



# Family Handbook

## 2023-2024

Mission, Beliefs, & Values

Catalyst Academy Charter School’s mission is to create a world-class K-8 school that prepares all scholars effectively for college, career, and life. This holistic approach to our scholars’ development will equip them with the knowledge, skills, and mindset to be a catalyst for positive change for themselves, and in their families and communities.

Catalyst Academy Charter School’s core values are driven by our motto: “Belong. Grow. Achieve.” These three words convey what research has demonstrated about the necessary ingredients for success, especially among disadvantaged scholars. Research by Camille Farrington at the University of Chicago, which was featured in Paul Tough’s 2016 book *Helping Children Succeed: What Works and Why*, has identified the component beliefs that constitute a positive academic mindset:

- I belong in this academic community.
- My ability and competence grow with my effort.
- I can succeed at this.
- This work has value for me.

At Catalyst Academy Charter School, we synthesize this message into three impactful words.

- **Belong:** We are building a powerful school community where everyone is embraced, respected, and supported in service of our common mission of enabling all our scholars to be successful.
- **Grow:** All Catalyst scholars, teachers, and staff are committed to growing every day to help us fulfill this mission.
- **Achieve:** A great education is a catalyst enabling each scholar to define and achieve his or her dreams.

Catalyst Academy Charter School’s educational approach contains six primary components:

1. High Expectations: a school culture where everyone pursues excellence every day;
2. Strong Relationships: parents, teachers, and scholars working from a strong foundation of communication and understanding;
3. Academic Rigor: a college-preparatory curriculum that is rigorous and standards-aligned in classrooms that build scholars’ knowledge and critical thinking.
4. Quality Teaching: extensive teacher development resources to ensure highly effective teaching;
5. Innovation and Personalization: application of tools (e.g., personalized learning), approaches (e.g., project-based learning) and structures (e.g., scholar “flex time”) to create an innovative, unique path for each scholar;
6. Holistic Scholar Development: explicit focus on social-emotional development and cultivation of scholars’ sense of belonging, agency, and identity development

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### Address & Telephone Changes

It is very important that every family maintain an up-to-date address, email and telephone Number, and emergency contacts with the school. If you have a change in address or contact information during the school year, email [operations@catalystacademy.org](mailto:operations@catalystacademy.org) or contact the office at 412-684-2400.

Please note that if you change your address in SchoolMint, you still need to notify the school. For an address change, an address change form must be completed and a new proof of residency must also be submitted. It can take up to two weeks to arrange for transportation from your home district of residency.

### After school program

Catalyst Academy partners with Learning Loft to provide an excellent after-school program for our scholars. The program is located at Catalyst Academy and runs until 6:30 PM. Parents must register their scholar separately with Learning Loft. Note that no school bus transportation is available for scholars that stay after school. Families interested in the after-school program should contact Learning Loft to register.

### Anti-Bullying Policy

The Board of Directors (“Board”) of Catalyst Academy Charter School (“Charter School”) recognizes the importance of providing all scholars and employees with a safe school and learning environment in order to promote the educational process. The Board has determined that a safe and civil environment in school is necessary for scholars to learn and achieve high academic standards.

Bullying and cyberbullying, like other disruptive or violent behaviors, is conduct that disrupts both a scholar’s ability to learn and Charter School’s ability to safely educate its scholars in a safe environment. Therefore, in order to ensure and promote a safe learning environment, it shall be the policy of Charter School to maintain an educational environment that is intolerant of bullying and cyberbullying in any form.

Since scholars learn by example, school administrators, faculty, staff and volunteers are directed to demonstrate appropriate behavior, treat others with civility and respect and to refuse to tolerate bullying and cyberbullying. This policy pertains to all scholars and staff, regardless of their status. This policy also applies to all scholars and staff whose conduct out of school materially and substantially interferes with the educational process at Charter School.

### ***Definitions***

**Bullying** and **Cyberbullying** are defined as an intentional electronic, written, verbal or physical act, or a series of acts:

1. directed at another scholar or scholars;
  2. which occurs in a “school setting”, or occurs outside of school and Charter School reasonably forecasted that the outside-of-school conduct would materially interfere with or substantially disrupt the educational process or program in the school, and the outside-of-school conduct does in fact materially interfere with or substantially disrupt the educational process or program in the school;
  3. that is severe, persistent or pervasive;
  4. that has the effect of doing any of the following:
    - a. substantially interfering with a scholar’s education;
    - b. creating a threatening environment; or
    - c. substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school
- Bullying and cyberbullying shall encompass acts that occur outside a school setting if those acts meet the requirements found in (1), (3) and (4) listed above.

**School Setting** shall mean in Charter School, on Charter School grounds, on Charter School property, using Charter School equipment and technology, on Charter School’s server or Charter School’s electronic, web---based, Internet or online programs, in Charter School vehicles(or vehicles of Charter School transportation providers), at designated bus stops or at any activity sponsored, supervised or sanctioned by Charter School and any time spent necessarily traveling to and from these locations.

Additionally, any scholar whose out of school conduct materially interferes with or substantially disrupts the educational process in the school is also subject to this policy. Cyberbullying is often seen by sending harmful or cruel material, text messages and/or images or engaging in other forms of social aggression and bullying using the Internet, cell phones, personal digital assistants (“PDAs”) or other technology resources.

All scholars, staff, volunteers and contractors shall comply with Charter School’s Acceptable Use and Internet Safety Policy, which is required under the Children’s Internet Protection Act (“CIPA”), and review Charter School’s Social Media and Networking Guidelines Policy when using any technology resources. Cyberbullying via the Internet is seen through the use of any one or more of a number of methods, including, but not limited to:

- Email sent to the intended victim;
- Blog entries regarding the intended victim;

- Posts on social networking websites, including, but not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram;
- Posting victim's pictures on the Internet or networking websites with derogatory phrases or questions attached to them;
- Using instant messaging tools to harass victims;
- Creating an Internet parody of the intended victim;
- Creating fake Internet profiles for the victim on a public website;
- Creating or accessing an unauthorized website which harasses or bullies the victim;
- Using camera phones and/or digital cameras to take embarrassing photographs of scholars and/or staff and posting them online;
- Excluding others from an online group by falsely reporting them for inappropriate language to Internet service providers.

Cell phones are also often used for cyberbullying for things such as calling or text messaging the victim and/or using a victim's cell phone to text or call another victim using harassing language. The use of the Internet or Charter School email does not necessarily have to involve the creation of the offensive materials. Rather, the person creating the offensive material may do it on a home computer and then use Charter School's computers to take such actions as accessing it, viewing it, displaying it for others to see, disseminating copies of it to others or otherwise publicizing the contents. Charter School strictly prohibits the above conduct and any conduct by any scholar or staff that creates or intends to create an intimidating, threatening, offensive or hostile learning environment.

### ***Guidelines***

Scholars shall conduct themselves in a manner in keeping with their levels of development, maturity, and demonstrated capabilities with a proper regard for the rights and welfare of other scholars, school staff, volunteers, and contractors. The Board believes that standards for scholar behavior must be set cooperatively through interaction among the scholars, parents and guardians, staff, and community members of Charter School, producing an atmosphere that encourages scholars to grow in self-discipline. The development of this atmosphere requires respect for self and others, as well as for school and community property on the part of scholars, staff, and community members. Since bystander support of bullying and cyberbullying can bolster these types of behaviors, Charter School prohibits both active and passive support for acts of bullying and cyberbullying. The staff should encourage all scholars to refuse to engage in these acts and to report them immediately to the Director of Scholars of Catalyst Academy Charter School.

### ***Reporting Procedures***

Any scholar who feels he or she has been bullied or cyberbullied shall have the right to file a complaint of such bullying. Complaints should be reported to the Director of Scholars. Complaints may also be reported directly to a teacher, guidance counselor, or other administrator who shall immediately report the incident to the Director of Scholars in order to protect the alleged victim and for prompt investigation. Any staff who sees any incidents of bullying or cyberbullying must immediately report the incident(s) to the Director of Scholars. All other members of the school community, including scholars, parents, volunteers, and visitors, are encouraged to report any act that may be a violation of this policy.



It shall be the responsibility of the Director of Scholars to investigate promptly and thoroughly any and all bullying and cyberbullying complaints received or referred by other individuals and to make recommendations based upon the investigation. The investigation is to be commenced within three (3) school days after a report of any bullying is received. The Board of Trustees requires the Director of Scholars to be responsible for determining whether an alleged act constitutes a violation of this policy. In determining whether alleged conduct constitutes bullying or cyberbullying, the totality of circumstances, nature of the conduct, and context in which the alleged conduct occurred shall be investigated. If the investigation results in a substantiated charge of the bullying, Charter School shall take prompt corrective action to ensure the bullying and/or cyberbullying ceases and will not reoccur.

Reports to the Director of Scholars may be made anonymously, but formal disciplinary action may not be based solely on the basis of an anonymous report. The Director of Scholars shall immediately notify the parent or guardian of the perpetrator of the bullying and the parent or guardian of the victim of the bullying of the alleged incident.

### ***Consequences for Violations***

Consequences and appropriate remedial actions for a scholar or staff member who commits one or more acts of bullying or cyberbullying may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including in school or out of school suspension from Charter School or expulsion or other disciplinary removal from Charter School, in the case of a scholar, or suspension or termination in the case of an employee, as set forth in Charter School's scholar Code of Conduct or Employee Handbook. In some cases, bullying and/or cyberbullying may constitute criminal activity and the Police Department will be notified. This may lead to a criminal investigation and criminal charges against the scholar or staff. Consequences for a scholar who commits an act of bullying and/or cyberbullying shall be unique to the individual incident and will vary in method and severity according to the nature of the behavior, the developmental age of the scholar, and the scholar's history of problem behaviors and performance, and must be consistent with Charter School's scholar code of conduct. Remedial measures shall be designed to: correct the problem behavior; prevent another occurrence of the behavior; and protect the victim of the act.

The following intervention strategies for protecting victims may be followed as needed:

- Supervise and discipline offending scholars fairly and consistently;
- Provide adult supervision at Charter School sites or other sites used by Charter School, at any activity sponsored, supervised or sanctioned by Charter School during any breaks, lunch times, bathroom breaks and in the hallways during times of transition;
- Maintain contact with parents and guardians of all involved parties;
- Provide counseling for the victim if assessed that it is needed;
- Inform school personnel of the incident and instruct them to monitor the victim and the offending party for indications of harassing, intimidating and bullying and/or cyberbullying behavior. Personnel are to intervene when prohibited behaviors are witnessed; and
- Check with the victim daily to ensure that there have been no incidents of retaliation from the offender or other parties.

### ***Retaliation Prohibited***

The Board of Trustees strictly prohibits retaliation or reprisal against any person who reports bullying and/or cyberbullying incidents. Retaliation includes, but it is not limited to, any form of intimidation, reprisal or harassment used against a person who reports, in good faith, incident(s) of bullying and/or cyberbullying. Disciplinary action against any person who retaliates or engages in reprisals for reporting such behavior(s) may include sanctions up to and including expulsion or suspension for scholars and termination for staff engaging in such prohibited conduct. The consequences and appropriate remedial action shall be determined after consideration of the nature, severity, and circumstances of the act.

### ***False Accusations***

The Board of Trustees prohibits any person from falsely accusing another of bullying and/or cyberbullying. The consequences and appropriate remedial action for a scholar found to have falsely accused another of bullying and/or cyberbullying may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion. Consequences and appropriate remedial action for an employee found to have falsely accused another of bullying and/or cyberbullying shall be disciplined in accordance with Charter School policies, procedures, and agreements. Annual Distribution of Information The Board of Trustees requires Charter School officials to annually disseminate the policy to all school staff, scholars, volunteers, independent contractors and parents along with a statement explaining that it applies to all applicable acts of bullying and cyberbullying that occur in Charter School, on Charter School grounds, on Charter School property, using Charter School equipment and/or technology, on Charter School's server or Charter School's electronic, web--- based, Internet or online programs, in Charter School vehicles, at designated bus stops or at any activity sponsored, supervised or sanctioned by Charter School and any time spent necessarily traveling to and from these locations. Additionally, any scholar or staff out of school conduct that materially and substantially interferes with the educational process in Charter School is also subject to this policy.

