

Middlesex County Stem Charter School



Middlesex County Stem Charter School

2018 - 2019

**Student & Parent
Handbook**

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Notice: It is understood that this handbook cannot cover every aspect relating to the functions, procedures, and policies at Middlesex County Stem Charter School. Therefore, any situation not specifically referred to in this handbook will fall under the guidelines set forth by New Jersey Department of Education Policies and Procedures.

FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S DESK

Dear Parents and Students,

Welcome to the 2018-2019 school year at Middlesex County Stem Charter School Charter School!

This school year marks our third year at the elementary level, and based on our past successes, we are extremely excited to share this school year with both our students and their families. The key to our success has been the dedication and support from our faculty, staff, students and their families, and the community.

The expectations are high for all students at Middlesex County Stem Charter School. Each of you will perform to the best of your abilities at all times, respect the rights of others, and represent the school with enthusiasm and integrity.

Middlesex County Stem Charter School Charter School is based on a foundation of clear expectations and we strive to maintain a positive and productive environment during the school day. Please read this handbook carefully and become familiar with the policies of Middlesex County Stem Charter School, especially those related to attendance, dress code, and Student Code of Conduct. This handbook provides parents and students with clear guidelines for expectations at Middlesex County Stem Charter School.

The success of our school also depends on positive collaboration between home and school, so I invite you to visit our school often, take part in school activities by joining our Parent Teacher Student Organization (PTSO), and show an interest in your child's progress. It is my sincere wish that we all work together in fostering positive learning experiences for students.

Thank you for your continued support of Middlesex County Stem Charter School Charter School. Together, we are building a great future for our students!

Sincerely,

Dr. Namik Sercan

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Middlesex County Stem Charter School Charter School is to provide academic and social challenges and opportunities for students to attain the skills necessary for success in post-secondary education.

DUE PROCESS AND STUDENTS' RESPONSIBILITIES & RIGHTS

STUDENTS' RESPONSIBILITIES

- To be caring and honest,
- To do his or her best to learn and master all he/she can,
- To respect school rules, regulations, and policies,
- To be sure that personal expressions do not interfere with the rights of others,
- To follow state law and school policies concerning substance abuse,
- To respect and protect the personal and property rights of others and of the school,
- To treat all members of the community with full respect, fairness, and courtesy,
- To abide by all the expectations of the school and its community,
- To follow the prescribed guidelines for participation in school activities, AND
- To adhere to due process procedures.

STUDENTS' RIGHTS

- To feel safe in the school environment,
- To take full advantage of the learning opportunities,
- To work in an environment free from disruptions,
- To express his or her opinions, ideas, thoughts, and concerns,
- To have a healthy environment that is smoke alcohol, and drug free,
- To use school resources and facilities for self-betterment under appropriate supervision,
- To expect courtesy, fairness, and respect from all members of the community,
- To be informed of all expectations and responsibilities,
- To take part in a variety of school activities, AND
- To have the right to due process.

All students at Middlesex County Stem Charter School Charter School (MCSCS) are entitled to the rights guaranteed by the United States Constitution and Bill of Rights, and their rights will not knowingly be denied by the required Code of Conduct or by any disciplinary actions taken by the school. Any student who exhibits any of the unacceptable student behaviors or Conduct Violations listed in this handbook, or added to this list at a later date, will suffer immediate consequences. These consequences range from notification of parents, isolation, detention, and emergency removal from a school activity, to suspension, expulsion, and criminal prosecution. In all instances, MCSCS's policies and procedures governing due process for suspensions and expulsions will follow New Jersey Compilation of School Discipline Laws and Regulations, N.J.S. 18A:37-2. All students at MCSCS have the right to feel physically, emotionally, and intellectually safe. Therefore, if at any time you feel you are the subject of harassment, hazing, threats, or other intimidating behavior, you should immediately speak to an administrator about the problem. The situation will be investigated as soon as possible. All such reports will be kept confidential.

Similarly, if you are concerned about the safety of a student who seems to be the subject of harassment, hazing, or threats, you should immediately speak to an administrator about the problem. The situation will be investigated as soon as possible, and reports will be kept completely confidential.

ATTENDANCE

Excellent attendance is the first requirement for success in school. Studies show that frequent absence is a predictor of future dropouts. Therefore, parents are expected to ensure that their child is in school unless absence is necessary. This includes students coming to school on time and remaining for the entire day.

Absence Verification: School attendance is a basic responsibility of the student and parent. The student who avoids responsibility for learning for being absent himself/herself from school/class is impeding and complicating the teaching-learning.

- MCSCSCS will not condone nor permit absences from school for any reason not specified in the law and will not issue course credit if the student attendance requirement is not met.
- Students who have more than eighteen (18) days of unexcused absences will be denied credit and be retained in the same grade.
- Per Year Three (3) Days of unexcused absence will be pardoned upon receipt of a written request from the parent to do so.
- Missing 18 periods of one class will result in denial of credits.
- All doctor's notes must be submitted within three (3) school days after returning (including the day of return), and notes must be acceptable to the administration. Doctor's notes received after the three (3) days will not be counted as EXCUSED.
- Parents will be notified of student's absences at the fifth (5), ninth (9), tenth (10) & referral to the administrative courts.
- Students who arrive at school after 10:16AM or leave school before 12:55PM will be considered as absent. Four hours of instruction is required for a student to be considered present.
- Students who accrue more than 10 excused absences for medical reasons must have a documented chronic condition or chronic medical diagnosis from a doctor. All medical notes need to include the reason for the absence.

Accepted excused absences with a medical condition or diagnosis are but not limited to the following:

- Injury
- Illness such as flu, virus or any other contagious infection
- Medical disorder

Non-accepted excused absences without a medical condition or diagnosis past the 10 days are but not limited to the following:

- Cough, cold, upset stomach or any other common cold symptoms
- Headaches unless documented as a chronic migraine condition
- Sinus infection unless document as a viral infection

TRUANCY

Truancy shall be defined as an absence from school not excused by the school administration or verified by a parent. Students, at the discretion of the Chief Education Officer or his/her designee, may be charged with a cut of class for each class missed. Additionally proper authorities may be notified. Truancy may be applied to students who are absent from school without parent notification to the school.

EXCUSED ABSENCES

The following absences are considered excused if appropriate documentation is received in attendance office upon student's return from absence:

1. **Personal Illness:** Personal illness of the student is excused in case that attendance in school would endanger the health of the student and/or the health of others. Upon the student's return to school, appropriate medical documentation is required within three (3) days of the absence(s). Your parent or guardian should call the school each morning you are home ill. When you return to school, you must bring an explanatory note from your parent or guardian and a document from your doctor; or else it will be considered an unexcused absence. The school may require a doctor's confirmation if you have 3 or more consecutive or nonconsecutive medical excused absences within the entire school year. A note should also be brought for a Doctor's appointment excuse.

2. **Serious Illness or Death in the Family:** Serious illness or death in student's immediate family necessitating the absence. Your parent or guardian must call the office to explain the situation and estimated time of absence. When you return to school, you must bring an explanatory note from your parent/guardian or doctor within three days. (Immediate family: "Immediate Family Member" means an individual's spouse, child, parent or sibling residing in the same household. *N.J.S.A. 52:13D-13(i)*, up to 3 days). ***** Need notes
3. **Court Order:** Compliance with a court order or an order issued government agency including an order for a pre-induction physical examination for service in the armed forces, mandating absence from school is excused. Your parent or guardian must call the office to explain the situation and estimated time of absence. When you return to school, you must bring a copy of the appropriate documentation issued by an authorized agency.
4. **Recognized Religious Holidays:** Recognized religious holidays, published by the New Jersey Department of Education, observed by the faith of the student. Your parent or guardian must call the office to explain the situation and estimated time of absence. When you return to school, you must bring an explanatory note from your parent/guardian.

Scheduling the completion of assignments following each absence is the responsibility of the student. *If a student is absent three days or more due to illness, that student must be re-admitted by the school nurse who will verify the illness.*

UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

An unexcused absence is defined as the act of a student is absent from school for a day or any portion of a day or from an individual class, with or without the knowledge of the parent/legal guardian, for reasons other than those specifically outlined as excused absences.

Teachers are not required to provide make-up work for students when they are truant or cutting class.

There are serious consequences of unexcused absenteeism including but not limited to the following:

- Class work and tests missed due to unexcused absences shall be subject to reduction in grade. Determination of reduction in grade is made by the teacher based on course syllabus. Makeup work not submitted or submitted late due to unexcused absence(s) shall receive a zero.
- Loss of privileges for dress-down days, athletic games, or school sponsored functions, trips or activities.
- Student who has accumulated ten (10) or more consecutive days of unexcused absences shall be withdrawn with or without parent's permission.

Examples of student unexcused absences include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Family travel and vacations.
2. Out of School Suspension:
"An excused absence is for religious observance and does not include illness, quarantine, suspensions, extended family vacations, homelessness or other prolonged absence." (NJ School Register 2016-2017 3.2.6)
3. Other daytime activities that are unrelated to the school program.

SCHOOL TARDINESS

A student shall not "skip" or miss any class or activity (or any portion of a class or activity) or be tardy (for a class or activity) for which he or she is enrolled without a valid excuse.

A student is considered tardy when he or she arrives at school after the beginning of the official school day (7:50 AM) or is not in the assigned class at the official beginning of the class period. In order to start the day smoothly and minimize interruptions caused by late arriving students, please see that your child is on time. **Late arriving students must be checked in by a parent.** Cars must be parked in the parking lot, and students and parents must stop by the front office, sign in, and get a tardy slip to class stating the reason for tardiness. Students who are eligible for bus transportation provided by their district will not be counted tardy if the bus arrives late.

- **Excused Tardy:** Late arrival to school as a result of reasons defined herein as excused absences or as a result of events physically out of one's control such as inclement weather, documented transportation delays, health related emergencies with proper documentation, power outage, compliance with court order, etc. shall be excused.
- **Unexcused Tardy:** Arriving late to school or class with or without the knowledge of parent/guardian, as a result of oversleeping, traffic, car trouble, for other reasons not defined as excused.
- **Habitual School Tardy:** Excessive tardiness of eight or more may result in a letter of *Notification of Excessive Tardiness* from the school. Continued tardiness will result in a referral to the school social worker.

Consequences for tardiness:

- Four (4) tardies =letter home
- Every Eight (8) tardies will equal one unexcused absence which will be added to the student's cumulative attendance record.

CLASS TARDINESS

Students are expected to be in their assigned seats when class begins. Repetitive tardiness will result in student receiving disciplinary consequence based on the Middlesex County Stem Charter School Charter School Discipline Cycle. One conduct point is assigned for each class tardy.

CLASS CUTS/SKIPPING

A class cut occurs when a student is absent from class for more than 5 minutes without permission from the teacher or authorization from the office to do so. Students who become ill or need to see a counselor or administrator during class time should first report to class, obtain permission to be excused, and get a written pass from the teacher.

EARLY CHECKOUTS

Being removed from class and leaving the school prior to the official end of the school day with a parent or legal guardian is considered an early checkout. A photo ID is required to check a student out of school. Only those persons who have been previously approved by the parent(s)/guardian(s), and officially recorded on the student's records at school will be allowed to check out a student. Approved adults, are guardians listed on the child's Genesis account. If the adult is not listed on the child's Genesis account, the child will not be released to the adult.

- To be considered "in attendance" for a school day, a student must be present for at least one-half of the school day. Students leaving school before meeting that requirement (12:55pm) will be considered absent for the day. Students arriving to school before meeting that requirement (10:16AM) will be considered absent for the day.
- A parent or legal guardian must bring appropriate documentation (doctor's note, etc.) showing the necessity of an early checkout at the time the student is released from school or the next day.
- Early checkouts are not permitted after 2:50PM. When planning to check a student out of school early, please fill out the form on Genesis, so the student can be prepared to leave during instructional time with minimal disruption to the rest of the class.

MAKE-UP WORK FOR ABSENCES – EXCUSED OR UNEXCUSED

An excused or unexcused absence from school, even for several days, does not remove any student from responsibilities in the classroom on the day they return to school. Students who have been absent will be given the same number of days that they were absent to make up missed work.

