



PRIDE ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL

PARENT HANDBOOK AND STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT 2011-2012

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PEOPLE TO KNOW

Board of Trustees

Mr. Robert Mitchell, President
Mr. Michael Moore, Vice President
Mr. Jnanendra Ray, Board Secretary
Ms. Jane Albert, Member
Mr. Bryan Tiggs, Member
Mr. James Felton, Member
Mrs. Yanett Bagca, Member

Administration and Leadership Team

Fiona Thomas, Principal
Rose Mary Dumenigo, Vice Principal
Jnanendra Ray, School Business Administrator
Robin Brower, Dean of Students
Jodi Cenac, Dean of Academics
Sue Becker, Technology Coordinator

High School Placement

Evan Geiger, Coordinator of High School Placement and Student Life

Main Office Staff

Lynne Popinko, School Secretary
LaShonda Dockery, Office Manager

In School Suspension Staff

Carolyn Tynes, In School Suspension Monitor

Business Office Staff

Amanj Kaur, Accounting Manager
Madhuchhanda Ray, Human Resources Manager

School Nurse

Mary Ann Evans, School Nurse

School Social Workers

Keesha McClean
Nicole Paladino

2011-2012 Pride Academy Charter School Calendar

August (8 teacher, 0 kid)

M	T	W	TH	F
1	2	4	5	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19 New Teacher Orientation
22 Teacher Orientation	23 Teacher Orientation	24 Teacher Orientation	25 Teacher Orientation	26 Teacher Orientation
29 Teacher Orientation	30 Teacher Orientation	31 Teacher Orientation		

September (20 teacher, 14 kid)

M	T	W	TH	F
			1 Teacher Orientation	2 Teacher Orientation
5 No School: Labor Day	6 Teacher Orientation	7 Teacher Orientation	8 Teacher Orientation	9 Teacher Orientation
12 No School	13 School Opens Parent Orientation 5:30pm	14	15	18
19	20	21 Back to School Night	22	23 Half Day for Students
26	27 High School Night 6pm	28	29	30

October (21 teacher, 21 kid)

M	T	W	TH	F
	4	5	6 NCLB Parent Mtg 5:30pm	7
10 Regular School Day School is OPEN	11 School Safety Team 5:30pm	12	13	14
17	18	19	20	21 1st Trimester Progress Reports Out

November (20 teacher, 20 kid)

M	T	W	TH	F
	1	2	3	4 Half day Students
7	8	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23 1st Trimester Ends Half Day	24 No School Thanksgiving Break	25 No School Thanksgiving Break
28 School Re-Opens	29	30		

December (17 teacher, 17 kid)

M	T	W	TH	F
			1	2
5	6	7	8	9 Report Card Conference
12 No School	13	14 2nd Interim Assessment	15 2nd Interim Assessment	16 Half Day for students
19	20	21	22	23 Half Day; Winter Break
26 No School: Winter Break	27 No School: Winter Break	28 No School: Winter Break	29 No School: Winter Break	30 No School: Winter Break

January (21 teacher, 20 kid)

M	T	W	TH	F
2 No Classes	3	4	5	6
9	10	11	12	13
16 No School: Martin	17	18	19	20

February (20 teacher, 20 kid)

M	T	W	TH	F
		1 3 rd Interim Assessment	2 3 rd Interim Assessment	3 Half Day for students
6	7	8	9	10 Half Day for students
13	14	15	16	17
20 No School: President's Day	21	22	23	24 2 nd Trimester Ends
27	28	29		

March (23 teacher, 22 kid)

M	T	W	TH	F
			1	2
5	6	7	8 NCLB Parent Leadership Mtg 5:30pm	9 Half Day for Students
12	13	14	15	16 Report Card Conferences
19	20	21	22	23
26	27	28 4 th Interim Assessment	29 4 th Interim Assessment	30 Half Day for Students

April (16 teacher, 16 kid)

M	T	W	TH	F
2 No School: Spring Break	3 No School: Spring Break	4 No School: Spring Break	5 No School: Spring Break	6 No School: Spring Break
9 School Re-Opens	10	11	12	13 Half Day for Students
16	17	18	19	20 3 rd Trimester Progress Reports Out
23 NJASK 7-8 L.A.L. test	24 NJASK 7-8 L.A.L. test	25 NJASK 7-8 Math. test	26 NJASK 7-8 Math. test	27 Half Day for Students

May (22 teacher, 22 kid)

M	T	W	TH	F
	1 NJASK 5-6 (Make up day NJASK 6-8)	2 NJASK 5-6 (Make up day NJASK 6-8)	3 NJASK 5-6 (Make up day NJASK 6-8)	4 Half Day for Students
7 PACS University (Make up day NJASK 5-6)	8 (Make up day NJASK 5-6)	9 (Make up day NJASK 5-6)	10 (Make up day NJASK 5-6)	11
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25
28 No School Memorial Day	29	30	31	

June (15 teacher, 14 kid)

M	T	W	TH	F
				1
4	5	6	7	8 3 rd Trimester Ends
11 Project Pride & SPIRIT WEEK	12 Project Pride & SPIRIT WEEK	13 Project Pride & SPIRIT WEEK	14 Project Pride & SPIRIT WEEK	15 Spirit Week
18 Half Day: 8 th Grade Field Trip	19 Half Day: 8 th Grade Dance	20 Half Day: Last Day / Graduation	21 No Classes Teacher Wrap-up	22
25	26	27	28	29

Total Days in Session

Students - 186 (includes 3 snow days and 1 additional Professional Development Day TBA)

Teachers - 203 (includes 3 snow days)

Marking Period Length: 1st Trimester—12 weeks
2nd Trimester—12 weeks
3rd Trimester—12 weeks

Friday Early Dismissal

Every Friday, students have a 2:45pm early dismissal for Faculty Meetings/ Professional Development, unless otherwise noted.

INTRODUCTION

At Pride Academy Charter School, we are committed to partnering with you to ensure your child's growth and success. This guide will introduce you to our philosophy, policies, and procedures. Welcome to the Pride Academy Charter School family.

What's New?

We have made additions and changes to policies and practices regarding attendance, perfect attendance, Morning Assembly and D.E.A.R. time, grooming, uniform, suspension and student accountability, among others. Be sure to read the sections titled **Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights, Threats, and Suicide Prevention**. If your child has winning the Perfect Attendance Award as a goal this year, be certain to read the section titled **Perfect Attendance, Early Pick-up and Unexcused Lateness**. As a community-centered school, we listen intently to our families' and students' needs. Some of the changes are a result of parent suggestions and feedback. Others are in response to legislative changes. All reflect our continued desire to raise expectations, increase safety, maximize teaching and learning, and increase achievement outcomes for our students.

What We Ask of You and Why

First and foremost, we ask you to please read this handbook completely and discuss it with your child. We ask this so you understand how we operate and the level of commitment we need and expect from parents to ensure your children succeed. It is essential that your child arrive at Pride Academy with an understanding of the expectations for Pride Academy scholars and a willingness to live up to those expectations. It is important that both you and your child be committed to our philosophy, our core values, and our school policies including the Student Code of Conduct and all accountability policies so your child can be successful here.

When We Need You

The teachers and administration of Pride Academy are fully committed to your child's growth and success. Truly, we cannot do what we do without your help and support. Please take an active role in our community. Parent/School partnership is one of the keys to student success. We invite you to attend PTO meetings, volunteer to serve on the Parent Committee and School Safety Team, support school fundraisers, and participate in school activities. Research has shown that students whose parents play an active role in their education perform at higher levels than others. We welcome you to work with us, support your child, and share your time and talents with our school community.

Mandatory Parent/Guardian Attendance

There are times parents and guardians must be physically present at the school. **Following are some examples of times when parent or guardian attendance is mandatory:**

- **Meetings of all types** - IEP meetings, Accountability/ Conferences, Parent/Teacher conferences, and Conflict Resolution meetings involving students and their parent or guardians
- **Health Emergency** - student illness requires pick up within one (1) hour
- **Behavior Crisis/Out of School Suspension** - requires pick up within one (1) hour of parent contact
- **Progress report and report card pick-up**
- **Homework/Lateness Accountability** - if the student fails to report as assigned
- **In-School Suspension** - parent or guardian must sign student in and out of the ISS room each day

- **Saturday Accountability** - requires a parent or guardian to accompany the student and work with him or her on the day's activity
- Any other time parent/guardian presence or attendance at school is requested

We appreciate that attendance at these events may be inconvenient; however, we know that our students grow and accomplish the most when parents are behind us.

What Enrollment or Continued Enrollment Means

By enrolling your child at Pride Academy or keeping your child enrolled for the 2011-2012 school year now that you have received these policies, you indicate both your decision to support our philosophy and your agreement to abide by our policies as they are written in this book. No changes will be made to policies during the year.

The policies in this book will be followed for the duration of the 2011-2012 school year.

We will work to teach your child everything he or she needs to succeed, but we recognize that your child's first and most influential teacher is you. We look forward to working with you this year.

THE PRIDE PHILOSOPHY – *What We Believe*

Pride Academy is characterized by a culture that is orderly, supportive and focused on academic achievement. Our school community emphasizes mutual care and respect. Our philosophy emphasizes a positive approach to discipline, in which the students are gradually led towards self-discipline. Students are expected to behave respectfully towards their teachers, classmates, school staff and property at all times. Our committed staff of teachers will address students with respect and compassion. Administrators and teachers will work together to promote student achievement and to ensure the Code of Conduct is consistently followed and fairly enforced.

Our teachers strive to create a sense of community within our classrooms. As family; we support one another. Students are expected to come to school prepared, on time, and ready to make a positive contribution. Our goal is to discourage misbehavior and teach students to make better choices in the future.

Lastly, Pride Academy is shaped by five guiding principles, or core values. The first of these core values is *peace*. ***Violence of any type has no place at Pride Academy. Violence may be physical or verbal. It may also take the form of harassment, intimidation or bullying. We do not permit fighting, play fighting, hitting or hitting back. We do not permit disrespect in any form, including name calling or teasing of any kind, irrespective of whether these behaviors are done in a playful or joking manner or whether the person who is the subject of teasing or name calling is present or aware of the behavior. No behavior that breaks the peace or creates an environment where teachers cannot teach and students cannot learn is permitted at Pride Academy. Students must never engage in these behaviors or behave in any manner that makes others feel uncomfortable, put down, or unsafe. This has always been Pride Academy policy, but it is now also state law.*** Please be certain to read the section titled: **Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights** so you may familiarize yourself and your child with the terms of this law.

THE PRIDE VISION – *How We'll Get There*

The cornerstones of our school vision are represented by letters that spell **PRIDE**:

Peace **R**espect **I**ntegrity **D**etermination **E**mpathy

At PRIDE Academy Charter School, students work together and encourage one another in a supportive learning community. Teachers and administrators work as a team and actively facilitate opportunities to grow and support student leadership; parents commit to work in partnership with the school; and all members of our school community model and live the core values of Peace, Respect, Integrity, Determination, and Empathy. Students, parents, staff and administration resolve problems in a way that is constructive, respectful, and peaceful.

OUR MISSION – *What We Want for You*

Pride Academy Charter School endeavors to ignite success in middle school students of all abilities through a curriculum rooted in the values of peace, respect, integrity, determination, and empathy. By establishing a community dedicated to academic achievement, mastery of fundamental skills, positive leadership, and active service, Pride Academy Charter School strives to embolden its students to harness their own power to shape their futures and the world.

OUR VALUES – *Who We Strive to Be*

The Pride philosophy is based upon five core values: peace, respect, integrity, determination, and empathy. All students are expected to try to live by these values. During the first week of school, students examine and discuss each value. Students and their parents or guardians affirm their commitment to live by and practice the core values by signing the Pride Academy Charter School Pledge. The five core values are characterized as follows:

- Peace:** Conflicts will be resolved in non-violent ways. Students and adults will work together to create a calm, safe environment by learning and teaching how to resolve and avoid conflicts in non-violent, non-confrontational ways.
- Respect:** All members of the school community, including students, parents, teachers and administrators, will treat one other with respect. We treat each person as valuable, worthy of greatness and goodness. We accept individuals for who they are. We demonstrate high regard for others, for property, for differences, and for opinions different from our own. We respect the rights of teachers to teach and of students to learn. We respect our shared goal of student achievement.
- Integrity:** Honesty will be at the core of all that we say and do. We follow through on our obligations and commitments. We do not do things halfway.
- Determination:** We will not allow obstacles to block our pathways to excellence. We do our best in every area. We never give up.
- Empathy:** Compassion and understanding of each other's feelings will guide our choices and conduct. We will not hurt each other physically or emotionally. We are kind and supportive of one another.

