



**Parent and Student Handbook
and Code of Civility**

**OUR WORLD
NEIGHBORHOOD
CHARTER SCHOOL**

Non-Discrimination

Discrimination on the basis of age, sex, sexual preference, handicaps, race, religion, marital status, or national origin is prohibited in the employment of personnel, in the provision of educational programs, and in the conduct of the business affairs of Our World Neighborhood Charter School.

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



While we experienced great success in the past, it is my belief that each year presents a new opportunity for school and parents to work collaboratively to make this school the very best it can be. By committing to excellence parents, students, teachers, staff, and administrators pledge to create an open and honest line of communication and to create programs and experiences for each child that is founded on the principles of best practices in education.

We are committed to improving the school's all the school academic, extracurricular, support, and enrichment programs, so that student success will not be only in the area of English Language Arts and Mathematics, but also in Science, Social Studies, and Foreign Languages—Spanish and Mandarin. As we continue to grow and mature, we are still committed to the goals of creating a safe and nurturing environment in which each child develops a positive sense of self while recognizing his or her roles and obligations as a member of a community of learners and of the world. We must all embrace the OWN way of doing things. What that means is that we honor and respect the diversity of our community and accept that individual needs are important, but that as a school we are members of a bigger community that must support each other and find ways to respect and co-exist in a harmonious manner.

This handbook is a guide and a resource that begins to delineate how we wish to create a positive learning environment. It is the roadmap that we ask that you read and discuss with your child. We also suggest that you use both the school's and the PTO websites at www.owncs.org and www.ownpto.org to get additional information on what is happening at the school.

I am determined to reach out a hand of support, love, and respect to each child and parent to work collaboratively with all OWN staff members to ensure that each child learns to his or her potential, but also that he or she also feels supported and treated fairly at all times.

Respectfully,

Brian Ferguson
Executive Director

LETTER FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES



Dear Members of the OWN Community:

We are all very gratified with the enormous progress our school has achieved since its doors opened to students in 2002. A lot is due to the vision of our founders to create a “beautiful urban school.” A lot is due to our excellent administration and our highly competent staff. And a lot is due to parents and community members who have been invaluable supporters.

Over these years we have seen dramatic changes all around us, altering priorities for our community, our country, and our planet. For the future, we can only be certain of continuing change. While all the students who have passed through our halls have been impacted in one way or another by these changes, OWNCS has remained a constant in their lives, providing the solid foundation these young scholars will rely on for their future success as they adapt to this changing world.

This strong foundation is due, in part, to the real professionalism that has flourished at our school over the years. The students sense that they are in a secure environment and that there are high expectations of them as regards both behavior and achievement. We have witnessed how they respond to the ways they are treated and try to live up to those expectations.

It's important that everyone in the OWN community appreciates the extent to which our teachers and staff are “tuned in” to our children. They are getting to know these young people in a way that parents don't often experience. They use this understanding to create a learning environment that can support each individual. The Board of Trustees has great confidence in the ability of our teachers and staff to deal with every issue that affects our kids in their school lives.

As Board President, I am aware of the importance of the partnerships that will allow for the continued success of our school in the years to come. Community support is critical to our success. We need your volunteer time, your constructive criticism, your financial donations and, above all, we need you to send your children to school ready to learn and ready to share the OWN experience with their friends.

Sincerely,

Steven Solinsky
Chairperson, Board of Trustees

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	1
LETTER FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES	2
SCHOOL OVERVIEW	5–6
What Is a Charter School?.	5
A Brief History of OWN Charter School.	5
Mission	6
GOVERNANCE.	7
Charter Schools Institute.	7
Board of Trustees	7
Leadership Team.	7
PARENT INVOLVEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS.	8
HOURS OF OPERATIONS	9
CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN.	10–11
Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies, Science.	10
Homework	10
Field Trips	10
Middle-School Grading System.	11
Report Cards and Progress Reports	11
ACADEMIC INTERVENTION & PUPIL PERSONNEL SERVICES	12–13
Special Education	12
English as a Second Language	12
Social Worker	12
Guidance Program.	12
Dean of Students.	12
Child Study Team	13
Promotion and Retention Policy	13
SUPPLY LISTS	14–15
ADMISSION & RE-ENROLLMENT PROCESS	16
GENERAL REGULATIONS	17
Lockers & Cell Phones.	17
RESPONSIBILITIES IN COMMON AREAS.	18
DRESS CODE	19
LUNCH	19
ATTENDANCE, ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL	20
Tardiness	20
Absences	20
Dismissal	20

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TRANSPORTATION	21
HEALTH AND SAFETY	22
Nurse	22
Medication	22
Accidents	22
Fire Drills/Emergency Procedures	22
Visitor Identification	22
STUDENT RECORDS AND CONFIDENTIALITY	23
FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)	24
COMPLAINT POLICY AND PROCEDURE	25–26
Formal Complaints	25
Informal Complaints	26
CODE OF CIVILITY	27–46
PILLARS OF A POSITIVE COMMUNITY	28–30
ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	31–35
Classroom Teachers and Assistants	31
Executive Director/Principal	31
Roles, Responsibilities and Rights of Students	33
Roles and Responsibilities of Parents	34–35
ENCOURAGING APPROPRIATE CONDUCT	36
CORRECTING INAPPROPRIATE CONDUCT	37–42
Discipline Chart	39–40
Expulsion Procedures	41
Reporting Crimes and Disruptive Behavior	42
ACCEPTABLE USE AND INTERNET SAFETY POLICY	43
PUBLIC NOTICE AND FREEDOM OF INFORMATION LAW (FOIL)	46

SCHOOL OVERVIEW

WHAT IS A CHARTER SCHOOL?

Charter schools are public schools that operate independently according to the terms of a five-year performance contract or “charter.” Charter schools commit to meet specific goals for academic performance and their charter can be revoked if agreed-upon results are not attained.

Like all publicly funded schools, charter schools must meet Regents requirements and state laws for health, safety, civil rights and student assessment. In addition, charter schools must accept all students through a lottery process and cannot discriminate in their admission policy.

Charter schools can be started by educators, parents, community leaders and not-for-profit organizations, and are approved only after a rigorous review process. Once schools open, they are governed by a not-for-profit board of trustees. They are exempt from some state and local regulations regarding curriculum development, personnel hiring and financial management, but must succeed in meeting or exceeding the goals established for their academic programs.

Charter schools receive state funding (PPA) for each student. In addition to the PPA, several state and federal grants are available, and charter schools are welcome to fundraise from private sources as well. Charter schools do not receive any city, state, or federal funding for facilities .

A BRIEF HISTORY OF OUR WORLD NEIGHBORHOOD CHARTER SCHOOL

Our World Neighborhood Charter School came to life as the result of the efforts of a group of parents living in the Long Island City-Astoria-Sunnyside-Woodside neighborhoods. The founders sought to create a school that welcomed and honored this diversity through the vehicles of curriculum, policy, and governance of the school.

As members of the former Astoria Parents Network, many of the founders were advocates for issues of social justice and interested in child-centered models of instruction based on cooperative, active learning and, of course, parent involvement. The school received its charter from the Charter School Institute of the State University of New York in 2001 and officially opened its doors to the children of New York City on September 30, 2002 in a newly renovated building in the historic Kaufman-Astoria complex.

In the spring and summer of 2005, OWN School, working with the Community Resource Exchange under a grant provided by the New York City Center for Charter School Excellence, convened an extended series of meetings which were attended by a group of parents, administrators, teachers, and Board members. The purpose of these meetings was to develop a long-term strategic plan for the school. The plan covered vital issues such as program enhancements, teacher retention, community involvement, and facilities development. That plan was formally presented to the Board of Trustees in September of 2005 and unanimously adopted.

In September of 2005, OWN moved its middle school (Grades 6–8) to 31–20 37th Street. The building, complete with a gymnasium and cafeteria area allowed OWN to accommodate more people at school events and has relieved the crowding problem at the elementary school.

In January 2007 OWN Charter School, in recognition of its continued achievement was granted a full, unconditional five year charter renewal from SUNY, Charter Schools Institute. On October 16, 2007, OWN received a Blackboard Award for excellence. OWN continues to receive tremendous local support and recognition for its achievement in educating young people.

SCHOOL OVERVIEW

MISSION OF OUR WORLD NEIGHBORHOOD CHARTER SCHOOL

It is the mission of Our World Neighborhood Charter School to educate students to become independent thinkers and lifelong learners. OWN is committed to an educational philosophy based on inquiry, active and experiential learning, and social justice. Through a literacy-based, integrated and standards-driven curriculum that encourages community and honors diversity, OWN students receive the broad education they will need to meet the academic and social challenges of the best New York City High Schools, and indeed, to thrive in today's world.

OWN Charter School is located in one of the most ethnically diverse neighborhoods in the United States. This is celebrated by integrating the cultural richness of the community with the lessons of the classroom and the governance of the school. All members of the OWN community—students, teachers, and administration—are expected to reflect on the nature and quality of their work and interactions, and to strive to reach their full potential as learners and as citizens.

Key to the success of our school will be a focus on the following design elements and strategies:

- Provide a rigorous standards-driven curriculum that provides multiple opportunities for diverse assessments;
- Employ a balanced literacy approach to the teaching of reading and writing;
- Utilize assessments that serve as a tool to develop and adjust individual learning plans for students;
- Individualize instruction through the pedagogical practice of differentiation at the elementary level, and through progressive needs-based groupings by subject in middle school;
- Integrate all students into the classroom through a curriculum aimed at building community, honoring diversity and addressing multiple intelligences;
- Provide opportunities to students for remediation as well as enrichment;
- Foster social and cultural awareness through an interdisciplinary, project-driven social studies curriculum;
- Fully integrate technology in the classroom;
- Introduce the study of a second language beginning in kindergarten;
- Establish class size at maximum of 25 students in all classes in the elementary grades, and at an average of 25 students in the middle school;
- Provide each K–2 classroom with both a teacher and an assistant teacher;
- Support teachers through extensive and continuous professional development;
- Provide multiple opportunities for family involvement in the activities and governance of the school.

The above outlined strategies underscore our core academic and social belief that effective education is a conduit for academic and social growth for students, as well as for the school community as a whole.

GOVERNANCE

SUNY, CHARTER SCHOOLS INSTITUTE

In 2002, SUNY, Charter Schools Institute (CSI) granted OWN's Board of Trustees its initial charter to operate a school. In 2007, CSI granted OWN an unconditional 5-year renewal of its charter, allowing the school to serve its students through 2012. CSI is the school's authorizer and is entrusted to monitor and supervise the school's compliance with its charter. Each year OWN must submit to CSI an Annual Report on its progress towards meeting the Accountability Plan. CSI also does inspection and monitoring visits to the school to observe how the school is functioning and to ensure that the school is meeting the terms of its charter, complying to all laws, rules and regulatory statutes, and most importantly providing students with an appropriate and excellent educational experience.

To learn about CSI's role in monitoring the school visit their website at www.newyorkcharters.org.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The OWN Board of Trustees is made up of individuals from a variety of professional and ethnic backgrounds. Trustees must be approved by the Charter School Institute of the State University of New York and perform their work in the public interest. Trustees receive no compensation for their work at OWN, and their children must go through the same lottery procedure as all children in New York State in order to be admitted to OWN. Three of the nine seats on the Board are reserved for parents of children at OWN.

The function of the Board is to preserve the mission of the school by overseeing its functions, and by taking whatever steps might be necessary to ensure the viability of the organization. The board is responsible for all issues of compliance and accountability with state and federal agencies.

The Board's primary role is to provide vision and guidance to the school. The daily functioning of the school is entirely in the hands of the school's leadership and administrative teams. The Board, however, makes major decisions about the direction of the school and monitors all progress in all critical areas such as curriculum, facilities, and finance. The Board must also convene and concur on any expulsionary procedure. Trustees may be reached by e-mail or letter. There is a mailbox for the Board of Trustees in the front office of the elementary school building.

