

ECMS Scholar and Parent Handbook

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Greeting

Dear Families and Scholars,

Welcome to Equality Charter Middle School. Your hard work and focus have helped you arrive at this moment. We are proud to have you as a scholar and positive school community member. Equality's role in our community is not only to prepare scholars for college success but also to ensure they can sustain consistent, appropriate behavior and professional relationships in all aspects of adult life.

Scholar accountability and family support are vital aspects of adolescent growth during a time of transition to Equality Charter Middle School. Equality will use relationships developed with scholars, families, community organizations, and programs to deliver our mission and sustain our role as a positive foundation for our scholars. Thank you, and we are looking forward to an amazing school year

Best,
Equality Charter Middle School Family

Administration/Support Staff Contact Information

Name/Title	Contact
Gene Johnson - Principal	gene.johnson@equalitycharterschool.org
Brianna McNeil - Assistant Principal of Culture	brianna.mcneil@equalitycharterschool.org
Graciela Walker - Director of Instruction Laquita Bolden - Instructional Coach Amanda Burack - Instructional Coach Lauren Nilsson - Director of Scholar Services	graciela.walker@equalitycharterschool.org laquita.bolden@equalitycharterschool.org amanda.burack@equalitycharterschool.org lauren.nilsson@equalitycharterschool.org
Anais Corpas - Director of Operations Tracee Black - Interim Director of Operations	anais.corpas@equalitycharterschool.org tracee.black1@equalitycharterschool.org
Mekayla Givens -6th Grade Dean Darius Hawkins -7th Grade Dean Erica Fitzpatrick -8th Grade Dean	mekayla.givens@equalitycharterschool.org darius.hawkins@equalitycharterschool.org erica.fitzpatrick@equalitycharterschool.org
Jazmin Melendez - Social Worker Gina Wright - School Counselor	jazmin.melendez@equalitycharterschool.org gina.wright@equalitycharterschool.org
Main Office Staff	msoffice@equalitycharterschool.org

Part I: Academics

Academic Calendar

All school events and instructional dates (e.g., the end of the quarter) will be posted to the MS Parent calendar on our website:

<https://www.equalitycharterschool.org/scholar-resources/>. You can also add the information to your Google Calendar using the feature on the website page above.

Grading Policies

Quarter and Final Averages are broken down as follows:

- 90-100: A
- 80-89: B
- 70-79: C
- 65-69: D
- 55-64: F

*The lowest grade that can be entered into a gradebook is 55%, which is equivalent to 0%. Teachers will provide a comment with the actual score earned if it is less than 55%.

Grading Categories:

- 30% Classwork - graded on effort with feedback towards growth and mastery
- 10% - Homework - graded on effort with feedback towards growth and mastery
- 60% - Standards Mastery Assessment - graded on accuracy
 - Combination of exit tickets, quizzes, tests, projects, essays, etc.

Homework - Purpose, Process, and Policy

OUR PURPOSE

At Equality Charter Middle School, homework is used to help solidify learning. We believe it is essential to instill the habit of practicing and applying the skills and concepts learned while- outside of the classroom. We believe homework review and feedback are integral parts of this process to meaningfully engage scholars in fostering this habit. Our teachers support efforts around homework equity by ensuring the appropriate differentiation of homework.

OUR PROCESS

To ensure our assigned homework is aligned with our purpose, the following steps are required:

- **Creation:** Our Teachers will identify if the assignment will be a time to PRACTICE/APPLY what was learned during class or a preview of what will be taught in the next lesson;
- **Differentiation:** Teachers will provide differentiated options for homework that provide the necessary scaffolds (supports) that scholars may need to engage in

homework independently.

- **Frequency:** Homework will be assigned no less than two times a week for Core Classes (Humanities and Math) and will take no more than 45 minutes to an hour to complete.
- **Distribution:** Homework will be emphasized when distributed to the class and posted to Google Classroom.
- **Posting:** All homework will be posted to Google Classroom with a due date so that it populates to the scholars' Google Calendars.
- **Review:** Homework will be reviewed regularly in class.

OUR POLICY

- The homework represents 10% of a scholar's total grade
- Homework is graded for effort and accuracy, and your scholar will receive feedback to support their understanding; every assignment complete will receive a grade in PowerSchool
- Late homework penalty*:
 - Turned in one day after the due date - 90%
 - Turned in two days after the due date - 65%
 - Turned in three days after the due date - 55%, which is equivalent to a 0%

Academic Integrity

Scholars are expected to show integrity in meeting their academic requirements for all courses. Cheating or plagiarism is considered academic dishonesty, and it undermines the trusting relationships between teachers and scholars. The use of artificial intelligence (AI) or other unauthorized resources to complete assignments, quizzes, or assessments without the teacher's instruction is strictly prohibited.