Pride Promise

Pride Academy Charter School students begin each day at morning assembly. Morning assembly is a school-wide meeting during which information is shared, issues are discussed, and the entire school community reaffirms its focus and commitment to the Pride Core Values by reciting the PRIDE Promise:

I am responsible for my own destiny.
The choices I make today will determine tomorrow.
I have Pride...
I will be a peacekeeper.
I have Pride...
I will treat everyone with respect.
I have Pride...
I will be trustworthy and do what's right.
I have Pride...
I will believe in myself and never give up.
I have Pride...
I will care for and value others.
I have Pride...
As we let our Pride shine, we promise to help others shine too.
We have Pride!

OUR CORE BELIEFS

Pride Academy Charter School is built upon the following core beliefs:

- Students of all abilities will thrive in a peaceful learning community that values respect, integrity, determination, and empathy for others.
- Within all students lies the power to shape their own future by making positive choices today.
- By serving individual academic needs through a cohesive skill-centered curriculum, untapped student potential will be realized.
- Through critical examination and active response to challenges facing our community, students are best able to comprehend the interconnectedness of life and the power of the individual.
- By deliberately honoring accomplishments while continuously setting new challenges, students gain the courage, confidence, and competencies needed to take academic and leadership risks.
- Adults teach students with their actions. All members of our school community --administration, faculty, and parents -- must live and embody the values that the school seeks to instill in our students.
- A culture which prizes goal-setting, positive choices and perseverance will equip students with the skills and mindset needed to seize future educational opportunities.
- By questioning, seeking, understanding, and responding, all members of our school community will be active participants in the lifelong learning cycle essential for growth.

LEADERSHIP TEAM

The Pride Academy Leadership Team is led by the School Principal and composed of the following:

- Vice Principal
- School Business Administrator
- Dean of Academics
- Dean of Students
- Lead Teachers

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Pride Academy Charter School is governed by the Board of Trustees, which meets on the third Tuesday of every month. Like all public charter schools, Pride Academy is considered an independent school district. We are not under the authority of any local Board of Education. Board meetings are open to teachers, parents, and the public. During a meeting, the Board may choose to go into a closed Executive Session to discuss personnel or individual student issues. Those members of the public who are in attendance will be dismissed while the Board discusses confidential matters. Those who attend Board of Trustees Meetings should be aware that names of students and staff must not be stated during a public meeting.

ADDRESSING CONCERNS – *Chain of Command*

In the event that a parent or guardian has a concern, please follow the chain of command to resolve the issue. The chain of command proceeds as follows:

- First, calmly address the matter with the teacher or staff member directly connected to your child.
- Listen respectfully to what the teacher or staff member says regarding the situation, even if it differs from what your child has said to you.
- Then, if the issue is not resolved, speak to either the Dean of Students or Vice Principal.
- If after speaking to the Dean or Vice Principal there is no resolution, then contact the School Principal.

Only after all of the above steps have been followed, may parents seek to address the Board of Trustees.

ACADEMICS AND LEARNING – *Why We're Here*

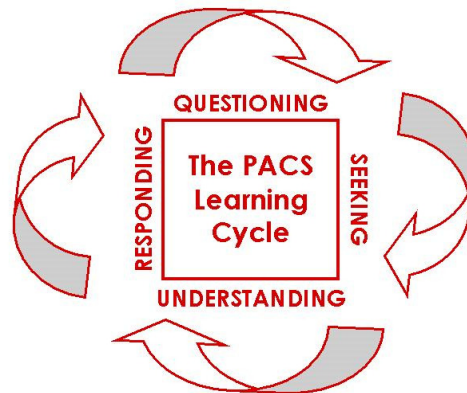
Academics and learning are the fundamental goals of Pride Academy. We need your cooperation and support to ensure your child's success here. Students are expected:

- TO BE **ON TIME** to school and to each class and activity, every day
- TO **REPORT TO AND REMAIN IN** ASSIGNED AREAS

- TO **BE IN FULL, CORRECT UNIFORM**, every day
- TO **ATTEND AN ENTIRE DAY OF SCHOOL**, every day
- TO **CONTRIBUTE TO A SAFE, SUPPORTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**, by living the Core Values
- TO **WORK HARD** in class
- TO **ARRIVE PREPARED** for class
- TO **PARTICIPATE** in all class activities
- TO **COMPLETE NIGHTLY, HIGH QUALITY HOMEWORK** assignments and projects

Academic Achievement – PACS Learning Cycle

Our educational program is based on the PACS Learning Cycle, an original system created by the Pride Academy Charter School team to cultivate and strengthen higher order habits of mind.



The four key components of The PACS Learning Cycle are:

- Questioning
- Seeking
- Understanding
- Responding

These are critical for the development and execution of higher order thought processes. Pride Academy Charter School recognizes that rudimentary memorization of facts and content will not translate into more meaningful, useful learning for any discipline unless students are also taught how to make sense of information and then to respond actively to what they have learned. The PACS Learning Cycle is an integral part of the school day and is continually reinforced throughout the school community.

Honor Roll

Pride Academy Charter School Honor Roll recognizes both scholastic achievement and core value achievement. We do so because we believe that the key to success lies as much in excellence of character as in superior academics. The core values of peace, respect, integrity, determination, and empathy represent the bedrock of good citizenship. At Pride Academy emphasis is placed on the development of the person as well as the development of the scholar.

The awarding of Core Value Honors recognizes consistent demonstration of effort and behaviors that exemplify the core values of peace, respect, integrity, determination and empathy. The criterion for recognition as a Core Value Honor recipient is achievement of an above average Core Value grade of 1 (Excellent) or 2 (Good) in every subject for the trimester. **The best high schools look for students who display both social and academic strengths. We expect our students to strive for excellence in both academics and core values.**

Placement on the Honor Roll recognizes academic achievement. The awards are made each trimester based upon report card grades. There are two levels of recognition on the Honor Roll. Students who earn grades no lower than B are placed on the Honor Roll. Students who achieve the highest level of academic distinction by earning straight As are honored by inclusion on the High Honor Roll.

Core Value Honors	Core Value Grades of 1 or 2
Honor Roll	As and Bs in all subjects
High Honor Roll	Straight As

Grade Scale

The Pride Academy grade scale is as follows:

A+	97-100
A	90-96
B+	87-89
B	80-86
C+	77-79
C	70-76
D	65-69
F	64 or below

Child Find Procedures

At Pride Academy we are committed to ensuring that all students attain academic excellence and are supported in their progress towards meeting rigorous and achievable goals and objectives.

For students who do not meet the acceptable levels of proficiency based on the NJASK tests and are identified by teachers and/or parents to be at risk based on their short term and long term academic performance, Pride Academy Charter School staff consider and utilize a range of options geared towards helping students achieve their potential. Such measures may include, but are not limited to the following:

- Recommending student attendance at summer academic enrichment programs.
- Providing targeted Title I assistance in class, on the weekend, and/or after school for academic tutoring.
- Utilizing the school's Intervention and Referral Services program (I&RS) and procedures to help identify areas of weakness and develop possible strategies for help.

- Utilizing Child Study Team services subsequent to the I&RS intervention period or directly when warranted.
- Reviewing and restructuring, at any point in the school year, teacher and team assignments to ensure the most effective placements.
- Involving parent/guardians in strategy sessions to create a viable program and plan for their child.
- Closely examining and regularly reviewing curriculum and instructional practices to maximize the school's program for student success.
- Providing professional development opportunities closely aligned with the school's curricular goals and geared towards helping all teachers teach and reinforce basic skills, reach a variety of learners, and meet individual student needs by modifying and differentiating instruction.

Steps for initiating I&RS interventions in the general education program include the following:

- Parent, teacher and/or school professional submits a written referral to the Social Worker or Special Education Coordinator for either a conference or I&RS Committee meeting.
- Social Worker or Special Education Coordinator schedules a meeting and contacts the parent/guardian.
- During the meeting an intervention plan is developed and the Social Worker, Special Education Coordinator or I&RS member is assigned to monitor the intervention plan.
- The staff member responsible for implementing the plan keeps written documentation (logs, schedules, work samples) of interventions used and their results.
- After the intervention period, the Social Worker, Special Education Coordinator or I&RS member schedule a follow-up meeting with the teachers/staff members to review the interventions.
- Parent, teacher, and/or school professional may directly contact a member of the Child Study Team for an intervention plan.

Steps for a teacher/staff member initiating a Child Study Team Referral subsequent to the intervention period or directly when warranted:

- The teacher/staff member completes referral documentation and forwards it to the Social Worker or Special Education Coordinator. The referral information must include: Student's name, date of birth, grade, description of presenting problems, progress reports, and summary of interventions.
- Upon receipt of the referral documents, the Social Worker or Special Education Coordinator will date and initial the referral documents which initiates the 20-day time line for conducting the Testing Determination Meeting.
- The Social Worker or Special Education Coordinator then schedules the Testing Determination Meeting and conducts the meeting according to N.J.A.C. 6A:14

Steps for a parent initiating a Child Study Team Referral subsequent to the intervention period or directly when warranted:

- Parent writes a letter requesting Child Study Team services.
- Any teacher or staff member who receives a written request for a CST evaluation from a parent must immediately forward the request to the Social Worker or Special Education Coordinator who will process the request by date stamping the letter, which initiates the 20-day time line for conducting the Testing Determination Meeting.
- The Social Worker or Special Education Coordinator schedules the Testing Determination Meeting and conduct the meeting according to N.J.A.C. 6A:14

GENERAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Cell Phones, Blackberries, etc.

Students should not bring cell phones to school. When a cell phone is necessary, students must silence phones before entering the building and put them away until they leave the building at the end of the day. Cell phones must not be out or visible during the school day. Students may not use cell phones during lunch, or recess, nor may students use cell phones in the restroom or during after school activities. **Students serving In School Suspension (ISS) must surrender cell phones to the ISS Monitor upon entering the ISS room.** Phones will be returned to the parent or guardian signing the student out of ISS at the end of the day. Phones that vibrate, ring, or are visible during school hours will be confiscated and left with administration for parent or guardian pick-up. Students who repeatedly violate the cellular phone policy will not be permitted to bring a phone to school. Pride Academy will not replace or repair lost, stolen damaged cell phones.

Electronic Equipment and Toys

iPods, electronic games, and other toys may not be brought to school because of the potential interruption to the learning environment and the danger of damage, loss, and theft. Such items that are visible during school hours will be confiscated and left with administration for parent or guardian pick-up. Pride Academy will not replace or repair lost, stolen or damaged electronic equipment and toys.

Grooming and Professionalism

At Pride Academy, we seek to instill in our students habits of professionalism. To this end, students are expected to arrive at school clean, groomed, and appropriately dressed each day. Students may not comb, brush or style hair in class or in common school areas outside of the restrooms, nor may they attend school with hair covered, unless it is for religious purposes. Students may not wear “Do Rags”, curlers, or unwrapped or pinned up “doobies” or “wraps” in school. We strongly discourage hairstyles that are overly long or distracting, such as bright or unnatural hair and hair extension colors. These can be distracting both to the student and to the overall learning environment.

Not Allowed in School

- Toys
- Balls of any type
- Instant bonding glues, such as Krazy Glue and nail glues

- Permanent markers, like Sharpies
- Writing on skin or clothing
- Animals or pets
- Make up or hair products
- Perfume, colognes or heavily scented products of any type
- Practical joke items of any type
- Firecrackers, poppers, stink/smoke bombs and similar devices
- Nail polish or nail polish remover

Teachers are not responsible for safekeeping students' property. Pride Academy will not pay for, repair or replace, lost, damaged, or stolen student property. Please leave items not related to performing academic tasks at home.

ADMISSIONS

To enroll a student at Pride Academy Charter School please contact the school to learn the details of the application process including the lottery deadline. We encourage applicants for all grade levels from 5th to 8th grade.

Admissions Conference

Families should schedule an admissions interview where they will receive a handbook and an application packet that must be completed and returned to the school.

Admissions Lottery

The names of all applicants will be entered into a lottery held towards the beginning of each calendar year and at other points throughout the year. Successful applicants will be chosen at random from those who have applied.

Waiting List

A waiting list is kept for students who have applied but are not selected for admission at the beginning of the school year. If new openings for students become available during the year, students on the waiting list will be contacted. A student on the waiting list must accept a spot when offered, or re-enter the next lottery. All requested documentation must be submitted on a timely basis after the enrollment spot is accepted or the spot will be offered to the next student on the waiting list. Please be advised that waiting list names are not rolled over to the next school year. A student who wishes to remain on the waiting list for the next year, must reapply and enter the January lottery for that new school year.

