

ECES

Scholar & Parent Handbook

Updated July 2026



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Greeting

Dear ECES Families and Scholars,

Welcome to the Elementary Scholar and Parent Handbook, a helpful guide made just for our Elementary School families, with children in Kindergarten through 3rd Grade! We are super excited to team up with you as your little one starts their school journey. This handbook has all the important information you need to know about our school rules, the opportunities we have for you to participate in our school community, and how things work at ECES.

We are all about making sure every scholar feels welcomed and supported, so this handbook is here to help you and your family settle in and get ready for an awesome school year!

Best,

Ms. Amanda & The Equality Charter Elementary School Team

Mission - To ensure each scholar reaches individual academic and personal success through a nurturing scholar-centered approach.

Purpose - To transform lives through education

Vision - Equality Charter School will graduate scholars with demonstrated career and college readiness - so they are prepared for the path they choose after high school.

School Communication

Families and schools will communicate in a variety of ways including the use of the app “School Messenger” for phone and email blasts to families, PowerSchool to communicate academic progress, DeansList to communicate social-emotional progress, Class Dojo and emails for updates and direct communication to and from families. Families should expect a response to their communication by the end of the next school day.

School-Based Support Staff Contact Information

• Amanda Mercado, Principal	Amanda.Mercado@equalitycs.org
• Monique Barrett, Director of Community & Culture ◦ Supervises all Electives and Culture Team ◦ Manages disciplinary issues	Monique.Barrett@equalitycs.org
• Deanna Lindsay, Director of Instruction (K-2) ◦ Supervises all 1st and 2nd teachers	Deanna.Lindsay@equalitycs.org
• Nazaret Marte, Dignity Act Coordinator ◦ Reports of Bullying	Nazaret.Marte@equalitycs.org
• Niurkalis Rosario, ES Office Manager • All other ES Office Staff	ESoffice@equalitycs.org
• All Social-Emotional/Emotional Wellness Team Members	ESCulture@equalitycs.org
• Donyella Ramsey, Parent Coordinator	Donyella.Ramsey@equalitycs.org
• Nicole Sioleski, ES Special Populations Coordinator • Emily Collins, Senior Director of Scholar Services • Christina Perez, School Psychologist • Jocelyn Kelly, Chief Academic Officer	ESSpecialPops@equalitycs.org
• All Kindergarten Teachers	ESK@equalitycs.org
• All First Grade Teachers	ES1@equalitycs.org
• All Second Grade Teachers	ES2@equalitycs.org
• All Third Grade Teachers	ES3@equalitycs.org
• All Reading Intervention Teachers	ESReading@equalitycs.org
• All Art, Music, PE, Science Teachers	ESElectives@equalitycs.org

- **Kips Bay** After School Program

ESAfter@equalitycs.org

Organization-Based Support Staff Contact Information

• Caitlin Franco , Executive Director	Caitlin.Franco@equalitycs.org
• Jocelyn Kelly , Chief Academic Officer	Jocelyn.Kelly@equalitycs.org
• Amanda Myers , Chief Operating Officer	Amanda.Myers@equalitycs.org

Communicating with Your Child's Teacher

On the first day of school your child will be sent home with a letter from their grade level teachers with their contact information to support your communication with them. If you need access to your child's teacher during the school day when they are teaching please contact the main office (718) 517-3169 to leave a message or send an email. If you are trying to call a teacher after hours and they don't answer, please leave a message explaining the reason for the call, your full name and telephone number and allow time to return your call. All teachers will return your call within 1 school day. In addition, in the event of an emergency, please call the Principal, Ms. Amanda (347) 964-3079.

Arrival

All scholars enter through the main entrance on Magenta Avenue.

- Early Arrival - 7:45 AM
- Regular Arrival - 8:00 AM
- Late Arrival - after 8:10 AM

Dismissal

All scholars will be dismissed through the main entrance on Magenta Avenue.

- Regular Dismissal - 2:15 - 2:45 PM
- Tuesday Dismissal - 1:15 - 1:45PM
- Kips Bay After School Dismissal - 5:30 PM

Your child's safety is our utmost priority.

- Only approved contacts will be allowed to pick up a child at dismissal. Anyone picking up a child **MUST** have photo identification on them at