Assignments are available on the Genesis and are available 24 hours a day – should a student be absent for any reason, please refer to the School Information System. **Parents should not call or email the front office for assignments.** Long-term assignments given prior to a student's absence will be due on the original due date or upon the student's return to school. For students who have been absent, make-up tests will be scheduled at a time designated by the teacher.

PERFECT ATTENDANCE

Students are recognized if they maintain perfect attendance each semester. Perfect attendance is considered as zero absences, zero tardiness, and zero early checkouts, regardless if they are excused or unexcused.

TRUANCY

Any child, in grades kindergarten through fifth grade is subject to the New Jersey Compulsory Attendance Law. A student who has ten or more days of unexcused absences during the calendar school year is considered truant. Truancy is in violation of the compulsory state school-attendance law and is considered a serious matter that will have immediate consequences.

After ten (10) unexcused absences, the parent/legal guardian will be notified by the school administrator.

When administrative actions taken to correct truancy have proven ineffective, according to New Jersey Attendance (N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.6), the school may file proceedings in court and furnish evidence for the conviction of parents/legal guardian and/or child for non-compliance with state attendance laws.

STUDENT DISCIPLINE AND CODE OF CONDUCT

CONDUCT INFORMATION

The Middlesex County Stem Charter School faculty and staff believes in a school environment in which all students have the right to learn. Ideal learning takes place in an atmosphere of mutual respect, high expectations, positive reinforcement, and academic honesty. The education of students involves parents, teachers, administrators, and the students themselves.

Discipline is a process of helping students understand what they have done, and teaching them how to correct their behavior. For any discipline program to be successful, students are expected to take responsibility for their behavior, accept consequences for their behavior, and learn to change or adjust their behavior for the future. Students are expected to adhere fully to the code of conduct. In addition, Students shall not incite, urge, encourage, advise, or counsel other students to violate any rule of this Code of Conduct, or conspire to violate any rule of this Code of Conduct. (N.J.A.C. 6A: 16-7.1).

Students must demonstrate respectful behavior to each other at all times. Bullying, fighting, play-fighting, teasing, horseplay, and name-calling **will not be tolerated**. This and the entire Code of Conduct applies to both on- and off-campus school activities. Off-campus misconduct for which a student may be disciplined includes, but is not limited to, any off-campus conduct which could result in the student being criminally charged with a felony, or felonious conduct, for which a student has been arrested, criminally charged/indicted, adjudicated to have committed or convicted, as well as conduct which makes the student's continued presence at school a potential danger to persons or property at the school or which disrupts the educational process.

Student discipline is a joint responsibility between home and school. Parental support for good discipline enables the school to maintain an optimal learning environment.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR INDIVIDUAL ACTIONS OR CHOICES

It is expected that every individual will accept responsibility for his/her own actions, whether intentional or unintentional. Often harm caused to other persons or their possessions is unintentional, or the result of careless behavior. This, however, does not excuse or diminish the personal responsibility of the student (and/or his/her parent/guardian) to make appropriate restitution. When known and verified by an administrator, any harm caused to another will be reported immediately to parents. **Middlesex County Stem Charter School, its employees, and/or the School Board do not assume any liability for the intentional or unintentional harm caused by any student to another individual or his/her possessions.**

Middlesex County Stem Charter School's goal is to help every student maximize his or her intellectual, social, physical, and emotional potential. Procedures within the school are designed to create an orderly and distraction-free environment in which all students can learn effectively and pleasantly. In order to foster this kind of learning environment, the Middlesex County Stem Charter School administrators and teachers shall not allow inappropriate, distractive, or disorderly behaviors to occur during school, on school property, or at any school-sponsored activities. **Students who continuously disregard the Code of Conduct may be recommended to the School Board for expulsion.**

Our ultimate goal is to instill in students a sense of responsibility and self-discipline. "Firm, but fair" is the basis for this school-wide discipline program. Guidelines are provided in order to foster mutual respect and cooperation within the school setting. Middlesex County Stem Charter School takes seriously its responsibility to educate its students in a safe and drug free school where they are free from fear of harm or intimidation. Therefore, weapons, drugs, and gang activity will not be tolerated. Students, who violate Middlesex County Stem Charter School rules, or state laws related to these offenses, will be suspended or expelled from school. Violators will also be reported to police and may be arrested. These rules apply to all students at school and school-sponsored activities.

PART I: DISCIPLINARY RULES

The following code provisions apply to student behavior, AT ANY TIME, while on school property, engaging in or attending a school-sponsored event, while using the school technology resources or, in some cases, off - campus (see rule 19). The decision to charge a student for violation of this Code of Conduct shall be made by the administration of MCSCS.

DEFINITIONS

Administrator

The principal or other designated person to whom authority has been delegated.

Board

The Middlesex County Stem Charter School School Board.

Expulsion

Suspension or expulsion of a student from school beyond the current school quarter or semester.

Disciplinary Hearing Officer or Hearing Officer

The individual(s) appointed to conduct a disciplinary hearing.

Long-Term Suspension

The suspension of a student from school for more than ten (10) school days, but not beyond the current school quarter or semester.

Parent

The student's natural parent or court approved legal guardian.

Permanent Expulsion

Expulsion from Middlesex County Stem Charter School for the remainder of the student's eligibility to attend school pursuant to New Jersey law.

School Property

Includes, but is not limited to:

1. The land and improvements which constitute the school;
2. Any other property or building, including school bus stops, wherever located, and where any school-sponsored/sanctioned function or activity is conducted;
3. Any bus or other vehicle used in connection with school functions and activities, including but not limited to, school buses, buses leased by school district and privately-owned vehicles used for transportation to and from school activities;
4. En route to and from school (Prior to imposing discipline regarding incidents occurring en route to and from school, school administration should consult with the system office of student discipline.)

School Technology Resources

Includes, but is not limited to:

1. Electronic media systems such as computers, electronic networks, messaging, and Web site publishing, and
2. The associated hardware and software programs used for purposes such as, but not limited to, developing, retrieving, storing, disseminating, and accessing instructional, educational, and administrative information.

Short-Term Suspension

The suspension of a student from school for ten (10) school days or less.

Teacher

A classroom teacher, counselor, school assistant, substitute teacher or a student teacher who has been given authority over some part of the school program by the principal or a supervising teacher.

Detention

Including Saturday opportunity school, by a teacher or an administrator requires a student to be at school for a limited period of time other than normal school hours or days. The student's parent or legal guardian should be notified at least on the day prior to the serving of detention or Saturday opportunity school.

Local School Interventions

Include the use of student and/or parent conferences, student court, mediation, detention, in-school suspension, bus suspensions, Saturday opportunity school, out-of-school suspension, and forfeiture of the privilege of participation in extracurricular activities.

Office Timeout

Includes the removal of an elementary student from his/her class by the principal or a designee. The timeout is served in a cool-down location supervised by appropriate school personnel in a room on the school premises other than the student's classroom for one (1) day or less depending upon the nature of the behavior and the age/grade of the student.

In-school Suspension

The removal of a student from his/her class by the principal or a designee and assignment to a location, supervised by appropriate personnel in another room, on the school premises, for a period not exceeding ten (10) consecutive school days. A student assigned to in-school suspension will be permitted to work on classroom assignments and will be counted present on the attendance register. If a student is removed from regular class assignments for more than one-half of the school day, written notice of this assignment to in-school suspension must be sent to the parent. A copy of the written notice ("suspension letter") must also be sent to the Exceptional Children Department if the student has an Individual Education Plan (IEP) and the visiting teacher/school social worker should be sent a copy of all suspension letters. The letter should clearly indicate that the suspension is "in-school." The administrator should make every effort to have a conference with the parent(s) and student before, or at the time the student returns to regular classes.

DESCRIPTION OF DISCIPLINE OPTIONS

Withholding of Privileges

The student may be denied an opportunity to partake in school-related activities and/or events as deemed appropriate by an administrator.

Administrative Detention

An administrator may assign administrative detention to a student who fails to comply with school rules. Administrative Detention will be held with the assistant administrator, or in an **Opportunity Room**. Parents will be sent a notification when administrative detention is assigned. All administrative detentions are documented on the student's permanent discipline record.

In-School Suspension

In-School Suspension is a formal disciplinary action that can only be assigned by A Middlesex County Stem Charter School administrator, and requires written correspondence to parents. In-school days of suspension may increase on successive occasions where it becomes necessary for the same student to be placed in in-school suspension. **All students under in-school suspension are prohibited from participating in after-school activities, and are required to leave the school campus immediately upon dismissal.** Disciplinary Referral Forms resulting in In-school suspension assignments will be recorded on the student's discipline transcript.

Out-of-School Suspension

Out-of-School Suspension is a formal disciplinary action that can only be assigned by a Middlesex County Stem Charter School administrator and requires written correspondence to parents. Out-of-school suspension may increase on successive occasions where it becomes necessary for the same student to be suspended from school. **A meeting between a parent and an administrator is required prior to the return to Middlesex County Stem Charter**

School of any student serving an out-of-school suspension. All students under out-of-school suspension are prohibited from participating in after-school activities and therefore are not allowed to come on the school campus. Students who receive an out-of-school suspension will not be able to participate on any overnight field trips for the rest of the school year and any fees or deposits paid earlier are non-refundable. Out-of-school suspension assignments will be notated on student’s discipline transcript.

Option to Withdraw

A student may withdraw without penalty from a charter school at any time and enroll in another local school in the school district in which the student resides. A student who is suspended or expelled from a charter school as a result of a disciplinary action taken by a charter school shall be entitled to enroll in a local school within the local school system in which the student resides if, under the disciplinary policy of the local school system, such student would not have been subject to suspension or expulsion. In such instances, the local school system shall not be required to independently verify the nature or occurrence of the applicable conduct, or any evidence relating thereto.

Academic and/or Behavioral Contract

Students who have been given consequences based on Step 4 of the disciplinary cycle in any category will be asked to enter into an academic and behavioral agreement. Failure to sign the agreement by the parent and/or student will not hinder the school administration from taking any further actions.

Expulsion

Expulsion is a formal disciplinary action that can only be approved by Middlesex County Stem Charter School School Board of Education after receiving a recommendation by the Middlesex County Stem Charter School administrative team due to the student’s involvement in a serious discipline offense or the student’s involvement in repetitive discipline offenses. A written correspondence to the parent(s) that will contain the date and time of the Board hearing will be mailed to the parent(s) within ten days of the suspension.

MINOR VIOLATIONS DISCIPLINE CYCLE

Minor violations in or outside of the classroom will be handled by the issuance of conduct points. Students’ violations will be recorded by the teachers or other staff by help of a computerized Conduct Log system. **Conduct points** can be given anywhere in the school by any school employee. Parents and students will have online access to the recorded information on Student Information System. Administration will review the recorded Conduct Log and assign consequences as follows:

1 – 3 conduct points	No consequence assigned. However, points will be transferred and will accumulate throughout the school year.
4 – 7 conduct points	Administrative Detention – Students who earn a 4 th Administrative Detention will be given an Incident Referral Form instead.
8 – 12 conduct points	In-School Suspension (ISS) during a selected period – Students who earn a 4 th ISS will be given an Incident Referral Form instead.
13-17 conduct points	In-School Suspension (ISS) for half a day- Students who earn a 4 th ISS will be given an Incident Referral Form instead.
18 or more conduct points	Incident Referral Form for not following school rules. (Additional consequences may apply).

Minor Violations (Class I Offenses)

Minor violations listed below are not exhaustive and subject to change at any time at the discretion of the administration. Different violations carry different conduct points ranging from 1 to 3.