BEFORE YOU ENROLL

Before you enroll your child, please be certain that you understand and are prepared to support the school's mission, values, and code of conduct. This includes full support of school policies, including your commitment to ensure that your child is dressed in the correct school uniform every day. Enrollment signifies your willingness to abide by decisions made with regard to student behavior and to bring concerns to administration. By enrolling your child, or continuing your child's enrollment, you agree to attend

accountability, report card, progress report and other conferences, and to comply with out of school suspensions, etc.

We are always open to parental input and opportunities to grow and improve as a learning community; however, we reiterate: The policies contained in this handbook are those that will be in effect for the 2011-2012 school year. It is vital that you are fully prepared to honor them. For the sake of fairness, they will be followed in all cases. Unwillingness of students and parents or guardians to honor the Code of Conduct and policies contained in this book will lead to accountability consequences up to and including dismissal from Pride Academy.

WITHDRAWAL

Parents or guardians that are withdrawing their child should request a transfer form from the school office. ***The parent or guardian must report in person to pick up and sign for the transfer card.*** An exit interview with an administrator or designated staff member may take place when the transfer is picked up. School records will be forwarded to the new school upon receipt of a signed request from the new school.

ARRIVAL

REGULAR SCHOOL HOURS begin at 8:00 a.m. Students may enter the facility at 7:15 A.M. Monday through Friday. Students arriving before 8:00 a.m. must come directly into the building and go directly to the Common Room to await the beginning of Morning Assembly. **Students must arrive with an independent reading book in their possession and be prepared to read silently during designated D.E.A.R. times including the period of time in the Common Room prior to the commencement of Morning Assembly.**

IMPORTANT: Students may not arrive at school and go to neighborhood stores or anywhere else inside or outside the building before entering the Common Room. If needed, students must report directly to the Common Room to obtain a bathroom pass. Students may not report directly to the bathroom, nor may they leave the Common Room for any purpose without permission and/or a written pass from a teacher or administrator.

Common Room space is limited and cannot safely accommodate both students and parents. Please escort your child only as far as the Common Room door.

D.E.A.R. TIME

D.E.A.R. (Drop Everything and Read) Time is a period of independent, sustained, silent reading. Students MUST bring a chapter book every day and have it with them AT ALL TIMES throughout the school day including before Morning Assembly and lunch/recess time. *If your child is nearly finished with a book, two books should be brought to school.* Students lose points for not having a D.E.A.R. book with them at all times. Please ensure that the content and subject matter are positive and appropriate for school, and that the language in the book will help your child develop a robust SAT test vocabulary. If you are unsure about reading content or level, please speak with an administrator or your child's Language Arts teacher. Developing the habit of independent reading need not be expensive. Public libraries are a free source for appropriate reading material. Library Cards are PASSPORTS to increased reading fluency!

BREAKFAST

Pride Academy provides a school breakfast program for those students who qualify. After breakfast, students must clean up their trash and place it in garbage cans. If students bring their own breakfast, they should bring healthy foods that do not include snacks like soda or chips. Students should not bring glass bottles or anything that needs to be heated in a microwave. **Breakfast is served from 7:15 to 7:45 a.m. sharp. Your child must arrive at school between 7:15 a.m. and 7:45 a.m. to eat breakfast in school.** No breakfast will be served or eaten in school after 7:45 a.m. Children who are hungry do not learn as well as they should and often have difficulty behaving because they are uncomfortable and distracted. Please provide breakfast at home if your child will arrive at school after 7:45 a.m. so your child can achieve his or her highest potential each day.

LUNCH

Breakfast and lunch are served daily in our Common Room. We participate in a federal program that offers free and reduced price breakfast and lunch for students from families with eligible incomes. Lunch will be available at the opening of school in September. Application forms will be provided to all students at the beginning of the school year and they may be requested at any time from the main office. *A separate form must be completed for each child.* Students may also choose to bring their own lunches to school and purchase milk.

Lunch Deliveries

Please have your child order lunch through our lunch program or bring his or her lunch to school. We understand that there are emergencies when lunch must be dropped off, however, we request that this not be regular practice. Locating students during the lunch periods disrupts regular school operations.

Take Out Food Deliveries

Students, parents and guardians may not have restaurant food delivered directly to the school. Food deliveries to students will be refused.

FOOD POLICIES

Eating in Class

Students are not permitted to eat in class unless it is part of a teacher-sanctioned activity. Otherwise, eating and drinking anything other than water outside of the Common Room is strictly forbidden and will result in a disciplinary consequence.

Candy, Gum and Soda

Gum, candy and soda are not permitted in school. We encourage the development of healthy eating habits by teaching about and providing nutritious meals. Students may not bring gum, candy, seeds or soda to school and do not allow your child to purchase them and bring them to school. **They will be confiscated.**

Edible Seeds

Sunflower, pumpkin and other edible seeds are not permitted in the school because of unsanitary conditions created by discarded shells. **Seeds will be confiscated.**

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Each teacher is fully responsible for classroom management. As a first step, teachers at Pride Academy promote excellence in both academics and behavior by planning and implementing, challenging, rigorous, and engaging lessons. Our teachers also utilize our school-wide behavior management system that rewards positive behavior and helps students with challenging behaviors self-reflect and set goals for improvement. In the first days of school, teachers explain the Pride Academy behavior management system to help students understand expectations, and integrate class and school guidelines.

The behavior management system provides students the opportunity to earn points positive behavior. Positive behavior is that which reflects the Pride core values of peace, respect, integrity, determination, and empathy. The system is used in all classes and throughout all periods of the day. Students are given appropriate feedback from teachers when their actions do not demonstrate Pride's core values. As a consequence students earn less points for continued negative behavior. Extreme incidents of negative behavior may warrant both less points earned as well as other consequences such as accountability conferences, participation in a Pride Peace circle, Lunch Accountability, Saturday Accountability, and in or out of school suspension.

Each student has the potential to earn a set number of points per week. Throughout the year, positive rewards and acknowledgements are presented to students who earn the predetermined required number of points for a set time period. Students have the opportunity to earn weekly prizes and larger prizes, such as field trips, dispersed at other points in the year.

We communicate with parents and guardians daily through phone calls, when needed, and through the Pride Scholar Chart. PLEASE REVIEW YOUR CHILD'S PRIDE SCHOLAR CHART EVERY DAY. Parents/Guardians receive an overview of points earned the prior week through Weekly Updates. **If your child fails to earn his or her points for the week, as indicated on the Weekly Update, please address the reasons why. Weekly updates are distributed each Monday and must be returned signed by Parent or Guardian the following day. If you do not receive a weekly update each week, please contact your child's teacher. If you still do not receive an update, please contact a school administrator.**

COMMON ROOM RULES

The Common Room is our dining room when we are away from home. It should be treated with the same care and respect we demonstrate in our own homes. Part of the community service component of our curriculum and a way students show their appreciation for our school community is to serve, on a rotating basis, as Lunch Helpers during their designated lunch period. We also show appreciation and model our core values of respect and empathy by following these rules of courtesy and conduct:

- Walk at all times
- Use indoor voices when speaking
- Be silent when requested
- Do not cut in front of others, play, or push others in line
- Say "please" when making requests
- Respect others who are dining by excusing yourself from the table when needed
- Avoid making comments about other students' food choices, and touching or asking for others' food

- Say “thank you” when food is served
- Eat neatly and help clean up, whether the mess is yours or not
- Keep hands and feet to yourself
- Stay seated unless you have permission to get up
- Stay in the Common Room unless you have a pass or permission to leave

ATTENDANCE & TRUANCY

Students must attend school regularly to succeed at Pride Academy. **By law, Pride Academy must notify the authorities when a student is chronically truant without verifiable excuses. Pride Academy will file a Truancy Complaint with the courts in the student’s home district for any student with excessive unexcused absences.** Vacations are considered unexcused absences and can affect promotion to the next grade. As such, it is important that you schedule vacations while school is not in session. Students who miss multiple days of school do not perform as well as those who attend everyday. Students are expected to attend a full day of school everyday unless they experience one or more of the following:

- Fever
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Unidentified rash
- A contagious condition (other than a mild cold)
- Reportable Illness (Refer to the section of this handbook titled **Health**)

A minor cold or sniffles need not prevent school attendance unless the student has a cough, or will be unable to focus and participate in school. Please send tissues and hand sanitizer, if possible.

Absences

Parents or Guardians must notify the Main Office at 973.672.3200 by 7:30 a.m. if their child will be absent from school. *Please do not contact your child’s classroom teacher.* Authorized reasons for absence are personal illness, observance of religious holiday, or a death in the immediate family. If the school is not notified of the student’s absence, the school is required by law to notify the parents that the child is not in school. This will be done by telephone. The student must bring a note signed by the parent or guardian on the day he or she returns to school. The note should include the child’s name, current date, date of absence, and reason for the absence.

IMPORTANT: Students with five (5) or more unexcused absences will be required to submit a medical note for each absence thereafter, unless the school nurse has official documentation of a chronic medical condition and the absences are attributable to that condition. *Failure to submit a note with an excusable reason for absence on the date of return will result in an unexcused absence. More than eighteen (18) unexcused absences can result in non-promotion to the next grade.*

Attendance and Graduation

Excessive absences will affect the ability of 8th grade students to participate in graduation activities and privileges. ***This includes disqualification from participation in 8th grade activities up to and including the graduation ceremony and denial of promotion to the next grade.***

Making Up Work Missed

Students who are absent from school must ask teachers for make-up assignments on the date of return. Students are responsible for completing and submitting missed work in a timely manner. Assignments that are not made up will lower grades and can lead to failure and retention.

Excused Absences

Students who are frequently absent for medical reasons or are out of school for three or more consecutive days due to injury or illness must return to school with a verifiable doctor's note. This note must include the child's name, the current date, the date on which the child may safely return to school, and the diagnosis or reason for the absence. ***This note must be submitted to the Main Office on the date of return to school. Without a medical note, any absence will be considered unexcused. Medical notes will be verified.***

PUNCTUALITY

Being on time is a valuable life habit taught at PRIDE Academy. School begins at 8:00 a.m. Students arriving late **must report to the Main Office for a late pass. Students who are late may never report to class without a late pass.** A late pass is required to document partial day attendance and for entry to class, even if the student arrives at the beginning of the class period. Lateness is excused with medical documentation or as determined by school administration due to extreme inclement weather. Students arriving after 10 a.m. or leaving before dismissal may be charged ½ day of excused or unexcused absence, as appropriate. Lateness without medical documentation will result in a one-hour accountability served after school on the day of the lateness.

PERFECT ATTENDANCE, EARLY PICK UP, AND UNEXCUSED LATENESS

Pride Academy maintains high expectations for our students. We constantly look for opportunities to improve as a school and as a community. This year we are raising the bar for Perfect Attendance. To win recognition for Perfect Attendance, students must have no more than three (3) days of unexcused lateness and must attend a full day of school every school day, unless excused. Reasons for excused lateness are limited to death in the immediate family and official appointments with health care providers. Lateness and early departure require documentation, such as an original physician's note documenting attendance at a medical appointment to be excused. Whenever possible, appointments should be scheduled after school hours.

IMPORTANT: Chronic unexcused lateness will be addressed by administration and may also result in a Truancy complaint being filed in the home district municipal court.

Early Departure Procedure

If your child needs to be picked up early, we ask that parents/guardians/authorized adults report to the Main Office. We will call your child's classroom teacher and have your child dismissed to meet you in the office. Every minute of learning is precious. For this reason, students will not be called to the Main Office to wait before an authorized adult arrives to sign the student out. Students are expected to return to school after appointments, if time permits. **IMPORTANT: Students who depart early without an approved excuse will be ineligible for the Perfect Attendance Award. Repeated early departures may warrant a parent conference with administration**

LATENESS ACCOUNTABILITY

Students with **unexcused lateness** will receive an after school **Lateness Accountability** on the day of the lateness or on the next school day. Parents will be advised when students receive Lateness Accountability. Lateness Accountability runs from 4:00 to 5:00 p.m. on the days it is held.

IMPORTANT: For students who take the school bus, or who have other scheduled after school pick-ups, a parent or guardian is responsible to make alternate arrangements to pick the student up from school at 5:00 p.m. sharp, after Lateness Accountability ends.

DISMISSAL

The school dismissal schedule is as follows:

- Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday school ends at 4:00 p.m.
- Friday school ends at 2:45 p.m.
- Half days school ends at 12:30 p.m.

Pick up of students takes place in front of the building.

IMPORTANT: Half days are posted in the school calendar. Parents will be notified of any changes to the calendar in writing, via the school website, or by phone in the event of weather, building, or other emergencies. ***While we understand that emergencies sometimes occur, your child must be picked up on time. In accordance with statute, children who are frequently left at school beyond the regular hours of school operation will be considered abandoned, and referred to the appropriate authorities.***

LEAVING SCHOOL GROUNDS DURING THE DAY

PRIDE Academy is committed to the safety and wellbeing of its students. We have no means by which to protect students outside of the school grounds. As such, once students arrive at school or enter the school building, they are not permitted to leave the building unless accompanied by an authorized adult such as a parent, guardian, parent chaperone or teacher in the event of a field trip. Students who are dropped off at school are required to report inside the building immediately. Students may not leave the building to run errands, go to the store, etc. under any circumstances.