This conduct is unacceptable, and any scholar who engages in cheating or plagiarism will be subject to, but not limited to, the following:

- Receiving a zero on the graded assignment or having the assignment invalidated
- Engaging in a restorative meeting with the Teacher, Assistant Principal of Instruction/Assistant Principal of Culture, Director of Instruction, School Counselor, and Parent/Guardian
- Completing a reassessment
- Completing a restorative assignment or task

Promotion and Retention Policy

Automatic Promotion Criteria: A scholar who meets the criteria in both categories below will be automatically promoted to the next grade level.

1. **Report Card Grades** - each scholar MUST have a Final Average of 65% for EACH core class
2. **Attendance** - each scholar MUST maintain a 90% or higher attendance rate (no more than 18 absences in total/excused or unexcused)

Promotion in Doubt Criteria: A scholar whose performance indicates they are at risk of not meeting the promotion requirements will be designated as Promotion in Doubt. **This designation serves as an early warning and does not automatically result in retention or Summer School placement.**

Parents/guardians will be notified at the end of each quarter if their child is considered Promotion in Doubt. A scholar may receive this designation if they meet **any** of the following criteria:

1. One or more core course quarter averages of **65% or below**.
2. More than **five absences** during a quarter.

Automatic Retention Criteria: A scholar will be automatically retained in their current grade level and will not be eligible to attend Summer School if they meet **either** of the following criteria:

- Earn a final course average of an F (below 65%) in two or more New York State required core academic courses (Math, Science, Humanities, etc.). Final course averages are calculated using the scholar's performance across **all four marking periods** and are **not** based on individual quarter grades.
- Accumulate **more than 18 absences** during the school year, unless otherwise excused in accordance with school policy.

The school will communicate concerns regarding a scholar's academic progress and attendance throughout the year. Parents/guardians will receive official notification of an automatic retention decision by **June 11**.

Automatic Summer School Criteria: A scholar who does not meet one of the school's promotion criteria, but does not meet the Automatic Retention Criteria above, will be required to attend Summer School.

To be promoted, the scholar must successfully complete all Summer School academic and attendance requirements. Scholars who fail to successfully complete or are dismissed from Summer School will be retained in their current grade level.

Parents/guardians will be notified of Summer School eligibility by the end of Quarter 3 Report Card Conferences. A scholar's eligibility may change based on their academic performance or attendance during Quarter 4.

End-of-Year Activities for 8th-Grade Scholars

Participation in 8th grade end-of-year activities including, but not limited to: the senior trip, prom, graduation celebrations, the Moving-Up Ceremony, and other culminating events, is a privilege earned through consistent demonstration of Equality Charter Middle School's expectations for academics, attendance, behavior, and citizenship.

To be eligible for end-of-year activities, scholars must maintain good academic standing **AND** good behavioral standing throughout the school year. Scholars who are considered Promotion in Doubt (PID), or who do not meet the school's academic or behavioral expectations, may lose eligibility to participate in one or more end-of-year activities.

The school utilizes a tiered eligibility system (Green, Yellow, and Red) to monitor scholars' academic progress, attendance, discipline, and overall conduct. A scholar's eligibility level determines which end-of-year activities they may attend. Scholars will receive periodic updates regarding their status. When applicable, scholars may have opportunities to restore eligibility through restorative actions and sustained improvement. However, **certain serious disciplinary incidents may result in the immediate loss of eligibility for all end-of-year activities.**

In addition:

- * Scholars enrolled in Summer School may not be eligible to participate in end-of-year activities, including the dance, senior trip, and other celebratory events.

- * Scholars who are retained in Grade 8 **are not eligible to participate in any end-of-year activities, including the dance, senior trip, or Moving-Up Ceremony.**

- * Scholars who are not enrolled in Summer School but have significant behavioral infractions may also lose eligibility to participate in end-of-year activities.

Final eligibility decisions will be made by the school's Principal and Assistant Principal by June 1st. Families are encouraged to review the complete [**8th Grade End-of-Year Activities Eligibility Guidelines**](#), which outline the eligibility levels, expectations, restorative opportunities, and event restrictions in detail. All eligibility determinations made will be considered final.

Part II: Our Approach to School Culture

What is a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS)?

MTSS blends the prevention-based, team-driven, data-informed decision-making practices of Response to Intervention (RTI) and Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS), which explicitly require a multi-tier approach. Emphasis is on schoolwide, differentiated universal core instruction at Tier 1; Tiers 2 and 3 provide intensive and increasingly individualized interventions. MTSS is a systemic, continuous improvement framework in which data-based problem-solving and decision-making are used across all areas of the school to support the success of all scholars. MTSS is “a way of doing business,” which has at its center high-quality, evidence-based instruction and intervention and assessment practices designed to meet scholar needs so that each scholar receives the appropriate level of support. By blending RTI and PBIS systems, ECS will maximize the use of time to make decisions for scholars that are the most effective. Research has shown that schools implementing PBIS with fidelity have increased scholar academic performance and graduation rates. RTI goes hand in hand with developing data-based interventions for scholars who require academic support.