Class	Shortcuts	Description	Point
1.01	Dress Code	Violation of the uniform dress code.	1

1.02	Refusing to participate in learning	Refusing to participate in learning: leaving centers, sitting outside of group circle, sleeping, or not participating.	1
1.03	Tardiness	Repeated late arrival to class.	1
1.04	Classroom Disruption	Any other minor act of misconduct which interferes with the orderly operation of the classroom including but not limited to excessive or disruptive talking, throwing objects, verbal exchanges, arguing, passing notes.	2
1.05	Failure to Follow Directions.	Failure to follow directions: Refusal or failure to comply with a direction or an order from a school employee inside or outside the school building.	2
1.06	School Building Disruptions/Misconduct	Hall/Cafeteria disruptions (including but not limited to yelling, shouting, screaming, throwing food, loitering, in an unassigned area, banging on door and/or walls, and/or running)	2
1.07	Horseplay	Horseplay, roughhousing, wrestling, pushing, scuffling, play- fighting, or any boisterous activity inside or outside of the school building.	2
1.08	Behavior That Puts Safety at Risk	Behavior that puts safety of student, classmates or staff at risk in or outside the school building, including, but not limited to recess and emergency preparedness drills.	3
1.09	Disrespectful or Rude Behavior	Disrespect: Conduct or behavior that lacks regard, civility, politeness, and/or courteous consideration which goes beyond the bounds of acceptable student behavior. This may include, but is not limited to, teasing, name-calling, gossiping, spreading or starting rumors, and purposely embarrassing or humiliating another student.	3
1.10	Inappropriate Language/ Materials	Inappropriate Language/ Materials: The use of oral, written or bodily language (including designations, abbreviations that connote offensive meaning), electronic messages, computers, gestures, objects, or pictures are disrespectful or socially unacceptable and which tend to disrupt the school environment, a school function, or an extracurricular/co-curricular activity.	3

Repetitive, meaning three or more of the same minor violations, will result in student being classified as a student with Continuous Disciplinary Infractions. Appropriate support will be provided to resolve the behavior issues within the Intervention and Referral Service Team (I&RS) problem-solving framework. However, administration may refer the students with Continuous Disciplinary Infractions to the School Board to be expelled from the school to protect the learning environment of other students.

MAJOR VIOLATIONS DISCIPLINE CYCLE - (Class II-IV Offenses)

Major violations of the Student Code of Conduct result in an Incident Referral Form. The incident(s) reported on the Incident Referral Forms are investigated and appropriate consequences are assigned by the Behavior Support Team. The Behavior Support Team will exercise professional discretion in determining incidents of horseplay, intentional spitting, physical altercation, fighting or physical bullying, or self-defense as defined by New Jersey Department of Education. **The Behavior Support Team will also have the authority to assign consequences based on behavior related to specific incidents. This may include differentiated discipline assigned on a case by case basis.** The minimum consequences for prohibited behaviors will apply as noted in this Student Code of Conduct. Parents are notified of the consequences by either phone call, email, notice letter sent home with student, or US mail. Assignments of consequences are progressive. In general, each incident referral advances the student to the next step in the Major Violation Discipline Cycle and violations may have higher consequences if committed at a higher cycle step. Consequence ranges on the Major Violation Discipline Cycle cover most of the major violations. However, it cannot cover all possible examples for violating the listed offenses. **Any item that is deemed unsafe, inappropriate, or hazardous to persons or property may be confiscated by school personnel.** Offenses not covered by the Discipline Cycle are handled by the school administration in accordance with federal and state laws in a manner consistent with the Charter Schools Act.

Any recommendation of long-term suspension, expulsion, or alternative school will result in a hearing being scheduled for a student. A Student Discipline Hearing Panel consisting of three school officials will convene an informal hearing for students in K through 5th grade.

The consequence may be one of the following, according to the seriousness of the misbehavior, and not necessarily in this order:

- ❖ Withholding of Privileges

- ❖ Administrative Warning / Assign Conduct Point
- ❖ Student / Administrator Conference
- ❖ Student / Teacher / Administrator Conference
- ❖ Student / Teacher / Parent / Administrator Conference
- ❖ Administrative Detention
- ❖ Referral to I&RS (Intervention and Referral Services)
- ❖ In- School Suspension (ISS)
- ❖ Out-of-School Suspension (OSS)
- ❖ Option to Withdraw
- ❖ Recommendation for Expulsion

Intermediate Violations (Class II Offenses)

Intermediate acts of misconduct are more serious or disruptive examples of the offenses in Class I. Class II also includes repeated (three or more of the same violation) acts of misconduct from Class I and acts directed against people or property that do not seriously endanger the health or safety of others. The misconduct must be reported to the school’s Behavior Support Team for disciplinary action.

Class	Infractions	ISS (1 day)	ISS (2 days)	ISS (3 days)	O SS (1-3 days)	O SS (3-5 days)	O SS (5-7 days)	O SS (8-10 days)	O SS (10 days) / EXP
2.01	Repeated Misconduct of Class I violation: Repeated misconduct which tends to disrupt an orderly school environment or extracurricular/co-curricular program or activity.	S t e p 1	S t e p 2	S t e p 3	S t e p 4	S t e p 5	S t e p 6	S t e p 7	S t e p 8
2.02	Disrespect: Conduct or behavior toward a school employee or an adult that lacks regard, civility, politeness, and/or courteous consideration which goes beyond the bounds of acceptable student behavior. (More serious than Class I).	S t e p 1	S t e p 2	S t e p 3	S t e p 4	S t e p 5	S t e p 6	S t e p 7	S t e p 8
2.03	Fighting: Minor physical contact between two or more students which is harmful or disruptive. Self-defense is described as an action taken to block an attack by another person or to shield yourself from being hit by another person. Retaliating by hitting a person back is not self-defense and will be considered as fighting.	S t e p 1	S t e p 2	S t e p 3	S t e p 4	S t e p 5	S t e p 6	S t e p 7	S t e p 8
2.04	Forgery: The making of a false or misleading written communication to a school staff member with either the intent to deceive the staff member or under circumstances which would be reasonably calculated to deceive the staff member.	S t e p 1	S t e p 2	S t e p 3	S t e p 4	S t e p 5	S t e p 6	S t e p 7	S t e p 8
2.05	Gambling: Any unlawful participation in games (or activities) of chance for money and/or other things of value. This includes selling and trading items amongst students without approval from school administration.	S t e p 1	S t e p 2	S t e p 3	S t e p 4	S t e p 5	S t e p 6	S t e p 7	S t e p 8
2.06	Insubordination/Open Defiance: Either verbal or non-verbal refusal to comply with school rules or directions from school staff.	S t e p 1	S t e p 2	S t e p 3	S t e p 4	S t e p 5	S t e p 6	S t e p 7	S t e p 8

		e p 1	e p 2	e p 3	e p 4	e p 5	e p 6	e p 7	e p 8
2.07	Intimidation/Threats: The verbal or physical threat to do harm or violence to another student(s) or to the property of another person. Any verbal, written, or printed communication maliciously threatening any injury to the person, property, or reputation of another, with or without the intent to extort money or any pecuniary advantage whatsoever; or with intent to compel the person so threatened, or any other person, to do any act or refrain from doing any act against his/her will.	S t e p 1	S t e p 2	S t e p 3	S t e p 4	S t e p 5	S t e p 6	S t e p 7	S t e p 8
2.08	Stealing (under \$50): Taking the property of another person or school without permission. The taking, possession or distribution of school property without authorization. (Mandatory: Restitution).	S t e p 1	S t e p 2	S t e p 3	S t e p 4	S t e p 5	S t e p 6	S t e p 7	S t e p 8
2.09	Unauthorized Assembly, Publications, etc.: Demonstrations and/or petitions by students, or possession and/or distribution of unauthorized publications, including misuse of electronic messages or computers which interfere with the orderly process of the school environment, a school function, or extracurricular/co-curricular activity.	S t e p 1	S t e p 2	S t e p 3	S t e p 4	S t e p 5	S t e p 6	S t e p 7	S t e p 8
2.10	Other Serious Misconduct: Any other intermediate act of misconduct or any more serious, harmful, or disruptive example of any of the offenses described in Class I.	S t e p 1	S t e p 2	S t e p 3	S t e p 4	S t e p 5	S t e p 6	S t e p 7	S t e p 8
2.11	Bullying: Any unwanted aggressive, intimidating, insulting, dehumanizing or threatening verbal, electronic, or physical behavior or expression that is directed toward another person on school property or off school grounds if it adversely impacts the education at school for students or staff. This may include, but is not limited to, pushing, shoving, name-calling with profanity, purposeful exclusion, slander, and verbal cruelty.	S t e p 1	S t e p 2	S t e p 3	S t e p 4	S t e p 5	S t e p 6	S t e p 7	S t e p 8
2.12	Physical Contact: Offensive, unwanted and/or inappropriate touch.	S t e p 1	S t e p 2	S t e p 3	S t e p 4	S t e p 5	S t e p 6	S t e p 7	S t e p 8
2.13	Dangerous/Unsafe Acts: Behavior in such a manner as could reasonably cause physical injury to any person or property without intent to do such harm.	S t e p 1	S t e p 2	S t e p 3	S t e p 4	S t e p 5	S t e p 6	S t e p 7	S t e p 8
2.14	Provoke/Attempt to cause fight: Any action, comments, or written messages intended to cause others to fight or which might reasonably be expected to result in a fight.	S t e p 1	S t e p 2	S t e p 3	S t e p 4	S t e p 5	S t e p 6	S t e p 7	S t e p 8
2.15	Confrontation/Dispute: Lower level confrontations such as, mutual pushing and shoving or altercations which stop upon verbal command and are resolved without injury or need for physical restraint.	S t e p 1	S t e p 2	S t e p 3	S t e p 4	S t e p 5	S t e p 6	S t e p 7	S t e p 8

2.16	Simple Battery: Intentionally making physical contact of an insulting or provoking nature which causes physical harm to another person. Any attempt to cause physical injury, threaten bodily harm, or behave in such a way as could reasonably cause physical injury to any person.	S t e p 1	S t e p 2	S t e p 3	S t e p 4	S t e p 5	S t e p 6	S t e p 7	S t e p 8
2.17	Leaving class without permission or not reporting to the designated area on time.	S t e p 1	S t e p 2	S t e p 3	S t e p 4	S t e p 5	S t e p 6	S t e p 7	S t e p 8
2.18	Skipping or cutting class or activity: A class cut occurs when a student is absent from class for more than 5 minutes without permission from the teacher or authorization from the administration to do so.	S t e p 1	S t e p 2	S t e p 3 - 8					
2.19	Vandalism (Less than \$50): The willful or malicious destruction, damage, or defacement of school property or property of others including the act of defacing with graffiti, keying or scratching a car, trashing a room, resulting in damages, causing or attempting to cause damage to school property, altering or attempting to alter school property and setting fire to or attempting to set fire to school property. (Mandatory: Restitution).	S t e p 1	S t e p 2	S t e p 3	S t e p 4	S t e p 5	S t e p 6	S t e p 7	S t e p 8
2.20	Providing False and/or Misleading Information: – Providing false information to a school employee including giving false student information data and concealment of information directly relating to school business. This includes, but is not limited to, failure to provide correct name, correct phone number or other pertinent data, forgery of school notes, re-admit slips, tardy slips, excuse blanks, report cards, hall passes, field trip forms, scholarship warnings, notes to or from parents/guardians, or any other related materials.	S t e p 1	S t e p 2	S t e p 3	S t e p 4	S t e p 5	S t e p 6	S t e p 7	S t e p 8
2.21	Use of - in employee's presence – vulgar, abusive, profane or ethnically offensive language, pictures or gestures.	S t e p 1	S t e p 2	S t e p 3	S t e p 4	S t e p 5	S t e p 6	S t e p 7	S t e p 8
2.22	Possession of Firearm Facsimiles – Possession, sale, or discharge of any facsimile, toy-type replica of a firearm or empty shell.	S t e p 1	S t e p 2	S t e p 3	S t e p 4	S t e p 5	S t e p 6	S t e p 7	S t e p 8
2.23	Encouraging Major Violations of Code of Conduct. Consequences contingent upon rules violated.	S t e p 1	S t e p 2	S t e p 3	S t e p 4	S t e p 5	S t e p 6	S t e p 7	S t e p 8

		St e p 1	St e p 2	St e p 3	St e p 4	St e p 5	St e p 6	St e p 7	St e p 8
2.24	Lewd, Indecent, or Offensive Behavior – Any behavior offensive to common propriety or decency, including, but not limited to, possession, distribution, or display of obscene or “hate” material, possession/display of electronic images or text, or similar behavior.								
2.25	Inciting or Participating in a Major Student Disorder - Leading, encouraging, and/or assisting in disruption which results in destruction or damage to property or cause personal injury.								
2.26	Public Display of Affection (PDA): Kissing, touching, inappropriate dancing, sitting on laps, prolonged hugging, close contact, or any suggestive contact that are in poor taste and show disrespect for others as interpreted by school personnel. (Mandatory: Parent Contact).								
2.27	Possession of Stolen and/or lost property with or without knowledge or not returning found items to the authorities.								
2.28	Cheating/Plagiarism: Willful or deliberate or unauthorized use of the work of another person for academic purposes, or unauthorized use of notes or other material or any form of communication in the completion of an academic assignment or test. In addition to disciplinary responses, the student may receive no credit for the assignment, test or exam.								
2.29	Mistreatment/misuse of school, personal or others’ properties. The willful or malicious act of misuse or mistreatment of property such as littering, wasteful use or unauthorized possession. (Mandatory: Restitution).								
2.30	Use or possession of Wireless Communication/Electronic Devices: Elementary students are prohibited from using or displaying mobile telephones/wireless communication devices on school property at any time. This rule also applies to digital cameras, PDAs, digital music devices, handheld tablet computers, e-readers, etc. (Mandatory: Parent Contact) (Step 1: Warning).								
2.31	Photography and Recording Devices- Audio or Video: Taking photographs or recording within the school building or at school-sponsored events (on- or off-campus) without expressed written permission from the Middlesex County Stem Charter School Administration. (Mandatory: Confiscation) (Step 1: Warning).								
2.32	Behavior that puts others safety at risk. All persons involved in provoking, committing, planning, participating, helping, advising, encouraging, or benefitting in the violation of a rule or code of conduct are parties to the violation and/or offence.								