NOTE: Students may NEVER leave the building or any assigned area without permission. To do so places the student at grave risk and will result in suspension in every instance.

SCHOOL VISITORS

At Pride Academy we believe it is important that parents and guardians feel welcome in our school and comfortable in meeting with teachers and administrators. We encourage visitors, volunteers, and parents at PRIDE. For security reasons all school visitors must sign in at the Main Office before going anywhere in the building.

IMPORTANT: Please read the following completely and discuss the content with anyone who will be responsible for picking your child up from school.

Meeting Requests

Parents or guardians who have a school concern must call an administrator to schedule an appointment. We will try to accommodate walk in appointments, however, there may be a significant wait or we may not be able to meet with you that day. It is best to schedule an appointment. We respect your time and will do our best to honor scheduled appointments. We regret that you may need to wait beyond scheduled meeting times while emergent situations are addressed. **Morning assembly, lunch and recess periods and dismissal are the busiest times of the day. No meetings will take place during these times.** We understand that your time is valuable and will do our best to make you wait no longer than necessary. Please understand, however, that our priority must be the safety of our students and staff, and the smooth and orderly operation of the school. All meetings, scheduled or otherwise, will take place after these priorities are addressed.

Classroom Visits

Parents or guardians who would like to shadow students for a day or who would like to visit classrooms must contact Mrs. Fiona Thomas, Principal, at least three school days in advance to receive permission and make arrangements. Arrangements may take more than three days to complete. **During a classroom visit, guests must remain quiet in the classroom, unless the teacher requests the guest plays a different role. No student interaction is permitted.** Administration retains the right to terminate, restrict, or refuse classroom visits of any individual who violates any aspect of the School Visitor policy

School Visitor Behavior

Visitors are guests of Pride Academy. Guests are required to adhere to the Code of Conduct set for all members of our school community. Children who are guests must be under adult supervision and orderly at all times. All visitors are required to conduct themselves in a way that sets a positive example for our students and that does not disturb the peace or offend others. **Hostility, profanity, shouting, disrespect, bullying and aggression are inappropriate behaviors and are never permitted at Pride Academy.** Visitors who display any such behavior, on or around school grounds, will be in violation of the School Visitor Policy and may have future access restricted accordingly. Anyone who violates the School Visitor Policy will be required to leave the premises immediately. The authorities will be contacted to remove anyone who fails to depart on request.

Visitor and Student Interactions

Visitors may NEVER address any Pride Academy student, or other student, who is not their own child without the express permission and supervision of Pride administration and/or the child's parent or guardian. It is NEVER APPROPRIATE for adults to involve themselves in student disputes unless a Pride administrator and the parents or guardians of all students involved are present. THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS TO THIS RULE.

If you have a problem with the conduct of a Pride Academy student, or any child who is not your own, bring your concerns immediately to a member of the Pride Academy administration. WE will address your concern with the student or child and will bring his or her parent or guardian in to meet with you, if

possible. **Failure to honor this policy will be considered a major violation of the School Visitor Policy and may result in restricted access to the building or denial of access to the building. Please refer to the Failure to Follow School Visitor Policy below.**

Failure to Follow School Visitor Policy

For parents, guardians, or other adults who do not follow this policy or who conduct themselves in loud, disrespectful, harassing, or threatening ways towards and/or in the presence of administrators, staff, students or other visitors, the following will take place:

1. The parent/guardian will receive notification from Pride Academy Administration or the Pride Academy Board of Trustees informing him/her that access to the school building, presence on or adjacent to school grounds, attending school sponsored functions, and meeting with school administrators and staff, if permitted, will be limited and require pre-approval. School visits, if permitted, must be supervised by an administrator or designated staff member at all times including but not limited to before school hours, during school hours, after school hours, and during school-sponsored functions.
2. If the parent/guardian chooses not to follow the guidelines outlined in the school policy or the notification letter, the authorities will be contacted.

PARENT/SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP - *The key to success*

We understand and respect that your child's education is of paramount importance. We are eager to work with you and support your child to ensure that he or she has an opportunity to succeed here. One of the most important things you can do to ensure your child's success at school is to build a strong connection to the school by:

- Initiating regular communication with his or her teachers
- Take and/or return calls from your child's teachers and school administration immediately or as soon as possible
- Review your child's Pride Scholar Chart each day and address concerns with your child's behavior
- Allowing your child to see that you are willing and eager to be active in the school
- Being open about your support of the school including the administration, the teachers and the policies
- Following through on school requirements like signing the homework agenda, ensuring homework is completed, signing and returning school notices and documentation, etc.
- Immediately addressing with your child any negative behaviors reported by the school or noted on the Weekly Update.

This allows your child to see that you and the school are on the same side and desire the same thing—his or her success! If you have concerns or negative feelings, please do not share them with your child or within your child's hearing. We ask this because if your child feels that you are not respectful and supportive of the school, it becomes very difficult for your child to be respectful and fully committed to achievement in the classroom. Please bring your concerns directly to administration so we can hear what you have to say and work with you to address and resolve any issues.

EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

As a charter school, Pride Academy is an independent school district. We do not follow the local district calendar. Changes in the school schedule, including cancellation, may occur due to weather, building conditions, or other problems. Please discuss with your child what he or she should do if the regular schedule is changed and school closes early.

Please ensure that all contact phone and email information is current and on file with Mrs. Dockery in the Main Office.

Please check the school website prideacs.org, your email, voicemail, or listen to the radio and television stations for information specific to Pride Academy Charter School. This is especially important during weather that could warrant cancellation, delayed opening, or early closing. We will indicate which action is in effect in our announcement to the media or communication via email and voicemail through the Alert Now system.

BUS POLICY

Following are guidelines that ensure the safety of all children when riding on buses to and from school, school events and field trips. Students should follow regular classroom rules:

- Remain seated at all times unless you are entering or exiting the bus after it has stopped.
- If seatbelts are available, they must be worn at all times.
- Items prohibited at school are also prohibited on the bus.
- Behavior prohibited at school, such as hitting, fighting and profanity, is also prohibited on the bus.
- Be silent as requested by the driver, staff, or chaperones.
- Keep arms, hands, heads, and other objects inside the bus.
- Cooperate respectfully and immediately with instructions from the driver or school staff.
- Respect bus staff, fellow passengers, property, pedestrians, and motorists.

Students who fail to abide by these guidelines may be excluded from the bus and future trips, or may be required to have a parent or guardian chaperone, if he or she is to be permitted to attend.

PUBLIC BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS

Pride Academy students are governed by our Student Code of Conduct during recess, visits to local parks, field trips, or while participating in other outdoor or public activities. During these times, students must adhere to the public behavior guidelines to ensure their own safety and the safety of classmates and Pride Academy staff.

- Students may never interact with members of the public by calling out, waving or responding to them.
- Students may not enlist members of the public, parents, siblings, or relatives to run errands or purchase items from the store on their behalf.
- Items prohibited at school are also prohibited when in public.

- Behavior prohibited at school, such as hitting, fighting, disrespect to others, and use of profanity, is also prohibited in public.
- Be silent as requested by the driver, staff, or chaperones.
- Cooperate respectfully and immediately with instructions from supervising adults.
- Respect supervising adults, members of the public, public and private property, pedestrians, and motorists.

Students who misbehave in public may earn a disciplinary consequence, be excluded from trips and other outdoor activities, or be required to have a parent or guardian chaperone to participate in certain activities.

HEALTH / ILLNESS

Keep your child at home on any day he or she has a contagious condition, has experienced diarrhea or vomiting, has an undiagnosed rash or has a fever. A minor cold or the sniffles may not be reason to stay home from school, unless the child has a cough or fever. Your child must be well enough to participate in all school activities, including recess. Students will NOT be permitted to remain alone in the classroom during recess.

IMPORTANT: *Students who need to leave school due to illness must be picked up within one hour of notification. Please ensure that current contact information is on file in the main office in the event of a medical emergency. A parent, guardian or emergency contact must be available for emergency pick up at any point during the day. Students returning to school after an illness must provide an excuse note to the main office on the date of return.*

Reportable Diseases

Please notify the school nurse immediately if your child is diagnosed with any communicable illnesses, so we may alert other parents, if necessary, and watch for symptoms in other students. It is especially important to notify the nurse if your child is diagnosed with the following:

Chickenpox	Influenza (Flu))	Ringworm
German Measles (Rubella)	E. Coli	Scabies
Streptococcus (Strep Throat)	Mononucleosis	Impetigo
Scarlet Fever	Meningitis	Giardia Lamblia
Pink Eye (Conjunctivitis)	Fifth Disease	Mumps
Typhoid	Tuberculosis	Whooping cough (Pertussis)
Shigella	Diphtheria	Staphylococcal disease
Hepatitis A	Small Pox	Lice (head or body)
Stomach virus (any type)		Salmonella

Parents must provide the school nurse a doctor's note diagnosing your child as suffering from any medical condition that may be contagious or any chronic health condition such as diabetes, eczema, asthma, food, seasonal, or medication allergies.

Medication

A student who needs to take a **prescription medication** at school must have the correct form completed and signed by a parent or guardian and the prescribing physician. This form and medication (in the original container) must be together in the nurse's office. A student who needs to take a **non-prescription medication** at school must have the correct form completed and signed by a parent or guardian. This form and the medication (in the original container) must be together in the nurse's office. Both types of medication forms can be obtained from the nurse. Please work out a medication schedule that excludes the school whenever possible. Parents may also come to school and administer medication without a form.

Self-administered Medication

Self-administration of medication by pupils is permitted in accordance with New Jersey law (N.J.S.A. 18A:40-12.3). A student is only permitted to self-administer medication for asthma or other potentially life-threatening illnesses as defined by the Department of Education, New Jersey Statutes Annotated and New Jersey Administrative Code. Permission for self-administration of medication must comply with the conditions set forth in Regulation No. 5330. Every pupil that is authorized to use self-administered asthma medication pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:40-12.3 or a nebulizer must have an asthma treatment plan prepared by the pupil's physician on file with the school nurse. The asthma treatment plan must identify, at a minimum, asthma triggers, the treatment plan and other such elements as required by the Department of Education. All pupil medications will be maintained and secured by the school nurse, except those medications to be self-administered by pupils. In those instances, the medication may be retained by the pupil with the prior knowledge of the school nurse.

Accidents at School

When an accident that results in an injury to a student occurs at school, an attempt is made to notify a parent or guardian unless the injury is deemed to be minor (such as a small cut or scrape, etc.).

Contact Information

So we may reach you in the event of an emergency, please inform the school immediately of any change of physical or email address, personal, cellular, or emergency contact phone number. ***Please provide the school with two or more alternate people to contact in case of emergency. At least one emergency contact person must be someone who is willing and able to pick your child up from school within the hour and who is available to care for your child if he or she is unable to attend school, if you are unable to do so.***

HOMWORK

Homework promotes independent study, extends and enriches learning, provides extra practice in mastering skills and assists in the development of good work habits. It is not meant to be a burden but an extension of classroom learning. Homework may be assigned to an entire class, a small group, or an individual student. The amount and type of homework will vary because of grade and/or teacher. In order to be meaningful, it must be done consistently. Homework is your child's responsibility.

You, as a parent or guardian, should encourage your child to fulfill this responsibility. Please provide a quiet area where your child can work and study. There may be times that your child will need your assistance in completing homework assignments. Failure to complete homework will affect your child's grade and may result in failure and/or retention. Your child should have each day's homework assignment

and due date noted in his homework agenda. We ask that you supervise homework completion to ensure that:

- All assigned homework is completed
- Directions are followed
- Homework is correct
- Homework is a quality product; it represents your child's best effort

Once you have checked to see that all homework is completed, *please sign your child's homework agenda. It must be signed every day, whether homework has been assigned or not.* Please ensure that your child returns completed homework to the appropriate location in his or her school bag so it may be submitted on time. Students who fail to complete homework in core subjects must remain after school for Homework Accountability. Chronic failure to complete homework will result in an accountability conference between the parent, student and teacher.