What are the Essential Components of MTSS?

1. Team-Driven Shared Leadership
2. Data-Based Problem Solving and Decision-Making
3. Layered Continuum of Supports
4. Evidence-Based Practices
5. Family, School, and Community Partnering

Proactive Strategies/Positive Incentives

At ECMS, staff and scholars value and are acknowledged for...

Value	Description
Achievement and Progress	Demonstrating excellence and growth, academically, behaviorally, and social-emotionally
Integrity	Acting in ways that reflect strong moral principles and good character.
Responsibility	Owning your actions and the expectations of your role - being accountable to your community.
Self-Knowledge	Knowing your abilities, attitudes, and motives.

Great Eagle Points

All staff will take every opportunity to recognize positive behaviors that align with our school values: **Achievement and Progress**, **Integrity**, **Responsibility**, and **Self-Knowledge**. When scholars are witnessed demonstrating these positive

behaviors, staff will award scholars with Great Eagle points in our Dean's List database. **Accumulated points will result in more significant rewards, privileges, events, activities, and trips throughout the year.**

Scholars of the Week

Scholars will be celebrated weekly based on their efforts to demonstrate our values. This scholar will be randomly selected through the submission of Great Eagle points.

Great Scholars of the Quarter (Academic and Culture)

1. **Principal's List** - Scholars who maintain an overall average of 90% or more significant in the core subject area each quarter will earn the Principal's List.
2. **First Honors** - Each quarter, scholars who maintain an overall average from 89% to 85% in the core subject areas will earn Honor Roll.
3. **Honorable Mention**- Each quarter, scholars who maintain an overall average from 84% to 80% in the core subject areas will earn Honor Roll.
4. **Assistant Principal of Culture's Culture Crew** - Scholars with no behavior referrals or incidents for the quarter. Scholars with no tardies and no more than one unexcused absence will earn Culture Crew.

All scholars who earn any of the above will be celebrated during our End of Quarter Awards Ceremony.

House Competitions

Scholars are scheduled into a specific house each year. The House that shows that most success towards a specific goal tied to our values will be celebrated for their collective achievement.

The ECMS Houses are:

- **Achievement and Progress,**
- **Integrity,**
- **Responsibility,**
- **Self-Knowledge**

Field Trips/Incentivized Events

ECMS will host academic, incentivized field trips and events throughout the year. Scholars will be able to use their Great Eagle Points to participate in the field trips and/or events.

Please note that scholars will not be able to participate in field trips and/or events for one or more of the following:

- Multiple Behavioral Referrals (classroom disruption, classroom removals, disrespect towards peers and/or staff, inappropriate language, inappropriate hallway behavior, cutting class, etc.)
- Suspension (in and or out of school)
- Failing one or more of their classes (see grading criteria above)
- Lack of classwork completion
- 2 or more tardies in one week during specific quarter
- More than 3 unexcused absences within the specific quarter

Please note that eligibility for trips is determined based on a scholar's status during the current quarter. Scholars who do not meet the criteria this quarter will have the opportunity to qualify for the next trip in the following quarter.

Behavior Data Tracking

DeansList

DeansList is a software platform that makes it easy for schools to manage programs like PBIS and other innovative behavior and character education structures.

Staff Managed Interventions/Documentation

Staff-managed Deanslist Referrals are completed by staff members who wish to document a scholar's behavior and/or intervention and do not require administrative staff to take any additional measures.

Dean-Managed Interventions

Dean-managed Deanslist referrals are completed by staff members who wish to document a scholar's behavior, the attempted multiple interventions that were unsuccessful, and, therefore, requests for Deans or the Assistant Principal of Culture to follow up directly with the scholar regarding the behavior.

Hallway Passes

ECMS will utilize an electronic hall pass system within our Dean's list platform. The electronic hall pass system is used for Hallway Monitoring/Congestion, Improved Bathroom Usage, Student Accountability, Data Tracking, and Efficient use of class time. To leave the room, scholars must have an active Hallway Pass from a teacher or other staff member to be in the hallway **at any time during the school day**, except during transitions and after-school activities. Scholars who are abusing hallway passes and going over time will be put on a pass limit for the day. Scholars who have negative hallway interactions with peers and/or are playing in the hallway, hanging out in the bathroom with friends, etc., will be put on an encounter prevention, which prevents them from being in the hallway at the same time with a specific peer(s). If scholars are put on a pass limit or encounter prevention, the grade level dean will communicate via email to the parent/guardian(s) and staff.

Scholars are prohibited from having an active hall pass during the first **5 minutes** and last **5 minutes** of each class period and during transitions.

Tiered Interventions

This guide displays our intervention process for all negative and problematic behaviors. Additional negative behaviors not found in this guide are covered in our Code of Conduct. Equality Charter Middle School reserves the right to use any intervention we deem appropriate in response to any negative or problematic behavior that disrupts the learning environment or creates an unsafe school

environment for any scholars and staff.

