



2024-2025

**Parent Handbook
and**

Student Code of Conduct

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Mr. Michael Moore, Member
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Ms. Rose Mary Dumenigo Vice Principal
Dr. Charlene Jones, School Business Administrator
Ms. Robin Brower, Dean of Students, Anti-Bullying Specialist
Mrs. Jodi Wilson, Dean of Academics
Mr. Evan Geiger, Dean of Student Advancement
Mrs. Colleen Marash, Director of Special Education

BUSINESS OFFICE

Dr. Charlene Jones, School Business Administrator
Mrs. LaShonda Dockery, Assistant School Business Administrator

MAIN OFFICE

Ms. Sharde Critchlow, School Secretary
Ms. Camille Oates, Main Office Coordinator
(973) 672-3200

SCHOOL NURSE

Ms. Kande Agbere, School Nurse

SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS

Mr. Jumoke Charles, School Social Worker – 7th & 8th Grades
Mrs. Nanayaa Farl, School Social Worker – 5th & 6th Grades

INTRODUCTION

At Pride Academy Charter School, we are committed to partnering with you to ensure your child's growth and success. This Parent Handbook & Student Code of Conduct will introduce you to our philosophy, policies and procedures so you know what to expect from us and what we expect from our students and families. Please read and share it with your child. Our Student Code of Conduct is the roadmap to your child's success at Pride Academy. Whether your scholar is new to Pride or returning, we are happy that you are here.

IT TAKES A VILLAGE

We invite you to take an active role in our community by attending Parent Council and Ubuntu Family meetings, Parent Parties, and other school events. Research shows that students whose parents play an active role in their education perform at higher levels than others. Parent//guardian attendance is required for:

- IEP meetings, Progress Report and Report Card conferences—Critical information is shared.
- Accountability Conferences to discuss behavior, academic or other concerns.
- Restorative meetings involving other students, parents and or school staff.
- Health Emergency—Students must be picked up by a parent/guardian or emergency contact within forty-five (45) minutes of notification.
- Behavior Crisis or Out of School Suspension - Pick up is required within forty-five (45) minutes of notification.
- Justice Detention – Parent or guardian must sign student out and meet with an administrator, if requested.
- Saturday Accountability –Parent or guardian must accompany student and work with the scholar on the day's activity.
- Any other time parent or guardian presence or attendance is requested.

We understand that parent or guardian attendance may inconvenience you, but this is never our intent. Our students grow and achieve the most when their parents and guardians are behind us. We need you.

WHAT ENROLLMENT AND CONTINUED ENROLLMENT MEAN

When you enroll or continue your child's enrollment at Pride, you affirm your commitment to abide by decisions made regarding student behavior and you agree to respectfully present any concerns you may have to school administration. You are agreeing to our philosophy and expectation that all scholars uphold the Pride Academy Student Code of Conduct, Core Values, school rules and policies. Please be prepared to support our school's mission, values, and Code of Conduct by having your child complete homework, signing and returning documentation promptly and ensuring your scholar arrives and is picked up on time. Enrollment and continued enrollment require your commitment to have your child respect our staff, school property, rules and procedures, including

cell phone storage and use rules. It also means you will ensure that your child wears the full proper uniform to school every day.

Unwillingness of students, parents, or guardians to honor the Pride Academy Student Code of Conduct, Core Values, uniform guidelines, practices, and policies contained herein will impede student success and may lead to consequences up to and including dismissal from Pride Academy. The policies in this book, some of which are more fully detailed on our website at Prideacs.org., will be in effect for the entire 2024-2025 school year. We will work to teach your child everything needed to succeed at Pride, however your child's first and most influential teacher is you.

THE PRIDE PHILOSOPHY – What We Believe

Pride Academy is characterized by a culture that is orderly, supportive, and focused on academic achievement. Our school emphasizes mutual care and respect. We take a positive approach to discipline, in which teachers seek to nurture and develop students' greatness and students are gradually led towards self-regulation. We expect students to be their best selves and to respect their teachers, classmates, school staff and property. Our staff will address students with respect and compassion. Administrators and teachers will work together to promote student achievement and ensure the Code of Conduct is consistently followed and fairly enforced.

As family, we support one another. Our teachers strive to create a sense of community in our classrooms. Students must come to school prepared and on time, ready to take an active role in learning and play a positive role in our community.

Pride Academy is shaped by five guiding principles or Core Values. The first of these Core Values is **Peace**. Violence has no place at Pride Academy. Violence includes physical or verbal abuse, and Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB) of any type, including Sexual Hsrassment. ***Fighting, play fighting, hitting, and hitting back are unsafe behaviors that are never allowed. Students who engage in these behaviors should expect to be suspended. We do not permit disrespect or "roasting". This includes name-calling and teasing, playful or otherwise, whether the subject of the behavior is present and aware or not. These behaviors hurt, make others feel unsafe, and create conflict in school and are therefore forbidden online, via social media, phone, or any other means.*** This has always been our policy. It is also the law. Please read the section titled: Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights to familiarize yourself and your child.

THE PRIDE VISION – The PLACE We Want to Be

To develop a community of scholars and philanthropists who can excel among their peers from surrounding communities, we envision Pride Academy as a school that provides our students with a strong academic foundation, with skills to lead and opportunities to be leaders, and with a better understanding of their role in their communities and the world at large. We envision Pride Academy as an integral part of the community we serve, where the power of families and the collective efforts of all members of "our village" are harnessed to support our students as they become critical thinkers, life-long learners, and agents of change in their families, their communities, and our world.

Pride Academy will be a PLACE that ignites and fosters the following in our school community:

Philanthropy:	Commit to the actions and ideals of service and social justice in our communities and our world.
Leadership:	Recognize our power as individuals to effect positive change.
Academic Achievement:	Apply the habits of questioning, seeking, understanding, and responding towards our personal growth as life-long learners, decision-makers, and problem solvers.
Cultural Awareness:	Explore and find value in our own cultural identity and the cultural identities of others.
Excellence:	Develop the knowledge, skills and resilience to achieve high expectations in our personal and professional lives.

OUR MISSION—What We Want for Your Child

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 CORE VALUES—Who We Strive to Be

The Pride Academy philosophy is based upon five Core Values:

Peace:	Conflicts will be resolved without violence. Students and adults will work together to create a calm, safe environment by learning and teaching how to avoid, de-escalate, and constructively resolve conflict.
Respect:	All members of the school community, 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 right of teachers to teach and of students to learn. We respect our purpose and our shared goal of student achievement.
Integrity:	Honesty is at the core of all that we say and do. We fulfill our obligations and commitments. We do not do things halfway. We do the right thing, <i>especially when no one is watching</i> .
Determination:	We do 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 guides our choices and conduct. We do not hurt each other physically or emotionally. We are kind and supportive of one another.

OUR CORE BELIEFS

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

- Students of all abilities thrive in a peaceful learning community that values respect, integrity, determination, and empathy for others.
- All students have 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 is 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—administrators, faculty, and parents—must live and embody the values that the school seeks to instill in our students.
- A culture that prizes goal setting, positive choices and perseverance equips students with the skills and mindset needed to seize future educational opportunities.
- By questioning, seeking, understanding, and responding, all members of our school community become active participants in the lifelong learning cycle essential for growth.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Pride Academy Charter School is governed by a Board of Trustees, which meets monthly. 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. Student or staff names may not be stated by attendees during the public portion of the Board meeting.

During a meeting, the Board may enter Executive Session to discuss confidential personnel or student issues. Members of the public who are in attendance are dismissed while the Board goes into closed session to discuss these matters.

ACADEMICS & 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. Pride Academy Scholars must:

- BE ON TIME to school, to classes and activities every day.
- KEEP THEIR CELL PHONE IN THEIR LOCKER all day, every day.
- RESPECT ADULTS AND PEERS.
- CARE FOR SCHOOL PROPERTY AND TECHNOLOGY.

- FOLLOW RULES AND DIRECTIONS.
- REPORT TO AND REMAIN IN ASSIGNED AREAS.
- HAVE A PASS AND/OR PERMISSION to leave the room.
- BE IN FULL, CORRECT UNIFORM every day.
- ATTEND A FULL DAY OF SCHOOL every day.
- LIVE THE CORE VALUES.
- CONTRIBUTE TO A SAFE, SUPPORTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT FOR ALL.
- WORK HARD in class.
- ARRIVE PREPARED for class.
- PARTICIPATE in all class activities.
- COMPLETE HIGH-QUALITY HOMEWORK every night.

PARENT & SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP- The Key to Success

We believe that your child's education is of paramount importance. We are eager to work with you to support your child and ensure they can succeed here. One of the most important things you can do to ensure your child's success is to build a strong connection to the school.

Parent Steps to Student Success:

1. Show your child that you are willing and eager to be active in the school and that you support the school administration, teachers, and policies.
2. Initiate regular communication with your child's teachers.
3. Ensure your child treats school property with respect and care, including any school owned computer whether it is issued for at home or in school use. The computer is a critical learning tool that will cost parents/guardians approximately \$100 to repair and \$200 or more to replace. Please discuss this with your child.
4. Take and return communication from your child's teachers and school administration immediately or as soon as possible.
5. Ensure your child wears the correct uniform each day. Pay attention to uniform details such as ensuring the dress uniform shirt is always worn with the dress pants or skirt and sneakers or black shoes.
6. Check nightly to ensure quality homework is completed. Sign and return notices and documents, etc. **If your child is required to have their agenda signed as part of an academic or behavior improvement plan, please sign it nightly.**
7. Make sure your child reports to school before 8:00 a.m. and avoid late fees by ensuring your child is picked up on time, within fifteen (15) minutes of dismissal.

These steps show your child that their education is important to you, that you and the school are on the same side and share the same goal—their success.

PARENT CONCERNS

We are eager to hear from you. If you have concerns, please do not share them with your child or within your child's hearing. If your child feels you are not supportive of the school, it can become difficult for your child to be respectful and fully committed to achievement in the classroom. Please address issues with school administration so we can allay your concerns.

Addressing Concerns – Using the Chain of Command

If you have a concern, please address it by following the chain of command below:

1. Calmly discuss the issue with the teacher or staff member directly connected to your concern.
2. *Please do not* discuss your concern with other teachers or staff members that are not directly involved in your child's situation.
3. Please listen respectfully and without judgment to what the teacher or staff member says regarding the situation, *especially if it differs from what your child has told you. Children may change or omit important details.* We want to help you and are eager to do so.
4. If the issue is not resolved with the teacher, speak to Robin S. Brower, Dean of Students, or Asgeir Ofstad, Principal.

PACS FRAMEWORK FOR ACTIVISM

From its conception, Pride Academy Charter School has been “dedicated to academic achievement, mastery of fundamental skills, positive leadership, and active service...” To that end, the Pride Academy founders developed the PACS “Framework for Activism”, an original system created to cultivate and strengthen higher order habits of mind that can be used in critical thinking and problem solving.

The Framework for Activism challenges Pride Scholars to “Question”, “Seek”, “Understand”, and “Act” on social issues that impact their communities and their world. Through the application of the Framework for Activism, Pride scholars develop proposals for annual grade-level service projects as part of our “Project Pride” service initiative, which challenges students to be community leaders and activists by working to address a variety of social issues. Fifth graders develop projects around the topic of Health. Sixth (6th) graders project focus is on Poverty. Seventh (7th) graders focus on Violence. Eighth (8th) graders project topic is Education.

Over the years, Pride Scholars have applied the critical thinking and problem-solving Framework for Activism to address issues such as gun violence, homelessness, pediatric cancer, drug abuse, and more.

HONOR ROLL

Pride Academy Charter School Honor Roll recognizes both scholastic and core value achievement. We do so because we believe 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, we emphasize the development of the person as well as the development of the scholar.

Core Value Honors recognizes consistent effort and behaviors that exemplify the Core Values of peace, respect, integrity, determination, and empathy. A Core Value Honor recipient must achieve 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.

The Honor Roll recognizes academic achievement. 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 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 Charter School 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

For students who do not meet the acceptable levels of proficiency based on state tests and are identified by teachers and/or parents to be underperforming 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 full potential. Such measures may include, but are not limited to the following:

- Recommending student attendance at summer academic enrichment programs, when offered
- Providing targeted Title I assistance in class, on the weekend, and/or after school
- Utilizing the school's Intervention and Referral Services program (I&RS) and procedures to identify areas of weakness and develop strategies for help
- Utilizing Child Study Team services after the I&RS intervention period or directly when warranted
- Reviewing and changing, 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

Initiating I&RS interventions in the General Education Program

- Parent, teacher and/or school professional submits a written referral to the Social Worker or Special Education Coordinator for a conference or I&RS Committee meeting.
- Social Worker or Special Education Coordinator schedules a meeting and contacts the parent/guardian.
- During the meeting, develop an intervention plan and the Social Worker, Special Education Coordinator or I&RS member is assigned to monitor it.
- The staff member 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 schedules 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.

Teacher/Staff Child Study Team Initiation

- The teacher/staff member completes referral documentation and forwards it to the Social Worker or Special Education Coordinator.
- Upon receipt of the referral documents, the Social Worker or Special Education Coordinator date and initial the referral documents, which initiates the 20-day timeline 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

Parent Initiation of Child Study Team Referral

- 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 dating the letter, which initiates the 20-day timeline 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

CELL PHONES & ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Every classroom and office at Pride Academy has a phone that students may use with teacher or administrator approval. Students are asked not to bring cell phones or devices such as cameras, tablets, smart watches and personal laptops to school. Students should not bring these items because of the potential disruption to the learning environment and the danger of damage, loss, or theft.

We understand that many students and parents rely on cell phones for communication after school. If a student brings a cell phone to school despite this direction, it must be turned OFF and put away before entering the building. **The phone must be placed in the student's own locker during homeroom or before entering class if a student arrives late. *The phone must stay in the locker until dismissal.***

Earbuds/Headphones

Students may not wear earbuds or headphones in bathrooms, classrooms, or hallways during school, unless authorized by the supervising teacher or an administrator. Earbuds and wireless headphones must be secured in the student's locker during homeroom or before entering class. Students that do not abide by rules for headphone and earbud use may have these items confiscated and held for parent pickup in addition to other consequences.

