



Echelon Academy

Parent Handbook

2017-2018

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An arts integrated school

What is arts integration?

Arts integration is the meaningful use of the arts processes (visual art, literature, dance, music, drama) along with content to introduce, develop, or bring closure to lessons in any academic area.

Why integrate the arts?

- The arts are an effective means of communication going beyond the limits of language and allowing for expression of otherwise trapped emotion.
- It involves higher order thinking causing students to observe, make judgments, synthesize and relate new information to prior knowledge. These processes are critical in science, math, and history.
- The arts are engaging and motivating, capturing attention and creating confidence to take educational risks.
- Business leaders consider creative problem solving to be one of the most important skill sets for the 21st century which is the essence of using arts integration through critical thinking, creating meaning, and expressing meaning.

What does research say about arts integration?

- A 3 year study of 2,000 students found a significant relationship between rich school arts programs and creative, cognitive, and personal competencies needed for academic success (Burton et al., 2000).
- 23 arts integrated schools in Chicago showed test scores rising up to two times faster than in demographically comparable schools (Deasy, 2002).
- Test scores of arts-involved students are generally higher than those who aren't (Deasy, 2002; National Center for Education Statistics).
- SAT scores for students who studied visual art are 47 points higher in math and 31 points for the verbal portion over nonarts students (College Board).
- All 3,500 students in a Los Angeles program that integrated the arts into literature and social studies wrote higher-quality essays, showed deeper understanding of history, and made more interdisciplinary references than nonarts students (Aschbacher & Herman, 1991).
- In Milwaukee, Elm Elementary moved from being ranked in the bottom 10 percent of schools to being number 1 after introducing a comprehensive arts program.

"Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted." -[Albert Einstein](#)

STATEMENT OF PURPOSES

The goal of **ECHELON ACADEMY** is to provide students with a supportive and challenging environment that is responsive to all learning styles, emphasizes learning through the arts, and integrates creative and critical thinking throughout the curriculum.

Self-esteem is nurtured and success becomes habitual because individual needs are recognized and accordingly met through research-based methodologies. This framework produces greater levels of autonomy and responsibility as students progress, and provides appropriate structure and support conducive to good academic and social decision making. A most critical component of our role with students is to increase their motivation for academic achievement and to help them aspire to bright futures.

ECHELON ACADEMY offers a journey of engaged learning through the teaching of the arts, a positive and encouraging learning community where achievement happens more efficiently and with ease as teachers and students work cooperatively, heading the same direction, traveling on the thrust of one another, standing by one another, and thriving in encouragement.

ECHELON ACADEMY has been created to provide private, affordable, quality education to kindergarten, elementary, middle, and high school children (grades K-12) who are unsuccessful in a traditional school setting and/or have language and learning disabilities. Addressing the academic needs of children with learning differences, **ECHELON ACADEMY** is equipped to provide instruction for children who may have been diagnosed with one or several of the following learning disabilities:

- Dyslexia
- Language disorders
- Academic skills disorders
- Attention disorders
- Processing deficits
- Executive Function disorder

Objectives:

- To encourage authentic, real world learning.
 - To provide arts integrated instruction.
 - To implement individualized student instruction.
 - To enhance social skills development.
 - To provide hands-on field experiences that encourage real-life competencies.
 - To provide flexible grouping of students according to skill levels.
 - To utilize a fair admissions screening process which considers the whole child, beyond test scores.
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ECHELON ACADEMY:

- Encourages students to attain their highest level of achievement through small group instruction.
- Employs the Theory of Multiple Intelligences to reach all students in their own capacity (Musical Intelligence, Logical-Mathematical Intelligence, Linguistic Intelligence, Intrapersonal Intelligence, Interpersonal Intelligence, Spatial Intelligence, Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence, Natural Intelligence).
- Strengthens environmental education, communication, collaboration and multi-disciplinary work. Engages students to become educated persons who take ownership for their own learning.

STATEMENT OF VALUES

- We meet learners at their own levels.
- We challenge learners to reach their individual potentials.
- We provide worthy role models and positive reinforcement.
- We encourage development of self-awareness, good decision-making and problem solving skills.
- We support self-motivation, self-discipline, and risk-taking.
- We develop responsible use of freedom.
- We encourage learning and teaching as mutual processes.
- We work cooperatively, competitively, and independently.
- We value a safe and nurturing environment.
- The buildings and grounds are clean and in good repair.
- People extend themselves to support each other.
- Needs are addressed on a student-by-student basis.
- Individual differences are respected and initiatives are welcomed.
- We value the journey to accomplishment.
- We are committed to completing tasks.
- School should be a positive and motivating experience for all students.