LEADERSHIP TEAM

The Leadership Team is composed of the Executive Director and Assistant Principals. The Leadership Team works with the Guidance Counselor, Dean of Students and Social Worker, and will:

- Review the Code of Civility and the school's disciplinary policies with staff at the beginning of each new year to ensure that students will be taught (or retaught) the school's rules, and that the school's expectations for conduct and character development are understood in all classrooms and common areas.
- Review and assess student achievement in all areas of the curriculum.
- Coordinate the dissemination of information to parents regarding student discipline and character education.
- Gather input from staff and parents regarding current school policies so appropriate actions may be taken.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS

VOLUNTEERING and GETTING INVOLVED

Parents are encouraged to participate in school-related activities. All parents are automatically members of OWN's Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) at no cost and are urged to become actively involved. PTO members volunteer as hall monitors, lunchtime assistants, office help, field trip chaperones, and ambassadors of goodwill to local businesses and politicians. The PTO also sponsors fundraising events such as Book Fairs and Carnivals.

Another way to participate is by working directly with your child's teacher. This may involve reading to the class, sharing cultural information, careers, or anything else a teacher might like assistance with. In addition, parents participate in many school wide planning activities. Parents have served on committees to develop the school's strategic plan and will continue to play a role in the development of the school's success.

PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATION

The PTO meets twice a month, usually on a Wednesday at 7PM and again on a Friday of each month at 8AM to accommodate busy schedules. Additionally, the PTO executive committee holds monthly meetings with the Executive Director. Please try to attend the regular PTO meetings as often as you can in order to stay abreast of school events and concerns. The PTO is your voice, and the co-chairs of the PTO come to each meeting of the Board of Trustees to update them about your concerns. Your involvement is crucial to the success of OWN. You can reach the PTO by leaving messages in the PTO box in the front office, on the phone at 718-392-3405 x 218 or by visiting them at www.ownpto.org.

PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES

Formal parent/teacher conferences are scheduled twice each year to facilitate open communication between parents and teachers regarding students' progress. Conferences are held at the end of the first and third quarters of the school year. Refer to the School calendar for specific dates. Parents may also schedule informal conferences or conversations with teachers or School leaders at any time throughout the year. Please go to the main offices to schedule a visit.

NEWSLETTERS and LETTERS

Parents will receive regular newsletters featuring a letter from the Executive Director as well as announcements of upcoming events and Schoolwide activities. The school also sends home a monthly letter with an updated calendar of events. Ask your child for the letter. It is an important document that keeps you abreast of what is happening in school and issues that may affect your child's education and achievement.

HOURS OF OPERATION

OWN K–5 instruction begins promptly at 7:50 AM and ends at 3:10 PM, Monday through Friday. ***No student will be admitted into the school building before 7:30 AM.*** It is important that families do not leave an unattended child on the school premises before there is adult supervision.

Faculty and staff members will greet students in the morning and dismiss the children in the afternoon, ensuring that each student exits the school in a safe and orderly fashion. Parents who would like their children (Grades 3–5) to walk home or wait off-school grounds for pick-up must sign a permission slip before the child will be released to do so.

Children not enrolled in an after-school program (e.g. Chess Club or Reading/Math Tutorial) are not permitted on School grounds after 3:15 PM. If a child is left at the School after hours, the parent or emergency contact will be called to arrange for pick-up. **The School will fine a parent \$40 for each hour the child is under School Supervision.** If a parent, guardian, or authorized adult cannot be reached by 5:00PM the police will be notified of the child’s abandonment.

OWN Middle-School instruction begins promptly at 8:05 AM and ends at 3:30 PM, Monday through Friday. ***No student will be allowed in the building before 8:00 AM.*** OWN Middle School does not allow students to leave its premises during the school day. Children who stay after school for sports, tutoring, or any other activities will not be allowed to leave the school premises and then return. This is for your child’s safety and the protection of the school.

SCHOOL CLOSING AND EMERGENCIES

OWN will follow the lead of New York City’s Department of Education with regards to decisions about the opening and closing of school due to weather and other emergencies. School closings or emergencies will be announced on NY1 and WINS 1010. In addition, a message will be placed on the school’s voice mail system announcing the emergency closing (718) 392-3405

IMPORTANT SCHOOL CONTACT INFORMATION

Elementary School	(718) 392-3405	Middle School	(718) 274-2902
Fax	718) 392-2840	Fax:	(718) 274-7146
Office	ext. 200	Office	ext. 107
Nurse	ext. 209	Nurse	ext. 122
Assistant Principal	ext. 232	Assistant Principal	ext. 104
Weekly Announcement	ext. 750	Weekly Announcement	ext. 750

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN

At the heart of OWN Charter School is a highly structured curriculum that sets high expectations and provides individualized monitoring to assist students in attaining ambitious goals for achievement. OWN Charter School provides a strong academic foundation for students that will prepare them for success throughout life.

LANGUAGE ARTS, MATHEMATICS, SCIENCE, SOCIAL STUDIES

Reading, writing, arithmetic, reasoning, and research are fundamental disciplines essential to academic success. OWN is committed to providing students at all grade levels with daily instruction and experience in core curriculum areas. OWN has created and utilizes curricula designed to directly address New York State Learning Standards in all subject areas and to enable students to reach their highest potential. Students also receive instruction in foreign language, arts and physical education weekly.

English Language Arts

Grades K–8 use Readers and Writers Workshop, Words Their Way.

Mathematics

Grades K–5 use TERC Mathematics;
Grades 5–8 use Glencoe Mathematics

Science

Grades K–8 use FOSS in addition to Harcourt Science 2000 and Holt, Rinehart, Winston Science Plus.

Social Studies

Grades K–8 use Teacher Curriculum Institute Social Studies Alive and History Alive.

HOMEWORK

Homework assignments are given regularly. Helping your child with homework is an excellent way for parents to learn about the curriculum and its goals. Teachers will vary assignments to make homework productive and interesting. The following chart indicates about how much time we expect students to spend on homework each night. In addition to regular homework assignments, all children must spend at least 20 minutes reading each night.

Kindergarten	10 minutes	4th–5th Grade	50 minutes
1st Grade	20 minutes	6th Grade	60 minutes
2nd Grade	30 minutes	7th Grade	80 minutes
3rd Grade	40 minutes	8th Grade	90 minutes

Here are some ways you can help your child with his or her homework experience.

- Make homework rules together with your child. Decide when and where it will be done.
- Give your child a healthy snack before he or she begins homework.
- Provide a quiet place and enough time for your child to do homework, such as a desk in his or her room or the kitchen table. Make sure there is sufficient light and that distractions are limited.
- Show an interest in your child's homework and ask him or her about it each night. Encourage your child to work independently. Assist him or her if needed, unless otherwise noted.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips may be planned throughout the year for academic enrichment. Parents/guardians will receive advance notice and a permission slip must be signed in order for the student to participate. Students without signed permission slips will remain at the School.

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN

MIDDLE-SCHOOL GRADING SYSTEM

OWN Middle-school students are assessed each quarter, across subject levels, using the following grading guidelines.

Social Studies, English Language Arts and Spanish

Categories	Grades 6, 7, & 8
Homework	10% (of final grade)
Classwork	5% (of final grade)
Portfolio	5% (of final grade)
Tests	30% (of final grade)
Quizzes	20% (of final grade)
Projects	30% (of final grade)

Mathematics/Science

Categories	Grade 6	Grade 7–8
Homework	10% (of final grade)	10% (of final grade)
Classwork	5% (of final grade)	5% (of final grade)
Portfolio	5% (of final grade)	5% (of final grade)
Tests	30% (of final grade)	30% (of final grade)
Quizzes	20% (of final grade)	10% (of final grade)
Projects	30% (of final grade)	20% (of final grade)
Labs	0% (of final grade)	20% (of final grade)

Report Cards and Progress Reports

Report Cards will be given out four times throughout the school year.

Quarter 1	Handed out at Parent Teacher Conferences
Quarter 2	Mailed Home
Quarter 3	Handed out at Parent teacher Conferences
Quarter 4	Mailed Home

Progress reports will be handed out to students in school four times a year. Parents are required to sign these reports and return them to the subject area teachers.

Progress Report 1	Midway through Quarter 1
Progress Report 2	Midway through Quarter 2
Progress Report 3	Midway through Quarter 3
Progress Report 4	Midway through Quarter 4

ACADEMIC INTERVENTION SERVICES AND PUPIL PERSONNEL SERVICES

Academic Intervention Services (AIS) is designed to help prevent student failure and to keep students functioning at their very best. AIS can be used to remediate as well as enrich. AIS is comprised of the following teams and department: Guidance Counselor, Social Work, Dean of Students, Child Study Team, Special Education, English as a Second Language (ESL), Reading Specialist, and Literacy and Mathematics Coaches.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

OWN's Special Education program serves students who have an Individual Education Program (IEP), which mandates: SETTS also known as Resource Room, Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, and/or counseling. OWN does not have a Collaborative Team Teaching (CTT), or the more restrictive 12-1-1 or 8-1-1 self-contained special education classes. Special education services are primarily delivered on a pullout basis, meaning that students leave their regular general education classroom for instruction in the special education resource room. Some students may also have push-in service which the special education teacher works with the child in his or her classroom.

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

English as a Second Language is taught by certified instructors to eligible students based on their results on the LAB (R) test. Students are pulled out to meet with the ESL teacher for either one or two periods each day. The amount of time each student spends in ESL classes each day is determined by the score they receive on the LAB(R). Students must pass both NYSESLAT and the NYS English Language Arts exams to exit the ESL program.

SOCIAL WORKER

The school social worker collaborates with the guidance counselor, dean, and other faculty members on the social, emotional, and academic functioning of all students. The social worker:

- Provides IEP counseling to students
- Works with parents, students, and teachers around issues of child abuse and neglect
- Does crisis intervention
- Runs affinity groups for students experiencing chronic problems and difficult issues

GUIDANCE PROGRAM

The guidance program assists faculty and staff in providing individual students with the skills necessary to reason, communicate, understand themselves and what lies ahead, and to find their way into the most favorable areas of activity for growth and development. Guidance department provides:

- Individual and group counseling
- High school placement assistance for students in grades 6–8
- Monitoring of academic grades throughout the year
- Study and organizing skills instruction

DEAN OF STUDENTS

The dean of students works closely with students, parents, and teachers to ensure that each child is developing appropriate social skills while becoming a productive member of their school and home communities. The dean of students works to:

- Provide assistance with classroom management to instructional staff
- Improve student behavior
- Strengthen the school/parent/community bond
- Promote positive choices for students

ACADEMIC INTERVENTION SERVICES AND PUPIL PERSONNEL SERVICES

CHILD STUDY TEAM

The Child Study Team is a collaborative effort in which classroom teachers, specialists, speech and language therapist, administrators and others work together to create intervention plans for students who may be struggling with either behavioral, emotional, or academic issues. The goal of the CST is to act as a means of early intervention to assist young people to improve their performance and to give teachers more resources and tools to successfully work with struggling students.

READING & MATHEMATICS ACADEMY

The reading and mathematics academies are after school activities in which selected students are provided with additional instruction geared to improving student achievement on the New York State exams.

Students in grades 3–8, who are below grade level and/or who scored at level 1 or level 2 on the prior years' NYS English Language Arts and Mathematics exams are invited to participate in the academies. These academies are important in helping each child demonstrate his or her mastery of grade level NYS standards so that he or she may be promoted to the next grade level. Scores below level 3 on the NYS ELA and/or Math exam may result in a student being retained in his or her current grade level.

OWN ASSESSMENTS

OWN employs a variety of assessment tools including standardized tests, state mandated exams, assessments from publishers of school textbook series, teacher created tests and quizzes, student portfolios, and performance assessments. Expectations and performance on these varied assessments guide the development of curricula on each grade level, the development of student remediation, and instructional strategies aimed at improved academic achievement.