PHOTOGRAPHY & RECORDING POLICY

Students may not photograph, video or audio record school activities, teachers, peers, test, homework, or curriculum materials (unless legally required), or school facilities, transmit via any means or post said recordings online without the express consent of Pride Academy Charter School administration.

Students may never photograph, audio or video record themselves or others nor may they post or share photographs, audio or video taken in a bathroom, the nurse's office, in a locker room or in any other place or time where there is an expectation or need of privacy or during any other school activities without the express consent of Pride Academy Charter School administration.

Inappropriate Use & Possession of Cell Phone

Students found using a cell phone in school without permission or who use a phone or any device in a bathroom and/or to record peers, staff, class or playground activities, on or offsite school events, curriculum materials, assessments, etc., without the express permission of school administration, will have devices confiscated and held for parent pick up.

When used to record others surreptitiously or incidentally, cell phone use may violate others' rights to privacy. Any student who is found, through video or photographic evidence posted online or present elsewhere, to have used a phone to harass, intimidate, threaten, bully, or denigrate other school community members, or to impede or violate the privacy or rights of others in our school community whether it occurs in school or outside of school and it causes another member of the Pride Academy community to feel disrespected, violated or unsafe in school, may receive a disciplinary consequence including, but not limited to having their phone confiscated and held for parent or guardian pick up at the conclusion of any required investigation or a period of up to 10 days.

This means the student may not have access to the phone or be able to travel with the phone at dismissal on the day it is confiscated and for a maximum period of 10 days thereafter.

At Pride Academy to bring a cell phone to school is a privilege. ***Cell phones must be turned over to school administration until dismissal if the student does not have a combination lock and their own assigned locker. Students who violate cell phone policy in or out of school may be required to turn their phone over to a school administrator upon arrival each day for student pick up at dismissal or may lose the privilege to bring a phone to school altogether. Please discuss this with your child.***

Cyberbullying & Sexting

Pride Academy Charter School is committed to maintaining a culture of safety for all members of our community. When concerns arise in school related to cyber bullying of Pride students or the sharing of photographic or video images that are sexual in nature or that feature inappropriate images of underage children, the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights mandates that the school act. School Administration must open an investigation into the matter within twenty-four (24) hours of receiving the incident report. Allegations of HIB must be reported to school officials on the HIB Form 338 for

use by LEA personnel and contracted service providers or the IB form 338 for use by families and caregivers both available on our website at www.prideacs.org. During the investigation, school administrators will gather information including any cell phones that may contain material that is related to or the subject of the complaint. Parents and guardians will be requested to attend a meeting with school administration, at which point they will be informed of the nature and purpose of the investigation and their child's role. By law, the investigation must be completed within ten (10) days. Upon conclusion of investigation or within the ten (10) day investigation period, all phones are returned to parents and guardians, at which point the parents or guardians delete any inappropriate material in the presence of school administration.

PARENTS/GUARDIANS: Please teach your child to inform you of any inappropriate material they receive online, in a group chat, via phone or any other means, then bring any concerns you may have with content sent or posted by another Pride scholar to school administration *immediately*. **Ensure your child does NOT share inappropriate content by allowing others to view it, by posting or reposting it online or in a group chat, or by forwarding it to others, including to you or other family members. Inappropriate material featuring underage peers may violate child pornography statutes and require the involvement of law enforcement.**

Help Keep Your Child SAFE

Please closely monitor your children's Internet and cell phone use. Cell phones and Internet access open children to communication with strangers and provide a gateway to information that is neither developmentally appropriate nor safe. Your middle schooler needs your guidance and supervision. Although they may object, ***always know the lock code to your child's phone.*** Periodically, look through the phone. This may feel like an invasion of privacy, but it is *a matter of safety*. Look at the videos and photos on the phone. Look at recently deleted items. Read the text messages and group chats. Look at your child's social media profiles; many students have profiles under several different names. Make sure your child *only posts images that they would feel comfortable having prospective high schools, colleges, and employers see. What is posted on the Internet can remain associated with your child's name online forever.* **Students should never take or share photos or videos while undressed, partially dressed, or behaving in a sexually suggestive manner to post online or send to others. Such images can fall into the possession of dangerous individuals anywhere in the world. Please discuss this with your child.**

Damage, Loss and Theft of Cell Phones and Electronic Devices

Pride Academy will not investigate or search for lost, damaged or stolen student cell phones or devices. The school will not replace, repair or reimburse for any phone or device whether in the possession of the student or a school employee when lost, damaged or stolen.

UNIFORM & DRESS CODE

Pride Academy students are required to wear the appropriate Pride uniform to and from school daily, with the exception of school-approved dress down days. The uniform is our scholars' professional dress. It must be worn in the following ways that show pride and self-respect:

1. Uniform and dress down pants must be pulled up and secure around the waist. If uniform pants do not stay up, a black belt must be worn. No sagging pants are allowed.
2. Students may NOT wear compression shorts, tights, Under Armour, long sleeved shirts or other types of clothing, the legs and sleeves of which are visible under the Pride uniform.
3. Students may NOT wear footless tights with or without socks under a skort.
4. Uniform skorts, which have attached shorts integrated into the structure of the skort, must be purchased from our uniform vendor. No other skort is acceptable for uniform wear. Skort hems must be no more than three inches (3") above the knee. Students may NOT wear uniform **skirts**. (No skirts or dresses are permitted at any time.)
5. Socks must cover the ankle and stop below the knee.
6. Students must wear sneakers or black shoes with the uniform.
7. Students may NOT wear Crocs or similarly styled shoes, Uggs or Ugg-style boots with the Pride Academy uniform. Students may wear black boots ONLY if there is substantial snow and ONLY if the dress uniform pants can be pulled down over the boots. If pants legs cannot be pulled down, student must change into sneakers or black shoes upon arrival to homeroom or before entering class.
8. Students may NOT wear boots with the gym uniform or with a skort.
9. Student may NOT MIX DRESS AND GYM UNIFORM PIECES.

Gender Equity and Uniform Wear

Please see the complete Gender Equity and Expression on the website at www.prideacs.org.

All approved Pride Academy dress uniform pieces, including pants, skort, shoes, and all accessories acceptable for wear with the dress and gym uniforms, such as small post earrings, headbands without bows, flowers or other ornamentation, black shoes and sneakers are acceptable and may be worn by any student, without regard to affectional or sexual orientation, gender or gender expression. Any student who experiences disrespect or teasing of any type because of uniform or clothing choices should report it to the supervising adult, or to Robin S. Brower, Dean of Students, Title IX and Anti-Bullying Coordinator, Asgeir Ofstad, Principal, or Rose Mary Dumenigo, Vice Principal. Student's parent may report any such incident on HIB Form 338 for parents and guardians available at www.prideacs.org.

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 and 2024; 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 or gender expression, religion,

disability, or socioeconomic status. Please refer to sections titled Gender Equity Policy and Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying.

Uniform Accommodations

Parents of students that require changes to the uniform for religion, 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 must consult with school administration to address and resolve needs and concerns regarding uniform.

School Uniform

A long or short sleeved gray polo with PRIDE logo, a black uniform skort (no belt required), or black uniform pants, socks, and sneakers or black shoes comprise the school uniform. These must be worn correctly for a student to be considered in uniform. If uniform pants sag, showing skin or undergarments, scholar will be required to wear a black belt, with a plain gold or silver buckle, to hold pants up. If skin or undergarments show and pants do not have loops for a belt, parent or guardian will be requested to alter the pants or to obtain another pair of uniform pants for the student's use. Lastly, uniform shirts may be worn tucked or outside of pants or skort. If student wears a t-shirt under the dress shirt, the sleeves and hem must not show.

The gym uniform is black PRIDE logo sweatpants, knee-length black basketball shorts, sweatshirt and t-shirt with the PRIDE logo. Students wearing dress and gym uniforms pieces together will be considered out of uniform. **Parents and guardians of students who reside in more than one household can support their child by keeping dress and gym uniforms in both locations.**

Students are not permitted to wear hoods in school and may not wear uniform hoodies from prior school years with the school uniform. ONLY uniform sweatshirts and PRIDE Spirit wear sweatshirts without hoods are allowed.

Please ensure your student wears a clean uniform that is in good condition each day. Families in need should contact school administration if providing a uniform presents a challenge. The uniform may be hand washed, if needed. Uniforms that are stained, cut, torn or in poor condition must be replaced. Failure to launder uniform and uniform disrepair will not excuse students from wearing the uniform daily. Students or parents are encouraged to prepare the uniform the night before school.

IMPORTANT: Students wearing a non-uniform shirt or sweatshirt with the uniform will be considered out of uniform. Students may not substitute non-uniform clothing for uniform wear, even if the non-uniform item is completely or partially covered by a uniform item. For example, students may not wear a plain gray non-uniform polo shirt under the uniform sweatshirt or cardigan. It is a matter of integrity that students wear all parts of the uniform each day.

NOTE: To improve ventilation, classroom windows and doors may remain open as the weather cools. Students may wear a non-uniform sweatshirt if it is concealed underneath the uniform sweatshirt.

Reporting to School Out of Uniform

Students who lack any part of their uniform will be considered out of uniform. Students may be given uniform clothing from the supply of clean, gently used uniforms the school keeps on hand. Students who are chronically out of uniform will not be permitted to participate in schoolwide dress down events and may also lose points and other privileges.

Grooming & Personal Hygiene

Students must arrive at school groomed and dressed in the appropriate uniform each day. We encourage parents and guardians to support students with proper undergarments and hygiene products as they approach puberty and learn to manage their changing bodies, body chemistries, and needs. Natural hair, natural looks and natural beauty are welcomed and celebrated at Pride. **Students may not comb, brush, or style hair outside of restrooms, nor may they attend school wearing a bandana, hairnet, hair bonnet, durag, curlers, pin curls, hair pinned up in a “doobie”, extreme false lashes and make up, etc. Face and tongue piercings, tattoos and dental appliances used for cosmetic purposes only are not allowed.** We discourage hairstyles that are distracting or that cover the face or eyes preventing the student from seeing or being seen.

Health & Safety

Currently, Pride scholars and staff are not required to mask indoors unless returning from quarantine due to COVID-19 after which scholars will be required to mask in school, unless eating or drinking, for five (5) days. Pride Academy administration maintains the right to institute mask requirements for students, staff and visitors in shared common spaces, offices and classrooms and to require appropriate distancing to comply with CDC or local health department recommendations. In such an event, the following will apply:

- Students must always carry a spare mask in a Ziploc bag.
- Mask should never be pulled down to speak nor should it ever be worn below the nose.
- Masks must also be worn outside during times when people are in close contact with others, such as dismissal and fire drills.

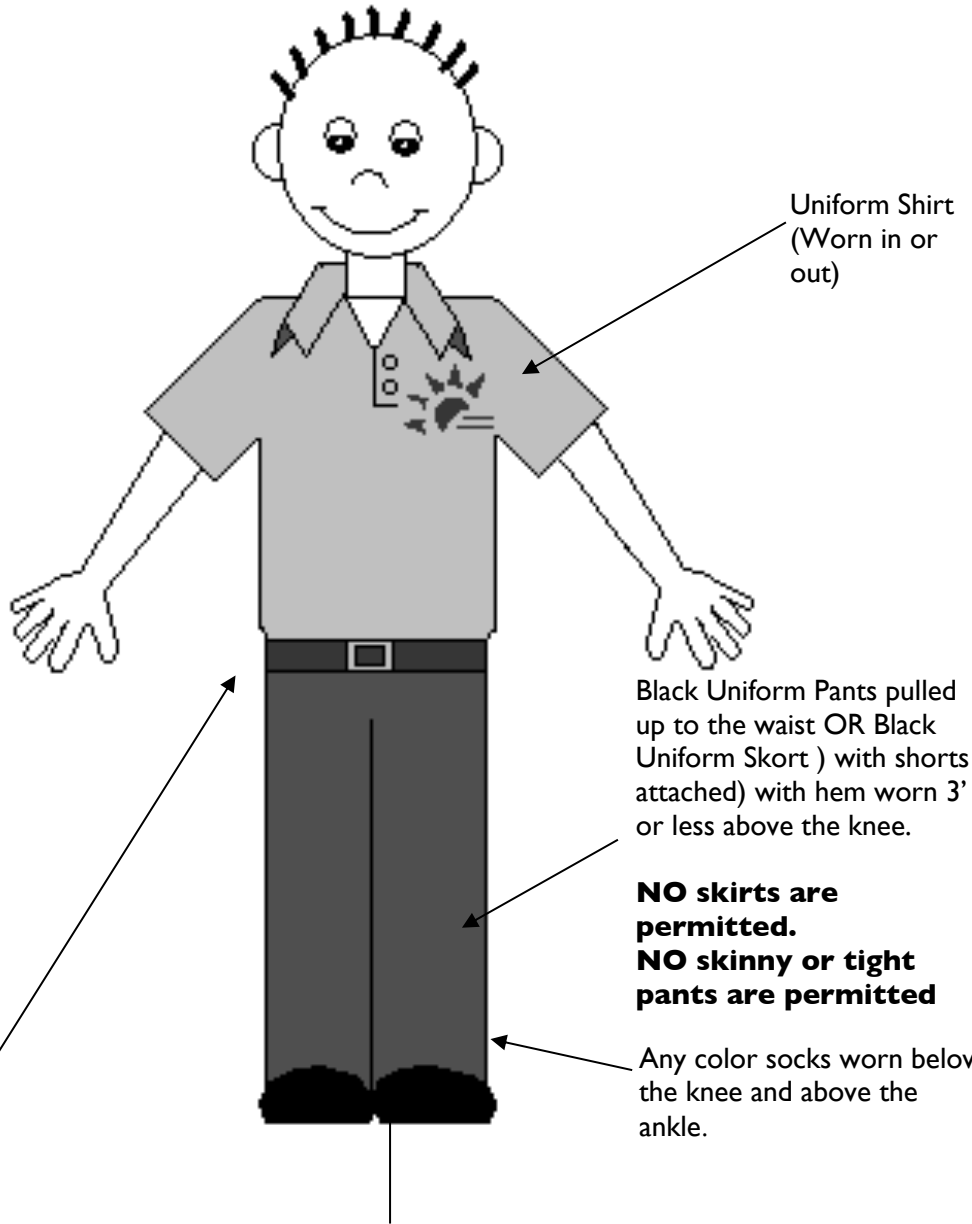
While we understand that wearing a mask may be uncomfortable at times, we are committed to the safety of our scholars and their families and to the safety of our staff. For this reason, scholars who repeatedly place themselves, their families, and others at risk by not wearing masks properly will be referred to an administrator.