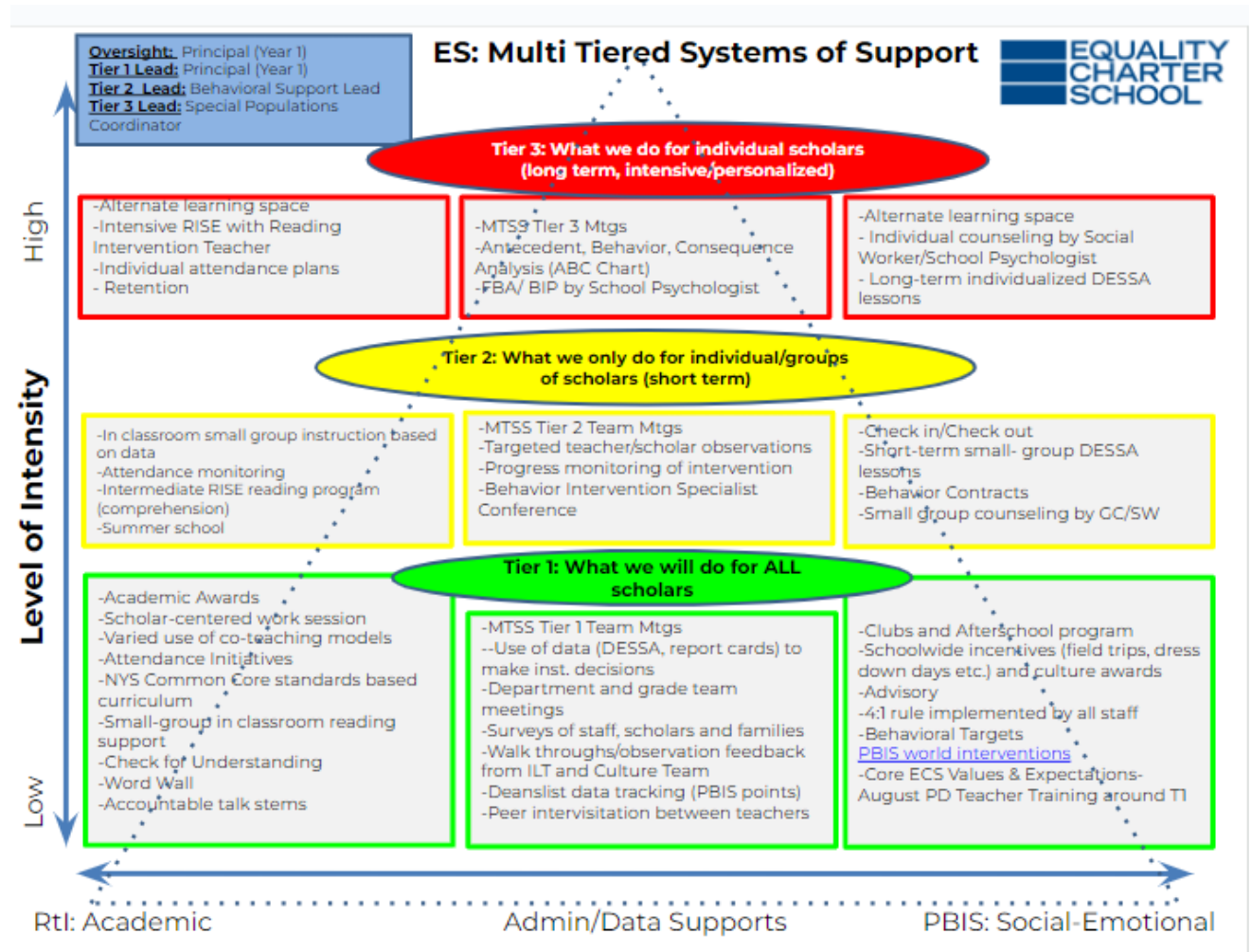
the time of pick-up, as the school will verify identification and the approved contact list. **Scholars will not be released to any person without a photo identification.**

Part I: MTSS

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

MTSS blends the prevention-based, team-driven, data-informed decision-making practices of the academic-based Response to Intervention (RTI) and culture-based Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS). The goal is always to provide support through a tiered approach.

- Tier 1 supports at a whole-group level.
- Tier 2 support to small-groups of scholars in addition to continuing Tier 1 supports.
- Tier 3 supports are provided to individual scholars in addition to continuing Tier 1 supports, and any Tier 2 supports in place.



Part II: Academics

Academic Calendar

All school events and instructional dates (ex. end of trimester) will be posted to the ES Parent calendar available on our website -

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

Academic (Instructional) Program

This year's scholars will have access to instruction in Math, Reading and Writing, Science, Music, Movement (PE), Art, and Social-Emotional Learning. You can learn more about our instructional program and the curricula for each subject area by clicking the links below.

- Math - [Eureka Squared](#)
- Reading and Writing - [Core Knowledge Language Arts](#)
- Science - [Science 21](#)
- [Music](#)
- Movement (PE)
- [Art \(sample unit\)](#)
- Social Emotional Learning - [DESSA](#)

Progress Updates and Report Cards

Families will be alerted at the mid-way point in the Trimester to review scholar grades - this is a progress update. Report Cards will be provided for each scholar so that families have a clear picture of their child's progress.

Trimester 1	Trimester 2	Trimester 3
Progress Update- Beginning of October	Progress Update- End of January	Progress Update- End of April
Report Card - Beginning of December	Report Card - Beginning of March	Report Card - End of May

Attendance

Regular attendance is essential to your child's academic success, social-emotional development, and sense of belonging at school. We expect scholars to attend school every day, arrive on time, and remain in school for the full instructional day whenever possible.

If your child will be absent or arrive late, please notify the Main Office **before the start of the school day** by emailing **ESOffice@equalitycs.org** or calling **(718) 517-3169**.

The school monitors:

- Absences
- Tardiness (arriving late)
- Early dismissals

Attendance may be recorded as **excused** or **unexcused**, depending on the reason for the absence and any required documentation.

Examples of Excused Absences

- Illness (with a same-day phone call, email, or appropriate documentation)
- Death of an immediate family member
- Court appearances requiring the scholar's attendance
- Religious observances
- Other circumstances approved by the school

Examples of Unexcused Absences

- Family vacations during scheduled school days
- Doctor's appointments for family members other than the scholar
- Other absences that do not meet the criteria for an excused absence

How ECES Responds to Attendance Concerns

When attendance concerns begin to emerge, ECES will work with families to provide increasing levels of support based on each scholar's individual circumstances.

Families can generally expect the following progression:

- **Classroom Outreach:** Your child's teacher will contact you to check in, understand any barriers, and offer support.
- **School-Based Problem Solving:** If attendance concerns continue, additional staff members may partner with your family to identify strategies and available resources.
- **Attendance Support Planning:** When more intensive support is needed, the school may develop an individualized attendance support plan in partnership with your family.
- **Ongoing Monitoring:** The school will continue to monitor attendance, review progress, and adjust supports as needed.

The level of support provided is based on multiple factors, including attendance patterns, identified barriers, and the effectiveness of previous interventions. No single attendance measure automatically determines the level of support provided.

Whenever possible, ECES will work collaboratively with families to resolve attendance concerns before more intensive interventions become necessary.

In rare situations where attendance concerns remain unresolved despite ongoing partnership with the family and school-based supports, ECES may be required to request additional support from the New York State Central Register (SCR) in accordance with New York State law. For more information about educational neglect and the reporting requirements for schools, [please click here](#).

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 Elementary School. In addition, Equality sometimes closes schools even when the NYCDOE is open. Parents are notified of these closings and late starts via the Equality Website and through a phone blast to all Equality families. Please keep your phone number updated in PowerSchool by communicating any changes with our Main Office - ESOffice@equalitycs.org.

