



**Community Handbook  
2019-2020**

Curiosity – Compassion – Community – Courage - Craftsmanship

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## **Introduction**

Dear Families,

This year, Explore serves Kindergarten through fourth grade and will continue to add one grade per year until Explore is fully built out as a K-8 school. Explore Community School provides a challenging education in a joyful and supportive environment.

Daily, students engage in meaningful project-based learning that ensures they master core academic content while developing the character and social skills that will equip them to become innovative leaders. Led by an extraordinary group of loving and supportive teachers, Explorers demonstrate the highest levels of academic achievement, character growth, confidence, creativity, and care for themselves and their community. Every day at Explore, we embrace the diversity that surrounds us and grow together through curiosity, reflection, and collaboration to ensure our students are known, supported, healthy, happy, challenged, and fully prepared for college and beyond.

We know that caregivers are students' first and primary teachers and we look forward to learning with and from you as we develop. As a member of this community, you and your student will play an integral role in helping us achieve our mission and vision. In order to facilitate your participation and collaboration, this handbook is designed to provide you with as much information as possible about our mission, approach, and policies.

Of course, no document can address every question you may have and we encourage you to contact any of us if you have concerns or need further information. Thank you again for joining our community. It's going to be an awesome journey, and we are glad to embark upon it together!

## **The Martha O'Bryan Center**

Explore! Community School is an outreach of the Martha O'Bryan Center, an anti-poverty nonprofit organization with longstanding history and deep community roots. The Martha O'Bryan Center has operated from the heart of Cayce Place since 1948, opening doors of hope and possibility to create a culture of attainment and positively shape future generations.

## **Foundational Beliefs**

The mission of Explore! Community School is to foster the independence, critical thinking and creativity of a diverse community of learners so they are fully prepared to become confident, conscientious leaders who change the world. As we work towards this mission, we are guided by three foundational beliefs:

### **1. We believe in providing meaningful opportunities for students to engage in authentic learning experiences.**

Daily, students engage in learning opportunities that reinforce Tennessee State Standards and concepts while developing the creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, and communication skills necessary for success in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. This approach ensures learning is meaningful to students, challenging them to apply their learning through exciting project-based tasks that require expert thinking and complex communication and allows seamless integration of art, music, technology and community service. At Explore, we encourage students to learn as readers, authors, mathematicians, scientists, and artists.

### **2. We believe in creating a culture of excellence, joy, and love.**

At Explore, we understand that when students are held to high standards and create work in which they have pride and ownership they realize their true potential, unlocking the capacity for excellence in every area of their lives. We support learning that promotes craftsmanship by developing students' ability to study, reflect, and improve. Children are born with a love for learning, and we will cultivate that love by providing a joyful educational experience that supports each student's unique passions and interests. We recognize that relationships form the foundation of community and are committed to seeking to understand others' actions, thoughts, and backgrounds. Within our school community, we depend on one another.

### **3. We believe in collaborating with families and communities.**

We recognize that caregivers are children's primary teachers and that students learn everywhere, all the time. Therefore, we work purposefully to engage families and empower them to participate meaningfully in their child's education. We work collaboratively, creatively, and relentlessly to dismantle barriers and obstacles to community success. We develop strong relationships

with the community and among one another, and we will look to each other for support and inspiration. We acknowledge that the care for each individual by each individual is vital to a successful school environment. As such, we are committed to the education of the whole child academically, socially, and emotionally. We support a community where each individual voice is valued and nurtured. We believe in celebrating diversity as strength by actively seeking to learn and understand perspectives.

### Core Values and Community Commitments

Springing from our foundational beliefs, our Core Values are what we strive to embody. The Community Commitments are the Core Values in action and serve as a guide for our daily conduct. All members of our community make the following commitments to ensure that we live out our core values and that every member of our community is empowered, challenged, inspired, and loved.

Core Value	Commitments
<p><b>Curiosity:</b> <i>We encourage exploration and discovery in teaching and learning.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● We will wonder, dream, and ask questions.</li> <li>● We will discover our talents, passions, and potential.</li> <li>● We will ensure learning is always purposeful, interesting, and fun.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Community:</b> <i>We learn from each other and collaborate to make a positive impact on our school, families, and world.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● We will celebrate diversity as an essential strength of our community.</li> <li>● We will recognize and honor the qualities that make each of us unique.</li> <li>● We will take responsibility for our success and support the success of others.</li> <li>● We will keep others and ourselves safe.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Compassion:</b> <i>We are mindful of others and are kind and helpful to ensure we all experience success</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● We will act with kindness, speak with love, and listen with respect.</li> <li>● We will seek out opportunities to help one another.</li> <li>● We will take action to improve our school, community, and world.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Courage:</b> <i>We take action to do the right thing even when it's hard. We stand up for others, admit our mistakes, and ask for help when we need it.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● We will take risks in order to grow and improve.</li> <li>● We will do the right thing even when it's hard.</li> <li>● We will Explore new places, ideas, and possibilities.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Craftsmanship:</b> <i>We will do whatever it takes to ensure we create work that is worthy of pride.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● We will seek out and implement feedback in order to improve.</li> <li>● We will create beautiful work.</li> <li>● We will revise and improve until we are proud.</li> </ul>

## Academics

### A Day at Explore

**Breakfast and Arrival:** Our doors open at 7:30 and breakfast is served until 7:50. Explorers are greeted by teachers, staff and friends as they enter the building, get organized for the day, and interact with the morning message when they arrive in their classrooms.

**Community Meeting and Move this World:** Meeting time builds and strengthens the classroom community by making connections between students and teachers through greetings, cheers, and positive messages. Community Meeting allows students to feel a sense of belonging and to let them know school is fun! Move This World is a social and emotional learning program that teaches our self-regulation skills and language to appropriately express feelings and ideas.

**Calendar:** Understanding the world around us can be hard work! In kindergarten through second grade, calendar math helps students learn about the ways we organize time, temperature, and the weather and to recognize patterns and review important mathematical understandings.

**Reader's Workshop and Word Work:** Reader's Workshop allows teachers to craft lessons that model key literacy and discussion skills using authentic, meaningful texts. Students have the opportunity to practice modeled skills in guided reading groups, independently with self-selected books, and in choice literacy centers. In Word Work students benefit from exploration and explicit instruction in developmental spelling as they discover how to make

words and the ways they work. We focus on teaching spelling rules instead of word lists.

**Guided Reading:** Guided Reading is a time where students are taught on their instructional reading level. Students work with teachers in small groups to get the support, instruction, and extension they require to continue to learn and grow. During this time, all students receive targeted instruction from their teachers on the specific skills they need to practice and master. These groups are informed by our F&P testing and other academic data we collect in order to best meet the needs of all of our Explorers.

**Recess:** Play is essential for developing creativity and increasing academic achievement. Students at Explore will enjoy this chance to connect with their friends, cultivate their imaginations, exercise, and have fun!

**Lunch:** Students will enjoy a healthy, delicious lunch and then have the opportunity to rest, focus their thoughts, and re-energize for the afternoon.

**Content Literacy:** Content Literacy is an opportunity for students to read and write about the world around us, exploring social studies and science through experiments and non-fiction texts. During this time of the day students look at primary sources, answer document-based questions, utilize the scientific method, and participate in the engineering design process.

**Writing:** During writing, teachers use mentor texts to help students develop their voice and create stories that come from their unique, personal experiences and from research-based materials. Students also learn

**Balanced Math:** During the balanced math block, students will focus on developing number sense and problem solving as Explorers develop deep conceptual understanding through guided play and discovery. Students will discover new patterns and relationships in composing and decomposing numbers. During problem solving we will work to understand real world problems and situations.

**Explicit Math:** Explicit math instruction is designed to support and extend the thinking developed by mathematicians during the balanced math instruction. Mathematicians are given direct instruction and have opportunities to practice math concepts multiple times to help ensure retention and deep understanding.

**Related Arts:** At Explore we believe every child deserves the opportunity to discover and exercise their passions and that the arts are as important as our traditional curriculum. Kindergarten through second grade Explorers will participate in music, garden, and art once a week. Third through fifth grade Explorers will participate in Spanish, music, and art once a week. All Explorers K-5 will participate in Fitness and Adventure twice a week to promote healthy lifestyles and physical fitness.

**Explorations:** Students will engage in purposeful project-based learning, taking the knowledge they gain during the rest of the day and applying it in authentic, hands-on activities. Students will create works of beauty and worth that they can present and be proud of.

**Closing Circle:** This is a time to celebrate the ways that we have demonstrated learning and our core values throughout the day. Students are able to share compliments, point out something they learned, or share something they are looking forward to.

**Dismissal:** Students leave for home or transition to after school programming.

School is dismissed at 1:45 on Fridays in order to provide training and work time for our staff members. We recognize the logistical challenges this may present to families and are committed to providing opportunities for Enrichment during this time. This programming will take place at Explore and the Martha O'Bryan Center and will be offered at a sliding-scale fee required for participation.

It is important to note that these enrichment activities are not facilitated by Explore staff members and are not part of Explore's instructional day or program. Therefore, participation is a privilege that is granted by the programming provider and is subject to their requirements. Regardless of participation in enrichment programming, all students must be dismissed from school no later than 1:45pm, as staff has scheduled meetings and training sessions directly following school on Fridays. Please make arrangements for pick-up, or child care for Fridays to ensure

**Community Partners:** We will collaborate with several community partners for the 2019 - 2020 school year. We will continue our four-year partnership

with Plant the Seed as Explorers in grades K-2 will grow their knowledge of where food comes from and what it means to live healthy and sustainable lives. We will also extend our two-year partnership with Southern Word for a fourth year. Other community partners will be added throughout the year, stay tuned to Bloomz for updates!

## **Response to Instruction and Intervention**

Response to Instruction and Intervention is a framework for teaching and learning. At Explore, our mission is to help all Explorers succeed and to give every Explorer the support they need to reach high expectations. Each instructional period is designed to allow Explorers to work at their instructional and independent levels. Instructional levels are those levels which an Explorer requires teacher support and scaffolding to master. Independent levels are those levels that the Explorer is working at on their own.