- *Scholars who exhibit physical aggression of any kind understand that Equality will use Crisis Prevention & Intervention techniques to diffuse the incident and ensure all parties are safe. This may result in your child being expeditiously removed from an unsafe environment in a manner that allows staff to ensure the safety of the child, other scholars, and the staff members involved*
(<http://www.crisisprevention.com/>).

Teach Like a Champion (EPICC Strategies)

Teach Like a Champion provides educators with a set of techniques, a shared vocabulary, and a framework for practice that equips teachers to achieve dramatic results with their scholars. Please refer to Appendix A for Responses to Behavior Interventions Chart.

Extended Day Commitment (Academic or Behavioral)

A teacher may keep a scholar during lunch or after school for an academic and/or behavioral commitment.

- **Academic Commitment** is used when a scholar does not complete classwork due to distractions, refusal, etc.
- **Behavioral Commitment** is used when an incident occurs, and scholars are required to engage in a restorative conversation with the teacher involved before returning to class the next day. This conversation aims to address the incident, repair relationships, and ensure mutual understanding to prevent future conflicts.

Extended Day Commitments will be held in increments of 15 or 30 minutes and run daily except for Tuesday. The teacher will notify the parent of the scheduled time for Extended Day Commitment. Failure to attend an Extended Day Commitment with a teacher will result in longer increments. Every Commitment will be scheduled the day of, or after the infraction occurs, with a protocol to ensure consistency and effectiveness. Any scholar who skips a commitment will be referred to the dean for further interventions.

Parents will be notified of the date and time of the Commitment. Any scholar who skips Extended Day Commitment, refuses to attend, or does not participate wholeheartedly will be issued additional interventions/consequences.

Scholars will not be automatically excused from Extended Day Commitment upon parent request. That decision is up to the discretion of the Dean or Assistant Principal of Culture

Alternate Learning Space

Alternate Learning Space (ALS) allows scholars to reflect on their behavior and receive 1:1 support as necessary outside of the regular classroom environment. The goal of ALS is for the scholar to reset and refocus so they can transition back into the classroom as quickly and safely as possible. ALS is not recorded as a suspension. Parents will be contacted anytime their child is assigned an ALS. ALS can be given up to four class periods.

Community Integrity Breach

Here at ECMS, we center our approach on restorative practices. Restorative practices focus on building a positive community and repairing relationships when conflicts arise. They involve open dialogue and mutual understanding to address issues and their impact. Key components include restorative conversations, circles, and mediation, where students and staff work together to resolve conflicts, promote accountability, and prevent future incidents. These practices aim to create a supportive environment, enhance communication, and strengthen relationships within the school community.

A Community Integrity Breach (CIB) is a restorative process that we have created to increase student accountability, repair harm, and enable scholars to learn from their mistakes. The process is as follows:

A scholar is placed on a CIB for the following reasons, but not limited to:

- Physical Altercation
- Harassment/Bullying (verbal, physical, cyber, etc.)
- Misuse of electronic devices
- Destruction of school property
- Extreme/Excessive disrespect towards anyone (Staff and/or Peers)
- Theft
- Drugs
- Weapons

While on Community Integrity Breach, Scholars are expected to:

- Complete a research project - the topic will relate to your actions and is at the discretion of the Grade Level Dean.
- Obtain signatures from your teachers by being your best self and displaying positive academic habits or core values.
- Assume the responsibility to get the teacher's signature at the end of class.
- Present their project to their peers and have a restorative conversation once they have obtained their signatures and completed the project

Click the link to see the [Community Integrity Breach form](#)

In-School Suspension/Out-of-School Suspension/Long-Term Suspension

Please refer to the Code of Conduct.

Response to Behavior Intervention Chart

Negative Behaviors	Potential Tiered Intervention / Consequences
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Some Tier 1 behaviors but not limited to: • Leaving seat without permission • Talking at inappropriate times • Calling out in class • Sleeping/Head down in class • Classroom disruption • Playing with objects not related to instruction • Disruption of the classroom environment	• Reteaching • Redirection • Proximity to scholar • Verbal Cues • Seat Change • Non-verbal cues • Scholar/ Teacher Conference • Parent Outreach • Collaborative Problem Solving • Conflict Resolution • Restorative Approaches • Guidance Conference • Individual Behavior Contract within Class • Reset • Staff managed referral • Documentation only • Commitment • ALS • Parent Outreach
Some Tier 2 behaviors but not limited to: • Continued behavior from Tier 1 despite interventions • Refusal to do work • Being on an unrelated website during web-based learning • Throwing any objects in class • Inappropriate language, name-calling or taunting <i>(directed at another scholar)</i> • Disrespect to a staff member • Refusal to follow staff directive • Walking away from an adult • Walking out of the classroom • Cutting class • Inappropriate transitions (running, dunking the door) • Offensive language (Remarks regarding race, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity, disability, etc.)	• Reteaching • Redirection • Verbal Cues • Seat Change • Collaborative Problem Solving • Community Integrity Breach • Conflict Resolution • Restorative Approaches • Individual behavior contract • Social work/Guidance Support • Dean Managed Referral • Classroom removal • ISS • Commitment • Parent Round Table Meeting