WHAT DOES A PRIDE SCHOLAR LOOK LIKE?

The Pride Dress Uniform

- NO rings allowed
- Small hoop or dangling earrings may be worn but must be removed in gym class.
- A necklace may be worn. It must not present a choking hazard.
- NO large hair bows. Plain plastic, fabric or elastic headbands are allowed.
- Gym shirt, plain black, loose-fitting sweatpants or shorts, and sneakers on gym days
- **No Hoodies are allowed, including PRIDE Hoodies from previous years.**
- ONLY Pride logo sweatshirts and fleeces
- Black uniform skort, with shorts attached
- Solid black, white or gray opaque stockings with the skort.
- NO patterned hosiery is allowed

Black belt with a plain gold or silver buckle is optional. If required to hold pants up, belt MUST be solid black.



Uniform Shirt
(Worn in or out)

Black Uniform Pants pulled up to the waist OR Black Uniform Skort) with shorts attached) with hem worn 3' or less above the knee.

NO skirts are permitted.
NO skinny or tight pants are permitted

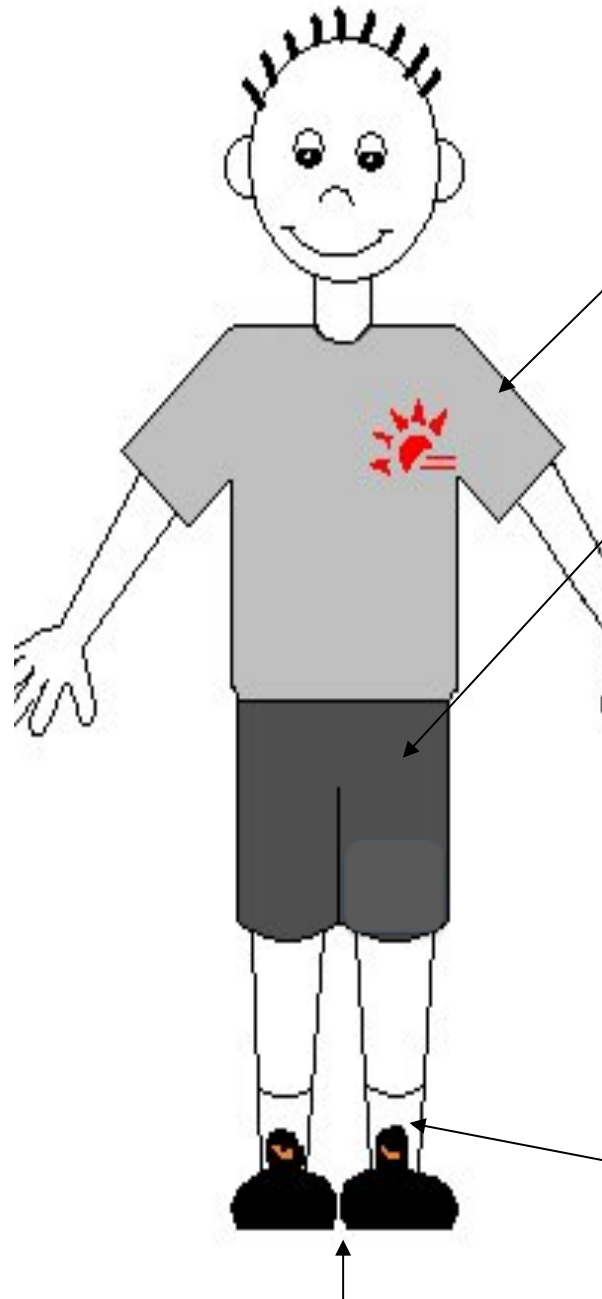
Any color socks worn below the knee and above the ankle.

Black shoes or any color sneakers

WHAT DOES A PRIDE ATHLETE LOOK LIKE?

The Pride Gym Uniform

- NO RINGS allowed
- Small hoop or dangling earrings and a necklace may be worn *but must be removed for gym.*
- NO large hair bows. Plain plastic, fabric or elastic headbands are allowed.
- **No Hoodies are allowed, including PRIDE Hoodies from previous years.**
- ONLY Pride logo sweatshirts and fleeces



A Gym uniform T-shirt, PRIDE SPIRIT Wear or other PRIDE-issued T-shirt MUST be worn under the Uniform fleece or Uniform sweatshirt

- Solid black knee length basketball style shorts may be worn alone or under loose fitting SOLID BLACK sweatpants.
- NO Compression shorts, undergarments, joggers, or leggings may show under shorts.

Any color socks

Any color sneakers

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:**

- Ripped pants or shirts that expose skin or clothing that exposes private areas, like buttocks, back, breasts, chest, groin, belly, upper thighs, or abdomen
- Skirts or Dresses (Unless for religious purposes or to accommodate a medical need)
- Clothes with language or pictures that are violent, vulgar, profane, obscene, or libelous; that denigrate others based on race, color, religion, creed, national origin, gender, gender expression or affectional preference, sexual orientation, gender, gender expression, sex or disability; or that promote tobacco, marijuana, e-cigarettes, vaping, alcohol, drugs or violence or oppose the Pride Core Values
- Sneakers or shoes with wheels, flip-flops, Crocs and similarly styled shoes, slides, open-backed, high-heeled or platform-type shoes, sneakers or boots
- Bandanas, bonnets and durags
- Sheer clothing or clothes that reveal skin or undergarments
- Tank tops, strapless or spaghetti strap clothing
- Skinny or tight pants or clothing such as Spandex leggings and compression shorts

If students report to school in clothing that exposes private areas including the buttocks, back, breasts, chest, groin, belly, upper thighs, or abdomen, parents will be contacted to bring an appropriate change of clothing to school or the school may provide clean, gently used uniform pieces from the school's supply, if available. If there is any concern or doubt about the suitability of clothing, it is best not to wear the item or outfit to school. The above list is not all-inclusive. Decisions regarding what constitutes appropriate school wear will be made by and at the sole discretion of school administration.

NOT ALLOWED IN SCHOOL

1. Drugs, excluding Epi-pens and asthma inhalers, alcohol, tobacco, nicotine products, e-cigarettes, vaping products, nicotine, marijuana and marijuana derivatives, CBD and THC edibles and products of all types, drug paraphernalia, drug delivery devices and empty packaging for any products considered contraband or forbidden in school, matches and lighters
2. Students selling or sharing with others any item(s) or substance(s) not permitted in school
3. **Holding or carrying anyone else's bookbag or purse.** Everyone is responsible for their own bag(s). Students may be held accountable for contraband found in any bag in their possession.
4. Students and their parents or guardians are responsible for student computers and must therefore transport their own bookbag or backpack and their computer.
5. Guns, knives, box cutters, chains, or any other object or substance used or intended for use as a weapon, to inflict pain or cause harm such as mace, pepper spray, etc.
6. Aerosol or pump sprays of any type, excluding asthma inhalers
7. Instant bonding glues, such as Krazy Glue and nail glue

8. Cutting or writing on skin, uniforms, or clothing
9. Perfume, cologne or any other heavily scented products, like perfumed lotions
10. Firecrackers, poppers, stink/smoke bombs, similar incendiary devices or practical joke items
11. Nail polish, nail polish remover, nail care items
12. Explicit, pornographic, or otherwise inappropriate material or images
13. Use of school computers, email accounts or servers for non-academic purposes
14. Borrowing, touching, closing, or turning off anyone else's computer
15. Selling, trading, or exchanging goods or services with other students
16. Requesting or accepting money, in or out of school, from other students
17. Bringing goods to school for sale before, during, or after school on or off school property
18. Asking for, demanding or sharing others' food or drinks
19. Nuts and nut products of any kind
20. Toys, including toy guns, knives and/or replica weapons of any type
21. The Paqui One Chip Challenge or any product intended to cause discomfort if ingested

Please check your child's backpack daily and keep all items unrelated to school at home.

ADMISSIONS & CHANGE OF ADDRESS

To enroll a student at Pride Academy Charter School, please contact the school to learn about the application process including lottery dates and deadlines. Parents must first register students in their district of residence. Proof of registration required proofs of residency, a transfer card and all other required documentation must be submitted to Pride Academy promptly to retain placement. We welcome applicants for all grade levels from 5th to 8th grade. **False residency information may jeopardize enrollment and can result in criminal prosecution.**

Admissions Conference

Families should schedule an admissions conference where they will receive a current handbook and an admission packet that must be completed and returned to the school before enrollment is finalized.

Admissions Lottery

The names of all applicants will be entered into a lottery held in January of each calendar year and at other points throughout the year. Successful applicants will be chosen at random from those who meet application criteria.

Wait List & Annual Reapplication

A wait list is kept for students who have applied but are not selected for admission at the beginning of the school year. If openings become available during the year, students on the waiting list will be

contacted. A waiting list student 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. Verifiable siblings of currently enrolled students receive admissions preference.

IMPORTANT: Wait list names **DO NOT CARRY OVER** into the next school year. Any parent or guardian, whose child remains on the wait list at year-end, that wishes their child to seek admission for the next year must reapply and enter the January lottery every new school year.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Please notify Ms. Oates, Main Office, immediately if you move to a new address. **Your child will not be automatically disenrolled from Pride if you move.** This will ensure that you receive important information that is mailed to your home and that your child is enrolled under the proper school district of residence.

Moving Out of District

Students who attend Pride Academy and move outside our sending districts of Newark, Orange, or East Orange, may continue to attend Pride Academy Charter School under the following conditions:

- Parent **MUST** register the student in their new school district within ten (10) days of relocating.
- The school district where you live **MUST** agree to allow your child to remain enrolled at Pride and agree to pay the district per pupil allotment.

Fraudulent residency information may jeopardize continued enrollment and can result in criminal prosecution.

TRANSFER / DISENROLLMENT FROM PRIDE

Parents or guardians that are withdrawing their child from Pride Academy must obtain a transfer card from the Main Office. A 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 must enter their designated waiting area before 8:00 a.m. 5th and 6th grade students will report to the Common Room. 7th and 8th grade students will assemble in the Great Room. Students must remain seated or standing in or near their teams, as directed. Students may enter the facility at 7:30 A.M. Monday through Friday. Students arriving early may eat breakfast in the Common Room.

IMPORTANT: Students may NOT go to neighborhood stores or anywhere else in the school before reporting to their designated waiting area. In addition, students may not go to the bathroom in the Common Room or leave the Common Room without permission and/or a pass from the supervising teacher or administrator. Failure to report to homeroom on time may result in students being marked late or absent when attendance is taken and students are not in the correct location to be marked present on time and accounted for.

ATTENDANCE

Students must attend school regularly to succeed at Pride Academy. Students may attend school irrespective of students' marriage, pregnancy, or parenthood. Students who miss multiple days of school do not perform as well as those who attend every day. Students are expected to attend the full day of school every day, unless they experience one or more of the following and are required to stay home and/or quarantine:

- Any signs or symptoms of COVID-19
- Fever
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Unidentified rash
- A contagious condition
- Reportable Illness (Refer to the section of this handbook titled Health)

Absences & Excused Absences

Parents or guardians must leave a message with the Main Office at 973.672.3200 by 7:30 a.m., if their child will be absent from school. Please do not contact the classroom teacher or other school personnel to share attendance information. Authorized reasons for absence are personal illness, religious holiday, or 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 submit to the Main Office, a note signed by the parent or guardian on the day he or she returns to school to excuse an absence for authorized reasons other than illness. The note must include the child's name, the current date, the date of absence, and reason for the absence. Students who are absent for illness or are out of school for three or more consecutive days due to injury or illness must return to school with a doctor's note. Please refer to "Unexcused Absences" below for additional information regarding absences that require a doctor's note to be excused. The doctor's note must include the child's name, the current date, dates of absence, the date on which the child may safely return to school activities, and the diagnosis or reason for absence.

Unexcused Absences

Students that accrue five (5) or more unexcused absences must submit a medical note for each subsequent absence, to excuse additional absences. The medical note must be submitted to the Main Office on the date of return, or the absence will not be excused. Medical notes will be verified.

- 1) 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 municipal court in the student's home district for any student with excessive unexcused absences.
- 2) ***Vacations are not excused absences and can prevent promotion to the next grade if they cause a student to exceed 18 unexcused absences. Please schedule vacations when school is not in session.***
- 3) Excessive absences may affect a student's ability to participate in extracurricular activities, clubs, and special events.

Making Up Missed Work

Students must ask teachers for make-up assignments on the date they return to school.

Students must complete and submit missed work by the teacher's deadline or be subject to the teacher's late work policy. Assignments that are not turned in can lead to failure and retention.

ELEVATOR USE POLICY

If a student enrolls with or returns to school with restricted mobility, Pride Academy is an accessible facility. An elevator access is located on the second floor near Room 308, on the first floor in the vestibule at the back of the Common Room, and on the basement level near Room 202.

The elevator is only for use by the custodians or a designated staff member if school equipment, mobile labs or furniture needs to move to different floors and for accommodating individuals needing assistance. Only an administrator or the school nurse may authorize the use of the elevator. An individual who requires the use of the elevator must make a request to the Principal.

If a student requires the use of the elevator, an Elevator Use form must be completed by the student and parent. It may be necessary for a medical doctor to certify the use of the Elevator detailing the duration needed and including the physician's signature and contact information.

All individuals who receive authorization to use the elevator will be expected to:

1. Remain in the area until the elevator door is completely closed.
2. Use the elevator emergency Alarm button and Help Call only in case of an emergency and leave the elevator clean and free of any belongings, packages or trash.
3. Not allow unauthorized individuals in the elevator. In the event an unauthorized user enters the elevator, it is the authorized individual's responsibility to immediately inform the Principal or another administrator. Unauthorized users are subject to disciplinary actions. Failing to report unauthorized users may jeopardize the individual's privilege to use the elevator. If an injured student requires help to carry their belongings, one other student may be given permission to join them in the elevator. Any user requesting help must first receive authorization from the Principal or an administrator.

