

Cape Cod Lighthouse Charter School

Parent / Guardian Responsibilities

Volunteering

Parental participation is an integral part of the Lighthouse School. We depend on parent help for many school activities throughout the year. Every parent is expected to volunteer three hours per month. If your work schedule prohibits you from coming in to school during the day, there are many other ways in which you can help (e.g. join the Fundraising Committee, stuffing envelopes for a mailing). Please be generous with your time and skills. We are able to provide a rich and diverse education for students because of parental help.

For more information watch for updates in "Notes to Home" about Parent Association activities.

Student Responsibilities

Statement of Purpose

The Lighthouse Charter School seeks to encourage in each student a sense of self-discipline with individual responsibility and accountability for one's actions; self-respect as well as respect for others; and an individual code of behavior which reflects the values of family and the school's community.

In order for our school to be successful, everyone in the school must do the following:

- work towards the educational goals and objectives of the CCLCS
- preserve individual dignity
- recognize and honor the rights of others as well as ourselves.

For students to learn, get along with each other, and feel happy, they must be in an orderly atmosphere with fair, well-understood rules. The goal of positive discipline should be to turn bad behavior into good behavior. Parents and guardians are important people in the school community. Family support reinforces the school's disciplinary effort and is crucial to assisting teachers by encouraging appropriate behaviors.

The Lighthouse Charter School, its teachers, its families, its students and its volunteers, are committed to creating an extraordinary educational environment in our school. Our school must be as safe, secure, and trouble-free as possible. We know that the learning process is substantially enhanced by order, cooperation, and respect. We, as a community, will abide by a code of conduct (standards, expectations, and consequences) that will preserve this educational environment.

We support and defend high expectations and expect others to do the same.

Individual Rights and Responsibilities

CCLCS, as a public school, recognizes the importance of its responsibility to educate students. We will strive to establish a curriculum and a working community based on academic freedom. Certain individual rights and responsibilities are considered essential to our school community. They are:

1. The right to be respected as a member of the community.
In turn, each student is responsible for treating others the way s/he would like to be treated.
2. The right to receive the best possible education.
In turn, each student is responsible for being prepared to work in class and on homework to the best of his/her ability, and to cooperating with teachers and classmates.

3. The right to feel safe and secure in school.
In turn, each student is responsible for following the discipline code of the school and to respect his/her classmates and their property.
4. The right to be treated fairly.
In turn, each student must accept the consequences of his/her behavior.

Setting Clear Expectations

At the beginning of the school year each student at CCLCS is expected to understand and sign a copy of the behavioral contract below. This contract translates the rights and responsibilities detailed above into a clear set of behaviors that can help to guide student actions during their time at CCLCS.

A. Universal Student Contract

The following contract is designed to serve as a guide for helping students understand the kinds of behaviors towards other students that are most helpful in creating a safe, supportive environment where all students and adults can learn and develop to the best of their potential. The main value at the heart of the school's behavioral code is that all members of the school community respect each other, and work to support each other. Putting the values of respect and support into action means that members of the CCLCS community must pledge to avoid certain behaviors that tend to harm others in the community, and behaviors that can weaken the learning environment. This contract clearly spells out some of the behaviors that students agree to avoid in order to ensure a healthy, supportive learning environment.

Most students at CCLCS already follow these behaviors, and some students will probably only need occasional reminders. It is possible that some students may have a harder time following these rules. If a student is found to be a "repeat offender" and participates in behaviors that break this contract on a regular basis, that student will receive an individual behavioral contract that spells out the consequences of breaking these rules in greater detail.

The Universal Student Contract:

As a member of the learning community at the Cape Cod Lighthouse Charter School, I understand my behavior is an important ingredient to building a strong, supportive community of learners, and I agree to follow all parts of the behavioral code described in this document.