STATEMENT OF RATIO

- Staff to student ratio will not exceed 1:6.
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STATEMENT OF ADMISSIONS POLICY

Application Process

After an initial school visit, the application process consists of the following steps:

1. Student's recent report card
2. Psychological and Educational assessments
3. Current IEP
4. Parent evaluation form
5. Completed teacher evaluation form sent directly to the school
6. Student classroom visit
7. Informal assessment, if necessary

Admission Criteria

We use a comprehensive approach to gain the best possible understanding of each child from different perspectives. The application process provides the parent and the child, as well as our admissions committee, with an opportunity to ensure that there is a good fit between student/parent expectations and school expectations. A parent and student interview completes the admissions process.

We have a rolling admissions policy; applications are reviewed as they are submitted as long as space is available. After the application process is complete, the registration process begins. The director communicates quickly with parents as each step of the process is completed.

ECHELON ACADEMY STATEMENT OF STAFF QUALIFICATIONS

Teacher Qualifications

An Echelon teacher must hold a bachelor's degree or equivalent from a college or university and have experience successfully working with diverse learners. A degree may be in an area other than education if the higher education degree is complemented by substantial experience with diverse learners.

In addition to being knowledgeable about the subjects they teach, teachers must have the ability to communicate, inspire trust and confidence, and motivate students, as well as understand the students' educational and emotional needs. Teachers must be able to recognize and respond to individual and cultural differences in students and employ different teaching methods that will result in higher student achievement. They should be organized, dependable, patient, and creative. Teachers also must be able to work cooperatively and communicate effectively with other teachers, support staff, parents, and members of the community.

Instructional Assistant Qualifications

An EA instructional assistant must have at least 2 years of related formal postsecondary education and/or have substantial experience working with children in an educational environment. Teacher assistants should be able to handle classroom situations with fairness and patience, and must demonstrate initiative and a willingness to follow a teacher's directions. Good writing skills and the ability to communicate effectively with students and teachers are also necessary.

All Echelon Academy employees are required to pass a federal and state background check.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

Students will:

1. Develop increasing responsibility for their learning and their behavior.
 2. Be actively involved in their learning.
 3. Read, write, speak and listen with proficiency in all curriculum areas with all appropriate support.
 4. Increase their understanding of divergent views and be accepting of differences within their class, school and community.
 5. Develop more understanding for and empathy toward each other.
 6. Experience the value of working together in academic and social forums while at the same time understanding their responsibility as individuals.
 7. Develop the ability to apply reasoning to their everyday decisions and actions.
 8. Become better problem solvers both socially and academically.
 9. Be capable of meeting learning objectives individually and in a group setting.
 10. Demonstrate skills in group-interaction/co-operative learning which exhibits positive interdependence.
 11. Utilize technology as a tool for enhancing learning across the curriculum.
 12. Demonstrate capability for accomplishing tasks of increasing sophistication.
 13. Demonstrate greater investment for and independence in learning as they move through the grades.
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SCHOOL EXPECTATIONS

The School Shall:

1. Provide a safe, supportive, and structured environment which emphasizes academic, social and personal achievement.
 2. Promote a strong, meaningful and supportive relationship between the school and our parents and between the school and community at large.
 3. Develop positive attitudes in students toward work and toward academic achievement.
 4. Provide varied academic and extra-curricular activities to enable students to explore the span of their talents.
 5. Provide current textbooks, technology, supplies and related materials necessary to support the faculty and staff in their efforts to provide students with effective learning experiences.
 6. Provide professional faculty and staff competent in pedagogy and their curriculum as well as the ability to effectively teach diverse learners.
 7. Develop a variety of teaching techniques and assessment tools to match the various learning styles of the student population.
 8. Provide a team approach to instruction for each grade which supports a structured sequence of instructional experiences commensurate with students' increasing maturity, their capability for dealing with successively more complex tasks, their need for structure and accountability, their conceptual strength and which provides an appropriate balance of concrete/abstract approaches.
 9. Provide opportunities for students to experience personal excellence in various dimensions of the school program.
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ACADEMIC POLICIES

Extra Help

Students may always seek extra help from teachers when they do not understand an assignment, if the work is difficult, or if they have been absent and have missed assignments and class discussions. Students should arrange conferences with teachers before or after school or at a convenient time during the school day. Our High Flyers After School Program provides additional hours of academic support.