4. Take full responsibility for any damage resulting from the misuse of the elevator. Full restitution and disciplinary sanctions may be imposed.

BREAKFAST & LUNCH

Your child can receive free breakfast or may bring breakfast to school and eat in the Common Room before homeroom. If your child does not participate in the school breakfast program, please ensure your child eats at home or brings breakfast. Hungry children do not learn well.

Lunch

Pride Academy participates in the Federal Free and Reduced-Price meals program. Through this program, the school provides a free breakfast and/or lunch for qualifying students. Lunch may be ordered in advance and is served by grade during designated periods beginning in September. Students may bring lunch from home but may not heat food. Students who prefer may order an alternate lunch selection.

Sodas, gum, candy, seeds with shells (sunflower, pumpkin), and glass bottles are NOT ALLOWED in school.

Lunch Drop Offs & Food Deliveries

Students must order lunch through our lunch program or bring lunch to school. Parents and guardians may not drop off lunch or have it delivered each day. Food deliveries for students will be refused.

Clean Up

After meals, students must clean up and properly discard trash. Students may be assigned to help in the cafeteria on a rotating basis.

FOOD & DRINK

Students may not eat in class except with teacher permission. If allowed, students may carry and drink a bottle of water in class, away from computers and other technology. Filtered water fountains are available for student use. Food and other drinks must remain in the Common Room.

Nut Allergies

Students may not bring nuts, peanuts or any food containing nut products like nut butter, powder, flour, milk or oil to school because the mere presence of these foods can trigger life threatening reactions in children with allergies.

COMPUTER & INTERNET USE POLICY – General Computer & Network Use

Pride Academy believes the use of technology and computer-assisted communications is vital to our students' success. It is our educators' responsibility to foster an understanding of appropriate technology and to teach the technological skills needed to promote academic excellence. The

proper use of technology and technological skills will be integrated into our instructional programs when learning is enhanced by its use.

Pride Academy encourages the use of computer-assisted communications such as the Internet when it supports our curriculum and advances the learning process. The Internet provides connections to information all over the world. Pride Academy does not control the content of the information available. Some of the information may be controversial and/or inappropriate for Pride Academy students.

Preserving access to computers and the Internet is a community effort that requires each student, parent, and teacher to act responsibly and guard against abuses. Therefore, both the community as a whole and each user have an obligation to abide by the following standards of acceptable and ethical use:

All Users Shall

- Use the school computers and Internet access for classes and assignments as directed.
- Use **only** your school accounts during the school day and use them only for their intended purpose.
- Care for school technology as instructed to prevent damage and preserve equipment.
- Use only the accounts for which you are authorized and use them only as intended.
- Protecting our computer systems by not sharing your password with anyone, inside or outside the Pride Academy community.
- Respect the privacy and personal rights of others.
- Follow the instructions of your teacher or the lead computer teacher regarding access and use of online information.
- Abide by applicable laws and school policies
- Respect the copyrights and intellectual property rights of others including the legal use of copyrighted software, making sure to include attribution when using someone else's images or written material.
- Report any misuse, malfunctioning equipment or missing parts to your teacher or the lead computer teacher immediately.

All Users Shall NOT:

- Violate copyright law by using material from a web site without permission of the owner of that site.
- Include material copied from a web site in an assignment handed in to a teacher without proper citations. That is plagiarism.
- Download software on the school network or on a school computer without the express permission of Pride's lead computer teacher.
- Change the system configuration on a school computer.
- Add extensions to your school user account, including but not limited to desktop themes, games, cameras, keyboards or any other extension.
- Use the school network to access files that might, in any way, harm the school network.

- Bypass or disable the school's filters
- Access social media accounts, yours or someone else's, in school at any time on any device.
- Obtain or use anyone else's password.
- Pretend to be anyone you are not, such as another Pride Academy community member.
- Use the school network to develop programs that harass other users or infiltrate a computer or computing system and/or damage the software components of a computer or computing system.
- Use the school network or computers for personal financial gain.
- Use the school network or computers to run your own business.
- Use the school network or computers for any illegal purpose.
- Use the school network or computers to send hate mail, or for the purpose of harassment, discrimination or other antisocial behaviors.
- Use the school network or computers to access pornography or other inappropriate material.
- Use curse words or language that may be offensive or threatening to another user.
- Intentionally search for materials on the Internet or school network that are inappropriate for your age, grade level or academic objective.
- Give personal information including your name, address or phone number to anyone on the Internet.

Teachers are responsible for monitoring student use when the student is under their supervision. Pride Academy Charter School expects all users to exercise respectful, ethical and legal behavior when using the school's network and resources. Consequences for violations vary based upon the severity of the offense. Disciplinary actions may be determined consistent with existing policies and regulations concerning staff or student conduct. Where applicable, law enforcement agencies will be involved. All Pride Academy students and parents are required to sign an agreement to adhere to school policies and procedures before a student is allowed to access the Internet.

Internet Safety Policy

The primary goals of the Pride Academy Internet policy include the following: 1) to promote and ensure the welfare and the safety of our students when using the Internet; 2) to provide Internet access so all students can become effective and safe Internet users; 3) to extend awareness and knowledge of the Internet; and 4) to become motivated, responsible, independent users of the Internet. Student use of the Internet facilities at Pride Academy is for educational purposes.

A copy of the Acceptable Use Policy will be sent home. It must be signed by all students AND each student must have the signed permission of a parent/caregiver before using the Internet at school. These documents will be kept on file by the school.

All student access to the Internet in school must be supervised by either a teacher or another staff member. This also applies to any special use before or after school hours. Activity on school computers is monitored and flagged for inappropriate activity and any activity that may indicate a concern for student safety. Parents are responsible to supervise their students use of school devices and the school network outside of school. There should be no expectation of privacy of email communications, search history or any other activity conducted on a school-owned computer or

conducted via the school network during or outside of school hours. Student e-mail messages sent and received on the school's computer network are monitored and subject to review. All e-mail messages will be archived for review later, if necessary.

Names and images of students will only be used with parental permission, as granted on the Publicity Release Form. No other personal information shall be posted. Students' work, including first name and grade level, may be posted on sites hosted by the school's local network. Student work, without full name, may be posted on Web 2.0 web sites (Wiki, blogs, digital storytelling, and video). Photographs/images of students will not be identified by individual names. Only authorized webmasters may post on sites hosted by Pride Academy Charter School.

All student workstations have filtered access to the Internet. The level of filtering is determined by Pride Academy. Since no filtering system is 100% foolproof, if inappropriate sites are inadvertently accessed, the student must notify a teacher immediately. If inappropriate sites are deliberately accessed, students should expect a disciplinary consequence.

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is when a student is tormented, threatened, harassed, embarrassed, or targeted by another student via technology. Such targeting infringes on the right of students to focus on their education and is against the law in the state of New Jersey. Tools used in cyberbullying include, but are not limited to cell phones, text messages, photo and video messages, e-mail, instant messages, web sites, social networks, group chats and software "robots."

Students may not create fake social media accounts or use artificial intelligence or related applications to alter or create videos, photographic images, memes, texts, messages, chats, etc., that mislead or target others or that appear to have been created by others. In such instances, where laws have been broken, significant harm or conflict has resulted, or student safety has been placed at risk because of these or similar actions, the matter may be referred to law enforcement for investigation.

Pride Academy will take whatever steps are necessary to protect our students and their families from cyberbullying that occurs at any time of the day, whether it originates in school, at home or elsewhere. All offenses should be reported immediately to Mr. Ofstad, Principal or to Ms. Brower, Dean of Students. Students who cyberbully should expect a disciplinary consequence. All students must abide by this policy.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Each teacher is 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. In the first days of school, teachers explain the Pride Academy Core Values, the Pride Scholar Chart, our schoolwide behavior management system. There is a full school effort by teachers, staff and school administration to help students and their parents/guardians understand and expectations.

Students will receive encouragement, reminders, and feedback from teachers. Throughout the year, positive rewards and acknowledgements will be given to students whose behavior represents a

commitment to scholarship. We communicate with parents and guardians through phone calls, email and other means when needed.

THE COMMON ROOM & THE GREAT ROOM

The Common Room, where lunch will be served and the Great Room, where Recess will be held each day, should be treated with care and respect. We observe the following rules of courtesy and conduct:

- Be silent when requested
- Never leave the room or enter the bathroom without a pass or permission from the adult in charge
- Do NOT enter the bathroom if there are three (3) or more students inside
- Never playfight in the bathroom or anywhere else; notify an adult immediately
- Do not cut in front of others (even if the person you're cutting says it's ok), play, or push in line
- Enter the serving line from the correct direction and location
- Use indoor voices when speaking
- Say "please" and "thank you" when appropriate
- Respect yourself and others by excusing yourself to the restroom, when appropriate
- Don't comment on, touch, or ask for others' food
- Eat neatly and help clean up, whether the mess is yours or not
- Show you appreciate our school community by serving as a Lunch Helper when requested
- Do NOT throw or play with food
- Stay seated unless you have permission to get up

PROMOTION, RETENTION & GRADUATION POLICY & STANDARDS

To ensure that students at Pride Academy meet the required benchmarks of learning in their current grade so that they can be most successfully prepared to take on the academic challenges of the next grade, the administration and faculty have developed a set of promotion and graduation standards. Please review them carefully with your child.

5th - 7th Grade Promotion Standards

To be promoted to the next grade, a Pride Academy student must achieve final grades of at least a D in the core subjects of English Language Arts, Social Studies, Science and Math. A student who receives an F in two (2) or more of these subjects may be required to attend summer school, or complete assignments in the content area to achieve the competency required in the subjects to be promoted to the next grade. A student who attends summer school or completes the required coursework for this purpose and who does not achieve the required competency in that subject may be required to repeat the grade.

If Pride Academy does not hold their own on-site summer school program, students may be required to complete work packets and/or online assignments that will need to be submitted by the stated deadline.

If a student fails both English Language Arts and Math or receives three or more F's in the core subjects of English Language Arts, Social Studies, Math, and Science, he/she may be recommended for retention.

8th Grade Promotion and Graduation Standards

To be awarded a Pride Academy diploma, an 8th grade student must achieve final grades of at least a D in the core subjects of English Language Arts, Social Studies, Math, and Science. Should a student receive an F in two or more core subjects, he/she may be required to attend summer school or complete coursework to increase competency in the failed subject areas to graduate. The student will receive a diploma only upon successful completion of the coursework and will be ineligible to take part in graduation activities. Participation in the graduation ceremony will be determined by Administration. In addition, all outstanding balances owed must be paid to participate in graduation activities, including but not limited to the graduation ceremony.

A student who does not achieve the required competency over the summer may not graduate and may be asked to repeat the 8th grade. If Pride Academy does not hold its own on-site summer school program, students will be required to attend summer school at a local public school or complete work packets and/or online assignments, at cost to the student's family, that will need to be submitted by the stated deadline.

If a student fails both English Language Arts and Math or receives three or more F's in the subjects of English Language Arts, Social Studies, Math, and Science, he/she may be recommended for retention and will not be eligible to participate in the graduation ceremony and 8th grade activities.

Pride Academy Charter School is committed to academic and personal excellence. We hope that all families can support us with reinforcing these guidelines and communicating how important it is for our children to come to school on time every day, complete homework, and be prepared to learn. Education is truly the key to success.

ATTENDANCE, LATENESS & EARLY DEPARTURE

Pride Academy Charter School complies with New Jersey Statutes that require students to attend school regularly and to arrive on time by 8:00 a.m.

Absenteeism & Lateness

Pride Academy Charter School complies with New Jersey Statutes that require students to attend school regularly. Excessive absenteeism that results in more than 18 unexcused absences and unexcused lateness will be reflected on your child's report card and become part of your child's permanent educational record. Tardiness and absenteeism will negatively affect your child's ability to attend a high school of choice. Eighteen (18) or more unexcused absences may result in your child being retained and according to NJ State law, can also result in a parent/guardian being summoned to the Municipal Court in their child's district of residence to respond to a complaint of

Truancy. Parents/guardians of students who are chronically late or absent will be required to meet with school administration. Scholars who are chronically late may be ineligible to participate in after school activities and sports.

Students arriving late must report directly to the Main Lobby or Main Office to get a Late Pass. A Late Pass is required to document partial day attendance and to enter class, even if the student arrives at the beginning of a class period. Failure to obtain a late pass will earn student an accountability consequence. Lateness may be excused for medical appointments or as determined by school administration.

Perfect Attendance

Pride Academy maintains high expectations for our students. To earn an award for Perfect Attendance, students must have no 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

DISMISSAL

The school dismissal schedule is as follows:

- Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday school ends at 3:20 p.m.
- Friday school ends at 2:10 p.m.
- Half Days school ends at 12:30 p.m.
- Afterschool clubs will end at the time set in advance by supervising staff. Students must be picked up within fifteen (15) minutes of the club end time.

Please make sure your child knows what their afterschool transportation plan is each morning before arrival to school. Please avoid the undue worry and expense of late fees incurred by having children call home to make or discuss afterschool arrangements and transportation at dismissal.

LEAVING SCHOOL GROUNDS

PRIDE Academy is committed to the safety and wellbeing of its students. We have no way to protect students who are outside of the school grounds without supervision. Once dropped off at school, students must enter the building immediately. Once students enter the building, they may not leave under any circumstances unless accompanied or signed out by an authorized adult such as a parent, guardian or dismissed by a teacher. Students may not leave school during p.m. homeroom or at any point in the school day before dismissal unless signed out by a parent or guardian.

NOTE: Students may NEVER leave any assigned area without permission. Doing so places the student at grave risk and will result an accountability consequence for truancy in every instance.