I agree to demonstrate respect for CCLCS through care of the building, school equipment and all school resources. This includes contributing to keeping our physical space clean and healthy, as well as taking care of and not damaging school property, including things as big as the vans, and as small as paper clips.

I agree to act as a thoughtful and responsible representative of CCLCS on school grounds and in public spaces. I recognize I am a reflection of my community and should act with courtesy and consideration for the safety and comfort of others. This includes walking (not running) on the sidewalk, being courteous to people who share our mall, demonstrating appropriate behavior in the vans, and in using appropriate language and behavior on school trips.

I agree to respect the learning climate at CCLCS by coming to classes prepared and on time, and by behaving appropriately and positively in the classroom setting. This includes a commitment to honesty in my schoolwork, avoiding cheating and plagiarism (copying).

I agree to never "put down" or "pick on" another student or staff member with my remarks or actions, or participate in "bullying" other students.

I agree to avoid participating in gossip or in circulating notes or other written or electronic (like email or instant messaging) materials that could be designed to hurt somebody else's feelings.

I agree to avoid unwanted physical contact with other students, and if a student or staff member asks me to stop such behavior, I will do so immediately.

I agree to respect other people's possessions, and keep my hands off others' pens, papers, schoolwork, backpacks and anything else that does not belong to me.

I understand that if I break these rules I will be hurting myself, my friends and the CCLCS community. In addition, I will risk earning penalties, ranging from a loss of privileges (e.g. field trips) to more serious penalties (e.g. suspension).

I understand that a student who consistently breaks the rules may require an Individual Behavioral Contract with specific and very clear expectations and consequences.

B. Consequences for Breaking Rules

Very Serious Infractions

The following very serious infractions, several of which involve criminal offenses as well as violations of the school's rules, can result in suspension up to 10 days or exclusion or expulsion by the Director. When a student is excluded from school, the Director may establish a list of conditions that must be completely met before the student can be readmitted to school. Any student suspended for 10 days or more or excluded or expelled may appeal the Director's decision, including the conditions for re-admittance, in writing to the Board of Trustees. The Board is the final arbiter in all disciplinary actions. However, if the Board upholds the Director's decision and the Director determines that the student has failed to meet the conditions set forth in his/her exclusion, the Director has final authority to deny the student's readmission to the school. These rules apply to behavior on the school premises or at school-related functions.

Very serious infractions include:

- Possession and/or use of a weapon
- Possession or use of explosives
- Possession, sale, distribution or use of drugs (illegal substances)
- Possession, sale, distribution or use of alcohol or alcoholic beverages Possession, sale, or distribution of tobacco products
- Misuse of over-the-counter drugs
- Extortion
- Giving false alarms
- Theft
- Arson
- Assault of staff or student
- Threatening health and safety of staff or student
- Battery of staff or student (e.g., hitting, beating up, etc.)
- Vandalism
- Hazing and harassment (constantly "picking on" another student)
- Any other action that seriously affects the educational process or safety of the school's staff and students

Upon issuance of felony complaint against the student, if the Director determines that continued presence in school will have a substantial detrimental effect on the school's welfare.

Additionally, any breaches of Federal law, Massachusetts state law, or the by-laws of the Town of Orleans, will be handled in cooperation with the Orleans Police Department. It is also important for parents and students to understand that according to Massachusetts general laws (M.G.L. ch. 71, sec. 55), "A student may be expelled from a charter school based on criteria determined by the Board of Trustees and approved by the Secretary of Education with the advice of the principal and teachers."