Play Fighting (Physical Aggression)	• Deanslist Referral (Dean Managed) AND Dean Extended Day Commitment or Short Term Suspension
Vandalism	• Deanslist Referral (Dean Managed) AND School Community Service • Short Term Suspension

Theft	• Deanslist Referral (Dean Managed) AND Restitution, 1-9 Extended Day Commitment and/or Suspension • Community Integrity Breach
Repeated staff-managed behaviors across a data period.	• Deanslist Referral (Dean Managed)) AND Dean facilitated Parent Conference, • Implementation of School-Based Tier II Intervention (ex. CICO)
Verbal Aggression, including threats of physical violence, and or hate speech	• Deanslist Referral (Dean Managed) • Conflict Resolution • combination of 1-9 day Extended Day Commitment or Suspension • Community Integrity Breach • Counseling with the Counselor/Social Worker
Physical Altercation (Fighting)	• Deanslist Referral (Dean Managed) • Conflict Resolution • combination of 1-9 day Extended Day Commitment or Suspension • Community Integrity Breach
Creating or contributing to an unsafe environment (Other)	• Deanslist Referral (Dean Managed) • Conflict Resolution • combination of 1-9 day Extended Day Commitment or Suspension • Community Integrity Breach
Bullying/Cyber-bullying	• Deanslist Referral (Dean Managed) • Conflict Resolution • combination of 1-9 day Extended Day Commitment or Suspension

	• Counseling with the Counselor/Social Worker • Community Integrity Breach
Sexual Harassment	• Deanslist Referral (Dean Managed) • Conflict Resolution • combination of 1-9 day Extended Day Commitment or Suspension • Counseling with the Counselor/Social Worker • Community Integrity Breach
Gambling/Selling products without administrative approval (Other)	• Deanslist Referral (Dean Managed) • Conflict Resolution • combination of 1-9 day Extended Day Commitment or Suspension • Counseling with the Counselor/Social Worker
Possession or Use of flammable material/Tobacco/vapor products	• Deanslist Referral (Dean Managed) • Conflict Resolution • combination of 1-10 day Extended Day Commitment or Suspension • Counseling with the Counselor/Social Worker • Community Integrity Breach
Possession or use of drugs or alcohol (Substance control)	• Deanslist Referral (Dean Managed) • Conflict Resolution • Combination of Extended Day Commitment or Short Term Suspension • Counseling with the Counselor/Social Worker • Community Integrity Breach
Possession with the intent to distribute drugs or alcohol (Substance control)	• Deanslist Referral (Dean Managed) • Long Term Suspension (more than 10 days- subject to a Suspension Hearing) • Counseling with the Counselor/Social Worker • Community Integrity Breach
Weapons	• Deanslist Referral (Dean Managed) • Short Term Suspension • Long Term Suspension (more than 10 days - subject to a Suspension Hearing) • Counseling with the Counselor/Social Worker • Community Integrity Breach

Repeated administration-managed behaviors across a data period.	• Deanslist Referral (Dean Managed) AND Administration facilitated Parent Conference, Implementation of School-Based Tier III Interventions (ex. FBA) • Referral to counseling services
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- ECMS reserves the right to request a Long-Term Suspension (more than 10 days) based on the severity and occurrence of the behavior, which includes a Superintendent's Hearing;
- When appropriate, a Warning Letter and/or Behavior Support Plan may be developed for a scholar in consultation with the parent, Counselor, Social Worker, and/or Dean.

Part III: Attendance, Lateness, and Uniform Policies

General Attendance Policy

Scholars absent from school can only attend or participate in school sporting events, dances, or any other school-sponsored activities occurring on the day of the absence if the school has given advance permission.

<u>Daily Attendance</u>	<u>Punctuality to School</u>
Attendance Intervention Plans will be implemented to support scholars who have reached our chronic absenteeism thresholds: • 1 unexcused absence - Any day a scholar is absent, the parent or guardian will receive a phone call home informing them of the absence • 3 unexcused absences - Scholar will meet with Dean to discuss preventative measures. Dean will conduct a phone conference with the Parent/Guardian and review a scholar-driven prevention plan • 5 unexcused absences in a term - Parent/Guardian and scholar will meet with an instructional team representative, counselor, and social worker to review further interventions, including an Attendance Intervention Plan • 10+ unexcused absences in a school year - Parent conference will be held at the school with the social worker. The social worker will discuss the next steps, which may include ACS reporting. • 15+ unexcused absences in a school year - A parent conference will be held at the school with the scholar, case manager (if applicable), school counselor, social worker, and	All scholars who arrive late to school will automatically receive a phone call home. Scholars arriving after 8:15 am and beyond (without excused lateness and/or situational circumstance that cannot be resolved immediately) will receive an After-school Commitment • 1st-5th infraction - Parents/Guardians are contacted by the school on each infraction. • 6th-9th infraction- Parent/Guardian receives written communication from the school pertaining to scholar lateness. • 10th-14th infraction- A meeting with the Parent/Guardian, scholar, school counselor, and social worker will be held. • 15th - 19th infraction- Administrative meeting with Parent/Guardian, scholar, Assistant Principal of Culture, school counselor, case manager (if applicable), and social worker. • 20th+ infraction- Parent conferences will be held at the school with the Principal, Assistant Principal of Culture, Director of Scholar Services (if applicable), and School Counselor.