Home Practice - Purpose, Process, and Policy

Our Purpose

At Equality Charter Elementary School, home practice extends learning beyond the school day through meaningful opportunities for scholars to practice, apply, and discuss what they are learning. We believe home practice should strengthen academic skills while encouraging positive family engagement and the development of independent learning habits.

Home practice should reinforce—not replace—classroom instruction and should be purposeful, manageable, and developmentally appropriate.

Kindergarten

Kindergarten home practice is designed to promote joyful learning through family interaction rather than traditional homework.

Families should read with their child for **20 minutes every day of the week**. In addition, teachers will provide **one brief hands-on home practice activity each school day (approximately 5–10 minutes)** that reinforces the learning taking place in the classroom.

Home practice focuses on authentic experiences rather than worksheets and may include activities such as:

- Read together and discuss favorite characters, important events, or make predictions.
- Practice writing first name, letters, or numbers using a dry erase board or other reusable materials.
- Count everyday objects while setting the table, sorting laundry, or putting away groceries.
- Go on a shape, color, number, or pattern hunt around your home.
- Draw a picture about your day and tell a family member about it.
- Practice gross motor skills by hopping, balancing, skipping, throwing and catching a ball, or creating an obstacle course.
- Complete a family mindfulness activity, practice deep breathing, discuss one feeling you experienced that day, or share one act of kindness.
- Help with a household responsibility such as setting the table, watering plants, matching socks, or organizing toys.

Teachers may also provide optional extension activities for families who would like additional practice. Families may share completed work by bringing it to school or sending a photo when appropriate.

Grades 1 and 2

Scholars should complete approximately **30-40 minutes** of home practice each evening.

Home practice will include:

- Daily independent or family reading (20 minutes every day of the week)
- Reading fluency and/or comprehension practice
- Writing practice when appropriate
- Math skill practice
- Occasional science, SEL, or elective extensions that reinforce classroom learning

Teachers may provide a combination of written practice and authentic learning experiences that support the standards being taught in class.

Grades 3-5

Scholars should complete approximately **40-50 minutes** of home practice each evening while building increasing independence and responsibility.

Home practice may include:

- Daily independent reading
- Reading comprehension and written responses
- Math practice and problem solving
- Vocabulary or content-area review
- Long-term projects or research assignments, when appropriate

Teacher Responsibilities

Teachers will:

- Communicate weekly home practice expectations to families.

- Provide meaningful feedback on completed home practice.
- Recognize scholars who consistently engage in home practice.
- Offer Before or After School Commitments (extra help) for scholars who need additional support completing or understanding home practice.
(See more information under [Before or After School Commitments.](#))

Our Policy

- Home practice is intended to reinforce classroom learning and provide teachers with information about scholar understanding. Teachers may provide feedback on completion, effort, and misconceptions to inform future instruction.

We value quality over quantity. Home practice should be meaningful, manageable, and leave scholars with time to play, spend time with family, and develop interests outside of school.

Grading Policy - Standards-Based Grading

At ECES, we will utilize NYS Standards-based grading in Grades K-3. Each trimester we will identify specific NYS Standards on which scholars' performance will be assessed. Grades for each NYS Standard will be level-based. Please see a description of each level below (a numerical value has been added to support understanding):

- **Level 1** - Significantly below grade-level learning standards resulting in an inconsistent understanding of concepts and skills (0-54)
- **Level 2** - Partially meeting grade-level learning standards, exhibiting an initial understanding of concepts and skills (55-64)
- **Level 3** - Meeting grade-level standards, exhibiting an understanding of concepts and skills (65-79)
- **Level 4** - Meeting grade-level standards with honors, exhibiting a thorough and consistent understanding of concepts and skills (80-89)

- **Level 5** - Meeting grade-level learning standards with high honors, exhibiting the ability to transfer concepts and skills beyond the standard (90-100)

Please see [this video](#) for more information on standards-based grading.

Math, Reading and Writing Assessments

All scholars will take reading, writing, and math assessments to identify the support they need in the classroom to grow and help determine promotion. Please see below for a video link to learn more about the assessments and the schedule for administration.

1. **READING**

- a. All K, and 1st as necessary - **Letter Sound Data**
- b. K-5 - **mClass DIBELS 8** ([Video](#))
- c. Tier 3 - **Dyslexia Screener - Imagine+Learning** ([Video](#))

2. **READING & WRITING**

- a. K-3 **CKLA End of Unit or Domain** (EOU/EOD)

3. **MATH**

- a. All K, and 1st as necessary - **Continue Jar Assessment** ([Video](#))
- b. K - **Lavinia Priority Standard Assessment** and **Eureka Achievement Descriptor Observations**
- c. 1st - 5th - **Eureka Squared Topic Tickets, and End of Module Assessment**

Promotion and Retention Policy

It's important to remember that promotion to the next grade level is a milestone that requires sensitivity and understanding. Each child progresses at their own pace, and we're committed to supporting their growth and development every step of the way.

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

1. **Report Card Grades** - Scholar has mastered the NYS Standard for the subject overall at Level 3, 4, or 5.

2. **mClass/NWEA/Lavania Assessments** - Scholar has met grade level performance on all end-of-year (EOY) reading benchmark areas (and math for Kindergarten).
 3. **Attendance** - There will be approximately 176 instructional days. Each scholar **MUST** maintain a 95% or higher attendance rate (no more than 10 absences in total/excused or unexcused).
- ***Scholar performance that does not meet ALL 3 criteria is considered Promotion in Doubt.***
 - ***Scholars meeting 2 of the 3 criteria may need to attend Summer School Intervention to provide some additional time to meet that grade level's standards.***
 - ***Scholar performance that only meets 1 out of the 3 criteria may need to repeat the grade level to give him or her more time to master that grade level's standards.***

Part III: School Culture

Our School Values

At ECS, we believe that our core values are the foundation of all work within our community. This means that both staff and scholars must be committed to embodying these values EVERY day! Scholars will receive positive reinforcement for demonstrating our core values, including SOAR Points. When scholars struggle to demonstrate these values they will receive feedback in a way that honors their dignity and humanity.