Some of the standardized tests administered during the year are:

- Terra Nova K–8
- NYS English Language Arts and Mathematics, Grades 3–8
- NYS Science, Grades 4 and 8
- NYS Social Studies, Grades 5 and 8
- NYSESLAT

STUDENT PROMOTION & RETENTION POLICY

1. Parents will be notified early if a student is failing to make normal grade level progress. Students may be required to repeat their current grade level and/or attend summer school.
2. Factors affecting promotion include, but are not limited to: results on standardized tests that are below grade level; scores at Level 1 and/or 2 on the NYS English Language Arts and Math Exams; poor student attendance and poor academic results in two or more subjects — ELA, Math, Social Studies, and Science.
3. The school will meet with parents to discuss progress being made by the student.
4. If the school decides student retention and/or summer school attendance is necessary, there will be a meeting with parents to discuss the steps that must be taken.
5. Decisions on student retention or required summer school attendance are the final determination of the school's administration.

SUPPLY LISTS FOR DIFFERENT GRADES

Kindergarten & First Grade

1 box of 24 pencils
1 box of washable markers
2 boxes of 24 crayons
6 hard covered notebooks (marble type)
Elmer's liquid glue
Scissors (child)
6 large glue sticks
4 Pocket folders: 1 red, 1 blue, 1 yellow, 1 green
Zip-lock bags: 1 box qt-size and 1 box gal-size
2 boxes of tissues
2 bottles of hand sanitizer
2 boxes of baby wipes
1 large roll of paper towels
1 pack of large paper plates
1 pack 3x5 index cards
1 pack of construction paper
2 plastic folders
1 oversized white T-shirt
A change of clothes (in a bag clearly labeled with your child's name)

Second Grade

1 ruler with inches and centimeters
1 box of 24 pencils
1 pencil box
1 box of colored pencils
1 box of washable markers
1 box of 24 crayons
1 package of construction paper
1 package of loose-leaf paper
Elmer's liquid glue
Scissors (child)
6 hard covered marble notebooks
6 Pocket folders
1 bottle of hand sanitizer
1 hand soap
2 boxes of tissues
2 rolls of paper towels
2 boxes of baby wipes
Zip-lock bags-2 boxes
1 oversized white T-shirt

Third Grade

1 pair of scissors
6 glue sticks
1 bottle of Elmer's glue
3 packages of #2 pencils
4 highlighters
1 box of crayons
4 boxes of tissues
2 packages of lined index cards

1 package 11x17 construction paper
6 2-pocket bottom folders
1 pencil case (the ones that snap close)
1 set of washable markers
1 set of colored pencils
2 packages of loose-leaf paper
1 package of pencil top erasers
2 bottles of hand sanitizer
2 packages of baby wipes
Post-it notes
Gallon size ziplock bags
9 marble notebooks
1 ruler with inches and centimeters

Fourth Grade

2 packages #2 pencils
6 glue sticks
1 package of crayons
1 box of washable markers
1 package of blue or black pens
2 red pens
1 pair of child's scissors
1 zipper plastic pencil case
6 marble notebooks
1 ruler with both inches and centimeters
4 2-pocket folders
2 boxes of tissues
1 plastic pencil sharpener
1 package of construction paper (assorted colors)
1 package Ziploc bags
1 package sticky notes (post-its)
2 highlighters
1 roll paper towels
1 package of baby wipes

Fifth Grade

1 package of blue or black pens
2 red pens
3 packages #2 pencils
1 box of crayons
1 box of thick color markers
1 box of thin point color markers
1 box of colored pencils
1 pair of child's scissors
Math supplies: 1 protractor, 1 ruler with inches and centimeters
4 glue sticks
1 bottle Elmer's glue
1 roll clear tape
3 packages of construction paper (asst. colors)
2 marble notebook
4 packages of loose-leaf paper

SUPPLY LISTS FOR DIFFERENT GRADES

- 1 3-inch 3-ring binder
- 4 1-inch floppy 3-ring binders
- 2 packages of lined loose-leaf paper
- 1 package of loose-leaf reinforcements
- 3 packages of dividers
- 4 packages of post-its (assorted colors and sizes)
- 4 packages of 3x5 index cards
- 1 personal pencil sharpener
- 2 packages disinfecting wipes
- 2 boxes of tissues
- 3 rolls paper towels
- 1 package highlighters assorted colors
- 1 USB Flash Driver
- 3 marble composition notebooks
- 1 marble notebook with math graph paper
- 2 packages of graph paper

Do not purchase a planner

Grades 6 to 8

- 1 Zipper Style/hard pencil case
- 48 #2 pencils
- 12 red pens
- 24 black/blue pens
- 5 highlighters
- 2 packages of pencil erasers
- 1 box colored pencils
- 1 box 24-count crayons
- 1 box fine line markers
- 1 glue stick
- 1 bottle Elmer's glue
- 1 pair child scissors
- 4 packages (4x6) index cards per quarter
- 2 packages of asst. color construction paper
- 1 package reinforcement labels
- 1 ruler (inches & centimeters)
- 1 package graph paper
- 1 scientific calculator (TI-34 II Explorer)
- 2 pocket folders (preferably plastic)
- 2 packets loose-leaf paper
- 1 3-ring binder with subject dividers
- 2 rolls of paper towels
- 2 boxes of tissues
- 1 bottle hand sanitizing lotion

Do not purchase a planner.

ADMISSION, RE-ENROLLMENT, TRANSFERS

ADMISSION OF NEW STUDENTS

OWN Charter School is open to all children, on a space-available basis within each grade. Preference is given only to siblings of admitted students and residents of District 30. The School does not discriminate on the basis of sex, sexual preference, handicaps, race, religion, national origin, intellectual or athletic ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, disability, proficiency in English, or any other basis prohibited by law. To apply for kindergarten, a child must have his or her 5th birthday before December 31 of the enrollment year.

Students are selected by open lottery. There are no admission requirements, and no tests are given to determine whether or not admission is granted. Once all available slots are filled, all other applicants will be placed on a waitlist. Students will be admitted from the waitlist as places become available in each grade, in the order that the applications were filed.

RE-ENROLLMENT OF CURRENTLY ENROLLED STUDENTS

To secure your child's place at OWN Charter School for the next school year, you must officially re-enroll him or her. In January, re-enrollment packets are mailed home along with the deadline for re-enrollment. Students whose re-enrollment packets are received after the deadline will be added to the waitlist and admitted on a space-available basis.

TRANSFERS

The School asks that, whenever possible, parents provide at least two weeks notice if a student must transfer from OWN Charter School for any reason. Such notice will allow the School to process the necessary transfer paperwork, including having the student's records transferred. It will also enable the School to fill the vacant seat with another student from the waitlist.

SPECIAL NEEDS

In keeping with the rules and regulations that govern the provision of special education, Our World Neighborhood Charter School will meet the requirements of IDEA and the charter law. OWN Charter School works, using the processes and policies of the New York City Department of Education, to implement the IEP of each student. If OWNCS finds that it cannot implement the IEP of a given student, the School will work with the NYC Department of Education to provide either services or placement. Our World Neighborhood Charter School provides Resource Room services and other related services such as counseling, speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, and physical therapy. Please address questions to the Executive Director or the Director of Special Education as it relates to special education.

GENERAL REGULATIONS

MONEY AND OTHER VALUABLE PROPERTY

Students are encouraged to leave all money and other valuable property at home. The School assumes no responsibility for the loss or theft of such articles.

LOCKERS

Each middle-school student is assigned a locker for books and personal belongings. Sharing of lockers is not permitted and children should not share the combinations. Lockers may be personalized on the inside, but inappropriate pictures and photos are not permitted. Lockers remain the property of OWNCS and are subject to inspection at any time. Students must purchase locks from the school. Non-school locks will be cut from lockers without advance notice. Grade 5 students in the elementary school are also assigned lockers. These, however, must be kept unlocked.

CELL PHONES, BEEPERS, PDA'S, etc

Students are not allowed to bring cell phones, beepers, or other personal electronic devices to school. They are distractions and interfere with positive social interactions. If a student must have a cell phone for emergency after-school situations, a special waiver must be obtained and returned to the school office. Cell phones allowed under this waiver must be turned off and remain in the student's locker or book bag during school hours. Cell phones and other electronic devices that are taken out of lockers and bookbags will be confiscated and must be picked up by a parent. The School will not be responsible for lost or stolen cell phones or electronic devices.

CANDY, GUM, AND TOYS

Students may not bring candy, gum, toys, or any non-school related items to School. Candy and gum will be thrown out. Toys will be confiscated and not returned until the end of the school year.

CLASSROOM CELEBRATIONS

In accordance with the Child Nutrition and Wellness Reauthorization Act, OWN has adopted a wellness policy in an effort to help our students and the entire school community develop healthier habits. Birthdays are a special time in every child's life, but please be advised that no food is to be provided for classroom celebrations. We ask that you focus on alternate ways of celebrating this important milestone. One idea would be to send in your child's favorite book to share/read with the class. The book can then be donated to the school library in your child's name if you choose.

SOLICITATION

Solicitation of or by any student, parent, or staff member on School property for any cause except those authorized by the Executive Director is strictly prohibited.

RESPONSIBILITIES IN COMMON AREAS

The school's common areas include the playground, hallways, rest rooms, cafeteria, gymnasium and multipurpose room. Because students from every grade use these areas under the supervision of various faculty and staff, it is important to establish rules and expectations that are commonly understood and consistently applied. With such rules in place, staff can focus on encouraging good character among students rather than correcting misbehavior.

Staff will continuously encourage appropriate behavior in the school's common areas through positive and friendly interactions with students. Verbal praise will be used to recognize students who exercise courtesy, safety, and respect. The Executive Director will visit classrooms or use the intercom to compliment good behavior in the school's common areas.

Following are the school's goals for student conduct in each of the common areas.

Playground:

Students will play safely in all games and on all equipment, showing consideration and respect for others.

Hallways:

The hallways of the school will be a safe and quiet environment where people interact with courtesy and respect.

Restrooms:

The restrooms at the school will be clean and safe. A pass procedure is established to keep the traffic controlled. At all times, teachers will use their discretion in sending children to the bathroom on a case by case basis.

Meals:

Lunches and snacks at the school will be enjoyed in a safe, clean, and friendly environment where people interact with courtesy, manners, and respect.

Assemblies:

Students will demonstrate respectful behavior during assemblies by listening, participating, and following directions.

Before and After School:

Students will arrive at and depart from the school in a safe and orderly manner. Abusive, bullying, or disrespectful behavior will not be tolerated during arrival and dismissal. This especially applies to those students riding the school bus—such behavior on a moving vehicle endangers the lives of students and drivers alike. ***If a student cannot show he or she can behave responsibly on the bus, the privilege of riding the bus will be suspended and may, in some cases, be denied completely.***

DRESS CODE

OWN Charter School does not require students to wear a uniform. Rather, OWN Charter School requires that children dress in clean, comfortable clothing that does not distract from our cooperative learning environment.

Children must dress in compliance with school rules of sanitation and safety in a manner that conforms to community standards of decency and modesty. If student clothing is deemed inappropriate, the child's parent or guardian will be called to bring in acceptable clothing.

- Shoes and socks must be worn at all times for health and safety reasons.
- Shorts may be worn; however, the bottom of the shorts should be at the child's fingertips or below. Shorts that are extremely short are not permitted.
- T-shirts may be worn, but white undershirts are not permitted except as undergarments.
- Jewelry, other than simple earrings or watches, is not permitted.
- Strapless dresses, halter tops, midriff tops and see-through shirts are not permitted.
- Clothing advertising violence, alcoholic beverages, illegal substances, and tobacco products is not permitted.
- Clothing containing inappropriate language and/or messages is not permitted.
- Clothing advertising commercial brands and messages is discouraged.
- Hats, caps, scarves, and other head coverings are not permitted unless required by religious practice.
- Appropriate dress, for weather and activities, on Physical Education days are:
 - Fall or Spring: shorts, tee shirts, sneakers
 - Winter: wind pants /sweatpants, tee shirts/sweatshirts, sneakers

LUNCH

OWN Charter School's commitment to offering children a superior education extends to the meals that are provided.