Field Trips

Quality learning takes place both within and beyond the walls of **Echelon Academy**. We must maintain high standards of behavior during field trips because we represent our school. Leaving school grounds for learning experiences is a privilege that must be earned; it requires students to make good decisions and to behave responsibly. Students who demonstrate the inability to make good decisions or to behave responsibly may be excluded from field trips. Students have the opportunity throughout the school year to demonstrate to their teachers a respect for rules, an enthusiasm for learning and an ability to make good decisions independently. It is in this way that students earn trust and respect. Students who behave inappropriately will not be allowed to attend non-academic activities as well as field trips.

All school rules apply while on field trips.

Before going on a field trip, each student must fill out a permission slip and have it signed by their parent or guardian. This form must be returned to the teacher prior to the trip.

HOMEWORK POLICY

Homework is an integral part of the schooling experience and is fundamental to learning. We owe to students the academic experiences where they can develop and apply skills with greater independence and confidence. Parental assistance, at this level, in reinforcing and supporting our goals regarding the execution of homework will pay dividends in later years. Homework provides an opportunity for students to review prior instruction and practice responsibility which is required in possible future schooling or work situations. The purposes of homework are: (1) to reinforce understanding and to mold skills which require exercise and repetition in order to become part of the students' base of knowledge; (2) to model the learning process; (3) to support the development of investigation skills that lead toward greater independence and (4) to apply the students' knowledge base to new situations and problems.

2017-2018 Academic Calendar

August 29, 30, 31, September 1	Professional Days*
September 5	First Day of School
October 6	Early Release Day (12:00 dismissal)*
November 9, 10	Parent Conferences-Half Days (12:00 dismissal)
November 22, 23, 24	Thanksgiving Break - No School
December 1	Professional Day - No School*
December 22	Half Day - Winter Break (12:00 dismissal)
December 25-January 1	Winter Break - No School
January 15	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day - No School
January 25	Early Release Day (12:00 dismissal)*
January 26	Professional Day - No School*
February 19	President's Day - No School
March 2	Early Release Day (12:00 dismissal)*
March 26-April 2	Spring Break - No School
April 9	Early Release Day (12:00 dismissal)*
May 28	Memorial Day - No School
May 31	Early Release Day (12:00 dismissal)*
June 12	Half Day - Last Day of School (12:00 dismissal)
June 13	Professional Day

The school calendar includes 182 days of instruction, allowing for two days of emergency school closures. If an additional make-up day is required, April 2nd will be used. Echelon Academy follows Montgomery County Public School's closings and delays, when they are weather related.

1st Marking Period Ends November 9

3rd Marking Period Ends April 6

2nd Marking Period Ends January 25

4th Marking Period Ends June 12

*Indicates professional development

SCHOOL SUPPLIES

Notebooks

Every student will begin the year using a three-ringed notebook with dividers as an organizational system. A pencil holder with holes to attach to notebook rings as well as #2 pencils, blue or black pens, eraser, and a highlighter are also necessary. If that system is ineffective, other organizational systems will be employed. Teachers will assist students with organization by utilizing a consistent and systematic procedure for keeping all class work together.

Pens and Pencils

Every Upper School student should carry pens and pencils. No magic markers or red pen colored inks should be used for written assignments. No permanent makers are allowed.

Neatness

All students are expected to have pride in their work; therefore, each student should strive to produce his/her best work at all times. Papers should include a heading in the right hand corner beginning on the second line which includes the following information:

Name Date Subject

Homework -General

Students will be assigned homework throughout the week. This may not apply when longer projects are due in a particular course.