Other Infractions

There are a wide range of other negative behaviors, similar to those described in the student contract, that can undermine the strength of the school community and thus require corrective action. At CCLCS we have developed tools to respond to these situations. The tools are designed for clear identification, communication, restitution to the community and, when appropriate, sanctions to allow increased self awareness for the offender and a safe and appropriate learning climate for the "victims" of the misbehavior. Behaviors requiring such intervention include but are not limited to:

- disruption of the learning environment
- disrespect or bullying directed towards teachers or other students
- mistreatment of the physical setting or materials
- disobeying teachers or other adults in charge
- inappropriate contact with other people or materials
- treating others badly because of their ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual preference, family background or general appearance (see discrimination / harassment policies in this handbook)
- inappropriate or distracting items brought to school
- unsafe behavior in class or in shared spaces
- poor sportsmanship in group settings
- violation of the "Acceptable Use of Technology" contract
- inappropriate language

Teachers and other adults in charge have a range of options available to address these situations. As noted in the Student Behavioral Contract, responses may vary depending upon how many infractions a student accumulates (see section on "Keeping Track of Student Behavior"). Teacher responses need to balance the need for consistency with the ability to appropriately judge the magnitude of a response in a given situation. As such, maintaining discipline is part art, part science. Teacher responses will include the following tools.

- verbal warnings
- time outs in the classroom area
- calls home to parents to discuss student's behavior
- missing recess
- staying after school
- sending the student to a member of the Administrative Team
- sending the student to the Office

Tracking Student Behavior

Behaviors requiring more than just verbal warnings, but not serious enough to be classified as “very serious”, can be managed through the “Think About It” process. This is a multi-step process that involves the following components:

1. Initial identification of the incident. At this stage the staff member notices the incident and engages the student to begin processing.
2. After initial verbal processing, the student is prompted to fill in a “Think About It” (TAI) sheet. This may be done in the classroom, in a time out space outside of the classroom, or in the office area.
3. After the sheet has been filled out the teacher or administrator determines next action steps and fills them in on the form. Steps can include a student conference with teachers or administrators, a parental meeting or phone conference, or loss of privileges for the student. Staff should be sure to follow special protocols that may have been developed for students on behavioral plans.
4. One of the adults processing the incident is assigned to take charge of the action steps.
5. The sheet is put into a folder in the team notebook.
6. A teacher designated for each grade level removes the form from the folder, enters the incident onto the student’s electronic database file, records on the form how many forms the student has accumulated so far this year, and logs and transfers the sheet into the grade’s disciplinary notebook.
7. The team reviews the last week’s recorded disciplinary incidents at each week’s grade level meeting.
8. An accumulation of TAI forms will result in an automatic after-school session, as well as a meeting with the student’s parents to address the root causes of the behavior and to discuss strategies to improve behavior (assuming such a meeting has not been recently held before this). As mentioned in the general Student Behavioral Contract, repeated misbehavior may require a more specific Individual Behavioral Contract.
9. Accumulation of "Think About It" sheets may trigger review of the student’s eligibility for field trips. The review may determine that a student is ineligible, or it may trigger a warning letter.

Field Trip/ Physical Education Behavior

The curriculum at the CCLCS often provides for learning experiences away from the school grounds. During these activities, it is important for all students to be responsible for their behavior. Inappropriate behavior may result in loss of field trip privileges. The following rules are in addition to normal school rules.

- Students must give parents and other school community members assisting with field trips the same respect that they would provide to teachers.
- When asked by the driver of a van to be quiet, students are required to be quiet.
- Consumption of food and drink is not permitted in school vans without permission of the driver.
- Students must leave the vans clean and free of debris at the end of each trip.

Detention Protocol

- Students who engage in “moderately” disruptive behaviors (less severe than suspensions, but more severe than minor distractions) or students who accumulate repeated minor infractions may be asked to stay after school for a detention.
- A detention will last from 3:15 until 4:00 and is designed to include reflection and restitution. Using the “Think About It” sheet as a draft, students will be required to write a letter to their teacher and parents explaining what happened and how they can make amends and avoid similar behaviors in the future. The time is designed to be calm and reflective.

- We expect detentions to be meted out infrequently.
- In general, three detentions will trigger a more serious response that will likely include a suspension and parental meeting.