All parents/guardians must submit a Free and Reduced Priced Meal Application so that payment status may be established. While these forms are being processed, all students who desire meals provided through the School will receive them.

Parents are asked to make lunch payments on a monthly basis by cash or money order made payable to OWNCS and to deliver these payments to the School office or by using our online payment system. When it is necessary for a student to pay in cash, parents are encouraged to seal the money in an envelope with the student's name printed on the outside. The envelope should be delivered to the School office at the beginning of the school day to reduce the risk of loss or theft. ***Parents who do not pay for lunches in a timely manner run the risk of having your child being denied lunch.*** Every attempt will be made to remind parents to pay. We do not wish to cancel lunches or resort to collection agencies to assist us in getting payments that are due.

Students are advised to refrain from sharing food with other students to minimize the spread of viruses and bacteria, and the risk of allergic reaction.

Students will practice etiquette and hone their clean-up skills during mealtimes.

ATTENDANCE, ARRIVAL and DISMISSAL

TARDINESS

Instruction begins promptly at 7:50 AM [OWN K–5], or 8:15 AM [OWN MS] and it is critical that all students be prepared to begin at that time. A student who is late misses valuable instructional time, and conveys an unacceptable lack of regard for the school.

Any student who arrives after 8:05 AM [OWN K–5], or 8:05 AM [OWN MS] must report to the school office before proceeding to the classroom. The student will be considered tardy and the incident will be recorded. *Only Kindergarten parents are allowed to take their child to the classroom after 8:05 AM.* If a student is tardy four times, the problem will be regarded as chronic, and remedial action will be necessary. A middle-school student may be given a detention if they accrue 4 tardies.

ABSENCES

Parents must contact the elementary school or middle-school office by 9:30 am by phone whenever a child is going to be absent **and** send a written excuse to the teacher when the child returns to school.

The following reasons are sufficient cause for an excused absence: a.) illness, b.) death in the family, c.) inclement weather, which would be dangerous to the life or health of the child, d.) legal quarantine, e.) emergency conditions as determined by the Executive Director or designee, and f.) prior permission from the Executive Director and consent from the parent/legal guardian.

In the event that extraordinary circumstances require that the student be absent from School, an Authorized Absence Plan may be developed jointly by the teacher, the Executive Director, and the student's parent or legal guardian. The plan will define the length of the absence and the means by which the student will make up the work he or she will miss. The plan must be approved and signed by the Executive Director and the parent/guardian prior to the student's absence.

If a student returns to school after an absence without a note, the teacher will call the parent to remind him or her to send a note the following day. If a note is not received within two school days of the absence, the absence will be regarded as unexcused. **After four unexcused absences, the appropriate legal authorities will be contacted.** Parents are reminded that it is their legal obligation to make certain their children are in school, and legal sanctions for truancy include fines. Excessive absences may lead to a child being retained in his or her current grade level and also reported to the appropriate legal authorities.

DISMISSAL

Students at OWN K–5 are dismissed between 3:05 and 3:15 PM. Dismissal times are staggered to ensure an orderly exit. The classroom teacher will provide the exact time and location of dismissal. If you are picking up your child by automobile, please be careful not to interfere with school buses that will be on 35th Avenue and 37th Street. **Teachers are allowed to dismiss children only to the company of parents or people whose names are on the Emergency Contact list submitted to teachers at the beginning of the year.** Parents may put as many names as they wish on the Emergency Contact list and are advised to check periodically with teachers to see that this information is current.

It is a good idea to send your child's teacher a note anytime a new person is picking up your child, even if this person is on the Emergency Contact list. This will help avoid confusion and misunderstandings.

If it is necessary for a student to be dismissed from school before the end of the school day, parents must provide **written notification** to the school office with the child that will be picked up and the name of the person who will come for the child. This notice must be received by the School office by 2:00 PM the day of the early dismissal. **Only adults who are listed in the school's records as being authorized will be allowed to take students from the school in these cases.**

TRANSPORTATION

OWN students come from all boroughs of New York City, except Staten Island, and travel to and from the school using every conceivable mode of transportation, including walking and riding bicycles.

For students who are eligible, free or half-price MetroCards or yellow school bus transportation is provided by the NYC Department of Education. Yellow bus stops are determined by the NYC Department of Education according to their guidelines. OWN will accommodate new parents in getting their children on an existing route, but cannot create a new route unless there are 11 other children in the same area that also need transportation. ***Buses run only on days that NYC public schools are open.*** Despite our best efforts, there are occasional days when OWN's and NYC Dept. of Education's schedules do not coincide. On such days parents must make alternate arrangements to transport their child to school. Notes will be sent home with students reminding parents of days they will have to provide transportation.

Yellow bus drivers operate with strict instructions. They are not allowed to transport students younger than 5 years old, or children who are not regular riders who want to visit their friends after school. They are not allowed to drop a child off at a bus stop if no adult is waiting for him or her—they will return to the school with the child at the end of the route. It is important to get to know the bus driver on your child's route and to keep the driver informed of any changes in your plans. Teachers and the Administration should always be informed of any changes as well. **Parents are never allowed on the bus.**

Parents and students are reminded that, by NYC Department of Education policy, lost or stolen MetroCards are not necessarily replaceable immediately. Students must wait until such information is entered in the Department of Education's database and new cards are issued. Some public bus drivers will allow students to travel with a letter provided by the school, indicating a student is eligible for a card and is awaiting a new one.

GENERAL ELIGIBILITY

Students must be at least 5 years old by December 31st of the school year and live within a 5 mile radius of the school to be eligible for a MetroCard or yellow bus service.

BEHAVIOR RULES FOR THE BUS

- Children must immediately take a seat and remain seated while on the school bus.
- While on the bus, children may talk in a low voice, and not shout or scream.
- Children may not leave their seats and must wear seat belts while the bus is in motion.
- Failure to comply with these rules may result in disciplinary action as described in the School *Code of Civility* of this handbook.

ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES FOR METRO CARDS:

GRADE	DISTANCE	ELIGIBLE FOR:
K–Grade 2	less than 1/2 mile	Half Fare MetroCard
K–Grade 2	1/2 mile or more	Free Fare MetroCard or Yellow School Bus
Grades 3 – 8	1/2 – 1 mile	Half Fare MetroCard
Grades 3 – 8	more than 1 mile	Free Fare MetroCard or Yellow School Bus

Student MetroCards are issued twice a year (one in September and one in February) and operate in the same manner as regular MetroCards. The cards are valid on regular school days between the hours of 5:30 AM and 8:30 PM. Students are allotted three free trips (with all allowed transfers) per school day.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Students' health and safety is the school's foremost responsibility. The following information describes the precautions taken to protect the well-being of all students. If your child has any specific health, safety, or security needs, please inform the school so that appropriate accommodations can be made.

NURSE

OWN Charter School has the services of an on-site nurse to assist students who are ill or injured. Parents will be notified whenever a student has been referred to the school nurse. If the nurse requests that a child be sent home, **the child must be picked up immediately. *Failure to do so is a violation of health and hygiene codes and is reportable to ACS and the authorities.***

Parents or students may also wish to consult with the nurse on matters related to hygiene, nutrition, substance abuse, depression, child abuse and neglect, or other issues of concern.

MEDICATION

The school nurse and the student's teacher must be informed of any prescription medication that a student is required to take at school. To dispense prescription medication to students, the nurse **must** receive a written order from the student's doctor and a permission slip from the student's parent or guardian. All medications should be brought to the school nurse in its original prescription container, labeled with the student's name, the name of the medication, the date of expiration, and the proper dosage.

Students are not permitted to bring non-prescription medications to School. If, during the course of the school day, it is necessary for a student to receive common, non-prescription medication (e.g., Tylenol), the school nurse will dispense it with proper authorization. Parents must inform the school of any allergies to or restrictions on non-prescription medication that their children might have. Also, please notify the school nurse in writing if your child has a chronic illness that may affect his or her performance at school.

ACCIDENTS

The school nurse or a trained staff member will administer initial treatments for minor injuries. The student's parent or emergency contact will be notified immediately by phone whenever medical treatment is administered to a student, and an incident report will be kept in the student's permanent file. **In such cases, it is especially crucial that the school has working phone numbers for students' parents and for alternate contacts in the event that a parent is unavailable.** Please be vigilant in keeping the school's records for your child up-to-date.

FIRE DRILLS/EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

The school will have at least 10 fire drills during school hours. Specific signals and procedures have been established for all types of disaster drills, and safety areas have been designated. Teachers are equipped with instructions, and all drills will be practiced with students on a regular basis.

VISITOR IDENTIFICATION

To help ensure a safe and secure learning environment for your children, **all visitors** to OWN Charter School are required to show ID, sign in at the school office, and to wear a visitor's pass. Faculty and staff have been instructed to escort anyone not having a pass immediately to the office for identification.

STUDENT RECORDS AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Every student is required to complete and submit the following as part of the registration process:

- *Birth Certificate*
- *Proof of residence.* This can be a utility bill (but not a cable bill)
- *Enrollment Form.* This form is used to record all basic information about the student and the family, including home, work, and emergency telephone numbers. It is extremely important that a parent or guardian sign this form.
- *Free and Reduced Price Meals Application.* This form must be completed for all students and will be held in strict confidence.
- *Medical Forms.* This set of forms must be submitted for all students within the first 30 days of attendance. If you have questions about immunization requirements or other medical issues, please contact your physician or the school nurse. It is the responsibility of each parent or guardian to keep their child's medical information, including food allergies, up to date.
- *Record Release.* This form gives the School permission to obtain all records pertaining to a given student from his or her previous school. This form must be completed and should include the telephone number and address of the previous school, as well as the signature of a parent or legal guardian.
- *Photo Release Form.* OWN Charter School's has generated significant public interest and some media coverage. If for any reason, you do not wish to have your child photographed, video taped, or contacted by the media, you may state so on this form.

It is critical that the School be notified immediately of any changes in a student's name, address, phone number, responsible parent, or any other information provided at the time of registration. Such changes should be communicated in writing and sent to the School Secretary.

OWN Charter School complies with all confidentiality laws protecting the privacy of its students and their families. Information regarding a student's progress will be shared only with parents or guardians, appropriate members of the School's faculty and staff, and any professional consultants retained for the purpose of measuring and/or improving instructional quality. When information regarding student performance is made public, it will be presented in such a way as to avoid the identification of specific, individual students.

FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. S 1232g, 34CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education.

FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attend a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have been transferred are "eligible students."

Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible students to review the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies.

Parents or eligible students have the right to request that a school correct records which they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information.

Generally schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR S 99.31):

- School officials with legitimate educational interest
- Other schools to which a student is transferring
- Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes
- Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student
- Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school
- Accrediting organizations
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena
- Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies
- State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law

COMPLAINT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

FORMAL COMPLAINTS

A formal complaint involves an alleged violation of law and/or charter. Examples of formal complaints are:

- Improper discipline of a special-education student (violates IDEA)
- Billing the wrong district for a student (violation of Charter Schools Act)
- Child abuse in the school (violation of New York State law)

Issues involving a violation of law and/or charter may be resolved informally, but the complainant can at any time during the process initiate the formal complaint process.