HOMWORK ACCOUNTABILITY

Homework Accountability is an after school detention that is served on the same day a student fails to turn in a quality homework assignment that demonstrates effort. Excellent homework should:

- **Represent the student's own work** (*Parents should never do homework and students must not plagiarize from books or the Internet, copy, or allow others to copy homework*)
- **Be completed** to the student's best ability
- **Be neat** (NO ragged, torn edges, wrinkles, or stains)
- **Have a proper homework heading that includes the below *and any phrase or quote specified by the school or individual teacher***

Sample Homework Heading

Name _____

Date _____

Team _____

Subject _____

- Be written in **black or blue pen *only***, or in pencil for Math and certain Science assignments
- Be written in **complete sentences**
- Be **written on loose-leaf paper and show all steps in computations**, with work transcribed neatly onto worksheet(s) provided. **The loose-leaf paper and the worksheet must be handed in to receive full credit.**

Every effort will be made to notify a parent or guardian as soon as possible when a student receives Homework Accountability. Homework Accountability takes place from 4:00 to 5:00 p.m. on Monday through Thursday only. Attendance is mandatory. Parents or guardians must arrange for student pick-up at 5:00 p.m., if students cannot walk or take a public bus home. ***Students who fail to report to Homework Accountability on the scheduled day must attend on the following school day accompanied by a parent or guardian. Failure to attend three consecutive Homework Accountabilities will result in a Saturday Accountability***

PARENT CONFERENCES AND PROGRESS REPORTS

The Pride Academy academic year is divided into trimesters. Progress reports will be distributed three times yearly. Report cards will also be distributed three times yearly with final report cards being distributed by pick-up. **Teacher conferences will be scheduled to coincide with progress reports and report cards and require parent or guardian attendance. Progress Reports and Report Cards must be picked up by a parent or guardian.** These conferences represent a critical time to discuss your child's academic and social progress. You and your child's teacher may have additional conferences as needed or requested by either of you.

PARENT COUNCIL

At Pride Academy, involved parents are the key to our students' success. Our Parent Council provides an important link between parents and the school's staff and administration. We urge all parents, teachers, and friends of the school to join and become active members. To encourage participation, Parent Council meetings are scheduled in the afternoons and evenings. Please attend whenever you can.

SCHOOL SAFETY TEAM

At Pride Academy, the safety of our school community is a top priority. The School Safety Team is comprised of teachers, administrators and parents committed to identifying and addressing ways to make Pride Academy an even safer environment than it already is. We invite you to join and become an active member.

STUDENT COUNCIL

Student Council is a democratically elected group of students in the fifth through eighth grades. The council focus is on addressing needs in the school community. Students have the opportunity to develop a sense of responsibility and to appreciate their own contributions, as well as those of others, to improve their school.

DRESS CODE

Pride Academy students are required to wear a uniform to and from school daily, with the exception of school-approved dress down days. The Pride Academy uniform is our scholars' professional dress. The uniform should be worn in a way that demonstrates pride and self-respect. Pants must be pulled up and securely belted around the waist. Shirts must be of adequate size and length that they remain tucked into pants at all times. ***Uniform skorts and all skirts must be of sufficient length that when the student's arms are at rest along the student's sides, the fingertips rest against fabric, not skin.*** Parents or guardians of students who report to school out of uniform or in inappropriate dress will be contacted and requested to bring the student's uniform or a change of clothing to the school. In addition, the student will receive an accountability consequence.

Uniform Accommodations

Parents of students who require changes to the uniform for religion or faith practice, or medical need, should address their concerns with Pride Academy Administration. We are eager to make any accommodation needed to make all students feel welcome at Pride Academy. ***Parents and guardians of students who reside in more than one household are advised to consider keeping dress and gym***

uniforms in both locations, as it can be challenging for students to keep track of uniform wear under these circumstances. Parents and guardians who have special concerns regarding uniform are encouraged to bring their concerns to a school administrator.

PRIDE Academy Charter School adheres to the laws and regulations set forth in N.J.A.C. 6A:7- 1.8; Title VII, Civil Rights Act of 1964; Title IX, Education Amendments of 1972; N.J.S.A. 10:5, and Equal Pay Act 1973, and is committed to ensuring equality in Educational, Employment, and Contract Practices for all persons, regardless of race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, affectional or sexual orientation, gender, religion, disability, or socioeconomic status.

Reporting to School Out of Uniform

Students may NEVER report to school out of uniform without prior school approval. Students who lack any part of their uniform will be considered out of uniform and will receive an appropriate consequence. A belt, solid black socks, and solid or completely black shoes are part of the uniform and must be worn with the dress uniform to be considered in uniform. Exceptions are limited to instances when Pride Academy Administration has made an accommodation for faith or medical reasons. Gym and dress uniform pieces may not be worn together. Students reporting to school in dress and gym uniforms combined will be considered out of uniform and will receive an appropriate consequence. Parents or guardians are requested to work together with their children to ensure that the student has a clean uniform available for daily wear. The uniform may be hand washed, if needed. We encourage our students to take responsibility for their uniform. Failure to do laundry and uniform disrepair will not excuse students from wearing the uniform daily.

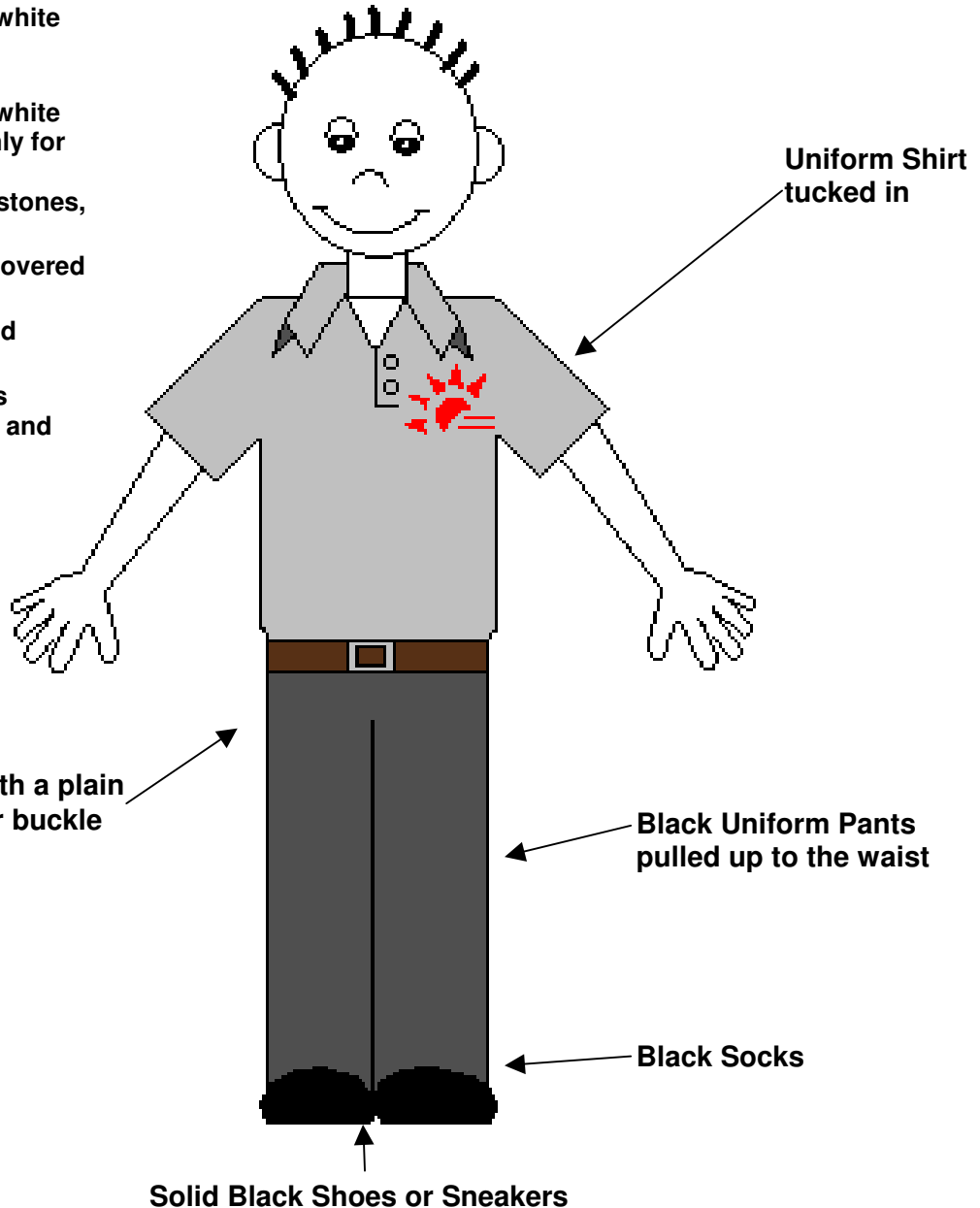
Students may NEVER substitute a non-uniform gray polo shirt, non-uniform gray t-shirt, non-uniform black sweatpants or non-uniform black dress pants for uniform wear.

WHAT DOES A PRIDE SCHOLAR LOOK LIKE?

The Correct Pride Dress Uniform

- No jewelry (except small stud earrings and a watch)
- Plain red, black, grey or white plastic, fabric or elastic headband
- Plain red, black, grey or white head coverings (worn only for religious purposes) (No bows, flowers, rhinestones, patterned scarves, etc.)
- Visible tattoos must be covered
- Gym shirt, PRIDE logo sweatpants or shorts, and sneakers on gym days
- No sweatshirts or jackets except Pride sweatshirts and fleeces

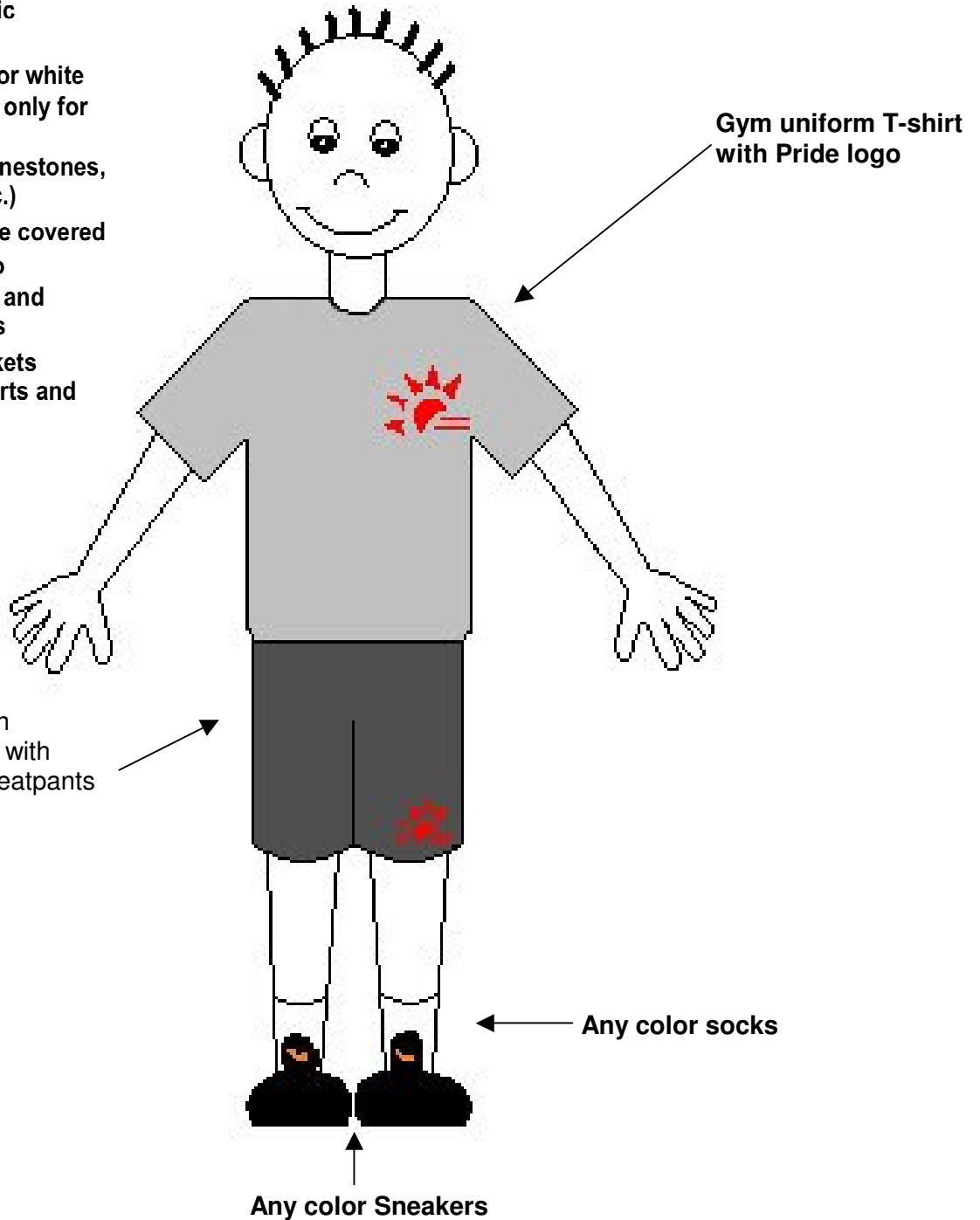
- Black belt with a plain gold or silver buckle



WHAT DOES A PRIDE ATHLETE LOOK LIKE?