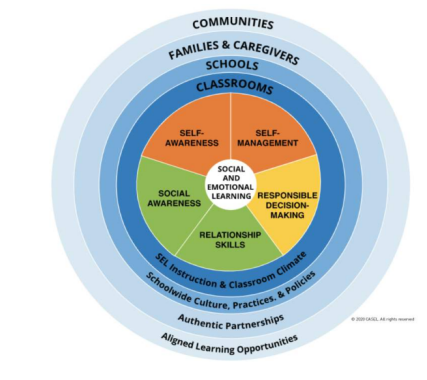
Social-Emotional Support

We believe in providing support to the whole child, which includes developing the social-emotional (SE) skills that help scholars understand themselves, build positive relationships, make responsible decisions, and demonstrate our school values. This learning happens daily in the classroom, particularly during Advisory (see below).

To better understand each scholar's social-emotional strengths and areas for growth, we administer the **Devereux Student Strengths Assessment (DESSA)**, a research-based screening tool that measures skills such as self-awareness, self-management, relationship skills, responsible decision-making, and social awareness. The results help our staff identify strengths, determine areas where additional instruction or support may be beneficial, and monitor scholar growth over time.

Families will receive information about their scholar's social-emotional development and, when appropriate, staff will partner with families to discuss strengths, goals, and strategies that can be reinforced both at school and at home.

This work is grounded in the **CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning)** framework, which emphasizes strong connections and collaboration among the classroom, school, family, and community.



Scholar Safety, Crisis Prevention, and Intervention

At Equality Charter Elementary School, the safety and well-being of every scholar is our highest priority. We believe the best way to respond to challenging behavior is to prevent it whenever possible through strong relationships, clear expectations, explicit instruction of social-emotional skills, and proactive supports.

When a scholar begins to struggle, staff use a variety of strategies to help them safely regain control and return to learning. These may include:

- Redirection and problem-solving
- Co-regulation with a trusted adult
- Sensory or calming supports
- A break in a supervised setting
- Other individualized strategies based on the scholar's needs

Our goal is always to de-escalate situations before a crisis occurs.

If a Safety Crisis Occurs

In the rare event that a scholar's behavior creates an imminent risk of serious physical harm to themselves or others, trained staff will utilize additional de-escalation techniques.

Additional information can be found in our Code of Conduct.

Advisory

Advisory is a time dedicated to developing the social-emotional skills of our scholars and is a very important part of our K-12 program. At ECES, Advisory happens every day, multiple times during the day.

- **Morning Meeting** - Morning Meeting sets the perfect tone for the day ahead. Each student receives a warm greeting during Morning Meeting, ensuring that they feel appreciated and included right from the start. It also fosters a strong sense of community within the classroom, establishing predictability and routine while providing a clear roadmap for the day's activities. The majority of activities for Advisory - Morning Meeting will come from the DESSA program.
- **Mindfulness** - Mindfulness is designed to support scholars with resetting after lunch and recess to once again get ready for classroom

learning. This time will include breathing exercises, meditation, and quiet reflection to help increase focus.

- **Read-Aloud & Activity** - Read-Aloud & Activity supports scholars with making bigger connections to how we can learn lessons from stories and the world around us to increase our own social-emotional skills. Scholars will engage in work that brings together their focus for the day and our school values.
- **Community Circle Advisory** - Community Circle advisory is a time for our school community to bring joy - celebrate Achievement & Progress, work together on areas that we need to have greater focus, announce birthdays, etc. Community Circle Advisory will be held on Fridays for each grade level at least once per month . We will have K-5 Community Circle Advisories at least 5 times each school year.

Dignity for All Students Act

The **New York State Dignity for All Students Act (DASA)** ensures that all public school scholars have the right to a safe, supportive learning environment free from discrimination, intimidation, taunting, harassment, and bullying on school property, on a school bus, and at school functions. Equality Charter School embraces and follows the requirements of the Dignity Act.

Dignity Act Coordinator (DAC)

The **Social-Emotional Learning Specialist** serves as Equality Charter School's Dignity Act Coordinator (DAC) (see [School-Based Contacts](#)).

The DAC is trained to address issues related to:

- Race
- Color
- Weight
- National origin
- Ethnic group
- Religion or religious practice
- Disability
- Economic status
- Sexual orientation

- Gender
- Sex

The DAC works to ensure all scholars are provided with a safe, supportive, and positive school climate free from harassment and discrimination.

Reporting Concerns

Incidents of harassment, bullying, or discrimination may be reported to the:

- Dignity Act Coordinator (DAC)
- Principal or Director of Community & Culture
- Executive Director

Reports should be made as soon as possible.

Staff members who witness or become aware of an incident of harassment or bullying must report it to the Principal within one school day.

All reports will be investigated in accordance with applicable school policies, regulations, and state law. If an investigation determines that the Dignity Act has been violated, appropriate corrective action will be taken in accordance with the Discipline Code and applicable laws and regulations.

Health and Wellness - Food Policy

Scholar nutrition and health is a big concern at ECS. 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, this policy has been created. Food and beverages brought to school must meet dietary guidelines and protect the health and safety of scholars.

****There will be some special occasions such as whole-school birthday celebration events that deter from this policy - it is about moderation, not complete elimination.***

- Scholars are highly encouraged to bring healthy snacks such as fruit, vegetables, cheese, yogurt, and/or crackers.

- Scholars have access to healthy lunch options through school. No outside fast food, chips, sweets, or candy.
 - The school will teach scholars about healthier food choices and moderation when the school provides these items as treats.
- Scholars may only drink/bring water, milk, or 100% juice to drink at meals.
 - Scholars may bring a water bottle with them to class and drink water during class - ***make spills easy to clean up.***
 - The school will provide access to water fountains (scholars can also refill their bottles).
- Scholars may not share or trade food with other scholars (due to allergies and possible medical issues).