Charter School is required to post this policy on its website and make the policy available in every classroom. This policy shall also be posted at a prominent location within every Charter School building where such notices are usually posted. Charter School shall ensure this policy and its procedures for reporting bullying and cyberbullying incidents are reviewed with scholars and staff within ninety (90) days after its adoption and, thereafter, a minimum of one (1) time per school year.

### ***Compliance***

As required by the Federal Broadband Data Improvement Act of 2008, Charter School shall educate elementary and secondary school aged scholars with computer access to the Internet about appropriate online behavior, including online interaction with other individuals on social networking websites, such as Facebook, and in chat rooms and educate them regarding cyberbullying awareness and response.

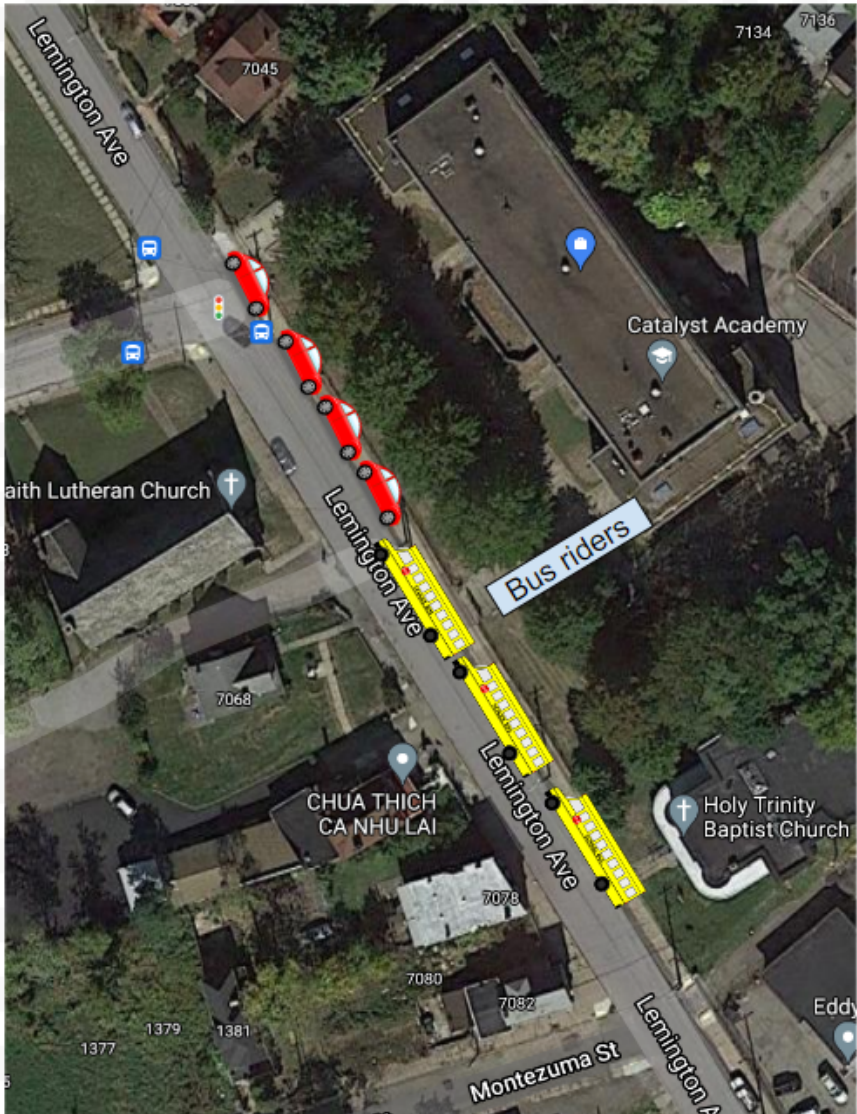
The Board of Trustees directs the Administration to develop any procedures necessary to implement this policy and to develop appropriate prevention, intervention and education strategies related to bullying

and cyberbullying. Acts of bullying and cyberbullying are prohibited by and a violation of Charter School's Acceptable Use and Internet Safety Policy and its Child Internet Protection Act (CIPA) Policy. Charter School will comply with all applicable federal and state laws relating to bullying and cyberbullying, including, but not limited to, the requirements delineated in the Pennsylvania Charter School Law, 24 P.S. § 1701- 13 A, et seq., the Federal Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), 47 U.S.C. § 254(h) and (l), and the Neighborhood Children's Internet Protection Act (N-CIPA) and any applicable implementing regulations. Charter School will also comply with Chapter 711 of Title 22 of the Pennsylvania Code, the Public School Code, the applicable House Bill 1067 Public School Code amendments relating to safe schools and bullying, and applicable provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA 2004) and its applicable implementing regulations regarding the discipline of special education scholars and thought-to-be eligible scholars who engage in an act of bullying.

### **Arrival & Dismissal Procedures**

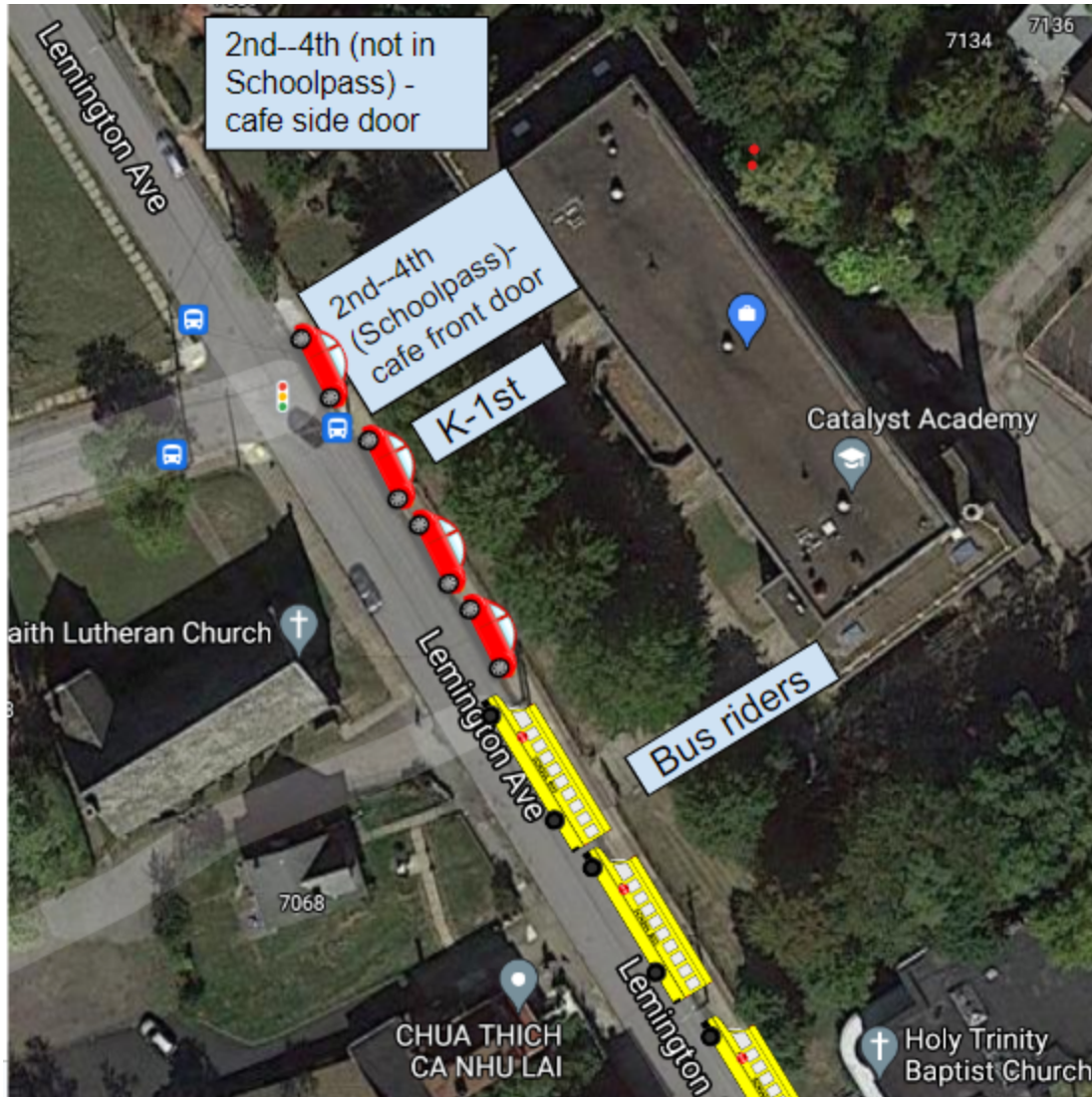
#### **Arrival**

Arrival is between 7:45 - 8 AM. If you are arriving via car, there is a carline on Lemington Ave (see picture). Catalyst staff will be on the sidewalk to help scholars get out of the car. Drivers should remain in the car and depart as soon as their scholar is safely out. You will need to walk your scholar to the front door if you arrive after 8AM.



**Dismissal**

Dismissal begins at 3:15PM. If you are picking up your scholar via car, you will need to park in the neighborhood and walk onto campus to pick up your scholar. To expedite the process, once on campus, parents should use Schoolpass to “check-in” for faster pick-up. Instructions for using Schoolpass will be provided at the beginning of the school year. The dismissal location for scholars depends on your scholar’s grade level. See map for more details. If you have multiple children attending Catalyst, please use the dismissal location for your youngest scholar.



### Changes to Dismissal

In the beginning of the school year, any scholar that is registered for a bus, will be assumed to ride the bus unless notified otherwise by a parent/guardian. You can use Schoolpass to manage your scholar's dismissal plan, e.g., your scholar rides the bus M,W,F, but they go to the afterschool program Tu, Th each week. You can also use it to make a one-day only change, e.g. today my scholar will get picked up.

Parents are strongly encouraged to use Schoolpass to make any changes to their scholar's dismissal plans. This is especially important if your scholar sometimes rides the bus. You can make changes to their dismissal up until 2:30PM. **In order to avoid missed pickups or missed buses, parents must put in dismissal changes before 2:30PM. Additionally, to ensure the safe dismissal of all of our scholars, early dismissals are not permitted after 2:45. If you arrive after 2:45 p.m. for an early dismissal, you will need to wait until your child is dismissed at their normal time.**

## Attendance Policy

The Front Office Manager will be the Attendance Designee, responsible for coordinating and ensuring compliance with attendance policies and truancy responses. The CEO will support and oversee the Front Office Manager in this role, and other administrators may assist as needed. The Catalyst Academy Charter Scholar Truancy Elimination Plan can be found on the school website. Catalyst Academy is obligated to adopt and implement compulsory attendance measures for all scholars as per the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

Scholars are expected to **arrive for breakfast between 7:45 a.m. and 8 a.m.** Scholars who **arrive between 8:00 and 8:15 a.m. will be marked tardy**, but will proceed to the designated Community Time meeting space (either the schoolwide meeting space or their classroom, depending on the day and their grade). Exceptions will be made in cases where external factors were an issue (e.g. severe weather, no-show bus).

Attendance will be taken by classroom teachers and **submitted between 8:15 and 8:50**. At 9:15 a.m., the Student Records Associate and/or the Front Office Manager will check the submitted roll against any late arrivals (who sign in at the office in a Late Arrival Log) and will then call the home of any absent scholars, continuing to call until he or she has spoken with a parent or guardian and confirmed the reason for the child's absence.

**Scholars must be present a minimum of 4 hours to be considered present for a half-day.** If a scholar is not present for a minimum of 4 hours, they will be considered absent. In all cases, a half-day or full day absence, scholars are required to bring a note. An absence can be excused only with valid documentation. A child with a prearranged early dismissal must be signed out in the Early Dismissal Log in the main office by the child's legal guardian or a caregiver who has been previously authorized in writing to pick up the child.

The Front Office Manager or designee will record daily attendance (tardies, excused/unexcused absence, and early dismissals) in the school's information system. CACS will be proactive about attendance. Scholars absent more than once in a marking period will receive a call or home visit from a teacher, Director of Scholars, counselor, family engagement coordinator, or other designee; the Front Office Manager will flag the second absence for the Principal, Director of Scholars or other leadership team member for appropriate follow-up occurs including, phone calls or home visits as needed.