Suspension Recording Protocol

Student suspensions are logged in the disciplinary master notebook housed in the Director's office, and are logged into the school's electronic database. When a student receives a suspension, the Director or the Director's designee checks the yearly record to assess the student's cumulative suspension data in order to assure that the school complies with all regulations with respect to student suspension requirements.

Behavioral / performance expectations for participation in extended field trips

The extended field trips at the Cape Cod Lighthouse Charter School are designed to build class cohesion, meet specific learning objectives, and serve as a fun reward for students' enthusiastic participation in the academic and civic life at our school. The success of the trips requires students, parent chaperones and teachers to uphold very high standards of behavior. Living together in harmony for five days in the June heat of Pennsylvania, the woods at Nature's Classroom or for three days in the rustic White Mountains, requires a climate of mutual trust between students and staff. At CCLCS we have been able to build and maintain this trust, as evidenced by years of very successful trips.

We strive to make these trips positive growth experiences for ALL students, but it does sometimes happen that students need to be excluded from a class trip. These exclusions are rare, and are based on the student's behavioral and academic performance at school. In order to be included in a class trip, a student must meet the following academic standards.

- complete at least 75% of his/her homework assignments in all classes
- complete all project work in all classes
- have a passing class participation grade in all classes

Any student in danger of falling short of these standards will receive warnings when they fall out of compliance, so that they can complete the work necessary to be included in the trip.

Students can also be excluded from overnight field trips for behavioral reasons. These behaviors include serious violations of school rules - such as possession of drugs or weapons, vandalism, assault or harassment.

Teachers will routinely review students' field trip participation status at weekly team meetings. Parents of students in danger of being excluded from trips will be informed of this. Students excluded from a trip will be informed with a letter from the school's director at least one week before the trip, unless the event leading to the exclusion happens closer to the trip date.

Due Process

All students involved in a discipline concern will be afforded due process. Due process includes the student's right to be treated with fairness and respect; to be given the opportunity to share his/her side of a situation; and to be assigned consequences in a reasonable and impartial manner. Due process includes the right to request a review of any decision and the right to appeal through the school's appeal process.

Students will be given the opportunity to reflect on their misbehavior, to assume personal responsibility for their part in a situation, to brainstorm and/or rehearse alternate methods of handling the situation, and to make amends, when practical, in an appropriate manner.

D. Special Disciplinary Procedures

Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71, Section 37H requires that all student handbooks shall contain the following provisions:

1. Any student who is found on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of a dangerous weapon, including but not limited to, a gun or knife; or a controlled substance as defined in Chapter 94C, including, but not limited to, marijuana, cocaine, heroin, may be subject to expulsion from school or school district by the principal.
2. Any student who assaults a principal, assistant principal, teacher, teacher's aide or other educational staff on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, may be subject to expulsion from school or school district by the principal.
3. Any student who is charged with a violation of either paragraph (a) or (b) shall be notified in writing of an opportunity for a hearing; provided, however, that the student may have representation, along with the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses at said hearing before the principal. After said hearing a principal may, in his discretion, decide to suspend rather than expel a student who has been determined by the principal to have violated either paragraph (a) or (b).
4. Any student who has been expelled from a school district pursuant to these provisions shall have the right to appeal to the Board of Trustees. The expelled student shall have ten days from the date of expulsion in which to notify the Board of Trustees of his appeal. The student has the right to counsel at a hearing before the Board of Trustees. The subject matter of the appeal shall not be limited solely to a factual determination of whether the student has violated any provisions of this section.
5. When a student is expelled under the provisions of this section, no school or school district within the commonwealth shall be required to admit such student or to provide educational services to said student. If said student does apply for admission to another school or school district, the superintendent of the school district to which the application is made may request and shall receive from the superintendent of the school expelling said student a written statement of the reasons for said expulsion.