Response to Instruction and Intervention relies on high quality instruction by teachers coupled with decisions that are guided by data. Response to Instruction and Intervention is designed to support and extend learning for all students. As such, all learners fall into and pass between the different levels throughout their educational experiences.

**Tier I Instruction:** All students receive research-based high-quality instruction from their general education instructors.

**Tier II Instruction:** In addition to Tier I, 30 minutes of extra help is provided to students who need additional support in math, reading, and/or the development of their social and emotional skills.

**Tier III Instruction:** In addition to TI support, 45 minutes of extra help is provided to students who need more intensive support. At Explore, we use triennial MAP data, reading running record data, and supplemental math data, to ensure that students who need additional instruction receive it at a level and in a format that is most appropriate for them.

### **-Report Cards**

Report cards will be completed at the end of each quarter to formally report Explorers' progress. Report cards consist of two components: a Reflection on Valuable Moments and the Academic Report.

## **Reflection on Valuable Moments**

At Explore Community School we work to cultivate the academic, social, and emotional growth of our students. The Reflection on Valuable Moments gives an overview of your child's demonstration of Explore Core Values.

### **The Academic Report**

Students in grades K-4 are evaluated throughout the year on their progress towards national and state standards. Final report cards reflect student performance on grade-level standards and include narrative comments from the teacher.

For the 2019-2020 school year, Explore has scheduled caregiver conference days in order for each student, family, and teacher to reflect upon student progress and collaborate towards future success. These days are provided on the school calendar. Please note that students will not report for the regular school day on these dates.

### **Homework**

We believe that students learn everywhere, all the time, and that children in the primary grades need significant time at home for imagination, play, and quality time with family and friends. For 2019-2020, homework has the following components:

- **Kindergarten:** Homework is limited to sight word practice and a weekly reading log. Each school day, Explorers will bring home two books. One will be on their independent reading level and should be read to a caregiver. The other will be a book in which they're interested that caregivers should read to the Explorer. Explorers should also practice their sight words at least three times per week. The completion of these tasks should be noted on the reading log and returned to school with the books the next day.
- **1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade:** In addition to the reading log, students will receive one page of math or reading skills practice. These will be collected each Monday.
- **3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Grade:** Explorers will receive three pages of math reinforcement, one page of reading skills practice, and one graphic organizer or article with comprehension questions in addition to their reading log.

- **Caregivers:** Please check your Explorer’s folder nightly for important updates and their Valuable Moments report. Please also ensure your Explorer gets plenty of sleep!

Homework will go home on Mondays and will be returned on the following Monday. Teachers will provide feedback to Explorers on homework in class when and if corrections need to be made. Homework will be tracked based on completion.

At the teacher’s discretion, additional materials to target gaps or trends may be included in each week’s packet. Any additional materials will be designed to require less than fifteen additional minutes during the week. Homework will also include a few basic tips about questions or supports you can have to talk to your child about their project-based learning topic. It will also include example pages to help give an example of the type of responses the teacher is looking for.

Please note: In addition to reinforcing and maintaining previously taught content, homework also helps students develop responsibility, organizational, and time management skills. Families who prefer additional assignments will be provided a list of resources and activities they can use for more academic practice at home.

### **Assessments**

In addition to traditional classroom assessment measures, we will utilize a variety of additional tools to inform our instruction. These tools include:

- **Reading:** To understand Explorer’s progress in reading, students will be given the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment at the beginning, middle, and end of the year. This assessment will provide a student’s reading level that will be noted on report cards. We will also utilize the Kindergarten Inventory of Developmental Spelling.
- **Math:** We will use the Developmental Number Assessment, Fact Interviews, and Problem Solving assessments in combination with teacher-created observations and assessments to inform math instruction.
- **Measures of Academic Progress (MAP).** Similarly, the MAP assessment will be given at the beginning, middle, and end of the year. This assessment will provide us with a nationally normed reference point for the performance of our students in reading and math. In addition to the classroom data pieces, MAP data helps us determine if students

need additional intervention in reading and math and allows us to make informed decisions about what that intervention should look like.

- **TN Ready:** As a public school we administer the TN Ready assessment beginning in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade for all students through 8th grade.

## **Promotion Policy**

Explore has been designed to support the success of every student, and we will work relentlessly to ensure students receive the instruction and social support necessary to succeed at the following grade.

However, some students need more time or more support in order to meet grade level benchmarks. Based upon students' individual academic and social and emotional progress, an individual student may not be ready for promotion to the next grade. This decision is made on an individual student basis in collaboration with families at the school's discretion.

Caregivers can expect a meeting with their Explorer's teachers and a member of the leadership by the third quarter of the school year, if the school team has any concerns about an Explorer's readiness for promotion for the upcoming school year. If you, as the caregiver, have any major concerns about your Explorer's progress, you can request a meeting with the teachers and member of the school leadership team as well.

We want to be sure that we are supporting all of our students and working in close collaboration with families and caregivers to develop the best plan for the short and long term success and well being of the Explorer.

## **Student Supplies**

The easiest way to manage supplies in primary classrooms while ensuring a positive classroom environment is to have shared supplies within the classroom. Explore provides a supply request form each year that grade level teachers create and revise.

All supplies will be kept at school and divided among and used by all students, therefore, families do not need to label supplies with their child's name. For policies on toys and personal supplies, please see the **GENERAL POLICIES** section.

## Attendance and Transportation

### Attendance Policy

In order to achieve our ambitious mission, we must maximize our time with students in school every moment of every day. Regular attendance is mandatory. Families should not schedule vacations and non-emergency appointments during school time. Families should take advantage of the early dismissal on Friday, as well as holidays and school vacations, to schedule appointments and travel.

Absences will be “excused” for illness, verifiable family emergency, /recognized religious holidays regularly observed by persons of the child’s faith, or (in rare instances) other reasons requested in writing by the parent/guardian and considered legitimate by the principal or designee. Per MNPS policies, these absences can only be counted as excused if written verification from the legal guardian is received in the main office within 24 hours of the student’s return to school. A doctor’s note or other official documentation is required for any absence period of 2 or more consecutive days. Notes from the doctor must come on official letterhead. ***It is imperative that families bring in written documentation for any school time missed on the first day of return.*** This is recorded in Infinite Campus (our student information system) and shared with the MNPS school district and state.

In order to be counted as present, a student must remain in school until noon. If a student comes to school, and must go home before 12:00 p.m., due to illness, then the student’s attendance status will be changed from “Present” to “Excused Absence.” Additionally, if a student arrives to school after 12:00pm, they will be marked as “Absent” pending documentation from the family.

All other absences, including those related to trips or vacations taken outside of school wide breaks, are considered “unexcused.”

### Chronic Absences and Enrollment Implications

After three unexcused absences, Explorers are flagged for truancy intervention. The school is then legally required to do our due diligence in order to ensure compliance with the TN State laws for student attendance.

According to T.C.A § 49-6-3001, all students under 18 are expected to be in school. All students under the age of 18 will be expected to comply with these laws and the school will follow procedures set out in TCA § 49-6-3007 if the student does not comply with the law. In cases of truancy, the Principal (or her/his designee) will investigate the situation. Explore Community School operates in compliance with TCA § 49-6-3007 requirements, which can include mandated reporting of truancy to appropriate state agencies.

Students are afforded rights under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act should their absences be related to a disabling condition.

Due Diligence for Truancy Prevention can include:

- Telephone call(s)
- Face to face meeting with the Registrar or member(s) of the Culture Team
- Development of an attendance support plan
- Follow-up mailed letter summarizing communications/action steps or attempts at caregiver outreach sent via certified letter
- Outreach to state agencies if none of the previous interventions were successful in improving attendance outcomes

If a student is absent the first five (5) days of school, or at least ten consecutive days during the school year, and there has been no successful contact between the family and the school to explain his or her absences, that student may lose his or her seat at Explore and may be considered un-enrolled from the school.

## **Tardies**

Students are expected to be inside the school before 8:00 a.m. Students arriving to school after 8:00 a.m., even if it is before the start of morning meeting, are marked tardy. Tardies may be excused if a written note with a valid reason is received. In the case of chronic tardies (over 10% of school days or 10 unexcused tardies), the student's family must attend an attendance conference with Explore administration. *If unexcused tardies continue, a student is at risk of retention and additional action including, but not limited to, referral to an Attendance Officer, issuance of legal notices, and juvenile court intervention.*

Any student arriving late to school must be escorted in by an adult and signed in with an Explore staff member to make sure students are safe and accounted for at all times. We will record their presence and update our attendance records as accordingly.

Explorers who arrive after 8:00am may not be served breakfast. It will depend on the availability of food and if a caregiver is able to stay with the student while they eat their breakfast.

### **Early Dismissals**

Unless a parent, a guardian, or a designated emergency contact has contacted the school in advance or provided a signed note to the school explaining the situation, and the school has granted permission, no student will be dismissed early from school. In addition, the parent, guardian, or designee must sign the student out with the Main Office before removing the student from school grounds. *Students will not be dismissed unless the parent or guardian has physically come to the Main Office.* Notification regarding early dismissals should be made as far in advance as possible. To ensure an orderly dismissal process, students will not be dismissed after 3:00 p.m. Monday-Thursday or after 1:00 p.m. on Fridays.

Likewise, if a student needs to be sent home due to an illness or behavioral infraction, a parent/guardian, or other individual authorized for pickup must come to the school, meet with the Principal or his/her designee, and remove the student from school. Students being sent home for behavioral infractions will not be dismissed unless the parent, guardian, or a designee has physically come to the school.

In such situations, students are not permitted to return to school until an in-person meeting or telephone conference with a member of the school leadership team has been completed.