IMPORTANT: Due to allergies, **PEANUTS and TREE NUTS ARE NOT ALLOWED ON CAMPUS. Please check the labels of any food items to ensure it is made in a nut-free facility. Leave the label on the food so that school staff can also double check this for additional safety.**

Birthday Celebrations

Every child's birthday is important and we want to help you make it a special day for your child. We also want to be mindful that many children have food allergies, not every family has the means to buy treats for an entire class of scholars, some families don't celebrate birthdays, and some of our scholars will have a birthday over the summer when friends are not in school with them. With all of that in mind, please see our policy on birthday celebrations:

Individual birthday parties will NOT be celebrated. Families will not be allowed into the building to bring outside items.

School-Approved Celebration (Please let us know if your family does not celebrate birthdays)

Month of:

An ice cream or popsicle party will be held at the end of the month for all scholars celebrating a birthday for that month.

*Summer Birthdays will be celebrated during the first week of school..

Day of:

Birthdays will be announced in class during Morning Meeting or Community Circle.

- The community will sing and dance in celebration
- They will also get the following gifts from the school store:

- Crown, sticker and bracelet
- Scholars can wear a special dress up or dress down outfit.

General Uniform Policy - No Skirts K-5

All Kindergarten through 2nd Grade families will be asked to provide one extra pair of clean underwear, a bottom, and a top in case of accidents.

	Tops	Bottoms	Footwear	Accessories	PE Uniform
Grades K-5	<i>Required daily:</i> Any ECS Logo Items from Flynn & O'Hara, The Gear Store, or provided by ECS. <i>Optional ECS logo items over t-shirt:</i> • Crewneck sweatshirt (no hood) • Button-down sweater • Long sleeve fleece jacket	<i>Grades K-2:</i> • PE shorts or sweatpants (Flynn & O'Hara or navy blue from any store). <i>Grades 3-5:</i> • PE shorts or sweatpants (Flynn & O'Hara or navy blue from any store). • Black, khaki, gray, or navy pants (regular, 5-pocket, or cargo style), capris, or knee length shorts.	Footwear must be closed-toed and have a full back. This includes sneakers, boots, or other shoes.	Any vendor: • Hair wraps¹- any solid color • Stockings • Socks • Ties	Same as everyday uniform

If you need support with your child meeting uniform expectations, please reach out to the Main Office at ESOffice@equalitycs.org or call (718) 517-3169.

Dress-Up or Dress-Down Days

There will be occasions where scholars have the opportunity to dress-up or dress-down. We want all scholars and families to feel comfortable to express themselves while being mindful of how to best support scholars in being able to still engage in their day to day activities.

For dress-up or dress-down days please make sure your child can still comfortably:

- Sit criss-cross applesauce on the floor (nothing too short; if wearing a skirt or dress, shorts underneath; nothing too tight that might rip)

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).

- Run and play at recess (no heels or shoes with no backs; no spaghetti straps, or midriffs)
- Clothing should not be see-through
- No mask or props allowed.

DeansList (SOAR Points)

At ECES, all staff will take every opportunity to recognize positive behaviors that align with our school values. When scholars are “caught” soaring high like an Equality Eagle they will earn SOAR Points. K-2 will earn points on Class Dojo and 3-5 will earn points through DeansList. **Accumulated points may result in more significant rewards, privileges, events, activities, and trips throughout the year.**

SOAR Points can be given for:

- Demonstration of ECS Values in all areas of the school
- Perfect attendance and on-time arrival
- Full homework completion
- Great acts of kindness

Behavior Data Tracking

Equality Charter Elementary School utilizes **DeansList** to document positive scholar behaviors, behavioral interventions, and referrals for additional support. As part of our Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), DeansList allows staff to:

- Recognize and reinforce positive scholar behaviors aligned to our school values.
- Document behavioral interventions and supports.
- Monitor behavioral patterns and progress over time.
- Inform data-based decisions regarding additional scholar supports.
- Communicate behavioral information with families.

Families have access to their scholar's behavior records through DeansList.

Tiered Intervention

Classroom Managed Interventions

The PBIS framework categorizes behaviors as Classroom Managed or Office Managed. These categories identify the level of support required, not the job title of the responding staff member.

Classroom Managed behaviors are addressed through universal, proactive, and least restrictive interventions by the staff member supervising the scholar at the time of the behavior. Depending on the setting, this may include teachers, teaching assistants, school aides, specialists, administrators, recess staff, cafeteria staff, or other school personnel.

Classroom Managed behaviors generally do not require administrative involvement unless they become chronic, escalate in intensity, or present a safety concern.

Office Managed Interventions

Office Managed behaviors require administrative involvement due to the severity of the behavior, repeated escalation despite appropriate interventions, or concerns related to the safety of scholars or staff.

Office Managed interventions may include collaboration among members of the School's MTSS team, including administrators, behavioral support staff, special populations staff, social workers, school psychologists, or other appropriate personnel based on the individual needs of the scholar.

When selecting an intervention, staff should:

- Consider the scholar's age, developmental level, and the context of the behavior.
- Review and implement any applicable IEP, Section 504 Plan, Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP), health plan, or other support plan.
- Consider whether the behavior may be influenced by disability, communication needs, trauma, or sensory regulation needs.
- Select the least restrictive intervention that safely supports the scholar and returns them to learning.

Before and After School Commitments

Before and After School Commitments will be held in increments of 10 minutes (up to 60 minutes) and run daily. Families will be notified of the need for an after-school intervention at least 1 school day in advance so families can adjust pick-up times.

Reasons scholars may be scheduled for After School Commitments:

- home practice help
- additional academic support
- Additional social-emotional support

Alternate Learning Space

Our goal is to ensure scholars are in their classroom learning environments at all times. However, we recognize that sometimes a scholar may need an opportunity to de-escalate, reflect on their behavior, and receive 1:1 support outside of the regular classroom environment - away from distractions and possible triggers. When this need arises, ECES will provide an Alternate Learning Space (ALS). The goal of ALS is for the scholar to reset and refocus so they can get back into the classroom as quickly and safely as possible. ALS is not recorded as a suspension. Parents will be contacted before the end of the day their child is assigned an ALS.

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

While we hope that scholars never exhibit a level of unsafe behavior that requires a suspension, we want families to be informed of the process and their rights. Please refer to the Code of Conduct for information regarding suspensions.

