



**CORNERSTONE**  
**PREPARATORY SCHOOL**  
**Lester Campus**

*“College Prep begins in Kindergarten”*

**Family Handbook**  
**2014-2015**

**320 Carpenter Street**  
**Memphis, TN 38112**  
**901-416-3640**

**Revised June 16, 2014**



Dear parents and guardians,

We are honored that you have selected Cornerstone Prep as the school of choice for your child. We know you desire the best for those in your care – thanks for trusting us to educate your child.

We desire to partner with you in the educational process. We value your input, ideas and support as we work together to provide the highest quality education to your child. We firmly believe that working together we can accomplish our mission:

Cornerstone Prep equips all students with the Wisdom and Knowledge necessary to succeed in college and to become leaders in their community.

Included in the following pages are some of the critical ways in which we can work together to ensure that your child grows in Wisdom and Knowledge during the 2014-2015 school year. I want to highlight some of the most important items here.

The most important way you can invest in the future of your child is to make sure they come to school, on time, every day. We accomplish so much during one school day – missing even one day of school, or even arriving late or dismissing early, puts your child behind other Prepsters. So, please make sure your child attends school all day every day.

Homework is another critical success factor in the life of your child. Consistently completed homework provides your child practice that is necessary for mastery of the concept taught during the school day. Your child needs you to remind and require him or her to complete homework each day. Your child should need little help completing the assignment but they do need you to emphasize the importance of it.

Thanks for working with us on these two very important areas of your child's education.

We have many other ways in which you can participate in the life of the school, including helping with classroom celebrations, participating in afterschool programs and events, and providing support for your child's teacher. Please contact Jacque Fields to discover the many opportunities available for you to get involved at Cornerstone Prep.

I look forward to spending the year with you and your child – thanks for giving me the privilege of serving you this year.

Sincerely,

Lisa R. Settle  
Principal, Cornerstone Prep

## **The Mission of Our Organization and School**

Capstone Education Group is the organization and governing body of Cornerstone Prep and seeks to fulfill the same mission as the school, which is as follows: Cornerstone Prep equips all students with the Wisdom and Knowledge necessary to succeed in college and to become leaders in their community.

## **Enrollment**

Cornerstone Prep is an Achievement School District (ASD) neighborhood school with a designated attendance zone. The ASD guarantees enrollment to all attendance area students at their assigned school or an equivalent placement. The ASD also guarantees the continued enrollment of non-attendance area students (e.g. transfers) who attended an ASD school prior to the transformation. In the event of additional capacity, ASD schools can serve other eligible, but not ‘guaranteed enrollment’ groups of students. The ASD has established an enrollment priority group structure to ensure that its schools serve certain students. Schools with attendance areas must serve all students assigned to their school. If a school has additional seats available after all students with guaranteed enrollment are offered seats, the school may offer enrollment to other students.

No students entering school, including those entering kindergarten or first grade, those from out-of-state and those from nonpublic schools, will be permitted to enroll (or attend) without proof of immunization, as determined by the Commissioner of Public Health.<sup>1</sup> It is the responsibility of the parents or guardians to have their children immunized and to provide such proof to the principal of the school which the student is to attend. Exceptions, in the absence of an epidemic or immediate threat thereof, will be granted to any child whose parent or guardian shall file with school authorities a signed, written statement that such measures conflict with his/her religious tenets and practices; or due to medical reasons if such child has a written statement from his/her doctor excusing him from such immunization. A homeless child or youth should be enrolled immediately and have full and equal opportunity even if no records are currently available. Proof of exceptions will be in writing and filed in the same manner as other immunization records. A list of transfer students shall be kept at each school throughout the school year in order that their records can be monitored by the Department of Health.

Each school will provide and/or provide for special services that may be required to facilitate equitable access and participation of students based on varying factors such as being an English Language Learner (ELL), experiencing homelessness, requiring special education or gifted services; students’ achievement level on State assessment; or attending a Title I school. Students and parents/guardians have the right to request teachers’ and other paraprofessionals’ qualifications.

English Language Learners (ELL) are non-English language background students whose level of oral, reading, and written proficiency in English does not allow them to fully benefit from the curriculum and creates difficulty in regular classroom curriculum without specially designed modifications. ELL students have not yet met the definition of

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<sup>1</sup> T.C.A. §49-6-5001.

fluent English proficient (FEP). If the inability to understand, speak, read, or write the English language excludes a student from effective participation in the educational programs offered by the school, the school shall take appropriate action to rectify the English language deficiency in order to provide the student equal access and participation in its programs. The school shall develop and periodically update a local plan for providing ESL services for students whose native or dominant language is not English. The plan for implementation of appropriate instruction and ESL services for students who have limited English proficiency shall be in accordance with the current rules, regulations, and minimum standards of the State Board of Education, and state, and federal law.

Educational services will be provided for homeless or migrant students in accordance with local, state and federal guidelines (No Child Left Behind). A homeless child<sup>2</sup> lacks fixed, regular and adequate residence or has a primary residence in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter for temporary accommodations, a public or private place not designated for use as regular sleeping accommodations for humans.

The ASD is the local education agency (LEA) for all students with special needs (including students eligible for IEPs or 504s) geographically zoned to attend schools operated by the ASD. Partner Operators offer a full continuum of service options to meet the needs of all students. Unless otherwise required by a student's individualized education program (IEP), all students with disabilities may attend the same zoned school as her or his nondisabled peers, as the vast majority of special education needs can be met in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) at any ASD school. Each school shall provide access to a free appropriate public education to all disabled children residing within the jurisdiction of the school system. The plan for implementation of appropriate instruction and special education services shall be in accordance with the current rules, regulations and minimum standards of the State Board of Education<sup>3</sup>, and State<sup>4</sup>, and federal<sup>5</sup> law. Administrators, principals and teachers are responsible for providing an IEP or 504 Plan for each disabled student and for adhering to all components of this policy. Parents are responsible for becoming knowledgeable of their rights and participating in the IEP or 504 process.

No student will be denied an education solely because of a communicable disease, and his/her educational program shall be restricted only to the extent necessary to minimize the risk of transmitting the disease.<sup>6</sup> Parents or guardians of infected students shall inform appropriate school officials of the infection so that proper precautions for the protection of other students, employees, and the infected student shall be taken. No student with a communicable disease which may endanger the health of either himself/herself or other individuals will enter or remain in the regular school setting. If a school principal has

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<sup>2</sup> As defined by No Child Left Behind, Public Law 117-110

<sup>3</sup> TRR/MS 0520-1-3-.09(3)(b)

<sup>4</sup> T.C.A. §49-10-101

<sup>5</sup> Education of Individuals with Disabilities 20, 1400-1485. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. (Note: 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 has been interpreted by the courts to include individuals with contagious diseases to be disabled.)

<sup>6</sup> T.C.A. §49-2-203; Rule 0520-01-03-.08.

reason to believe a student has a communicable disease which may endanger the health of either himself/herself or other individuals in the regular school setting, the principal shall:

1. Assign the student to a setting which will protect other students, employees and the student himself; or
2. Exclude the student from school until certification is obtained from a physician or the County Health Department by either the parent or principal stating that the disease is no longer communicable.
3. If the superintendent/designee has reason to believe that the student has a long-term communicable disease, the principal must require confirmation from a physician or the County Health Department as to the student's condition. If the student is confirmed to have a long-term communicable disease, the principal shall refer the student for special education services.

The superintendent/designee may request that further examinations be conducted by a physician or County Health Department and may request periodic re-examinations after the student has been readmitted to the school. Expenses incurred from examinations requested by school officials shall be paid by the ASD. The names of all students excluded from school under this policy will be forwarded to the Office of the Superintendent.

### **School Calendar & Closings**

Please see below for the Cornerstone Prep School Calendar for the scheduled school days for the 2014-2015 school year. Please note that we follow the Shelby County School District calendar in most instances.