### **Arrival**

Explore Community School opens its doors at 7:30 a.m. every day. Students are welcome to arrive any time between 7:30 and 7:59 a.m., but must be inside the school by 8:00 a.m. when the school day officially begins. Any student who arrives into the school after 8:00 a.m. will be counted as tardy

and needs to be signed in by a parent or a guardian. All students must enter through the front door of the main building.

For the 2019 Fall Semester, Explore will offer early drop off at 7:15-7:30am. This will be in the Martha O'Bryan Center Community Room. This is a service that we are offering to support a smooth and timely arrival for our families as construction will still be taking place at and around Explore This is not considered full before and after care, but a time to drop off for families who are on a tighter time schedule in the morning. We have limited space for this time. We ask other members of our community to be mindful and reserve this service for those families who need this extra support. This will be in place until the completion of the new Dew Street which will increase access to the school and will reduce traffic congestion on the street.

Breakfast begins at 7:30 a.m., and serving ends in classrooms at 7:50 a.m. If students arrive to their classrooms after 7:50 a.m., we will assume that they do not require breakfast. Explore cannot promise that we will be able to serve breakfast to students arriving after 7:50am.

If parents need to speak to a teacher or conduct any other classroom business, this should occur after the school day and by appointment with the teacher. Unless an appointment has been made with a specific staff member ahead of time, students and families must remain outside of the school building until 7:30 a.m. Following the first week of school, Explorers should be dropped off at the front door and *caregivers will not be permitted to accompany them to class.*

## Dismissal

Students will be dismissed from school at 3:45 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. Students will be dismissed at 1:45 p.m. on Friday. Parents/guardians who arrive before dismissal must wait outside until their teacher dismisses students. In order to ensure a safe, timely dismissal for all students, we are **unable to provide early dismissal for students in the last 30 minutes of school.**

Teachers will keep a list of each Explorer's dismissal method (bus, car, walk, after school program) in their classroom. If the student is to be dismissed in a manner departing from the routine, caregivers must contact the front desk by 3:00. The front desk will update the method on our Explore dismissal channel. *Requests to change dismissal methods made after 3:00 will not be permitted.*

Every family will be issued two dismissal placards per student. These placards will serve as mandatory identification each time your child is dismissed from school. Maintaining the placards is the responsibility of each parent as they serve as proof of permission to pick up students from Explore. Please let us know as soon as possible if a placard is lost or stolen and we will issue an alternate. To ensure the safety of our students, *we will check the identification and the list of individuals approved to pick up students for everyone picking up a student without a placard.*

Timely pick-up of students is critical so that our already hard-working and highly dedicated teachers do not have to stay after their normal working hours. Keep in mind that Explore teachers are salaried paid employees and do not earn over-time when they work beyond their regular schedule. *Three pick-ups of students after 4pm will result in a phone or in-person conference being scheduled between the caregiver and school operations team to problem solve about the late pick-ups. Next steps and potential consequences will be discussed. Consistently late pick-up adds undue stress on school team members, and often causes embarrassment and anxiety for the student.*

## Bus Transportation

Participation in bus transportation is a privilege. All behavioral expectations outlined in the Explore Community Handbook apply on school bus transportation. Students who take the school bus are expected to act responsibly and respectfully at all times. All school expectations apply on the bus and certain additional rules will also apply during bus transportation.

## **Bus Rider Rights and Responsibilities**

We are happy to be able to provide our Explorers with the opportunity to ride the school bus! We use the bus in order to get Explorers to and from school safely, and to participate in fun and enriching activities off site.

Explore partners with Grayline as our official bus service. The following outlines expectations from both Explore and Grayline on the rights and responsibilities that our Explorers and families have when riding the bus for any school related purpose. Our shared goal is to provide a safe and comfortable ride for the Explorers, our staff, and the drivers.

<b>Rules of the Bus</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Follow the directions of the driver and/or monitor.</li><li>2. Stay seated throughout the ride.</li><li>3. Keep hands, arms, legs, and objects to yourself..</li><li>4. Take care of the bus. (No trash, no writing or damage to the bus)</li></ol>



Explorers are expected to follow these rules whenever they are riding the bus. If a student is struggling to meet the expectations of the bus, then students can earn consequences starting from a one-way suspension from the bus for the afternoon, up to a full removal from the bus for the semester or year.

Caregivers will be contacted in the case of any unexpected behaviors on the bus. For more information about the bus discipline policy, please see the full bus discipline policy outlined below.

The following are non-negotiable behaviors which warrant the highest level of discipline and may ***lead to immediate removal from the bus:***

- Fighting/Physical Attacks
- Verbal Aggression (Making Threats to the driver, monitor, or other rider)
- Three afternoon student returns to school

The safety of our community members is paramount and the above listed behaviors compromise the overall safety and well-being of our community and thus, cannot be accepted.

In addition to rules for our Explorers, our staff, Grayline drivers, and families also have rights and responsibilities.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Community Rights</b></p> <p>All Explorers, Grayline staff, and Caregivers have the right to:</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Community Responsibilities</b></p> <p>All Explorers, Grayline staff, and Caregivers have a responsibility to:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A safe and timely riding experience</li> <li>● Courteous and respectful treatment</li> <li>● Ask questions or express concerns about their experience</li> <li>● Expect follow up to address their concerns</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Be at the bus stop on time for AM pick up and PM drop off</li> <li>● Use respectful language and tone when interacting with Explore/Grayline staff and Caregivers, and Explorers</li> <li>● Raise any questions or concerns to the school</li> <li>● Participate in any follow up actions to address concerns (i.e. meetings/phone calls, etc.)</li> </ul>

### Bus Rule Violation Consequences

- **One infraction** = Student receives a verbal warning from school leadership and school leadership makes a phone call home to the student’s caregiver.
- **Two infractions** = School leadership makes a phone call home to the student’s caregiver informing him/her that the student will be suspended from the bus in both the morning and afternoon the following day.
- **Three infractions** = School leadership makes a phone call home to the student’s caregiver informing him/her that the student will be suspended from the bus in both the morning and afternoon for the next three (3) days.

- **Four infractions**= School leadership makes a phone call home to the student's caregiver informing him/her that the student will be suspended from the bus in both the morning and afternoon for the next five (5) days.
- **Five infractions**= School leadership makes a phone call home to the student's caregiver informing him/her that the student is permanently suspended from the bus, either for a semester or the remainder of the school year.

An administrator will meet the bus at school every day. No student will board or exit the bus before the administrator checks with the driver about behavior.

- If the school determines a child is not ready to ride the bus safely, a parent will be asked to come to the school building to pick up the child from school.
- More serious behavior (i.e. fighting) will be investigated and students will be treated exactly as if the incident happened on school grounds.

Infractions, if serious enough, can warrant immediate loss of bus privileges for the remainder of the school year. Families are strongly encouraged to reinforce the importance of proper bus behavior and the potential consequences for poor behavior choices. Should a student lose bus privileges, the student's caregiver is responsible for arranging alternative transportation for the student. Unless a student is suspended, the student will earn an "unexcused absence" for failure to attend school as a result of lost bus privileges.

Caregivers should plan to arrive at the bus stops to meet their students at least five minutes before the scheduled arrival time. Bus drivers will have a copy of the list of individuals authorized to pick up every student and will check for placards or IDs before releasing students off the bus. *No student will be released off the bus without a caregiver or authorized representative present.*

## School Closings

Explore follows the MNPS inclement weather closing policy. Please monitor local television and radio stations for any closure announcement. Explore will also confirm such closings through Bloomz, and One-Call as soon as the decision is made.

In the rare case that there is a school closing that is separate from the district, Explore will inform caregivers via phone and through Bloomz and the school's Facebook page. Caregivers will also be notified of school re-opening information as soon as it is made available. Here are some examples of reasons why school may close: flooding, no power, safety or security issue in the building or community.

## School Safety

### **Closed Campus**

Under no circumstances are students allowed to leave the school building without permission. A student with permission to leave may only leave under the escort and supervision of an authorized adult. Students should be aware that the school has several neighbors, and should be respectful and courteous of their needs. Once students have entered the school in the morning, they may not leave the building unless a school staff member or other authorized adult escorts them.

### **Visitor Policy**

*All visitors are required to report to the Front Desk upon entering the building.* Any visitor, including parents, who do not report to the office or is found in the building without authorization, will be asked to leave immediately. Visitors must wear visitor badges at all times to indicate that they have checked-in at the main office. Parents are encouraged to visit the school and parent involvement is discussed in more detail later in this handbook. We need to ensure that all adults are clearly identified when in the building with Explorers.

### **School Searches**

In order to maintain the security of all students, the School authorizes the Principal and his or her designee(s) to conduct searches of students and their belongings if the authorized school official has reasonable suspicion to believe that the search will result in evidence that the student violated the law or the School's Code of Conduct or otherwise constituted a threat to the health, safety, welfare, or morals of the school, other students, school personnel, or any other person lawfully on school property or attending a school function. In authorizing searches, the school acknowledges both state and federal constitutional rights, which are applicable to personal searches of students and searches of their possessions.

Students have no reasonable expectation of privacy rights in school lockers, desks, or other school storage places. The school exercises overriding control over such school property, which may be opened and subjected to inspection at any time by school officials.

An authorized school official may search a student or the student's belongings based upon information received from a reliable informant. Individuals, other than the school's employees, will be considered reliable informants if they have previously supplied information that was accurate and verified, make an admission against their own interest, provide the same information that is received independently from other sources, or appear to be credible and the information they are communicating relates to an immediate threat to safety. School employees will be considered reliable informants unless they are known to have previously supplied information that they knew was not accurate.

Students may be subject to personal searches and searches of their possessions where reasonable individualized suspicion exists to conduct such search. Reasonable individualized suspicion to conduct a search of a student or a student's possessions and the scope of the particular search shall be based upon, among other things, the student's age, the prevalence and seriousness of the problem to which the search is directed, the urgency necessitating an immediate search, and the probative value and reliability of information used as justification for the search.