Absences are a big deal, big enough for a member of the administration to potentially come to the scholar's house. Additional interventions may include calling the child's home before school each day for an extended period of time; working with the parent/guardian to develop a transportation plan; providing an alarm clock; or contacting the Allegheny County Department of Human Services if school staff are persistently unable to get in touch with the child and/or guardian.

## **Excuses**

Excuses need to be submitted within three days of a scholar's return to school. Up to three (3) consecutive absences can be excused by a parent. On the fourth (4) consecutive absence, a physician's excuse is required.

After ten (10) cumulative excused absences, parents are required to submit a physician's excuse for every subsequent absence. Failure to supply a physician's excuse for absences beyond ten (10) days will result in an unexcused absence.

Per Pennsylvania law, a child is "truant" if the child has incurred three or more school days of unexcused absences during the current school year. A child is "habitually truant" if the child is subject to compulsory school laws and has incurred six or more school days of unexcused absences during the current school year.

If a child is habitually truant, Catalyst will notify the parents, and a parent or guardian will be required to attend a School Attendance Improvement Conference (SAIC) to develop a truancy elimination plan. Failure to attend the meeting or adhere to the truancy elimination plan will result in legal proceedings as required by Pennsylvania law. Children, Youth, and Families may also be notified.

### *What is an excused absence/tardy?*

1. Personal illness or injury. Any absence for more than three (3) days requires a note from a physician. The note must be signed by the physician and explain the reason and the dates of the absence.
2. A visit to a medical or dental professional. A note from a doctor or dentist is required to consider this as excused.
3. Serious illness in the immediate family/ household including grandparents, parents, brothers and sisters.
4. Death in the immediate family.
5. Observance of a religious holiday. An absence may be considered excused if the tenets of a religion, to which a student or his/her parent adhere, require observance of a religious event.
6. Other absences as approved by the CEO and/or Principal and as allowed by law.
7. Family trips with pre-approval by the principal.
8. Court or Administrative Proceedings. An absence resulting from the attendance of a student at the proceedings of a court or an administrative tribunal if the student is a party to the action or under subpoena as a witness
10. Quarantine.

## Birthdays

Birthdays are an important part of childhood. Please refrain from distributing birthday invitations at school. Due to allergies and other medical issues, please do not send in birthday food or treats. Non edible items are allowed.

## Bus Transportation Guidelines

### **BUS TRANSPORTATION IS A PRIVILEGE, NOT A RIGHT**

#### **BUS AND BUS STOP CONDUCT**

- Catalyst Academy rules, including discipline policies and procedures apply when scholars are on the bus and at the bus stop.

-Catalyst Academy administrators are in charge of transportation discipline.

-Any violations that occur involving the school bus and/or incidents that occur while students are on the way to school (bus stop/neighborhood) or returning from school (bus stop/neighborhood) may result in disciplinary action.

1. Scholars are required to stay seated during the bus ride. Scholars will face forward for the duration of the trip and keep their feet on the floor in front of them and out of the bus aisle.
2. Scholars will refrain from yelling and/or screaming, using bad language or bullying others on the bus.
3. Scholars will refrain from eating or drinking on the bus.
4. Scholars will get on or off the bus only at their assigned stop.
5. Scholars are not allowed to ride a bus that they are not assigned to.
6. Scholars will not refuse to sit in an assigned seat if given one or deny another person a place to sit.
7. Scholars are required to adhere to the Catalyst Academy code of conduct while on the bus.

#### **PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE FOR IMPROPER CONDUCT ON THE BUS**

First violation of the transportation guidelines, the Director of Scholars will warn the student and send a notification to the scholar's parent(s)/guardian(s).

The second violation of the transportation guidelines will result in a one day suspension from the bus.

The Director of Scholars will notify the student's parent(s)/guardian(s).

Third violation of the transportation guidelines, the student is denied bus privileges for 1-3 days. The Director of Scholars and/or the Principal will notify the student's parent(s)/guardian(s).

If there is a Fourth violation of the transportation guidelines. The student is denied bus privileges for the remainder of the quarter. The Director of Scholars and the Principal will notify the student's parent(s)/guardian(s).

\* If a student loses bus privileges, parent(s)/guardian(s) will be responsible for transporting the student to and from school. Refusal to transport the student will result in unexcused absences. Depending on the severity of the infraction progressive steps may be skipped.



### Campus Safety and Supervision of Scholars

Scholars are not to be in the building or on the school grounds after the regular school day unless under the direct supervision of a Catalyst Academy staff member or Catalyst partner.

Posted in every room is a map detailing the relevant evacuation and emergency protocol. Scholars are to follow their teacher according to that map and to stay with their class. In the event of a fire drill or fire, scholars must not stop at bathrooms or lockers. They must go directly to their designated outside location until given further instructions. Any scholar violating this procedure is jeopardizing the safety of the school and will face consequences including possible suspension. There is no talking during a drill or emergency procedure. Talking during a drill or emergency procedure will result in a scholar receiving an appropriate consequence.

In adherence to Pennsylvania's school code, Catalyst Academy has a School Safety Committee. The members of that committee are as follows:

#### Catalyst Academy School Safety Committee

Brian Smith (coordinator)

Meghan Lawrence

Andrea Cespedes

Takiyah Spivey

Monica Cooper

Lacie Klein

### Child Abuse Detection and Response Policy

This document establishes procedures for School employees to assist in identifying and reporting child abuse and for reporting and training in compliance with the Child Protective Services Law.

#### **Definitions**

The following words and phrases shall have the meaning given to them in this section:

- a. Administrator – the person responsible for the administration of the school. The term includes a person responsible for employment decisions in a school. The principal of a school where the abused student is enrolled will serve as the administrator under this policy.
- b. Adult – an individual eighteen (18) years of age or older.
- c. Applicant – an individual who applies for a position as a school employee.
- d. Bodily Injury – impairment of a physical condition or substantial pain.
- e. Certifications – refers to the child abuse history clearance statement and state and federal criminal history background checks required by the Child Protective Services Law and/or the School Code.

- f. Child – an individual under eighteen (18) years of age.
- g. Child Abuse – intentionally, knowingly or recklessly doing any of the following:
  - 1. Causing bodily injury to a child through any recent act or failure to act.
  - 2. Fabricating, feigning or intentionally exaggerating or inducing a medical symptom or disease which results in a potentially harmful medical evaluation or treatment to the child through any recent act.
  - 3. Causing or substantially contributing to serious mental injury to a child through any act or failure to act or series of such acts or failures to act.
  - 4. Causing sexual abuse or exploitation of a child through any act or failure to act.
  - 5. Creating a reasonable likelihood of bodily injury to a child through any recent act or failure to act.
  - 6. Creating a likelihood of sexual abuse or exploitation of a child through any recent act or failure to act.
  - 7. Causing serious physical neglect of a child.
  - 8. Engaging in any of the following recent acts:
    - i. Kicking, biting, throwing, burning, stabbing or cutting a child in a manner that endangers the child.
    - ii. Unreasonably restraining or confining a child, based on consideration of the method, location or duration of the restraint or confinement.
    - iii. Forcefully shaking a child under one (1) year of age.
    - iv. Forcefully slapping or otherwise striking a child under one (1) year of age.
    - v. Interfering with the breathing of a child.
    - vi. Causing a child to be present during the operation of a methamphetamine laboratory, provided that the violation is being investigated by law enforcement.
    - vii. Leaving a child unsupervised with an individual, other than the child's parent/guardian, who the actor knows or reasonably should have known was required to register as a Tier II or Tier III sexual offender, has to register for life, or has been determined to be a sexually violent predator or sexually violent delinquent.
  - 9. Causing the death of a child through any act or failure to act.

10. Engaging a child in a severe form of trafficking in persons or sex trafficking, as those terms are defined in the law.

The term **child abuse** does not include physical contact with a child that is involved in normal participation in physical education, athletic, extracurricular or recreational activities. Also excluded from the meaning of **child abuse** is the use of reasonable force by a person responsible for the welfare of a child for purpose of control or safety, provided that the use of force:

1. Constitutes incidental, minor or reasonable physical contact in order to maintain order and control;
  2. Is necessary to quell a disturbance or remove a child from the scene of a disturbance that threatens property damage or injury to persons;
  3. Is necessary for self-defense or defense of another;
  4. Is necessary to prevent the child from self-inflicted physical harm; or
  5. Is necessary to gain possession of weapons, controlled substances or other dangerous objects that are on the person of the child or in the child's control.
- h. County Agency – Allegheny County Children and Youth Services.
  - i. Direct contact with children – the possibility of care, supervision, guidance or control of children or routine interaction with children.
  - j. Independent Contractor – an individual other than a school employee who provides a program, activity or service who is otherwise responsible for the care, supervision, guidance or control of children pursuant to a contract. The term does not apply to administrative or other support personnel unless the administrative or other support personnel have direct contact with children.
  - k. Perpetrator – a person who has committed child abuse and is a parent(s)/guardian(s) of a child; spouse or former spouse of the child's parent/guardian; a paramour or former paramour of the child's parent/guardian; an individual fourteen (14) years of age or older who is responsible for the child's welfare or who has direct contact with children as an employee of child care services, a school, or through a program, activity or service; an individual fourteen (14) years of age or older who resides in the same home as the child; or an adult who does not reside in the same home as the child but who is related within the third degree of consanguinity or affinity by birth or adoption to the child; or an adult who engages a child in severe forms of trafficking in persons or sex trafficking, as those terms are defined in the law. Only the following may be considered a perpetrator solely based upon a failure to act: a parent/guardian of the child; a spouse or former spouse of the child's parent/guardian; a paramour or former paramour of the child's parent/guardian; an adult responsible for the child's welfare; or an adult who resides in the same home as the child.
  - l. Person responsible for the welfare of a child – a person who provides permanent or temporary

care, supervision, mental health diagnosis or treatment, training or control of a child in lieu of parental care, supervision and control.

- m. Program, activity or service: Any of the following in which children participate and which is sponsored by a school or public or private organization:
  - 1. A youth camp or program.
  - 2. A recreational camp or program.
  - 3. A sports or athletic program.
  - 4. A community or social outreach program.
  - 5. An enrichment or educational program.
  - 6. A troop, club or similar organization.
- n. Recent act or failure to act – any act or failure to act committed within two (2) years of the date of the report to the Department of Human Services or the county agency.
- o. School Employee – an individual employed at Catalyst Academy Charter School. The term excludes an individual who has no direct contact with children.
- p. Serious Bodily Injury – bodily injury which creates a substantial risk of death or which causes serious permanent disfigurement or protracted loss or impairment of function of any bodily member or organ.
- q. Serious Mental Injury – a psychological condition, as diagnosed by a physician licensed psychologist, including the refusal of appropriate treatment, that:
  - 1. Renders a child chronically and severely anxious, agitated, depressed, socially withdrawn, psychotic or in reasonable fear that the child's life or safety is threatened.
  - 2. Seriously interferes with a child's ability to accomplish age-appropriate developmental and social tasks.
- r. Serious Physical Neglect – any of the following when committed by a perpetrator that endangers a child's life or health, threatens a child's well-being, causes bodily injury or impairs a child's health, development or functioning:
  - 1. A repeated, prolonged or egregious failure to supervise a child in a manner that is appropriate considering the child's developmental age and abilities.
  - 2. The failure to provide a child with adequate essentials of life, including food, shelter or medical care.
- s. Sexual Abuse or Exploitation – includes any of the following: the employment, use, persuasion,

inducement, enticement, or coercion of a child to engage in or assist another individual to engage in any sexually explicit conduct or simulation of sexually explicit conduct for the purpose of producing visual depiction, including photographing, videotaping, computer depicting, and filming of any sexually explicit conduct; or any of the following offenses committed against a child: rape, sexual assault, involuntary deviate sexual intercourse, aggravated indecent assault, molestation, incest, indecent exposure, prostitution, sexual abuse, or sexual exploitation.

- t. Student – an individual enrolled in Catalyst Academy Charter School under eighteen (18) years of age.
- u. Volunteer – an unpaid adult individual, who, on the basis of the individual’s role as an integral part of a regularly scheduled program, activity or service is a person responsible for the child’s welfare or has direct contact with children.

