



School Culture and Behavior Management Policy (2019-20)

Overall Philosophy

Our School Culture and Behavioral Management Policy is based on our holistic, student-centered approach, rooted in the cognitive theories of Constructivism and Choice Theory, and ultimately framed in the unique language of our Leadership Index Rubrics (please see attached). Together, these components provide the underlying rationale for the tailored decision making that occurs with respect to both major and minor behavior matters involving students.

Individualized and Student-Centered

We believe that Lead Teachers are best positioned to respond to the individual needs of students in each Schoolhouse (classroom), and thus our teacher-led leadership structure delegates to each lead teacher the authority to choose how to specifically implement the instruction around, and day-to-day management of the Leadership Index, as long as it is differentiated and done so in such a way that is consistent with the overall philosophy described above.

Schoolhouse Management

While all staff members share the collective responsibility of exhibiting and instilling in our students the core values embodied in our Leadership Index, the primary responsibility for purveying and managing school culture and student behavior should be vested in the individual Schoolhouses (i.e. classrooms), with the expectation that the vast majority of behavior issues will be addressed by Lead Teacher within each Schoolhouse. All teachers are directed to use a variety of strategies to identify a student's needs (the source of their behavior), and help develop a plan to enable the student to address the behavior (including, but not limited to calling parents, interviewing other involved students, creating opportunities for meditation and reflection, etc.). Teachers may engage the Dean of Students and/or members of her team to help determine and develop such responses and behavioral plans. Under such circumstances where behaviors are more serious (including but not limited to the causing of injury, tantrums, property damage, etc.), the Dean may inform one of the Partners (usually the Stakeholder Partner), and when necessary refer particularly serious matters to the response to intervention team (RTI) for review and follow up. The Dean may also determine whether a more serious action (e.g. suspension), needs to be taken. In making such determinations, the Dean contacts the parent or guardian and, if necessary, a parent meeting is scheduled, conducted and followed up. See "**Highly Disruptive or Unsafe Behaviors**" below for more information on the policy and procedures under such circumstances.

Firmwide Resources

The Partners, Dean of Students and staff members on the Dean's team (including the Learning Specialists, social workers, etc.) are available to provide strategic and targeted consultation and support teachers and staff members in their work in managing and supporting the positive behavioral development of students in each Schoolhouse as they work through behavior and leadership development matters (including but not limited to the development of any behavioral plans or interventions). The Dean of Students is designated as the DASA Coordinator and shall investigate all incidents of harassment and/or bullying (including but not limited to cyber bullying) involving students.

Serious, Highly Disruptive or Unsafe Behaviors

Like our instruction, every behavior issue is handled and determined on an individualized basis. The goal for every behavioral engagement with a student is to help ensure the consistent display and mastery of the behaviors outlined in the "Awakened" and "Developed" categories of the Leadership Index rubrics, while simultaneously ensuring the health and safety of all students, staff and school property. For any serious behavioral act or display that is inconsistent, or in conflict with the behaviors in the "Awakened" and "Developed" categories of each Leadership Attribute Rubric (including, but not limited to those behaviors highlighted in the "Dormant" and "Awakening" categories of the rubrics), teachers and instructional personnel may utilize a variety of strategies to help support students to reflect and improve and align their choice of actions and behaviors. These strategies could include, but are not limited to:

- asking students to take time to use breathing techniques
- writing reflections
- adult mediated and supervised peace-making discussions and planning
- peer mediated peace-making discussions and planning
- phone calls to parents
- one-on-one or group reflection conversations (with classroom or Dean's Team staff members)
- self-reflection/meditation time (either inside or outside of the classroom (including another classroom))

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For serious, highly disruptive and/or unsafe behaviors (including but not limited to causing injury to self, another student or staff member, screaming, running from staff members, damaging school property, etc.), that either interferes with, or may interfere with the learning and instructional environment, or places at risk or harms themselves, another student, staff member or school property (as determined by a teacher, member of the Dean's team or other staff member), students may be referred to the Dean for consideration for a more serious action, including but not limited to:

- asking students to take time to use breathing techniques
- writing reflections
- adult mediated and supervised peace-making discussions and planning
- peer mediated peace-making discussions and planning
- phone calls to parents
- one-on-one or group reflection conversations (with classroom or Dean's Team staff members)
- self-reflection/meditation time (either inside or outside of the classroom (including another classroom))
- suspension (short term or long term)
- expulsion

Mission

Our mission is to ignite, empower and transform people traditionally labeled "at-risk" into social entrepreneurs, engineers, and global leaders through our innovative, holistic and progressive human development school model.