## School Culture and Discipline

### **Responsive Classroom**

Explore uses the Responsive Classroom (RC) approach to create a safe environment where children are able to take academic and social risks. The RC approach helps children understand the importance of kindness toward and acceptance of all people, to celebrate differences in people and cultures, and to learn important social skills such as empathy and problem solving. Drawing upon the work of many great educational theorists and practitioners, Responsive Classroom` operates on the following seven guiding principles:

1. The social and emotional curriculum is as important as the academic curriculum.
2. How children learn is as important as what they learn.
3. Great cognitive growth occurs through social interaction.

4. To be successful academically and socially, children need to learn a set of social and emotional skills that include cooperation, assertiveness, responsibility, empathy, and self-control.
5. Knowing the children we teach—individually, culturally, and developmentally—is as important as knowing the content we teach.
6. Knowing the families of the children we teach is as important as knowing the children we teach.
7. How we, the adults at school, work together is as important as our individual competence: Lasting change begins with the adult community.

The Responsive Classroom approach offers interconnected strategies to use in classrooms such as: starting each school day with Morning Meeting, where students work together on group activities and greet each other; creating clear and consistent approaches to discipline that foster social responsibility; and classroom organization and family communication strategies to involve families as partners in their children’s education.

### Valuable Moments

The Valuable Moments chart is the way we will positively acknowledge our core values in action. These will represent the ways our community commitments come to life. The following is an example of a clip chart that will be used in each classroom. The idea is that our students will be recognized each time they demonstrate a value throughout the day, moving from one value to another and back again without hierarchy.

*Valuable Moments*

Curiosity	Community	Compassion	Courage	Craftsmanship
				

Students’ demonstration of these values will be publicly recognized on a daily basis through the use of closing circle. During closing circle students will recognize the valuable moments of the day. The idea is that, during closing circle, students would nominate individuals who had been recognized throughout the day on the clip chart, and the teacher would record these names. These Valuable Moments will hang for the next day outside of the classroom as further public recognition until the next day.

Each day, a Valuable Moments Report will be sent home to caregivers to be signed and returned to school. On this report teachers will recognize the valuable moment(s) Explorers have demonstrated throughout the day. The sheet below outlines the observable behaviors that align with the DESSA (Devereux Student Strengths Assessment) competencies for social emotional learning that reflect our core values. This form also shows Teachable Moments, or times when an Explorer had a corrective behavior that needs to be shared with families.

## **Daily Valuable Moments Sheet**



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Week of: \_\_\_\_\_

**Valuable Moments**

Curiosity	Community	Compassion	Courage	Craftsmanship
Joyful learning	Shows awareness of strengths	Describes own feelings	Taking risk	Works hard on improving products
Seeks out challenging task	Gets along with different people	Calmly resolves a disagreement	Accepting feedback	Keeps trying when unsuccessful
Takes an active role in learning	Acts respectfully in competition	Expresses concern or care for others	Accepts responsibility	Focuses on a task despite Distraction
Experimenting	Follows trusted adult's advice	Shows kindness for others	Carries self with confidence	Prepares for school
Discovery	Practices safety for all	Expresses opinions with care	Stays calm when challenged	Ask for feedback

**Teachable Moments**

Behavior Intervention	Date
<input type="checkbox"/> Buddy Classroom <input type="checkbox"/> Office Visit <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	

Day of the	Teacher Comments	Parent Signature
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<b>Week</b>		
Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		
Friday		

### **School Wide Social-Emotional Learning Components**

**Move This World:** is a social and emotional curriculum that ritualizes a daily practice of identifying, expressing and managing emotions. The online platform encourages classrooms to strengthen social and emotional learning in fun and interactive ways. It builds empathy and resilience and helps to provide additional common culture.

**Restorative Practices:** Restorative practices promote inclusiveness, relationship-building and problem solving, rather than the administration of a punitive consequence. Students are encouraged to reflect and take responsibility for their actions and come up with a plan to repair harm. Two examples of restorative practices which are utilized at Explore are Apology of Action and Restorative Circles.

**Mindfulness:** Mindful Schools defines Mindfulness as the means maintaining a moment-by moment awareness of your thoughts, emotions, bodily sensations and the surrounding environment with openness and curiosity. It is proven to reduce stress, improve work satisfaction and help with emotional regulation.

**Check In:** Explorers who need further support will check in one to twice a day with a trusted adult in the building. This check in is a chance to build positive relationships with adults in the building and to review successes and areas for growth. It's designed to be informal and conversational.

**Pathfinders:** Every semester, one Pathfinder will be selected from each grade level, showing strengths in a single core value. The month before the semester ends, the community will be aware that Pathfinder nominations are open, and

all are invited (staff, family, community, and Explorers) to submit nominations. A staff and Explorer Pathfinder panel (composed of staff and current Pathfinders) will read through the nominations and determine the next round of Pathfinders. The new Pathfinders will be announced and recognized at the end of semester Community Meeting.

## **Internal Rewards**

We do not reward students with prizes when they succeed unless the circumstances of a student's behavior require additional support. We offer specific praise, encouragement, and we celebrate the varying forms of student achievement. Positive whole-group reinforcement furthers development of a supportive school/classroom community.

We believe that, if children only experience extrinsic rewards, they learn to work for those and do not connect their learning to their own goals and the outside world. We strive to help students make these connections, believing that the purpose of learning is to interact thoughtfully with the world.

## **Rules and Logical Consequences**

Explore's approach to discipline is derived from the [Responsive Classroom](#) model (described above). Students are expected to know and follow teacher directions and school rules, resolve conflicts without physical contact, be respectful of adults and each other, use appropriate language, and respect the rights and property of others. The goal of Explore's approach to behavior is to set a high standard for kind, appropriate conduct and provide students with clear guidelines of acceptable behavior.

Staff members will treat students respectfully in all situations. Students are expected to make appropriate choices that ensure safety and respect for themselves and others. Each class works on developing an understanding of community around the idea of mutual respect and encouragement.

Staff will demonstrate to students that they can make choices in social situations and their behavior has consequences. Explore expects students to become positive members of the school community and to uphold our expectations for appropriate behavior. Rules and logical consequences will be clearly

communicated to students, and those consequences will be administered calmly and fairly.

There are three types of logical consequences that students may be given, depending on the behavior and how the student will best learn from the situation:

1. **“You Break It, You Fix It.”** - Children take responsibility for fixing, as best they can, any problem or mess they created.
2. **Loss of Privilege** - When a student or group of students breaches the trust of the rules, a logical consequence is for the teacher to take away the privilege until the student shows readiness to handle the privilege, usually a class period or a day. What's taken away must be directly related to the misbehavior, and the teacher must make sure that the child truly understands and can live up to expectations. Students will have the opportunity to practice positive behavior choices to ensure future success.
3. **Safe Space** - This type of logical consequence is used when a teacher believes that a child needs a way to calm down and recover self-control. The consequence is that the child moves to a pre-established place in the classroom, takes time to regroup, and then rejoins the class once he or she has calmed down.

## School Behavior Response and Discipline Framework

### Rationale

This behavior response framework is enacted to support the strong sense of community that is central to Explore Community School’s mission, vision, values, and model. Students, staff, and families all have a role to play in building and keeping the culture of our school. Our school has developed its school behavior response by integrating philosophies and practices from Responsive Classroom, Restorative Practices and is supported by nuanced application of classroom management strategies.

Our premise is that 80% of the practices are **proactive measures** that build authentic relationships, give members of the community language to express their feelings, give staff members protocols for engaging with students, and give students voice and agency in their school day. The other 20% is responsive; how do we respond and repair harm when harm has been done?

Many people confuse a restorative or responsive school approach as permissive, or a seeming absence of corrective consequences. By its design, our complete behavior response plan will drastically reduce the need for those consequences.

However, when a student has made a knowing choice to break the rules and breach our culture, an appropriate consequence will be determined through our Fair Process. We will work actively with the student, family, teacher, and other school community members to fully and thoughtfully reintegrate the student(s) back in the learning community without guilt or blame. We think about mistakes as learning opportunities and we work together to learn and grow from them. We will use conferences, mediations, and restorative circles to elevate root causes, learn lessons, and teach replacement behaviors that will benefit the individual and the group. By design, the restorative process is collaborative and requires the active participation of the student which is what will increase the positive impact of the practice.

This year, we will continue to use a national assessment called the Devereux Student Strengths Assessment (DESSA), to measure the development of behavioral competencies related to our core values over the course of the year. We will also conduct other screenings and use a collection of data to determine if an Explorer needs additional social supports and will work in tandem with families to develop and implement appropriate interventions and supports.

All of the programs we use at Explore share a similar outlook. That is, that students can and want to show their best as a contributing member of our community. When students make mistakes, treating them with dignity, teaching a replacement behavior, thoughtful repairing of harm done, and reintegration into class is the best and most beneficial approach for all members of the school community.

### **Student Discipline Practices and Procedures**

Discipline is used to teach and guide Explorers how to demonstrate care for our community. When students are disruptive or behave inappropriately, school staff members respond logically, appropriately, and consistently. Staff members ensure that all Explorers are treated with kindness, equity, and fairness.

In addition to the in-class proactive measures, the progressive behavioral continuum has been developed to make sure that we give Explorers! ample opportunity to self-regulate and self-correct by using the least invasive forms of intervention as possible. We will make this information clear for students and families so that all members of the school community understand the progression of interventions and when the intervention changes over to behavior correction.

We have outlined a process that Explorers will follow in the case that they show unexpected behaviors. The progression is developed to make sure our behavioral interventions equitable, to allow for student regulation, and to preserve the relationship between Explorers, families, and staff member.