<b>Date(s)</b>	<b>Day(s)</b>	<b>Event</b>
July 9 <sup>th</sup>	Wednesday	Teacher Professional Development Begins
July 29 <sup>th</sup>	Tuesday	Registration Day
July 30 <sup>th</sup>	Wednesday	Family Fun Day
July 31 <sup>st</sup>	Thursday	New & Returning Student Orientation
August 4 <sup>th</sup>	Monday	First Day of School
August 11 <sup>th</sup>	Monday	Beginning of MAP Testing Window
August 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Friday	End of MAP Testing Window
August 28 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday	Title 1 Parent Meeting
August 29 <sup>th</sup>	Friday	End of Reporting Period
September 1 <sup>st</sup>	Monday	Labor Day – No School
September 4 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday	Parent Council
September 12 <sup>th</sup>	Friday	Interim Assessment #1
September 18 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday	Parent Teacher Conferences
September 19 <sup>th</sup>	Friday	Professional Development Day- Teachers Only
September 22 <sup>nd</sup> -26 <sup>th</sup>	Monday - Friday	Health Screenings: CCHS Dental
September 30 <sup>th</sup>	Tuesday	End of Reporting Periods
October 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Thursday	Parent Council
October 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Friday	Last Day of Quarter #1
October 6 <sup>th</sup> -10 <sup>th</sup>	Monday - Friday	Fall Break – No School

November 4 <sup>th</sup>	Tuesday	End of Reporting Periods
November 6 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday	Parent Council
November 7 <sup>th</sup>	Friday	Interim Assessment #2
November 11 <sup>th</sup>	Tuesday	Veteran's Day – No School
November 17 <sup>th</sup>	Monday	MAP Testing Begins
November 26 <sup>th</sup> - November 28 <sup>th</sup>	Wednesday - Friday	Thanksgiving Break – No School
December 4 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday	Parent Council
December 5 <sup>th</sup>	Friday	MAP Testing Ends
December 8 <sup>th</sup>	Monday	End of Reporting Period
December 19 <sup>th</sup>	Friday	End of Quarter #2
December 19 <sup>th</sup>	Friday	Half Day of School
December 22 <sup>nd</sup> –January 5 <sup>th</sup>	Monday	Winter Break – No School
January 5 <sup>th</sup>	Monday	Professional Development / Teachers only
January 6 <sup>th</sup>	Tuesday	Students Return
January 8 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday	Parent Council
January 19 <sup>th</sup>	Monday	Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday – No School
January 21 <sup>st</sup>	Wednesday	End of Reporting Period
February 6 <sup>th</sup>	Monday	Interim Assessment #3
February 12 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday	Parent Teacher Conferences
February 12 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday	Parent Council
February 16 <sup>th</sup>	Monday	President's Day – No School
February 19 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday	End of Reporting Period
March 5 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday	Parent Council
March 13 <sup>th</sup>	Friday	End of Quarter #3
March 16 <sup>th</sup> –20 <sup>th</sup>	Monday-Friday	Spring Break – No School
March 26 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday	End of Reporting Period
April 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Friday	Good Friday – No School
April 9 <sup>th</sup>	Monday	Parent Council
April 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Thursday	Interim Assessment #4
April 28 <sup>th</sup>	Tuesday	Beginning of TCAP Testing Window
May 8 <sup>th</sup>	Friday	End of TCAP Testing Window
May 8 <sup>th</sup>	Friday	Beginning of MAP Testing Window
May 15 <sup>th</sup>	Friday	Field Day
May 21 <sup>st</sup>	Thursday	End of MAP Testing Window
May 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Friday	Last Day of School / Half Day / End Qtr4

Cornerstone Prep will only close school in cases of extreme weather conditions. In such situations, we will follow the Shelby County School District closing decisions. Please listen to local radio and television stations. If the Shelby County School District announces a delayed opening or a closing, Cornerstone Prep will also be delayed or closed.

## **Arrival**

- The school officially opens to all Prepsters at 7:00 AM each day. Please do not leave your child on the campus before 7:00 AM as doors will not open until 7:00. Prepsters are tardy at 7:20. Breakfast is available to all Prepsters who arrive prior to 7:15.
- All Prepsters should enter the school through the cafeteria doors until 7:20. After 7:20, a family member should bring the Prepster to the main office and sign the Prepster into the school and receive a tardy slip.

## **Dismissal**

- For the safety of all involved, Prepsters will be dismissed in two groups: walkers and car riders.
- Prepsters who are walking home are dismissed at 3:15 so they can safely leave campus before carpool begins.
- Families who children are walking home are responsible for picking up Prepsters at one of the following locations:
  1. Kindergarten and First grade students will be dismissed from the external classroom doors located on the northwest corner of the campus (facing Hale Street). Kindergarten students will be dismissed out of the exterior door of Cornell K and First grade students will be dismissed out of the external door of Wake Forest 1.
  2. Prepsters in grades 2-5 should be picked up outside of the gate located in the breezeway area, which is located just west of the cafeteria on the north side of campus. Teachers will walk all students past the gate, dismissing the students on the outside of the fenced area. Please wait outside the gate until the teacher brings your child past the gate.
  3. Prepsters who ride in a car or bus or typically walk to the Lester Community Center for after school programs should be picked up in the cafeteria.
- Carpool begins at 3:30 in the driveway on the north side of the campus, just behind the cafeteria. Please drive your vehicle from west to east on Hale so that you can enter the campus by turning right rather than turning across traffic.
- Please meet your student no later than 3:15 if they are walking home and 3:45 if they are riding home in a vehicle.
- Families must submit a release form listing the names and information for any individuals other than parents or guardians who are authorized to pick up their child.

## **Transportation**

Cornerstone Prep is authorized to provide transportation services to and from school at no cost for eligible students. The provision of such services, although not required for students other than those receiving special education services as determined by a child's individualized education program (IEP), is provided as a service to the general population in accordance with applicable federal and State laws . Regardless of circumstance, students with IEPs requiring transportation services remain eligible for such services after the 10<sup>th</sup> day of suspension. Criteria for bus ridership eligibility for the general population

are determined by the ASD. Student use of transportation provided by the ASD is a privilege and continued eligibility to use the transportation services provided may be suspended and/or revoked for violation of applicable policies and rules.

The following resident students are eligible for transportation on school buses:

1. To and from a Student's Zoned School
  - a. All students enrolled in elementary schools who reside one and one-half (1 ½) miles or more from their zoned/assigned school
  - b. All students enrolled in middle or high schools who reside two (2) miles or more from their zoned/assigned school
  - c. Students receiving special education services who have a current IEP indicating a need for special transportation services, regardless of distance
  - d. Students living within the designated miles for their assigned schools with a 504 plan that indicates a need for student transportation as verified by a physician (a completed Student Information Form must be on file at the school).
  - e. Students who reside in an area where traffic or other conditions make walking to and from school hazardous. Hazardous areas, as determined annually by an analysis conducted by the office responsible for student transportation services, shall be based on the following conditions:
    - i. Age of student
    - ii. Traffic volume and/or speed
    - iii. Roadway design/walkway conditions (i.e. curvy roads, sidewalks, ditches)
    - iv. Railroad tracks and crossings
    - v. River or waterway crossings
    - vi. Other conditions as deemed appropriate
2. To and From a School of Choice
  - a. Parents/students electing to attend an ASD School not in their attendance zone, but are zoned to a "Priority School" (a school in the bottom 5% in the state of TN), can do so. However, parents shall be responsible for their child's transportation to and from the School of Choice (unless transportation is already being provided).
  - b. School of Choice transportation is defined as a student getting to a bus stop on an existing bus route where the bus, having room for the student, is already scheduled to go to a designated school(s). Students attending a School of Choice may be transported by the bus, as tag-along transportation, upon completion of the district's School Choice transportation request form annually, and under the following conditions:
    - i. The student can get to an existing bus stop by the established pick up time for a bus already going to the School of Choice;
    - ii. This School of Choice transportation would not cause a student overload on the bus or otherwise result in any additional cost to the district;
    - iii. This School of Choice transportation is merely a courtesy based on the aforementioned conditions. If any of these conditions change,

- tag-along transportation shall automatically terminate. The District will attempt to provide two (2) weeks' notice to parents prior to such termination when possible;
- iv. The District's School of Choice transportation request form shall state that the School of Choice transportation is merely a courtesy and a privilege, subject to termination if any of the above conditions change

## **Attendance**

Consistent attendance is a critical aspect of your child's academic achievement. Therefore, Cornerstone Prep requires regular attendance in order for a child to be promoted to the next grade. The ambitious nature of our curriculum and school day make regular attendance essential for Prepsters to keep pace with their classmates. Excessive absences will be considered a violation of the family agreement with Cornerstone Prep and Prepsters who miss an excessive number of days may not be promoted to the next grade. As required by law, excessive absences will also be reported to proper authorities. Listed below are the details regarding absences.