### **Delegation of Responsibility**

Pursuant to the procedures, the CEO or designee shall:

- a. Require each applicant for employment to submit an official child abuse clearance statement issued within the preceding year, except for those exempted by law.
- b. The CEO or designee shall annually inform students, parent(s)/guardian(s), staff, independent contractors and volunteers regarding these procedures. Catalyst Academy Charter School staff, independent contractors and volunteers shall annually receive notice of their responsibility for reporting child abuse in accordance with these procedures.
- c. School employees and independent contractors shall obtain and submit new certifications every sixty (60) months.
- d. Certification requirements for volunteers are addressed in a separate Board Policy.
- e. The CEO or designee shall ensure that the poster, developed by the PA Department of Education, displaying the statewide toll-free telephone numbers for reporting suspected child abuse, neglect and school safety issues be posted in a high-traffic, public area of each school. The designated area shall be readily accessible and widely used by students.

### **Guidelines**

- a. Duty to Report

School employees, independent contractors, and volunteers shall make a report of suspected child abuse if they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is the victim of child abuse under any of the following circumstances:

1. The school employee, independent contractor or volunteer comes into contact with the child in the course of employment, occupation and the practice of a profession or through a regularly scheduled program, activity or service.
2. The school employee, independent contractor or volunteer is directly responsible for the

care, supervision guidance or training of the child.

3. A person makes a specific disclosure to a school employee, independent contractor or volunteer that an identifiable child is the victim of child abuse.
  4. An individual fourteen (14) years of age or older makes a specific disclosure to a school employee, independent contractor or volunteer that s/he has committed child abuse.
- b. A child is not required to come before the school employee, independent contractor or volunteer in order for that individual to make a report of suspected child abuse.
  - c. A report of suspected child abuse does not require the identification of the person responsible for the child abuse.
  - d. Any person who, in good faith, makes a report of suspected child abuse, regardless of whether the report is required, cooperates with an investigation, testifies in a proceeding, or engages in other action authorized by law shall have immunity from civil and criminal liability related to those actions.
  - e. Any person required to report child abuse who willfully fails to do so may be subject to disciplinary action and criminal prosecution.
  - f. Any person who knowingly or intentionally makes a false report of child abuse or intentionally or knowingly induces a child to make a false claim of child abuse may be subject to disciplinary action and criminal prosecution.
  - g. Any person who engages in intimidation, retaliation, or obstruction in the making of a child abuse report or the conducting of an investigation into suspected child abuse may be subject to disciplinary action and criminal prosecution.
  - h. The school shall not retaliate or discriminate against any person for making, in good faith, a report of suspected child abuse.
  - i. Reporting Procedures
    1. School employees, independent contractors or volunteers who suspect child abuse shall immediately make a written report of child abuse using electronic technologies ([www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis](http://www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis)) or an oral report via the statewide toll free number (1-800-932-0313). A person making an initial report of suspected child abuse must also submit a written electronic report within forty-eight (48) hours after the oral report. Upon receipt of an electronic report, the electronic reporting system will immediately respond with a confirmation, providing the school with a written record of the report.
    2. A school employee, independent contractor or volunteer who makes a report of suspected child abuse shall immediately, after making the initial report, notify the building principal or administrator and if the initial report was made electronically, also provide the building principal or administrator with a copy of the report confirmation. The building principal or administrator shall then immediately notify the CEO or designee

that a child abuse report has been made and if the initial report was made electronically, also provide a copy of the report confirmation.

3. When a report of suspected child abuse is made by a school employee, independent contractor or volunteer as required by law, the school is not required to make more than one (1) report. An individual otherwise required to make a report who is aware that an initial report has already been made by a school employee, independent contractor or volunteer is not required to make an additional report. The person making an initial oral report is responsible for making the follow-up written electronic report within forty-eight (48) hours, and shall provide the building principal or administrator with a copy of the report confirmation promptly after the written electronic report has been filed. The building principal or administrator shall in turn provide a copy of the report confirmation to the CEO or designee.
4. If the CEO or designee reasonably suspects that conduct being reported involves an incident required to be reported under the Safe Schools Act, the CEO or designee shall inform local law enforcement, in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

j. Investigation

1. School officials shall cooperate with the Department of Human Services or the county agency investigating a report of suspected child abuse, including permitting authorized personnel to interview the child while in attendance at school.
2. Upon notification that an investigation involves suspected child abuse by a school employee, the building principal or administrator shall immediately implement a plan of supervision or alternative arrangement that has been approved by the CEO for the school employee under investigation. The plan of supervision or alternative arrangement shall be submitted to the county agency for approval.

**Training**

The school shall provide its employees and independent contractors who have direct contact with children with mandatory training on child abuse recognition and reporting. The training shall include, but not be limited to, the following topics:

1. Recognition of the signs of abuse and sexual misconduct and reporting requirements for suspected abuse and sexual misconduct.
2. Provisions of the Educator Discipline Act, including mandatory reporting requirements.
3. School policy related to reporting of suspected abuse and sexual misconduct.
4. Maintenance of professional and appropriate relationships with students.

Employees are required to complete a minimum of three (3) hours of training every five (5) years.

### **Additional Child Abuse Risk Mitigation Measures**

One on one interactions with students must always be observable, i.e., another person can freely walk into the space. No one on one interactions with a student should be in a locked room.

All school staff have a responsibility to help ensure the safety of our school community and its students. This includes monitoring difficult to observe spaces, e.g., restrooms. School administrators will at times explicitly assign duties that may include restroom or other space monitoring. If any staff has concerns about a specific space lacking enough monitoring, they should report it to their supervisor, the Manager of School Operations, the Principal, or the CEO.

### **Code of Conduct & Behavior Support Policy & Procedures**

The motto of Catalyst Academy Charter School is *Belong. Grow. Achieve.* These three important words are reflective of our underlying values that greatly inform our approach to discipline.

**Belong.** We are building a strong, inclusive, supportive community for all of our scholars. Therefore, we are committed to avoiding suspension and expulsion unless required by state law. We do not find clear research support for exclusionary disciplinary practices, are cognizant of the historically disproportionate use of these practices on scholars of color, and believe it sends the wrong message to our scholars, and school community. In the event of an infraction that does or could mandate suspension, the involved scholar(s) due process rights will be protected. Whenever possible, we will use restorative practices. This is well-aligned with our focus on developing healthy relationships, social-emotional development, and a strong sense of community.

**Grow.** A growth mindset applies to all facets of personal development. In addition to academics, behavioral choices can be improved with effort and skill development. Indeed, it is our belief that in many cases, children don't want to misbehave, but they often lack the skill set to cope with specific situations. These challenges are often more acute for low-income children whose brain development has been impacted by exposure to several adverse childhood experiences (ACE), e.g. abuse, neglect, poverty, divorce, and exhibit behavioral challenges as a result. Our overall approach is to not only focus on consequences, but as importantly to build our scholars skill base through research-backed general approaches, e.g. social-emotional learning and school-wide positive behavioral intervention strategies (PBIS). This positive, skill development approach is aligned with our focus on our scholar's holistic growth.

**Achieve.** Our scholars' future achievement in college, career, and life, will require that they consistently make healthy behavioral decisions. Consequently, we must hold all members of the school community to high behavioral standards, and provide the modeling, culture, and the explicit support necessary for scholars to meet these standards.

### **Behavior Support Practices and Beliefs**

We believe that every scholar can grow and achieve if they are given the opportunity and receive the necessary support for their success. Our approach to supporting scholars' emotional and behavioral needs are rooted in restorative practices. We seek to understand the emotional challenges of our scholars and provide them the necessary scaffolds to overcome the social and emotional barriers that interrupt their instructional time. We explicitly teach social and emotional content daily through the direct support of behavior and class Community Time.



➤ **Class Dojo**

Class Dojo is the system we use to record helpful and unhelpful choices scholars make throughout the school day. The primary use of dojo is to provide a snapshot of a scholar's day for their families. Reviewing Dojo with your scholar allows you to have intentional conversations about the choices they make throughout the day as well as keep an open line of communication with the classroom teacher through messaging within the app if you so choose. When we communicate with each other for positive and constructive feedback about a scholar, it allows us to build a stronger relationship and ensure that we are on the same page with expectations and support for the scholar.

Scholars receive scholar points (positive feedback) and reminder points (constructive feedback) throughout the day. They can earn positive points for anything. They earn reminder points for unhelpful choices. Our hope is that earning positive points will reinforce scholars' motivation to make helpful choices.

➤ **Color System**

Scholars at Catalyst Academy Charter School work with their teachers, support staff, and the school's culture team towards making helpful choices during the school day that positively impact their learning, peer relationships, and interactions within the school community. As a result of the choices scholars make during the day, they have the opportunity to earn "scholar points" or "reminder points" as highlighted in the section above. At the end of each day, scholars earn a "color" based on the number of reminder points they earned that school day. This color helps families understand the type of day scholars had and should serve as the foundation of reflection for the next day.

- *Blue Day: 0-4 Reminder points "I made a lot of helpful choices today on my own.*
- *Green Day: 5-9 Reminder points "I needed a little help with some of the choices I made today.*
- *Yellow Day: 10-18 Reminder points "I needed more help making helpful choices today."*
- *Red Day: 19+ Reminder points "I made a lot of unhelpful choices today."*

## Behavior Discipline Practices

- **Level 1 behaviors** are actions that impede one's own learning and productivity.
  - Actions that can be considered Level 1 behaviors include but are not limited to: off task behavior, being out of area, non-participation in instructional activities, not cooperating with general classroom norms.
  - Interventions that can be used to address the behaviors:
    - Have scholar get up and move/offer scholar physical activity (deliver a message to someone, get a drink of water, do jumping jacks, use of thumb ball)
    - Offer flexible seating/alternative space in the classroom (scholar can stand to complete work, use floor desks, sit in area of choice with clipboard)
    - Offer time and space to decompress (especially for scholars who experience sensory challenges)
    - Proximity
    - For scholars who are distracted by an object, remove the object (verbiage: "I will hold this for you until it's time to use - I am going to give it back.")
  - Possible consequences
    - Complete missed tasks during lunch, recess, or other free time
    - Missing work goes home for homework
    - Home Targeted Reflection (Reflection specific to a certain situation sent home and completed w/ family)
- **Level 2 behaviors** are actions that impede one's own learning and productivity as well as the learning and productivity of others. These actions may also cause or unintentionally lead to unsafe environments.
  - Actions that can be considered Level 2 behaviors include, but are not limited to: elopement (within a big space and within the teacher's view), stealing, roaming around the classroom, choosing not to cooperate with a specific direction, non cooperation with general classroom norms (rules), screaming/yelling, using unkind words/inappropriate language (saying it aloud or targeting it to someone).
  - Interventions that can be used to address the behaviors:
    - Planned Ignoring
    - Short respite (Time and Space)
    - Provide a coping strategy (read a book, hug teddy bear, butterfly breaths, yoga, etc.)
    - Remind scholar what they are working for (their positive reinforcement)

- Separate scholar seats/seats change
- Bounce Back Conversation
- Feelings Reflection/Class reflection
- Possible consequences
  - Restorative lunch or recess (“I Statement” reflection, Make It Right reflection, or other targeted reflection)
  - Solve problems/complete a task by working together.
  - Reactive Restorative Circle/Conversation with a Make It Right Activity
- **Level 3 behaviors** are actions that impede on the learning, productivity and/or the safety of others
  - Actions that can be Level 3 include, but are not limited to: life threatening behaviors, physical aggression toward staff/peer (hitting/fighting, throwing items, biting, destruction of school property), self harm, verbal threats to self or staff/peers, misuse of emergency systems.
  - Possible interventions that can be used to address the behavior
    - School Counselor/School Social worker implements crisis counseling services/risk assessment
    - Safety Care Physical Intervention (This intervention is used as a last resort.)
    - Immediate phone call to the family to intervene
  - Possible Consequences
    - Make it Right Activity
    - Catalyst Community Service
    - Parent Sit-in/Restorative Circle
    - Parent Pick-Up

### **Unsafe Behaviors Policy**

Catalyst Academy Charter School must ensure that all Catalyst students are educated in settings free from restrictions or injuries caused by the challenging behaviors of other students.

An unsafe behavior is defined as acts directed towards a person and or property that pose a threat to the safety or welfare of others in the school community. Examples of unsafe behaviors include, but are not limited to:

- Fighting/Hitting
- Throwing items
- Destruction of school property
- Misuse of emergency system
- Spitting
- Biting
- Indecent exposure
- Sexually explicit behavior
- Elopement

Per our unsafe behavior procedure, scholars displaying unsafe behaviors will need to be picked up by a designee immediately. As a part of the reintegration process, the parent and the scholar will need to participate in a restorative meeting.