See Appendix A for examples of classroom-managed and office-managed behaviors and possible intervention options.

Additional Policies

Toileting Policy

We understand that toilet training marks a big step in a child's growth journey. While we strongly encourage all Kindergarten scholars to be toilet trained, every child follows their own path in developing personal hygiene skills. Our approach to supporting scholars who are not yet fully toilet trained will be one of patience, understanding, sensitivity, and respect.

We will work with families to support the independent mastery of toilet training to support using an MTSS approach:

- **Tier 1 (provided as a whole-group)**
 - All families will be asked for input on their child's toileting plan, including what vocabulary words are used around toileting and if there are any cultural norms at home that may differ from the school environment
 - Bathroom times will be built into our daily schedule - visuals of routines will be posted
 - During Read-Aloud Advisory, we will read books about toileting and include toileting picture books in our classroom library
 - Positive praise will be a focus of encouragement around toileting
 - Hand-washing skills will be reinforced
 - All families will be asked to provide at least one extra set of clothing - families will be reminded to send a replacement
 -
- **Tier 3 (individual supports)**
 - Check-ins during arrival, before and after snack/meals, transitioning and before dismissal to provide frequent reminders (will be added to toileting plan)
 - When there is an accident, conversations around their toileting plan will be held in private
 - A staff member will be available to directly supervise a child from the bathroom doorway where they are able to enter the restroom quickly to provide assistance, including wiping, changing out of soiled clothing, changing into clean clothing - our goal is to limit 1:1 interactions and provide more than 1 adult for support.

- It may be necessary to consult with our school nurse and your child's medical provider, if toileting progress is not made.

For more information about NYSED regulations regarding toileting, [please click here](#).

School Nurse & Medication

We are proud to have a dedicated school nurse at ECES who comes from the Department of Health. Our nurse is here to support the health and well-being of all students throughout the school day.

Nurse's Role:

Our school nurse plays a vital role in providing health services, promoting a healthy school environment, and addressing the healthcare needs of our scholars. She is trained to handle various health concerns and emergencies that may arise during school hours.

Families can reach out to Nurse through the following channels:

Phone: Call the school and dial - x1110

Email: ESNurse@equalitycs.org

If your child requires medication during school hours, the school nurse will assist by administering medication. However, medication may not be given without the completion of the "Administration of Medication" form ([click here for a copy](#)). This form must be completed by a healthcare provider. Families can get a copy of this form by calling or stopping by the school. This policy and the requirement to have a form on file applies to all medicine, including aspirin, Tylenol and other over-the-counter medicines. Medicine needs to be in its original packaging/case. Staff at the school are NOT authorized to administer medication.

If your child is seen by the nurse, you should expect a communication via Class Dojo or DeansList from your child's teacher, and an update from the nurse if your child received specific medical treatment.

Field Trips

Families will sign a “[Walking Permission Slip](#)” at the beginning of the school year to allow permission for scholars to be taken off-campus to walk around our neighborhood (ie. to collect leaves in the Fall).

There will also be times when we take longer walking trips (ie. to the Gun Hill Park) and trips that require scholars to take a school bus (ie. Eastchester Library). For those trips, we will send home individual permission slips including our location, transportation, and any other information.

We hope that families will be able to chaperone at least one field trip a year!

Computer Use

Families signed the technology/computer agreement when you enrolled your child. You can find a copy of the [Computer Usage Agreements](#) here.

Media Release

Families signed the media release form to grant permission or not for the release of photography and video of their child as part of promotions for the school, including on the use of school-approved social media accounts.

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.

[ECES 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. Video

surveillance is a valuable deterrent to inappropriate behavior and is 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 policies.
- Only those authorized by the Executive Director/designee, Principal/designee, Assistant Principal/designee, or District Director of Operations/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.

Appendix A: Response to Behavior Intervention Chart

Appendix A provides examples of classroom-managed and office-managed behaviors and possible intervention options. These examples are intended to guide decision-making and are not exhaustive. Staff utilize professional judgment to select the least restrictive intervention that is appropriate based on the individual circumstances of the behavior.

L1 - Problematic Behaviors

- **Wandering the classroom during instruction:** Child is NOT self-soothing due to sensory needs, emotional dysregulation or needs otherwise stated on the child's IEP
- **Not following the one-mic rule:** talking without turn
- **Sleeping/Refusal to do work:** NOT due to child feeling sick
- Loud drumming/tapping on desks that disrupts instruction
- **Playing with objects that disrupt focus:** NOT fidget toys
- **Inappropriate transitions:** not cleaning up space, running, talking, not facing forward, screaming during transitions
- **Crying or screaming so loud scholar disrupts learning**
- **Minor classroom Dishonesty:** not showing integrity
- **Minor Vandalism:** anything that can be replaced, ie. paper, pencil, crayons
- **Profanity towards teachers or other scholars:** NOT due to emotional dysregulation
- **Non-compliance:** When a scholar does not follow directions, rules, or expectations after they have been clearly communicated NOT due to developmental or cognitive delays or processing challenges or needs.
 - Non-Compliance includes but is not limited to:
 - Ignoring simple directions
 - Continuing preferred activity when asked to transition
 - Saying "no" or "I don't want to" to routine requests
 - Walking away when given an instruction
 - Selective hearing: responding to some requests but not others
 - Testing boundaries with new rules and expectations
 - Emotional refusal: crying, tantruming when asked to do something, passive resistance

- Sitting but not participating: academic work is NOT being completed
- Slow compliance
- Forgetting instructions immediately after being given them
- **Eloping:** Making an attempt to run outside of designated area, unsuccessfully

L1 - Tiered Intervention / Consequence Options

*Interventions should be provided by the individual staff member witnessing the behavior. They do **NOT** need to occur in sequential order, use your professional judgement based on the behavior.*