The Progressive Behavior Continuum is as follows:

### **Classroom Level Interventions**

- Clear What to Do Directions
- Positive Narrations
- Non-Verbal/Least Invasive Reminders (Using cues, ASL and/or least invasive redirections)
- Logical Consequence- (i.e. Go to seat, go to carpet, loss of materials, or Try it Again)
- Break in the Safe Space (10 minutes )
- Teacher Pep Talk (Stay in the Game/What happens next)

### **Behavior Correction (Families will be called)**

- Buddy Classroom
- Check In with member of the Culture Team
- Visit with the School Leadership
- ISS for the day
- Family Pick-Up
- OSS

### **Major Breaches of School Community**

In some cases, an Explorer may make a decision that is unsafe or highly disruptive which significantly compromises our school community. In those rare cases, the student would go through a Fair Process for Corrective Consequences that maintains the dignity of the student, provides physical and

emotional safety for students and staff, while providing a consistent and equitable process for families.

Our Discipline Table describes the three types of behavior breaches and possible interventions.

LEVEL	BEHAVIOR	INTERVENTION
Major Breach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Theft</b>- Taking the property of another individual or school without permission, with the intent of depriving the owner of the property.</li> <li>● <b>Bullying</b>-teasing, intimidating behavior, public humiliation</li> <li>● <b>Physical Aggression</b>- Intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly committing a physical attack on another person</li> <li>● <b>Verbal Aggression</b>-A threat to cause harm to students, staff or school. Evidence must support the threat is actually or potentially harmful to the safety of the school or community</li> <li>● <b>Inappropriate Sexual Behavior</b>-Physical contact or communication of a sexual nature</li> <li>● <b>Repeated Moderate Breach Behaviors</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Family Group Conferencing</li> <li>● Restorative Conference</li> <li>● Classroom Restorative Circle</li> <li>● Logical Consequence</li> <li>● ISS</li> <li>● OSS</li> </ul>

<p>Moderate Breach</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Vandalism</b>-Willfully destroying or defacing school or personal property</li> <li>● <b>Theft</b>- Taking the property of another individual or school without permission.</li> <li>● <b>Disruption</b>- Continuously and intentionally disrupting the school environment to the extent that the learning of other students or the normal functioning of the school is impaired</li> <li>● <b>Repeated Minor Breach Behaviors</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Restorative Conference</li> <li>● Logical Consequence</li> <li>● Modified Schedule</li> <li>● Parent Conference</li> <li>● Alternative Classroom Placement</li> <li>● ISS</li> </ul>
<p>Minor Breach</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Escalated Defiance</b>-Refusing to follow reasonable request from teacher, administrator, or support staff</li> <li>● <b>Indecent Language</b>- Using profane or indecent language on school grounds or at school sponsored activities</li> <li>● <b>Unwanted Touch</b>-Engaging in minor physical contact with another student such as pushing, bumping, or horseplay</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Small Impromptu Conference (Mediation)</li> <li>● Buddy Classroom</li> <li>● Logical Consequence</li> <li>● Reflection Sheet</li> </ul>

### Fair Process for Corrective Consequences

When an Explorer has breached our school community, they will go through a fair process to help them regain the ability to self-regulate, accept

accountability for their actions, make amends, and be fully integrated back into the class community. The fair process relies on timely and complete information from the supervising adult. Fair Process will be documented in Kickboard and shared via Slack to the teachers/supervising adult so that all impacted members are informed and know what to expect relative to next steps.

**Step 1: De-escalate-** Using safe, non-violent measures, school members will help the student to de-escalate. Helping them to calm their bodies, calm their breathing, and regulate their emotions so that they are ready to engage in conversation about what happened.

**Step 2: Information Gathering-** When the student is calm and ready, team members will gather information from the student, other involved students and the staff members to gain a clear and comprehensive understanding on what happened, and why.

**Step 3: Consultation-** This step requires members of the team to check in with other, the teacher, and family to take into consideration any other factors that we need to know before assigning a consequence. Such as, does the student have an IEP, a behavior plan, or any other variable that would influence that decision or affect the outcome?

**Step 4: Take Action and Communicate-** Informed by the information gathered about the event and the consultation, a respectful, developmentally appropriate, consequence will be discussed with the family and applied to the situation. This provides an opportunity for the student to take accountability for their actions with the support of caring adults and peers. The staff member who is responding to the breach will enter their incident notes in Kickboard and copy them on Slack to the teachers so that everyone will know and for reference for future documentation or communication needs.

**Step 5: Reintegration to the Community-** Once the consequence has been completed (within the school day or beyond) the student is now ready to be warmly welcomed to the community. This could be in the form of a formal conference with a leader, teacher, student, and family members. It could also be mediation meeting, formal conference, and class restorative circle. The purpose is to elevate the cause of the behavior, teach alternatives and help all students understand the impact that their behavior has had on other members of the community. This is all done to intentionally repair harm and move forward without repeated incidents of undesired behaviors.

- If a student's actions violate the personal safety of a school community member, the period of separation could be extended and would require family members to participate in a formal conference before reintegration to the class community.

## **Field Trips**

If Explorers consistently demonstrate challenges meeting Explore's behavior expectations, they may lose the privilege of participating in upcoming field trips or may need a designated caregiver to provide them, this is most likely if an Explorer has been aggressive, destructive, or spend significant time out of the classroom for behavioral concerns within a week of the trip.

If students with Individualized Education Plans, Behavior Intervention Plans, 504s, Student Success Plans, or Support Team plans require additional supervision or support during field trips, the team will collaborate with the caregivers to establish, document, and execute those interventions.

Students who consistently demonstrate such behaviors must regain Enrichment and Field Trip privileges by fixing any harm done and staying in class for at least three consecutive days leading up to the field trip. If students have not earned this privilege then a caregiver must accompany them on any field trip.

## **Suspension and Expulsion Policies and Procedures**

Explore emphasizes social-emotional development and respect for others. We will always work to provide students the support that they need behaviorally and socially/emotionally, just as we do with academics. We hope that this will minimize the need to suspend or expel students. However, the Principal or the Director of Culture and Social Supports (DCSS) may suspend or expel a student under circumstances when the safety and well being of the student or others is threatened or the seriousness of the behavior requires time away from school.

Students may be suspended from school for a specified number of days or expelled from the school for the remainder of the year. Expelled students may re-apply to attend Explore the following year but will receive no admission preference.

The decision to suspend or expel a student will be made by the principal or the DCSS, with or without the recommendation of the student's teacher or another school employee.

The school's board of directors must approve any expulsions. The principal will determine the number of days for suspensions based on the severity of the infraction, the age of the student, previous infractions, and MNPS district level policies. When a student is suspended, a parent is required to pick the child up from school. When a child is suspended, a letter is sent home with the parent/guardian and a re-entry meeting is scheduled with school leadership, the student, the caregiver, and teachers.

Expulsion is defined as the exclusion from Explore Community School on a permanent basis. Tennessee law provides the Principal with the authority to expel students without Board involvement for the following behaviors (typically known as "Zero Tolerance" offenses):

- **Drugs (17-10ZT)** – Possession, use or distribution of illegal drugs; unlawful use, cultivation, manufacture, distribution, sale, solicitation, purchase, possession, transportation, or importation of any controlled drug (e.g. Demerol, Morphine) or narcotic substance.
- **Handgun (18-10ZT)** – Possession of a handgun; the weapon involved was a handgun or a pistol.
- **Rifle/Shotgun (19-10ZT)** – Possession of a rifle or shotgun; the weapon involved was a shotgun or rifle.
- **Explosive (20-10ZT)** – Possession of explosive, incendiary device, any destructive device which includes; any explosive, incendiary (e.g., bomb, grenade, rocket/missile, mine) or poison gas.
- **Assault of Staff (32-10ZT)** – Intentionally, knowingly or recklessly causing bodily injury to a staff person, or causing physical contact with another that was extremely offensive or provocative.
- **Aggravated Assault of Staff (35-10ZT)** – This is considered assault of staff. Intentionally or knowingly causing serious bodily injury to the staff person.

The Principal reserves the right to request that the Board of Directors hold an expulsion hearing and consider the student for expulsion for a specific, severe behavioral infraction or for repeated disregard of school policies and procedures. Specifically, regarding the latter, a parent meeting will be required once a student has been suspended for four incidents. A behavior

contract will be made between the student and school if he/she has been suspended for three incidents. A student's breach of this contract may lead to the recommendation of an expulsion hearing. Whenever an expulsion hearing is recommended, the below procedural safeguards will be in effect:

The student shall receive written notice of the following:

- Outline of infractions/charges and a statement of the evidence;
- Date, time and place of a hearing;
- Notice of the right at the hearing to:
  - Be represented by their parents, legal or other representative (at the student's/parent's own expense).
  - Present evidence.
  - Confront and cross-examine witnesses.

The school will record (by tape or other appropriate means) the hearing and a copy of such will be made available to the student upon request.

All preceding communication, notices and proceedings will be translated into the student's/parent's primary language if necessary for their understanding of the proceedings.

A student and/or parent, upon request, will have the right to review the student's records in accordance with the TN Records Regulations or other applicable law.

All decisions by the Board of Directors regarding expulsion of a student will be issued to him or her in writing. In addition to the above stated policies, any breaches of Federal, TN State or Nashville City laws may be handled in cooperation with the local police department.

### **Procedural Safeguards for Students with Special Needs or Disabilities**

Federal and state law provide certain procedural rights and protections relating to discipline of students who have been identified under such laws as having special needs based upon an IDEA or Section 504 recognized exceptionality . A copy of the Notice of Procedural Safeguards or Parent and Educator Guide to Section 504 rights can be found in the Main Office.

Explore! Community School officials may suspend students with IDEA recognized exceptionalities and Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and cease educational services for a total of up to 10 consecutive or 10 cumulative school days in one school year without providing special education procedural safeguards. Detentions do not count toward the 10-day limit. The Principal has discretionary flexibility in regards to the amount of days of suspensions given to each student with an IEP. Students with IEPs can be suspended in excess of 10 school days in certain circumstances. When campus officials anticipate a referral for expulsion, the following apply:

Provide written notice to the parent/guardian or surrogate parent of the intervention or consequence being considered and the date of an Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting, which must be held within 10 days of the date of the decision to discipline the student.