Discipline of Students who are Eligible for Special Education Services

In general, if your child has violated the school's disciplinary code, the school may suspend or remove your child from his or her current educational placement for a period not to exceed ten (10) consecutive school days in any school year. If your child possesses, uses, sells or solicits illegal drugs on school grounds or at a school-sponsored event or carries a weapon to school or a school function or has repeated incidents of suspendable offenses, the school may place your child in an interim alternative educational setting for up to 45 calendar days. If your child has been placed in an interim educational setting as a result of a disciplinary action, your child may remain in the interim setting for a period not to exceed 45 days. Thereafter, your child will return to the previously agreed-upon educational placement unless either a hearing officer orders another placement or you and the school agree on another placement.

Anytime the school wishes to remove your child from his or her current educational placement for more than ten (10) consecutive school days in any school year, or for more than ten cumulative days when a pattern of removal is occurring, this constitutes a "change of placement." A change of placement invokes certain procedural protections under the IDEA, the federal special education law. These include the following:

- Prior to any removal that constitutes a change in placement, the school district must send you a full statement of your procedural right (Notice of Procedural Safeguards) and inform you that the Team will consider whether or not the behavior that forms the basis for the removal is related to the

student's disability or was the direct result of the district's failure to implement the IEP. This consideration is called a "manifestation determination." Remember that you, as a parent, always have the right to participate as a member of the Team.

- Prior to any removal that constitutes a change in placement and/or upon determination that the behavior is a manifestation of the disability, the school must convene a Team meeting to develop a plan for conducting a functional behavioral assessment that will be used as the basis for developing specific strategies to address the problematic behavior. If a behavioral intervention plan has been previously developed, the Team shall review its implementation and modify if necessary.

Consideration of whether the behavior is a manifestation of the student's disability:

The law provides that the Team must consider evaluation information, observational information, the student's IEP and placement, and must determine whether the behavior prompting disciplinary removal was a manifestation of the student's disability. The Team considers if the student understood the impact and consequences of the behavior and further considers if the student's disability impaired the student's ability to control his or her behavior.

If the Team determines that the behavior was related to your child's disability, then your child may not be removed from the current educational placement (except in the case of weapon or drug possession or use) until the IEP Team develops a new IEP and decides upon a new placement and you consent to that new IEP placement.

If the Team determines the behavior was not related to your child's disability, then the school may suspend or otherwise discipline your child according to the school's code of conduct, except that for any period of removal exceeding ten (10) school days, the school must provide your child with a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). The school must determine the educational services necessary for and the manner and location for providing these services.

In the case of a disagreement with the Team's determination:

If you disagree with the Team's decision on the "manifestation determination" or with the decision relating to placement of your child in an interim alternative education setting or any other disciplinary action, you have the right to request an expedited due process hearing from the Bureau of Special Education Appeals.

Discipline and Procedural Requirements Applied to Students not yet Determined to be Eligible for Special Education

If, prior to the disciplinary action, a school district had knowledge that the student may be a student with a disability, then the school district makes all protections under law available to the student until and unless the student is subsequently determined not to be eligible for special education. The school district may be considered to have prior knowledge if:

1. The parent had expressed concern in writing; or
2. The parent had requested an evaluation; or
3. School district staff had expressed concern that the student had a disability.

If the school district had no reason to consider the student disabled, and the parent requests an evaluation subsequent to disciplinary action, the school district will complete an expedited evaluation to determine eligibility for special education. The expedited evaluation will be completed and delivered to the parent via Team meeting discussions and reports within 15 school days from the school's receipt of a written consent to evaluate. If the student is found to have a disability and is eligible for special education services, then he/she receives all procedural protections subsequent to the finding of eligibility.

