



# **RePublic Schools Core Family Handbook**

2020-2021

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## MISSION, BELIEFS, AND VALUES

### The Home and School Partnership

At RePublic Schools, we do everything we can to ensure that your scholar succeeds academically and socially. We know that success is not possible without the dedication and support of our scholars' parents, guardians, family and friends. All of us must work together to provide the very best education for RePublic scholars. Home is a child's first classroom and a parent is a child's first teacher. When our scholars see how dedicated you are to our school and its values, they will be inspired to model that same level of dedication and commitment to our shared values.

### Mission

The mission of RePublic Schools is to reimagine public education in the South. RePublic Schools achieves its mission by operating schools that prepare scholars to enter, succeed in, and graduate from the college of their choice, and by supporting schools that value innovation and ownership.

## SCHOOL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### The RePublic School Day

Across all grades, the RePublic school day is extended to permit extra instructional time and assistance. Up to tenth grade, scholars receive two classes of math, two classes of literacy, and extra help every day, as well as computer science, science, and history multiple times per week. Please see the elementary, middle, or high school handbook for start and end times for each level of school.

### Communication Between Parents and the School

Communication is one of the most valuable tools we have in supporting our scholars' success. We will communicate with you frequently and in detail about your scholar's school life and academic progress. Communication is a two-way street. We need to hear from you early and often about your scholar. We expect a call if your scholar is out for the day. We expect a call if you or your scholar is concerned about his or her academic performance. We expect a call if something happens at home that would be helpful for a scholar's teacher or advisor or the school leadership to know.

You can expect:

- Weekly Newsletters
  - Weekly, families will receive a newsletter. At the elementary and middle school level, the newsletter will be a printed handout. At the high school level, this information will be sent out over email. The newsletter will include announcements and updates. If you do not receive a weekly newsletter, please ask your scholar and, if they have not received it, please reach out to the school. To ensure that you receive this critical information each week at the elementary and middle school levels, we ask that you sign each newsletter. We explain to scholars that it is their responsibility to ensure that you get this information,

why it is important, and that we hold them accountable for getting the weekly newsletter to you. It is our goal that families should feel involved in the events, activities, and announcements in our school communities. If you have questions or concerns about anything, please contact the school immediately.

- Access to Scholar Grades
  - Our elementary school and our middle schools track grades for scholars on a grading platform called School Runner. At the beginning of the year, we will send you log-in information. School Runner will allow you to see scholar grades in real time.
  - Our high school scholars will be able to track grades through the Power School app (Power School Mobile) on either their computer or their phone. Scholars will receive a log in at the beginning of the year to see grades in real time.
  - If you lose your log-in information, please contact the main office so we can remind you of it.
- Grade Level Advisory Calls

Twice per month, grade level teams meet to review scholar data and to identify positive and concerning trends. After this process, the team prioritizes families to receive phone contact from one or more teachers.

  - One of the many goals is to ensure that all parents are being contacted with a frequency that is both sustainable and relevant. Ideally, families should receive personal contact, on average, once a month.
- Quarterly Report Card Pick Up
  - Quarterly, your scholar's school will produce a report card which outlines their performance over the past six to eight weeks in grades, attendance, homework, behavior, and standardized tests.
  - In order to ensure communication about their performance, the following will happen, quarterly:
    - Your scholar's advisor will meet individually with them to discuss progress towards goals.
    - You'll be invited to your scholar's school for an in-person conference with their teachers.
    - You will receive a copy of the Report Card.
- Parent/Family Nights
  - All RePublic Schools hold regular family events where all scholars and their families are welcomed, but not required to attend.
  - These events are a great opportunity to come have fun with the whole family and to get to know teachers and fellow families a bit better.
  - Former family night themes include: Math Night, International Night, Movie Night, Christmas Cookie Decorating Party, Thanksgiving Potluck, etc.
- Additional Communication
  - In addition to the standard communication expectations outlined above, families should feel comfortable reaching out to staff whenever they have questions or concerns. Schools will distribute contact information for teachers and leadership at the beginning of each year. If you are ever confused about whom to speak to, please simply contact the main office and they will be happy to connect you to the appropriate

person. Our internal commitment is that all non-emergency calls and emails are responded to within 48 hours of receipt.

### **Inclement Weather Closings**

In the event of poor weather conditions such as heavy snow, ice or rain, please check our Facebook page, examine our website, wait for a phone call from our automated system, and listen to local TV or radio stations for relevant information regarding school cancellations or delays.

***RePublic Schools generally follows the delay and cancellation policies of the local school districts of Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools (MNPS) and Jackson Public Schools (JPS), but on rare occasions will make an independent call.***

If the local district is closed or delayed, this DOES NOT mean that RePublic schools will definitely be closed or delayed. In the event that RePublic Schools is open and the district is closed, ALL scholars are expected to attend school. Failure to do so will invoke the school's attendance policies. Families should check their local listings for information regarding inclement weather decisions.

### **Attendance Policy**

In order to achieve our ambitious goals, scholars at RePublic Schools must be in school, ready to learn every single day. Regular attendance is mandatory and poor attendance will not be tolerated. Preparing for college takes a substantial amount of time and hard work. As such, every single day counts at RePublic. Our scholars can only be successful if they are present at school and ready to learn. Missing school does not only impact your scholar's opportunity to experience teaching in the moment; it also impacts scholars' ability to catch up once they return. Regular attendance at school is therefore mandatory and vital for every scholar.

If a scholar is absent for the first five days of school, or at least ten consecutive days during the school year, and there has been no successful contact between the family and the school to explain his or her absences, that scholar may lose his or her seat and be considered un-enrolled from the school.