PICK UP & LATE PICK-UP FEES

Students must be picked up within 15 minutes of dismissal. This includes regular dismissal from school as well as dismissal from afterschool activities such as athletics, club meetings, etc. **After the 15-minute grace period, an adult MUST come into the Main Lobby to sign the student(s) out and pay the late fee. Late fees accrue at a minimum rate of \$5 for the first five minutes or any part thereof. The fee continues to accrue at the rate of \$1 per minute after the first 5 minutes. Late fees must be paid in cash to the supervising staff member at the time of pick up, starting after the 15-minute grace period.**

Late fees begin to accrue at 3:35 p.m. Monday through Thursday, at 2:25 p.m. on Fridays, at 12:45 p.m. on half days, and within fifteen (15) minutes of the end time for afterschool activities. Please ensure that whoever picks up your child is aware of that days' dismissal time, especially on half days when we dismiss at 12:30 p.m. and on Fridays when we dismiss at 2:10 p.m. There may be other times when we dismiss early. You will be notified by written notice or a call from our Alert Now system. Please check your voicemail messages and let the Main Office know if your phone number changes.

We want our students to be safe. For this reason, we do not allow students to wait unsupervised in the school building, outdoors, or in local businesses to avoid incurring late fees. Students who remain after school beyond the fifteen (15) minute grace period and are then directed to walk will incur late fees. If your child will be picked up by someone other than yourself, such as a transportation service, and your child is picked up after the grace period, the adult picking up your child must come into the building to sign your child out and will be informed of the late fee amount at that time. Please be advised, however, that late fees are the sole responsibility of the parent or guardian.

If your child is picked up late, please be prepared to pay the late fee cheerfully. If the fee is not paid at the time of pickup, please send payment to school with your child on the next school day. Late fees support student activities that benefit your child. Please pay with a smile ☺.

MEETING REQUESTS

Parents or guardians who wish to meet with a teacher or administrator are requested to schedule an appointment in advance to meet during designated school hours. Teachers and administrators may not be available immediately for unscheduled meetings. By planning, you can minimize disruption to school operations and ensure we have the appropriate staff prepared to attend and address your concerns.

SCHOOL VISITORS

Every school visitor is required to sign in at the Main Office. For safety and security purposes, visitors may not travel throughout the building. Visitors are guests of Pride Academy. Guests are requested to adhere to the Code of Conduct set for all members of our school community. Children who are guests must be supervised by an adult. Visitors must set a positive example for our students and may not disturb the peace or offend others. Hostility, profanity, shouting, disrespect, and bullying are never permitted at Pride Academy. Visitors who display such

behavior on or around school grounds may have future access restricted accordingly. Anyone who violates the School Visitor Policy will be requested to leave the premises. Law enforcement will be contacted to remove anyone who fails to depart on request.

Visitor and Student Interactions

Visitors may NEVER address any Pride student, or other child, who is not their own without the permission and supervision of Pride Academy administration and/or the child's parent or guardian.

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 and will arrange for parents or guardians to meet with you, if possible. Failure to honor this policy will be considered a major violation of the School Visitor Policy. Please refer to the *Failure to Follow School Visitor Policy* below.

It is never appropriate for adults to independently investigate or to otherwise involve themselves in student disputes or disciplinary matters involving other children unless a Pride administrator and the parents or guardians of all students involved are present.

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 notice from Pride Academy Administration or the Pride Academy Board of Trustees stating 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 from the Principal or a designee.
2. If the parent/guardian chooses not to follow the guidelines outlined in the school policy or the notification letter, law enforcement will be contacted.

EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

Pride Academy is an independent charter school district. We do not follow the East Orange school calendar. Changes in the school schedule, including transition to remote learning and cancellation of activities, may occur due to weather, building conditions, or other concerns, such as a health emergency. Please ensure that all phone, work, emergency and email contact information is current and on file with the Main Office at (973) 672-3200.

Check the school website prideacs.org, your email, and 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 communicate via email and voicemail through the Alert Now system.

BUS POLICY

There is no regular district-provided bus transportation to or from school this year. Following are guidelines that ensure the safety of all children when riding on buses to and from afterschool care, or other events. Students should follow regular classroom rules:

- Remain seated unless you are entering or exiting the bus after it has stopped.
- If required, students should keep masks on and maintain social distance on the bus.
- 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, e.g., disrespect, defiance, bullying, leaving your seat without permission, shouting, throwing objects, hitting, fighting, and using profanity, is not allowed on the bus.
- Be silent as requested by the driver, staff, or chaperones.
- Keep arms, hands, heads, and other objects inside the bus and keep the aisle clear.
- Cooperate respectfully and immediately with instructions from the driver or bus 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.

PUBLIC BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS

Our Student Code of Conduct applies during recess, events held at parks, field trips, and while participating in other outdoor or public activities. During these times, students must adhere to public behavior guidelines for their 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 throwing objects, hitting, fighting, roughhousing, running, disrespect to others, and use of profanity, is also prohibited in public. Our students must always conduct themselves as Pride Scholars.
- Be silent or quiet 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, special events, and other outdoor activities, or be required to have a parent or guardian chaperone to participate in activities.

SPORTING EVENT & OFF-SITE EVENT BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS

Attendees supporting Pride Academy athletic teams are guests of the host location. Whether at Pride or off-site, students and their guests are expected to adhere to the Code of Conduct set for all members of our school community, which includes students, their families and guests, and staff, staff families and their guests must also adhere to the Code of Conduct, rules and behavior expectations set by our host location. Referees, other game officials and staff of the host location must be treated with respect. Any concerns with the behavior of staff or officials at host locations should be addressed to the Principal, or another Pride administrator. Children must always be supervised by an adult and orderly. Visitors must set a positive example for our students and may not disturb the peace or offend others. Hostility, profanity, shouting, disrespect and aggression are never permitted at Pride Academy, and they are not permitted at school-sponsored, off-site events either. *Smoking is not permitted at school-sponsored events.* Visitors that display such behavior may have future access to events restricted accordingly. Anyone who violates these expectations may be requested to leave the premises immediately. The authorities will be contacted to remove anyone who fails to depart on request.

- Behavior prohibited at school, such as fighting, playfighting, disrespect, and using profanity, is also prohibited in public.
- Be silent or quiet as requested by game officials, coaches, staff or administration.
- Cooperate respectfully and immediately with instructions from supervising adults.
- Respect supervising adults, members of the public, opposing team players, coaches and fans, public and private property, pedestrians, and motorists.

HEALTH CONCERNS

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

Medical Action Plan

The school nurse must receive a doctor-prescribed action plan, as well as necessary medication and supplies, if your child has ANY health concern that could result in a medical emergency.

Contagious Diseases

Keep your child at home for serious contagious conditions, diarrhea or vomiting within the past 24 hours, or any undiagnosed rash or fever. A minor cold or the sniffles need not prevent school attendance unless accompanied by a cough or fever. Your child must be well enough to participate in all school activities, including recess. Students may not sleep or have their heads down during class or remain alone in a classroom during recess.

IMPORTANT: Students who must leave school due to illness must be picked up within one hour of notification. Please ensure that we can reach you in an emergency. Keep current contact information on file in the Main Office. A parent, guardian or emergency contact must be available for emergency pick up at any point during the day.

Reportable Health Conditions

Please notify the school nurse immediately if your child is diagnosed with any contagious condition, 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 any of the following:

COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus)	Influenza (Flu))	Ringworm
Chickenpox	E. Coli	Scabies
German Measles (Rubella)	Mononucleosis	Impetigo
Streptococcus (Strep Throat)	Meningitis	Giardia Lamblia
Scarlet Fever	Fifth Disease	Mumps
Pink Eye (Conjunctivitis)	Tuberculosis	Whooping cough (Pertussis)
Typhoid	Diphtheria	Staphylococcal disease
Shigella	Small Pox	Lice (head or body
Hepatitis A	Bed Bugs	Salmonella
Stomach virus (any type)		

DRUGS, ALCOHOL, NICOTINE & TOBACCO

If a staff member notices, receives information about or has concerns about a scholar using, sharing, selling and/or bringing to school controlled substances or substances that are not permitted for use or possession by a minor, including marijuana and marijuana derivative or CBD products, they will refer that scholar to Mr. Asgeir Ofstad, Principal or Ms. Robin S. Brower, Dean of Students or a designee who will remove the student from class and escort the student to the nurse for a medical evaluation. If the nurse is not available and the student appears to be under the influence or is found to be in possession of contraband, an attempt will be made to contact a parent/guardian or an emergency contact who will be requested to report immediately to the school. If a parent/guardian or an emergency contact is unavailable or does not report to the school immediately and there is reason to believe that a scholar was actively using a substance banned for use by minors or is currently under the influence of drugs, marijuana or a marijuana derivative product, alcohol, nicotine or tobacco, or any other banned substance, the Principal, Vice Principal, Dean of Students or other designated staff member(s) will escort the student to a medical provider, and;

- Assign accountability including OSS for students that test positive, possess and/or are involved in the use, distribution or sale of substances that are being abused, misused, are illegal or are banned for minors. These include but are not limited to tobacco, nicotine products, vapes of any type, marijuana, opiates, OTC medication that may be misused, prescription medication that may be distributed or used by persons for whom it is not prescribed, CBD and other marijuana products, steroids, etc.

- Provide a referral to seek drug and substance testing/screening before return to school
- Require that Drug/Substance Abuse counseling is set in place if student tests positive and screening reveals use
- Contact local Law Enforcement and the State of New Jersey Division of Child Placement and Permanency, when appropriate in accordance with the law
- Complete required State Department of Education reporting

Signs of Substance and/or Drug Use

In accordance with the Pride Academy Charter School Drug, Alcohol, Nicotine and Tobacco policy above, any student that exhibits the following will be referred to the school nurse, Mr. Asgeir Ofstad, Principal, Ms. Robin Brower, Dean of Students or a designee:

Red eyes	Change in grades
Slurred speech	Tardiness/absences
Off-balance gait	Change of peers
Unusual odor	Poor hygiene
Extreme anger/laughter	Fighting
Substances Found	Information relayed or shared
Law enforcement notified school	Teacher saw _____ on student
Other circumstances that raise concerns	School community member voiced concern that the student is in possession, sharing and/or selling

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 will be made to notify a parent or guardian unless the injury is deemed to be minor (such as a small cut or scrape, etc.). Please refer to section titled “Parent/Guardian & Emergency Contacts”

COVID-19 PROCEDURES

We strongly recommend that your child receive a full course of COVID-19 immunizations and all CDC recommended boosters. If your child has any symptom of COVID-19, including fever, vomiting, diarrhea, sore throat or rash, please keep them at home. If your child tests positive for COVID-19, your child must quarantine for the CDC recommended number of days, five (5), before returning to school. Upon return to school, your child will be required to mask for a specified number of days, currently five (5). Returning students will have time to complete missing work.

Remote instruction will not be provided to or required of quarantining students. If well enough, students may complete assignments online during quarantine. Students may return to school on Day 6, if they have been fever and symptom-free for 24 hours. Parent or guardian must provide the positive COVID-19 test or a doctor’s note to verify and excuse the scholar’s absences.

Close contacts of a household member that tests positive for COVID-19 may attend school but must monitor their status and wear a mask in school for five (5) days, unless eating or drinking. Mask and other COVID-19 requirements for students, staff and visitors may be implemented or amended by the Pride Academy Charter School administration, at any time, as appropriate and in accordance with CDC and local health department guidelines. Safety is our priority.

PARENT, GUARDIAN & EMERGENCY CONTACTS

Please inform the Main Office 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 15 minutes in a serious health or disciplinary emergency and within 45 minutes in the event of minor illness or disciplinary emergency. Please arrange for someone who can be available to supervise and provide care in the event your child cannot attend school if you are unable to do so.

ALERT NOW MESSAGES AND SCHOOL-INITIATED CALLS

Periodically you may receive a call from a member of the school staff or from the school’s ALERT NOW system. These calls convey important, time sensitive information to parents, guardians and the school community at large, about meetings, events and school closings. Calls from the staff, administration, and ALERT NOW will show in your phone’s call log as coming from the school’s main number, 973.672.3200. The Main Office staff cannot determine who may have called or for what

reason you may have received a call. Please listen to your voicemail messages and avoid contacting the Main Office to inquire about missed calls.

HOMEWORK

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

Please provide a quiet area where your child can work and study. At times your child may need your assistance with homework. Failure to complete homework will affect your child's grade and can result in failure and/or retention. Please ensure that:

- All assigned homework is completed with name and date
- Directions are followed
- Homework is correct
- Homework is a quality product and represents your child's best effort

Please ensure that completed homework is turned in, if it is online, or returned to your child's school bag so it can be turned in on time. Failure to complete homework may require a conference between the parent, student and teacher, and additional accountability measures, including being required to have the agenda signed by a parent/guardian daily and ineligibility for sports, trips, or other activities.

Excellent homework should:

- Be the student's own work. Parents should never do homework, and students must not submit as their own work AI generated text or plagiarize nor should they copy or allow others to copy their work. This can result in a failing grade for all students involved. Please see section titled "Cheating, Plagiarism & Artificial Intelligence" below.
- Be completed according to the teacher's directions and to the student's best ability
- Have a proper heading, if written, that includes the below and any phrase or quote specified by the school or 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.

Cheating, Plagiarism & Artificial Intelligence

Students are prohibited from using artificial intelligence (AI) such as ChatGPT and similar applications to complete work in any subject area without the permission and guidance of their subject teachers. Unless students have been instructed in the use of AI and taught how it might be utilized in a specified assignment, *students should assume that they may not use it*. Students must independently complete their own assessments, projects and At Home Learning / Homework assignments. *Submitting others' work as one's own, which includes submitting work that is generated by AI without teacher permission or copied from online sources, copying other's work, looking up answers to online assessments and giving answers or completed homework to others will result in a lowered grade and an accountability consequence. The accountability consequence may be a Teacher or Lunch Accountability, an alternate assignment, Justice Detention, Saturday Accountability or Suspension. **Attendance at accountability, including any accountability assigned by a teacher or other school staff, is mandatory. Students who fail to report to accountability on the scheduled day and time may receive additional days of accountability, a Dean Referral, or another more serious consequence that requires parent participation, such as Saturday Accountability, as assigned by school administration.***

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 a parent or guardian to pick up grade reports. 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.

UBUNTU FAMILY 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 is now. We invite you to join and become an active member.