Assistant Principal of Culture. The administration will discuss the next steps, which may include ACS reporting. • 18+ unexcused absences in a school year – Scholar will have missed at least 10% of allotted instructional days. Parent conferences will be held at the school with the Principal, Assistant Principal of Culture, Director of Scholar Services (if applicable), and School Counselor. The administration will discuss the next steps, which may include dis-enrollment from Equality.	
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- Absence: Any day a scholar is absent, the parent or guardian will receive a phone call home informing them of the absence.
- Only absences documented by a signed statement from a medical doctor, attendance at a funeral following the death of an immediate family member, or government judiciary court stating the scholar's presence will be considered "Excused" absences. All other absences will be regarded as "Unexcused."
 - **Continued lateness/absence:** A phone call from the Social Worker and a mandatory parent meeting
 - **Chronic lateness/absence:** Chronic latenesses/absences will be documented along with the implementation of Tier III support the school has given. In compliance with NYC regulations, ACS will be contacted for excessive lateness and absences, as this impacts a child's access to education.

Snow Days

In the event of poor weather conditions, such as heavy snow, please listen to your local television or radio stations for relevant information regarding school cancellations. If New York City Public Schools are closed due to poor weather conditions, so is Equality Charter Middle School. In addition, Equality sometimes closes school even when the NYCDOE is open. Sometimes, Equality will have a late start on days with poor weather conditions. Parents are notified of these closings and late starts via the Equality Website and through a phone blast to all Equality families. Please remember to keep your phone number updated in PowerSchool.

General Tardy Policy

All scholars who arrive tardy to school will automatically receive a phone blast home.

Arrival

- The school day starts at 7:55 AM.
- Scholars may enter the building at 7:30 AM to participate in the early breakfast and morning supervision program. Scholars will transition upstairs at 8 AM.
- Scholars coming to school on time will be served breakfast in the classroom from 7:55-8:10.
- Scholars are marked late after 8:10 AM and must report to class with a late pass from the office afterward.

Early Arrival 7:30 AM- enter the main entrance to the auditorium

On-Time Arrival 8:00 AM

- 6th (Entrance 4-5- Stairwell B)
- 7th (Exit 6- Stairwell A)
- 8th Grade (Exit 1- Stairwell D)

Dismissal

All dismissals will be by 2:58 and 3:05 PM every day except Tuesdays. On Tuesday, all scholars will be dismissed at 1:11 p.m. Scholars participating in Sports, Clubs, Test Prep, After-School Commitments, or MMCC **will not be allowed to re-enter the building if they leave the building instead of going straight to their activity.**

Regular dismissal takes place on the front side of the school. On special occasions, scholars may be dismissed from the playground.

Early Dismissal

Early dismissal of any Middle School scholars will require written communication or in-person pick-up from our Main Office. Please keep in mind that early dismissal should be avoided at all times. However, if scholars must leave before dismissal, the family must send a written note or email stating the time of dismissal and the nature of the appointment/reason for early dismissal. The family member can also report to the school, sign in at the Safety Agent, and then inform the Main Office. Designated school personnel will contact the parent to verify the note's authenticity or confirm receipt of the email. Please direct all written communication to msoffice@equalitycs.org.

If there is an extreme emergency in which the parent is unable to send written communication at that moment, the parent must receive direct permission from the Principal or Assistant Principal of Culture before early dismissal can be granted.

The sign-out process for scholars dismissing after written communication is as follows:

- After receiving written communication, the scholar will sign out at the Main Office.
- He/She/They will receive a letter that they are being allowed to leave early.
- They will present that pass/letter to the Safety Agent.
- *Scholars leaving with a family member will not need a letter.