### Custody/Court Orders

If there is a legal arrangement of custody concerning your scholar, you must provide a current copy of that court document to the. A personal note is not sufficient. The law requires the school to have a copy of court orders and custody arrangements for reference. The same rules apply to all Protection From Abuse (PFA) orders. For questions pertaining to custody records, please contact the front office.

### Dress Code

Monday - Thursday Dress Code	
<b>Tops</b>	Catalyst Academy polo <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Short or long-sleeved <b>must</b> have Catalyst Academy logo</li> </ul> Female scholars may wear khaki jumpers over polo in grades K-2.
<b>Bottoms</b>	Khaki pants or shorts (non-tight fitting) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Shorts can be worn <b>until</b> Oct. 1</li> <li>● Shorts can be worn <b>starting</b> May 1</li> </ul> Female scholars may wear khaki skorts or skirts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Skorts worn Grades K-5</li> <li>● Skirts worn Grades 6-8</li> </ul>
<b>Shoes</b>	Any closed-toed flat heel shoe.  Socks must be black, white, or grey. Female scholars are permitted to wear stockings in black, white, or grey. Leggings are <b>not</b> permitted.
<b>Outerwear</b>	Catalyst cardigan A crewneck sweater or sweatshirt in black or navy worn over the Catalyst Academy polo

<b>Accessories</b>	<p><b>No</b> belt required for K-2.</p> <p>Earrings worn in the lower lobe.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>No</b> earrings larger than a dime Grade K-5</li> <li>● <b>No</b> earrings larger than a quarter Grade 6-8</li> </ul> <p>Modest neck jewelry for Grades 3-5. Modest jewelry of all kinds may be worn for Grades 6-8.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>No</b> additional jewelry for Grades K-2</li> </ul> <p><b>No</b> hats unless for religious purposes.</p>
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Friday Dress Code	
<b>Tops</b>	<p>Catalyst Academy t-shirt or sweatshirt College t-shirt or sweatshirt</p>
<b>Bottoms</b>	<p>Jeans are permitted on Fridays Khaki pants or shorts (non-tight fitting)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Shorts can be worn <b>until</b> Oct. 1</li> <li>● Shorts can be worn <b>starting</b> May 1</li> </ul> <p>Female scholars may also wear khaki skorts or skirts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Skorts worn Grades K-5</li> <li>● Skirts worn Grades 6-8</li> </ul>
<b>Shoes</b>	<p>Any closed-toed flat heel shoe.</p> <p>Socks must be black, white, or grey. Female scholars are permitted to wear stockings in black, white, or grey. Leggings are <b>not</b> permitted.</p>
<b>Outerwear</b>	<p>Catalyst cardigan A crewneck sweater or sweatshirt in black or navy worn over the Catalyst Academy polo</p>
<b>Accessories</b>	<p><b>No</b> belt required for K-2.</p> <p>Earrings worn in the lower lobe.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>No</b> earrings larger than a dime Grade K-5</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>No</b> earrings larger than a quarter Grade 6-8</li> </ul> <p>Modest neck jewelry for Grades 3-5. Modest jewelry of all kinds may be worn for Grades 6-8.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>No</b> additional jewelry for Grades K-2</li> </ul> <p><b>No</b> hats unless for religious purposes.</p>
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### Education for Children Experiencing Homelessness

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act was established in 1987 and amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015. The Act defines the term “homeless children and youths” as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. The federal mandate ensures that homeless children and youth have access to the same free and appropriate public education as other children. Children who are homeless may qualify for assistance with school lunch, school supplies, tutoring and transportation so that they can remain in their school of origin. If you believe that your scholar may qualify for this service, please contact:

Myra Powel, Parent & Community Advisor  
 Phone: 412-219-4596  
 Email:myra.powell@catalystacademy.org

### Electronic Devices

Electronic devices are permitted at school, but scholars are not permitted to use personal devices during the school day without staff permission. **Scholars who bring cellular phones to school will need to turn them off and put them away upon arrival. If a scholar does not turn off their device and put it away, a staff member will confiscate it for the remainder of the day, and it will only be returned directly to a parent or guardian.**

Catalyst Academy assumes no responsibility for lost, damaged, or stolen cell phones/electronic devices. No video, photo or audio recordings are to be taken on school grounds.

### Emergency Contact Information

In the event of an emergency, Catalyst Academy will contact all parents and families via email and phone call. It is vitally important that parents and families keep their emergency contact information up-to-date. If there is ever a change to your contact information, alert the Front Office Manager as soon as possible.

### Equal Employment Opportunity Statement

The School provides equal employment opportunities without discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, marital status, veteran status or other legally-protected class or characteristic. The School

prohibits any such discrimination. This policy applies to all employees and applicants and it applies to recruiting, hiring, compensation, training, placement, transfer, promotion, demotion, discipline, and termination. The School seeks to fill all positions with qualified candidates without regard to race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, marital status, or veteran status or other legally-protected class or characteristic.

### FERPA and Scholar Records

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students who are 18 years of age or older ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days after the day Catalyst Academy Charter School ("School") receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the School CEO a written request that identifies the records they wish to inspect. The School official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA. Parents or eligible students who wish to ask the School to amend a record should write to the School CEO, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it should be changed. If the School decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the School will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.
3. The right to provide written consent before the School discloses personally identifiable information (PII) from the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to School officials with legitimate educational interests. A School official is a person employed by the School as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel) or a person serving on the school board. A School official also may include a volunteer or contractor outside of the School who performs an institutional service of function for which the School would otherwise use its own employees and who is under the direct control of the School with respect to the use and maintenance of PII from education records, such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist; a parent or student volunteering to serve on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee; or a parent, student, or other volunteer assisting another School official in performing his or her tasks. A School official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility. Upon request, the School discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll, or is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes of the student's enrollment or transfer.
4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the [School] to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

Family Policy Compliance Office

U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20202

FERPA permits the School to disclose appropriately designated "directory information" without written consent, unless you have advised the School to the contrary in accordance with School procedures. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow the School to include this type of information from your child's education records in certain School publications. Examples include:

- A playbill, showing your student's role in a drama production;
- The annual yearbook;
- Honor roll or other recognition lists;
- Graduation programs; and
- Sports activity sheets, such as for wrestling, showing weight and height of team members.

Directory information, which is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released, can also be disclosed to outside organizations without a parent's prior written consent. Outside organizations include, but are not limited to, companies that manufacture class rings or publish yearbooks. In addition, two federal laws and state law require local educational agencies (LEAs) receiving assistance under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) to provide military recruiters, upon request, with the following information – names, addresses and telephone listings – unless parents have advised the LEA that they do not want their student's information disclosed without their prior written consent. If you do not want the School to disclose directory information from your child's education records without your prior written consent, you must notify the School in writing on the FERPA Opt-Out form.

The School has designated the following information as directory information:

- Student's name
  - Address
  - Telephone listing
  - Electronic mail address
  - Photograph
  - Date and place of birth
  - Major field of study
  - Dates of attendance
  - Grade level
  - Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
  - Weight and height of members of athletic teams
  - Degrees, honors, and awards received
  - The most recent educational agency or institution attended
- Student ID number, user ID, or other unique personal identifier used to communicate in electronic systems that cannot be used to access education records without a PIN, password, etc. (A student's SSN, in whole or in part, cannot be used for this purpose.)

FERPA also permits the disclosure of PII from students' education records, without consent of the parent or eligible student, if the disclosure meets certain conditions found in §99.31 of the FERPA regulations. Except for disclosures to School officials, disclosures related to some judicial orders or lawfully issued subpoenas, disclosures of directory information, and disclosures to the parent or eligible student, §99.32



of the FERPA regulations requires the School to record the disclosure. Parents and eligible students have a right to inspect and review the record of disclosures. A School may disclose PII from the education records of a student without obtaining prior written consent of the parents or the eligible student –

- To other School officials, including teachers, within the educational agency or institution whom the School has determined to have legitimate educational interests. This includes contractors, consultants, volunteers, or other parties to whom the School has outsourced institutional services or functions, provided that the conditions listed in §99.31(a)(1)(i)(B)(1) - (a)(1)(i)(B)(2) are met. (§99.31(a)(1)) The School may designate after-school providers with whom it has written agreements with to provide after-school programming to School students as other School officials who may have access to education records.
- To officials of another school, school system, or institution of postsecondary education where the student seeks or intends to enroll, or where the student is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes related to the student's enrollment or transfer, subject to the requirements of §99.34. (§99.31(a)(2))
- To authorized representatives of the U. S. Comptroller General, the U. S. Attorney General, the U.S. Secretary of Education, or State and local educational authorities, such as the State educational agency in the parent or eligible student's State (SEA). Disclosures under this provision may be made, subject to the requirements of §99.35, in connection with an audit or evaluation of Federal- or State-supported education programs, or for the enforcement of or compliance with Federal legal requirements that relate to those programs. These entities may make further disclosures of PII to outside entities that are designated by them as their authorized representatives to conduct any audit, evaluation, or enforcement or compliance activity on their behalf. (§§99.31(a)(3) and 99.35)
- In connection with financial aid for which the student has applied or which the student has received, if the information is necessary to determine eligibility for the aid, determine the amount of the aid, determine the conditions of the aid, or enforce the terms and conditions of the aid. (§99.31(a)(4))
- To State and local officials or authorities to whom information is specifically allowed
- to be reported or disclosed by a State statute that concerns the juvenile justice system
- and the system's ability to effectively serve, prior to adjudication, the student whose
- records were released, subject to §99.38. (§99.31(a)(5))
- To an agency caseworker or other representative of a State or local child welfare agency who has the right to access a student's case plan when such agency or organization is legally responsible for the care and protection of the student. 20 USC §1232g(b)(L).
- To organizations conducting studies for, or on behalf of, the School, in order to: (a) develop, validate, or administer predictive tests; (b) administer student aid programs; or (c) improve instruction. (§99.31(a)(6))
- To accrediting organizations to carry out their accrediting functions. (§99.31(a)(7))
- To parents of an eligible student if the student is a dependent for IRS tax purposes. (§99.31(a)(8))
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena. (§99.31(a)(9))
- To appropriate officials in connection with a health or safety emergency, subject to §99.36. (§99.31(a)(10))
- Information the School has designated as "directory information" under §99.37. (§99.31(a)(11))

The Board of Trustees of Catalyst Academy Charter School recognizes that it has the primary responsibility to ensure compliance with applicable state and federal laws and regulations governing educational programs. The Board encourages the early, informal resolution of parental complaints and incidents whenever possible and appropriate. To resolve complaints that cannot be resolved through such an informal process, the Board shall adopt a uniform system of complaint processes specified below.

This process will be prompt, impartial, and equitable and shall comply with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations. For purposes of this policy and the accompanying regulation, "Complaint" means a written and signed statement alleging one or more violations of paragraphs #1-4 below. If the complainant is unable to put the complaint in writing, due to conditions such as a disability or illiteracy, the charter school shall assist the complainant in filing the complaint.

The charter school shall investigate and resolve the following complaints:

1. Any complaint alleging charter school violation of applicable state or federal law or regulations including but not limited to Free and Reduced Lunch and special education programs;
2. Any complaint alleging unlawful discrimination in programs and activities against any person based on his/her actual or perceived characteristics of race or ethnicity, color, ancestry, nationality, national origin, ethnic group identification, age, religion, marital or parental status, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, or genetic information or based on his/her association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics. Unlawful discrimination includes, but is not limited to, discriminatory bullying, discriminatory intimidation, and sexual harassment;
3. Any complaint alleging that the charter school has not complied with legal requirements related to the implementation of its charter;
4. Any complaint alleging retaliation against a complainant or other participant in the complaint process or anyone who has acted to uncover or report a violation subject to this policy;
5. Any complaint alleging non-discriminatory bullying shall follow the procedures in the School's Anti-Bullying Policy.

The Board recognizes that informal dispute resolution can, depending on the nature of the allegations, offer a process to reach a resolution to the complaint that is agreeable to all parties.

Due to the implicit power imbalance between adults and scholars, such a process may only be offered to resolve complaints that involve both scholars and adults on a voluntary basis. Such a process shall not be offered or used to resolve any complaint involving sexual assault or sexual battery, even on a voluntary basis. In filing and investigating complaints, the confidentiality of the parties involved shall be protected as required by law.