Procedures for filing a formal complaint

All formal complaints from a parent, individual or public agency must be submitted in writing. If you wish you may pick up a complaint form in the school's main office. The complaint should include:

- The nature of the violation
- The facts on which the statement is based
- The signature and contact information of the person filing the complaint
- If alleging violations with respect to a specific child, include:
 - The name and address of the residence of the child
 - A description of the nature of the problem of the child (the concerns that led you to file the complaint), including the facts relating to the problem
 - A proposed resolution of the problem to the extent known and available at the time the person is filing the complaint

What to expect once a formal complaint has been filed:

1. Please submit your complaint to the School Secretary of the elementary school. She will date stamp it and place in the mailbox of the Board of Trustees.
2. All formal complaints will be reviewed by the Board of Trustees at the next public board meeting following the date of receipt of the complaint as long as the complaint was filed with sufficient time for the Board to review it. So, if a complaint is filed on October 30, the Board will review it at the following Board meeting, which is on November 25. Otherwise, the Board will review the complaint at its next Board meeting.
3. The Board will respond to your complaint in writing within 10 business days after the Board meeting.

Upon resolution of a complaint, OWN will provide you with:

1. A written determination and any remedial action to be taken and the reasons for such determinations
2. A written notice informing you of your right to appeal the determination to SUNY, Charter Schools Institute if the complaint involves a violation of law or charter
3. A copy of the SUNY's grievance policies (as they are posted on the website of the Institute at <http://www.newyorkcharters.org/parentResources.htm#questions>).

The Formal Complaint Appeal Process

SUNY Charter Schools Institute's role in the formal complaint process is a limited one, and it is generally restricted to appeals after the school's board of trustees has handled the complaint. Detailed instructions for filing an appeal are available on the Parent Resources pages of the Institute's website: <http://www.newyorkcharters.org/parentResources.htm#questions>.

COMPLAINT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Informal Complaints

Many types of complaints do not involve violations of law or charter. Examples of informal complaints are:

- “Xena pulls my daughters’ hair. Can’t she move seats?”
- “I want my son in a different class or section.”
- “My child was retained in the 3rd grade and I think she should be in the 4th grade.” (no discrimination; assume charter was followed)
- “I think my child deserves an ‘A’ in that course, not a ‘B’.”

It is the desire of the school to work closely with parents and students to resolve issues that are problematic for either party in a manner that is respectful and thoughtful and beneficial for both parties. It is the hope of the school that issues that would fall in the category of ‘informal complaints’ be resolved quickly at the school level and are not handled by the school’s Board of Trustees.

Procedures for filing an Informal Complaint:

- Complaints on behalf of your child should be made as quickly as possible to the teacher. You may submit your complaint in writing, orally, or via email to the teacher or person involved. The school directory has a complete list of all email addresses.
- If the teacher does not resolve the issue to your satisfaction you may take your complaint to an administrator—the Dean or Assistant Principal.
- If the Dean or Assistant Principal does not resolve the issue, you should take your complaint to the Executive Director.
- If your complaint is about a school administrator or teacher, and you have not been able to resolve it with person involved, you should proceed to the Executive Director.
- If your complaint is about the Executive Director, you should file your complaint in writing to the President of the Board of Trustees.

What to expect once an informal complaint has been filed:

You should expect a response within a reasonable amount of time. If you do not get a response in a reasonable amount of time you may move the complaint up the chain of command. If no action is taken at all, you may proceed directly to the Board of Trustees, under what would be a violation of this policy, which is part of the school’s charter.

Upon resolution of your complaint, OWN will provide you with:

A response that includes the reason for the action taken, if any. Response to informal complaints may take the form of oral or written communication. To the extent possible, the school will keep a written record of informal complaints.

The Informal Complaint Appeal Process

If a parent is not satisfied with the resolution or action taken by a teacher, staff member or administrator, he or she may appeal to the Executive Director.

OWN Board of Trustees does not handle appeals of informal complaints, unless the initial complaint was about the Executive Director.

SUNY Charter Schools Institute does not handle appeals of informal complaints.

CODE OF CIVILITY

A BLUEPRINT FOR LIVING AND LEARNING

*Adopted by The Board of Trustees
Our World Neighborhood Charter School, Astoria, New York 11106*

INTRODUCTION

The faculty and staff at the OWN Charter School are dedicated to providing the school's students with the skills necessary to reason, communicate, and live with dignity in a civil society. Central to this mission is the creation of a school community characterized by respect and caring.

The school's Code of Civility has been designed to guide the efforts of teachers and staff in creating a safe, orderly environment and to help all students attain the goal of academic excellence and an abiding appreciation of the cultures represented within our diverse community. The Code, which states the school-wide rules governing student behavior as well as the consequences for breaking the rules, serves as a contract among parents, students, and staff.

The Code of Civility identifies ten character virtues, our Pillars of a Positive Community, that are at the center of the school's character education curriculum and that will be cultivated with care and consistency at the school. In addition, it describes the ways in which appropriate choices will be encouraged as well as the roles and responsibilities of students, parents, and teachers.

Establishing a policy that promotes character education and discipline is an ongoing process. Alone, this Code will not ensure discipline, nor will it develop an individual's character. As part of a comprehensive effort supported by all members of the school community, however, it will guide the process. Faculty and staff will work continuously to achieve as much consistency as possible with regard to disciplinary matters, and they will be prepared to revise and adapt disciplinary procedures as necessary.

The OWN *Code of Civility* is in force:

- At all times on the school grounds.
- Off the school grounds at a school activity, function, or event.
- En route to and from school for transported students.

Embracing the principles of the OWN *Code of Civility* is a first and vital step toward creating the type of environment in which all children can thrive. It will not only minimize physical harm and disruption among students, it will help establish among all members of the school community the habits that characterize a civil society. This is our *Code*, a blueprint for living and learning.

SAFE AND DRUG FREE SCHOOL

We are working to maintain a Safe and Drug Free environment in an effort to make our learning environment a positive one that exemplifies the benefits of a drug free lifestyle. The use of illicit drugs and the unlawful possession and use of alcohol or tobacco is wrong and harmful. Guidelines have been set in the *Code of Civility* that address these issues. We encourage you to speak openly with your children about these issues.

PILLARS OF A POSITIVE COMMUNITY

OWN Charter School recognizes that effective instruction requires a positive and orderly environment focused on learning, and that schools have an important role to play in supporting parents' efforts to teach basic values to their children. The School's *Code of Civility* defines expectations for conduct, focusing on ten character virtues: respect, responsibility, perseverance, kindness, truth, citizenship, courage, self-discipline, fairness, and true friendship. These "Pillars of a Positive Community" are the cornerstone of the School's character education curriculum. Everyone associated with OWN School—staff, administrators, Board members, and students—pledges to abide by these *Pillars*, so that the entire school community becomes a model of learning and caring. This will enable students to model these virtues in their actions in order to develop the habits that characterize a civil society. Parents can help reinforce such lessons by talking about these virtues and encouraging their children to model them at home.

Please read the *Code* thoroughly and discuss it with your children. Every parent/guardian and student will be asked to sign a contract identical to the one on the last page of this handbook. This "contract" indicates that everyone understands and agrees to the School's rules and expectations. The contract will be co-signed by the Executive Director upon receipt. The *Code of Civility* thus serves as set of guiding principles for the entire learning community. Staff, students, and parents at the school will work together to help each student reach his or her full potential in academic achievement and moral maturity. Toward this end, staff will make every effort to keep students focused on the following ten character virtues, our *Pillars of a Positive Community* in school, the workplace, and society at large.

KINDNESS: To care for others by offering help and showing gratitude

At the school, students will learn to be kind to one another: to include rather than exclude children on the playground, to cheer up someone who is sad, and to treat others the way they would like to be treated. Perhaps the greatest challenge in practicing kindness consistently is to grant forgiveness. Grudges and ill will destroy the bonds of trust in our friendships and communities, and they will not be allowed to flourish at the school. To be kind means to be willing to apologize for our own mistakes and to forgive the mistakes of others. Students will learn that kindness can prevent personal conflicts and forgiveness can resolve them.

FRIENDSHIP: To select and to be true friends

A true friend is someone who will always try, for your sake, to do what he or she believes is good for you. The faculty and staff at OWN School will encourage students to develop true friendships with those who share sound values and live by them. They will learn that the characteristics of true friendship include loyalty and dependability, and that true friends demonstrate other virtues such as a good sense of humor, intellectual curiosity, and kindness. Students will be taught that deception, manipulation, and insensitivity are not signs of a true friendship.

COURAGE: To act bravely and honorably when there is risk involved

At OWN school, students will learn that taking physical or social risks for things that are worthwhile is courageous and honorable. For example, students will learn that it takes courage to tell the truth, to accept the consequences of inappropriate behavior, and to participate in games in which they may not excel. At the same time, students will learn to be prudent and avoid risks that are reckless or potentially harmful. Careful distinctions will be drawn between rational and irrational fears to help students overcome the latter and deal with the former.

PILLARS OF A POSITIVE COMMUNITY

RESPECT: To treat others and oneself with courtesy and care

By teaching and modeling respect for others, faculty and staff at the school will help students learn what it means to care for all persons as individuals, regardless of race, religion, socio-economic background, or disability. From the first day of school, students will learn that there is no place for vulgar or mean-spirited language in the school community. In the early grades, courtesy and sharing will be emphasized, and good manners will be taught. In the later grades, students will learn to communicate and debate constructively, to look people in the eyes when speaking to them, and to greet everyone with a smile or a warm handshake. Students will demonstrate respect by walking quietly in the halls, without pushing, shoving, or hitting others. Ultimately, practicing respect for others will enable students to avoid negative behaviors such as name calling, teasing, and blaming.

By teaching respect for oneself, teachers, and staff will help students learn what it means to care for one's physical self (e.g., personal hygiene). Respecting oneself also means taking care to develop one's character and drawing satisfaction from meeting high ethical standards. Students who value themselves physically and ethically are more likely to make positive choices that promote good health and strong character.

Showing respect helps to support healthy relationships and healthy attitudes. When everyone demonstrates respect for themselves and others, a safe, clean, and welcoming school environment is the result.

TRUTH: To be sincere in character, words, and deeds

To live by the truth—to be sincere in character—means to seek objective understanding, to recognize falsehood, to learn from mistakes, and to seek wisdom. At the school, students will learn to lead lives of integrity by telling and seeking the truth. Students will be encouraged to practice honesty—sincerity in words and deeds—by saying what they mean, meaning what they say, keeping their promises to others, and setting realistic goals for themselves. Honesty also includes never manipulating others for personal benefit. Intellectual honesty will be fostered by teaching thoughtful reflection—the ability to think logically, consider reliable evidence, and make informed judgments rather than hasty conclusions based on opinion, impulse, or prejudice. Cheating and lying will not be tolerated at the school.

RESPONSIBILITY: To fulfill one's obligations in a timely manner

To do one's part thoughtfully and promptly as a member of a family, school, and community, is a character virtue worth cultivating. Responsibility entails order—putting things back where they belong—and stewardship—taking care of personal property and common spaces. It also includes doing one's work, neatly, completely, and promptly. Teaching our students to fulfill obligations and duties even when it is difficult to do so is crucial to living in a civil and productive society.

In teaching responsibility, faculty and staff will help to create a community in which students can feel proud of their roles in the smooth functioning of their classrooms. This includes classroom jobs, punctuality, and personal accountability. By holding students accountable, staff will underscore a powerful twofold lesson: students' claims and actions matter, and their words and deeds—whether intentional or unintentional—have consequences. Students will aspire to become responsible persons who, by owning up to their actions, have taken charge of themselves and their conduct and can affect positive change in others.

PILLARS OF A POSITIVE COMMUNITY

SELF-DISCIPLINE: To manage one's time and energies wisely

Students at the school will learn that there is a time for work and a time for play, and that they may not always get what they want in the time or place that they want it. Faculty and staff will cultivate patience as part of the development of self-discipline, which is important both as a virtue in itself and as a means to achieve higher goals. The individual who possesses self-discipline has developed the ability to manage his or her temper, appetites and urges, habits of work, and habits that show consideration of others. In a supportive positive community, children realize that lack of self-control can have negative consequences for themselves and others.