Major Violations (Class III Offenses)

Class III infractions are major acts of misconduct. They include repeated misconduct acts from Class II; serious disruptions of school order; threats to the health, safety, and property of others; and other acts of serious misconduct. The misconduct must be reported right away to the school's Behavior Support Team, who may remove the student from the school or activity immediately.

Class	Infractions	R e s t i t u t i o n	IS S (1 d a y)	IS S (2 d a y s)	IS S (3 d a y s)	OS S (1 - 3 d a y s)	OS S (3 - 5 d a y s)	OS S (5 - 7 d a y s)	OS S (8 - 1 0 d a y s) / O W	OS S (1 0 d a y s) / E X P
3.01	AWOL: Leaving school grounds or the site of any school activity without permission.									
3.02	Technology tempering: Any use of technology for personal gain, profit, or illegal conduct, such as fraud, copyright infringement, downloading unauthorized files, pornography, hacking, or distributing viruses which result in disruption.									
3.03	Battery: Intentionally making physical contact of an insulting and provoking nature in an attempt to cause physical injury, threaten bodily harm, or behave in such a way as could reasonably cause physical injury to another person.									
3.04	Breaking and Entering: The unlawful and willful entry or attempted forcible entry of any school property or the personal property of students and school personnel.									
3.05	Destruction of Property/ Vandalism (More than \$50): The willful or malicious destruction of school system property or the property of others.									
3.06	Disrespect: Conduct or behavior that lacks regard, civility, politeness, and/or courteous consideration which goes beyond the bounds of acceptable student behavior. (More serious than Class II).									

3.07	Extortion: The willful or malicious threat of harm, injury, or violence to the person, property, or reputation of another with the intent to obtain money, information, services, items of material worth, or to cause fear.									
3.08	Fighting: Physical contact between two or more students which is harmful or disruptive. Self-defense is described as an action taken to block an attack by another person or to shield oneself from being hit by another person. Retaliating by hitting a person back is not self-defense and will be considered as fighting.									
3.09	Firecrackers/Fireworks: Unauthorized possession and/or igniting of fireworks or firecrackers on school system property, at a school function, or extracurricular/co-curricular activity.									
3.10	Gross Insubordination/ Blatant Defiance: Willful refusal to submit to or comply with authority; exhibiting contempt or open resistance to a direct order such as refusing to serve a disciplinary consequence.									
3.11	Illegal Organizations: Establishing or participating in a secret society on school property, at a school function, or at an extracurricular activity.									
3.12	Possession of Contraband Material: Possession, use, and/or distribution of materials or items, other than weapons or firearms, which are forbidden. The parent/guardian will make arrangements to pick up the object from the school, if applicable.									
3.13	Smoking and Other Use of Tobacco Products: The possession, use, distribution, or sale of tobacco products on school property, at a school function, or extracurricular/co-curricular activity.									
3.14	Stealing (\$50 to \$300): The taking of the property of another without the permission of the person. The taking, possession or distribution of school property without authorization.									
3.15	Trespassing: Unauthorized entry into school property (with or without intent to commit theft), a school function, or extracurricular/co-curricular activity and/or remaining after the administrator or designee has directed such person to leave that location.									
3.16	Possession of any instrument or object other than a firearm may be considered under this heading if there has been no threatening or intimidating display of the instrument or object.									

3.17	Other Major Infractions (Major infractions that do not fit within the other definitions): Mooning and sexual harassment which is any slur, innuendo, or other verbal or physical conduct reflecting on an individual's gender which has the purpose of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment.								
3.18	Threat/Intimidation: Any premeditated or repeated threat to cause physical harm to another person with or without the use of a weapon, whether made verbally, in writing, electronically, or by conduct or action, to kill another person or do any act of violence which may cause death and creates fear or apprehension in that person along with the individual having the capability to actually carry out the threat.								
3.19	Bullying/Harassment – Any unwanted and repeated written, verbal, electronic, or physical behavior, including threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing acts, by a student that is severe and pervasive and that creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile or offensive educational environment, cause discomfort or humiliation, or unreasonably interfere with the individual's school performance or participation. Severe and pervasive behavior will be determined by the principal. Prohibited acts include an act of violence, threat of violence, or harassment based on actual or perceived race, color, national origin, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion or other distinguishing characteristics of a student that is directed at one or more students or staff; substantially interferes with educational opportunities or educational programs of the targeted student(s); or adversely affects the ability of a student(s) to participate in or benefit from the schools' educational programs or activities by placing that student(s) in reasonable fear of emotional or physical harm, or because the conduct as perceived by the student(s) is objectively offensive.								
3.20	Other Serious Misconduct: Any other major act of misconduct which seriously disrupts the orderly operation of the school program, or any school activity or transportation services which threatens the health, safety or property of self or of others or behavior not specifically described above which substantially disrupts the orderly conduct of a school, school function or an extracurricular/co-curricular activity. This may include, but is not limited to, providing false/misleading information to staff members, profanity, use of gang-related signs or symbols, or language intended or reasonably calculated to insult and/or incite another person; repeated dress-code violations; misuse of electronic items or computers; or the activation of a fire alarm without reasonable cause which, in the discretion of the principal, was not the result of a willful or malicious act.								

3.21	Sexual Harassment – Any unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and/or other inappropriate verbal, written, electronic, or physical contact of a sexual nature. It includes, but is not limited to, sexually-oriented jokes, verbal/physical advances, touching, pinching, patting, sexually-oriented kidding, teasing, using language that has a double meaning and is sexually suggestive, and requests or demands for sexual involvement, accompanied by implied or explicit threats. Sexual offenses are prohibited against members of the same sex as well as the opposite sex.									
3.22	Directing Obscene, Profane, Offensive or Abusive language or Gestures to a School Employee – Any behavior offensive to common propriety or decency directed to a school employee including, but not limited to, any verbal, written, electronic, or physical conduct such as threats, bullying, slurs, innuendos, or harassment, which has the purpose or the effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment.									
3.23	Possession of a controlled object without intent to harm or use for personal protection.									
3.24	Entering in an unauthorized area without permission.									
3.25	Violation of the ISS Rules/Procedures.									
3.26	Creating or organizing a conspiracy of any kind with regard to the school and/or its' employees. Intentionally making false accusations that jeopardize the professional reputation, employment, or professional certification of a teacher or other member of the school staff.									
3.27	Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying: Any gesture, any written, verbal or physical act, or any electronic communication, whether it be a single incident or series of incidents, that is reasonably perceived as being motivated either by any actual or perceived characteristic that takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, on a school bus, or off school grounds that substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other students, and that a reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, will have the effect of physically or emotionally harming a student or damaging a student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm to his person or damage his property (Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act).									

4.02	Arson (Mandatory referral to an appropriate agency): The willful and/or malicious burning of or attempt to burn or destroy school property, contents in or on the property, or personal property of others.
4.03	Threats to Employees, Volunteers or Students: Any direct threat, by word or act, to do violence or harm to a school employee, volunteer or student which creates a fear that the threat could be carried out. Elementary: 1-10 Day OSS with hearing referral. Upon recommendation of a school or decision or hearing panel, a student may be transferred to another traditional school at the end of the disciplinary consequences. Transportation will be provided by family.
4.04	Battery of Employees, Volunteers, or Students: An actual or intentional touching or striking of a school employee, volunteer, or student against his/her will or intentionally causing bodily harm, which may include, but is not limited to, visible or significant injury such as swelling, bleeding, concussions, broken bones, sprains, etc. or where medical attention was sought for visible significant injury to an individual. A student shall not forcefully abduct, transport and/or detain a person against his/her will. In severe cases, the battery of a student may be the basis for expulsion. Elementary: 1-10 Day OSS with hearing referral for long-term suspension and/or expulsion. Upon recommendation of a school or decision or hearing panel, a student may be transferred to another traditional school at the end of the disciplinary consequences. Transportation will be provided by family.
4.05	Bomb Threats/Explosions: Any communication which has the effect of threatening an explosion to do malicious, destructive, or bodily harm to school system property at a school function or extracurricular/co-curricular activity, or to the person in or on that property or attending the function. This includes preparing, possessing, or igniting explosives, including unauthorized fireworks, on school property or at a school function or extracurricular/co-curricular activity.
4.06	Weapons/Dangerous Instruments: The possession, use, or control of any instrument or object, other than a firearm, which could be used to inflict harm on another person or to intimidate any person. Included in this category are objects such as BB guns or pellet guns, air soft guns, paintball guns and replicas of any gun or weapon, stun-gun, knives (including pocket knives), chains, pipes, razor blades, box cutter, any Bowie, Dirk, machete, hypodermic needle(s), sling shot, spear, sword, ice picks, other pointed instruments, nunchakus, brass knuckles, explosives, Chinese stars, billy clubs, tear gas guns, electrical/chemical weapons or devices, ammunitions, incendiary device. Also included is anything represented to be a firearm, if used in an intimidating manner toward another person. The possession of any weapon in violation of New Jersey Compilation of School Discipline Laws and Regulations will trigger the reporting requirements of the New Jersey Department of Education
4.07	Loaded/Unloaded Firearm: Any pupil who is convicted or adjudicated delinquent for possession of a firearm or a crime while armed with a firearm or found knowingly in possession of a firearm on any school property, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored function shall be immediately removed from the school's regular education program pending a hearing before the local board of education to remove the pupil from the regular education program for a period of not less than one calendar year subject to modification on a case-by-case basis by the chief school administrator (18A:37-8).
4.08	Robbery/Extortion: The taking or attempting to take anything of value under confrontational circumstances from the control, custody, or care of another person by force or threat of force or violence and/or putting the victim in fear.
4.10	Other: Any other intentional or wanton act which significantly harms or poses a realistic threat of serious harm to oneself or another person and/or which is clearly beyond the bounds of acceptable and tolerable student conduct in the community. This may include, hazing, hate crimes, bullying, and harassment or the possession of drug paraphernalia.
4.11	Drugs/Alcohol: Distribution/Selling/Buying: The transmission or distribution, buying, or selling of any alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs, narcotics, hallucinogens, amphetamines, barbiturates, marijuana, prescription medication, or any other substances that are listed under the New Jersey's drug-free zone law (A2762/S1866).