Vision

Our vision is to use our Teaching Firm, a unique teacher-led organizational model, to be a fun, holistic, 'college-successful', career-ready, community-centered, culturally rich and relevant incubator of exceptional human potential where we spark, nurture and unleash mindful people empowered to affect positive change in the communities we serve.

Suspensions & Expulsions

In the case of suspensions or expulsions, a member of the Dean's team will conduct an investigation of the matter, including speaking with all involved stakeholders (including and especially the student who is the subject of the suspension or expulsion). In every circumstance a student will be given the opportunity to be heard and provided with information about the behaviors/actions that have brought that matter up for consideration for suspension or expulsion. Depending on the severity of the incident, and the behavioral history of the student who is the subject of the suspension or expulsion consideration, the Dean will be presented with the information gathered from the investigation, along with a recommendation for suspension or expulsion. The Dean will make a determination based on a review of the record, as well as a direct conversation with the student who is subject of the suspension or expulsion consideration prior to making any determination of suspension or expulsion. In the case of expulsions, the Dean will be sure to talk with parents, guardians or caregivers before making any expulsion decisions.

The only exception to the above process is for students with an IEP—in these circumstances the Dean will further consult with learning specialists, teachers and other stakeholders in determining suspension or expulsion decisions for students with IEPs. Where the recommendation would be for an expulsion or a suspension that would exceed 10 days (except where the suspension is for causing serious bodily harm), the Dean will notify the Partners that she will forward a request for an MDR to the CSE, as well as the student's parent, guardian or primary caregiver. The purpose of the MDR is to determine whether the subject behavior is a manifestation of the student's disability. Where appropriate the school's request for an MDR shall also include a concurrent request for the CSE and DOE to provide the student with services outlined in their IEP as required by law.

Where it is determined that the behavior is a manifestation of the student's disability, when appropriate we shall request an emergency review of the student's IEP to ensure that they are in the appropriate setting and receiving adequate services. If it is determined that our school is not the appropriate setting, we shall request for the CSE and DOE to provide the student with the appropriate setting and services aligned with their needs as required by law.

In any circumstance where a student with an IEP has been determined to cause serious bodily harm to a person at school, on our premises or at a school function, the student may be suspended from school for no more than 45 school days. In all such circumstances, the Dean shall notify the CSE and request that the CSE and DOE provide for the education services for the student as outlined in their IEP.

The School Bus

The Dean is the initial point person for any behavioral issues that occur on the school bus. The Dean informs the Stakeholder Partner of all significant behavioral matters from the school bus. Under most circumstances the Dean will make the determination of whether to contact parents. When serious incidents occur, or there is a consistent pattern of a student's unsafe choices, the Dean may determine whether a student will be suspended from the bus.

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CHARTER SCHOOLS

616 Quincy Street, 3rd Floor
Brooklyn, NY 11221
718-285-3787
www.embercs.org

Mission

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Students with IEPs

For students with IEP’s, the Partners Council will consult with the Learning Specialist and Dean in making disciplinary decisions. See “**Suspensions and Expulsions**” above.

Provision of Alternative Education

In situations where students are removed from school for more than 10 days, we will work with the DOE and CSE to ensure the provision of appropriate alternative education and instruction as required by law.

Documentation

All serious behavior matters (including any behavior management plans established in conjunction with parents), will be documented and tracked by the Dean and reported to the Partners Council via the Stakeholder Partner.

Due Process and Compliance with Applicable Laws

All matters involving discipline of students (including, but not limited to matters involving suspension, expulsion, etc.) shall comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws and regulations, including, but not limited to affording appropriate and required due process to all stakeholders. This includes ensuring that in each instance where suspension for any length of time is potentially implicated or contemplated, that the student involved is given oral or written notice of the charges against her/him, and if s/he denies them, s/he is provided with explanation of the evidence against them and an opportunity to present her/his version.

Appeals

All disciplinary actions, including but not limited to suspension and expulsion decisions administered under this policy may be appealed to the Partners either orally or in writing. The Partners will review all documentation and/or testimonials, which may include but is not limited to interviewing the student who is the recipient of the disciplinary action, as well as any other stakeholder. The Partners will make a decision either to uphold, modify or reverse a disciplinary determination within 2 days, and shall provide notification of this decision to the student and their parent, guardian or primary caregiver orally or in writing.

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Ember does not discriminate against any student, employee or other person on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, disability or any other unlawful ground.