FAIRNESS: To use the concept of equality in making sound decisions

At the school, students will learn to “play by the rules,” not for the rules’ sake alone but because to do so is fair and just. Prior to beginning a game or activity, for example, students may ensure fairness by establishing an agreement among all participants concerning the rules. Students will be taught to value what is just and to discern what is not. At OWN, equality entails the inclusion of all people in a diverse world.

PERSEVERANCE: To demonstrate “stick-to-it-ness”

“Slow and steady wins the race” is the moral of Aesop’s fable of the tortoise and the hare. Of course, like other virtues, perseverance must be linked with worthy goals. Someone who persists in a pointless, misguided, or harmful endeavor achieves little. But knowing what should be done, without having the perseverance to accomplish it, will also result in failure. Thus, developing the habit of perseverance is an important goal. Though it is not always easy, perseverance leads to pride in one’s achievements.

Laziness or distractions often get the better of all of us. For young people, the allure of television, video and computer games, cell phones and other electronic devices is very strong. Such distractions often consume valuable time that might otherwise be devoted to positive social interactions, exercise, creative endeavors, and academic achievement. Perseverance helps students resist inappropriate diversions, and stick to worthwhile tasks.

The faculty and staff at the School will guide students in practicing perseverance on worthwhile tasks. Students will be taught to start tasks promptly and enthusiastically and to finish them with attention to detail and pride in the final product.

CITIZENSHIP: To fulfill one's responsibilities to community, country, and world

Citizenship at the school will help to develop school spirit and promote responsibility to the community. Citizenship includes patriotism—loyalty to our country and its democratic principles—an ideal essential to the flourishing of our society. Citizenship, in the sense of OWN School, also includes the concept of oneself as a citizen of the world and the dedication of oneself to the betterment of that world. To foster citizenship, students will learn about national and international heroes and their contributions, our nation’s political institutions, and national and international current affairs. Students will be encouraged to think critically, to engage in debate over important issues, and to develop an appreciation for national and international civic and cultural traditions.

When conflicts arise between students, as they invariably do between members of any community, the staff will use these as opportunities to engage students in the process of resolving them in a positive manner. Students who learn the fundamentals of conflict resolution become better citizens and better leaders.

THE ROLES OF SCHOOL PERSONNEL

Each member of the school community has a role to play in creating a safe, orderly environment that is conducive to learning.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The role of the Executive Director with regard to discipline is to guide staff and students in their efforts to ensure student success—the central mission of the school.

The Executive Director will have a thorough working knowledge of the *Code of Civility*, and when necessary will assist staff in implementing classroom and school-wide management procedures. Working with the school's Social Worker, Assistant Principals, Guidance Counselor, Dean of Students, and Coaches, the Executive Director will provide training and continued support to teachers as they strive to teach students to follow the *Pillars of a Positive Community* and school rules.

The Executive Director will assist staff in responding to severe misbehavior, such as uncooperative behavior and physically dangerous and/or illegal acts, as well as any chronic or recurring problems. In certain cases, the Executive Director will initiate time-out periods, parent conferences, suspensions, or other severe consequences. The Executive Director may also contact the appropriate law enforcement authorities, depending on the nature of the infraction. If the Executive Director is unavailable to assist with a crisis situation, the school secretary will direct referrals to another assigned staff member.

CLASSROOM TEACHERS AND INSTRUCTIONAL ASSISTANTS:

The classroom teacher is the center of the school's character education and discipline policy. The OWN Code of Conduct recognizes the need for a cooperative relationship between students, parents, and educators. We need and expect teachers and staff to:

- Be models of the *Pillars of a Positive Community*.
- Be prepared and enthusiastic in implementing the curriculum.
- Use consistent and compassionate guidance procedures.
- Help maintain an atmosphere conducive to good behavior.
- Strive to create a positive learning environment.
- Help students resolve conflicts in a constructive and compassionate manner.
- Seek to involve students in the development of classroom policy.
- Plan a flexible curriculum to meet the needs of all students.
- Differentiate instruction to meet the needs of all students.
- Encourage parent and community participation.
- Refrain from yelling and from making profane or inflammatory statements.
- Be well-groomed, and conduct themselves in a safe and responsible manner.
- Be consistently on time and prepared.
- Work cooperatively with colleagues, parents, and administrators.
- Seek changes in an orderly and approved manner.

Teachers will continually emphasize to both students and parents the importance of the *Pillars of a Positive Community*. The *Pillars* will be established as rules for each classroom, and students will be encouraged to live by the ten character virtues; teachers will underscore expectations for student behavior by relating student actions to the *Pillars of a Positive Community*. In this way, teachers will focus on teaching, modeling and encouraging appropriate conduct, rather than just trying to “control” behavior.

THE ROLES OF SCHOOL PERSONNEL

Three basic principles of classroom management and discipline will be implemented by all teachers.

- At the beginning of the school year, students will be taught how to behave responsibly in each type of classroom activity, and these lessons will be reinforced throughout the year as necessary.
- Teachers will strive to provide positive reinforcement by interacting frequently with each student when the student is behaving appropriately.
- When misbehavior occurs, teachers will redirect actions or calmly and consistently implement mild classroom “consequences,” corrective actions taken in response to inappropriate behavior, using such instances as teaching opportunities. The focus of interaction with each student should continue to be primarily positive.

Though these principles will serve as useful guides, each teacher, student, and situation is unique. Teachers will use professional discretion to select the specific procedures that fit individual student needs and particular situations.

Teachers will work in collaboration with other staff to solve problems that are chronic or severe. Techniques that may be used by teachers in dealing with minor behavior problems as well as procedures for responding to chronic misbehavior are described under “Encouraging Appropriate Conduct.”

SCHOOL NURSE OR MEDICAL PERSONNEL

The school nurse will be available to faculty, staff, and students for consultation on such matters as personal hygiene, nutrition, substance abuse, depression, child abuse, or neglect. The nurse will also provide medical care for students who are ill or injured. When the nurse is not on school grounds, staff will assist students in need and will determine whether parents should be contacted and the student sent home.

RESPONSIBILITIES AND RIGHTS OF STUDENTS

Students will take pride in their academic and social achievements and their efforts to create a model society based on a desire for knowledge, compassion for their classmates, and an abiding appreciation of the diversity that characterizes our neighborhoods. Throughout the day, students will practice the school's *Pillars of a Positive Community* and cultivate the virtues they embody. In the classroom, students will follow the teacher's rules for group instruction, which will be articulated for each activity.

Students shall have the responsibility to

- arrive on time and attend all classes daily.
- come to class with appropriate working materials and be responsible for his/her own work.
- complete classroom assignments and homework to the best of her/his abilities.
- understand the teacher's grading system and monitor his/her own progress in each class.
- respect and protect school facilities, properties, and materials.
- abide by the rules set forth by the school and individual classroom teacher and accept the consequences of acceptable and unacceptable behavior.
- be familiar with the *Handbook* and the *Code of Civility*.
- cooperate with school personnel in cases involving disciplinary actions; they should follow prescribed steps of grievance procedure and accept final decisions.
- refrain from profane or inflammatory statements.
- conduct themselves in a safe and responsible manner.
- know and observe school rules of dress and appearance.
- consider and respect the divergent points of view of others; they should also be sure that their personal expressions (speech, written, or symbolic) are not damaging to or infringing on the rights of others.
- respect the rights of others to participate in symbolic or religious activities of their choice.
- abide by the rules and guidelines of extracurricular activities and clubs; they should show good school spirit and sportsmanship.
- support and take an active interest in student government.
- assemble in such a way as to avoid disrupting the educational process or conflicting with school rules.

Students shall have the right to

- attend school and benefit from quality educational opportunities.
- be informed of all school rules and regulations, and the consequences of breaking those rules and regulations.
- receive due process in all disciplinary actions. This shall include a grievance procedure.
- receive a free and appropriate education, which will include instruction using texts and materials at a level which allows an opportunity for success.
- know in advance how grades in a class will be determined.
- use school facilities, properties, and materials.
- hear, examine, and express divergent points of view; this shall include freedom of speech, written expression, and symbolic expression.
- be shown personal respect by other students and school personnel.
- be supported in their social and emotional growth.
- enjoy appropriate break times for exercise.
- decide whether or not to participate in symbolic (e.g., flag salute) or religious activities.
- dress and groom in such a way as to express personal preferences within the parameters of the school dress code.
- peacefully assemble on school grounds.
- enjoy reasonable degrees of personal privacy. However, upon reasonable suspicion, students's spaces and belongings may be searched for prohibited or illegally possessed substances or objects.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS

Parents are encouraged to participate fully in the education of their children. Support and cooperation of parents are vital. Parents are expected to support the academic learning of their child by maintaining high expectations for both the student and the school. The major role of parents with regard to discipline and character education at the school is to demonstrate consistent interest in the child's progress at school and support for the child's best efforts. Parental support provides an enormous incentive for a child to strive for excellence.

Parents may be asked to help teach their child specific skills, such as remembering homework, learning to be more independent, or managing anger appropriately. If parents are asked to assist staff, specific information will be provided on ways to help the student.

If there is a severe or recurring problem, parents will be asked to help staff teach the student an alternative set of behaviors. In such cases, it is important to recognize that teaching a student to behave appropriately as a contributing member of the school community is in the student's best interest. By working together, parents and staff can help the student acquire the skills that will increase opportunities for success. Failure to comply with the specifics of the school's plan for teaching appropriate behavior and continued student misbehavior may result in the student's expulsion.

Parents who have concerns about their child's adjustment to the school or any aspect of the school's program and policies will be asked to discuss their concerns first with their child's teacher. Every teacher at the school will be prepared to work with parents and will respond to parental concerns appropriately and expeditiously. The Guidance Counselor, Dean of Students, Social Worker, Assistant Principal or Executive Director will also be available if there are issues that exceed the scope of a parent-teacher conference.

PARTICIPATION

- Attend all parent-teacher conferences.
- Attend school functions and activities with your child.
- Become an active member of the Parent Teacher Organization.
- Respond promptly to school requests for information or permission.

ENVIRONMENT

- Ensure that your child is clean and dressed according to the school's dress code.
- Maintain regular medical and dental checkups for your child. Help your child maintain a healthy lifestyle by leading one yourself.
- Communicate openly with your child in order to help solve any school problem.
- Support school officials in maintaining a safe and orderly school environment.
- Discuss the *Pillars of a Positive Community* with your child. Make sure he/she understands school rules and the laws concerning students' use, possession, distribution, or sale of tobacco, alcohol, or any controlled substance on or near the school.
- Ensure that your child understands that possessing or handling any type of weapon on school property, on the way to or from school, or at any school event is prohibited and will lead to expulsion and notification of the police and New York State Education Department.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS

EDUCATION

- Fill your home with books. Read together every night.
- Make certain your child's attendance at school is regular and punctual and that all absences are properly excused and in compliance with school procedures.
- Instill in your child the desire to learn. Plan family visits to museums, libraries, theatres, and science centers.
- Become acquainted with the school, staff, curriculum, and activities.
- Ensure that your child has the necessary materials and supplies needed for school.
- Ensure that your child has a quiet and proper place and time to study at home.

RESPECT

- Be respectful of OWN teachers, staff, and the rules that guide the school. Treat all members of our learning community with the same level of basic respect and patience that you yourself wish to receive in return. Do not smoke while on school grounds.
- Guide your child, from the earliest years of his or her life, to be polite, to exercise self-control, and to be accountable for his or her actions.
- Teach your child, by word and example, respect for law, for the authority of the school, and for the rights and property of others.
- Encourage your child to respect honest work and to develop an interest in exploring broader fields of knowledge.
- Know and understand the rules your child is expected to observe at school, be aware of the consequences for violations of these rules, and accept legal responsibility for your child's actions.
- Accept the right of the Board of Trustees to require respectable behavior of all students and non-students at all activities involving the school. Understand that the rulings of the Board reflect the final authority at the school on all matters pertaining to discipline.
- Encourage your child to respect and learn about the different cultures represented by our diverse student body.