4.12	<p>Gang-Related Activity: Activities by any group of three or more students with a common name or common identifying signs, symbols, tattoos, graffiti or attire, which encourages, solicits, promotes, urges, counsels, furthers, advocates, condones, assists, causes, advises, procures, or abets any illegal or disruptive activity or behavior of any kind, whether on or off school campuses or school property. No student shall engage in any activity while participating in a gang which interferes with the orderly conduct of school activities, with discipline in the schools, or with the rights of other students or faculty members. No student shall hold him- or herself out as a member of a gang, [which may include, but is not limited to displaying gang-identified tattoos or other gang-related paraphernalia, or participating in creating or displaying gang-related graffiti. No student shall recruit or solicit membership in any gang or gang-related organization.</p>
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BUS CONDUCT

All Code of Conduct rules apply on school-provided transportation and at school bus stops. Students may not violate any direction of the school bus driver. Students may not disrupt the environment of the bus or bus stop in any manner, including but not limited to: loud or boisterous behavior, using emergency exits improperly, riding an unauthorized bus, and disembarking at an unauthorized stop. Students shall follow all student behavior policies and regulations while at the bus stop and on school-provided transportation, including, but not limited to, the prohibitions on physical violence, bullying, assault, battery, disrespectful conduct and other unruly behavior.

Students will receive consequences for any offense(s), as specified in this Student Code of Conduct, and may also be suspended from the bus for a specified time.

Bus Conduct Expectations:

1. Students must keep all body parts inside the bus at all times.
2. No object may be thrown into, within, out of, or at the bus.
3. No student may act in any manner that interferes with the bus driver's ability to safely drive the bus or another student's ability to ride the bus without harassing or loud distractions.
4. Students must remain seated at all times, unless directed by the bus driver.
5. Students must remain silent at all railroad crossings.
6. Emergency doors and windows are to be used only at the direction on the bus driver.
7. Students may not use any electronic devices during the operation of the school bus, including but not limited to: cell phones, pagers, audible radios, tape or compact disc players without headphones; or any other electronic device that may interfere with the bus's communication equipment or the driver's operation of the school bus. Students may not use any electronic device to video or audio record while on school-provided transportation vehicles.
8. Students may not use mirrors, lasers, flashing lights, flash cameras, or any other lights or reflective surfaces, in a manner, which might interfere with the operation of the school bus.
9. Students may not eat, drink, or chew gum on the bus.
10. Students will not commit physical or sexual offenses against students or employees on the school bus.

BUS MISCONDUCT CONSEQUENCES

Students may be denied bus privileges when behavior is inappropriate. Students must abide by the above rules and regulations in order to ensure safe and orderly bus transportation. Students receiving four or more bus conduct reports or students who engage in severe bus misconduct, may be suspended from the bus for 1 to 10 days, or be recommended to the MCSCS School Board for bus expulsion. Parents will be notified in writing of student bus violations. Failure to abide by these safety procedures will result in the following sequence of events:

- **First Bus Referral** – Student will receive consequences as determined by the school administration. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) will be notified in writing and a parent conference may be requested.
- **Second Bus Referral** – Student may be suspended from riding the bus for one (1) to three (3) days. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) will be notified in writing and a parent conference may be requested.
- **Third Bus Referral** – Student may be suspended from riding the bus for three (3) to five (5) days. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) will be notified in writing and a parent conference may be requested.
- **Fourth Bus Referral** – Student may be suspended from riding the bus for six (6) to ten (10) days. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) will be notified in writing and a parent conference may be requested.

- **Fifth Bus Referral** – Student may be suspended from riding the bus for ten (10) days in addition to consequences determined by the New Jersey Department of Education and may be referred to a Disciplinary Tribunal Hearing. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) will be notified in writing and a parent conference may be requested with the school official or administrator, bus driver, and bus supervisor.

Note: When students are suspended from the bus, they are not allowed to travel on any school bus during the suspension. This includes field trips. During bus suspensions, students are eligible to attend classes. Parent/guardian will be contacted via phone or mail for each bus referral. If necessary, appropriate law enforcement agencies will be contacted. Because of the additional safety factors and for the protection of the driver and students on the bus, principal or designee has the authority to impose immediate suspension from the school bus for serious offenses as well as minor violations. Parents will be called to be notified of the suspension.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Keep: Middlesex County Stem Charter School uses a **School-wide Classroom Management Plan** in which all faculty and staff work in a cooperative systemic effort to encourage a successful learning environment. This plan is designed to ensure an effective learning atmosphere for all students and to curtail any minor inappropriate behaviors that disrupt the learning environment.

The structure of the Classroom Management Plan consists of four main parts:

- **Rules** - the expected behaviors for all students.
- **Consequences** – what the student chooses to accept if a rule is broken.
- **Rewards** - what the student receives for appropriate behavior.
- **Commendations** – what the student receives for exceptional behavior.

Please refer to your child’s classroom teacher’s management plan that was given to you at the beginning of the school year.

GENERAL BEHAVIOR GUIDELINES

School-wide Rules:

1. Respect yourself and others.
2. Follow directions the first time.
3. Be prepared for each class.
4. Keep yourself to yourself.
5. Transition quickly and quietly.

Cafeteria Rules:

1. No loitering in the cafeteria.
2. Push chairs back after eating.
3. Keep tables, chairs, and floors clean.
4. Talk in a normal voice (classroom voice).
5. No backpacks allowed in the cafeteria during lunch.
6. Dispose of trays, trash, and debris in trashcans.
7. Keep hands, feet, personal belongings, and food to yourself.
8. Keep cafeteria lines orderly: no pushing, running, or cutting in line.
9. Students who mutilate or deface school property will be fined an amount necessary to cover the cost of restoring the damaged property, as well as receiving appropriate disciplinary action.

School Assemblies

School assemblies are held for the benefit of the students and the faculty. Courtesy will be shown to those in charge of, and participating in the program. Misbehaving students will be removed and may lose their privilege to attend assemblies in the future.

Acceptable Use of Technology Equipment in Computer Labs, Media Center, or Laptop Carts

Students should respect all of the technological equipment. Any mishandling or tampering with computers, SMART Boards, or systems may result in losing computer privileges at school. In addition, disciplinary action, including suspension, may occur for

situations considered serious by the school administration. Any damage, requiring repair to hardware or software will result in financial charges being assessed. Students shall not alter or attempt to alter school or private property, including technology hardware and software. Students may not bring computer software to campus to be used on school computers without prior approval of the school administration. Students are not allowed to Instant Message, Email, write BLOGs, visit social websites or log onto personal websites on school computers. Students should not bring food items or beverages into the computer classroom setting.

In the Halls, Restrooms, Media Center

Students are not permitted in the halls during class periods unless they are accompanied by a teacher or have a hall pass from an authorized staff member. Students who are found in the halls without passes will be subject to disciplinary action. Hallways and lavatories are areas used by all members of Middlesex County Stem Charter School. Because everyone uses these areas, the following are rules of conduct that all students must follow, and conduct points will be issued when they are broken.

1. Do not roughhouse, push, or wrestle.
2. You may not eat or drink in halls and restrooms.
3. You may not run in the halls, lunchroom, and restrooms.
4. Do not leave belongings on the floor.
5. You must do your part to keep these areas clean and safe.
6. You may not use any profane or vulgar language while in these areas.
7. You may not loiter in the halls, lunchroom, restrooms, or media center.
8. Make sure you clean up after yourself and appropriately dispose of all trash.
9. Report any leaks, spills, or other problems in the restrooms to a teacher or the office.
10. You may not yell, scream, bang on doors, or make excessive noise while in these areas.

Emergency Drills

Fire, intruder, and tornado drills are held at different intervals throughout the school year. Students must follow their teachers' instructions and go to designated areas as quickly as possible. Students must not talk, run, or push. A signal bell or announcement will be given for returning to class.

CHARACTER EDUCATION

An important component in a successful discipline system at the elementary level is Character Education. Middlesex County Stem Charter School strives to educate students on the expectations and consequences regarding behavior choices.

Character Education

Monthly Character Education themes are presented in the Middlesex County Stem Charter School weekly newsletter and introduced during assemblies. Teachers will incorporate the Character Education theme into their daily lessons.

Anti-Bullying Campaign

Middlesex County Stem Charter School has a zero-tolerance policy for bullying. Our goal is to:

1. Educate students on the characteristics of bullying and offer students the opportunity to avoid demonstrating behaviors of a bully.
2. Arm students with strategies, including a secure sense of self-esteem, needed to combat bullying in the event they are subjected to a bully.
3. Apply the firm and consistent discipline consequences to students bullying any other classmate.

Middlesex County Stem Charter School will participate in the annual "Anti-Bullying Week" to combat bullying and incorporate Anti-Bullying curriculum in our health class.

Positive Behavior Recognition

In addition to the character education provided, a school-wide positive behavior plan will be used to encourage good behavior and recognize students' efforts in doing the right thing. Students can earn a Cougar Coin for making good behavior choices in school. Every Friday, one winner is picked from each grade and is celebrated. Any staff member can give out a coin to a student.

CONFERENCES

Parents and teachers should maintain a good working relationship to help students get the best possible education. Conferences are good communication tools. Our most important form of communication is the parent-teacher conference. Parent/teacher conferences are scheduled at least once per semester – check the school calendar for the specific date. Additional conferences may be requested at any time during the school year. If you would like to have a conference with any staff member, please contact the school and arrangements will be made.

GRADING SCALES

Kindergarten - Grade Two	Grades Three – Five		
E- Exceeding standards (student has achieved mastery) 90 and Above	A+ 98-100	A 93-97	A- 89-92
P- Proficient in standards (student is meeting grade level expectations) 80-89	B+ 87-88	B 83-86	B- 80-82
S- Satisfactory in standards (student is approaching grade level expectations) 70-79	C+ 77-79	C 73-76	C- 70-72
N- Needs Improvement (student is below grade level expectations) 60-69	D + 67-69	D 65-66	
NG-No Grade (student needs support services)	F 0-64		

GRADING SYSTEM & REPORTING

Students receive progress reports four times per year and report cards at the end of each quarter (nine weeks). Parents should contact their child's teacher if there are any questions concerning grades recorded or information contained on the child's report card. The MCSCS Board, in compliance with Common Core and State Standards, approves the grading scale.

School Information System

Parents can see their children's academic progress, daily homework and assignments, projects, discipline records and attendance records online through School Information System (SIS database). At the beginning of each school year, parents will be provided a username and password, which will provide access to ONLY their student's records. We strongly encourage parents to visit the School Information System to stay informed of their student's grades, attendance, discipline, classwork, class schedule and standardized test history.

HOMEWORK POLICY

Homework is an essential part of the successful educational program at Middlesex County Stem Charter School Charter School. Doing homework will help students develop many valuable skills such as good study habits, time management, responsibility, and perseverance. Teachers assign homework that will foster individual learning and growth and that is appropriate for the subject area. It is each student's responsibility to complete and turn in homework on time. If students or their parents have questions about homework, immediately contact the teacher who assigned it. Teacher's email is available on the course syllabus. All homework needs to be in the student's handwriting.

PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING

Cheating and plagiarism are dishonest choices made by students to misrepresent the student's true knowledge of the subject material (cheating) or misrepresenting information as their own ideas/concepts/words by not giving proper credit to the original source (plagiarism).

All papers or projects submitted at MCSCS are required to be in the student's own words unless stated in writing by the teacher otherwise. Therefore, any copying of information from the Internet or any other source (i.e. "cutting & pasting", etc.) is

considered plagiarism. However, drawings and/or pictures may be taken from an Internet or other source as long as they are properly cited in the document.

Cheating and plagiarism demonstrate a deliberate disregard for the educational program and are considered a serious matter. Students who cheat or plagiarize will immediately be given a zero (0) on the assignment/project and referred to the administration using a **Disciplinary Referral Form** for additional disciplinary consequences.

PROMOTION

A student in the elementary grades will be promoted to the next succeeding grade level when he/she has completed the course requirements at the presently assigned grade; has achieved the instructional objectives set for the present grade; has demonstrated the proficiencies required for movement into the educational program of the next grade; and has demonstrated the degree of social, emotional, and physical maturation necessary for a successful learning experience in the next grade.

RECOGNITION

Students are recognized and rewarded for accomplishments. Outstanding student achievement will be recognized once a semester with principal's Honor Roll, Honor Roll, Achievement Award and Perfect Attendance (see Attendance section above) Awards.