Tennessee law requires that all children between the ages of six (6) and seventeen (17) attend school.<sup>7</sup> In the ASD, attendance is also mandatory for students who have been expelled and remanded to attend alternative education programs. Attendance is a key factor in student achievement and therefore, students are expected to be present and on-time each day that school is in session. Students and parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring regular school attendance. Unexcused absences are prohibited by law and policy. Cornerstone Prep will notify parents/guardians when students are absent, provide opportunities to restore the student's attendance and offer access to resources to address truancy challenges. Referral to Juvenile Court or to the District Attorney General will be the final option.<sup>8</sup>

## **Excused and Unexcused Absences**

Absences for grades K-5 shall be classified as either excused or unexcused as determined by the principal or his/her designee. Excused absences shall include:

1. Personal illness or hospitalization of the student;
2. Illness or incapacitating condition of a family member that requires the temporary help of a student;
3. Death in the family;
4. Validated court appearances of the student;
5. Religious observances;<sup>9</sup>
6. One-day absence when the parent/guardian or custodian is deployed for military service and one-day absence when the parent/guardian or custodian returns from military service;<sup>10</sup> or
7. Circumstances, which in the judgment of the principal, create emergencies over which the student has no control.

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<sup>7</sup> T.C.A. §49-6-3001

<sup>8</sup> T.C.A. §49-6-3007

<sup>9</sup> T.C.A. §49-6-2904

<sup>10</sup> T.C.A. §49-6-3019

A student who does not receive prior approval from the teacher or principal/designee for an excused absence must submit documentation from a parent or guardian or other appropriate person describing the excused absence immediately upon the student's return to school, but, in any event, no later than three (3) school days after the absence was taken. If no documentation justifying the absence as excusable is submitted within the three-day period, the absence will become an unexcused absence.

In order to be counted present per ASD requirements, students must be in attendance for 4 hours for kindergarten and 6.5 hours for grades 1-8.

## **Appeals**

Disputes over whether an absence is excused or unexcused shall be decided by the principal (or designee). After meeting with the parent/guardian, the principal will send the parent/guardian a letter confirming his or her decision and ensure that the student's attendance record is adjusted accordingly. The principal's decision can be appealed to the operator's designee, as specified in the principal's decision confirmation letter.

## **School Responsibilities**

The principal/designee shall be responsible for ensuring that:

1. Parents are notified of compulsory attendance laws, the school's attendance goals and expectations, and the consequences for noncompliance;
2. Parents and students are informed of the avenues to talk about attendance-related problems with persons at the school whom they trust when poor attendance and truancy are a result of non-school related issues (e.g., family, social, economic);
3. Attendance is checked and reported daily for each class;
4. All student absences are verified;
5. Written excuses are submitted for absences and tardiness;
6. If necessary, verification is obtained from an official or other source to justify absences (e.g. letter from a doctor's office);
7. The school's student information system is updated daily with all students' attendance information to enable accurate district-wide reporting and monitoring of student attendance and interventions, when necessary; and
8. Unexcused Absence Procedures are implemented, including timely parent communications, attendance intervention support plan development and execution and operator/district notifications.

## **Unexcused Absence Process**

1. If a student is absent without an excuse, the school will implement school-based interventions to encourage regular school attendance. At a minimum, the following attendance procedures shall be implemented upon the fifth (5th) unexcused absence:
  - a. Formal written communication from the school to parents/guardians informing them of their noncompliance with compulsory attendance laws, the consequences for failing to comply, and a request to participate in a school-level meeting to develop a plan to support the student's regular attendance. The plan shall be signed by the student, parent/guardian and principal and included in the student's file.

- b. The student's truancy will be reported to the ASD and to the TN Department of Education via the school's weekly EIS transmission on student attendance, including the required transmission on student truancy that exceeds five unexcused absences.
  - c. All other forms of communications from the school to parents/guardians regarding student truancy may be conveyed in the form(s) that best meet student and school needs. Documentation of communication attempts and outcomes must be kept in the student's file, accessible by authorized district, state, community agency and law enforcement officials, upon request.
2. After a student has accumulated ten (10) or more unexcused absences, the school's Principal Designee will notify the Office of Portfolio Management ([compliance@tnasd.org](mailto:compliance@tnasd.org)) using the electronic truancy form.
  3. Within 72 hours of receiving notification from the Operator or Principal Designee, a letter from the Office of Portfolio Management will be sent to the parents/guardians to:
    - a. Encourage them to partner with the school in implementing the student's Attendance Intervention Plan and,
    - b. Inform the parent/guardian that if the parent fails to take appropriate action within three (3) days of notice of noncompliance, the Juvenile Court, District Attorney's Office, and/or Department of Children's Services may be notified for appropriate legal action and the student will be dis-enrolled from school.

Any student who accumulates ten (10) or more days of unexcused absences within a school year may, if the parent fails to take appropriate action within three (3) days of notice of noncompliance, be referred to Juvenile Court, the District Attorney's Office, and/or the Department of Children's Services for appropriate legal action. However, every attempt shall be made to intervene to support students prior to referral to these agencies.

### **All Absences Require a Note or Call**

Parents are required to provide a doctor's note or a phone call to the school to inform the school of the reason for the child's absence. Parents must notify the school within 3 days of the child's absence.

### **All Absences – “Excused” and “Unexcused” – Are Still Considered Absences**

Any day your child does not attend school is considered an absence.

### **Excessive Absences Diminish a Child's Opportunity for Promotion**

A Prepster who is frequently absent in a grading period is missing significant classwork. If a Prepster is missing significant classwork, the family will be called to the school to discuss the problem and develop an attendance plan.

### **Please Do Not Miss School for Appointments**

Families are responsible for scheduling medical appointments outside of school time. The best times are afternoons (after 3:15 PM) or days when school is not in session. In the rare

case when a Prepster has a medical appointment that cannot be scheduled after school, please be sure the Prepsters only misses school for the amount of time necessary to attend the appointment, not the entire school day.

### **Celebrations for Attendance**

Prepsters who have perfect attendance are congratulated and recognized for exceptional attendance and commitment to their education.

### **Tardiness**

Arriving to school on time is a key to your child's success. Breakfast is available to all Prepsters who arrive before 7:15. Prepsters choosing not to eat breakfast may arrive anytime between 7:00 and 7:20. All Prepsters who arrive after 7:20 are late and are missing essential instruction, disrupting the learning of other children, and risk falling behind on our ambitious curriculum.

Per the ASD policy, any tardiness other than those allowed as excused absences are unexcused. The ASD considers more than 4 absences in a grading period to be excessive. Please make sure your child arrives on time, ready to learn, every day. Prepsters who are tardy will miss a special subject each day they are tardy. Prepsters will miss either Art or Computer and multiple tardies will equal an unexcused absence.

Prepsters who are habitually tardy are subject to retention in their current grade and parents will be reported to the Department of Children's Services for educational neglect, in accordance to the Achievement School District policy in conjunction with directions from the Memphis & Shelby County Juvenile Court. Please see consequences for excessive tardies below.

#### Lower School grades Kindergarten – 2<sup>nd</sup>

- Every 4 tardies = 1 unexcused absence (calculated each quarter)
- 4 tardies - letter from the school
- 8 tardies – phone call and letter from the Principal
- 12 tardies – notice to the Achievement School District and report to the Department of Children's Services for education neglect

#### Upper School grades 3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup>

- Every 4 tardies = 1 unexcused absence (calculated each quarter) & afterschool detention
- 4 tardies - letter from the school
- 8 tardies – phone call and letter from the Principal
- 12 tardies – notice to the Achievement School District and report to the Department of Children's Services for education neglect

### **Early Dismissal**

Prepsters are expected to stay in school until the very end of the day. Early pickups are disruptive to the learning environment and require a teacher to stop teaching in order to

release a Prepster. Therefore, when an early dismissal cannot be avoided, a Cornerstone Prep staff member will enter the classroom to get your child during a transition in the class. That may mean that a parent may need to wait in the office for 5-15 minutes until the class has reached a transition time. No early dismissals will be allowed after 2:30. In order to be counted present per ASD requirements, students must be in attendance for 4 hours for kindergarten and 6.5 hours for grades 1-8. Early dismissals will be treated like late arrivals. Your child will be required to attend an after school tutoring session or make up the time in another specified time if he or she leaves school early more than 3 times in a grading period. Prepsters who are habitually dismissed early are subject to retention in the current grade.