- **Non-verbal cues:** Silent signals or gestures used to redirect scholar behavior or communicate expectations without stopping instruction or drawing attention to the scholar. e.g., finger on lips for quiet, hand signal, eye contact, facial expression, gestures.
- **Proximity to scholar:** Body positioning, moving scholar closer to teacher for a period of time or teacher moving closer to scholar.
- **Redirection:** Should be quick and quiet as to preserve scholars dignity
- **Verbal cues:** Restating expectations and positive narration (ie, I like how you're sitting)
- **Reteaching the expectation:** Explicitly going back and teaching the scholar what the correct behavior or rule is, rather than just telling them to stop the wrong behavior. (modeling, explaining the "why", practice and checking for understanding). Instead of saying, "stop running" try "walking feet", emphasizing the behavior you expect.
- **Seat change:** means moving a scholar to a different location in the classroom to help them be more successful and reduce distractions or disruptions. Seat changes can be temporary or permanent, strategic, and have clear expectations.
- **Scholar/Teacher conference:** offering choices, no more than two options
- **Staff provided fidget or sensory toys:** Giving a scholar a specific tool to help them self-regulate and focus while not disrupting others, making sure to include the scholar in the decision making process (no more than two options at a time).
 - **Approved Fidgets include but are not limited to:**
 - Hand held stress ball (should be able to fit in child's hand)
 - Fidget cubes
 - Therapy putty
 - Tangle toys
 - Fidget rings
 - Textured fabric squares
 - Koosh balls
 - Smooth stones
 - Chewable jewelry
 - Weighted Lap pads
- **Other strategies within PRIM** (Pre Referral Intervention Manual) See Nazaret for copy as needed

- **Restorative Practices:** Approaches that focus on repairing harm, rebuilding relationships, and helping scholars understand the impact of their actions on others, rather than just giving consequences, i.e., restorative conversations, apology letters, and peer mediations.

Family Involvement:

- **Contact with family:** phone call at **end** of day. Teacher calls the scholar's parent/guardian after school hours to discuss the behavior incident and work together on supporting the child, you don't want to distress the scholar by doing it midday.

Additional support, if behaviors occur more than twice in a full (5x) school week:

- **Contact with Family:** In-person, phone, or Zoom at end of day
- **Observation by Social-Emotional Support Staff:** Only if behaviors repeat for several days
- **Documentation on DeansList** to monitor for additional support needs

L2 - Problematic Behaviors

- **Throwing any objects in class:** Deliberately tossing, hurling, or launching any item within the classroom environment, regardless of size or intent due to emotional outburst, i.e, pencils, erasers, paper, books, markers, scissors, chairs, water bottles, toys, manipulatives, backpacks, etc.
- **Inappropriate gestures or language:** verbal/non-verbal cursing, kissing, groping, holding hands when not prompted (not in a school-line), causing discomfort and/or safety
- **Negative and Inappropriate Social Peer and/or Staff Interactions:** Anything that creates division, embarrassment, emotional harm, ostracizing, creating hostile environment, i.e., name-calling, instigation, taunting, body shaming, culture shaming, etc.
- **Refusal to follow directions:** Repeated refusal and/or disruptive to class due to emotional outburst
- **K-2 Play Fighting:** Wrestling, Pretend Sword Fighting, Ninja Moves, Tickle Fights, Chasing, Tackling, Airboxing, Video Game Inspired Moves
- **Physical Aggression and Fights:** Rough play that escalates, turns aggressive, leads to escalated physical behavior and crosses the line that becomes unsafe or inappropriate with a loss of boundaries that results in harm.
- **Minor Vandalism**
 - Writing/coloring on furniture, floor, walls, and other items
 - Ripping paper
- **Theft (under \$50):** Includes taking other scholars items or school property
- **Persistent/Disruptive Dishonesty:** repeated lying or dishonesty that continues after initial interventions and significantly interferes with classroom learning, relationships, or school processes, i.e., blaming someone else for something you did, saying something is true when it is not.
- **Eloping from Classroom:** Making an attempt and successfully running outside of designated area; remains on campus

The following behaviors are to be managed with the additional support of the School Psychologist and School Social Worker:

- **Touching adults and other scholars inappropriately (safe touch, unsafe touch):** any physical contact that violates personal boundaries, makes others uncomfortable, or involves private body parts. (Managed with the additional help of School Psychologist and/or Social Worker)
 - Unsafe Touch
 - Private parts
 - Unwanted touching
 - Forceful contact
 - Inappropriate hugging
 - Touching adults inappropriately
 - Safe Touch
 - High Fives, fist bumps
 - Brief side hugs
 - Handshakes
 - Helping someone up
 - Pat on the back
- **Physical Aggression and Fights:** Rough play that escalates, turns aggressive, leads to escalated physical behavior and crosses the line that becomes unsafe or inappropriate with a loss of boundaries that results in harm.

L2 - Tiered Intervention / Consequence Options

*Interventions should be provided by the individual staff member witnessing the behavior. They do **NOT** need to occur in sequential order, use your professional judgement based on the behavior.*

- **Individual meetings** with a member of the Emotional Wellness Team for coaching/problem solving
- **Behavior plan development** and implementation (scholar behavior contract)
- **Restorative practices** to repair harm (with staff or scholar who had harm done to them)
- **Documentation** of interventions and progress (DeansList)
- **PRIM-based behavior interventions** (Pre-Referral Intervention Plan)
- **DESSA strategies** to reteach emotional regulation skills

- **Natural consequences** (cleaning up vandalism, returning stolen items, etc.)
- **Collaboration** with Special Populations Coordinator, Social Worker and/or School Psychologist for coaching/problem-solving
- **Afterschool or lunch** commitment with restorative practices (commitments do not occur during recess)

Family Involvement:

- **Automatic family contact** via phone call or video call (may not require in-person meeting at this level)
- Invitation to observe child during the school day

Additional support, if behaviors occur more than twice in a full (5x) school week:

- **Small-group support period:** 2-4 weeks depending on behavior and scholar response
- **Progress monitoring** throughout the intervention period
- **Escalation to Tier 3** if behaviors persist or escalate despite consistent support