Grade	Award	Requirement
K-2	Achievement	Receive 'E' and 'P'
3-5	Principals Honor Roll	All A's
	Honor Roll	All A's and B's
K-5	Perfect Attendance	No absences, tardies or early dismissals unless for a documented medical reason or family emergency

TEXTBOOKS

Textbooks for pupils are furnished by Middlesex County Stem Charter School Charter School. Restitution for lost and/or damaged textbooks or related materials and supplies will be required BEFORE a second text or additional materials will be made available to a student. Students who owe money for lost or damaged texts or materials will be permitted to use a text during classroom instruction; however, they will not be permitted to take the text or materials home. Report cards may also be withheld until textbooks fees are collected. Students withdrawing from Middlesex County Stem Charter School prior to the end of the school year must return all furnished books and materials prior to leaving or pay the replacement cost for each unreturned item.

Students who report to class without their textbook (or workbook) as required will be given a **conduct point for each day they do not bring their book to class.** Should the book be determined as lost, parents are expected to pay for the lost textbook/workbook to avoid additional **conduct points** being assigned.

In most subjects, Online Textbook resources will be available. In these cases, there is no need for students to take any text book from the classroom, thus minimizing the risk of lost/forgotten books, as well as reducing the burden of heavy supplies in book bags.

DRESS CODE

Students are expected to wear the Middlesex County Stem Charter School uniform at all times and to dress and groom in such a manner as to reflect neatness, cleanliness, and safety. All students should dress appropriately so there is no disruption or interference with the educational environment or the orderly operation of the school. The principal or other duly authorized school official shall determine whether any particular mode of dress, grooming, and accessories is in violation of the spirit and/or the intent of the school's dress-code policy. Students and parents are expected to honor the uniform code so that valuable school time is not spent examining student attire to determine appropriateness. **Students are not permitted to change out of their uniforms during or after school unless participating in or attending an after-school activity that requires non-uniform clothing.**

Students who violate the uniform code will be allowed to call home for an appropriate change of clothing after obtaining administrator approval. We will make every effort to notify the parent of the violation, so that it can be addressed in a timely manner. **Inappropriate attire jeopardizes the instructional climate and therefore, will not be tolerated.**

GUIDELINES FOR CLARIFICATION ARE AS FOLLOWS:

1. Uniform Code:

- a. Students must be in complete uniform when they arrive to school. All shirts must be tucked in Physical Education shorts or slacks. Belts (grades 3-5) must be worn with all slacks. Uniforms are expected to remain intact and appropriately worn throughout the entire day at school.
- b. Students must remain in full uniform until they leave school. Shirts must remain tucked in – even after school, until they leave the school campus.
- c. Students who ride the bus must be in complete uniform when they get on the bus at the bus stop. Since students must be in complete uniform when they arrive, and they are not allowed to change clothes on the bus, they must already be in complete uniform as they get on the bus.

2. Shoes:

- a. Shoes must be closed toe and closed back, only solid black or solid brown in color, or athletic shoes (preferred for safety). Shoes must be worn at all times.
- b. The emphasis regarding shoes is safety – for that reason, all shoelaces must be tied properly, all buckles fastened, all straps must be secured– nothing may dangle or drag from the shoe. Slippers or thin soled shoes, flip-flops, sandals, or open-toed shoes are not permitted.
- c. Athletic shoes must be worn on Physical Education days.
- d. Boots, Uggs, Crocs, Clogs and high-heeled shoes are not permitted - Heels on shoes may not be higher than one (1) inch. Roller shoes, “wheelies” or shoes with wheels or lights are not permitted.

3. Slacks and Shorts:

- a. Slacks must be khaki. All slacks must have belt loops, and a belt must be worn through all the loops and fastened appropriately. Front pockets must be side seam pockets and back pockets must be sewn inside the slack– no outside pockets, patch pockets, nor are additional pockets permitted. Slacks may not have rivets or brads, split seams at the bottom of the legs, nor flaps on the pockets. Material may not be suede or corduroy – it must be 100% cotton or a cotton/polyester blend that is wrinkle resistant.
- b. Slacks or Physical Education (P.E.) shorts must be worn properly at the waist and not sag below the top of the hips. Slacks or P.E. shorts may not be rolled up or folded up. P.E. shorts must be no shorter than two inches above the top of the knee when standing. Capri style pants are not acceptable. Slacks or P.E. shorts must not fit too snugly.
- c. Athletic shorts are not permitted. Athletic type shorts, such as those used for biking, running, and basketball are not permitted. The only type of shorts students are allowed to wear are the school's uniform P.E. shorts which can only be worn on designated Physical Education day(s).

4. Top Options:

- a. Formal shirts must be burgundy collar shirt. All shirts must be tucked in at all times, so the entire belt is visible (grades 3-5). Shirts must be in good condition, without holes and tears. Shirt collars and sleeves must remain down.
- b. T-Shirts must not be worn with the exception of physical education class.
- c. Only school logo shirts are accepted.

5. Accessories:

- a. Belts (Grades 3-5) must be leather, braided leather, or fabric in the solid colors of navy, black or brown. Grommets, brads, or excessive ornamentation on the belt is not permitted. Belts are required to be worn properly with all slacks– this means that the belt must go through all the belt loops on the slacks, be properly fastened or buckled, and the “end” of the belt must not be allowed to hang down (it must also go through the loops if there is excess). The belt must also be tightened enough to prohibit the student’s slacks from sagging below the hips.
- b. Socks may only be in solid school colors of red, navy blue, or white. Fishnet or other patterned stockings or hose are not permitted. Leg warmers are not permitted.

- c. Headgear. Hats, caps, du-rags, sweatbands, cloth headbands and other headgear may not be worn in the building.
- d. Outerwear. Windbreakers, jean jackets, sweatshirts with or without hoods, coats, or ski jackets may not be worn during school hours. The school sweater and/or jacket may be worn during school hours.

Miscellaneous Guidelines:

- a. Clothing should be neat and clean.
- b. Clothing may not be worn inside out or backwards.
- c. Undergarments must not be exposed.
- d. Hair paint, face paint, body paint, and tattoos are inappropriate for school and not permitted.
- e. Athletic outfits are not permitted in the school building, except on dress-down days.
- f. Cosmetics and/or make-up are not appropriate in elementary school and should not be worn.
- g. Clothing with rips, tears, holes, or frayed edges are considered inappropriate for school.
- h. Jewelry and accessories should be appropriate for school and not attract undue attention or pose a safety risk. Piercings other than earrings are prohibited.
- i. Extreme hairstyles are not permitted (examples: Mohawk cuts, hair coloring other than standard frosting or natural highlighting) and should not attract undue attention.
- j. Hats, caps, curlers, scarves, bandanas, doo-rags, picks, combs, sweatbands, chains, sunglasses, tennis skirts, gloves, arm warmers, and coats are not to be worn during school hours.
- k. Exemptions may be granted for religious or cultural purposes, if approved in advance by administration.
- l. Clothing that is revealing, such as, tank tops, low-cut blouses or halter tops, mesh shirts, or shirts exposing the midriff are not to be worn to school. Skirts or dresses are allowed to be worn on non-uniform days; however, students must wear leggings underneath. Sleeveless shirts are not allowed. (Mainly applies to non-uniform days at school).
- m. Long-sleeve shirts are permitted to be worn under the short-sleeve school uniform. Only solid white, black, navy blue, and burgundy are allowed. If the student needs the extra warmth, long-sleeve uniform shirts are available.
- n. All T-shirts worn on dress-down days must be in good taste (no suggestive wording or illustrations or advertisements for items which are illegal for elementary school students - i.e., alcohol and tobacco products, etc.). (Mainly applies to non-uniform days at school).
- o. The Middlesex County Stem Charter School uniform includes an optional sweater or zippered fleece (no hood) for those students who need to have additional layers to remain warm.

SERVICES FOR STUDENTS

BEFORE- AND AFTER-SCHOOL SUPERVISION OF STUDENTS

Teachers arrive at 7:30 AM. Teachers use the time between 7:30 AM and 7:50 AM to prepare for the school day and supervise students therefore they are not free to meet with parents during this time. If you have concerns about your child's performance, please schedule a conference with the teacher via e-mail.

Students should not remain in the building after 3:15 PM unless they are registered in the aftercare program.

COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN SCHOOL & HOME

Parents may communicate directly with the school's staff members via email, voice mail, written request, Class Dojo or by the Student Information System.

An electronic copy of the newsletter will be sent home weekly via email announcing upcoming school activities and events.

COUNSELING SERVICES

Middlesex County Stem Charter School Elementary School offers counseling services. The school counselor or his/her designee can help you plan and succeed in your elementary school program and help you look ahead to middle school, high school and college. The school counselor can also help with personal issues and concerns. Life events and changes can severely impact a student's performance in school. Please let the counselor know if any such situation arises, so that the teachers can be made aware, and supports can be put in place to help your child. To see the school counselor, make an appointment in advance unless it is an emergency. Parents may call the office to arrange an appointment with a counselor.

FIELD TRIPS

Field Trips offer exciting ways to learn. Middlesex County Stem Charter School students will have the opportunity to go on field trips at various times throughout the school year. Grade level and/or team sponsored day field trips are offered to most students. A limited number of spaces are available for parent chaperones. Information on chaperoning field trips is included on the student's permission slip. **Students who have received an out-of-school suspension (OSS) during the school year, will not be eligible to participate in any field trips for the rest of the school year and any fees or deposits paid earlier are non-refundable.** In addition, any student who has demonstrated the inability to follow rules may be prohibited from participating - this determination will be made by the administration on an individual basis. Any fees or deposits paid earlier are non-refundable. For all field trips, students will be expected to follow these rules:

- You must abide by the Middlesex County Stem Charter School Code of Conduct and Discipline Plan while on the field trip.
- You must follow the Middlesex County Stem Charter School Dress Code, wearing the "burgundy and khaki" uniform unless otherwise specified.
- You must bring to school the **Field Trip Permission Slip**, signed by your parents or guardian, by the specified date. **PHONE CALL PERMISSION OR EMAIL WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.**
- Parents who wish to volunteer on field trips must complete the mandatory volunteer training prior to the field trip.
 - **Chaperones:** In order to become a chaperone for a field trip, the parent/guardian must have a Criminal History Record Check done prior to the trip. Before volunteering for a trip, approval letter must be submitted. Parents must also participate in HIB training.
 - *Criminal History Check Procedures:*
 1. Go to the website, <http://www.njgov/education/educators/crimhist> to pay the fees and fill out the fingerprint form.
 2. Once the form is filled out, print it and either schedule an appointment online or call to schedule an appointment.
 3. Bring the receipt to the administrative assistance showing that fingerprinting has been completed.
 4. Once approval letter has been received, bring that to the school personnel who is in charge. If approval letter is not received in three to four weeks, call 609-292-0507 to inquire as to the status of the letter.
 5. Parents/guardians may only chaperone on a trip once the approval letter has been brought to the administrative assistant.
 6. The date on the approval letter must be within a year of the field trip date in order to volunteer as a chaperone.
 7. Chaperones may only ride the bus if an approval letter has been submitted.

LUNCH / NUTRITION PROGRAM

Students may purchase a nutritious lunch in the school cafeteria or may bring their lunch from home. The cost and payment options for student lunch is provided on the school website and at Orientation Day. When sending lunches from home, please be sure to pack a nutritionally balanced lunch for your child. Do not send fast-food or soda to school for lunch. Foods high in sugar, such as candy, are not appropriate for school. Middlesex County Stem Charter School adheres to a Wellness Policy that discourages serving foods to children that have little or no nutritional value. Do not send glass containers or glass water bottles with your child to school.

Students applying for free or reduced lunch must complete the application form provided at Orientation Day which is also available on the school website and in the front office. Once applications are submitted, you will be contacted by the administration.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSINGS

When school is closed because of storms or other emergencies, or when school has a delayed opening, the information will be broadcast on NJ Channel 12 News and NJ 101.5 FM radio. An automatic broadcast message will also be sent to the parent's/guardian's phone. Parents/guardians may call 1-855-955 8500 if the full message is not received. (Please use the same phone where the message was received.) Please check the Middlesex County Stem Charter School website, www.cjcollegeprep.org, for emergency school closings. School closing/delayed opening announcements will begin no later than 6:00 A.M. Please continue to listen to the radio or TV in the event the 90-minute delay changes to a school closing due to deteriorating weather conditions.