## **Homework**

Homework is an essential part of the Cornerstone Prep educational program. Homework is designed to reinforce skills taught in the classroom, to help Prepsters develop a deeper understanding of concepts, and to promote good study habits. Homework will be assigned every night including weekends in order to keep your child actively learning. Please help your child be successful by creating routines at home for Prepsters to follow each day, requiring your Prepster to complete their assignment each day and providing a quiet, organized place to work.

Homework completion is part of each Prepster's grade. In addition, Prepsters will earn rewards for homework completion while Prepsters who consistently fail to turn in homework may be required to attend Homework club and will lose points on their average for that particular subject.

## **Make-Up Work**

Prepsters who are not in school miss critical academic assignments and assessments. Therefore, make-up work needs to be completed in order to ensure that your child masters the standard taught during the day missed. If a Prepster is absent or dismissed early for any reason, all missed homework assignments are due by 7:20 am on the day of the Prepster's return.

A Prepster absent for more than one consecutive school day will have as many school days as absences to submit missed homework for purposes of academic credit. For example, if a Prepster is absent on Monday and Tuesday, the Prepster has two days to complete the homework for purposes of academic credit. In this case, the work is due by Friday morning at 7:20am.

## **Assessments**

A Prepster absent for any reason (up to five consecutive days), or dismissed early, must make-up all missed assessments (e.g., tests, quizzes) within the number of consecutive school days that the Prepster had been absent. If a Prepster is absent for five or more consecutive school days, the Prepster must meet with the Principal to determine a reasonable timeline for making up missed assessments. Students who are absent the day of the scheduled state mandated tests will be permitted to take the required test in the allowed testing window.

All ASD schools are required to take the following assessments:

- Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TACP) for grades 3-12.
- Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) for grade k-12.

Both of these assessments are required for students in the identified grades. The testing dates are identified in this handbook along with other important dates. Please be you're your child is in school for these assessment. Also, please note that TCAP scores will comprise 15% of a student's overall grade as required by the ASD.

Both MAP and TCAP scores will be distributed to families within two weeks of the returned scoring.

### **After School Work**

Prepsters may be required to stay after school or on Saturday for various reasons, including:

- Detention Hall for inappropriate behavior
- Make up work caused by excessive absences or tardiness
- Extra tutoring sessions to help Prepsters address academic issues

Teachers or the administrative staff will communicate these needs to parents as soon as they are identified.

### **Promotion to the Next Grade**

Cornerstone Prep has tough standards for promotion. It is not automatically assumed that Prepsters will pass from one grade to the next. All Prepsters must earn promotion by demonstrating mastery of the essential knowledge and skills required. Prepsters may not be promoted if they are performing significantly below grade-level standards. Promotion decisions will be based on a Prepster's grades, standardized test scores, attendance, homework completion record, and other measures. We will look thoughtfully at Prepster test scores, examples of Prepster work, teacher observations, and other measures to make these decisions.

A Prepster may be retained for excessive excused or unexcused absences in a school year, having significant behavior problems that result in a lot of missed instruction time, or persistent trouble completing homework assignments.

Prepsters who have IEPs will be promoted to the next grade based on successful completion of the goals of the IEP. However, Prepsters with IEPs who have significant attendance or behavioral problems unrelated to their IEPs may be retained for these reasons.

The Tennessee Department of Education requires: 'Each local board of education shall develop a policy by which student scores on the ACH tests (grades 3-8) comprise a percentage of the student's final grade for the spring semester in the subject areas of mathematics, reading/language arts, science, and social studies. The percentage shall be determined by the local board from a range of no less than 15% and no more than 25%.'

Please note that the ASD's policy for all schools in the portfolio is that student scores on the ACH (currently known as TCAP) tests will comprise 15% of the student's final grade for the spring semester in the subject areas of mathematics, reading/language arts, science, and social studies.

Below are guidelines Cornerstone Prep considers when determining if a student with a disability will be retained:

1. Retention is a change of placement and must be an IEP team decision.
2. The IEP team should consider the student's growth on IEP goals and the student's performance levels on cognitive assessments.
3. IEP teams should also consider the question: Will another year in the same grade lead to the student's ability to gain further access to and/or excel in the general education curriculum? If no, retention is likely not appropriate for the student. If yes, retention may be appropriate for the student.

The parent or guardian has the right to appeal the school's decision to promote or retain a student. Parents should direct their concerns to the appropriate person or department identified in the school's internal grievance policy.

## **School Uniforms**

All Prepsters must come to school in the Cornerstone Prep uniform each day. Parents of Prepsters wearing inappropriate clothing may be asked to come to the school immediately to correct the uniform violation or face other consequences. Prepsters may miss special events and classes when not wearing the appropriate uniform and also may be required to wear an appropriate uniform shirt to cover attire inconsistent with the uniform dress code. We require school uniforms for several very important reasons:

- 1) ***Uniforms unite us as a community.*** When you look at a group of Prepsters in the Cornerstone Prep uniform, it is a powerful visual statement of our community.
- 2) ***Uniforms reduce distractions and clothing competition.*** Often Prepsters spend more time discussing and evaluating what others are wearing or not wearing than they spend focusing on learning. Wearing uniforms eliminates this distraction.
- 3) ***Uniforms eliminate comparisons.*** Whether families have high incomes or low incomes, the Prepsters come to school looking the same way. No one is made to feel less valued because of the clothes they own.
- 4) ***Uniforms look professional.*** Prepsters look neat when they arrive to school with shirts tucked into their pants. The Prepsters come mentally prepared for school and "dressed for work."

The Cornerstone Prep uniform shirt is a polo style shirt that you may purchase at the school.

The appropriate complete uniform is described below:

Boys

- Cornerstone Prep logo shirt, Khaki colored pants or shorts – Uniform style (no basketball shorts), Black or brown belt, sneakers that are predominantly black or white sneakers or black shoes, Black or white socks. Boys’ earrings are prohibited.

Girls

- Cornerstone Prep logo shirt, Khaki colored pants or shorts – Uniform style (no more than 1 inch above the knee), Khaki colored scooter, skort, - Uniform style with Black or brown belt – no embellishments (ankle-length skirts are acceptable...for religious reasons), sneakers that are predominantly black or white sneakers; black shoes (Mary Jane style); or saddle oxfords.

Exceptions and adjustments will be gladly made for those Prepsters who need to wear different clothing for religious convictions.

Jackets, coats and sweaters often contain pockets, zippers, strings and hoodies that are very distracting and inhibit learning in the classroom. Therefore, Cornerstone Prep sweatshirts and long sleeve shirts are available for purchase. Both of these items may be worn in the classroom for Prepsters who may be cold. Other sweaters and jackets may be worn to the school but will remain in Prepster lockers during the instructional day.

**Character Traits, Merits and Demerits**

A merit is the recognition of an action worthy of praise that demonstrates a Prepster’s progress toward character traits valued by the school. It is highlighted by the acronym PREP ROCKS. PREP ROCKS represents Cornerstone Prep’s character traits which are designed to create, cultivate, and motivate Prepsters towards growing in Wisdom and Knowledge. Prepsters are expected to daily display all character traits in all settings. Please see the chart below for examples of behaviors that exemplify each school value. A demerit can be earned for not meeting these expectations, and merits can be earned for exceeding them.

<b>School Value</b>	Examples of behaviors that exemplify the school value
Be Prepared	Student arrives on time and comes to school every day Student shows consistent pattern of preparation for class Student has all materials necessary to start class Student shows urgency in wanting to learn and start class
Be Respectful	Student is kind and courteous to peers and adults Student cares for others Student directly applies what an adult says Student allows others around him/her to learn at high levels by modeling school values
Be Engaged	Student demonstrates high level of mastery in concepts and/or growth Student demonstrates enthusiasm in learning Student applies previously taught concepts from previous units or lessons
Be Professional	Student uses precise language (vocabulary, complete sentence, etc.) Student communicates clear, articulate thoughts

<b>Accept Responsibility</b>	Student follows all directions in a respectful manner Student is aware of the expectations in all settings Student consistently models school values in all settings
<b>Operate with Honesty &amp; Integrity</b>	Student does the right thing even when hard Student does the right thing when no one is watching or praising Student tells the truth at all times
<b>Display Self-Control</b>	Student tells an adult about problems he/she is having with others, instead of attempting to handle it Student shows respect for learning environment
<b>Show Kindness</b>	Student always says please and thank you Student willingly shares materials and equipment with peers Student uses the bathroom/water fountain quickly
<b>Be Resilient</b>	Student takes re-direction and recovers quickly Student attempts difficult questions Student overcomes obstacles Student works on a difficult task without giving up

Every week, each grade will participate in various celebrations for good character. These exciting events incorporate a variety of celebrations and rewards for Prepsters who have made good choices throughout the week.