General Uniform Policy

While in school, scholars must always have on a top with the ECS Logo. Which is purchased through Flynn & O'Hara. Scholars may also wear an ECS shirt they received in school from an event/activity. Bottoms **do not need** to be purchased through Flynn & O'Hara. Please see the table below for details:

Flynn & O'Hara ECS Logo Items (Tops)	• Polo (long or short sleeve) • PE T-Shirt • Sweater Vest • Pullover Sweater • Long Sleeve Fleece Jacket • Crewneck Sweatshirt • V-Neck Cardigan Sweater
Bottoms (Can be purchased at any vendor)	• Pants/Sweatpants (black, khaki, gray, or navy ONLY) • Trousers • Slacks • Cargo Pants • Capris • Knee-length shorts (Dress shorts or cargo shorts) • Skirts/Skorts no more than 3 inches above the knee
Footwear (Closed Toe)	• Sneakers - Any color • Shoes- Any color • Boots-Any color
Head Gear	• Scholars can wear head wraps/caps for religious purposes • Hair wraps¹ - all black, all white, or black and white (no other colors)

The following clothing/items are PROHIBITED for all scholars, even on dress-down days:

Prohibited Headgear	Hats, Bandanas, Scarfs, Bonnets, Durags, Stocking Caps, Rollers, Hairnets, Headbands, hoods, sunglasses
Prohibited Clothing	Pajamas, Tank tops, Belly shirts, Leggings, Biker Shorts, Shorts/skorts/Skirts more than 3 inches above the knee,
Prohibited Footwear	Slippers, Crocs, Slides, Sandals, any footwear that is open-toe or open-heel

¹ Here are two acceptable examples of hair wraps: [Example 1](#), [Example 2](#); note that hair wraps are different from bonnets (shower or sleeping cap).

- If a scholar comes to school in anything prohibited, they will be given an ECS uniform to rent for the day, or a parent will be required to bring the scholar clothing that aligns with the uniform policy. If a scholar is given a uniform item(s) to rent for the day, they must sign it out and return it at the end of the school day.
- Three uniform violations will result in a meeting with the Grade-Level Dean, who will communicate the expectations with parents and work to resolve any future issues. The Deans will enter these violations into the DeansList for data.
- Hats or hoodies (Non-ECS logo), sunglasses, and or any prohibited headgear will be confiscated if worn or out during unauthorized times. Scholars may pick up garments at dismissal; any items not picked up after 24 hours will be sent to the Lost and Found.

Part IV: Additional Policies

Scholar IDs

All scholars will have their photos taken during the first week of school. It is essential that scholars bring their IDs to school every day and wear them throughout the day. Please note that this is non-negotiable. IDs are used to scan scholars during morning arrival, which helps us account for all students, especially since we share our building with two other schools. Your support in reinforcing this policy is greatly appreciated. Here are some tips to help ensure your scholar always has their ID:

- Encourage them to keep their ID in their backpack when not in school.
- Consider purchasing a thicker, more supportive lanyard to help prevent loss or damage.
- Ensure the ID remains covered to protect the barcode, as it is necessary for scanning.

Replacement Process:

Moving forward, ID replacements will cost \$3. If your child loses their ID, they should report it to their grade-level dean and bring their replacement fee to the main office. New IDs are issued on Fridays only.

Transportation Guide

Equality Charter School is committed to providing safe and reliable transportation for all eligible students. The handbook below outlines transportation options, eligibility criteria, family responsibilities, and policies, in alignment with NYC DOE guidelines.

[Transportation Guide](#)

[NYC DOE Transportation Guide](#)

Video Surveillance

Video surveillance provides a tool for monitoring activity on school property to further protect scholars, staff, and visitors' health, welfare, and safety. It is a valuable deterrent to inappropriate behavior and a significant factor in protecting school division assets. This system shall not replace the need for the ongoing vigilance of school supervision/security staff. School administrators shall ensure that due diligence is observed in maintaining general campus security.

Camera Location, Operation, and Control

- The placement of cameras is restricted to public areas.
- Areas chosen for surveillance shall be where surveillance is a necessary and viable deterrent.
- Cameras will not monitor areas where people have a reasonable expectation of privacy (e.g., changing rooms and restrooms).
- Surveillance cameras are to be used to deter theft, violence, vandalism, or other security breaches.
- Only authorized personnel shall have access to the monitor operation controls.

- The video camera surveillance system may operate 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, at the School's sole discretion. Video camera surveillance may be suspended at any time with or without notice.

Protection of Information and Disclosure

Security and retention of recordings

- Recordings shall not be disclosed except in accordance with this policy and in accordance with state and federal law. Disclosure of surveillance records shall be on a need-to-know basis to comply with the School's policy objectives, including promoting the safety and security of scholars and staff, protecting School property, preventing criminal activities, and enforcing School rules and policy.
- Only those authorized by the Executive Director/designee, Principal/designee, Assistant Principal of Culture/ designee, shall have access to the recordings.
- Copies of recordings of incidents subject to investigations, court cases, or due process hearings must be retained until resolved.

Use of Information Collected

- Video surveillance may be used for inquiries and proceedings related to law enforcement, scholar, and employee hearings. Video used as evidence for the foregoing purposes may not be altered.
- Videotape/film of scholars may be considered part of a scholar's educational record and therefore, the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) may apply.
- A videotape of athletic events, concerts and plays does not hold the same confidentiality because they are public events and therefore can be shown.