Middlesex County Stem Charter School has a detailed school safety plan which is reviewed and updated every year. In the event that these plans are needed, the media will notify parents.

In the event an emergency evacuation from the school campus becomes necessary, students and staff will be safely moved to our designated off site location and students would be released to parents at this alternate site.

Illness, Injury, & Medication Policies

MCSCS will have a school nurse or first-aid-trained-professional available to discuss or assist with medical problems or concerns. Unless you are ill, you must make an appointment in advance to visit school nurse during an academic period.

Illness/Injury

Sick students should not be sent to school, consult with their healthcare provider for proper treatment. Students need to stay home until they are symptom free for a day before returning to school. This will prevent spreading illness to others. The following is required upon the student's return:

1. Doctor's visit note(s) to excuse for absence(s) - Main office
2. Clearance note for all infectious conditions and severe injury - Nurse

Visit the nurse first for assessment before attending classes. Conditions which students must stay home until they are symptom free for a day include: vomiting, diarrhea, fever (should not return until they have been fever free for a day without fever-reducing medicine), conjunctivitis, uncontrollable coughing and sneezing, severe pain, earaches, sore throat, fatigue, suppurating lesions or sores. In addition, MCSCS, shall exclude students based on recommendations by the New Jersey Department of Health, New Jersey Department of Education and Center for Disease Control and Prevention. Do not medicate sick students and send them to school.

Illness or Injury During the School Day: Please follow these three rules if you become ill or are injured during the school day.

1. Report to the nurse's office. If the nurse is not available, you should report to the Main Office.
2. If you do not inform the office and simply miss class, it is an unexcused absence.
3. Do not just leave the building. Always report to the main office to seek assistance.

Medication Policy

Medication should not be brought to school unless it is essential to the health of the student. If a student must take medicine at school, these procedures must be followed:

- The medication to be administered by designated school personnel must be sent directly from the pharmacy or physician's office or brought to school by the student's parent/guardian.
- The school must receive a Medication Administration Directions Form signed by the student's physician and parent/guardian.
 - The following information must be clearly printed on the medication container:
 1. Student's Name
 2. Name of the medication
 3. Dosage
 4. Time the medication must be taken/# of times per day.
 - Bring in only the amount of medication that is needed for a school day.
 - In the case of prolonged need, send in the amount for a clearly specified period such as one week or one month. Extra medication will not be sent home with a student.
 - All medication will be kept in a secure location in the nurse's office.
 - Students are not allowed to carry any medication with them to school. This includes, ibuprofen, Aspirin, Tylenol, and other patent drugs.
 - Students may carry and administer their medication if these two conditions are met:
 1. It is warranted by a potentially life-threatening condition and advised by their physician and
 2. A Medication Self-Administration Form is on file in the office signed by the student's parent, physician.

GENERAL INFORMATION

MEDIA CENTER

The media center is a resource center for all print and non-print materials. Media center services offered to students include assistance with book selection and research assignments as well as story time and Accelerated Reader and STAR testing sessions. Students must comply with all media center rules, including, but not limited to, no games on the computers and computers need to be used for research assignments only. Repeated violations of media center rules may result in losing media center privileges.

SCHOOL PICTURES

A contracted photographer will photograph students in the school during the fall and spring semesters. Fall photos will also be used for identification purposes and for the school yearbook. Parents will be offered a variety of picture packages to purchase, if desired.

SCHOOL-SPONSORED ACTIVITIES

From time to time, MCSCS administration may organize or sponsor off-campus activities. Unless otherwise specified by the administration, all school rules are in effect in any such school-sponsored activity. Eligibility to participate in such programs and specific policies will be determined and announced by the administration as needed.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Due to the safety of all students, food is not permitted during birthday celebration. Parent/Guardian must reach out to the child's teacher 3 days prior to the day of celebration. A parent/guardian may come to the child's classroom and read a book in celebration of the student's birthday. Goodie bags are accepted; however, no edible content may be inside the bag. If any type of edible content is found in the bag, the goodie bags will be returned to the parent/guardian.

SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

Middlesex County Stem Charter School employs a certified Special Education Resource Teacher to provide consultation services to classroom teachers who serve special education students, as needed. Middlesex County Stem Charter School shall comply with federal and state law to ensure that all students with disabilities will be provided with a free appropriate public education (FAPE).

INTERVENTION AND REFERRAL SERVICE (I&RS)

The purpose of the I&RS is to identify and plan alternative instructional strategies for students who are experiencing academic, social, or behavioral problems. The I&RS is a team consisting of the referring teacher, the chairperson, and at least one other participant. Parents are invited to attend the I&RS process regarding their child. The I&RS process provides problem-solving strategies and instructional support for teachers and parents. Questions concerning the referral process should be referred to an administrator.

TRANSPORTATION TO AND FROM SCHOOL

School Buses

Transportation is provided for students living in a limited area designated by the Transportation Department. Students should understand that riding the bus is a privilege contingent upon proper and courteous conduct. Students are expected to follow the instructions of the driver and local school. **Any student failing to do so may be denied the privilege of riding the bus.** Students may not ride buses other than the one to which they are assigned, and they must get on and off the bus at their regularly scheduled stop.

When making arrangements for after-school get-togethers, students who are not eligible to ride the bus may not use bus transportation for this purpose – these events must be arranged using carpools. Middlesex County Stem Charter School administration cannot approve any bus riders who have not been approved and assigned by the transportation department. Parents may contact their district's transportation department.

- Franklin-732-246-3596
- Plainfield-908-731-4352
- North Brunswick-732-289-3026
- New Brunswick-732-745-5300

Car Riders

Students who are transported in cars should be dropped off in the designated area in front of the school. When picking a student up at dismissal time, please follow the designated carpool policies established by the Middlesex County Stem Charter School administration. The parent pick-up area is a NO CELL PHONE region and drivers should pay full attention to the carpool process. Your cooperation with Middlesex County Stem Charter School pick-up procedures is expected in order to make arrival/dismissal as **safe** and **efficient** as possible.

Bicycles, Skateboards, Roller Blades, and Scooters

Bicycles, skateboards, roller blades, and/or scooters, are not permitted on school property.

Changes in Transportation

In the event a student must deviate from their usual transportation arrangement (for instance a bus rider needs to be picked up by a parent) the parent must log into Genesis and complete the "add daily pickup release" form no later than 12PM to be approved for a dismissal change. Please identify who the child's teacher is, who is approved to pick up the child, and a phone number to contact the parent/guardian of the child. If no form is filled out by 12PM of the dismissal change day, the school will follow the information on the student's transportation badge for his/her transportation home.

If a student is to be picked up, the person picking up the child must be an approved guardian. Approved guardians are listed on the child's Genesis account. If the adult is not listed on the child's Genesis account, the child will not be released to the adult.

TUTORING

The school administration identifies the students who receive tutoring services. Middlesex County Stem Charter School offers free tutoring. Each teacher offers two days of tutoring each week during the last period of the school day. Students in grades K-3 are selected for tutoring based on the teacher and tutoring overrides any club that is offered that day. Students may NOT attend the tutoring session of any teacher other than their own, unless approved by administration. Students in grades K-3 have the opportunity of attending tutoring based on the, discretion of the classroom teacher, two days a week. Students in grades 4 and 5 may attend the tutoring sessions of each of their teachers, for a total of five tutoring days a week. It is strongly advised that students take advantage of this benefit if they are struggling in any subject area.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Official announcements are provided on our website – www.cjcollegeprep.org - and in our weekly newsletter. As a common practice, announcements made by the administration, which affect the school community, are made through these two communication devices. Middlesex County Stem Charter School encourages parent(s)/guardian(s) to check our website on a regular (daily) basis. The Board, administration, Teachers and Staff at Middlesex County Stem Charter School are dedicated to keeping our community informed.

BOOKBAGS, BACKPACKS, PURSES, and LUNCHBOXES

Students may use a book-bag/backpack/purse to transport school materials necessary for their learning experience to and from school. During the school day, however, Middlesex County Stem Charter School requires that all book bags remain in the student cubby, on the wall hook, or in the designated classroom location. Bags may not be worn or carried during the school day.

NO ROLLING BOOK BAGS. Book bags with wheels created a hazard in the classroom and in the hallways for the entire student body, as well as the staff.

Lunchboxes should have a zipper and should be kept in the designated classroom location except during lunchtime.

Be sure Student Name is written on all bags.

CELL PHONES/ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Elementary students are **prohibited** from using or displaying mobile telephones on school property. No such devices may be used at any time. Mobile phones **may not** be used during the school day to take photographs, listen to music, or to send or receive text messages. Students who are found in possession of a mobile telephone shall have the device confiscated and given to the school administrator. Confiscated devices will be returned directly to the parent/guardian, only.

If a parent/guardian cannot pick them up, items may also be shipped to a home address provided that the shipping charges are prepaid by the parent. This rule applies, but is not limited to other electronic devices, such as digital cameras, PDAs, handheld tablet computers, digital music devices, e-readers, etc.

Should there be additional offense(s), the student also will be given a **Disciplinary Referral Form** for improper use or possession of cell phones.

CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES

Smoking and Other Use of Tobacco Products: The possession, use, distribution, or sale of tobacco products on school property, including the parking lot, at school functions, or extracurricular is strictly forbidden.

Drinking and Other Use of Alcoholic Beverages: The possession, use, distribution or sale of alcohol products on school property, at a school function, or extracurricular activity is strictly forbidden. If the user of such substance is a minor, local police authority will be contacted.

CORRECTIONS AND/OR MODIFICATIONS TO THIS HANDBOOK

Middlesex County Stem Charter School reserves the right to make changes or modifications to this handbook as needed throughout the school year. Changes or modifications made during the school year will be announced in the weekly newsletter. The latest version will always be available on our website at www.cjcollegeprep.org.

DEFINITIONS AND/OR INTERPRETATIONS USED IN THIS HANDBOOK

For purposes of clarity, many terms and situations have been defined or explained in an effort to explicitly determine the exact meaning or context. The Middlesex County Stem Charter School administration will determine and apply specific definitions

and interpretations where necessary to provide maximum security, safety and educational opportunities for Middlesex County Stem Charter School students. No other definition or interpretation, nor any other source may be used or applied to terms or situations described within this handbook.

DESKS/CUBBIES

Each student will be assigned a desk and/or a cubby for his/her individual use at Middlesex County Stem Charter School. All desks and cubbies are for storing books, coats, and personal items necessary for school. Students should not bring valuable items from home. Middlesex County Stem Charter School will not be liable for personal items brought to school. To keep school supplies safe, we strongly advise you to write your name on all belongings in permanent marker. Please remember that your desk is school property and remains at all times under the control of the school. You, however, have full responsibility for the neatness and security of your desk and what is in it. School officials may make inspections. No item considered dangerous by the administration may be kept in the desks and will be removed if found there. This includes glass or any other objects that may be potentially dangerous.

Students attending Middlesex County Stem Charter School should not expect privacy in regard to the contents of their desks, cubbies, or other school property.

EMERGENCY DRILLS

Regular emergency preparedness drills will be held throughout the school year so that students will be trained to act properly in an emergency. These drills will include fire, lock down, and other crisis emergency drills. A comprehensive emergency preparedness plan is on file in the office.

FORGOTTEN ITEMS FROM HOME

Parents/guardians may leave forgotten items such as lunches or instruments on the 'pick up' table in the front office area. Students will be notified to come to the front office to retrieve the item.

LOST and FOUND

Middlesex County Stem Charter School maintains a Lost and Found for unclaimed items. Personal items that are found should be placed in the Lost and Found, unless it has a significant value. Items with significant value should be turned in to the front office. Unclaimed items will be donated to charity every month after students and parents are informed about the deadlines to check Lost and Found items. To avoid loss of personal items, please write students' names on all supplies, lunchboxes and fleece jackets in permanent ink.

MISSING ITEMS

When an item is missing, students should report the missing item to the assistant principal. Should the owner find the item themselves or it be returned directly to them, they should notify the assistant principal as soon as the item has been located. To ease administration's ability to find the owners of lost items, please put student's name on all personal items in permanent ink.