EXPRESSION

- Encourage your child to conduct himself or herself in an appropriate manner so as to contribute towards the educational progress of his or her classmates.
- Insist that your child never make obscene gestures, libelous, racist or sexist statements, or use intimidating tactics toward others.
- Encourage your child to dress appropriately so that his or her appearance will not disrupt the educational process or activities.

ENCOURAGING APPROPRIATE CONDUCT

At the school, students will be encouraged to make appropriate choices regarding their personal conduct. Following are the chief means by which faculty and staff will ensure order and support the development of good character at the school.

ACKNOWLEDGING APPROPRIATE CONDUCT

Positive Interactions and Positive Feedback

Daily interactions between staff and students provide the best opportunities for encouraging appropriate behavior and promoting the development of good habits. Staff at the school will strive to interact with students in a friendly, supportive manner at all times. Staff will attempt to interact with each student more frequently when the student is engaged in appropriate behavior than when the student is behaving inappropriately.

Positive interactions will include greeting students, talking to students, making eye contact, smiling, and overtly praising students when such accolades are deserved. When praising students, staff will attempt to provide them with specific information about which behaviors are contributing to success. For example, a staff member might say, "Alicia, you have been very responsible in remembering to bring your homework on the day it is due."

Student-of-the-Week Awards

At the end of each week, teachers will grant Student-of-the-Week Awards to acknowledge and reward students for demonstrating exceptionally responsible behavior, trying their best, cooperating, showing respect, or showing marked improvement academically or in dealing with challenging behavior. Award-winning students will receive special certificates and will have their picture shown on a special monitor placed near the entrance to the School. An administrator will personally and publicly congratulate these students and sign their certificates. The goal here is not to guarantee that each child will receive an award by the end of the school year. Rather, each week is to begin anew with each child having an equal chance to receive the award designated for that week.

CORRECTING INAPPROPRIATE CONDUCT

CONSEQUENCES FOR MINOR MISBEHAVIOR

We expect that the great majority of our students will strive to meet OWN's expectations for responsibility and self-discipline. We also understand, however, that no single set of procedures will be effective in helping every student develop the skills and attitudes necessary for success. Therefore, a series of interventions has been designed for students who have not been motivated by the school-wide procedures. As teachers and faculty adapt disciplinary procedures to meet individual needs, the focus will remain positive and an emphasis will be placed on the continuing need for calm and consistent consequences.

Students will learn that certain actions are unacceptable at the school and misbehavior has consequences. Students who engage in any type of misbehavior, whether minor or severe, will be required to make amends and/or restore the situation. Restitution may involve an apology; community or school service; or fixing, replacing, and/or paying for damage caused. The teacher or a designated administrator will determine the type of restitution required for a particular infraction. If possible, the restitution assignment will be communicated to the student's parents prior to his or her completion of the task. In all cases, parents will be informed of the child's inappropriate behavior and the restitution requirement.

CONSEQUENCES FOR SEVERE MISBEHAVIOR

Most misbehavior will be handled with discussion or the use of mild consequences. However, severe misbehavior will be met swiftly with specific and stern consequences. Severe misbehavior is defined as belonging to at least one of the following categories:

- Uncooperative behavior
- Physically dangerous behavior
- Illegal behavior

Uncooperative behavior is the direct refusal to comply with a reasonable staff instruction within a specified period of time. In such cases, the staff member involved will first explain to the student why his or her actions are inappropriate and may issue a mild consequence. If the student continues to ignore or disregard the instruction, he or she will be sent to the designated administrator and the incident will be reported to the Assistant Principal and/or Executive Director.

In cases of **physically dangerous behavior**—fighting, assault, physical intimidation—staff will firmly inform the students to stop the physical altercation. If the students do not respond, staff will use professional judgment to determine whether or not to intervene physically. Staff will not be required to take action that could be physically dangerous; in such cases, another student will be sent immediately for assistance. The designated administrator will notify parents and decide whether to contact the appropriate law enforcement authorities.

If a staff member is aware that a student is engaged in **illegal activity**, the staff member will refer the case to the director or designee who will notify the student's parent or guardian and, together with the Executive Director, will decide whether to contact the appropriate law enforcement authorities.

The tables of the Discipline Chart outline the specific procedures that will be applied in response to severe misbehavior. **Any or all** of the consequences listed for the various offenses may be imposed. Episodes of severe misbehavior are cumulative. An Expulsion Hearing may be convened upon the third instance.

CORRECTING INAPPROPRIATE CONDUCT

Referral

Referrals to the Dean of Students, Social Worker, Assistant Principal or Executive Director will be made only in response to severe or recurring behavior problems.

When making an office referral, the referring staff member will complete a Referral Form as soon as possible after the infraction. The Dean of Students or Social Worker will keep records on referrals which will be periodically reviewed by the school's Leadership Team. Using these records, the Leadership Team will determine whether it is necessary to revise school policies, or whether there is a need for further staff development to ensure the consistent implementation of current policies.

Time Out

At the school, time outs may be used for students who need a neutral environment to help manage their own behavior, or to cool down or reflect on inappropriate behavior. Such time outs involve removing the student from the instructional setting to a supervised area, such as the back of a classroom.

The following procedure is suggested when imposing a time out. ***No student shall ever be unsupervised during a time out situation.***

- Upon the behavioral infraction, the student will be sent on a short time out away from the instructional setting. The student will be told in a firm, nonemotional voice, that he or she has made the choice to continue the inappropriate behavior, and that a time out is the consequence.
- When the time-out has expired, the student will be told firmly that certain behaviors damage the School community and that he or she must want to contribute to a Positive Community before being allowed to rejoin the class. The student will be allowed to rejoin his/her classmates when he or she can communicate this desire to the teacher.

Suspension

In response to cases of severe misbehavior, the Executive Director, or a designee, may suspend or temporarily remove the student from school for up to ten calendar days. Suspension is regarded as a serious consequence. Once a student is suspended, he or she cannot go back and rejoin his or her class. The administration will attempt to contact parents and inform them of their child's infraction and its basic circumstances. Parents are expected to accept the suspension. ***Suspended students must be picked up immediately by their parents or proper authorities will be notified.*** (At the discretion of the school administration, a suspended student may be allowed to go home by bus.) The student's parents will be required to meet with the Executive Director, or designee, and any staff members involved in the suspension prior to the student's return to the school. During this meeting, parents are NOT entitled to know what specific consequences, if any, were given to the other child/children involved in the infraction. A suspended student **must** attend a daily instructional session during suspension. Parents are responsible for transporting children to and from these sessions. In addition, the student is required to complete homework related to the disciplinary infraction.

Expulsion

Expulsion is defined as the removal of the right and obligation of a student to attend the school under the conditions set by the school's Board of Trustees. The Executive Director will have final authority in recommending the expulsion of a student to the Board. A student who commits any reportable crime or who has had three instances of severe misbehavior may be subject to an expulsion hearing before the Board. Expulsions are final. Expelled students are not permitted on school grounds or at any school-related functions.

DISCIPLINE CHART

Problem	1st Offense (All of the consequences listed may be imposed.)	2nd Offense (All of the consequences listed may be imposed.)	3rd Offense (All of the consequences listed may be imposed.)
Uncooperative Behavior (e.g., disrespect toward staff members and peers, refusal to follow directions)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Staff member will first explain to the student why his or her actions are inappropriate and try to redirect behavior. ◆ Staff member will issue a mild consequence for the offense. ◆ Optional Child Study Team convened to establish instructional discipline action plan; parent and student (if appropriate) are apprised of the plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Parent notified and detention assigned. ◆ Parent notified to pick up student immediately. ◆ 1–3 day suspension (or longer depending on the severity of the offense), and meeting between parent, student, and teacher, prior to student re-entering school. ◆ Child Study Team convened to establish instructional discipline action plan; parent and student (if appropriate) are apprised of the plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Parent notified to pick up student immediately. ◆ Long-term suspension up to 10 days or possible expulsion, and meeting between parent and Administrator, prior to student reentering school. ◆ Board of Trustees is notified regarding possible expulsion.
Physically Dangerous Behavior (e.g., fighting, assault, physical intimidation) The Executive Director may contact the appropriate authorities, depending on the severity of the dangerous behavior and the age of the student involved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Parent notified to pick up student immediately. ◆ 1–3 day suspension (or longer depending on the severity of the offense), and mandatory meeting among parent, student, staff member involved, and Social Worker, prior to student re-entering school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Parent notified to pick up student immediately. ◆ 3–5 day suspension (or longer depending on the severity of the offense), and mandatory meeting between parent and Social Worker, prior to student re-entering school. ◆ Child Study Team convened to establish instructional discipline action plan; parent and student (if appropriate) are apprised of the plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Parent notified to pick up student immediately. ◆ Long-term suspension up to 10 days or possible expulsion, and mandatory meeting between parent and Social Worker, prior to student re-entering school. ◆ Board of Trustees is notified regarding possible expulsion

DISCIPLINE CHART

Problem	1st Offense	2nd Offense	3rd Offense
Illegal Acts (e.g., theft, vandalism, use of illegal substances) The Executive Director may contact the appropriate authorities, depending on the nature of the offense and the age of the student involved.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Optional Child Study Team convened to establish instructional discipline action plan; parent and student (if appropriate) are apprised of the plan (All of the consequences listed may be imposed.)	(All of the consequences listed may be imposed.)	(All of the consequences listed may be imposed.)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Parent notified to pick up student immediately.	◆ Parent notified to pick up student immediately.	◆ Parent notified to pick up student immediately.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ 1–3 day suspension (or longer depending on the severity of the offense), and mandatory meeting between parent and Social Worker, prior to student re-entering school.	◆ 3–5 day suspension (or longer depending on the severity of the offense), and meeting between parent and Social Worker, prior to student re-entering school.	◆ Long-term suspension up to 10 days or possible expulsion, and meeting between parent and Social Worker, prior to student re-entering school.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Optional Child Study Team convened to establish instructional discipline action plan; parent and student (if appropriate) are apprised of the plan.	◆ Mandatory Child Study Team convened to establish instructional discipline action plan; parent and student (if appropriate) are apprised of the plan.	◆ Board of Trustees is notified regarding possible expulsion.

EXPULSION PROCEDURES

If the offense is serious and/or the student has a series of several violations, the Executive Director may recommend to the Board of Trustees that the student be expelled from school.

The Executive Director/designee may suspend the student from school and will inform the parent at the time of suspension or within three (3) school days of the intent to file written charges for expulsion and offer to meet with the parent and student to discuss the reason(s) for the suspension and expulsion. Homework assignments will be provided to the student during the period prior to the expulsion hearing. Parents are encouraged to pick up the homework or must make arrangements to secure the assignments.

Charges for expulsion will be presented to the Board of Trustees in executive session for a formal hearing. The president of the Board of Trustees, or other board member designated by the Board president, will preside over the hearing.

The parent and student may attend the hearing and have the right to bring counsel. The parent and student may elect to waive their rights to appear at the meeting by an affirmative waiver or by failing to appear at the designated time. This action will be deemed a waiver of rights to contest the expulsion.

At the expulsion hearing, the Executive Director or designee will present the evidence to support the charges against the student. The student or parent will have the opportunity to answer the charges against the student and to present evidence to support the student's position.

Parents must be notified within three (3) school days of the findings by the Board of Trustees.

If a parent wishes to appeal the decision of the Board of Trustees based on their belief that their child was not afforded due process and/or that some law was broken they may file a formal complaint to SUNY, Charter Schools Institute and/or the New York State Education Department in accordance with the processes and procedures detailed in the School's Complaint Policy.

EXPULSION OF SPECIAL-EDUCATION STUDENTS

Students with disabilities may be suspended for inappropriate behavior. The Executive Director may give a short-term suspension to a student with disabilities. The Executive Director may suspend a disabled student from school for a total of ten days in a school year.