As appropriate for any complaint alleging retaliation, unlawful discrimination, or bullying, the Principal shall maintain the integrity of the complaint process and shall keep confidential the identity of the complainant and/or the subject of the complaint, if he/she is different from the complainant.

The following complaint shall not be subject to the Board's Complaint Policy but shall be referred to the specified agency: Any complaint alleging child abuse or neglect shall be referred to Childline and the appropriate law enforcement agency. Complaint Process:

- **Step 1:** Parent contacts school/teacher/staff regarding a complaint
- **Step 2:** If unresolved, School offers a meeting or conference
- **Step 3:** If unresolved, parent files a formal written Complaint with Principal
- **Step 4:** Investigation of the complaint (within 5 business days when feasible; no more than 10 business days)
- **Step 5:** If unresolved, Parent presents a formal written Complaint to the Board of Directors.
- **Step 6:** Response to the complaint and final written decision (within 30 calendar days, but may be extended to 60 with Board approval)

## Health and Illness

### Guidelines for Student Health

It is important to maintain a healthy school environment for all scholars and staff. Please keep the following guidelines in mind:

A parent/guardian will be notified and asked to pick up their scholar if they have:

- a temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher
- active vomiting or diarrhea
- suspected contagious illness (pink eye, flu, Covid 19)
- a serious injury or appears obviously ill
- a live louse/lice found on head

### Guidelines for Communicable Diseases/Health Concerns

Catalyst Academy aligns its guidelines with the Allegheny County Health Department for communicable diseases/issues:

- **Pink Eye:** Scholar is excluded from school until all discharge is gone and eyes are dry, regardless of whether antibiotic drops have been started.
- **Strep Throat:** Scholar is excluded from school for 24 hours after the initiation of treatment.
- **Head Lice:** Scholar may return to school after completion of first treatment. All cases of head lice should be reported to the school nurse.
- **Covid 19:** Contact the school nurse for isolation/quarantine procedures.

To prevent possible exposure of contagious illnesses to others:

- Scholars with a temperature above 100.4 degrees must be fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication (Tylenol, ibuprofen) before returning to school
- Injuries/illnesses occurring at home or over the weekend should be addressed prior to returning to school.
- If a scholar vomits or has diarrhea during the night or in the morning before school,

they should be kept at home for 24 hours from the last episode.

- If they have red, swollen, itchy eyes, have purulent drainage, or have a crusty appearance upon awakening, they should be kept home and see a doctor.

### Homework Guidelines

Catalyst believes there is inherent value in work at home. Homework allows for scholars to build important habits, reinforces necessary content, and allows for added adult support in a scholar's learning. However, homework should not be overly burdensome. We recommend the following in supporting scholars in homework completion:

- Support scholar in completing Math and Literacy work (when assigned by teacher)
- Read nightly with your scholar for a minimum of 20 minutes.

### Inclusive Learning at Catalyst Academy

The main components of the special education program at Catalyst Academy Charter School ("Catalyst") are also the same components of IDEA, the federal law related to special education. The special education program ("Inclusive Learning") at Catalyst is built on the following:

- The identification of scholars with disabilities ("exceptionalities");
- The development of an Individualized Education Program (IEP);
- The inclusion of all scholars in the least restrictive environment (LRE);
- The engagement of families in decision-making processes for the exceptional scholar;
- The provision of related services;
- And transition services for scholars 14 years or older

### Reporting Requirements of Catalyst Academy under IDEA

**Child Find** is the legal requirement of schools to identify all school age children who have disabilities and may be entitled to special education services. Catalyst is required to evaluate any scholar who presents as an individual who may benefit from specially designed instruction.

**Child Count** is another legal requirement of schools to report the number of scholars who receive special education services by grade level, by disability category, and by age of the scholar.

**Annual Public Notice of Special Education Services and Programs**, in compliance with state and federal regulations, any educational entity that receives federal or state funding is required to issue an annual public notice to community families communicating Catalyst's Child Find and Child Count procedures and findings in both print media and on the Catalyst website.

### Identification of scholars with Exceptionalities

Catalyst Academy closely monitors the performance of scholars with and without IEPs through the Catalyst Academy Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) model. To qualify for special education services, a scholar must meet a three-part test:

1. They must be school age (i.e. 5-21 years old);

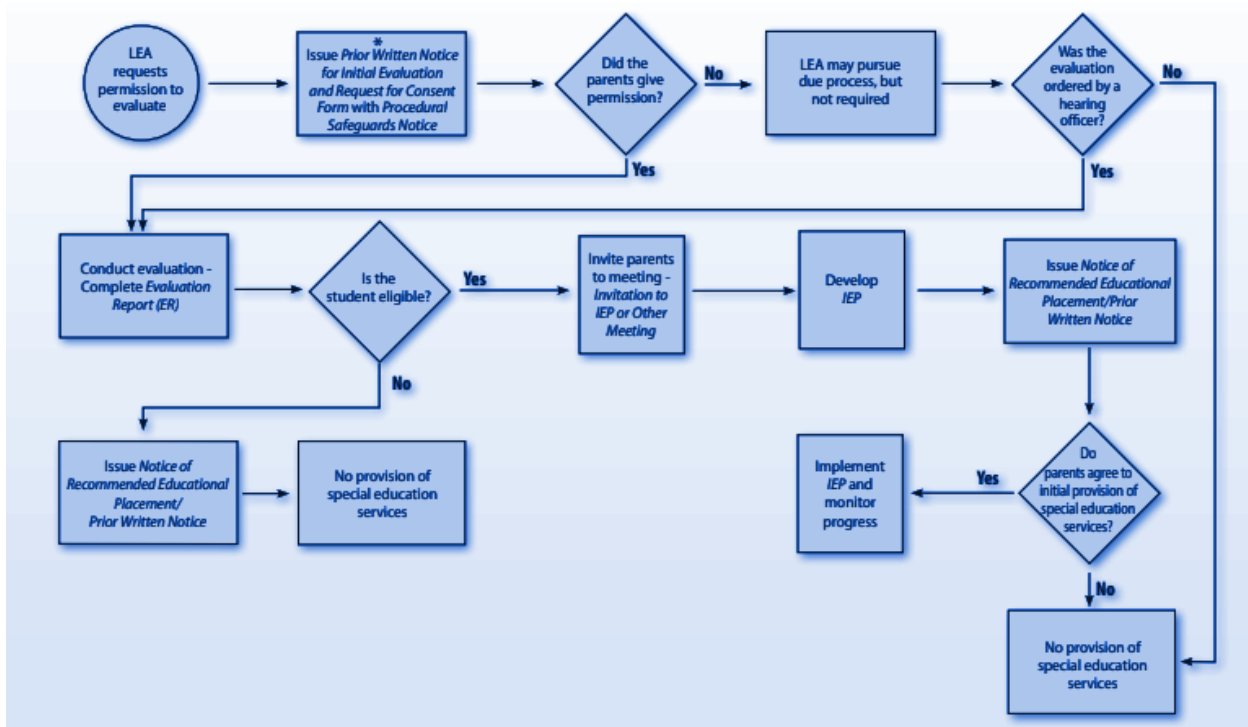
2. They must have a disability recognized under the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) (see below);
3. They must require specially designed instruction to meet their needs in the school setting (see below).

There are thirteen disability categories under IDEA:

- Autism
- Deaf/Blindness
- Deafness/Hearing Impairment
- Emotional Disturbance
- Intellectual Disability
- Multiple Disabilities
- Orthopedic Impairment
- Other Health Impairment (OHI)
- Physical Disability
- Specific Learning Disability (SLD)
- Speech & Language Impairment
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Visual Impairment

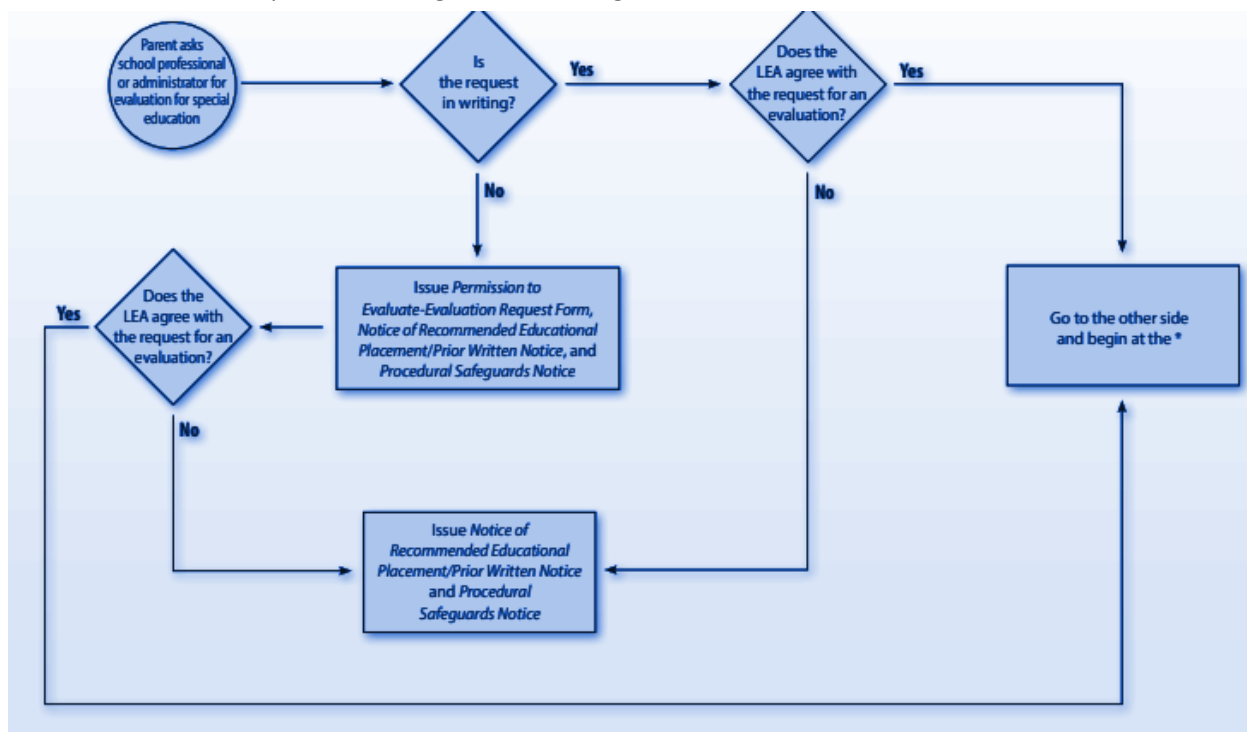


Should a scholar progress through each MTSS tier without significant growth in one or more skill sets, Catalyst staff and the scholar’s family should discuss an evaluation for special education services. The Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN) provides the following flowchart to explain a **school-requested evaluation** for special education services:



(PaTTAN, January 2019)

A **parent or legal guardian** may also request an evaluation for special education services for their child. PaTTAN describes this process through the following flowchart:



(PaTTAN, January 2019)

It's important to note that there are scholars who have disabilities who do not need a special education (i.e. they do not require an IEP). These scholars are often eligible for Section 504 plans, which differs from an IEP in three major ways:

1. Section 504 plans fall under a civil rights statute while an IEP falls under an educational benefits law;
2. Section 504 plans can follow a scholar following graduation from high school, while an IEP does not;
3. An IEP includes specific plans regarding related services, accommodations, modifications, measurable annual goals, and the degree to which the scholar will not be educated with nondisabled scholars among other specificities

Scholars who qualify for an IEP are provided with educational services that align with their disability category. These educational services are designed to meet their individual needs and strengths. In addition to the educational services a scholar with an IEP may receive, there are other services called related services the scholar might require to benefit from special education. These related services include transportation, speech pathology and audiology, psychological services, physical and occupational therapy, social work services, and nursing.

The extent of special education services and the location for the delivery of such services are determined by the IEP team (including parents and staff) at an annual IEP team meeting and are reevaluated every three years for all disability categories except for scholars with an Intellectual Disability, who are eligible for reevaluation every two years.

Procedural Safeguards are distributed to families of students who receive special education services annually. They describe a parent or guardian's rights under federal and state law as well as the process families may follow should they wish to formally seek dispute resolution.