The IEP team must:

- Determine whether the misconduct is related to the student's disability by reviewing evaluation and diagnostic results, information from the parent/guardian, observations of the student, and the student's IEP and placement. The behavior is not a manifestation of the student's disability if:
  - The student was given appropriate special education supplementary aids and intervention strategies; and
  - The disability does not impair the ability to control behavior.
  - A modification can be made so that the behavior plan is consistent with the IEP.
- Determine the appropriateness of an interim alternative educational setting, and as indicated, include in the IEP those services and modifications that will enable the student to continue to participate in the general curriculum and address the behavior so it will not recur.

Although the Section 504 regulations do not set a specific timeframe within which students with 504 plans must be reevaluated to make sure that they are receiving the appropriate services, Section 504 does require schools to conduct reevaluations periodically for students with 504s, especially before a significant change in placement. The Office of Civil Rights considers an exclusion from the educational program of more than 10 consecutive school days to be a significant change in placement. Therefore, even for students with 504 plans, the school must reevaluate prior to imposing the 11th day of suspension to determine whether the student's misconduct is caused by or

related to their 504 exceptionality (manifestation determination), and if so to further evaluate to determine if their current placement is appropriate.

While it is not anticipated and is extremely rare students with IEPs may be referred for an expulsion hearing if they are in violation of any Zero Tolerance offense. All students will be ensured a due process expulsion hearing.

### **Community Conduct on Campus**

All members of Explore's community are expected to serve as strong examples for students and to treat all other members with respect. In the event that a caregiver or other community member demonstrates conduct that does not live up to this expectation (cursing, disrespect, etc.) they may be asked to leave campus immediately. In the event of disrespectful or abusive language or actions towards staff members or students, individuals may be barred from campus at the discretion of the school principal or designee.

## COMMUNICATION AND FAMILY PARTICIPATION

### **School Phone Use**

Although Explore aims to have as much communication as possible with its families, we cannot guarantee that messages from families will be able to reach students or teachers during the instructional day. Teachers often don't check email or text messages until after 3:45 p.m.

Students may not receive incoming phone calls during the school day unless it is an emergency that requires immediate attention. If it is an emergency, please call the main office number and leave a message with the Front Desk Attendance.

Students will not be able to make calls from the class telephones. In the event of an emergency, students may be allowed to use school telephones, or a staff member's cell phone, at the discretion of school staff members.

### **Student Mobile Device Use**

Students may have "silenced" cell phones and mobile communication devices stored in their backpacks during the school day. The use of these devices during instructional time without the permission of the teacher, or in a disruptive manner in the school setting is prohibited. Cell phones and Mobile Communication Devices that ring, vibrate excessively, or in any other way disrupt the educational process of school, are grounds for confiscation of the device by school staff or personnel and pick up of the device must be arranged by a caregiver.

Examples of unacceptable usage or disruptive behavior with mobile devices can include but are not limited to: in restrooms or hallways during instructional time, bypassing school staff to make outgoing calls, taking pictures or videos, using phones in places of school business, etc.

In alignment with the above listed policy on searching content in school grounds, contents of cell phones may also be reviewed and searched if there exists a reasonable suspicion that it may have been used in an activity prohibited by our handbook. The student and family assumes all risks for lost/theft/or damage to the device(s) in bringing such devices onto school property or to school related functions.

## Teacher Contact

Parents are encouraged to communicate with their child's teacher. Teachers are available for phone calls before and after school from 7am to 7pm. Messages may be left for teachers with the Office Manager during the school day or on each teacher's class voicemail after the school day. Please leave your name and your child's name, a phone number and time you may be reached, and a brief message regarding the reason for the call. Teachers will return a parent's call within 48 hours. Please remember that messages will not be received until after the instructional day ends. Teachers are also available through their Explore email address (first initial, last name @Explore.school).

Parents should contact their child's teacher directly with questions about academic progress as well as behavior.

Parents can contact the main office directly for any of the following issues:

- Information about your student's records (ex. updating contact information etc.)
- Visits or volunteering
- Attendance issues
- Calendar and schedules
- Food

Teachers will list their contact information, including phone numbers and email addresses in the introductory letter to students' families during the first week of school.

For safety reasons, we must be able to reliably get in touch with student's caregivers. It is caregivers' responsibility to promptly update the school with any phone and/or address changes.

## Home-School Communication

We will be using Bloomz and One-Calls for the majority of our school communication. The Principal will send regular (weekly to bi-weekly) updates and will send the same information via One-Call. We will reserve sending home physical flyers for families who request that as their preferred form of communication and will limit formal communication to these two mediums. The same information will be shared on the school Facebook page and other

outlets, but the One-Calls and Bloomz posts will be the official source for up to date information about Explore.

Families are encouraged to check your child's folder each afternoon for valuable moments sheets, homework, flyers, notices, reminders, and other written communication from school staff that may not be able to be sent via these virtual communication means.

In addition to school leadership posts on Bloomz, teachers will also be required to post to Bloomz weekly to ensure families are informed about what is going on in classes for the week. Families without access to Bloomz can subscribe to Remind 101 which is a text messaging app for information and updates. Remind 101 is best used for class or grade level updates since each classroom teaching pair cannot use the One-Call feature.

All school staff members have 48 hours to respond to emails or phone messages. Any urgent requests can be made to our front desk attendant and s/he will expedite as needed according to the circumstance.

### Family Feedback

There are four formal ways that families can offer feedback to Explore

- 2 School Focus Groups (One in the Fall and in the Spring)
- Curriculum Summit
- End of Year Survey

In addition, you can always feel free to share ideas, questions, and concerns with your Explorers' teachers, via email to school leadership, and to your Family Advisory Council representatives. We are always looking to grow and improve. Your feedback helps us to do that.

### Family Nights, Breakfasts, and Weekend Events

Explore will host a variety of family nights, breakfasts, and weekend events throughout the school year. All families will receive detailed information about these events at least two weeks prior. Events will include:

- Exhibitions of Learning
- Academics Night
- Curriculum Summit
- Field Day
- Gratitude Breakfast

- Camping Trips

## Meeting with Teachers

If you would like to meet with your child's teacher outside of the regularly scheduled conference, you must make an appointment. An appointment can be made by calling the school and speaking with or leaving a message for the teacher directly, as well as by emailing the teacher. Caregivers should not expect to meet with a teacher without a prior appointment. Because our teachers are teaching from 8:00 a.m. to 3:45 p.m., meetings should take place before or after school.

## Volunteer on Campus

We encourage families to volunteer time on campus. To ensure that we make best use of parent time and efforts - and that we limit disruption to our instructional program - all classroom volunteers must abide by the set of guidelines below.

- ***Schedule your volunteer time in advance.*** School leaders and teachers are responsible for preparing and also delegating work to family volunteers. In order for school staff to prepare for a volunteer's time and productivity on campus, all family volunteers must be scheduled in advance by connecting with your child's teacher. Please make sure to check in with the Main Office when you arrive for your scheduled volunteer time so that you can receive a Visitor's pass. Visitors are expected to wear their visitor's pass throughout the entire duration of their visit to Explore.
- Limit talking to, engaging with, or disciplining students – including your own – in classrooms. Students are expected to remain focused on their learning while in school. Volunteers should allow the teacher to lead all aspects of the instructional program, and not discipline students, including their own.

## Family Advisory Council

The Family Advisory Council is a committed, action-oriented group of families with a focus on strengthening the school program through school events, fundraisers, community outreach, and other initiatives. It is open to any parent, guardian or adult family member who wants to work collaboratively with other

parents and school staff and make measurable additions to the school program.

## General Policies

### Dress Code

At Explore, we believe in encouraging students to celebrate uniqueness and self-expression. We do not have a uniform policy and students are welcome to wear the clothes in which they are most comfortable, within the following guidelines:

- Students should wear clothes that allow them to run, play, and get dirty.
- Tops must cover the student's midsection and shoulders.
- Any graphics or text must be child-appropriate.
- Bottoms must be of acceptable length (fingertip length or 2" above the knee).
- Shorts must be worn under skirts and dresses.
- All shoes must have a back strap (no flip flops or slides).
- Shoes with high heels are not permitted.
- At all times undergarments must be concealed by clothing.
- Accessories such as necklaces and bracelets must be safe for running and playing and must not distract from instruction.
- Perfume, cologne, or other scented cosmetics or lotions are not permitted.

### Extra Clothing

All students must bring an extra set of clothes in the event of a bathroom accident or spill. These should be brought on the first day of school and will be stored at the school site. Please place these clothes in a gallon-sized plastic sealable bag labeled with your child's name.

### Electronic Devices

Students are not permitted to have electronic devices other than a cell phone for family communication outside of school. The full Cell Phone Policy is outlined earlier in the handbook. At Explore, electronic devices include games (Nintendo Switch, etc.), and portable tablets (iPads/Kindles). None of these devices are needed and often present a distraction from successful academics and can compromise our community based atmosphere.

In addition, these items can cause conflict and lead to grief when/if lost or stolen. While Explore obviously strives to prevent theft of any item, the

Principal reserves the right to not investigate the theft of an electronic device that not allowed at school. In the event that a student is seen with an electronic device or uses a prohibited electronic device in school, a staff member will confiscate it. It will be returned only after a parent/guardian has come to school to pick it up. Repeated violations of this policy may result in indefinite confiscation irrespective of any costs or fees students and/or their families may incur as a result.

## **Toys**

Students are not permitted to bring toys to school, unless they are instructed to do so by their teacher. Teachers will correspond with parents via written communication appropriate times when students are allowed to bring toys to school. If toys are brought to school without permission, they will be stored in a closet until dismissal.

## **Food Procedures**

Families of students who order the school's lunch and have particular dietary restrictions should alert the Lead Server prior to the beginning of school, so that school staff is able to describe reasonable accommodations to the student or, if necessary, the family can choose to make alternate arrangements.