L3 - Problematic Behaviors

- **Repeated administration-managed behaviors across a data period**
- **Repeated Physical Aggression/Altercation:** multiple incidents of physical violence or fighting that occur over time, showing a pattern of aggressive behavior despite previous interventions, a brawl
- **Serious Harmful Dishonesty:** lying that causes significant damage to people, processes, or safety, and goes far beyond typical dishonesty by creating real harm or danger.
 - Serious Harmful Dishonesty includes but is not limited to:
 - Falsely accusing another scholar of serious behavior
 - Lying to avoid responsibility in a way that gets another scholar in trouble
 - Forging a parent, guardian or teacher's signature on documents
 - Cheating on a major test or assignment
 - Spreading a false rumor that seriously damages another scholars reputation
 - Lying to staff about safety-related issues
 - Saying a staff member did something that did not occur
 - Providing untrue or misleading information about a staff member
 - Misrepresenting a staff's actions or words
- **Major Vandalism:** Intentional destruction or significant damage to school property that requires professional and monetary repair, replacement, or creates safety hazards.
 - Major Vandalism includes but is not limited to:
 - Anything that requires repair/replacement by outside source
 - Promethean board
 - Window blinds
 - Wall panels
 - Air conditioning
 - Breaking furniture
 - Holes in walls

- Bulletin Boards
- Fire extinguishers
- **Elopement from Building:** Making an attempt and successfully running outside of designated area and into public spaces, i.e., the streets, oncoming traffic, etc.
- **Physical Aggression/Altercation towards staff:** any physical act directed at school staff members, i.e., spitting, smacking, slapping, biting, punching, kicking, nail digging, scratching, pulling hair, clothes and/or jewelry.

L3 - Tiered Intervention / Consequence Options

- **Removal from class** for investigation period (if scholar is not being interviewed he/she should be in class)
- **Formal investigation** conducted by school administration
- **Documentation** in DeansList system
- **Community Service:** having the scholar contribute positively to the school community through helpful activities that repair harm, build responsibility, and give back to others. Before rejoining the classroom community, the scholar will complete a structured reflection that demonstrates understanding of their actions and readiness to make better choices.
 - Community Service includes but is not limited to:
 - Cleaning/maintenance
 - Helping organize classroom supplies
 - Reading to younger scholars
 - Helping setting up during school events
 - Shadowing a staff member for a period of time
 - Mentoring
 - Participating in guided observations

Family Involvement:

- **Mandatory in-person parent meeting** within one week of behavior
- **Meeting attendees:** Social-Emotional Learning Specialist and Director of Community and Culture (DoCC)

Additional Support:

- **Continued behavior support** with extended timeline (4-8 weeks)
- **Individualized intervention plan** based on specific infraction
- **Additional interventions** for scholars where behavior is a manifestation of disability
- **Regular progress monitoring** throughout extended support period

L4 - Problematic Behaviors

- Threats of physical violence to self or others with intent
- Weapons possession
- Sexual Harassment
- Bullying/Cyberbullying (determined by a DASA investigation)
- Possession with intent to distribute drugs or alcohol
- Possession or use of flammable materials
- Possession of drugs (tobacco/vapor, etc.) and alcoholic products

L4 - Tiered Intervention / Consequence Options

- **Safety assessment** and securing of the environment (may result in removal of scholar from the space)
- **Homicidal and/or suicidal threat assessment** conducted by the School Psychologist, Social Worker or Social-Emotional Learning Specialist
- **Emergency investigation** begins immediately
- **Documentation** in DeansList with incident report

Family Involvement:

- **Immediate parent contact** - same day notification
- **Mandatory emergency meeting** within 24-48 hours
- **Meeting attendees:** Director of Community and Culture (DoCC), and Behavior Support Team (Principal may be in attendance if there is no suspension pending)
- **Family in-person meeting will be scheduled the day scholar returns**

Additional Support:

- **Intensive behavior support** with crisis intervention approach
- **Safety plan development** before return to classroom
- **Extended timeline** for intervention and monitoring
- **Additional interventions** for scholars where behavior is a manifestation of disability
- **Possible suspension** pending investigation and safety planning

External Reporting (When Required):

- **CPS reporting** if the child is in imminent danger
- **Law enforcement contact** may be required for weapons, drugs, or serious threats

More information regarding suspensions and the appeal process for suspension can be found in the [ECS Code of Conduct in the Penalties Section](#).

Appendix B: Scholar Rights & Responsibilities

I know I have the right to:

- **Be treated fairly, even when I make a mistake:** Everyone should treat me fairly, no matter how I behave. I should always be listened to and treated with respect.
- **Learn in a safe place:** School should be a safe and happy place where no one is mean or unfair to me.
- **Know what's right and wrong:** I should know what behaviors are good and which ones might get me in trouble.
- **Get help when I need it:** Teachers and other grown-ups can help me if I need advice about my behavior and learning.
- **Speak up if I disagree:** If I don't agree with something, I can talk about it in a nice way.

I agree to the following:

- **Be open to learning:** Come to school every day you can and be ready to learn.
- **Take care of materials and our school:** Put your supplies away neatly and respect school property.
- **Respect everyone:** Be kind and polite to everyone at school.
- **Take responsibility:** Be responsible for your actions, even when you make a mistake.
- **Tell a grown-up about problems:** Let a teacher or someone else know if there's a problem.
- **Solve problems nicely:** If there's a problem, try to talk it out calmly.
- **No fighting:** Don't fight in school or outside.
- **Keep everyone safe:** Don't do anything that could hurt people at school or nearby.
- **Follow directions:** Listen to teachers and staff.
- **Show school pride:** Wear your school uniform every day.

- **No electronics in school:** Leave phones, Ipads/tablets, watches, and games at home.. If your child requires technology for medical reasons, please contact the school.
- **Keep learning safe:** Don't do anything that stops other kids from learning.

Parent engagement and support are crucial during our behavior intervention process. Parents must have up-to-date contact information on file and an emergency contact for instances where they are not available via phone or email during the school day.

I have received a copy of the Equality Charter Elementary School Scholar Handbook & was given access to the Code of Conduct and carefully read this contract. I understand the expectations of Equality Charter Elementary School and the behavior that is required from my child.

Parent/Guardian Name: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____