PARENT PARTICIPATION

There are a number of opportunities at Middlesex County Stem Charter School for which a parent can volunteer. Please contact the PTSO and become a member. More information can be found on the school website. (www.cjcollegeprep.org)

Any parent who wishes to volunteer in the classroom, on fieldtrips, or around the school must complete the mandatory background check and HIB training each school year. No parent will be able to volunteer until these steps are taken. Please see our front office for the required forms. The forms and printed certificates must be turned into our front office.

PAYMENTS

Parents may take care of monetary obligations by check or online. Checks should be made payable to 'Middlesex County Stem Charter School'. There will be \$25 charge for any check returned to the school by the bank.

RECORDING DEVICES – AUDIO or VIDEO

Middlesex County Stem Charter School prohibits the use of audio or video recording equipment by anyone other than Middlesex County Stem Charter School staff or personnel on the Middlesex County Stem Charter School campus, within the school building, or at school-sponsored events (on- or off-campus) without express written permission from the Middlesex County Stem Charter School administration. Students found in violation will have their recording device confiscated, and be given a **Disciplinary Referral Form** for unauthorized recording. Parents or non-Middlesex County Stem Charter School personnel found in violation will immediately be required to leave - if uncooperative, appropriate law enforcement authorities will be contacted to have them removed from the premises.

SOCIAL NETWORKING WEBSITES

The school's firewall prevents such access at school, but these sites are being accessed on personal computing devices and/or at home. While at school, students are sharing or acting on what they have read. This creates disruptions and negatively impacts relationships, as well as the learning environment.

Some individuals create hurtful websites/blogs and post negative messages about other students and adults. Such incidents are considered "cyber harassment." Please talk with your child about appropriate Internet behavior and the importance of never posting something mean, hurtful, profane or obscene online. Setting restrictions on your child's Internet usage and maintaining access to your child's online networking account is strongly advised.

Students sometimes share personal information that jeopardizes their safety. When a student lists personal information they are at risk for attracting the attention of online predators. The following pieces of personal information should never be posted by students:

- Suggestive Photos
- Date of Birth
- Student's Real Name
- Classmate's personal information
- Home phone and cell phone numbers
- Personally, identifiable journal entries
- School name
- School Location

Please take time to review your family's safety guidelines for using the Internet wisely. A helpful website for Internet safety for younger students is www.ikeepsafe.org.

SPORTS EQUIPMENT

Students are not permitted to bring their own personal sports equipment to school. Middlesex County Stem Charter School will provide approved equipment for recess (balls must be foam) and physical education. Personal sports equipment brought to school will be confiscated and only returned directly to the parent.

HALL PASSES

Students in grades K-3 will receive a hand-held hall pass from their classroom teacher when needed. Teachers will issue hall passes to students who have justifiable reasons for leaving the room. Regardless of the reason issued, hall passes are only valid for a maximum time of five (5) minutes out of the room.

STUDENT SEARCHES

School officials are authorized to conduct reasonable searches of students, staff, and visitors pursuant to applicable law. When reasonable suspicion exists, school officials may search students whom they believe have either violated a particular law or rules of the school. The scope of the search will be reasonably related to the purpose of the search and not excessively intrusive in light of the age and gender of the student and the nature of the suspected infraction.

School computers and school resources, as defined below, are not private and are open to school review at any time.

Student desks and all school and classroom storage areas are school property and remain at all times under control of the school. These areas are not private. Periodic general inspections of these areas may be conducted by school authorities for any reason at any time without notice, and without student consent.

If a search yields illegal or unauthorized materials, such as materials shall be turned over in person to the proper legal authorities for ultimate disposition.

INVESTIGATION

When an administrator receives information of an alleged disciplinary rule violation, he/she will conduct an investigation to determine whether the charge or complaint has a basis in fact. Such investigation may include, but not necessarily be limited to, an interview with the charged student or students, interviews with witnesses, if any, and an examination of any relevant documents, including written statements from teachers, staff and student witnesses. Based on the evidence available, the administrator will determine whether a disciplinary rule(s) was violated.

Positive behavioral support resources are available at the school to help address behavioral problems. The school discipline process includes appropriate consideration of support processes to help students resolve such problems. The school should make reasonable efforts to correct student misbehavior through school – based resources at the lowest possible level, and to support students in learning the skills necessary to enhance a positive school environment and avoid negative behavior. Positive behavior supports and interventions should be implemented to improve the learning environment by improving student behavior and discipline. Behavior supports and interventions may include, but are not limited to, SST, counseling with school counselor, school social worker, school security officer and other staff, behavior, attendance and academic contracts or plans. Parents, guardians, teachers, administrators and other staff are expected to work together to improve and enhance student behavior and academic performance and should freely communicate their concerns about, and actions in response to student behavior that detracts from the learning environment.

DISCIPLINARY CONSEQUENCES

Once it has been determined that a rule(s) was violated, the Behavior Support Team will afford the student oral or written notice of the charges. If the student denies the charges, he/she shall be given an explanation of the evidence the school authorities have and an opportunity to present his/her side of the story. The team will follow a progressive discipline process. The degree of discipline to be imposed by the Behavior Support Team will be in proportion to the severity of the behavior of the particular student and will take into account the student's discipline history, the age of the student and other relevant factors. Disciplinary consequences may include local interventions, ISS, short-term suspension, long-term suspension, expulsion or permanent expulsion from all Middlesex County Stem Charter School Charter School.

DISCIPLINARY HEARING PROCESS

School will follow the New Jersey Department of Education procedures for Disciplinary Hearing Process.

TELEPHONE CALLS

Students may not be called from class to talk on the telephone during school hours nor are students allowed to make outgoing calls except in the most necessary circumstances.

As part of an effort to teach responsibility, students are discouraged from calling home for forgotten items. **Students may not use any phone at school other than an office phone – classroom phones are prohibited from use by students at any time.**

The school does not have sufficient phone lines to accommodate student phone calls at the end of the school day. All arrangements regarding after-school activities must be made before the student leaves home in the morning. Calls of an emergency nature, that may involve the interruption of a class to deliver a message to a child, must be directed to the principal or assistant principal for approval. **Students must have written permission from an administrator stating a reason in order to use the office phones between 7:30 and 3:21.** We ask that all students please come to school in the morning clearly knowing whether their parents expect them to ride the bus, or be picked up by car in the afternoon. We also ask that parents please know whether or not their children are planning to stay for an after-school activity.

VIDEO OR AUDIO SURVEILLANCE

Middlesex County Stem Charter School reserves the right to use video or audio surveillance to monitor halls, classrooms and common areas, to ensure student and faculty safety. Additionally, this video or audio surveillance may be used for evidence in disciplinary situations, as well as remote viewing or monitoring of various school activities, school entrances and school parking areas. All recorded images are the property of the school. The only personnel who may view the videotapes or digital files in the school are the principal and/or designee in the performance of their duties. Parents may request a viewing if any recording

is used as evidence in a discipline case. Viewing requests by parents may be refused or limited where viewing would be an unreasonable invasion of a third party's personal privacy, would give rise to a concern for a third party's safety, or on any other grounds recognized in the Privacy Act. No other request of viewing may be honored. Approved viewings must be done in the presence of principal or designee.

VISITORS

All visitors **must** first report to, and sign in at, the main office and wear a visitor's badge before going to other parts of the building.

Policy Regarding Outside Providers Visiting Middlesex County Stem Charter School

- A. To minimize disruption to the instructional program, visits to school must comply with the following guidelines:
 - 1. All visitors must sign in at the school office.
 - 2. Visits require notice at least 24 hours in advance and approved by the staff member.
 - 3. No classroom visit is allowed unless it is requested by the classroom teacher.
 - 4. The regular school program must continue during such visits so visitors must refrain from engaging the attention of the teacher or students through conversation or other means.
 - 5. Recordings of students and staff are not permitted.

- B. Additional Guidelines for Outside Providers
 - 1. The provider must be currently providing educational or therapy services to the student;
 - 2. An appropriate Release of Confidential Information under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), signed by the parent/guardian must be on file at the school;
 - 3. The provider must provide a copy of his/her liability insurance to the principal.

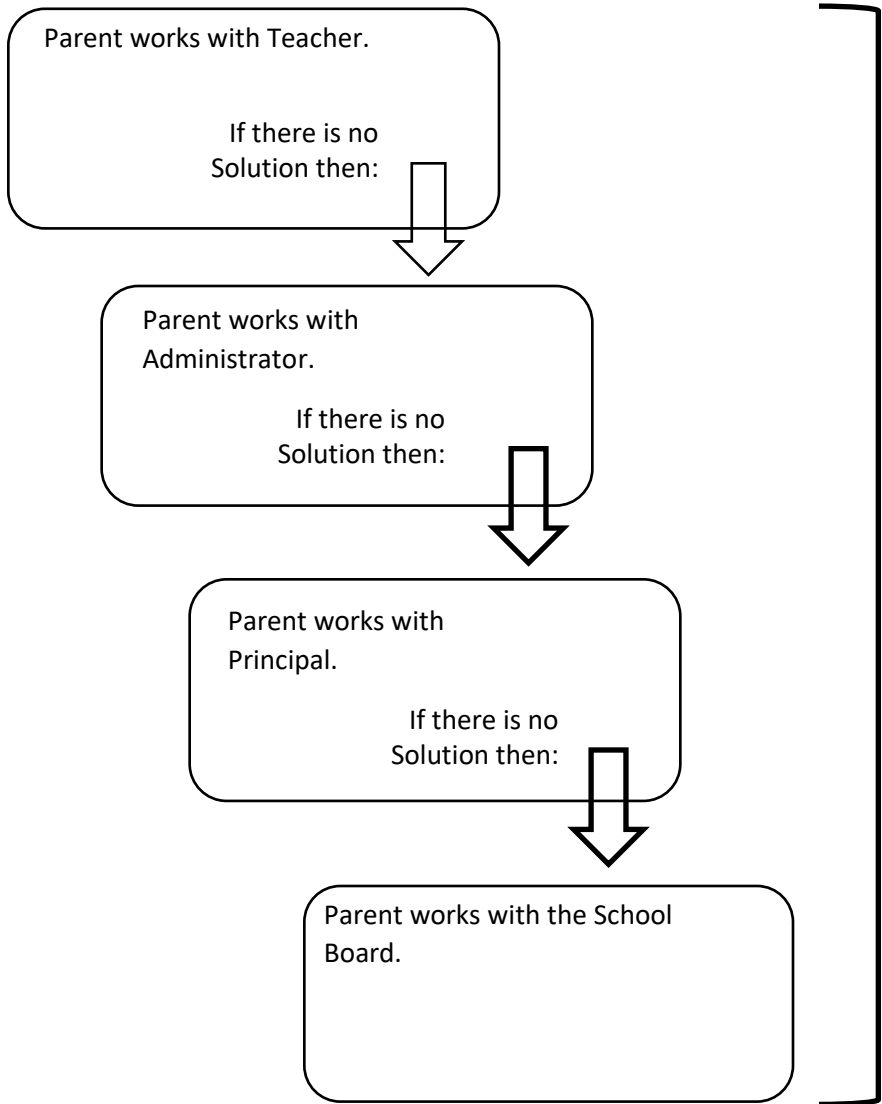
BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Parent/Guardian must inform the teacher prior to the celebration day and must get confirmation from the teacher. The parent/guardian may come to their child's classroom to read a book to the class. Students may receive a Goodie Bag, but no edible products can be placed in the Goodie Bag. If any edible products are found in the Goodie Bag, it will be collected and return back to the parent/guardian.

CHAIN OF COMMUNICATION

"While the New Jersey Department of Education retains ultimate authority over approved charter schools, it is a Middlesex County Stem Charter School Charter School's practice to request that parents work through the processes identified in this charter contract to resolve school-level issues. The New Jersey Department of Education respects the autonomy of the charter school and will not become involved in school-level matters unless there is a serious issue such as a health or safety concern, federal or civil right compliance issues, or evidence of criminal wrongdoing."

Occasionally, parents have a concern about various school processes and decisions. We request that parents adhere to the following procedures when such concerns arise:



Middlesex County Stem Charter School addresses health/safety, federal compliance, civil rights, or evidence of criminal wrongdoing.