Types of homework:

- Practice-mastery of specific skills
- Preparation-maximizing future lessons
- Extension-transfer abstract thinking
- Creativity-integrate many skills

Studying is an integral part of the homework assignment. Often an assignment will be to study material which has been covered to prepare for the next class or a test. Studying consists of reading and reviewing, both orally and in writing. Parents can offer assistance by showing interest, looking at the material and asking questions.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

- All students must take part unless excused by a physician for medical reasons. Permission from the physician is also required in order for the student to reengage in physical education activities after being excused.
- An excuse note from a parent is required should the reason for not participating be of short duration. Prolonged excuses require a physician's signature.
- **REQUIRED CLOTHING:** sneakers, socks, Echelon mesh shorts or Echelon sweatpants and an Echelon T-shirt/sweatshirt.

REPORT CARDS AND INTERIM REPORTS

Report cards are sent out four times per year, soon after the close of each marking period. Those dates are noted on the school calendar. Other progress reports will also be sent home throughout the marking period to keep parents abreast of student achievement and parents always have access to our online grading system. However, ongoing communication with parents is one of the pillars of the success of our school; therefore information on progress reports or report cards will not be a surprise to parents.

ACCESS TO SCHOOL/STUDENT RECORDS

All documented specific legal restrictions concerning parents/guardians must be provided to the Director. In the absence of any legal prohibition, all student information is shared with parents.

INTERSHIPS

Internships provide an avenue for students to gain job skills and work experience as well the opportunity to build a resume and enhance college applications through community service. These experiences not only provide hands-on experiences, but they also assist in refining career goals. In 9th grade, students begin with an in-house internship. Subsequently, students volunteer at internships in the community. In order to participate in this program, students must meet the Echelon attendance requirements as stated in the attendance section and maintain A's and B's in all classes.

DUAL ENROLLMENT

Dual enrollment allows academically advanced students to be enrolled in college courses while attending Echelon Academy which enables students to build a college transcript. These postsecondary classes will transfer to the student's college after high school graduation. College courses supplant the correlating high school course at Echelon Academy and Echelon teachers provide academic support to the students who are dually enrolled. In order to participate in this program, students must meet the Echelon attendance requirements and maintain A's and B's in all classes. Parents are responsible for the registration and payment of these courses, but they must be preapproved by Echelon Academy.

STUDENTS RECORDS REGULATIONS

The regulations regarding student records issued by the State Department of Education govern the scope of the data, classification of records, eligibility for access, security of records, and their ultimate disposal. These regulations are set forth to insure student rights of confidentiality, inspection, amendment, and destruction of student records. In general, the following rules apply:

- Records are classified as temporary and permanent. The permanent records include identification data, grades, etc. The temporary records include all other records - tests, school activities, professional evaluations, etc.
- Temporary records will be maintained for five (5) years, and then destroyed. However, the responsible person must be informed and given the opportunity to claim the records if he/she wishes. Permanent records will be kept or released to an authorized person at his/her request.

People having access to student records shall include authorized school personnel. In addition, students and parents have access to the records within their own personal jurisdiction. Those rights of access include:

- Students upon reaching 14 years of age or upon entering grade 9, whichever comes first.
- Parents at any time, except that if a student is 18 years of age or over, the student may limit a parent's access by written request.

No records shall be disseminated to any other party except by written consent of the responsible person as outlined in Item 3 above.

HEALTH SERVICES

Guidelines for student attendance

- A child with vomiting or diarrhea should remain at home for at least 24 hours after the symptoms have resolved.
- Any child with a fever of 100 and above, or a fever that produces chills, muscle aches, sore throat, or sweating, should remain at home until 24 hours after the fever has resolved.
- Strep Throat, Conjunctivitis or impetigo (a rash with pustules) requires 24 hours of medication as prescribed by the physician before a student returns to school.
- Students with Head Lice must be treated and all nits (egg cases) must be removed before a child can return to school.
- Students who have contracted Chicken Pox must stay at home until all lesions are scabbed over, 5-7 days from the last eruption.
- A child with a rash or skin condition that is undiagnosed by a physician should remain at home.
- Parents whose children have had any of the above conditions should contact the school nurse so that we may ease the transition back to school after an illness and implement communicable disease control in the school or classroom.

Emergency situations

In the event of emergency, an ambulance will transport a child to the nearest hospital. Parents or guardians will be notified.

First aid

First aid is defined as immediate and temporary care given in the case of accident or sudden illness. If an accident does occur, an adult will administer first aid.

Immunizations

All students must present evidence of current immunization according to state guidelines. The link is provided so that you can confirm your child's immunizations compliance for the upcoming school year:

https://phpa.health.maryland.gov/OIDEOR/IMMUN/Shared%20Documents/Min_Vacc_Req_2017-18_Final.pdf.