## **Breakfast and Lunch**

Children need healthy meals to learn. Explore Community School offers healthy meals every school day. Previously, Explore participated in the Community Eligibility Program which allowed 100% of Explorers to be served free breakfast, lunch, and snack. As of school year 2018-2019, Explore now participates in the Free/Reduced Lunch Program which means that students have to pay for breakfast and lunch on a sliding scale and meal service will be recorded using a Point of Sale system. For Explorers who are paying for lunch, families will be able to electronically upload monies to student lunch accounts and/or pay for lunches at school on a bi-weekly or monthly basis.

Full price breakfast costs \$2.00 per day; lunch costs \$3.00 per day. Some Explorers may qualify for free meals or for reduced price meals. Reduced price is \$0.20 per day for breakfast and \$0.30 per day for lunch. We will provide an application for free or reduced price meal benefits so you will know what

your contribution for meals will be. All Explorers will be able to receive a snack as we operate an extended day academic program.

Students may either receive meals from the school or bring their own food from home. The school has a serving kitchen and uses Revolution Foods as our food service partner. Since school meals are prepared off-site, the school must have an accurate number of meals that students wish to order.

*Families will be given a menu of meals at the beginning of each month and will be asked to opt in or opt out for the entirety of the month so that we can order an accurate amount of food and reduce waste of food or school funds. The school is charged for meals ordered, but not eaten. So we want to be as sustainable as possible and planning for meal ordering will allow us to do this.*

## **Food from Home**

It is important that students have healthy, balanced meals and for us to maintain the safety of all of our students. As such, families who decide to provide lunch from home must comply with the following guidelines. If your student is out of compliance with these requirements, inappropriate food items will be confiscated and returned home.

Prohibited foods for packed breakfasts, lunches, and snacks:

- **ALL FOOD CONTAINING NUTS!**
- Soda of any kind (even diet)
- Full sugar juices (including Gatorade or other sports drinks). Contains less than 10% of juice
- Candy/Gum of any kind
- Cookies or cakes of any kind

Suggested items for a nutritiously packed lunch:

- Water or 100% fruit juice
- A sandwich, soup or other main dish (Students will NOT have access to a microwave, therefore, please do not send meals that must be heated)
- Crackers or other snack packs
- Pretzels
- Fruit and/or vegetables

## **Lunch With Your Child**

For the 2019-2020 school year, our spacious Community Room/cafeteria can accommodate lunch visits. If you would like to eat lunch at school with your child please make arrangements ahead of time your child's teacher. Please be considerate of the other students when selecting food to bring to eat with your child. Fast food will not be permitted in the cafeteria

## **Birthdays**

Students are permitted to bring store-bought, nut-free treats to be shared with classmates when the teacher is notified at least 24 hours in advance. Celebrations should be limited to 15 minutes as this is enough time to acknowledge the student and celebrate this milestone. Families can notify the teacher via text, email or through Bloomz.

We recommend families bring cupcakes or cookies that are already prepared in individual servings. Treats will be shared at the end of day at Closing Circle . Birthday treats should be easy and quick to serve. Large productions like pizza parties, for example, are not permitted for birthdays. **REMEMBER, NUTS AND ITEMS CONTAINING NUTS ARE NEVER PERMITTED AT Explore COMMUNITY SCHOOL!**

Please do NOT bring ice cream, as this is difficult to serve and clean. We will notify you if any of your child's classmates have allergies and will make sure all snacks are safe for every child.

Parents are **not** required to send birthday treats to school. Unless directed otherwise by caregivers, the Explore community will sing "Happy Birthday" regardless of whether families have sent anything to school. Invitations for individual birthday parties are not to be distributed at school unless there is an invitation included for every child in the student's class.

## **Other Celebrations**

We know holidays can be exciting times of year for children. The many celebrations that take place at Explore center on school traditions, academics, or multi-cultural celebrations. These include things such as the 100<sup>th</sup> Day of School, field trips, Field Day, and others. Teachers will communicate guidelines and additional information about other celebrations.

## RECORDS AND HEALTH POLICIES

### **Student Records**

Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), parents have certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level.

### **Definition of Student Records**

"Student Records" shall mean any written or recorded information concerning a student by which a student may be individually identified and which Explore Community School maintains. They may include, but are not limited to, the following; basic identifying information, academic transcript, attendance records, health records, performance scores on standardized assessments, disciplinary records, records from previous schools. Recorded information maintained by a staff member for his or her exclusive use, or his or her substitute, shall not be considered a part of the student records.

### **Inspection of Student Records**

Parents shall have the right to inspect, challenge and copy student records of that parent's child until one of the following events occurs:

- The student attains 21 years of age; or
- The student attains 18 years of age and declares himself or herself financially independent of his or her parents.

Student records shall be made available to parents and eligible students within fifteen (15) school days of the time a written request for review is submitted to the Office Manager.

### **Right to Control Access of Student Records**

School officials shall release student records to the official records custodian of another school in which the student has enrolled or intends to enroll upon the written request of such official or student, provided that the parent receives prior written notice of the nature and substance of the information to be transferred. Parents may, upon written request, inspect copy and challenge such information. Once parents have been notified of their right to inspect,

copy and challenge information to be transferred to another school and the parents do not respond within ten (10) school days, the records shall be forwarded to the requesting school.

### **Access to Records Without Parent Consent**

School staff members who have a current and legitimate educational interest in the student records shall have access as needed for professional purposes to both the student's permanent and temporary records.

School officials shall release student records without parent permission pursuant to a valid court order or subpoena presented by local, state or federal officials. However, the school officials shall notify the parents in writing regarding the judicial order and the information so provided.

Student records may be made available to researchers for statistical purposes, provided that: a) Permission has been received from the State Superintendent of Education; and b) No student or parent shall be personally identified from the information released.

Information may be released without parental consent in connection with an emergency to appropriate persons if the knowledge of such information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other persons.

If a student is 18 years of age and the student is financially independent of parents, the student may request the parents be denied access to his or her records. A student who desires to declare himself or herself financially independent of his or her parents shall submit a request in writing to the school's records custodian.

### **Challenge Procedures**

A parent shall have the right to challenge the accuracy, relevance or propriety of any entry in the student records of his or her child, exclusive of grades. A request to challenge the contents of a student record shall be made in writing to the school by the parents and shall state in specific terms what entries in their child's record are being challenged. The Principal shall conduct an informal conference with the parents within fifteen (15) school days of the receipt of the written challenge.

## **Maintenance of School Records**

Student permanent records and the information contained therein shall be maintained for a period of sixty (60) years after the student has transferred, graduated or permanently withdrawn from school. Student temporary records shall be maintained until August 1st of the year the student transfers, graduates or permanently withdraws from school. The records of special education students shall be maintained for a period of three (3) years. Information maintained by staff members for their exclusive use shall be destroyed by the staff member maintaining the information no later than the student's transfer, graduation or permanent withdrawal from the school. The Principal shall be responsible for having all student records verified and to eliminate or correct all out-of-date, misleading, inaccurate, unnecessary or irrelevant information on all students' files.

## **Mandated Reporter Policy**

According to TCA 37-1-403(i)(1), all school personnel are mandated reporters of suspected abuse and/or neglect. Mandated reporters are required to report suspected child maltreatment immediately when they have reason to believe that harm has come to a child that "reasonably appears to have been caused by brutality, abuse or neglect." Under this law, failure to report such abuse is a Class A Misdemeanor.

Once any staff member becomes aware that a student may be the victim of abuse or neglect, they must:

- Call the DCS central intake hotline at (877) 54-ABUSE (552-2873)
- Notify the principal
- Complete an Explore Community School incident report.

When calling the hotline, the staff member must have the following information (or as much as is known): the name, birth date, and address of the alleged victim; the name, address, age or birth date, and relationship of the alleged perpetrator; what type of injury or harm was allegedly done to the victim; and a description of the incident (time/date, place in which it occurred, and indication of intention to harm). The staff member should also have the names and ages of other children in the household, information as to whether or not English is fluently spoken by the parents and the work phone number of the alleged perpetrator.

While these steps are taking place, the Principal will assist both the faculty member and student in understanding the ramifications of the call. The Principal will debrief the student and, when appropriate, will contact the parent(s)/guardian.

No one in the workplace, even a supervisor, is permitted to suppress, change, or edit a report of abuse. A mandated reporter who willfully fails to report suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect is subject to license suspension or revocation, and commits a misdemeanor. Falsely reporting information to the hotline is also a misdemeanor.

## Health Policies

**Health and safety are a top priority at Explore.** Before a student can enroll in the school, the school must have on file the following forms:

- **Medical Requirements Checklist.** This form contains records showing that the student has: 1) up-to-date immunizations; and 2) permission to receive screening for vision, hearing, and scoliosis.
- **Health Information Form.** This form provides important information about a student's emergency contacts, health care providers, and insurance. Most importantly, it gives the school permission to initiate emergency medical treatment in the event that a parent or guardian cannot be reached.
- **Authorization to Dispense Medication Form.** If a student requires medication while in school, the school must have on file an Authorization to Dispense Medication form, completed by the student's physician. No student is allowed to bring medication to the school without the school's full knowledge. Students who have provided the school with medication dispensation authorization forms should bring the medication (other than Tylenol and ibuprofen, which the school will stock in the main office) to the school on the first day, or contact to the school to make other arrangements. All medication must be presented in its original container from the pharmacy and must be brought in by a parent or accompanied by a note from the parent.
- **School Sickness.** If a student has had vomiting, diarrhea, pick-eye, or a fever, then they are not allowed back in school until 24 hours after that illness has been resolved and necessary medicines have been

started. This is to allow the student to heal and prevent the spread of communicable illness across the school community.