Health and Wellness - Food Policy

Poor eating habits can adversely affect scholar performance by causing, among other things, a lack of focus, low stamina, and/or behavioral outbursts – and, of course, long-term health consequences. In an effort to curb the consumption of low-nutrition foods.

Scholars are highly encouraged to bring healthy snacks such as fruit, vegetables, cheese, yogurt, and/or crackers, and not to bring lunches or snacks that are primarily fast food, chips, sweets, or candy.

- Scholars may only have water with them in class. We encourage personal water bottles so scholars may fill it up at the water coolers throughout the day.
- The school will provide access to filtered water and water fountains.
- Scholars may not share or trade food with other scholars (due to allergies and possible medical issues).
- The school will educate scholars about the impact of consuming foods of low nutritional value during breakfast, designated snack periods, lunch and other times scholars have access to food during the school day.

IMPORTANT: Due to allergies PEANUTS, and TREE NUTS ARE NOT ALLOWED ON CAMPUS.

Food in the Classrooms (Outside of Breakfast and Lunch)

Scholars can eat their outside and/or school breakfast in the classroom during arrival/breakfast time, 7:55- 8:10 a.m. They are not allowed to have any drink other than water with them during class time. Staff will support this by having scholars place food/drinks in cubbies and/or lunch bins. Food, snacks, and drinks in the classroom outside of breakfast, snack, and lunchtime will be confiscated and given back during appropriate food-eating time. Parents requesting a celebration involving food must be approved by the Principal and/or the Assistant Principal of Culture.

Electronics Policy

New York State law prohibits scholars from using cell phones or other electronic/internet enabled devices during instruction or anywhere within the school building. To support the bell-to-bell internet-enabled device ban and ensure a focused, safe, and distraction-free learning environment, the following procedures will be used to store scholar devices during the school day.

If a scholar brings their internet-enabled device to school, they must store it in a designated on-site storage area during the school day. Please see the link below for the middle school-specific storage and disciplinary policies.

- [Middle School](#)

To accommodate necessary communication from parents/guardians, they may use the following methods to contact their child during school hours while adhering to this policy:

- If a parent or guardian needs to contact their scholar for any reason, they should call the school's main office at 718-517-3169.
- Upon calling, families should select the appropriate option for either the Middle School or High School, based on the campus their scholar attends.
- Once connected, office personnel will determine the best course of action, which may include:
 - Relaying the message directly to the scholar,
 - Transferring the call to the classroom (when appropriate and non-disruptive), or
 - Arranging for the scholar to call back at the next available opportunity.

Computer Use

Scholars must read and sign the Equality Charter School Staff and Scholar Computer Usage Agreements at the beginning of the school year. Please adhere to this policy at all times for appropriate computer usage.

Scholars may not use their own personal laptops or iPads during the school day. They are only permitted to use the school-provided Chromebook. Families signed the technology/computer agreement when you enrolled your child. You can find a copy of the [Computer Usage Agreements](#) here.

Scholar-Athletes

An Athletic Handbook will be provided to any scholar selected to play on a sports team following tryouts.

Scholar Rights & Responsibilities

I know I have the right to:

- not be judged or labeled by my behavior
- be in a positive, safe, and supportive learning environment, free from discrimination, harassment, and bigotry;
- know what is considered appropriate behavior and what behaviors may result in disciplinary interventions or consequences;
- be counseled by members of the professional staff in matters related to my behavior as it affects my education and welfare within the school;
- appropriately voice my concerns if I do not agree with a request or decision; • due process of law in instances of disciplinary action for alleged violations of school regulations for which I may be suspended or expelled.

I agree to the following:

- attend school on time every day, with a positive attitude;
- appear for each of my classes at the start time, ready to begin work;
- be prepared with the required materials and assignments for all classes;
- show respect when interacting with all members of the learning community;
- be accountable for my own behavior, both negative and positive;
- respectfully and wholeheartedly participate in behavior interventions resulting from my own damaging behavior incident;
- attend Commitments when assigned;
- inform the Dean or any other Equality staff member of potential conflicts or altercations;
- resolve conflicts peacefully through mediation and conflict resolution;
- avoid fighting inside and outside of the school;
- avoid any behavior that endangers the welfare of school or neighboring community;
- behave respectfully and cooperate without arguing when a staff member gives direction or makes a reasonable request;
- take responsibility for my personal belongings and any other property owned by Equality that I may use or encounter;
- dress appropriately in full Equality Charter Middle School uniform daily;
- refrain from bringing items which may have any signs of gang affiliation (e.g. scarves, bandanas, hats etc.) and refrain from using gang signs, calls, chants, movements or handshakes;
- refrain from using electronic devices (e.g. cell phones, headphones, video games etc.) in the school building
- share information with school officials that might affect the health, safety or welfare of the school community;
- refrain from any behavior which disrupts the learning environment;
- follow rules and expectations in the Equality Charter Middle School Scholar Handbook & Code of Conduct