STUDENT COUNCIL

The Pride Academy Charter School Student Council is also known as the League of Leaders (LOL). LOL is a democratically elected group of students in the 5th through 8th grades. LOL's focus is on addressing needs in the school community. Students can develop a sense of responsibility and appreciate their own contributions, as well as those of others, to improve their school.

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 behavior expectations are set for all scholars:

Classroom:

- Show respect for others; backtalk, eye rolling, etc., are never acceptable
- Pay attention and follow directions the first time
- Take responsibility for actions; be truthful and honest
- Come appropriately dressed and prepared for school each day
- Display courtesy; wait your turn in class and in line
- Behave such that teachers can teach and others can learn
- Be kind: Keep hands, feet, objects, hurtful words and actions to yourself
- Respect and help care for school property; do not damage walls, desks, etc.
- Respect the property of other students; do not steal, damage or destroy others' belongings
- Avoid behaviors that may injure or offend others; roughhousing will result in consequences
- Follow class rules; they may differ in each subject
- Do not eat or chew objects in class

Locker Guidelines:

A locker is assigned to each student at the beginning of the year or when enrolled by the homeroom instructor. The locker and combination lock are the responsibility of the student assigned to that locker while the student is enrolled in school, or when school is in session.

A signed locker agreement by the student and parent/guardian is required to acknowledge an understanding of the locker agreement. Lockers are provided as a service to students, and the school accepts no responsibility for the contents of any locker or for anything that goes missing from the locker. Pride Academy Charter School reserves the right to search the lockers, desks, and personal belongings of a student when it is believed to be necessary for the health, safety, and welfare of the student and other students/staff. A student's locker or other storage area is subject to search, upon reasonable suspicion, for prohibited or illegally possessed substances or objects, or during routine locker inspections for rule compliance and review of cleanliness. If such items are found, the Pride Academy Charter School discipline policy shall be applied.

- Students are to use only the locker assigned to them, and keep it locked at all times.
- Students may not tamper with another locker or share their lock combination with others.
- It is the student's responsibility to remove articles from the locker when not enrolled, or at the end of the school term. At the end of the academic year, the homeroom instructor will inspect lockers and will dispose of any articles left inside.
- Students may not change lockers without authorization from the Dean of Students.
- Each student is responsible for the care and appearance of their locker. Lockers should be kept clean and neat, both inside and out. Every so often, students will be asked to clean out their locker. Students are expected to cooperate and remove unwanted papers and other articles that might be taking up valuable locker space.
- Students are not permitted to decorate the outside of lockers with items and materials of any kind.
- Each locker will have a combination lock on it, provided by the student and their family. We encourage students to memorize their combinations, and to keep their locker locked at all times.
- The student must provide their lock combination to their homeroom teacher. Please be advised, that all staff members will have access to a student's lock combination.
- Students are encouraged to report locker problems to their homeroom teacher. The Principal, Vice Principal and Dean of Students will use the lock combinations provided to open a locker when deemed necessary. If the combination or key is not in the possession of or available to the Principal, Vice Principal and/or Dean of Students, the lock will be cut and removed to gain access.
- Students are responsible for balancing their schedule to manage locker use.
- Lockers are not to be used as a reason to be tardy to class. If there are locker problems, the student should report to their assigned class on time and report the problem to the classroom teacher.
- All jackets and hats are to be kept in lockers and are not to be worn or carried to class. Only Pride Academy sweatshirts, fleece jackets, or cardigans can be worn in the classrooms.
- Students who enter or attempt to enter another student's locker are violating school rules and will be held accountable. Any student caught tampering, opening or removing items from any locker other than their own, without proper authorization, will be referred to Ms. Brower or another administrator.
- Items placed in the lockers may not be attached to the locker surfaces with adhesives (Sticky substances.).
- Students may not sell items out of their locker or store items for sale.
- Students may not share lockers.
- Food items must not remain in the lockers after school hours. Please double check this before leaving each day and for weekends and holiday breaks.
- Items found in unlocked lockers will be removed

Violation of these guidelines may result in the loss of locker privileges for a period of time up to and including the balance of the academic year.

Elevator Policy:

Students may not enter the elevator unless they have completed the Elevator Use Form and the school principal or an acting administrator has approved it. If a student who is approved for elevator use requires assistance to transport their belongings, the school principal or an acting administrator may authorize one additional student to ride the elevator. Permission must be obtained from the Principal or an acting administrator in the Principal's absence. No Elevator Use form will be required for the assisting/accompanying student. **ONLY ONE STUDENT MAY ASSIST AND RIDE IN THE ELEVATOR.** Any student found in the elevator without permission will receive an accountability consequence.

All individuals who receive authorization to use the Elevator will be expected to:

1. Not leave the area until the door is completely closed.
2. Use the elevator emergency Alarm button and Help Call for only an emergency and leave the elevator clean and free of any belongings, packages or trash.
3. Not allow unauthorized individuals in the elevator, In the event of another individual entering the elevator, it is the individual's responsibility to immediately inform the Principal or another administrator. Unauthorized users are subject to disciplinary actions. Failing to report unauthorized users may jeopardize the individual's privilege to use the elevator. If an injured student requires help to carry their belongings, one other student may be given permission to join them in the elevator. Any user requesting help must first receive authorization from the Principal or an administrator.
4. Take full responsibility for any damage resulting from the misuse of the elevator. Full restitutions and disciplinary sanctions may be imposed.

BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS

Recess:

- NO Football
- NO tackling, stealing/wrestling over the ball, playing defense, or blocking shots
- Practice Peace
- Wait your turn, no cutting the line
- Remain in areas assigned to your grade
- Avoid rough play, fighting and play fighting
- Get permission before re-entering the building from outdoor play areas
- Line up quickly and be silent when requested

Common Room:

- Keep your mask, if required, on unless you are eating or drinking
- Maintain appropriate social distance and wait your turn in line
- Respect and respond to the signal for silence immediately
- Talk quietly and use good table manners
- Never make fun of, touch, take, or ask for others' food, or ask others to bring you food
- Excuse yourself to the restroom when needed
- Keep food and utensils on tray
- Keep your area clean
- Help when requested and do more than your share
- Never take food or drink out of the Common Room without permission
- Remain silent during the dismissal process, exiting silently in a single file line

Assemblies:

- Stay seated until dismissal
- Be courteous: Watch and listen attentively
- Participate when requested
- Clap in support of others
- Respect and respond to the signal for silence

General Building Rules:

- Respect yourself, others, your family, and property
- Be quiet in common areas including hallways, stairways, Common Room, and restrooms
- Be silent as the teacher is greeting you into the classroom
- Never leave an assigned area without a written pass or permission
- Carry your own bag ONLY
- Use / touch only YOUR OWN computer, no one else's
- Walk when in the building
- Leave gum, candy, edible seeds, and soda at home
- Leave cell phones, 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

- NO NAME CALLING
- NO ROASTING
- Solve problems and differences peacefully
- Keep hands and feet to yourself: No hitting. No hitting back. No drama. No excuses.
- 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, forge signatures, cheat or lie to the staff, teachers, your parents or one another.
- Do what is right in all situations.
- If you find something that is not yours, turn it in to your teacher, an administrator, or the Main Office.

Any adult member of the community can and will hold others accountable to meet these expectations.

ACCOUNTABILITY & 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. We encourage students to reflect on the impact of their choices on themselves and others. Students have an opportunity to make amends, and to commit to make better choices in the future. Positive behavior is rewarded and negative behaviors receive an appropriate consequence.

Accountability Incentives

All Pride Academy Charter School students are expected to adhere to the school dress code, and commit to scholarship and the Pride Core Values. Scholars who demonstrate positive behaviors and/or show consistent, positive, growth, will earn the opportunity to participate in reward activities to be established by the teachers, students and administration.

Restorative Practice

Restorative Practice (RP) is an approach to school discipline that focuses on repairing harm and restoring the relationship between aggrieved parties. The process fosters reconciliation, as the first step of a Restorative Practice meeting requires the participants to establish a point of agreement by collaborating to develop the norms that shape and guide the meeting. This process builds empathy and empowers the victim, perpetrator, and other affected parties by amplifying their voices in seeking justice. Each may address the others, sharing how an incident affected them. The victim and affected parties hear the wrongdoer’s thoughts, motivations and perspectives also, providing an opportunity for empathy building. The victim also has opportunity to hear the acceptance of responsibility and the expression of remorse for wrongdoing. The session concludes with another

collaborative process as all parties share input and arrive at consensus in the plan to repair harm and/or make restitution.

Sources:
iirp.edu
<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/school-discipline/guiding-principles.pdf>

<http://www.safersanerschools.org/>

Restorative Circles

A Restorative Circle is an opportunity to improve student behavior and academic performance, or to examine and address problems between students and teachers, families, staff, and/or administration in a way that heals the harm done to relationships and fosters trust. During a Restorative Circle, 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

A Restorative Circle may involve one or more of the individuals above who will meet individually, or collectively with other families.

Peace Circle: Resolving Student Conflict

Any student who has a dispute with another peer must find a positive, peaceful way to resolve differences. Restorative Practice is a process that we have found to be very effective at helping students arrive at a place of fairness, peace, and respect. Students should speak to a teacher, the Dean of Students, the school social worker, or another administrator to request a restorative meeting or 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 administrator who facilitates the meeting; and any of the following:

- Student(s)
- Teacher(s) or staff member(s)
- Social Worker or Counselor

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 goal is to promote peace within the relationship and to spread that peace, and the peaceful resolution process throughout the community.

Fighting

Pride Academy is a safe school. Fighting is **STRICTLY PROHIBITED**. Fights are extremely rare at Pride Academy and will be treated with the utmost seriousness. **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, instigating, recording, posting, and sharing fight videos online or by other means, violate the Student Code of Conduct and will result in an appropriate accountability consequence up to and including suspension or expulsion.**

Be An Upstander, Not A Bystander

Fights rarely occur without an audience. Our stance is that students may not instigate, participate, or spectate while peers hurt one another. Students who have knowledge of a conflict, bullying, any situation that could result in violence, or who witness verbal or physical violence must alert a teacher, administrator or other adult immediately, and before the end of the school day whenever possible.

Accountability Consequences

Good choices take time to teach and to learn. Teachers address most behavior concerns in the classroom. Unacceptable behaviors include: Defying authority, fighting or assaulting others, spitting, harassment, intimidation and bullying, shoving, teasing, name-calling, using lewd or profane language or gestures, biting, tripping, pinching, any behavior that could result in harm to self or others, disrupting school or class, stealing or possessing stolen property, vandalizing, truancy, possessing weapons or prohibited items, selling or distributing same, being under the influence of any illicit substance, and repeating any other offense. Other behaviors may also be considered inappropriate and will be acted upon on a case-by-case basis. Pride Scholars must be committed to their education and are expected to demonstrate this by modeling our Core Values daily.

Justice Detention

Justice Detention is served on assigned days immediately after school for a period of one or more hours. **Justice Detention is assigned for serious or chronic poor behavior choices and is mandatory for students. Parent participation is mandatory when students are assigned a Justice Detention. Students must be picked up and signed out of Justice Detention at the student's designated departure time by a parent or guardian.** The parent or guardian must be prepared to meet with an administrator at that time, if requested. The parent or guardian must listen to the student read the day's reflective assignment and must sign off on the assignment.

Any student that does not meet behavior expectations in Justice Detention, including working diligently to complete the day's assignment, will be assigned to serve again or required to serve a longer period of time on the assigned day.

SATURDAY ACCOUNTABILITY

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 who remains present to work with their child. Accountability takes place from 10:00 a.m. until 12:00 noon on designated Saturdays 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 Accountability Behavior Expectations

During Saturday Accountability, students may not:

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

PARENTS: Please abide by these expectations as well. When you respect school rules, you set a powerful and 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 are assigned a Saturday Accountability receive notification via phone or text that contains a description of the incident resulting in the Accountability and the scheduled date and time of attendance.

Failure to Report to Saturday Accountability

Students who fail to report with a parent or guardian to Saturday Accountability will receive an additional Saturday Accountability. ***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 Accountability Attendance and Rescheduling

Saturday Accountability is not held every week. ***Parents, guardians and students must attend on their scheduled date.***

Saturday Accountability Offenses

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

- Disorderly conduct
- Repeated incidents of tardiness or truancy to class or to school
- Repeated uniform violations
- Major or chronic acts of insolence or defiance toward a school staff member.
- Obscenity, profanity, or vulgarity
- Vandalism

Students who fail to serve all Accountabilities before the end of the school year, may not participate in school trips and end of year fun activities or, in the case of graduating 8th grade students, may lose the right to participate in graduation-related activities, etc.

Corporal Punishment

Physical discipline is never practiced at Pride Academy Charter School. We respect parents' right to discipline their children, 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.

ALTERNATIVE BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTIONS

At any point in the accountability process students may be required to complete one or more tasks such as serve a teacher or lunch 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 a Restorative meeting, attend a Saturday Accountability, or otherwise support behavior modification and action plan implementation. 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 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 accountability measures at the discretion of Pride Academy administration.

SUSPENSION

Suspension is used when a student fails to respond to other attempts to remediate behavior or 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. Suspensions will be served Out of School (OSS), as determined by Pride Academy Administration. Whether a student receives a suspension or a lesser consequence is contingent upon several factors including the age and maturity level of the student, the nature and severity of the infraction, and whether the infraction is part of an ongoing pattern of poor behavior. **During suspension, students may not attend school nor may they be in or around the school building unless accompanied by a parent or guardian, nor may they attend any school function or activity with the exception of meetings related to the incident that resulted in suspension.** Students are expected to complete any homework assigned on the date of suspension in addition to any reflective assignments, letters of apology and other tasks that may be assigned and to return to school prepared to submit their work, deliver their apologies and improve their behavior.

Suspension & Childcare

We understand that Out of School Suspension (OSS) may create hardships for working parents who may need to arrange for childcare. This is never our intention. Suspension (OSS) will not be rescheduled or changed due to lack of childcare. Parents/guardians must arrange care. Suspension is intended to teach valuable lessons about accountability, the responsibility of community membership, and the consequences of violating accepted standards of behavior.

Parent Contact After Suspension

Reasonable efforts shall be made to contact the parent or guardian to advise of suspension. To assist us in contacting you, please ensure that Ms. Oates, Main Office always has up to date, accurate contact information for you. If warranted by your child's behavior, you will be required to pick your child up from school within the hour.