A demerit is the consequence of an action that does not align with the values and methods of the Cornerstone Prep Way. It is earned by a Prepster's choice to not follow explicit instructions of adults or a lack of effort in abiding by the rules of Cornerstone Prep. Demerits provide feedback to Prepsters, teaching them how their actions and behaviors are affecting their ability to learn and perform their responsibilities. Excessive demerits will result in consequences such as silent lunch detention, morning or afternoon detention, or exclusion from class celebrations and privileges.

### **School Lunch Program**

Cornerstone Prep offers both breakfast and lunch. All families must complete a form that enables their child to participate in the meal program. Under the Community Eligibility provision, every student will eat for free.

Families may send lunch to school. However, Prepsters will not have access to a refrigerator or microwave. If you are sending lunch to school with your child, we ask that you send nutritious foods. Please do not let your child bring unhealthy drinks (e.g., colas or juices heavy in sugar) or unhealthy snacks to school. Candy, gum, and soda are not allowed to be eaten at school. If you choose to send lunch, the entire lunch must be in one bag or container that has the Prepster's name on it.

### **School Visitor Policy**

Volunteers and parents/guardians/families are a vital part of the Cornerstone Prep community. We welcome them as volunteers, observers, and partners in the education of

our Prepsters. All visitors are required to report to the Main Office upon entering the building.

The V-Soft Raptor System (commonly referred to as Raptor) is a visitor registration and management system that the Achievement School District uses. The Raptor system allows the front office staff to produce visitor badges, quickly input student information, and electronically checks visitors against state and federal sex offender databases.

The Raptor system works by comparing each visitor's official identification (e.g., driver's license, passport, etc.) with a sex offender database, alerting school officials whether any matches are found. For all non-matches, Raptor will register the visitor's presence on campus, and produce a temporary ID badge for all visitors to wear while on school grounds.

Unless noted otherwise, all visitors must be checked into and out of the Raptor system during each school visit.

Those parents/guardians seeking to pick up a Prepster should remain in the office while the Prepster is brought to the office. Visitors must sign out before leaving the building. There will be no photos, videotaping or audiotaping by visitors on school grounds without permission.

Those who are not parents/guardians/families or approved volunteers may call the school 24 hours in advance to set up an appointment to visit the school.

In case of an emergency, parents or guardians should contact the Main Office either by phone or in person. Under no circumstances should parents or guardians contact Prepsters in their classrooms or attempt to remove Prepsters from the building without notifying and receiving permission from staff members in the Main Office.

## **Communication**

Communication between parents and the Cornerstone Prep staff enhances the academic achievement of Prepsters. Therefore, Cornerstone Prep sends home critical information for all parents each Tuesday. In addition, teachers may send home individual notes in the homework folder as well as making phone calls to parents.

Cornerstone Prep also uses an automated call system to send out mass emails, phone calls, and text messages to families to alert them of important information such as absences, missing homework, uniform violation, early dismissals due to inclement weather, etc. Therefore, it is extremely important that families provide up-to-date contact information to our office staff.

Our staff will be glad to meet with you to discuss any concerns you have regarding your child, Cornerstone Prep policies, etc. We ask that you not pull teachers or staff members during the school day to speak with you, as all staff members have assigned duties during the school day. Please call the office or put a separate note in your child's homework folder in order to schedule a time to meet a teacher or staff member.

## **Administering Medicines to Students**

It is the policy of Cornerstone Prep that all children's medication be administered by a parent at home. Under exceptional circumstances medication may be administered by school personnel under the appropriate administrative regulations.

If, under exceptional circumstances, a child is required to receive medication during school hours and the parents cannot be at school to administer the medication, principal or the principal's designee will administer the medication in compliance with the regulations that follow:

1. Medication (only if absolutely necessary) - Only medicines which absolutely **MUST** be given during the school hours should be brought by parent or guardian to school for dispensing at school. Please make arrangements for all other medicines to be given at home, either before or after school time. Most medications which need to be given one, two, or three times a day, can be given during the hours outside of school hours. Your child's health care provider can give you guidance about whether or not a dosage schedule can be changed. All medication will be brought to school by the parent or guardian, unless other arrangements have been approved by the school principal, but under no circumstance shall a student bring the medication to school by himself/herself. All medication must be brought in its original container whether it be a prescription or non-prescription medication.
2. Over-the-counter medicines-usually will not be given at school. There may be some exceptions, but arrangements need to be made with the principal and/or designee. Parents will still have to complete a medication dispensation form.
3. Original Containers- All medicines must be in their original containers and correctly labeled. Prescription medicines must have a pharmacy label or a label from the doctor's office or health care facility which includes the child's name, name of the medicine, strength of each unit of medicine, dosage amount, and time as well as the doctor's name. Over-the-counter medicines must be labeled with the child's name in a manner which does not cover up the original container label.
4. Parent Authorization- All medicines must have a Parent Authorization form completed, and the medicine container information must match the Parent Authorization. (A copy of this form is available in the school office.)
5. Physician Authorization – All prescription medication must have an medication dispensation form completed by the prescribing physician or facility. (A copy of this form is available in the school office).

## **Discipline Policy**

Each student is expected to behave in a manner that exemplifies the Cornerstone Prep culture, which is outlined by PREP ROCKS and includes:

- Be Prepared
- Be Respectful
- Be Engaged
- Be Professional
- Accept Responsibility
- Operate with Honesty and Integrity
- Display Self-Control
- Show Kindness
- Be Resilient

Students will be held responsible and accountable for behavior that conveys these principles. Proper behavior is expected at all school-sponsored activities both during and after the regular school day. Cornerstone Prep believes it is the role of educators to teach students proper behavior and to work with students who make poor decisions so they can become equipped to be college and career-ready adults. Students who consistently or repeatedly fail to uphold Cornerstone Prep standards of conduct and behavior, however, may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.

For this policy, “suspension” means the removal of a student from the student’s regular school program for up to ten (10) school days. This suspension may be in or out of school. “Expulsion” means removed from the student’s regular school or removed from school attendance all together for 11 or more days.

In order to assure a safe and secure learning environment free of drugs, violence, and dangerous weapons, any student who engages in the following “Zero Tolerance” behaviors may be subject to suspension for a period of not less than one (1) school year:<sup>11</sup>

1. Unauthorized possession of a firearm
2. Committing *aggravated assault* of a “teacher principal, administrator, any other employee of an LEA or school resources officer”<sup>12</sup>
3. Possession of illegal drugs

Expelled means removed from the student’s regular school or removed from school attendance all together. Nothing in this code shall be constructed to prohibit the assignment of expelled students to an alternative school. The ASD superintendent may modify expulsions on a case-by-case basis.

The following behaviors are also considered serious infractions and may lead to immediate suspension and/or expulsion.

1. Violence or threatened violence against the person or property of any personnel or any student attending or assigned to any school;
2. Possession of a pistol, gun or firearm on school property;
3. Possession of a knife or other weapons, etc., as defined in TCA 39-6-170, on school property;

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<sup>11</sup> T.C.A. §49-6-4216

<sup>12</sup> T.C.A. §49-6-3401(g)

4. Willful or malicious damage to the theft of real or personal property of the school or the property of any person attending or assigned to the school;
5. Unlawful use or possession of barbitol or legend drugs as defined in TCA 53-10-101;
6. Unlawful use or possession of alcohol;
7. The sale or distribution of drugs and alcohol;
8. Assault or battery on school employees; (this includes physical and explicit verbal assault)
9. Willful and persistent violation of the rules of the school or truancy (*with prior unsuccessful interventions*).