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4. Any student who has been expelled from a school district pursuant to these provisions shall have the right to appeal to the Board of Trustees. The expelled student shall have ten days from the date of expulsion in which to notify the Board of Trustees of his appeal. The student has the right to counsel at a hearing before the Board of Trustees. The subject matter of the appeal shall not be limited solely to a factual determination of whether the student has violated any provisions of this section.
5. When a student is expelled under the provisions of this section, no school or school district within the commonwealth shall be required to admit such student or to provide educational services to said student. If said student does apply for admission to another school or school district, the superintendent of the school district to which the application is made may request and shall receive from the superintendent of the school expelling said student a written statement of the reasons for said expulsion.

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Anytime the school wishes to remove your child from his or her current educational placement for more than ten (10) consecutive school days in any school year, or for more than ten cumulative days when a pattern of removal is occurring, this constitutes a "change of placement." A change of placement invokes certain procedural protections under the IDEA, the federal special education law. These include the following:

- Prior to any removal that constitutes a change in placement, the school district must send you a full statement of your procedural right (Notice of Procedural Safeguards) and inform you that the Team will consider whether or not the behavior that forms the basis for the removal is related to the

student's disability or was the direct result of the district's failure to implement the IEP. This consideration is called a "manifestation determination." Remember that you, as a parent, always have the right to participate as a member of the Team.

- Prior to any removal that constitutes a change in placement and/or upon determination that the behavior is a manifestation of the disability, the school must convene a Team meeting to develop a plan for conducting a functional behavioral assessment that will be used as the basis for developing specific strategies to address the problematic behavior. If a behavioral intervention plan has been previously developed, the Team shall review its implementation and modify if necessary.

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If the Team determines that the behavior was related to your child's disability, then your child may not be removed from the current educational placement (except in the case of weapon or drug possession or use) until the IEP Team develops a new IEP and decides upon a new placement and you consent to that new IEP placement.

If the Team determines the behavior was not related to your child's disability, then the school may suspend or otherwise discipline your child according to the school's code of conduct, except that for any period of removal exceeding ten (10) school days, the school must provide your child with a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). The school must determine the educational services necessary for and the manner and location for providing these services.

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1. The parent had expressed concern in writing; or
2. The parent had requested an evaluation; or
3. School district staff had expressed concern that the student had a disability.

If the school district had no reason to consider the student disabled, and the parent requests an evaluation subsequent to disciplinary action, the school district will complete an expedited evaluation to determine eligibility for special education. The expedited evaluation will be completed and delivered to the parent via Team meeting discussions and reports within 15 school days from the school's receipt of a written consent to evaluate. If the student is found to have a disability and is eligible for special education services, then he/she receives all procedural protections subsequent to the finding of eligibility.

D. Acceptable Use of Educational Technology

All students and staff at Cape Cod Lighthouse Charter School will have access to technology as part of their learning environment. It is expected that Cape Cod Lighthouse Charter School participants will abide by this Acceptable Use Policy when using Computers and other technology at the school.

Internet: Students may use the Internet for educational purposes only AND only with the permission of their classroom teachers - downloading, email and instant messaging are allowed only with direct teacher supervision. All users are expected to give credit for any work (graphics or text) taken from the Internet. Students may not, at any time, type their home address or telephone number to anyone on the Internet.

Hardware: All users are expected to treat computers with the care they deserve. Users agree not to physically tamper with computers and computer equipment. All school rules regarding vandalism apply to computers as well. Students should not move or unplug computer cables without teacher permission.

Software: Students may not load software, GAMES or APPLICATIONS, onto CCLCS computers. Installation or removal of software should be done only by staff after technology team notification. Software copyrights are respected by CCLCS; software piracy is prohibited.

Compact Disks: Students may not insert CDs or DVDs into CCLCS computers without teacher approval.

Privacy: Computer files belonging to other students or teachers are the same as property. Therefore, any tampering with files or projects belonging to another person will be regarded as stealing. Users are expected to respect the privacy of files belonging to the school, teachers, and students.

Any student found tampering with computer hardware or software could be liable for repair. Such repairs are often expensive. Students who violate this Acceptable Use Policy may lose computer privileges for a period of time.