The Correct Pride Gym Uniform

- No jewelry (except small stud earrings and a watch)
- Plain red, black, grey or white plastic, fabric or elastic headband
- Plain red, black, grey or white head coverings (worn only for religious purposes) (No bows, flowers, rhinestones, patterned scarves, etc.)
- Visible tattoos must be covered
- Gym shirt, PRIDE logo sweatpants or shorts, and sneakers on gym days
- No sweatshirts or jackets except Pride sweatshirts and fleeces



Appropriate school appearance

Please read and discuss the uniform with your child. ***In addition to the uniform specifications, the following are not appropriate and are not permitted at school:***

- Face or tongue piercings
- Hoops or dangling earrings of any size
- Multiple stud earrings
- Make-up
- Headbands that dangle or drape
- Grills or dental appliances used for cosmetic purposes
- Head coverings except those worn for religious purposes
- Visible tattoos (They must be covered)

Refer also to the section titled **Professionalism and Grooming**.

Casual Wear

Pride students may not wear clothing that contains language, pictures or messages that are violent, vulgar, offensive, obscene, or libelous; that denigrate others on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, national origin, gender, sexual orientation or disability; or that promote the use of tobacco, alcohol, drug use or violence. Clothing and jewelry may not feature language, images or messages forbidden under the Student Code of Conduct or otherwise contrary to the school's educational mission. **Students may not wear frayed or ripped jeans, or clothing that is very tight or so loose that it does not stay on, such as sagging pants. No clothing may be worn that reveals undergarments, or that exposes the buttocks, back, breasts, chest, belly, upper thighs, or abdomen. Undergarments must be worn. Spandex leggings may not be worn unless they are opaque *and* covered to mid-thigh by a skirt, dress or pants. Dresses and skirts must have hems no more than three inches above the knee. No strapless tops or dresses, spaghetti strap tops or tank tops may be worn. Sneakers or shoes with wheels (Heelies), flip-flops, open-backed, high-heeled, and platform-type shoes are unsafe and may not be worn at school. No head coverings may be worn except those worn for religious purposes.**

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS AND CODE OF CONDUCT

The behavior guidelines at Pride Academy are based on our core values of peace, respect, integrity, determination and empathy. The following expectations are set for the student body.

Classroom:

- Show respect for all staff members
- Follow directions
- Come prepared for work
- Display classroom courtesy
- Be kind: Keep hands, feet, objects, hurtful words and actions to yourself
- Help care for school property
- Respect the property of other students
- Follow the classroom rules in each room
- Do not eat in class

Playground:

- Use all playground equipment properly
- Play only in areas assigned to your grade
- Make sure there is no rough play or fighting
- Get permission before re-entering the building
- Line up quickly and be silent when requested

Common Room:

- Talk quietly and use good table manners
- Keep food and utensils on tray
- Keep your table area clean
- Help out when requested
- Do more than your share
- Never take food or drink out of the Common Room without permission
- Walk quietly in a single file line
- Wait your turn in the lunch line
- Raise your hand quietly to leave the table for any reason

Assemblies:

- Stay in your seat until dismissal
- Be courteous: Watch and listen attentively.
- Track the speaker
- Clap in support of others
- Respect and respond to the signal for silence

General Building Rules

- Respect yourself, others, your family, and property
- Be silent in common areas including hallways, stairways, Common Room (when requested), and restrooms
- Never leave an assigned area without a written pass or permission
- Walk when in the building
- Leave gum, candy, and soda at home
- Leave toys, portable music and video players, and other valuables at home
- The school is not responsible for damage, theft, or loss of personal items
- Cooperate with staff and administration: Help us to help you
- Don't pollute our school with rude, indecent, or obscene words or actions
- Solve problems and differences peacefully
- Practice good manners at all times: Say please, thank you, excuse me, I apologize and you're welcome when appropriate
- Don't litter, graffiti, spit or otherwise deface our school
- Use restrooms responsibly: Clean up before you leave. Do more than your share.
- Be honest. Don't take credit for work that's not yours; don't steal; don't forge signatures, or lie to the staff, teachers or one another.
- Do what's right in all situations.
- If you find something of value that doesn't belong to you, turn it in to the Dean of Students or to the Main Office.

Any member of the community can and will hold others accountable to meet these expectations and to help keep our school great.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND CONSEQUENCES

Everything we do at Pride Academy Charter School is intended to help our students develop the skills, knowledge and character they will need to succeed here and beyond. This includes our system of holding students accountable for behavior. Positive behavior is rewarded and negative behaviors receive an appropriate consequence. In each instance, we seek to encourage students to reflect on negative behaviors and to view poor choices as opportunities to grow and make better choices in the future.

Accountability Incentives

All Pride Academy Charter School students will participate in a school-wide Accountability Incentive program in which students earn points weekly based upon behavior. The points earned will be redeemable for rewards to be established by the teachers, students and administration. By reviewing performance weekly, students can begin to recognize patterns in their behavior. Students who have made poor behavior choices will learn to make better choices.

Fighting

Pride Academy is a safe school. Fights are rare occurrences. Students who fight or even play fight should expect to be suspended. We do not allow hitting or hitting back under any circumstances. When students engage in physical violence, it puts both their safety and the safety of others at risk. Behaviors that encourage fights, such as gossiping, spreading rumors, and instigating do not support a peaceful school environment and therefore have no place in our community. Students who engage in these behaviors should also expect to be suspended.

Lastly, fights rarely occur without an audience. Our stance regarding fights is that students may not instigate, participate, or spectate. Students who have knowledge of an impending fight or who witness fighting must alert a teacher, administrator or other adult immediately.

Fighting and all behaviors that encourage fighting violate the Student Code of Conduct and will result in an appropriate accountability consequence.

Resolving Student Conflicts

If a student has a dispute or disagreement with another student, or is unhappy with peers, he or she must try to find a positive, non-violent way to resolve differences. Students should speak to a teacher, the Dean of Students, the school social worker, an administrator or a Peer Mediator, so that the problem can be handled peacefully.

Accountability Consequences

We recognize that good behavior takes time both to teach and to learn. The PACS Learning Cycle will be an integral part of helping students to manage their behavior. By utilizing the key components of the PACS Learning Cycle, questioning, seeking, understanding, and responding, students will examine themselves and their behavior, and learn to understand and respond appropriately to challenges.

Teachers handle most of the inappropriate behaviors that occur in the classroom using Pride Academy's Behavior and Classroom Management system. This system is used for all students

whether they start an action, instigate a problem, retaliate, or join in. Behavior addressed by the policy includes, but is not limited to:

Defying an adult, fighting, hitting, kicking, spitting, scratching, threatening, bullying, shoving, name-calling, inappropriate language, biting, tripping, pinching, any behavior that could result in harm to self or others, or disruption of the learning environment, theft or possession of stolen property, destruction of property, truancy, lewdness, weapon or prohibited item possession, sale, or distribution, possession or being under the influence of any illicit substance, repetition of any other offense, and all types of harassment, intimidation and bullying.

Other behaviors may also be considered inappropriate and will be acted upon on a case-by-case basis. Pride Academy students are committed to their education. Because of this, the great majority of our students live in accordance with our core values. These students will be recognized for exemplifying Pride Academy's core values.

Corporal Punishment

Physical discipline is never practiced at Pride Academy Charter School. We respect the right of parents and guardians to address their children's disciplinary issues, however, parents and guardians may not administer physical discipline on school property. Teachers and staff may not physically discipline students under any circumstances and may not accept parental permission to do so. This policy applies to all Pride Academy Charter employees, including those who are family members of students.

Accountability Conferences

The accountability conference is the first step in growing and developing the core values of peace, respect, integrity, determination and empathy in individual students. The conference is an opportunity to improve student behavior and academic performance, or to examine and address problems between students and teachers, staff, or administration in a way that heals and fosters trust. During the accountability conference, the student may meet with one or more of the following:

- Teacher or staff member
- Parent or guardian
- Social Worker
- Person of influence (a friend, counselor, teacher, etc. whom the student regards highly)
- Administrator

These parties meet to help the student reflect upon and understand his or her behavior including strengths and areas that represent opportunities for growth. Everyone involved works together to establish a plan to help the student achieve his or her goals. Several accountability conferences may be held to review or revise goals, assess progress, assign consequences, etc.

When students have been referred to the Dean of Students for significant or repeated issues, a parent or guardian will be notified. The parent or guardian may be required to attend an accountability conference and may also be notified of the assigned accountability consequence.

Peace Circle

The Peace Circle is a meeting that may include any number of community members who are in conflict. The Peace Circle helps members resolve problems in a way that models the core values of peace,

respect, integrity, determination and empathy among students and other school community members. Participants practice active listening and work together to respectfully, peacefully, and honestly work out differences in a way that empowers the individuals and strengthens our community. A Peace Circle typically includes one or more administrators who facilitate the meeting; and,

- Student(s)
- Teacher(s) or staff member(s)
- Parent(s) or guardian(s)
- Social Worker
- Person of influence (a friend, counselor, teacher, etc. whom the student regards highly)

Students who are trained and experienced in Peace Circle practices may also moderate. Parties speak respectfully about relationship issues. The shared goal of participants is to understand and take responsibility for their respective roles in a conflict and to use the power each holds as an individual to change and grow through positive resolution. Members of the circle acknowledge the strengths and positive attributes of others and themselves, and learn to give others the benefit of the doubt. The ultimate goal is to promote peace within the relationship and to spread that peace, and the peaceful resolution process throughout the community. Participants convene as many times as necessary to resolve issues.

Peer Mediation

Peer Mediators are students who have been trained to help students in conflict resolve their issues in a manner that is peaceful and constructive. Students may be referred to Peer Mediation by a teacher or administrator or they may request to meet with a Peer Mediator by contacting one of the school social workers.

ALTERNATIVE BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTIONS

At any point in the accountability process students may also be required to complete one or more additional tasks such as serve a teacher, Saturday, or recess accountability, write a reflective essay or research paper, or deliver an oral or written apology to an individual, a class, or to the student body. Students may be assigned community service where they perform tasks under parent or staff supervision as restitution for behavior that hurt the school community. A parent or guardian may be required to attend classes daily with a student (shadowing) to observe behavior and/or support behavior modification. Additional interventions that authorized school personnel may initiate in response to student behaviors include:

- Referral for school support services
- Referral to outside counseling
- Referral to Juvenile Court or law enforcement

Alternative interventions are intended to:

- Offer students appropriate support
- Help students think deeply about making better future choices
- Help develop a sense of obligation to the school community at large
- Help students make restitution to the community
- Ensure the safety of the school community
- Ensure that teachers can teach and all students have the opportunity to learn

These steps may be implemented in addition to or in place of any or all measures at the discretion of Pride Academy administration.

SATURDAY ACCOUNTABILITY POLICY

One of the most important ways in which Pride Academy strives to establish positive partnerships with parents is by engaging parents in the process of supporting student behavior. When parents and schools unite to work toward the common goal of consistently appropriate, positive school behavior, students achieve success at greater rates.

Few things have a greater impact on student achievement than classroom behavior. At Pride Academy, we seek to have classrooms that are safe and disciplined at all times. We want all students to feel welcomed and able to do their best. When students fail to uphold the core values of Pride Academy, it impacts teaching and learning for themselves and often, for others as well.

Because we at Pride Academy respect the roles parents and guardians have as their child's first and most influential teacher, your support and partnership are essential when behavior is a concern. Saturday Accountability may be assigned for Code of Conduct and Core Value violations, either as an alternative to suspension or, in addition to other accountability measures, at the discretion of school administration.

Students must attend Saturday Accountability together with their parent or guardian.

Accountability takes place from 10:00 a.m. until 12:00 noon, unless otherwise specified. During the Accountability period, parents or guardians and their children will work together on the day's activity. This may be a reflective exercise targeting the student's behavior, attendance at a parent/child workshop, presentation or discussion, or; it may be another type of activity such as an academic assignment or community service where a student is assigned a responsibility such as cleaning an area of the building under the supervision of a parent or guardian. The day's assignment for Saturday Accountability will be determined by school administration.

Saturday Behavior Expectations

During Saturday Accountability, students may not:

- Socialize
- Draw
- Play games
- Engage in distracting behaviors
- Eat
- Sleep or put head down
- Display or use cell phone
- Display or use electronic devices (i.e., iPods, video games or CD players)

PARENTS: Please abide by these expectations as well. When you respect our rules, you set a positive example for your child to follow.