Scholars with exceptionalities and their families can expect to engage in a continuum of support and be embraced by a culture of dignity at Catalyst. Our leadership and instructional staff believes that scholars with exceptionalities at Catalyst belong in a community that not only supports them, but challenges them to achieve and grow commensurate with their abilities.

### **Screening and Evaluation for Special Education**

As reviewed above, Catalyst closely monitors scholar performance throughout the academic year. Evaluations for special education services can be requested by the school or by the parent or legal guardian of the scholar in question.

Should a parent or legal guardian wish to request an evaluation for special education services, they should submit a written request to the attention of:

Director of Inclusive Learning, Catalyst Academy Charter School  
7061 Lemington Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15206  
412-684-2400  
operations@catalystacademy.org

All information collected as part of an individual scholar referral or evaluation is treated in a confidential manner and does not become part of the scholar's permanent record file. A written policy regarding the confidentiality of scholar records is available for review by contacting:

Director of Inclusive Learning, Catalyst Academy Charter School  
7061 Lemington Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15206  
412-684-2400  
operations@catalystacademy.org

An evaluation of a scholar for special education can be an overwhelming process for families. That is why Catalyst staff consider our core beliefs--Below. Grow. Achieve.--in our continuum of support. Our staff believes:

- Your child belongs in a thriving, engaging community;
- Your child is entitled to an exceptional education that meets their needs and strengths;

- Your child can experience success at school (and may even love school!);
- Your child and their future matter to Catalyst

### **Promotion<sup>1</sup>**

Adhering to guidance from the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) Position Statement on Grade Retention and School Promotion, Catalyst Academy employs a holistic approach when considering the retention and/or promotion of a scholar. According to NASP, *“over the past four decades the effectiveness of grade retention fails to support its efficacy in remediating academic deficits.”*

Therefore, the approach of Catalyst Academy will be to collaborate with all necessary stakeholders to create a service model that ensures:

- Multi-tiered problem-solving models to provide early and intensive evidence-based instruction and intervention to meet the needs of all students across academic, behavioral, and social–emotional domains
- Equitable opportunities to learn for students from diverse backgrounds
- Universal screening for academic, behavioral, and social–emotional difficulties
- Frequent progress monitoring and evaluation of interventions

These factors will support our team, in collaboration with the scholar and their family, when determining promotion or retention.

### **Promotion<sup>2</sup>**

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## **Internet Acceptable Use Policy**

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<sup>1</sup> National Association of School Psychologists. (2011). Grade retention and social promotion (Position Statement). Bethesda, MD: Author.

<sup>2</sup> National Association of School Psychologists. (2011). Grade retention and social promotion (Position Statement). Bethesda, MD: Author.



The Internet is a global network linking computers around the world. Internet use provides valuable opportunities for research, curriculum support, and career development. Catalyst Academy Charter School offers Internet access to its scholars and staff. The primary purpose of providing access to the Internet is to support the educational mission of Catalyst Academy Charter School. Catalyst Academy Charter School expects that scholars and staff will use this access in a manner consistent with this purpose. While the Internet is a tremendous resource for electronic information, it has the potential for abuse. Catalyst Academy Charter School makes no guarantees, implied or otherwise, regarding the factual reliability of data available over the Internet. Users of the Catalyst Academy Charter School Internet service assume full responsibility for any costs, liabilities, or damages arising from the way they choose to use their access to the Internet. Catalyst Academy Charter School has installed special filtering software in an effort to block access to material that is not appropriate for children.

The following is a list of prohibited behaviors. The list is not exhaustive, but illustrates unacceptable uses of the Catalyst Academy Charter School's Internet service.

- disclosing, using or disseminating personal identification information about self or others;
- accessing, sending or forwarding materials or communications that are defamatory, pornographic, obscene, sexually explicit, threatening, harassing, or illegal;
- using the Internet service for any illegal activities such as gaining unauthorized access to other systems, arranging for the sale or purchase of drugs or alcohol, participating in criminal gang activity, threatening others, transferring obscene material, or attempting to do any of the above;
- using the Internet service to receive or send information relating to dangerous instruments such as bombs or other explosive devices, automatic weapons or other firearms, or other weaponry;
- vandalizing school computers by causing physical damage, reconfiguring the computer system, attempting to disrupt the computer system, or destroy data by spreading computer viruses or by any other means;
- copying or downloading of copyrighted material without authorization from the copyright holder, unless the copies are used for teaching (including multiple copies for classroom use), scholarship, or research. Users shall not copy and forward or copy and upload any copyrighted material without prior approval of the principal;
- plagiarizing material obtained from the Internet (Any material obtained from the Internet and included in one's own work must be cited and credited by name or by electronic address or path on the Internet. Information obtained through E-mail or news sources must also be credited as to sources.);
- using the Internet service for commercial purposes;
- downloading or installing any commercial software, shareware, freeware or similar types of material onto network drives or disks with

### **Mandated Reporter Policy**

The PA Child Protective Services Act was signed into law in 1975. It was enacted to protect children from abuse, allow the opportunity for healthy growth and development and, whenever possible, preserve and stabilize the family. What is child abuse? Child abuse, according to the CPSL, includes any recent act or

failure to act by a perpetrator which causes nonaccidental serious physical injury or non-accidental serious mental injury to a child under 18 years of age, sexual abuse or sexual exploitation to a child under 18 years of age, and serious neglect. The law says that mandated reporters must immediately make a report or notify the person in charge. The person in charge or the designee must make a report of suspected child abuse immediately to ChildLine at **1-800-932-0313**.

### **Medication Administration Policy**

Catalyst Academy Charter School (“Catalyst”) understands that taking medication can be a serious health matter for scholars and their families. Catalyst requires parents/guardians to administer scholar medications at home rather than at school whenever possible, as there are safety concerns about scholars forgetting to take the medication, having a reaction to the medication or other scholars taking the medication. Catalyst acknowledges that some scholars may require prescription or non-prescription medication for chronic or short-term illnesses during the school day to enable them to remain in school and participate in their education. When a licensed health care provider deems it medically necessary that a medication be administered during the school day, the following policy shall apply.

Catalyst Academy Charter School (“Catalyst”) understands that taking medication can be a serious health matter for students and their families. Catalyst requires parents/guardians to administer student medications at home rather than at school whenever possible, as there are safety concerns about students forgetting to take the medication, having a reaction to the medication or other students taking the medication. Catalyst acknowledges that some students may require prescription or non-prescription medication for chronic or short-term illnesses during the school day to enable them to remain in school and participate in their education. When a licensed health care provider deems it medically necessary that a medication be administered during the school day, the following policy shall apply.

### **Objective**

It is the objective of this policy to specify the conditions and circumstances under which medication shall be administered during the school day.

### **Definitions**

“Medication” is an F.D.A. (United States Food & Drug Administration) approved drug or preparation used for the treatment or prevention of disease that is (a) prescribed by a health care provider, who is licensed to write a prescription in any state in the United States of America (a “prescription medication”), or (b) an over-the-counter medication (a “non-prescription medication”). “Licensed health care provider” is a medical doctor (M.D.); doctor of osteopathy (D.O.); dentist (D.M.D. or D.D.S.); nurse practitioner (C.R.N.P.); physician assistant (P.A.C.); or doctor of optometry (O.D.);

“F.D.A. approved label” is the official description of a drug product which includes: indications; who should take the drug; adverse effects; instructions for uses in pregnancy, children and other populations; and safety information for the patient;

“Self-administration” means medication administered directly by the student to herself/himself not in the presence of a school nurse.

### **Policy**

It is the policy of the Board that:

1. Catalyst shall not be responsible for the diagnosis of a student's illness;
2. The administration or self-administration of prescription and non-prescription medications during the school day will be permitted when:
  - a. a licensed health care provider deems it medically necessary for the student to take medication, either prescription or non-prescription, during the school day;
  - b. the Authorization for Medication Administration Form is completed and signed by the licensed health care provider;
  - c. the Authorization for Medication Administration Form is signed by the parent/guardian;
  - d. the medication is delivered to the health office in a container with an FDA approved label;
  - e. Parent(s)/guardian(s) are responsible for assuring that the medication delivered to the Health Office is up to date and that the supply of medication is renewed as needed.
3. Non-compliance with these procedures may result in the student not receiving his/her medication;
4. The CEO or designee shall formulate administrative procedures that a parent/guardian must follow before any medication (prescription and/or non-prescription) will be administered or self-administered to his/her child during the school day. The procedures shall include a written request from the parent/guardian to administer the medication with a written order from the licensed health care provider;
5. Self-administration will be permitted where a licensed health care provider and parent confirm that there is a medical need for, and the student is responsible for and capable of, self-administering the medication. Such confirmation shall acknowledge that Catalyst assumes no liability for such self-administration. Prior Health Office approval is required. Catalyst may require that these written confirmations be updated from time to time;
6. Where a student demonstrates the capability for self-administration and for responsible behavior in the use of an asthma inhaler and/or EpiPen, the student may possess and use the inhaler and/or EpiPen at school. Students are prohibited from providing any medication or inhaler to another student, and violations of this policy will result in the immediate confiscation of the inhaler and the medication, loss of privileges of possessing same, and discipline under other Catalyst policies concerning controlled substances. Prior to receiving permission for self-administration with an inhaler or EpiPen, the student and parent shall provide a written statement from a licensed health care provider describing the drug, the dosage, the time the medication is to be taken and the diagnosis and the reason the medicine is needed. The licensed health care provider's statement shall also indicate the potential of any serious reaction that might occur, as well as any necessary emergency response, and shall also indicate whether the student is qualified and able to self-administer the medication. The student must notify a staff member immediately following each use of an EpiPen. The provisions of paragraph 4, above, shall apply to self-administration by inhaler;
7. Except as specifically provided for in this Policy and any accompanying administrative procedures, all medications (prescription and/or non-prescription) must be delivered to the health office for storing and administering and students are not permitted to carry medications on their persons during the school day, unless all requirements for permission for self-administration are met. Violations of any provision of this Policy or any related procedures may result in disciplinary action;

8. For life-threatening situations indicating incipient anaphylactic shock, trained staff shall be authorized to administer the prescribed Epi-pen. The CEO or designee shall designate the procedures to be followed, including training of staff, forms to be completed in advance by the parent/guardian and procedures for emergency administration of the medication;
9. Nothing in this policy is designed to prevent the administration of first-aid including the administration of Glucagon and/or EpiPen to a student without the express written permission of a parent where deemed necessary by a nurse pursuant to her/his professional judgment;
10. Catalyst will not administer or allow self-administration of homeopathic or herbal remedies;
11. The CEO or designee shall periodically review state standards and direct the responsible personnel accordingly;
12. Field Trips: Medications cannot be sent with the teacher if the school nurse is unable to attend the field trip. Situations involving children with life threatening medical conditions and students taking daily medications will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. For other situations, parents of children who receive routine medication during school hours may choose to have their children not receive their medication on the day of the field trip if the nurse cannot attend. Any questions should be directed to the school nurse;
13. All medications must be retrieved by parents or an adult designee at the end of the school year. Medications will not be returned to students. Any medication not picked up at the end of the school year will be properly disposed of. No medication will remain at school over the summer;
14. Exceptions to this Policy must be approved by the CEO.

#### ***Administration Responsibility***

It shall be the responsibility of the Administration to develop and enforce any administrative procedures deemed necessary to implement this Policy.

#### ***Communication***

This Policy shall be communicated to:

1. Catalyst Staff
2. scholars and Parents through Parent/scholar Handbooks

#### **Non Discriminatory Policy**

Catalyst Academy Charter School as a matter of policy provides educational opportunities without regard to race, creed, color, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, disability, or age. In addition, RePublic Schools does not permit or condone discrimination based on race, creed, color, national origin, religion, marital status, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, physical disability, or age in employment matters or assignment in programs or services provided.

#### **Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)**

The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232h; 34 CFR Part 98) applies to programs that receive funding from the U.S. Department of Education (ED). PPRA is intended to protect the rights of parents and students in two ways:

It seeks to ensure that schools and contractors make instructional materials available for inspection by parents if those materials will be used in connection with an ED-funded survey, analysis, or evaluation in which their children participate; and

It seeks to ensure that schools and contractors obtain written parental consent before minor students are required to participate in any ED-funded survey, analysis, or evaluation that reveals information concerning:

- Political affiliations;
- Mental and psychological problems potentially embarrassing to the student and his/her family;
- Sex behavior and attitudes;
- Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating and demeaning behavior;
- Critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close family relationships;
- Legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians, and ministers; or
- Income (other than that required by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under such program).