The medication dispensation authorization form requirement applies to all medication, including Tylenol and ibuprofen. If a student needs to take Tylenol or ibuprofen during the school day, he/she must have on file the authorization signed by his or her physician and a parent or guardian, giving the school permission to administer the medication during the school year. The medication dispensation authorization form requirement also applies to asthma inhalers, which students should keep in their backpacks. If a student needs to use his/her asthma inhaler during the school day, he/she should go to the main office to self-administer the inhaler.

All students needing medicine to be administered at school require the following:

- A medical administration form signed by your doctor
- Medicine must be in the original bottle
- Medicine need to be transported and dropped off at the school by the parent, students cannot transport medicine via backpack

### Concerns and Contact

Both the school and the Board of Directors work in conjunction with one another to hear and resolve any caregiver complaints. If a problem arises, both the school and the Board encourage the complainant to address the problem directly with the staff member(s).

If you are dissatisfied with the proposed resolution by the appropriate faculty or staff member, the complaint should be delivered in writing to the Principal. The Principal will also request a written report from the appropriate faculty or staff member. After reviewing the written statements by the staff member and the complainant and undertaking any additional investigation deemed necessary by the situation, the Principal will present an appellate decision to the complainant.

If the situation has still not been resolved, following the Principal's intervention, then the Explore Board of Directors encourages the complainant to email Marsha Edwards at [medwards@marthaobryan.org](mailto:medwards@marthaobryan.org). In this email, you should outline your concerns, actions taken, and results to date. The complainant should then follow up with the next steps provided by Marsha Edwards as our

CEO and representative for the Explore Board of Directors. If you are still not satisfied with that result, then you can attend the next board meeting and present your concerns there. The Board will not hear complaints that have not first followed these procedures.

We welcome you to contact us at any time. Please use the information below to contact us at your convenience.

### **Steps for a Making Formal Complaint**

1. Send a written complaint to the Principal including details such as who, what, where, when, and why you are making a complaint.
2. The Principal will investigate and follow up with family with a decision.
3. If the caregiver still has concerns with the proposed solution, they should request an in-person meeting with the Principal.
4. If, following the meeting, the caregiver still has concerns, they should email the CEO of Martha O'Bryan Center, Marsha Edwards at [medwards@marthaobryan.org](mailto:medwards@marthaobryan.org)
5. If the issue has still not been resolved, caregivers can plan to attend the next Explore board meeting. They should notify the Principal and CEO of Martha O'Bryan 24 hours in advance so their concerns can be added to the agenda.

## Frequently Asked Questions

*What makes Explore a unique learning environment?* Explore is a charter school that was designed to provide authentic, real-world learning opportunities for a diverse body of student learners. We work to provide a holistic education through a project-based approach.

*What is Project-Based Learning?* Project-based learning is an in-depth study of situations which occur in our students' local and global communities. In order to support our Explorers in recognizing the positive attributes of our communities we also approach our project-based learning as a way of looking for strengths and partners. We often look around us and ask who in our community is doing excellent work and how can we learn from the work they are doing. The units of study are based on community interests collected at the yearly curriculum summit.

*What is Responsive Classroom?* Responsive Classroom is an evidence-based approach to learning that focuses on building strong relationships between academic success and social and emotional learning. The goal of Responsive Classroom is to build learning communities where all students have a sense of belonging and feel significant. It is one of the many ways that we make sure every child that walks through our doors feels known, loved, and cared for. At the heart of Responsive Classroom is positive language and structured choice. We tell our Explorers what we notice and give reminders to encourage them to make strong positive choices. This structured choice and empowerment helps to prepare them to be leaders of their own learning. What might appear unstructured and loose is actually a careful balance of structure, planning, and discovery. You have to see it to believe it!

*What is Encore, and is it offered for children at Explore?* Encore is a hands-on, interactive, and problem-based approach to learning which focuses on developing students' critical and creative thinking abilities. In many schools Encore is an interdisciplinary way to instruct gifted and talented children. Despite popular belief, this program is not a special education program - it is available to all students regardless of IEP or non-IEP status. Encore instruction usually takes place outside the classroom for between 30 and 60 minutes a week. At Explore, we believe that students deserve to receive instruction which

challenges them at their instructional level throughout the instructional day. Because much of our instruction is based on data, allowing us to create small groups and individualized instruction, students have access to enrichment opportunities specifically during Reader's Workshop/Word Work and Math Workshop, as well as during other times of days where students are working in smaller groups or independently. Additionally, we believe strongly that all children deserve the type of instruction outlined in the Encore program, and therefore execute this belief through our daily Explorations and our project-based learning.

*What is the safe space and how is it used? Is it the same as time out?* The safe space is an area of the room where Explorers can go when they need a minute to themselves, need to re-regulate, or need to refocus. They may be sent to the safe space or may ask to use the space. The safe space is different than time out in that it is meant to help redirect Explorer's attention in a positive, not punitive way.

*When do Explorers experience science and social studies?* Explorers experience science and social studies during content literacy. During this important time of the day they are working on reading and writing related to nonfiction passages and primary sources. They are also completing the scientific method and the engineering and design process. Explore uses the *Engineering is Elementary* curriculum that is the same program used by Vanderbilt's gifted and talented program in their summer camp.

*Why do Explorers say "Rise Up"?* Community members use the "Rise Up" call and response as an attention-getting technique during group activities as well as to remind all stakeholders that we all must rise up to live our core values, create works of beauty, and better our communities.

*How do teachers distinguish between a discipline issue and an Explorer who needs to reset?* Teachers will use the following T-Chart to inform decisions about the next steps for an Explorer who is struggling to regulate. If a student is showing behaviors from the reset side, one of the teachers or the counselor can walk the student through the regulation process which uses language and strategies from *Move this World* and *Mindfulness*. If a student is showing behaviors from the right side, Ms. Walker or the Leader on Call will respond to provide behavioral support.

<u>SEL Check In</u>	<u>Corrective</u>
Crying Sad Fidgeting (excessive tapping/noise making) Using negative self talk Withdrawn Frustrated Consistent sleeping	Yelling Hitting Destroying Crossing personal boundaries

*What is the Reset Process?*

We are committed to providing a safe and supportive learning environment that leads to high achievement and individual excellence for all Explorers. To create and sustain this type of learning environment we will be implementing school wide Social Emotional Programming. As part of this programming Explorers will have daily opportunities to acquire and practice skills necessary to identify, express, and manage emotions. Teachers and staff will work to ensure that the entire school is a safe place for authentic expression of emotions. In every classroom there is a designated safe space where students can take a break and practice self regulation. An Explorer that is unable to self regulate while in the safe space will receive additional supports outside of the classroom. These additional supports may be implemented by classroom teachers or members of the Behavior Support Team.

Teacher Implemented Support

**Identify-** Using the Emotional ABC handout teachers will assist Explorers with identifying their current emotion.

**Express:** Once the Explorer has identified their current emotion teachers will assist the Explorer with crafting a feeling statement that keeps the focus on the feelings of the Explorer.

**Manage:** After crafting a feeling statement teachers will use the 10 Emogers handout to assist the Explorer with selecting a technique to manage their current emotion.

## Behavior Support Team Implemented Support

An Explorer that continues to have difficulties with self-regulation following the teacher implemented supports will be referred to the Behavior Support Team. A member of this team will assess the immediate needs of the Explorer and provide the supports necessary for the Explorer to return to class. The DCSS is the point of contact for following up with persistent behavioral concerns. Caregivers are encouraged to reach out with concerns about their Explorer's behavioral needs.

*How do the teachers know when a student is ready for to go to the Buddy Classroom? How does the student get there?*

Students are ready when they have had a logical consequence and have gone to the safe space. If they have not been able to get back on track, they are candidates for the Buddy Classroom. This gives the student a different environment to re-regulate and is the lowest form of a behavior correction. A student who is showing any of the major breaches of school community is not a good candidate for the buddy classroom. A student should walk with a pass to the buddy classroom. The buddy pairings will be pre-determined by the grade team.

*What happens if there are repeated Major Breaches? Persistent misbehavior?*

If an Explorer displays a pattern of unsafe or harmful behavior, we will have a meeting with the family after 2-3 incidents of related behavior. If another incident occurs following that meeting, a full Support Team meeting will be scheduled with the student, family, teachers, and leaders to develop a more targeted intervention plan and to determine if the student will need more intensive supports on an ongoing basis. For instances of lower level, but persistent misbehavior, we will engage families for the formal Support Team meeting following six incidents of receiving corrective discipline.

## Acknowledgement of Explore Policies and Procedures

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Explore Community School Community Handbook. I understand that it contains important information on policies and procedures. I realize this handbook is not intended to cover every situation that may arise but is simply a general guide to refer to.

I understand that it is my responsibility to familiarize myself with the information and that I agree with the policies and rules of the school.

I further understand and acknowledge that Explore may change, add, or delete any policies or provisions in this handbook as it sees fit in its sole judgment and discretion.

I acknowledge and understand that this Community Handbook supersedes and replaces any and all prior handbooks or materials previously distributed.

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

I confirm my child's participation in the areas identified with a check mark below:

	Yes	No
<b>Media</b>		
Explore Community school has permission to photograph or digitally record my child for the school website or other school related media publication.		
Explore Community School has permission to photograph or digitally record my child for promotional news and media outlets to further promote the school.		
My child has permission to participate in the hearing, and vision screening.		

Please Print:

Student Name: (First, Middle, Last): \_\_\_\_\_

School Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name (First, Middle, Last): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

### Opt Out Preferences

The following services are provided to all students at Explore. Please sign the following statements if you DO NOT want your child to access the service.

#### School Counseling Services

I wish to exclude my child from school counseling and therapy. Explore DOES NOT have my permission to provide school counseling or therapy to my child.

Explorer Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Caregiver Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

### Family Advisory Council:

Only sign the following statements if you DO NOT want your child to access the service.

If you choose one of the opt-out preferences, return the signed form to your child's school.

I wish to exclude my families contact information from the classroom roster that is distributed the families in my Explorers' classroom.

Caregiver Signature: \_\_\_\_\_