Trip

Student's Full Name:

_____ Grade:

_____ Date(s) of Proposed Absence:

_____ Name of Person(s) Directing and/or Supervising Student during

Above Absence:

_____ Relationship to Student:

Itinerary of the trip:

Include activities which could be educational in nature and will, therefore, provide the child with some valuable experiences outside the classroom.

_____ Classroom assignments are the
responsibility of the student to obtain, preferably prior to departure.

All assignments must be completed. Upon their return, students shall
be given the number of days to complete their assignments equal to
the number of days absent.

I certify that all of the above information to be true and agree to comply with
the above conditions.

Signature of Parent or
Guardian Date Best Contact Phone #

*Please return this form to the Main Office 1 week prior to the pre-planned
educational tour or trip.

Media Release

California Academy of Learning Charter School seeks to promote student activities
and celebrate student achievement on the school website, social media channels,

and newsletters. The school will not release any information without prior written consent from you as the parent or legal guardian. Please return this form to your child's homeroom teacher to indicate if your child's image, voice, video, work and/or full name may be used on the school's website and publications. This permission will remain in effect throughout your child's educational experience at California Academy of Learning Charter School. As a parent or legal guardian, you may withdraw your consent at any time by sending a written letter to the administrator of your child's school. We look forward to highlighting your child's accomplishments in the future. Thank you for your cooperation. Please check one of the following options:

☐ I/We GRANT permission for any photo/image, voice, video, work, and/or full name of our son/daughter to be published on the school's website and approved digital and print publications.

☐ I/We DO NOT GRANT permission for any photo/image, voice, video, work, and/or full name of our son/daughter to be published on the school's website and approved digital and print publications.

Child's Name: (Please Print)	
Parent/ Guardian Name: (Please Print)	
Parent/ Guardian Signature:	Date:

CALIFORNIA ACADEMY OF LEARNING
CHARTER SCHOOL

40B Trojan Way, Coal Center, PA 15423

#LoveLearning

Website: www.calcharteracademy.org

PARENT/GUARDIAN PERMISSION AND RELEASE OF LIABILITY FOR FIELD TRIP AND COMMUNITY BASED INSTRUCTION PARTICIPATION

I, _____, am the parent/guardian of
_____, a student in the California Academy of
Learning Charter School.

Please check mark one:

☐ I give my permission for my child to participate in the field trip/community
based instruction.

☐ I **do not** give permission for my child to participate in the field trip/community
based instruction.

I understand that although the students will be supervised by teachers/chaperones
of the California Academy of Learning Charter School, I assume the risk in my
student's participation in the event. If I choose not to permit my child to participate in
this field trip activity, the student will be expected to attend school on the day of the
field trip and will be provided with meaningful alternative educational activities under
the supervision of a teacher.

I acknowledge that I will not seek to have the school held liable in the event that any
accident, injury, loss of property or any other circumstance or incident occurs during
or as a result of my son's/daughter's participation in the field trip. This release of
liability includes accident, injury, loss, or damages to the student, as well as, to other
individuals or property which may result from the student's participation in the event.
I hereby release and agree to hold harmless the school district, its officials, agents
and employees, from any claims arising out of my child's participation in the event(s).

I have read and understand and accept all of the statements recited above
and accept full responsibility as described.

Student's Signature Date

Parent/Guardian Signature Date

PLEASE RETURN TO TEACHER

California Academy of Learning Charter School
ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF RECEIPT OF THE HANDBOOK

The Student Handbook is available on the California Academy of Learning Charter School website, or by hard copy upon request to the main office of your school building.

Student Name (please print):

_____ Grade: _____

My child and I have reviewed the contents of the **2025-2026** CAL Student Handbook. We acknowledge the expectations, procedures, and consequences explained throughout.

_____ (Student Name/ Signature)

(Grade)

(Parent/Guardian Signature) (Date