Suspension, Afterschool & Extra-Curricular Activities

Students who have received a suspension may not stay after school or participate in extracurricular activities on the day the suspension is received, on Saturday if the suspension is to be served the following week, or on the day(s) the suspension is in effect. This includes participation in sports, special events, etc. Students serving suspension may not be present on school grounds unless accompanied by a parent or guardian for a scheduled meeting.

Students must remain out of school for the entire suspension period. A student's presence 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.

Suspension of Students with IEPs

The regulations 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 when practicable, the teacher, supervisor or school employee who witnessed the behavior(s) leading to the suspension. The conference may be conducted by phone and 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 Suspension Notice to the parent. The notice will include a brief description of the behavior leading to the suspension and will specify the term of the suspension. The student must return from suspension prepared to submit completed assignments and apologies.

Returning from Suspension

A student who has received a Suspension must return, by 7:55 a.m. on the specified day and report to the Main Office to submit any written apologies or reflective assignments immediately upon return. If requested, a parent or adult guardian must accompany the student and be prepared to meet with an administrator.

Parents and Guardians—Improving Student Behavior

Parent/guardian and family response to school behavior concerns is the key to improved student behavior. We understand that a disciplinary consequence like a suspension can bring both disappointment and anger. As parents, our instinct is to protect and defend our children. We request that you try to avoid responding emotionally 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 to excel. If your child receives an accountability consequence or a suspension, please understand that there is a good reason for it.

Although your child may spend time outside of the classroom, in the Peace Center, in the Dean of Students' office or serving a suspension, a disciplinary consequence can provide an opportunity for your child to learn different but still valuable lessons. How effective a learning experience comes from a disciplinary consequence and the likelihood of positive change in behavior depends on you. We ask that you do the following:

1. Please hold your child accountable at home for poor classroom behavior, as evidenced by the need to call home, teacher notes and calls, insufficient learning points earned on the Pride Scholar chart, missed homework, etc.
2. If your child's behavior results in a Suspension, please do not allow your child to engage in preferred activities while suspended, e.g., computer time, watching television, using a cell phone, playing video games, going shopping, out to eat, going to the barber or hair salon, etc.
3. Please administer a consequence at home during the suspension period and tie the term of the consequence to improved behavior, as reported by the teachers.

At home consequences can be additional chores, reflective writing assignments, a significantly earlier bedtime, or withholding preferred activities such as going outside, attending parties or other upcoming events, losing TV, computer, and/or phone 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. By allowing your child to gradually earn privileges back based upon reports from school, you provide a powerful incentive for positive change.

ANTI-BULLYING BILL OF RIGHTS

In January of 2011, New Jersey enacted 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 may create a hostile environment, e.g., they may have a negative effect on students' sense of safety and wellbeing at school. We will therefore continue to address these issues as we always have, supported 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, as amended in 2017 and 2022. For the full text of the law and the complete Pride Academy Charter School policy prohibiting Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying, please refer to the Pride Academy Charter School website: www.prideacs.org

FILING A HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION & BULLYING (HIB) COMPLAINT

A HIB complaint may be lodged by making a verbal or written report to Ms. Robin S. Brower, Dean of Students, District Anti-Bullying & Title IX Coordinator or to Mr. Asgeir Ofstad, Principal. The written report should be filed using HIB 338 Form Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying (HIB) Reporting Form which may be found on the school website at prideacs.org. Paper copies of the form may also be obtained from the Main Office or from Ms. Brower. The forms may be completed and submitted anonymously by fax to 973.672.3207, by email to rbrower@prideacs.org or by U.S. mail to Robin S. Brower, District Anti-Bullying Coordinator, Pride Academy Charter School, 117 Elmwood Avenue, East Orange, New Jersey 07018 .
Please note: No disciplinary action can be based solely upon information obtained from an anonymous HIB report.

GENDER IDENTITY & EXPRESSION POLICY

Our Board of Trustees believe that a school culture that supports student achievement, respects the values of all students and fosters understanding of gender identity and expression within the school community is a safe learning environment. New Jersey law and school policy require that all programs, activities, and employment practices are free from discrimination based on sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. Therefore, in keeping with these mandates, the Board of Trustees is committed to creating a safe learning environment for all students and to ensure that every student has equal access to all school programs and activities.

The Board believes that fostering this understanding successfully requires cooperation and open, empathetic communication between the parents/guardians, school administration, school staff and the school community. The Principal or Principal designee shall ensure that students with gender identity or expression needs and their parents/guardians shall be given the opportunity to discuss them and participate in the educational planning and programming for their student. The Principal or Principal designee may consult the experiences and expertise of qualified school staff as well as external resources where appropriate.

The Board of Trustees believes the responsibility for determining a student's gender identity rests with the student, or, in the case of young students not yet able to advocate for themselves, with the parent. Therefore, the Board will accept a student's assertion of his or her gender identity when there is consistent and uniform assertion of the gender identity, or any other evidence that the identity is sincerely held as a part of the student's core identity. The Board of Trustees will not question or disregard the assertion of a student's gender identity. However, the Board authorizes the Principal or designee to question a student's asserted gender identity when there is a credible basis for believing the student's gender identity is being asserted for an improper purpose. Confirmation of a

student's asserted gender identity must include a letter from a parent to the Principal indicating the student is gender non-conforming. If a student does not want their parents/guardians to know about their transgender status, the need for parent/guardian confirmation shall be addressed on a case-by-case basis. If the parent/guardian does not consent to the student's gender identity, the Principal or designee will meet with the parent and the student to determine how the student's gender identity shall be addressed by Pride Academy.

The Board recognizes school-related needs regarding transgender students will vary on a case-by-case basis. Therefore, the Principal or designee will meet with the parent and student to discuss school-related needs such as the name and pronoun to be used by district staff in referring to the student, the gender identification to be used on the student's records, district staff members that should be informed of the student's access and use of restrooms, locker rooms, changing facilities, physical education classes, intramural programs, interscholastic athletic programs, and other gender-related factors that may affect the transgender student and his/her attendance at school and participation in school programs. Pride Academy will take reasonable measures to accommodate the needs of transgender students in accordance with Federal and State laws and regulations.

In the event that a student no longer identifies with a previously asserted gender other than their gender at birth, a parent/guardian of the student must submit a letter to the Principal indicating the student is no longer gender nonconforming. If the parent/guardian was not notified or aware of the prior gender expression, the transition will be managed on a case-by-case basis. The Principal or designee will meet with the parent and the student to discuss the transition of the student from gender nonconforming to gender conforming. In the event the parent/guardian does not consent to the student's assertion that the student is no longer gender nonconforming, the Principal or designee will meet with the parent/guardian and the student to determine how the student's gender identity should be addressed by Pride Academy. Pride Academy and school staff members will ensure the privacy of any student's transgender status and will not publicly disclose or acknowledge a student's transgender status unless required to in accordance with any Federal law, State statute, administrative code, or if the parent/guardian and student have authorized such disclosure.

To proactively plan for a safe learning environment free of discrimination and harassment, students and parents/guardians of students with gender identity and expression needs are encouraged to alert the school and schedule a meeting with the Principal or Principal designee. Upon request, the Principal will schedule a meeting with the parent/guardian and the student for the purpose of evaluating the needs of the student and planning any accommodations that may be considered to facilitate a respectful and comfortable school program that supports the student's achievement and wellbeing.

Definitions:

- A. "Gender Identity" is a person's deeply held sense or psychological knowledge of their own gender, regardless of the gender they were assigned at birth. Everyone has a gender identity.
- B. "Transgender" is a term which describes people whose gender identity or gender expression is different from their assigned gender at birth.
- C. "Gender expression" refers to the way a person expresses gender to others in ways that are socially defined as either masculine or feminine, such as through behavior, clothing, hairstyles,

activities, voice or mannerisms.

- D. "Gender non-conforming" refers to gender-related identity and/or gender expression which does not conform to the social expectations or norms for a person of that gender assigned at birth.
- E. "Transition" refers to the process in which a person goes from living and identifying as one gender to living and identifying as another.

Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB)

The Board shall make every effort to maintain a safe and supportive learning and educational environment that is free from harassment, intimidation, and/or bullying and free from discrimination on account of actual or perceived race, color, national origin, ancestry, age, sex, affectional or sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, domestic partnership status, nationality, atypical hereditary cellular or blood trait of any individual, genetic information, or refusal to submit to a genetic test or make the results of a genetic test known, disabilities, social or economic status, pregnancy, childbirth, pregnancy-related disabilities, actual or potential parenthood, family status or other distinguishing characteristic.

Complaints alleging discrimination shall be reported to the school affirmative action officer, Robin S. Brower, Dean of Students & District Title IX and Anti-Bullying Coordinator, and documented on HIB Form 338 according to board policies (2224, 4111.1/4211.1 and 6121 Nondiscrimination/Affirmative Action).

Any student experiencing or observing harassment, intimidation and bullying is encouraged to report the incident to a member of school staff. Any staff member observing or receiving a report of harassment, intimidation or bullying shall report the incident to the Principal or designee the same day the incident is observed or the report received according to Board policy 5131.1 Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying. All reported incidents of discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying shall be promptly investigated and resolved according to law and board policy.

Confidentiality and Privacy

School personnel may not disclose information that may reveal a student's transgender or gender non-conforming status, except as allowed by law. Under the Family Education Rights Privacy Act (FERPA), only those school employees with a legitimate educational need may have access to a student's records or the information contained within those records. Disclosing confidential student information to other employees, students, parents, or other third parties may violate privacy laws, including but not limited to FERPA. Transgender students have the ability, as do all students, to discuss and express their gender identity and expression openly and decide when, with whom, and how much of their private information to share with others.

Students who do not want their parents/guardians to know about their transgender status shall be addressed on a case-by-case basis. In some cases, notifying parents/guardians carries risks for the student, such as being excluded from the home. Prior to notification of any parent or guardian regarding the transition process, school staff should work closely with the student to assess the degree, if any, to which the parents/guardians will be involved in the process and must consider the health, wellbeing, and safety of the transitioning student. The school social worker or designee shall

balance the rights of the student needing support and the requirement that parents/guardians be kept informed about their child. In accordance with law, parents/guardians and/or the appropriate local officials shall be informed when there is any suspicion of injury or harm to the student or other students.

Coordination of School Accommodations

In planning appropriate accommodations for a student who is transitioning, the Principal, parents/guardians and the student and other qualified staff or consultants as necessary shall meet to discuss actions that school personnel may take to create safe learning environment, including:

Names/Pronouns

School staff shall be directed to address the student by the name and pronoun corresponding to their gender identity that is consistently asserted at school. Students are not required to obtain a court ordered name and/or gender change or to change their pupil personnel records as a prerequisite to being addressed by the name and pronoun that corresponds to their gender identity. To the extent possible and consistent with these guidelines, school personnel shall make efforts to maintain the confidentiality of the student's transgender status.

School documentation such as student IDs shall be issued in the name that reflects a student's gender identity that is consistently asserted at school.

A. Sports and Physical Education

Transgender students shall be provided the same opportunities to participate in physical education as are all other students. Generally, students may be permitted to participate in physical education and sports in accordance with the student's gender identity that is consistently asserted at school. Participation in competitive interscholastic athletic activities will be resolved on a case-by-case basis and according to the standards established by the New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association (NJSIAA).

B. Restroom and Locker Room Accessibility

The school aims to support transgender students while also ensuring the safety and comfort of all students. The lead person together with the parents/guardians, student and other qualified staff or consultants shall evaluate options for the use of restrooms and locker rooms by the transgender students and consider the following factors, including, but not limited to:

1. The transgender student's preference;
2. Protecting student privacy;
3. Maximizing social integration of the transgender student;
4. Minimizing stigmatization of the student;
5. Ensuring equal opportunity to participate;
6. The student's age; and
7. Protecting the safety of the students involved.

Generally, students may have access to the restroom or locker room that corresponds to the gender identity or expression that they consistently assert at school and no student shall be

forced to accept an accommodation with which he/she disagrees. A transgender or transitioning student who expresses a need or desire for increased privacy may be provided with reasonable alternative arrangements. Reasonable alternative arrangements may include the use of a private area, or a separate changing schedule, or use of a single stall, gender neutral restroom. Any alternative arrangement shall be provided to the extent possible in a way that protects the student's ability to keep his or her transgender status confidential.

A transgender student should not be required to use a locker room or restroom that conflicts with the student's gender identity or expression consistently asserted at school.

C. Gender Segregation in Other Areas

As a general rule, in any other circumstances where students are separated by gender in school activities (i.e. overnight field trips), students may be permitted to participate in accordance with the gender identity or expression consistently asserted at school. Activities that may involve the need for accommodations to address student privacy concerns will be addressed on a case-by-case basis considering the factors set forth above.

D. Dress Code

Students have the right to dress in accordance with their gender identity or expression that is consistently asserted at school, within the constraints of the school policy for student dress. School staff shall not enforce a school's dress code more strictly against transgender and gender nonconforming students than other students.

E. Privacy

The Principal and/or his or her designees are expected to work closely with the student and the student's parents/guardians in formulating an appropriate plan regarding the confidentiality of the student's transgender or transitioning status that works for both the student and the school. Privacy considerations may also vary with the age of the student.

Where the transgender or transitioning student feels more supported and safe when other students are aware that they are transgender or transitioning, school staff shall be given guidance and training appropriate for facilitating a respectful school climate. School personnel may be directed to work closely with the student, parents/guardians, other family members and other staff members on a plan to inform and educate the student's peers. It may also be appropriate to engage external resources to assist with educational efforts.

Resources for Transgender or Transitioning Students

If a school staff member observes that a gender identity issue is creating challenges for a student at school or if a student indicates an intention to transition, the staff member shall alert the school social worker or an administrator and encourage the student to meet with the school social worker if appropriate. School staff shall make every effort to support the student and encourage the support and respect of student peers and staff during school.