Please note the updated School Vaccination Requirements for the 2017-2018 School Year:

Grade Level	Vaccination Requirement
Kindergarten, 1 st , 2 nd and 3 rd Grade Students	<u>Varicella</u> Two (2) doses of Varicella vaccine are required
7 th , 8 th , 9 th and 10 th Grade Students	<u>Tdap</u> A single dose of Tdap vaccine is required <u>Meningococcal</u> A single dose of Meningococcal (MCV4) vaccine is required

MEDICAL CONDITIONS

If your child is under medical care for a condition or is currently taking medication that may affect him/her during the school day, please contact the appropriate staff member so we may better understand your child's needs throughout the school day.

Medication administration

All medication, including over the counter medications to be administered during the school day requires a proper medication order from a licensed prescriber and written authorization from the parent before the medication can be given to the student in school. Medications must be brought to the school by an adult in the pharmacy labeled container with no more than a 30-day supply accompanied by a school medication form.

Short-term medication

For short-term medications, i.e., those requiring administration in school for ten school days or less, the pharmacy labeled container may be used in lieu of a licensed prescribers order. The medication should be brought to the Director by the parent and a Medication Authorization form must be signed.

Over the counter medications

School staff may administer certain over the counter medications as needed under the direction and medical orders of a physician.

PARENT VOLUNTEERS

There are a number of jobs for which a parent can volunteer at Echelon Academy. Among these are office assistants, library assistants lunch supervisors, teacher aides, etc. Also, if a parent has a particular talent that can be shared, we would welcome the teaching of mini-courses. Any help from the parents of children at Echelon is welcomed and greatly appreciated. Please notify your child's teacher or the Director if you are interested.

PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES

Since a good working relationship between the school and parents has a positive effect on the student's experience, we welcome visits by parents. However, classroom visits must be cleared through the main office as to offset direct classroom disruption. At any time, parents may request to schedule a conference with a teacher.

GENERAL INFORMATION

School Day Schedule

The school day is from 8:45 – 3:00. Students may be dropped off at the front door beginning at 8:30. The academic day ends at 2:45 and students may be picked up by parents at 3:00.

Lunches

Students must pack a lunch and drink for school each day or purchase from our Hot Lunch plan. Students may drop off their lunches in the refrigerator in the morning, and they have access to microwaves at lunch time. We offer Hot Lunch for 4 days. Lunch menus are reviewed and ordered in the morning. Students may choose from Urban Bar-B-Q, Passion Bakery, Papa John's Pizza, and California Tortilla. If a student arrives after 8:45, he/she will need to bring a lunch, as Hot Lunches will already have been ordered. Deposits of no less than \$100 will be accepted into a child's lunch account. Parents will be notified when the account drops below \$20.

Overnight food or drink storage in the freezer or refrigerator is not available.

CARE OF SCHOOL PROPERTY AND BOOKS

Students are responsible for the proper use and care of books, supplies, equipment, and furniture in the school. Careless use of such items will not be tolerated. Damage to school property will result in the student's having to pay for or replace the item.

Full payment must be made for any lost book or any book defaced beyond repair. Final progress reports will not be distributed to those who are still in need of returning a book or resolving restitution for items lost or damaged. All financial obligations must be taken care of before report cards/transcripts will be issued.

DRESS

The appearance of any young person is primarily the responsibility of that individual and his/her parents. We expect students to maintain an appearance that is not distracting to teachers or other students, and is not detrimental to the educational process of the school. Students are required to wear Echelon Academy attire for the upper body such as polo shirts or sweatshirts, and khaki pants are required for the lower body. **Khaki pants must have front and back pockets.** Girls may wear khaki skirts/skorts as well as pants.

When a student's appearance is felt to be detrimental or improper, the administration will provide alternate clothing at a cost to the parent. Students are not to wear hats, jackets, bandanas, sunglasses, non-Echelon sweatshirts, slippers, pajamas or spaghetti strap tops in the building during the school day. In addition belly buttons and underwear of any kind should not be exposed in any circumstance. All shoes must be closed-toed and boots are not allowed.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

All students are required to leave on file in the office a Student Information Card for emergency procedures. The card must be kept up-to-date. It will help us to contact parents or guardian in case of an emergency. Please inform the office of changes of address, email or telephone.