### **Suspension and Expulsion as Consequences for Serious and/or Persistent Misbehavior**

A student may be suspended and/or expelled for serious infractions. Misbehaviors in violation of the Student Code of Conduct, not otherwise constituting an expellable offense, may become a serious infraction subject to expulsion and/or suspension when the misbehavior is so persistent that, in cumulative effect, it is significantly disruptive of the educational process. The decision to expel shall be based on an assessment of the facts and circumstances of each case. Relevant factors, without prioritization, include, but are not limited to, the seriousness of the misconduct, the student's age, grade level, history of prior misconduct, health and safety issues, and disruptive effects upon the educational process.

### **Suspension Process**

In addition to the above list of serious violations, the principal or designee has the authority to suspend a student for a period of up to five (5) school days to further investigate an incident or because of an emergency constituting endangerment to health or safety of students or staff.

#### **A. PREREQUISITES TO SUSPENSION**

Prior to suspending a student, the principal or designee must hold an informal conference with the student to:

1. Notify the student of the accusations against him/her;
2. Allow the student to relate his/her version of the incident; and
3. Determine whether the student's conduct warrants suspension.

#### **B. NOTIFICATION TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS**

If the principal or designee determines the student's conduct warrants suspension during the school day, the principal or designee must notify the student's parents/guardians that the student has been suspended before the student is sent home on the day the suspension occurs. The Principal/School Director or designee will notify a suspended student's parents/guardians of the period of suspension, the grounds for the suspension, and the time and place for an opportunity to confer with the Principal/School Director.

#### **C. CREDIT DURING SUSPENSION**

A student shall receive credit for work missed during the period of suspension if the work is completed within the same number of school days that the student was absent on suspension.

## **Expulsion Process**

This process applies to expulsions (removal from the regular program for more than ten (10) days). The school will follow the steps below before applying an expulsion:

### **A. PREREQUISITES FOR EXPULSION**

Prior to expelling a student, the Principal or designee must hold an informal conference with the student to:

1. Notify the student of the accusations against him/her;
2. Allow the student to relate his/her version of the incident;
3. Suspend the student for 5 days pending a decision on an expulsion.

### **B. NOTIFICATION OF PARENTS/GUARDIANS**

If the expulsion is applied, the principal or designee shall immediately give written notice of the expulsion to the parent or guardian. The expulsion notice shall include the effective date and length of the expulsion, the reason for the expulsion, information about the parent's right to appeal the expulsion decision to the Office of the Superintendent, and referral of the parent to the ASD's Alternative Education Coordinator in the Office of Portfolio Management, who will partner with the parent to assign the student to an alternative school, for which attendance is mandatory for the duration of the expulsion. All expulsion appeals must be filed, orally or in writing, within five (5) days after receipt of the notice and may be filed by the parent or guardian, the student or any person holding a teaching license who is employed by the ASD or an ASD authorized charter or transformation operator if requested by the student. The notice shall also state that failure to timely request an appeal constitutes a waiver of further rights in the matter.

### **C. NOTIFICATION OF ASD OFFICE OF PORTFOLIO MANAGEMENT-STUDENT SERVICES**

If the expulsion is applied, the principal or designee shall immediately give written notice to the ASD's Office of Portfolio Management's Student Access and Services team at [studentsupport@tnasd.org](mailto:studentsupport@tnasd.org). In order to facilitate the ASD's swift placement of the student in alternative school and minimal lost instructional time, the expulsion notice to the ASD must include all required submission components as specified in the ASD's Expulsion Protocol, including signature by the Operator's representative confirming review and approval of the school's expulsion decision and process in accordance with the ASD's and the Operator's discipline policies.

### **D. APPEAL TO A DISCIPLINARY HEARING AUTHORITY APPOINTED BY THE SUPERINTENDENT**

Appeals of expulsions shall be heard by a disciplinary hearing authority, consisting of members appointed by the Superintendent. Each appeal shall be heard by a hearing authority with at least one licensed employee of the ASD or one of its authorized schools. The hearing shall be audio recorded.

1. The Superintendent or designee shall give written notice of the time and place of the hearing to the parent or guardian, the student and the principal or designee. The Superintendent or designee shall also notify the parties that:
  - The notice shall include the reasons for the expulsion and state the same student rights as provided for suspension hearings, above.
  - The hearing will be held within ten (10) days of the beginning of the expulsion.
  - The hearing authority may affirm the decision of the school, or order removal of the expulsion unconditionally or upon such terms and conditions as it deems reasonable.

#### E. DECISION OF THE DISCIPLINARY HEARING AUTHORITY

Immediately following the appeal hearing, the hearing authority will notify the student and the student's parents/guardians in writing of his or her decision. The decision shall specify:

1. The length of the expulsion, if any;
2. Assignment to an alternative school, if applicable;
3. Procedures for re-admittance at the end of the expulsion period, if the expulsion is not permanent; and
4. The right to appeal the decision to the ASD Superintendent or designee.

#### F. APPEAL TO THE ASD SUPERINTENDENT OR DESIGNEE

The student or his/her parents/guardians may appeal the Disciplinary Hearing Authority's decision. The appeal process is as follows:

1. Parents may request a review by the ASD Superintendent by notifying him in writing within seven (7) calendar days of the date of receipt of the decision by the Disciplinary Hearing Authority.
2. The ASD Superintendent will review the audio or transcribed record from the hearing.
3. The ASD Superintendent or designee will notify the student and his or her parents/guardians of the decision, in writing, within five (5) school days of the request for a hearing.

### **Discipline Process for Students with Special Needs**

Schools may discipline students with special needs using in-school suspension, or out-of-school suspension. During in-school suspension, the school must continue the student's IEP services and allow opportunities for the student to participate in his or her general curriculum.

A school may suspend a student with disabilities for up to 10 days without a duty to provide continued services specified in the student's Individual Education Program (IEP), review his or her Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP), or reconsider the Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA).

If a student is expelled, removed from primary school longer than 10 days, a manifestation determination review (MDR) must be conducted within the first 10 days of

the student's removal. Parents must be notified at least 24 hours prior to the MDR. The MDR shall be used to determine (1) whether the conduct in question was caused by, or had a direct or substantial relationship to the child's disability, or (2) whether the conduct in question was the direct result of the school's failure to implement the IEP. Regardless of the MDR determination, services shall recommence on the 11th day of the student being removed from their primary school.

If the MDR determines that the conduct for a non-zero tolerance offense was a manifestation, the school must do the following: (a) conduct or review the student's FBA, (b) develop or modify a BIP, and (c) return the student to placement from which he or she was removed unless parents and school agree to a change of placement as part of modifications to the IEP or BIP. If the conduct was a zero tolerance offense, the student can be placed in an alternative education setting for up to 45 days.

If the MDR determines that the conduct was not a manifestation, the student shall be disciplined in the same manner as non-disabled students would be for similar violations. Parent or school appeals of the MDR determination must be conducted within 20 days of notice of the MDR decision by the LEA representative. The representative has 10 days to render an appeal decision. During the appeal process, the student shall continue receiving disability services. Schools have the right to appeal to the special exceptions ruling if continuing IEP services is substantially likely to result in injury to the student or others. Students suspected of a disability should receive IDEA discipline protections if the school has knowledge that the student may have a disability before the behavior occurred. If the behavior occurs and the parent then alleges the child has a disability, schools should conduct an expedited evaluation. No discipline protections shall be provided until evaluation is complete.

### **Cell Phones**

Prepsters are not allowed to use cell phones in school or on school field trips. If a cell phone is used during school, rings during school, or is seen by a staff member, it will be confiscated from the Prepster and only returned after a parent or guardian has come to the school to pick it up. Repeated violations of this policy may result in indefinite confiscation irrespective of any costs or fees Prepsters and/or their families may incur as a result.

### **Prepster Belongings**

Prepsters who disrupt class for any reason are violating school rules. This rule applies to Prepsters' personal possessions as well. Items including, but not limited to, game cards, trading cards, portable electronic games, toys, portable electronic devices, and cell phones are not allowed in school. Prepsters who violate this rule will have their item(s) confiscated until the item(s) is picked up by a parent or guardian and will be subject to consequences. Repeated violations of this policy may result in indefinite confiscation irrespective of any costs or fees Prepsters and/or their families may incur as a result.