Saturday Dress Code

Students must report to Saturday Accountability in full dress uniform. *A gym uniform or a combination of dress and gym uniform is not acceptable.* Parents and guardians of students who report to Saturday Accountability out of uniform will be asked to return the student home to change clothing. Parent and child must make up the missed time on the following scheduled Saturday.

Lateness to Saturday Accountability

Students must report to Saturday Accountability promptly at the specified time, which is usually 10:00 a.m. Students who report late will be required to attend the next scheduled Saturday with a parent or guardian to make up the time missed.

Notification of Saturday Accountability

Students who receive a Saturday Accountability receive a notice that is addressed to a parent or guardian. The notice contains a description of the incident resulting in the Accountability and the scheduled date and time of attendance. ***It is the responsibility of the student to take the Saturday Accountability notice home and give it to the custodial parent or guardian. Failure of a student to give the notice to the parent or guardian will not excuse the student from attending or from being suspended for non-attendance.***

Failure to Report to Saturday Accountability

Students who fail to report with a parent or guardian to Saturday Accountability will receive a one day suspension. The suspension is usually served during the following school week. ***A student who misses Saturday Accountability due to illness must present a doctor's note to the Dean of Students on the first day back to school.***

Saturday Attendance and Rescheduling

Saturday Accountability is not held every week. Parents, guardians and students must attend on their scheduled date. ***Parents/guardians must contact the Dean of Students to reschedule before the date of the Accountability.***

Saturday Accountability Offenses

Offenses for which students may be assigned Saturday Accountability include, but are not limited to:

- Disorderly conduct
- Gum chewing or eating during unauthorized times
- Lost Pride Scholar charts (Chronic)
- Repeated incidents of tardiness to class or to school
- Repeated uniform violations
- Minor acts of insolence or defiance toward a school staff member.
- Obscenity, profanity, or vulgarity
- Repeated failure to obtain parent/guardian signature

Students who fail to serve all Saturday Accountabilities before the end of the school year, may be excluded from school trips and end of year fun activities or, in the case of graduating 8th grade students, lose the right to participate in graduation-related activities, etc.

SUSPENSION

Suspension is used when a student demonstrates behavior that represents a major violation of the core values, disrupts school operations, or puts self, others, or the community at actual or perceived risk of harm. Whether a student receives an in or out of school suspension is contingent upon several factors including the nature and severity of the infraction. We

understand that in and out of school suspension may create hardships for parents who must miss or arrive late to work or make alternate arrangements for student pick-up and childcare, but please understand this is not our intention. Suspension is used when a student demonstrates behavior that represents a major violation of the core values, interferes with teaching and learning, or is harmful to self, others, or the community. It is intended to teach valuable lessons about accountability, the responsibility of community membership, and the consequences of violating accepted standards of behavior. There are two types of suspension:

- In School Suspension (ISS)
- Out of School Suspension (OSS)

Reasonable efforts shall be made to contact the parent or guardian by telephone or in person to advise of suspension, whether in or out of school. If warranted by your child's behavior, you may be requested to pick your child up from school within the hour if he or she is suspended. Students who have received a suspension may not stay after school or participate in any extracurricular activities including sports. To assist us in contacting you, please ensure that Mrs. Dockery of the Business Office always has up to date, accurate contact information for you.

Suspension of Students with IEPs

The regulation regarding suspension of students with special needs will be followed. For those students, if total number days suspended approaches ten (10), a review of the Individual Education Plan will take place and additional services will be provided, if warranted.

Informal Conference

Suspension will be preceded by an informal conference by the principal or designee with the student and whenever practicable, the teacher, supervisor or school employee who witnessed the behavior(s) leading to the suspension. The conference may be omitted if the principal or designee determines that an emergency exists. An "emergency" involves a clear and present danger to the lives, safety or health of students or school personnel. If a student is suspended without a conference, both the parent or guardian and student shall be notified of the student's right to return to school for the purpose of a conference. In such cases, the student must be picked up from school immediately or within the hour and may return with the parent or guardian for the conference.

Suspension Notices

At the time of the suspension, a school employee will make a reasonable effort to ensure that the parent or guardian is contacted by telephone or in person. When a student is suspended, the parent or guardian will also be notified in writing of the suspension and the specific offense committed by the student. It is the student's responsibility to deliver the written notice to the parent. The notice will include a brief description of the behavior leading to the suspension and will specify whether the suspension is an In School (ISS) or Out of School (OSS) suspension. The notice must be signed by

the parent and returned to the Principal or Dean of Students along with any other assignments given in relation to the suspension. **It is the student's responsibility to give the notice to the appropriate parent or guardian.**

In School Suspension (ISS)

Students in ISS remain in the ISS room for the entire school day from 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. A parent or guardian must sign the student into ISS each morning by 8:00 a.m. and out each afternoon at 4:00 p.m. for every day of ISS. Students will work independently on assignments under testing conditions, or complete silence. Students may speak only to the ISS Coordinator. Students must surrender cell phones to the ISS coordinator upon entry to the ISS room. Phones will be returned to the parent, guardian or other adult who signs the student out of ISS at 4:00 p.m. Students must follow regular class rules, including remaining seated unless given permission and raising hands before speaking. Students assigned to ISS may not travel through the building without an escort. Lunch and bathroom breaks will be scheduled and supervised by the ISS Coordinator, or a covering member of the staff or administration. An excessive number of ISS Referrals will adversely affect enrollment in Pride Academy.

Early Departure from ISS

Students who leave school before 4:00 p.m. when assigned to ISS must report to ISS the following morning with a parent or guardian to serve the balance of the suspension.

Out of School Suspension (OSS)

Students on Out of School Suspension (OSS) are required to remain out of school for the duration of the suspension period. They may not participate in sports or clubs, attend school functions, or be present on school grounds during that time. During OSS, students are expected to complete any homework assigned on the date of suspension in addition to any reflective assignments, letters of apology and Suspension Apology. Parents/guardians must attend Morning Assembly with students returning from OSS, at which time the student must submit a written apology and recite the Pride Promise.

Returning from Suspension—In and Out of School (ISS and OSS)

A student who has received an In School or Out of School Suspension must return, accompanied by a parent or adult guardian by 7:45 a.m. on the specified day and report directly to the Principal, unless otherwise directed by Pride Academy Administration. The student must be prepared to recite the Pride Promise during the Morning Assembly. The parent or adult guardian must remain present for the student's recitation, which will take place, at or about 8:00 a.m. Every attempt will be made to expedite recitations so parents and guardians wait no longer than necessary.

Parents and Guardians—Improving Student Behavior

Parent and guardian response to suspension is the key to improved student behavior. We understand that a suspension can bring both disappointment and anger. As parents, our instinct is to protect and defend our children. We request that you avoid responding emotionally to the suspension and resist the urge to share negative feelings within your child's hearing. ***Please reserve judgment, until you have met with or spoken with an administrator and have heard the complete story.*** At

Pride Academy, we want our students in school where they can learn and grow. When this is not possible, please understand that there is a good reason for the suspension.

Although your child will spend time outside of the classroom, while suspended, suspension can provide an opportunity for your child to learn a different but still valuable lesson. How effective a learning experience comes from suspension, and the likelihood that the suspension will result in a positive change in behavior depends largely on your response. ***Pride Academy parents are requested to support the school's decision by not using days of suspension, In School or Out of School, to engage in fun activities and by administering a consequence at home during the suspension.*** At home consequences can be additional chores, a significantly earlier bedtime, or withholding activities such as going outside, attending upcoming events, losing TV, computer, and/or telephone privileges or playing video games during the time of suspension and for a clearly specified period afterward. By setting clear expectations regarding behavior and communicating with us regularly for updates, you send your child the message that *you and the school are working together to help him or her succeed.* By allowing your child to gradually earn his or her privileges back based upon reports from school, you provide a powerful incentive for positive change.

It is fully expected that parents and guardians will honor In and Out of School suspensions. Parents may never bring students to school when they have received an Out of School Suspension or choose to exchange an Out of School Suspension for an In School Suspension as a matter of convenience. The decision to impose In or Out of School Suspension lies solely with Pride Academy Administration, and is not subject to negotiation. Violating suspension by being present in school or on school grounds during a suspension constitutes a **Major Violation** and may result in a consequence ranging from an additional suspension up to and including expulsion depending on the offense and the student's disciplinary record. Please refer to the section of this document titled **Major Infractions**, under the subheading **Abidance with Sanctions** for additional information.

ANTI-BULLYING BILL OF RIGHTS

In January of 2011, New Jersey enacted the toughest anti-bullying legislation in the country, the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights. The legislation establishes a twenty-four hour timeline within which school personnel must report bullying to the school principal or the designated Anti-Bullying Specialist or Coordinator. An investigation of the incident must begin within the next day and the issue must be resolved within ten (10) school days.

The law defines harassment, intimidation or bullying as “any gesture, any written, verbal or physical act, or any electronic communication, whether it be a single incident or a series of incidents, that is reasonably perceived as being motivated either by any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or a mental, physical or sensory disability, or by any other distinguishing characteristic, that takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, on a school bus, or off grounds as provided for in section 16 of P.L.2010, c122(C.18A:37-15-3), that substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other students and that:

- a. a reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, will have the effect of physically or emotionally harming a student or damaging the student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm to his person or damage to his property; or
- b. has the effect of insulting or demeaning any student or group of students in such a way as to

- cause substantial disruption in, or substantial interference with, the orderly operation of the school;
- c. creates a hostile environment at school for the student; or
 - d. infringes on the rights of the student at school.(cf: P .L.2007, c.129,s.1).

Pride Academy Charter School has always been proactive in our approach to harassment, intimidation and bullying (HIB) incidents of all kinds. We have taken a firm stand against disrespect, HIB incidents, and violence whether this behavior occurred on school grounds during school, before or after school as students commute to and from school, or offsite via the Internet, text message, or through social media. We did so because we understand that schools must be safe for optimal teaching and learning conditions to prevail. Now, the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights mandates that we address issues of bullying and cyber bullying, some of which may occur while students are at home or at another non-school location. Although these situations may occur in private homes, they have a negative affect on our students' sense of safety and wellbeing at school. We will therefore continue to address these issues as we always have, supported now by the letter of the law.

In compliance with this legislation, we will notify the parents of all students involved in HIB incidents. We will advise of the results of our investigation, accountability consequences, and offer counseling and intervention. We will also implement specific teacher training around the issue of HIB and suicide prevention, incorporate anti-bullying instruction appropriate to each grade, and celebrate an annual Week of Respect that will feature anti-bullying programming.

This passage is a brief synopsis of key elements of the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights legislation. For the full text of the law, please refer to the Pride Academy Charter School website: www.prideacs.org

HELP PREVENT BULLYING

Parents and guardians can play an important role in preventing and eliminating harassment, intimidation, and bullying.

1. Monitor your child's cell phone text messages, and social media pages for inappropriate images and content. Pride Academy strongly discourages students from maintaining pages on such sites, Tweeting, etc., as these are frequently breeding grounds for conflict.
2. Advise your child to avoid the following behaviors:
 - Name calling
 - Pushing, hitting, shoving, tripping, etc.
 - Isolating or ostracizing individual students, e.g., when a group of students refuses to speak to or sit near another classmate (passive bullying).
 - Making fun of others based upon appearance, race, religion, culture, name, food choices, real or perceived sexual orientation, or affectional preference, weight, hair texture/length/style, complexion, physical ability, etc.
 - Verbal abuse and disrespect, direct or indirect
 - Posting rumors, threats or disrespect via social media, such as Twitter, MySpace, or Facebook, telephone, text, email, or blog (cyber bullying).
 - ***Participating in cyber bullying by "liking" or approving of rumors, threats or disrespect via social media, such as Twitter, MySpace, Facebook, telephone, text, email, or blog.***

- Verbal, written, or physical threats, such as a raised fist, or other gestures implying the threat of physical violence
- intimidating or inciting others to violence against a targeted individual
- Controlling others by force, threat, or coercion, e.g., “If you talk to her, I won’t be your friend.”

Each of these behaviors represents a violation of the Pride Academy’s Student Code of Conduct and Core Values and as defined by the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights, constitute harassment, intimidation and bullying. Some of these behaviors represent **Major Infractions** under the Student Code of Conduct and can result in accountability consequences up to and including expulsion from Pride Academy. **Students who bully will receive a disciplinary consequence the first time the behavior is reported.**

3. Let us know if your child reports experiencing this type of behavior from others, or if your child reports witnessing others being mistreated.
4. Advise your child to immediately report incidents to Ms. Brower, Dean of Students/Anti-Bullying Specialist and Coordinator, Mrs. Fiona Thomas, Principal, or Rose Mary Dumenigo, Assistant School Director.