The Executive Director may recommend a student with disabilities for a long-term suspension or expulsion (greater than ten days) by following these procedures:

1. The Executive Director will follow regular procedures for long-term suspension or expulsion as described above.
2. Once the director has made a recommendation for long-term suspension or expulsion of a student with disabilities, he or she will refer the matter to the Committee on Special Education of the District Office.
3. If the District Office concurs that a suspension or expulsionary hearing is in order, the parent will be notified in writing of the time and place of the proceeding.

REPORTING CRIMES AND DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR

It is important that all students and parents understand that, in addition to taking disciplinary action at the school level, certain criminal and/or disruptive behavior must be reported to the police and to New York State Education Department through VADIR (Violent and Disruptive Incident Report). The following incidents will be reported.

- Capital Crimes
- Assaults or Threats of Assault
- Possession of Weapons
- Robbery or Theft
- Sexual Abuse
- Property Damage
- Drug or Alcohol Use

Additionally, the Executive Director has the discretion to report any other incident occurring within the regular operation of the school.

Any student who is formally charged with a felony by a proper prosecuting attorney for an incident which is shown to have an adverse impact on the educational program, discipline, or welfare in the school in which the student enrolled shall, following an administrative hearing conducted pursuant to rules of the State Board of Education, and after due notice to the parents, parent, or guardian, and when suspension is recommended, be suspended from all classes until the determination of his or her guilt or innocence, or the dismissal of charges, is made by a court of competent jurisdiction.

The Executive Director may suspend students under specified conditions for lengths of time in excess of 10 school days provided daytime alternative educational options are utilized. This remedy for disruptive behavior is authorized in addition to consequences specifically provided in the *Code of Civility*.

ZERO TOLERANCE FOR SCHOOL-RELATED CRIMES

It is essential that schools be safe and orderly to provide environments that foster learning and high academic achievement. To this end the Board of Trustees of Our World Neighborhood Charter School has adopted a policy of ***Zero Tolerance for School-Related Crimes***. Students found to have committed any of the aforementioned “reportable” offenses on school property, school sponsored transportation, or during a school-sponsored activity shall be brought before the Board for an expulsion hearing.

ACCEPTABLE USE AND INTERNET SAFETY POLICY FOR THE COMPUTER NETWORK

Our World Neighborhood Charter School makes available to its students access to interconnected computer systems within the School and to the Internet, the world-wide network that provides various means of accessing significant educational materials and opportunities. In order for OWNCS to be able to make its computer network and Internet access available, all students must take responsibility for appropriate and lawful use of internet resources. Teachers and other Staff will make reasonable efforts to supervise student use of network and Internet access. Students must understand that inappropriate internet use can result in one or more of the following; school discipline, loss of the privilege of using internet resources and/or criminal prosecution.

Below is the Acceptable Use and Internet Safety Policy ("Policy") of OWNCS and the Data Acquisition Site that provides Internet access. Upon reviewing, signing, and returning this Policy, a student will be eligible for Internet access at the school. If a student is under 18 years of age, the "PARENT'S OR GUARDIAN'S AGREEMENT" must be signed and returned. OWNCS cannot provide access to any student who is 18 or older until the Policy is signed and recorded or to a student under 18, until the "PARENT'S OR GUARDIAN'S AGREEMENT" is signed and recorded.

Listed below are the provisions of your agreement regarding computer network and Internet use. If you have any questions about these provisions, you should contact OWNCS Technology Department.

I. PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

By signing this Policy, you are agreeing to follow all rules outlined in the policy and to report violations of the policy by other students.

II. TERM OF THE PERMITTED USE

A student who returns a properly signed Policy will have computer network and Internet access during the remainder of the students' academic career while enrolled in Our World Neighborhood Charter School.

III. ACCEPTABLE USES

- A. Educational Purposes Only. OWNCS is providing access to its computer networks and the Internet for educational purposes only.
- B. Unacceptable Uses of Network. Among the uses that are considered unacceptable and which constitute a violation of this Policy are the following:
 - 1. Uses that violate the law or encourage others to violate the law.
 - 2. Transmittal of offensive or harassing messages.
 - 3. Any use which is commercial in nature.
 - 4. To use the Internet to view, transmit or download pornographic or otherwise objectionable materials.
 - 5. To use the Internet to transmit confidential or copyright materials.
 - 6. To use the internet to download any program, partial program or game without the express permission of the supervising teacher and OWNCS Technology Director.
 - 7. Any use of the internet which causes harm to others or their property.
 - 8. Any improper use of passwords.
 - 9. Any programming vandalism.
 - 10. Any "hacking" activities
 - 11. Any activities designed to expose OWNCS or other computers to computer "viruses".
 - 12. Students cannot provide private information about themselves over the internet including the student's credit card or social security number.

ACCEPTABLE USE AND INTERNET SAFETY POLICY FOR THE COMPUTER NETWORK

C. Netiquette. All users must abide by rules of network etiquette, which include the following:

1. Be polite. Use appropriate language. No swearing, vulgarities, suggestive, obscene, belligerent, or threatening language.
2. Avoid language and uses that may be offensive to other users. Do not use, distribute, or redistribute jokes, stories, or other materials that are based upon slurs or stereotypes relating to race, gender, ethnicity, nationality, religion, or sexual orientation.
3. Do not assume that a sender of e-mail is giving his or her permission for you to forward or redistribute the message to third parties or to give his/her e-mail address to third parties. This should only be done with permission or when you know that the individual would have no objection.

IV. INTERNET SAFETY

- A. General Warning: Individual Responsibility of Parents and Users. All users and their parents/guardians are advised that access to the electronic network may include the potential for access to materials inappropriate for school-aged pupils. Every user must take responsibility for his or her use of the computer network and Internet and stay away from these sites. Parents of minors are the best guide to materials to shun. If a student finds that other users are visiting offensive or harmful sites, he or she should report such use to his/her supervising teacher.
- B. Personal Safety. Be safe. In using the computer network and Internet, do not reveal personal information such as your home address or telephone number. Do not use your real last name or any other information which might allow a person to locate you without first obtaining the permission of a supervising teacher. Do not arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone you “meet” on the computer network or Internet without your parent’s permission. If someone attempts to arrange a meeting with you as a result of an internet contact you must report the communication, immediately, to your supervising teacher.
- C. “Hacking” and Other Illegal Activities. It is a violation of this Policy to use the School’s computer network or the Internet to gain unauthorized access to other computers or computer systems, or to attempt to gain such unauthorized access. Any use which violates state or federal law relating to copyright, trade secrets, the distribution of obscene or pornographic materials, or which violates any other applicable law or municipal ordinance, is strictly prohibited
- D. Confidentiality of Student Information. Personally identifiable information concerning students may not be disclosed or used in any way on the Internet without the permission of a parent or guardian or, if the student is 18 or over, the permission of the student himself/herself. Users should never give out private or confidential information about themselves or others on the Internet, particularly credit card numbers and Social Security numbers. Only a member of the school administration may authorize the release of student information, as defined by New York law, for internal administrative purposes or approved educational projects and activities.
- E. Active Restriction Measures. The School, either by itself or in combination with the Data Acquisition Site providing Internet access, will utilize filtering software or other technologies to prevent students from accessing visual depictions that are (1) obscene, (2) child pornography, or (3) harmful to minors. The School will also monitor the online activities of students, through direct observation and/or technological means, to ensure that students are not accessing such depictions or any other material that is inappropriate for minors.

Internet filtering software or other technology-based protection systems may be disabled by a supervising teacher or school administrator, as necessary, for purposes of bona fide research or other educational projects being conducted by students age 17 or older.

ACCEPTABLE USE AND INTERNET SAFETY POLICY FOR THE COMPUTER NETWORK

The term “harmful to minors” is defined by the Communications Act of 1934 (47 USC Section 254 [h] [7]), as meaning any picture, image, graphic image file, or other visual depiction that taken as a whole and with respect to minors, appeals to a prurient interest in nudity, sex, or excretion; depicts, describes, or represents, in a patently offensive way with respect to what is suitable for minors, an actual or simulated sexual act or sexual contact, actual or simulated normal or perverted sexual acts, or a lewd exhibition of the genitals; taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value as to minors

V. PRIVACY

Network and Internet access is provided as a tool for your education. The OWNCS reserves the right to monitor, inspect, copy, review and store at any time and without prior notice any and all usage of the computer network and Internet access and any and all information transmitted or received in connection with such usage. All such information files shall be and remain the property of the OWNCS and no user shall have any expectation of privacy regarding such materials.

VI. FAILURE TO FOLLOW POLICY

The user’s use of the computer network and Internet is a privilege, not a right. A user who violates this Policy, shall at a minimum, have his or her access to the computer network and Internet terminated, which the OWNCS may refuse to reinstate for the remainder of the student’s enrollment in the OWNCS. A user violates this Policy by his or her own action or by failing to report any violations by other users that come to the attention of the user. Further, a user violates this Policy if he or she permits another to use his or her account or password to access the computer network and Internet, including any user whose access has been denied or terminated. The OWNCS may also take other disciplinary action in such circumstances. In some instances inappropriate computer and Internet use violates state and/or federal laws and may result in criminal prosecution or juvenile court action.

VII. WARRANTIES/INDEMNIFICATION

The OWNCS makes no warranties of any kind, either express or implied, in connection with its provision of access to and use of its computer networks and the Internet provided under this Policy. It shall not be responsible for any claims, losses, damages or costs (including ~ fees) of any kind suffered, directly or indirectly, by any user or his or her parent(s) or guardian(s) arising out of the user’s use of its computer networks or the Internet under this Policy. By signing this Policy, users are taking full responsibility for his/her use, and the user who is 18 or older or, in the case of a user under 18, the parent(s) or guardian(s) are agreeing to indemnify and hold the School, the OWNCS, the Data Acquisition Site that provides the computer and Internet access opportunity to the OWNCS and all of their administrators, teachers, and staff harmless from any and all loss, costs, claims or damages resulting from the user’s access to its computer network and the Internet, including but not limited to any fees or charges incurred through purchases of goods or services by the user. The user or, if the user is a minor, the user’s parent(s) or guardian(s) agree to cooperate with the School in the event of the School’s initiating an investigation of a user’s use of his or her access to its computer network and the Internet, whether that use is on a School computer or on another computer outside the OWNCS’s network.

VIII. UPDATES

Users, and if appropriate, the user’s parents/guardians, may be asked from time to time to provide new or additional registration and account information or to sign a new Policy, for example, to reflect developments in the law or technology. Such information must be provided by the user (or his/her parents or guardian) or such new Policy must be signed if the user wishes to continue to receive service. If after you have provided your account information, some or all of the information changes, you must notify the person designated by the School to receive such information.

Legal References:

Children’s Internet Protection Act of 2000 (H.R. 4577, P.L. 106-554)

Communications Act of 1934, as amended (47 U.S.C. 254[h],[l])

Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (20 U.S.C.6801 et seq., Part F)

PUBLIC NOTICE and FREEDOM OF INFORMATION LAW (FOIL)

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO SEE PUBLIC RECORD

The amended Freedom of Information Law, which took effect on January 1, 1978, gives parents and other agencies the right of access to many public records. Our World Neighborhood Charter School has adopted regulations governing when, where, and how one can access these public records. The regulation can be seen at all places where records are kept.

According to these regulations, records can be seen and copied at:

Our World Neighborhood Charter School
36–12 35th Avenue
Astoria, NY 11106

The following officials will help you to exercise your right to access:

1. Agency officials who have in the past been authorized to make records available.
2. Records Access Officer(s):

Executive Assistant to the Principal or Office Manager
Our World Neighborhood Charter School
36–12 35th Avenue
Astoria, NY 11106

If you are denied access to a record, you may appeal to the following person(s) or body:

Executive Director or Principal
Our World Neighborhood Charter School
36–12 35th Avenue
Astoria, NY 11106