FIRE DRILLS

Fire drills are scheduled for the purpose of rehearsing for an emergency. It is important that all students concentrate on the procedure used during the drill in the event that a real fire may occur.

The basic rules for a fire evacuation are:

1. Form a single line to leave the room;
2. Do not run or attempt to change place in line;
3. Do not talk; it is essential that you listen to directions in the event of fire;
4. Go to the designated area away from the building;
5. Remain quiet and with your class until the signal is given to return.

LOST AND FOUND; STUDENT VALUABLES

Anything found in the classroom will be returned to the student if it is labeled. All other items found around the building or on school property will be turned into office. Books and notebooks will be returned to the owners if they can be identified. Articles such as clothing, hats, etc., should be marked with your name. Unclaimed articles will be donated to a charitable organization.

Students are prohibited from bringing money or items of considerable value to school unless it is for an exceptional circumstance such as payment for a field trip. Students, not the school, are responsible for their personal property. The office will be glad to place any valuable or large amounts of money in safe keeping until the end of the school day.

NO SCHOOL, DELAYED OPENING OR EMERGENCY CLOSING ANNOUNCEMENTS;

In the event of heavy snow or severely inclement weather, school may be closed or delayed. The same conditions may necessitate early dismissal. Please stay tuned to the news and follow the Montgomery County Public Schools closing, delay and early release policy as it relates to weather. Echelon's daily schedule will not be affected by MCPS power outages or other impacts unrelated to the weather.

SECURITY

The front door will remain locked after students have arrived. Parents may use the given code to enter the school throughout the day.

VISITORS

Visitors are welcomed to the school and must make scheduled arrangements for each visit.

TELEPHONES

The school does not call students from class to answer telephone calls. Telephone messages of an EMERGENCY nature will be delivered. Parents are urged NOT to call their children at school except in case of an emergency. Additionally, students do not have access to school phones during the day. **Cell phones** should not be used by students during school hours. They should remain off and will be held by the teacher until dismissal. When a student violates cell phone usage, the cell phone will be confiscated and a parent will have to pick up the phone at the end of the day. A second infraction of the no cell phone policy will require that the cell phone remain at school overnight and then a parent must pick up the phone the following day. If a student violates the cell phone policy repeatedly, the student may be prohibited from bringing a cell phone to school at the discretion of the Director.

SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS

Our school is fortunate in having capable people to help us whenever our regular teachers are ill or attending conferences. A substitute teacher is an important visitor whose impression of our school will be carried into the community. Students are expected to make good impressions by being polite, helpful, and considerate.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Poor patterns of attendance have a greater negative impact on school performance than any other factor. Work that is not made up during periods of absence has a cumulative impact that makes learning more burdensome for the student. Parents, students and school personnel must do everything that they can to reinforce the importance of daily class attendance. It is better for the developing attitudes of our children to express to them a unified message when it comes to valuing good school attendance. We ask parents to co-operate with the spirit of this policy by encouraging their child's attendance in every possible circumstance.

Parents of students with poor attendance, (who miss school for more than 9 days in a marking period) will be required to meet with the Director and will be placed under review for continuance at Echelon. **Students are expected to make up work missed due to absence.** As a general rule, make-up work should be turned in after a period of time equal to double the number of days absent. Upon return to school after an absence, students must bring a note to their homeroom teacher. The note must specify the date(s) of the absence.

- We desire not to sanction attendance that results from serious or chronic illness or conditions the average person would consider appropriate reasons for absence. We believe that the limits stated in this policy provide allowances for most of the normal patterns of illness and family-related business that can impact on a child's attendance in a given semester. In extraordinary circumstances, a child's poor health or chronic health-related issues may cause a student to exceed those allowances. Excessive attendance will have an impact on the issuance of high school credit. In order to receive high school credit for a class, students may not be absent and/or tardy more than 15 percent of the quarter or semester. For instance, if there are 45 days in the quarter and a student has been tardy 5 times and absent 3 times, he/she will lose credit due to an 18% disruption in attendance.
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VACATION POLICY

Family vacations relate to the attendance issue. Days taken for vacation during the school year can impact on cumulative attendance and cumulative learning. Vacations often cause a student to miss a significant body of learning in a subject, especially in areas where learning and skill building are sequential. Some work that is missed during absence as a result of vacation may not be able to be made up given the unique nature of the experience. As a result, some learning objectives may not be achieved. Students should inform the school office prior to vacation; students may be able to secure some assignments from staff prior to their leaving.

ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

Steps to follow when absent from school:

1. A parent or guardian should call the school on the morning of your absence.
2. A parent or guardian should write an excuse giving name, date, and days of absence and reason for absence.
3. The written excuse must be given to the teacher when the student returns to school.
4. If a student is absent 2 or more consecutive days, a doctor's note stating that the student is well enough to return to school will be required.

Dismissals

If for any reason it becomes necessary for students to leave school during school hours for reasons other than illness or accident, they must bring a note to the office from parents or guardians stating date, time and the reason for early dismissal. Early departures may affect the issuance of credit. Parents must sign out their students before the student leaves.

TARDINESS

Students who arrive late to school (after 8:45) should report to the office with a note citing an acceptable reason. Notes must be signed by a parent. Acceptable reasons for tardiness are sickness, doctor/dentist appointments and family emergencies. Students who are tardy to school more than (5) times per marking period will be required to meet with the Director and will be placed under review for continuance at Echelon.

DISCIPLINE

Discipline is a positive idea because it refers to following in the direction that one ought to go. Providing a disciplined school not only gives young people the best learning atmosphere, it helps individuals in establishing the attitudes and work habits they will need when discipline is no longer imposed. People lacking self-discipline are frequently captive to their own whims and are often unable to carry out day-to-day tasks as well as tasks that require perseverance or self-denial. In contrast, self-disciplined individuals are better equipped to reach their personal goals and to meet the needs of their families and society.

Learning is a co-operative process. All students who progress successfully through Echelon do so because they acquire the positive habits necessary to attain quality in their academic performance and make their social experience in school a positive one. Our program is designed to reinforce all of the habits which will make students successful learners and successful with each other.

Teachers are responsible for daily classroom discipline. Echelon staff encourage appropriate behavior through a variety of methods, including communication with parents, teachers and students. Disciplinary actions range from warnings and after-school detentions to probation, suspension and dismissal. If a student reaches 5 dress code violations, 5 unexcused tardies, or has a combination of 5 dress code violations and unexcused tardies, he or she will serve a one-hour, after-school detention.

The Director determines the terms and length of disciplinary consequences. Students are encouraged to take action whenever they observe a peer in an improper or wrongful act. It is possible to bring an incident to the attention of a staff member in confidentiality if the student makes that intention clear from the start.

Any physical, spoken or written act of abuse, violence, harassment, intimidation, extortion; any vulgar or profane language, any remarks of a personally destructive nature; or any restriction or prevention of free movement of an individual are unacceptable. Whether the act is deliberate or unintentional, this prohibition applies to acts directed toward an individual or group regarding race, color, creed, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, physical appearance, physical or mental disability, political or religious ideology.

DISCIPLINE, continued

A student may be suspended or dismissed immediately for any of the following offenses:

1. Possessing, using or selling alcohol or illegal drugs on campus or during a school-sponsored event, including being present at school or school activities while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
2. Possessing, brandishing or using a weapon on campus. Such items as lighters, beepers, water pistols, matches, cigarettes, sling shots, gum, hats, toy guns, knives, studded bracelets and necklaces or any other item judged to be inappropriate by a teacher or school official will be held and returned to the parent.
3. Taking any action that may be judged prejudicial to the school, whether at school or elsewhere, or bringing discredit or embarrassment to the school through inappropriate behavior.
4. Lapses in integrity such as lying, cheating or plagiarizing and especially lying, deceiving or concealing to avoid disciplinary or academic consequences.
5. Destruction of any school property or property belonging to another student.
6. Stealing or vandalizing -any student who commits or attempts to commit a theft, breaking and entering, or vandalism at school may be suspended and/or referred to the authorities. Theft includes stealing school property from staff or students.
7. Abusing, harassing, deliberately intimidating or physically harming themselves, another person or displaying any form of racial, ethnic, sexual or religious prejudice.
8. Displaying disrespect to members of faculty and staff.
9. Fighting is prohibited. Violation of this policy may be punishable by suspension or expulsion.
10. Smoking, chewing or possessing tobacco products on campus or at school-sponsored events is against Echelon policy and is subject to disciplinary action.