Parents or students who believe their rights under PPRA may have been violated may file a complaint with ED by writing the Family Policy Compliance Office. Complaints must contain specific allegations of fact giving reasonable cause to believe that a violation of PPRA occurred.

For additional information or technical assistance, you may call 202-260-3887 (voice). Individuals who use TDD may call the Federal Information Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339. Additionally, you may contact us at the following address:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20202-5920

### Scholar Belongings

Scholars should only bring items to class that are requested by teachers and/or support learning. Items such as but not limited to toys, portable gaming devices, or cell phones are not allowed in classrooms and must be kept in lockers or other designated storage areas. Scholars who violate this rule will have their item(s) confiscated for a period of time in the Front Office. Repeated violations of this policy may result in indefinite confiscation irrespective of any costs or fees scholars and/or their families may incur as a result. Skateboards, roller blades, skates, or scooters are not permitted on school property. If so, they will be confiscated and held in the Front Office.

### Scholar Goal Circles

Scholar Goal Circles are an important opportunity for parents, guardians, and other members of a scholar’s support system to meet with teachers and school administrators. Scholar Goal Circles are similar to traditional parent teacher conferences, but they have a few key distinguishing characteristics. They center the scholar in the conversation. Scholars, supported by their teachers, will be active participants in the conversation. The discussion will be goal-oriented, both to note prior progress and also to set goals for the next period. Finally, the term “circle” signifies the importance of having the scholar’s support circle attend the meeting. In addition to parents and guardians , this can include other important family members (e.g., grandparents), mentors, coaches, etc.

Catalyst will communicate scholar goal circle dates in advance and parents sign up for an appointment time to meet with their scholar’s primary general education teacher. Parents will also have the opportunity to speak with talent teachers and school administrators during these events. Scholar Goal Circles take place three times a year, and typically are on a Wednesday from 4:30-7:00.

### School Closings

Catalyst Academy Charter School follows Pittsburgh Public Schools inclement weather announcements. Families should check the Catalyst Academy Facebook and Instagram pages for general updates and can expect communication directly from school leadership confirming announcements.

### School Lunch and Breakfast

Catalyst participates in the National School Lunch Program. Families are requested to complete an Application for Free and Reduced Price School Meals to qualify for free or reduced priced breakfast and lunch. Regardless of whether a scholar is eligible for free or reduced price meals, all scholars receive breakfast and lunch at no charge. Menus will be distributed monthly.

Catalyst Academy Charter school promotes healthy nutrition. Breakfast and lunch will be provided by the school daily. Scholars may bring outside food items however there will not be refrigeration provided unless medically needed. We also advise parents of children with food allergies to communicate any/all needs with faculty and staff proactively. Catalyst Academy will take reasonable precautions to ensure scholar safety.

Listed below are a few examples of healthy choice items as well as items that are not allowed in school.

Examples of Healthy Choices	Examples of Items Not Allowed
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Water and Natural Fruit Juices</li> <li>✓ Fresh Fruits</li> <li>✓ Fresh Vegetables</li> <li>✓ Sandwiches on Whole Wheat Bread</li> <li>✓ Graham Crackers</li> <li>✓ Sugar Free Jell-O</li> <li>✓ Yogurt</li> <li>✓ Raisins</li> <li>✓ Applesauce</li> <li>✓ Cups of Fruit</li> <li>✓ Cottage Cheese</li> <li>✓ Dried Fruit</li> <li>✓ Granola Bar</li> <li>✓ Pretzels</li> <li>✓ Crackers</li> <li>✓ Cheese</li> <li>✓ Whole Grain Cereal/Cereal Bars</li> <li>✓ Veggie Chips</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ Juices with added sugar or high fructose corn syrup</li> <li>✗ Chocolate and Strawberry Milk</li> <li>✗ Candy</li> <li>✗ Soda</li> <li>✗ Cookies</li> <li>✗ Doughnuts</li> <li>✗ Cake</li> </ul>
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### Title I

Title I is a 100% Federally funded supplemental education program that provides financial assistance to local educational agencies to improve educational opportunities for educationally deprived children. Title I programs are designed to help children meet the state content and performance standards in reading, language arts, and mathematics.

Catalyst Academy receives Title I funding. As a Title I school, Catalyst must ensure that information related to scholar and parent/family programs, meetings, and other activities are sent to the families of Title I children in a format and in a language that family can understand.

Catalyst Academy will engage with scholars' families through a flexible number of meetings in the morning and/or evening. Catalyst will provide parents of participating children with a description and explanation of the curriculum in use at the school, the forms of academic assessments used to measure student progress, and the achievement levels of the challenging state academic standards. If requested by parents, opportunities for regular meetings to formulate suggestions and to participate, as appropriate, in decisions relating to the education of their children, and respond to any such suggestions as soon as practicably possible.

A School-Parent Compact is developed with parents and family members during the current academy year. The compact outlines how parents, school staff, and scholars will share in the responsibility for improved student academic achievement and the means by which the school and the parents will build and develop partnerships to help children achieve the state's high standards. The compact:

- describes the school’s responsibility to provide high-quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment that enables the children served under this part to meet the challenging state academic standards, and the ways in which each parent will be responsible for supporting their children’s learning; volunteering in their child’s classroom; and participating, as appropriate, in decisions relating to the education of their children and positive use of extracurricular time;
- addresses the importance of communication between teachers and parents on an ongoing basis through, at a minimum;
- mandates parent-teacher conferences in elementary schools, at least annually, during which the compact shall be discussed as the compact relates to the individual child’s achievement;
- frequent reports to parents on their children’s progress;
- provides materials and resources to families to promote the child’s education at home;
- reasonable access to staff, opportunities to volunteer and participate in their child’s class, and observation of classroom activities; and ensuring regular two-way, meaningful communication between family members and school staff, and, to the extent practicable, in a language that family members can understand either in print or through a translator

### **Parent Right-to-Know Letter**

Parent Right to Know Information as Required by The Elementary and Secondary Education Assistance (ESEA) [Section 1112(e)(1)(A)] and the Every Student Succeeds Act [Section 1112(e)(1)(A)]

Dear Parent(s)/Legal Guardian(s):

Your child attends Catalyst Academy Charter School, which receives Federal Title I funds to assist students in meeting state achievement standards. Throughout the school year, we will be providing you with important information about this law and your child’s education. This letter lets you know about your right to request information about the qualifications of the classroom staff working with your child.

At Catalyst Academy Charter School, we are very proud of our teachers and feel they are prepared to give your child a high-quality education. As a Title I school, we must meet federal regulations related to teacher qualifications as defined in ESEA. These regulations allow you to learn more about your child’s teachers’ training and credentials. We are happy to provide this information to you. At any time, you may ask:



- Whether the teacher met state qualifications and certification requirements for the grade level and subject he/she is teaching,
- Whether the teacher received an emergency or conditional certificate through which state qualifications were waived, and
- What undergraduate or graduate degrees the teacher holds, including graduate certificates and additional degrees, and major(s) or area(s) of concentration.

You may also ask whether your child receives help from a paraprofessional. If your child receives this assistance, we can provide you with information about the paraprofessional's qualifications.

Our staff is committed to helping your child develop the academic knowledge and critical thinking he/she needs to succeed in school and beyond. That commitment includes making sure that all of our teachers and paraprofessionals meet applicable Pennsylvania state requirements.

If you have any questions about your child's assignment to a teacher or paraprofessional, please contact Courtney Taylor at 412-684-2400 or [meghan.lawrence@catalystacademy.org](mailto:meghan.lawrence@catalystacademy.org).

Sincerely,

Meghan Lawrence

## TITLE I

### SCHOOL – PARENT – STUDENT COMPACT

The School Parent Compact will describe school-parent compact will be jointly developed with parents and family members and the compact outlines how parents, the entire school staff, and students will share in the responsibility for improved student academic achievement and the means by which the school and the parents will build and develop partnerships to help children achieve the State's high standards (*ESSA, Section 1116(d)*).

#### **School**

The school understands the importance of the school experience to every student and their role as educators and models. Therefore, the school agrees to carry out the following responsibilities to the best of their ability:

- Provide high-quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment that enables the children served under this part to meet the challenging State academic standards (required);
- Address the importance of communication between teachers and parents on an ongoing basis through, at a minimum through;
  - parent-teacher conferences in elementary schools, at least annually, during which the compact shall be discussed as the compact relates to the individual child's achievement
  - frequent reports to parents on their children's progress;
  - reasonable access to staff, opportunities to volunteer and participate in their child's class, and observation of classroom activities; and
- Ensuring regular two-way, meaningful communication between family members and school staff and, to the extent practicable, in a language that family members can understand;
- Treat each child with dignity and respect;
- Strive to address the individual needs of the student;
- Acknowledge that parents are vital to the success of child and school;
- Provide a safe, positive and healthy learning environment;
- Assure every student access to quality learning experiences;
- Assure that the school staff communicates clear expectations for performance to both students and parents

#### **Parent**

The parent understands that participation in his/her student's education will help his/her achievement and attitude. Therefore, the parent will continue to carry out the following responsibilities to the best of his/her ability:

- Volunteering in their child's classroom;
- Supporting their child's learning;
- Participating, as appropriate, in decisions relating to the education of their child and positive use of extracurricular time;
- Create a home atmosphere that supports learning;
- Send the student to school on time and well-rested on a regular basis;

- Attend school functions and conference;
- Encourage their child to show respect for all members of the school community and school property;
- Review all school communications and respond promptly

***Student (all school discretion to include items below)***

The student realizes education is important. He/she is the one responsible for his/her own success. Therefore, he/she agrees to carry out the following responsibilities to the best of his/her ability:

- Get to school on time every day;
- Develop a positive attitude toward school;
- Be responsible for completing homework on time;
- Be cooperative by carrying out the teacher's instructions and ask for help when needed;
- Do daily work that is neat and reflects the student's best effort;
- Be respectful to all school members and to school property

## **Title IA Complaint Resolution Procedures**

### **Introduction**

On December 10, 2015 a new Federal education law was signed by President Obama. This law, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), requires schools that receive federal Title IA funding adopt written procedures for resolving complaints filed.

### **Definition**

A “complaint” is a written, signed statement filed by an individual or an organization. It must include:

- A. A statement that a school has violated a requirement of federal statute or regulation that applies to Title IA.
- B. The facts on which the statement is based.
- C. Information on any discussions, meetings or correspondence with a school regarding the complaint.

### **Complaint Resolution Procedures**

1. Referral – Complaints against schools should be referred to Catalyst’s Federal Programs Office:

Federal Programs Director  
Catalyst Academy Charter School  
7061 Lemington Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15206  
412-684-2400

2. Notice to School:
  - a. The Federal Programs Office will notify the school Principal and CEO that a complaint has been received. A copy of the complaint will be given to the CEO and Principal with directions given for the Principal to respond;
3. Investigation:
  - a. After receiving the Principal’s response, the Federal Programs Office, along with the CEO, will determine whether further investigation is necessary. If necessary, the Federal Programs Office and the CEO may do an onsite investigation at the school;
4. Opportunity to Present Evidence:
  - a. The Federal Programs Director may provide for the complainant and the Principal to present evidence;
5. Report and Recommended Resolution:
  - a. Once the Federal Programs Director has completed the investigation and the taking of evidence, a report will be prepared with a recommendation for resolving the complaint. The report will give the name of the party bringing the complaint, the nature of the complaint, a summary of the investigation, the recommended resolution and the reasons for the recommendation. Copies of the report will be issued to all parties involved. The recommended resolution will become effective upon issuance of the report;
6. Follow up:
  - a. The Federal Programs Director and the CEO will ensure that the resolution of the complaint is implemented.
7. Time Limit:
  - a. The period between the Federal Programs Director receiving the complaint and resolution of the complaint shall not exceed sixty (60) calendar days.

8. Right to Appeal:
  - a. Either party may appeal the final resolution to the Department of Education.

### **Visitors**

Visitors are welcomed to come and see the work of our scholars and experience the work of our school community. All visitors are required to show appropriate identification and sign-in in the front office. During the duration of their visit, visitors are required to wear a visitor's badge.