When a student indicates an intention to transition, the school social worker or designee, as appropriate, shall offer assistance and provide the student, and/or their parents/guardians as appropriate, with information, resources and referral services regarding the issues associated with

gender identity and expression and/or formal gender transition. The school social worker or designee shall also provide information regarding gender transition planning at school. The school social worker or designee shall coordinate the measures planned and taken at school for supporting the student and creating a sensitive supportive environment at school. These measures may include:

- A. Making resources available to parents/guardians who have additional questions or concerns;
- B. Developing age-appropriate lessons for students about gender diversity and acceptance;
- C. Staff training surrounding vigilance to prevent possible harassment, intimidation and bullying issues that may arise for transgender or transitioning students.

Reports of harassment, intimidation and bullying shall be promptly investigated and resolved according to board policy 5131.1 Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying.

Official Records

To the extent that the school is not legally required to use a student's legal name or gender on school records and other documents, the school shall use the name and gender preferred by the student.

Each school is required to maintain a permanent student record of each student, which includes the legal name of the student as well as the student's biological gender. In addition, schools are required to use a student's legal name and gender on standardized tests and reports to the State Education Department.

A student's permanent student record may be changed to reflect a change in legal name or gender only upon receipt of documentation that such legal name and/or gender have been changed pursuant to applicable law. The following documentation may be provided:

- A. A court order or birth certificate demonstrating the student's new name.
- B. For a legal change of gender, the student must provide a birth certificate indicating the student's legal gender, or a valid passport indicating the student's legal gender.

Based on guidance from the NYC Department of Education found at:

<http://schools.nyc.gov/RulesPolicies/TransgenderStudentGuidelines/default.htm> and N.J.S.A. 10:5-1 et seq. Title IX, 20 U.S.C. Section 1681; extracted from Livingston School District Policy 5756

HELP PREVENT BULLYING

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

1. Monitor your child's cell phone text messages, group chats, 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)
- Responding negatively when a student joins an in-class work group or attempts to join in a social activity at recess
- Making fun of others based upon appearance, race, religion, culture, name, food choices, real or perceived sexual orientation, or affectional preference, gender or gender expression, weight, hair texture /length/style, complexion, physical or learning ability, etc.
- Verbal abuse and disrespect, direct or indirect
- Posting rumors, threats or disrespect via social media, such as Twitter, Discord, Instagram, Snap Chat, or Facebook, telephone, text, email, or blog (Cyber bullying) irrespective of how long they remain posted.
- Participating in cyber bullying by posting or reposting disrespectful or threatening comments or emojis, or posting affirming/laughing emojis, “liking’ or approving of rumors, threats or disrespect on social media.
- Verbal, written, or physical threats, such as a raised fist, or other gestures threatening physical violence.
- Sharing or requesting sexually explicit photos (Sexting) or sexual images or pornography, or transmitting embarrassing photographs of others,
- 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 is a violation of the Pride Academy’s Student Code of Conduct and Core Values and may constitute Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB) and some represent Major Infractions under the Student Code of Conduct. They can result in consequences up to and including expulsion from Pride Academy.

3. Let us know immediately if your child reports experiencing this type of behavior from others, or if your child witnesses others being mistreated.
4. Have your child report any situation that could result in violence to Ms. Brower, Dean of Students, District Title IX & Anti-Bullying Coordinator, Mr. Asgeir Ofstad, Principal, or Ms. Rose Mary Dumenigo, Vice Principal.
5. Advise your child to immediately report incidents to Ms. Brower, Dean of Students, District Title IX & Anti-Bullying Coordinator, Mr. Ofstad, Principal, or Ms. Dumenigo, Vice Principal

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, Threat to Life and Suicide Prevention policies have been enacted. In accordance with these policies, any student determined to present a threat to self, others, school staff, or the school community at large, may be required to undergo a medical or psychiatric evaluation and provide documentation of same to school administration. Student may also be referred 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
- Any expression that causes concern about any of the above

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 four (4) 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. Other behaviors that are chronic in nature, interfere with teaching and learning, harm others or put the safety of others at risk, may also constitute Major Infractions may result in suspension or expulsion. These 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. This includes threats or talk of fighting or jumping others.

Dangerous Weapons and Instruments

Pride Academy has a no 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 dispense Mace, pepper spray or any substance intended to cause skin, eye, respiratory or other physical discomfort, devices that administer electric shocks, chains, clubs, razors, knives, blades, 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 may not possess these items at any time while on school property, traveling to and from school, during lunchtime, or at 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.

Vandalism and Theft of 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, restroom walls and fixtures, supplies, including fire extinguishers, and equipment. Parents and guardians of students who steal or vandalize will be expected to repair, replace or reimburse the full cost of loss and damages.

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 participate in or 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, alcohol or tobacco related while on school grounds or attending any school related function including during transit to and from school. This includes tobacco, alcohol, and drug packaging, bottles, cans, etc. 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 of using or being under the influence of a controlled substance, for any reason including possession of packaging for controlled substances, will be required to have an immediate physical examination and drug test by a physician. If a student's parent or guardian cannot arrange to complete the examination and drug test within 48 hours, the parent must arrange to have the school's physician perform the test within this time period. 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. A report detailing results of the assessment and the recommended treatment plan must be provided to school administration. The student must provide evidence of compliance with recommended treatment to remain at Pride Academy. A repeated violation will result in a referral for expulsion. Sale or distribution of a controlled substance may result in a referral to law enforcement and a referral for expulsion.

Truancy

Students shall not be absent from school or from any assigned area in school for any unauthorized reason. Students, once present at school, are expected to attend all scheduled periods, including lunch and recess, and report to designated areas as directed, and may not leave school or any assigned area 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 their anatomy in any socially deviant or sexually suggestive manner while under jurisdiction of the school. Nor shall any student make gestures or sounds simulating sexual acts, 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. This behavior may result in an immediate referral for expulsion. Expulsion may also apply to a student who is repeatedly suspended and shows no evidence of desiring to change 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.

TITLE IX GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Under Title IX, as amended in 2024, Pride Academy Charter School has a written, publicized grievance procedure for handling complaints alleging discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, affectional or sexual orientation, gender expression, ancestry, socioeconomic status, pregnancy, and sex that provides for the prompt and equitable resolution of student and employee complaints.

Any person who believes that he/she has been discriminated against may also file a complaint with the Office for Civil Rights or the Department of Education at the same time a grievance is filed during or after the grievance process, or without using the school district process at all. A person may also file a grievance with the New Jersey Division on Civil Rights.

Under the Title IX regulation, Robin S. Brower, Dean of Students has been appointed Affirmative Action Officer (AAO) and has primary responsibility for coordinating activities related to the investigation of discrimination complaints. These include, but are not limited to: the installation, publication, recordkeeping, and processing of the grievance.

In keeping with federal/state antidiscrimination legislation, the Board of Trustees has adopted and hereby publishes the Grievance Procedure provided for the resolution of student, employee, and parent complaints.

PURPOSE: To provide students, employees, and parents a procedure by which they can seek a remedy for alleged violations related to discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, affectional or sexual orientation, sex, ancestry, national origin, or socioeconomic status.

DEFINITIONS:

Grievance -	A formal written complaint.
Grievant -	Any student, employee, or parent aggrieved by a decision or condition falling under the guidelines of federal and/or state anti-discrimination laws.
Affirmative Action Officer -	The district employee designated to coordinate efforts with anti-discrimination legislation and charged with the responsibility of investigating complaints.

PROCEDURE:

- Step #1 - The grievant must present the complaint in written form to the responsible person designated as the Affirmative Action Officer. (Use Grievance Report - Form A) **Forms B and C may be obtained from Ms. Brower, Affirmative Action Officer.)
- Step #2 - The Affirmative Action Officer has five working days in which to investigate and respond to the grievant. (Affirmative Action Officer is to use the space provided on Grievance Report - Form A)
- Step #3 - If not satisfied, the grievant may appeal within ten-working days to the School Business Administrator or designee (not Affirmative Action Officer). (Use Appeal - Form B**)
- Step #4 - Response by the School Business Administrator or designee must be given within five working days. (SBA or designee to use space provided for on Appeal - Form B**)
- Step #5 - If the grievant is not satisfied at this level, an appeal may be made within ten working days to the Board of Trustees which will hear the complaint at the next regular meeting or within thirty calendar days. (Use Appeal - Form C**)
- Local Board hearing shall be conducted so as to accord due process to all parties involved in the complaint such as written notice of hearing dates, right to counsel, right to present witnesses, right to cross-examine and to present written statement. The decision of the Board shall be by a majority of the members at a meeting, which shall be public.
- Step #6 - The Pride Academy Charter School Board of Trustees shall respond to the grievant within thirty calendar days. (Use space provided for an Appeal - Form C**)
- Step #7 - If the grievant is not satisfied with Board's decision, the grievant can have it referred to the County Superintendent of Schools.
- Step #8 - The grievant maintains the right to by-pass the grievance procedure and submit the complaint directly to any or all of the following agencies:
1. The Commissioner of Education
Bureau of Controversies and Disputes
New Jersey Department of Education
PO Box 500
Trenton, New Jersey 08625
Phone: (609) 292-5705
 2. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
Newark District Office
1 Newark Center, 21st Floor
Newark, New Jersey 07102
Phone: 800-669-4000 or 973-645-6383

3. U.S. Office for Civil Rights
U.S. Department of Education
32 Old Slip, 26th Floor
New York, NY 10005-2500
Phone 646-428-3900 or TDD: 877-521-2172
Email: OCR.NewYork@ed.gov

4. New Jersey Division on Civil Rights
140 East Front Street, 6th Floor
P0 Box 090
Trenton, NJ 08625-0090
Phone: 609-292-4605 or TDD 609-292-1785



GRIEVANCE REPORT - FORM A

STEP #1:

FROM: _____, Grievant
(Your Name)

TO: _____, Affirmative Action Officer

DATE: _____

DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT:

(Your Signature)

TEACHER E-MAIL & TELEPHONE ETIQUETTE

Phone calls and e-mails should be sent to teachers during school hours. If you must contact a teacher after hours about homework, we respectfully request that you do so before 8:00 p.m. Teachers may, if they choose, extend their individual hours of contact and will do so by personally informing students, parents and guardians. Although many of our teachers extend themselves to our students and their families by making themselves available and responding to messages received outside of school hours, they are not required to do so. Our teachers are expected to respond to messages within twenty-four (24) hours or on the next school day.

The Pride e-mail account must be used appropriately and for academic purposes only. Answers to homework must never be shared with others by email or any other means. Inappropriate use of school technology will result in suspension of privileges and accountability consequences.

STUDENT E-MAIL, GAMING, PHONE & GROUP CHAT ETIQUETTE

Parents and guardians are requested to help their children navigate their use of technology by monitoring their child's e-mail, video game, phone and group chat participation. Parents should remain within hearing of all online and phone activity and immediately report concerns to Ms. Brower, Dean of Students & Anti-Bullying Coordinator and Mr. Ofstad, Principal.

Parents should ensure their child complies with the following:

- Pride Academy email should be used for school purposes only in accordance with the 2024-2025 Technology AUP signed by students and parents/guardians.
- All communication to peers must be positive, kind and respectful. Students may not bully, coerce, roast, call names or use profanity in their conversations with one another.
- Group chats should be in keeping with Pride Academy's core values. No one should be invited to a group chat for the purpose of arguing, confrontation, creating drama, etc. Students that are not friends or friendly with one another should avoid being in chats.
- Scholars should not invite friends or family that do not attend Pride to engage in arguments or disrespect on social media, games, etc. with other Pride Academy community members.
- If a student chooses not to join or actively participate in a group chat or if the student blocks or silences a chat, peers should not be offended or become angry, nor may they harass peers by continuing to add them back into that chat or another chat. **Peers may not demand that others chat with them or join chats or games, nor may they make repeated or late phone calls to peers, particularly on school nights after 9:00 p.m.**
- Once your child has called or messaged a peer, they should wait for a return call or message or wait to see the student in school the next day. They should not contact the

other student repeatedly or become angry over the lack of response, in the event the other child is doing homework, studying, does not have their phone or is asleep.

Parent, guardians and other members of our community have expressed concerns about these types of behaviors. They create conflict and disrupt the peace in our school by spilling over into the school day. Teaching is interrupted and students are distracted from learning. This can lead to disciplinary consequences for the involved students. Please discuss this with your child.

FIELD TRIPS

We make every effort to have all students participate in field trips. In instances where students make poor behavior choices and their behavior may jeopardize their safety or the safety of others, the student may not be permitted to attend, at the discretion of school administration.

GRADUATION AND GRADUATION ACTIVITIES

Eligibility for graduation and promotion to high school are determined by a student's academic performance and school attendance. 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. Search the lost and found for your child's belongings periodically, as unclaimed items are retained for a limited time. Check with the Main Office staff or school administration for valuable lost items.

SECURITY

The safety of our students is of primary importance. Students may not open school doors to admit anyone onto the school premises, nor are students allowed to bring visitors to the upper floors of the school. All visitors must enter designated doors and report directly to 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 must 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 could place the student and everyone nearby at grave risk of harm
- Crouch out of sight in the areas designated by the teachers.
This requires students to sit extremely close together. They may find this awkward, embarrassing, or uncomfortable, but again, they will be practicing responding to the most dangerous of situations. ***Cooperation, seriousness, and absolute silence are essential.***
- Remain still and silent until instructed to do otherwise
- Sit silently and await additional instructions
- Remain in designated hiding places

Please advise your child of the importance of lockdown drills and review expectations.

FIRE ALARM and EVACUATION PROCEDURE

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

- Line up immediately and be silent
- Walk quickly and silently to the designated exit and line up outside
- Stand quietly and await additional instructions
- Follow directions of supervising adults immediately
- Observe all Pride Academy procedures outside and at the evacuation site
- Remain outside or offsite until instructed to re-enter the building

CONCLUSION

We hope you have found this handbook helpful. Please read and discuss our policies with your child and with everyone who will be responsible for picking your child up from school. All visitors are expected to practice our Core Values and follow school policies.

At the end of each year, we incorporate changes and suggestions from members of our school community into the procedures and policies that shape and govern our school. Please feel free to offer feedback on our policies and to make suggestions for changes to next year's policies and practices. We love to hear from you.

Please refer to this handbook frequently during the year. We look forward to having you and your child as part of the Pride family this year.