### **Lost and Found**

The school will keep a small Lost and Found box near the main office. Families may come in any day between 7:15 A.M. and 3:15 P.M. to search the Lost and Found. At the end of every Quarter, items left in the box may be donated to a local charity.

### **Classroom Parties, Birthdays, and Other Events**

Cornerstone Prep celebrates academic achievement and great character in the classroom every day. Once a month, Cornerstone Prep celebrates birthdays and other special events. In order to be fair and consistent, snacks are provided by the school on special days and for special events rather than having parents or families provide snacks on a child's birthday. To avoid hurt feelings, private Prepster invitations to parties and other events should be mailed home rather than passed out in class, unless the whole class is invited.

### **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act**

Cornerstone Prep abides by FERPA law, which is the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. FERPA guarantees certain rights to families with respect to their children's education records. We are glad to provide this information to you, and please let us know if you have any questions.

FERPA stands for the Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act administered by the US Department of Education. FERPA guarantees certain rights to families with respect to their children's education records. Tennessee's laws regarding open records, contained in T.C.A. § 10-7-504, further refine the requirements for handling student records and information. What are education records? Education records include anything that contains information directly tied to a student (i.e. personally identifiable) and is maintained by a school or education organization. These records span formats and include both print and electronic information. The law distinguishes between "education records" and directory information.

What is directory information? Directory information includes things that would generally not be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed, such as name, address, photograph, and age. Directory information may not include things such as a student's social security number or grades. Schools are required to notify parents of what information they designate as directory information. If appropriately designated, directory information can be disclosed to anyone. However, parents must have the right to 'opt out' of having their child's information released. Tennessee law does not allow for schools to identify student achievement as directory information. Therefore, schools cannot post honor roll or other academic information without consent.

Under FERPA, a school must annually notify parents of their rights. The annual notification must include information regarding a parent's right to inspect and review his or her child's education records, the right to seek to amend the records, the right to consent to disclosure of personally identifiable information from the records (except in certain circumstances), and the right to file a complaint with the DoE regarding an alleged failure by a school to comply with FERPA. FERPA exempts disclosure of records to school officials with a legitimate educational interest from parental consent. Therefore, the school must also notify parents of its definitions of the terms "school official", and

"legitimate educational interest." The annual notification may be published by various means, including any of the following: in a student handbook, at annual registration, in a letter/notice to parents, or on the school's website. Additionally, the ASD recommends schools include their directory information notice as part of the annual notice of FERPA rights.

Under FERPA, a school must provide a parent with an opportunity to inspect and review his or her child's education records within 45 days following the receipt of a written request. A school is required to provide a parent with copies of education records, or make other arrangements if necessary (e.g. the parent cannot travel to the school to view the record.) Under FERPA, a school is not required to provide information that is not routinely maintained or to create new education records in response to a parent's request. Accordingly, a school is not required to provide a parent with special updates on his or her child's progress in school unless such information already exists in an education record.

Under FERPA, a parent has the right to request that inaccurate or misleading information in his or her child's education records be amended. While a school is not required to amend education records, it must consider all requests. If the school decides not to amend a record in accordance with a parent's request, the school must inform the parent of his or her right to a hearing on the matter. If, as a result of the hearing, the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent has the right to insert a statement in the record setting forth his or her views. That statement must remain with the contested part of the student's record for as long as the record is maintained. The FERPA amendment procedure exists to challenge facts that are inaccurately recorded. It may not be used to challenge a grade, an opinion, or a substantive decision made by a school about a student. FERPA was intended to require that schools keep fair records, not to override the standards and procedures for making academic assessments, disciplinary rulings, or placement determinations.

Under FERPA, a school cannot disclose personally identifiable information from a student's education records unless the student's parent has provided written consent. However, there are a few important exceptions to that rule:

1. FERPA allows "school officials," including teachers, within a school to access personally identifiable information contained in education records provided the school has determined that they have "legitimate educational interest" in the information. School officials can include: teachers, administrators, support staff, nurse/health staff, etc. As mentioned previously, a school must define both "school officials" and what it deems "legitimate educational interest" in its annual notification to parents. A school official generally has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibilities.
2. Another exception permits a school to disclose personally identifiable information from a student's education records, without consent, to another school or district in which the student seeks or intends to enroll. The sending school may make the disclosure if it has included a statement that it forwards education records in such circumstances in its annual notification of FERPA rights.

3. For students who are in state custody (including foster care), the Tennessee Department of Children's Services may access a student's educational records without parental consent, and school districts are not required to notify the parents of the child before releasing the information pursuant to a court order.

The need to maintain confidentiality implies that records should be stored in a safe and secure location. Student records are kept in a locked file cabinet or another location with equivalent security.

If you have questions:

1. Consult the following resources:
  - a. <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/parents.html>
  - b. [http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/pdf/sealea\\_overview.pdf](http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/pdf/sealea_overview.pdf)
2. Contact your child's school

Families have the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the Achievement School District to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the office that administers FERPA is:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Ave., SW  
Washington, DC 20202

The Achievement School District may disclose "directory" information unless the parent/eligible student annually objects to such disclosure in writing to the Superintendent within two weeks of enrollment. Directory information includes: Name, address, phone number, date of birth, grade level, gender, participation in officially recognized activities, weight and height of athletes, dates of attendance and photographs.

The ASD may disclose personally identifiable information from an education record to appropriate parties in connection with an emergency if knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals.

### **Discrimination Statement**

Cornerstone Prep does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, national origin, or handicap/disability.

### **Board of Director Meetings**

All meetings will be held at Cornerstone Prep office, located at 320 Carpenter. Meeting dates and times are as follows:

- Sep 2 at 5:30
- December 2 at noon
- February 3 at 5:30
- April 7 at noon
- June 2 at 5:30

### **Title I Parent Information**

- Title I is the largest federal assistance program for our nation’s schools. The goal of Title I is a higher quality of education for every child. The program serves millions of children in elementary and secondary schools each year.
- Districts receive Title I funds from the federal government (through the TN Department of Education), and distribute these funds to schools based on the number of low-income students (eligible for free/reduced price lunch). However, low-income is only used to distribute funds. Students are selected to receive Title I services if they have an academic need.
- For Title I School-wide Programs: Cornerstone Prep students are in a Title I School-wide program. This means that our Title I money can be used to upgrade the educational program in ways that may impact every student in the school. This also means that **every parent/guardian of a student in our school is a Title I parent.**
- Listed below are some of these requirements that Cornerstone Prep is meeting related to Title I:
  2. **Report cards on statewide academic assessment.** Cornerstone Prep will share a state report card at the end of the year that shows whether the school has been identified for school improvement and how our students achieved on the TCAP and other indicators of adequate yearly progress compare to those in the district and the state as a whole.
  3. **Teacher qualification.** If a parent requests the information, Cornerstone Prep will include at least whether the teacher has met state qualifications and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas taught; whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or other provisional status; the baccalaureate degree major of the teacher and any other graduate certification. The information must also disclose whether the child is provided services by paraprofessionals, and if so, their qualifications. Cornerstone Prep will also give timely notice that the parent’s child has been assigned or has been taught for four or more consecutive weeks by a teacher who is not highly qualified.
  4. **Individual achievement on state assessment.** Cornerstone Prep will provide each parent information on the achievement level of their child on each of the state academic assessments (TCAP) as soon as is practicably possible after the test is taken.
    - **Limited English proficiency programs.** Cornerstone Prep has given home language surveys to all enrolled students and has informed all parents of students who are classified as English Language Learners of the academic program they are receiving with our ESL teacher, Cassandra Salley.
    - **Supplemental educational services.** Cornerstone Prep has informed parents of all supplemental educational services that we provide for students such as extended school day, additional professional development for staff, during and after school tutoring, small group instruction, re-teach, computer literacy, technology, co-teacher model, paraprofessionals, behavioral interventionists, and various reading and math supplemental curriculum.
    - **Parental involvement policy.** Parents have a number of rights, including:

- Be involved in and request regular meetings to express concerns
- Be provided updated information on your child's level of achievement
- Request and receive information on the qualifications of your child's teachers
- Cornerstone Prep requires all parents to sign a Parent-Student Compact during registration which outlines their parental involvement policy. There are other opportunities for parents and the school to work together in addition to the original compact.
- The school communicates via weekly parent newsletters placed in every child's homework folder, the parent bulletin board, parent-teacher conferences, the grade level curriculum meetings held in the winter, report cards, returned daily and weekly assessments, signed daily homework, Prepster paychecks, MAP and TCAP scores, and through regular communications with the Director of Parent and Community Relations staff member
- Title I information is provided during the Title I meeting
- Parents are encouraged to help with Friday celebrations, making copies, helping with arrival and dismissal, after school activities, or supporting teachers on certain projects.
- **Safe and drug-free schools programs.** In their Family Handbook, Cornerstone Prep stated in their discipline policy that they are a safe and drug-free school.
- **Student privacy.** The Cornerstone Prep Family Handbook contains information to all parents regarding their rights covered under FERPA.
- **Title I funding projects.** The Title I funds are providing:
  - Smaller teacher to student ratios
  - Differentiated instruction for all children
  - Parental involvement activities
  - Reading and instructional resources
  - Student computers

## **Parent and Community Grievance Policy**

Cornerstone Prep and the ASD consider parent and community support and input vital to school accountability and success. The general policy and procedures for addressing parents' concerns or complaints about any ASD school in the district are provided below.