Please support our efforts as we strive to maintain an environment that is secure, orderly and peaceful for all.

SUICIDE PREVENTION

Youth suicide is a serious health concern affecting our students. At Pride Academy, the educational environment exposes our students to close contact with caring adults, and therefore plays a key role in suicide prevention. The school setting creates opportunity to keep children safe from self-harm by identifying warning signs, intervening when suicide threats/attempts occur, establishing a positive school environment and providing resources that are responsive to our students’ personal, social, and emotional needs.

Because student safety is of paramount importance at Pride Academy, any student that exhibits behavior that indicates he or she presents a risk of harm to self or others will be addressed as a matter of utmost seriousness. To reduce the risk of suicide and increase crisis response at Pride Academy, a **Threat to Life and Suicide Prevention** policy has been enacted. In accordance with this policy, any student determined to present a threat to self, others, or property will be referred for a medical or psychiatric evaluation at a hospital emergency room and for follow up counseling both in and out of school.

Any student who feels he or she needs to speak with someone regarding feelings of hopelessness or a desire to inflict harm to self or others is encouraged to speak with any trusted adult in the school. **Please explain to your child that any statement, made orally or in writing, that indicates the possibility of harm to self, others or property, will immediately trigger this procedure. Students must understand that they may NEVER joke, with peers or with any adult in our community, about harming themselves, others, or property.** Return to school will be contingent upon submission of official documentation that supports a return to school. Threats include, but are not limited to:

- Threats of suicide
- Threats to kill or cause serious physical harm to another
- Threats to destroy the school building or other places/property

If the parent or guardian chooses not to seek the recommended medical attention and counseling following a student threat of harm to self, others or property, the student's return to school will be contingent upon parent or guardian completion and submission of a disclaimer that defends, indemnifies and holds harmless the Pride Academy Charter School and its employees, administrators and designees for any and all claims relating to injuries, accidents, disease, property damage and/or property loss which may occur as a result of the parent or guardian's decision not to follow Pride Academy's recommendations.

MAJOR INFRACTIONS

Any student who accrues six (6) suspensions or who has received a lesser number of suspensions, one of which includes any suspension for a **Major Infraction**, may be referred by school administration to the Pride Academy Board of Trustees with a recommendation for an expulsion hearing. **Major Infractions** are behaviors that represent serious violations of the Code of Conduct and/or require administrative intervention. Major infractions may result in suspension or expulsion and include, but are not limited to:

Assault

A student shall not assault, threaten, or behave in such a way, or incite others to behave in such a way as causes, or could cause, physical injury or produce fear of physical injury, to any school employee, student, or other person on school premises, while in the custody and control of the school, or in the course of a school-related activity including transit to and from school.

Dangerous Weapons and Instruments

Pride Academy has a zero tolerance policy for weapons and dangerous items. A student shall not possess, handle, transmit, or conceal any object which is designed for the purpose of inflicting bodily harm to others on school premises, while attending school events away from school grounds, or while in transit to and from school. This includes, but is not limited to, devices that administer electric shocks, chains, clubs, razors, box cutters, bats, laser light pointers, incendiary devices including matches, lighters, firecrackers or explosives of any type, and *any type of gun* including replicas and toys. Students are not to have these items in their possession at any time while on school property, traveling to and from school, during the lunchtime on or off campus, or at any school-sponsored events or activities.

Any student who has knowledge of the presence of firearms or other weapons on the person of a PRIDE Academy student, including during transit to and from school, on school grounds, or at any school-related function is required to notify school administration immediately.

Damage to School or Private Property

Students shall not damage, attempt to damage, steal, or attempt to steal, any school or private property while on school premises. School property includes, but is not limited to buildings, school grounds, buses, supplies, including fire extinguisher, and equipment.

Disruption of, or Interference with, Curricular or Extracurricular Activities

A student shall not, by use of violence, force, coercion, threat, demonstration, false alarm, false phone call to an emergency number, bomb threat, vulgar or obscene language, gestures, or printed material, ignition of fires, distribution of text via e-mail, telephone or other means incite others to violent or disruptive conduct, or in any other manner cause material disruption or interference with curricular or extra-curricular activities, or cause threatened or actual harm to others.

Gangs and Gang Membership

As a community committed to scholarship, safety, and the core values of peace and respect, gangs and gang activity are strictly forbidden. Students may not be affiliated with gangs, wear gang colors or bandanas, use hand signs that imitate or imply gang affiliation, recruit other students for gang membership, intimidate or coerce others with real or implied threats of gang retaliation, or promote gang membership in any way. Behavior that contradicts this policy will result in suspension and referral for expulsion from Pride Academy

Narcotics, Drugs, Alcoholic Beverages or Tobacco

Students shall not possess, use, transfer, conceal, sell, attempt to sell, deliver, or be under the influence of narcotics, drugs, or alcohol, or in any manner engage in drug abuse while on school property or attending any school-related function. No student shall possess, use, transfer, conceal, sell, or deliver any object deemed to be drug related while on school grounds or attending any school related function including during transit to and from school. Students shall not possess, distribute, or use tobacco while on school premises or while attending any school related function including during transit to and from school. Law enforcement will be notified of contraband possession, as required by statute, and the student will be subject to suspension and/or expulsion.

Any student suspected to be under the influence of a controlled substance will be required to have an immediate physical examination and drug test by a physician. If a student's parent or guardian cannot arrange an immediate physical examination, the school will contact the school's physician to perform the test. If the test results are positive, the student must have an evaluation and assessment conducted by a drug and alcohol counselor to determine the nature and severity of the problem. The student must provide evidence of compliance with recommended treatment to remain at PRIDE Academy. A repeated violation will result in expulsion.

Truancy

Students shall not be absent from school or from any assigned location in school for any unauthorized reason. Students, once present at school, are expected to attend all scheduled periods, including lunch and recess, and may not leave school without proper authorization.

Threats and Intimidation of Others

Students shall not intimidate, bully, abuse, sexually or verbally harass by any means including electronically, by phone, text message, or Internet, or otherwise extort favors or property from any other student or school personnel nor shall any student incite others to do so.

Improper Social Behavior

A student shall not expose any part of his or her anatomy in any socially deviant or sexually suggestive manner while under jurisdiction of the school. Nor shall any student engage in any sexual conduct or engage in any amorous physical contact with any other person while under jurisdiction of the school.

Abidance with Sanctions

A student shall not refuse to abide by any legal course of action set by the school administration, any teacher, or any court order related to improper behavior during school, school activities, or transit to and from school. Suspensions must be honored.

Other Conduct

A student shall not engage in any type of conduct not specifically set forth above which conduct is not in compliance with socially accepted standards of behavior.

Abiding and Abetting in the Commission of a Violation of the Above Rules

A student shall not aid or abet another student in the commission of a violation of any of the above rules. Any student who does so is subject to the same disciplinary consequences as the violator.

EXPULSION PROCEDURES

A student recommended for expulsion is entitled to a hearing to determine whether the student should be dismissed. The student will be suspended during the expulsion process. Home instruction will be provided in accordance with New Jersey Administrative Code. The hearing will be held in a timely manner, not to exceed (30) days after the School Principal or designee determines that a major infraction or series of offenses warranting expulsion has been committed and that at least one of the following findings is substantiated.

1. That other means of correction are not feasible or have failed to bring about proper conduct.
2. That due to the nature of the violations, the presence of the student causes a continuing danger to the physical safety of the student or others.

The hearing will be presided over by the Board of Trustees of PRIDE Academy. Written notice of the hearing shall be forwarded to the student and the student's parent or guardian at least ten (10) days before the date of the hearing. The notice will include:

- The date and place of the hearing
- A statement of the specific facts, charges and offenses upon which the proposed dismissal is based
- A copy of PRIDE Academy's student discipline guidelines and/or the grounds for suspension and expulsion
- Notification of the student, parent, or guardian's obligation to provide information about the student's status in PRIDE Academy to any other district in which the student seeks enrollment
- The opportunity for the student or the student's parent or guardian to appear in person or to employ and be represented by counsel

- The right to inspect and obtain copies of all documents to be used at the hearing
- The opportunity to confront and question all witnesses who testify at the hearing
- The opportunity to question all evidence presented and to present oral and documentary evidence on the student's behalf including witnesses

There will be zero tolerance for bringing a gun or deadly weapon to school for any assault on school employees or students. Expulsion may apply to a student who is repeatedly suspended and shows no evidence of desiring to change problem behaviors such as continued and willful disobedience and/or open defiance of authority. In each case, the student up for dismissal would have to be one who has not responded to other forms of discipline and support, such as behavior modification plans, detention, suspension, parental involvement and counseling.

Record of Hearing

A record of the hearing shall be made and may be maintained by any means, including electronic recording, as long as a reasonably accurate and complete written transcript of the proceedings can be made.

Presentation of Evidence

While technical rules of evidence do not apply to dismissal hearings, evidence may be admitted and used as proof only if it is the kind of evidence on which reasonable persons can rely in the conduct of serious affairs. The decision to dismiss a student must be supported by substantial evidence that the student committed a major infraction or series of offenses warranting expulsion.

Findings of fact shall be based solely on the evidence at the hearing. While no evidence shall be based solely on hearsay, sworn declarations may be admitted as testimony from witnesses whose disclosure of their identity or testimony at the hearing may be subject them to unreasonable risk of physical or psychological harm.

Written Notice to Dismiss

The School Principal or designee shall send written notice of the decision to expel to the student, parent or guardian. This notice shall include the following:

- The specific offense committed by the student
- Notification of the student, parent, or guardian's obligation to provide information about the student's status in PRIDE Academy to any other district in which the student seeks enrollment

STUDENT DUE PROCESS RIGHTS

Due process protects students from arbitrary and unreasonable decisions. Four important elements in due process procedures are:

- Students have the right to be informed in writing of the rules that regulate behavior and situations that will result in disciplinary measures.
- Students have the right to an informal hearing in all disciplinary actions, including the suspension process.
- Students have the right to a formal hearing in the expulsion process.
- Students have the right to appeal all decisions and be informed of all appeal procedures available to them

Students, regardless of age, must conduct themselves in a manner that does not disrupt the educational opportunities of others or disturb the orderly operation of the school. Students are responsible for regular attendance, conscientious effort in classroom work, properly maintaining textbooks and other school equipment, and conformance to school rules and regulations.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are an extension of classroom learning. We make every effort to have all students participate. In instances where student behavior is problematic, or may jeopardize the student's safety, a parent or guardian may be required to accompany the student on the trip and/or the student may not be permitted to attend.

GRADUATION AND GRADUATION ACTIVITIES

Eligibility for graduation and promotion to high school are determined by a student's academic performance. ***Participation in graduation events and activities is a privilege that must be earned through appropriate behavior and living Pride's core values.*** Students who violate the school's code of conduct may be excluded from graduation activities including, but not limited to, the graduation trip, dance, and the actual commencement ceremony itself.

LOST AND FOUND

Please check with the Main Office for the location of the Lost and Found. Please check the lost and found for your child's belongings periodically, as unclaimed items are retained for a limited time. Check with administration for valuable lost items.

SECURITY

The safety of our students is of primary importance. Please make sure your child understands that he or she should never admit anyone onto the school premises via side doors, etc. All visitors are required to enter designated doors and stop at the main office for clearance.

LOCK DOWN PROCEDURE

A Lockdown is state mandated practice of how students, staff and administrators should respond if armed or dangerous individuals entered the building. Students should respond in each instance as though they were responding to an actual emergency. Any time classroom teachers indicate a lockdown is in effect, students must respond as though to a real emergency and immediately do the following:

- **Maintain *absolute* silence.** Any noise will place the student and everyone nearby at grave risk of harm in an actual emergency.
- **Crouch out of sight in the areas designated by the teachers.** *This requires that students sit extremely close together.* Students may find this awkward, embarrassing, or uncomfortable, but again, they will be practicing to respond to the most dangerous situations. **Cooperation, complete seriousness, and absolute silence are essential.**
- **Sit silently and await additional instructions**
- **Do not leave designated hiding places, move or make a sound until instructed that it is safe to do so.**

FIRE ALARM PROCEDURE

Any time the fire alarm sounds, including during scheduled fire drills, students must:

- Line up immediately and be silent
- Walk silently to the designated exit and line up outside
- Stand quietly and await additional instructions

Do not re-enter the building until instructed to do so

CONCLUSION

We hope you have found this handbook helpful. Please read and discuss our policies with your child and any individuals who will be responsible for picking your child up from school. All visitors are expected to practice our core values and follow school policies. Feel free to make suggestions for additional content. We love to hear from you. Please keep this handbook nearby for your reference throughout the year. We look forward to working with you and your family this school year.