The most important factors in succeeding academically at Echelon are hard work, involvement, good attendance, and perseverance. The most important factors in succeeding personally at Echelon are trust, respect, kindness, decency toward others, and acceptance of and support for all members of the school. What we seek at Echelon is a healthy, positive, involved, inclusive and vibrant school community. Our rules help us to achieve that kind of school community. The outcome of the process of education is competence in learning and understanding. The school provides support and structure to assist in the educational process. We know that in working with children, the path to competence and then to excellence is not a straight one. Overcoming difficulty and challenges, overcoming personal challenges, and understanding self, all impact on one's progress to success. Our mission is to help students get there.

COURTESY AND RESPECT

We want all of our students and staff to feel great about being here. Intimidation, in any form and in any situation, is contrary to our purpose. Rudeness, sarcasm, disaffection, exclusive or abusive actions or gestures, disrespectful comments or acts of hate toward anyone in the school will not be tolerated. Courtesy among teachers, school employees, students and visitors is a tradition at our school. Everyone in this school strives to be considerate of all others. Students' respect for themselves, for teachers and for other students is paramount.

HARASSMENT

Echelon is committed to the prevention of harassment based upon sex, race, color, ethnic/national origin, religion, age, handicap/disability, sexual orientation, physical appearance, and physical/mental capacity.

Harassment is any form of behavior (including discrimination) that interferes with another person's sense of safety, dignity, comfort, or productivity in the employment or education environment.

Prohibited conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following conduct when related to a person's sex (gender), race, color, ethnicity/national origin, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, physical appearance, and physical/mental capacity and when such conduct is unwelcome by the recipient.

- Name calling (verbal/written), teasing, jokes, rumors or other derogatory or dehumanizing remarks;
- Pulling at clothing or other possessions;
- Graffiti or symbols;
- Gossip, harassing phone calls, and pranks;
- Unwelcome touching of a person or person's clothing;
- Offensive or graphic posters, pictures, cartoons/caricatures, notes, book covers, or designs on clothing
- Any words or actions which provoke feelings of discomfort, embarrassment, hurt or intimidation.

Harassment is prohibited whether or not such harassment involves relationships of adult-to-adult, adult-to-student, student-to-student, or student-to-adult. See a more elaborate discussion of harassment in the section on harassment and discrimination procedures. Sexual harassment is defined as unwanted, sexual attention from peers, subordinates, supervisors, customers or anyone with whom the victim may interact in order to fulfill his/her job or school-related activities/duties. The harassment may be verbal or physical in nature and may be directed at either females or males.

DETENTION

Students may be assigned lunch or after-school detention by their teacher or by the office. It is the student's responsibility to notify home of any assigned detention before or after school.

SUSPENSION

Suspension may be in or out of school and is imposed when other means of correction have failed, or when keeping a student in class would be detrimental to the general welfare of the school and its students.

Suspension is a temporary withholding of the privilege of attendance for not more than five (5) school days. Any pupil who persistently disobeys and opposes fair impartial regulations of the school is liable for suspension by the Director. The student will be informed of the reason and a written copy of the reason or reasons for the suspension will be sent to the parent or guardian. A student who is suspended will be reinstated after due time, if the pupil comes to school with his or her parent or guardian and gives satisfactory assurance of future good conduct. If satisfactory arrangements have not been made with the pupil and parents, however, suspension may continue.

Students are not only expected but also required to make up all missed work during the time a student was on suspension. All arrangements for making up work must be initiated by the student with the teacher.

DISMISSAL FROM ECHELON

A student may be dismissed if all other interventions have failed or unexcused attendance/tardiness have become chronic.

TRANSCRIPT

Students desiring a copy of their transcript should complete a Transcript Request Form. Please allow one week to process transcripts, scholarships, college applications, recommendations, etc.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS and VERIFICATION

By signing this page, you are acknowledging and verifying that you have received, take the responsibility to review with your child and will abide to these documents, referenced within this handbook.

This form must be signed and returned prior to the start of each school year.

Parent Name (printed): _____

Student Name: _____

Student's Grade: _____

Parent
Signature: _____ Date: _____

Return to:

Echelon Academy

900 Olney Sandy Spring Road

Sandy Spring, Maryland 20860

301-570-0999