If parents or community members have a concern about Cornerstone Prep, they should follow the following policy to reach a satisfactory resolution: (see summary chart: ASD Parent and Community Grievance Resolution Flowchart):

- 1 . Contact the principal: Parents and community members are encouraged to communicate any concerns or complaints that they have directly with school leadership.
- 2 . Contact the executive director: If the principal does not satisfactorily resolve a parent's complaint, the school's grievance policy specifies at least one additional

department or leader to whom grievances may be escalated within the organization that operates the school.

- a. Contact the Capstone Education Group's governing body. Cornerstone Prep is governed by a board of directors under the organizational name of Capstone Education Group (CEG). CEGd is subject to oversight by its authorizer, the ASD. If a parent or guardian of a student is not satisfied with a school-level or operator-level decision pertaining to a grievance, the parent or guardian may share concerns with the board of directors. The board meets publicly on a regular basis. Parents and guardians are encouraged to contact the ASD charter school principal for further information.

CEG, the governing body of Cornerstone Prep, is the legal entity with authority to make final decisions regarding:

- Staffing;
- Instruction and instructional support program;
- Use of time; and
- Student support services and discipline practices (in accordance with the ASD's Student Discipline policy)

Thus, for most concerns, the ASD does not have authority to overturn the decisions of charter schools regarding student services and staff. If warranted, the sole actions that the ASD has the authority to take beyond informing and influencing a charter operator to resolve an inadequately addressed Tennessee statute-defined violation on its own are to: (1) slow or stop the expansion or replication of a school or (2) revoke the charter.

The statutes that govern Tennessee charter schools provide specific criteria for the ASD to consider revocation or renewal of a charter<sup>13</sup> if the operator did any of the following:

- Committed a material violation of any of the conditions, standards or procedures set forth in the charter (including failure to adequately address parent concerns);
- Failed to meet or make adequate yearly progress toward achievement of the state's accountability system for two (2) consecutive years (past the first year of operation); or
- Failed to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management.

- 3 . Contact the ASD Office of Portfolio Management: If a parent has a concern that a school has violated the law, applicable district policy, a charter contract or student safety responsibilities AND problem-solving efforts with school leadership and with either the Achievement Schools' Head of Schools or a charter school operator's designated grievance officer and board of directors fails to satisfactorily address a parent's concern, then the parent may appeal to the Achievement School District's Office of Portfolio Management for assistance resolving the issue. When warranted, the Office of Portfolio Management will engage the ASD's General Counsel and/or external authorities to investigate and/or address an issue. The decision documented by the Office of Portfolio Management shall represent the input and final decision of the ASD leadership team.

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<sup>13</sup> T.C.A. §49-13-122

Where the issue involves a criminal violation of the law (e.g., a parent believes that his or her child has been physically abused by a school employee or another student), the parent should immediately contact the local police department and the Tennessee Department of Children's Services (DCS). School and district personnel who suspect student abuse are required to notify DCS and the ASD Office of Portfolio Management, and shall immediately do so upon notification or substantiated suspicion that a student has been abused.

# Parent and Community Grievance Resolution Flowchart

1. WHICH TYPE OF PROBLEM AM I HAVING?			
<p>General Issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disagreement with a teacher or another student</li> <li>Don't like a discipline decision, except expulsion or if the decision could involve special education</li> </ul>	<p>Enrollment Issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Confusion about enrollment</li> <li>Never received a school assignment</li> <li>I want to transfer my child to another school</li> <li>School said we should transfer or school said my child isn't a good fit</li> </ul>	<p>Special Ed Issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>My child is not receiving the special education services by his/her IEP</li> <li>I disagree with a decision made by the IEP Team</li> </ul>	<p>Critical Issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>My child has been expelled, or other serious discipline issues</li> <li>My child is in danger and the school hasn't responded</li> <li>Any serious legal or safety issues that the school has not addressed</li> </ul>
2. WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR WORKING WITH ME TO FIND A SOLUTION?			
<p>These issues are the responsibility of the school. The ASD can't mandate decisions in these areas.</p>	<p>Most issues can be resolved by the school. The ASD's student enrollment office will ensure that all ASD-eligible students are granted enrollment in accordance with ASD policy</p>	<p>These issues can be resolved by the school. The ASD's special education office can serve as a mediator and will ensure all required services are provided.</p>	<p>For these issues, the Portfolio Office will work with you until the issue is resolved.</p>
3. WHAT STEPS NEED TO HAPPEN TO ADDRESS MY PROBLEM?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Today you may contact the principal.</li> <li>Within 5 school days you should hear a response.</li> <li>After you've talked with the school you may not be happy with the decision. The principal can make many decisions for the school, and the ASD may not be able to change them.</li> </ul>	<p>FOR TRANSFERS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Please meet with your school to begin the transfer process.</li> </ul> <p>FOR OTHER ISSUES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Today you may contact the ASD's student membership access office at 901-260-9657 or <a href="mailto:studentsupport@tnasd.org">studentsupport@tnasd.org</a>.</li> <li>Within 2 days the student membership and access office will let you know the next steps to resolve your issue.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Today you may contact the principal.</li> <li>Within 3 school days you should be invited to a school IEP Team meeting to discuss your child's needs. The school must give you a 10-day notice. You may choose to meet sooner. You may request that the ASD's Special Education Manager attend.</li> <li>Within 10 school days of the IEP Team meeting, any changes made to the IEP will be implemented unless otherwise determined by the IEP Team.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Today you may contact the ASD's Portfolio Office at <a href="mailto:compliance@tnasd.org">compliance@tnasd.org</a> or at 901-416-3119 to describe your concern and previous school/operator/school board requests for help.</li> <li>Within 2 school days the ASD will organize the people needed to get an answer and update you and the school regarding next steps</li> <li>Within 5 school days the ASD will let you know the plan to address your problem, if it's not already addressed</li> </ul>
4. WHAT HAPPENS IF MY PROBLEM ISN'T RESOLVED AFTER I'VE DONE EVERYTHING ON THE LIST?			
<p>If the school principal does not respond within 5 days or the response is unsatisfactory, you can reach out to the operator's designated leader and if necessary, the Board, if it is a charter school; and to the Head of Schools if it is an Achievement School. To request an appeal of an expulsion, you may contact the ASD's student membership and access</p>	<p>Your child should continue to attend the assigned school, as applicable. If within 5 days your child's enrollment issue is not resolved by the ASD's student membership and access office, you may contact the ASD's portfolio compliance office at <a href="mailto:compliance@tnasd.org">compliance@tnasd.org</a> for review.</p>	<p>Please review the <a href="#">Notice of Procedural Safeguards</a> for steps to take if you disagree with the IEP Team's decision. If your child's new IEP is not implemented within 10 days of the IEP Team meeting, please contact the ASD's special education office at <a href="mailto:spedoffice@tnasd.org">spedoffice@tnasd.org</a>. The special education office will support the</p>	<p>You will always be able to reach your ASD Portfolio Office contact by email or office phone. These issues may not be solved immediately, but your contact will make sure you know what's going on, and won't stop until we find an answer.</p>

office within 5 school days of the expulsion notification at <a href="mailto:studentsupport@tnasd.org">studentsupport@tnasd.org</a> .		school's implementation of the IEP and will notify the ASD's portfolio compliance office for review.	
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