If a student is absent for any excused purpose (including illness), a student will be allotted the same amount of time as the duration of their excused absence to make up key assignments from the time they missed. The student's teacher will decide on exact homework and classwork that the student is required to make up. Regardless of homework and classwork decisions by a teacher, the student is required to make up any quizzes, unit assessments, interim assessments, or standardized assessments during the same time period after their return from an absence.

According to T.C.A § 49-6-3001 and M. C. A §37-13-91, all scholars under 18 are expected to be in school. All scholars under the age of 18 will be expected to comply with these laws and the school will follow procedures set out in TCA § 49-6-3007 and M.C. A §37-13-91 if the scholar does not comply with the law. In cases of truancy, the principal (or her/his designee) will investigate the situation. All RePublic Schools operate in compliance with TCA § 49-6-3007 and M.C. A §37-13-91 requirements, which include mandated reporting of truancy to appropriate state agencies.

### **All Absences Are Created Equal**

All absences, both excused and unexcused absences, are considered to be setbacks to your scholar's education at RePublic. Regardless of absence type, scholars are not set up to be successful if they miss school. RePublic also recognizes there are many real barriers to attendance for certain families. Schools will work to support families through those challenges to ensure scholars are in school learning each day.

### **Attendance Communication**

Families should communicate with the school about any attendance issues in advance, including sickness. This enables the school to plan and prepare for the scholar's absence. For any scholar not in school as of 8:00 am, families will receive an attendance phone call. Absences will be determined as excused or unexcused by the school leader or their designee. In order for an absence to be even considered as being excused, families should notify the school of an attendance issue via one of the following methods:

- A written note addressed to the school's Director of Operations
- An email to the school's director of operations
- A phone call to the school's director of operations (voicemails do not count)

Families can also expect to receive regular communication regarding attendance on all report cards. Real-time attendance data is also available on School Runner.

### **Absent Scholars Cannot Attend After School Events**

Scholars who are absent or have an incomplete day from school cannot attend school events, dances, or other school-sponsored activities on the day of the absence, unless the school has given advance permission. For weekend events, scholars must be present at the school on Friday to be eligible to attend.

### **Tardies**

Scholars are expected to be inside the doors of the school, in full uniform, at or before 8:00 am. Scholars arriving after 8:00 am are marked tardy. Four tardy days are counted on the scholar's record as one absence. Tardies due to traffic, medical appointments, family emergencies, etc. are not excused.

### **Arriving Late and Early Dismissals**

Scholars who arrive to school after twenty minutes after the school day begins and/or miss up to two full class periods are considered as having an incomplete day. This policy applies to both late arrivals and early dismissals. Two incomplete days are counted on a scholar's record as one absence.

Unless a parent or guardian has contacted the school in advance and provided a signed note to the school explaining the situation, and the school has granted permission, no scholar will be dismissed early from school. In addition, the parent or guardian must sign the scholar out with your school's main office before removing the scholar from school grounds. Scholars will not be dismissed unless the parent or guardian has physically come to the main office. Notification regarding early dismissals should be made as far in advance as possible. Early dismissal requests for pickup will not be accepted if they are made within an hour of official dismissal time. For their own safety, scholars must be picked up by a parent, guardian or designated emergency contact person in order to be dismissed. A note or phone call requesting that a scholar be dismissed on their own is insufficient and will not be honored. This policy applies to all early dismissals, including those for appointments and illness.

Likewise, if a scholar needs to be sent home due to a behavioral infraction or illness, a parent/guardian must come to the school, meet with the principal and/or dean if necessary, and remove the scholar from school grounds. Incomplete day consequences apply in these cases. Scholars being sent home for behavioral infractions or illness will not be dismissed unless the parent or guardian has physically come to the school (please see Code of Conduct for more details around behavioral infraction dismissal).

### **Leaving Campus**

In order to ensure the safety of all our scholars, scholars are not permitted to leave campus once they are inside the building. Leaving the school or school grounds without authorization is considered skipping or cutting class and will be considered a very serious violation of school rules.

### **Homework Policy**

Homework is an essential component of RePublic Schools' academic program. While teachers and scholars work hard during school time, it is critical that scholars practice independently so that they continue to build stamina and mastery. Homework is one way we ensure that happens. To ensure that homework is done consistently and accurately, there are several systems in place to set scholars up for success. Our goal is to teach scholars how to be successful in organizing homework, asking for help in advance, and turning in their work on time.

Please ensure that your child is completing his or her homework each night. We recommend setting aside a quiet, distraction-free (no television, no video games) area in your house for your scholar to work in. Once a scholar has completed his or her homework, you should look through it to ensure that the scholar followed directions, did their best work, and completed all required exercises. Parents must sign off on all scholar homework in order for the scholar to receive credit.

Please do not complete your scholar's homework for him or her. Homework is an opportunity for your scholar to practice what they have learned in class or to prepare for an upcoming class. If well-meaning parents or guardians complete a scholar's work for them, the student loses the opportunity to practice and learn.

### **Promotion**

Promotion to the next grade is earned at RePublic Schools. Retaining a scholar in his or her current grade is not a punishment. It is an opportunity for that scholar to master the content of that grade before moving to the next. The goal is to ensure that all scholars who are promoted are set up for success in the next grade. A scholar is a candidate for promotion into the next grade if he or she:

- Has fewer than twenty absences in the school year.
- Passes all classes (with a passing grade higher than 65%).
- Reads no fewer than two years below grade level.

Scholars who do not meet these criteria are candidates for retention in their current grade. RePublic is guided by these criteria in making the decision to ultimately retain a scholar.

Specific provisions of an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or an active English Language Learner may amend promotion or retention criteria, on a case-by case basis.

Schools will have conversations with every scholar who meets any of the above criterion at the end of each quarter. Schools will make final decisions on promotion at the end of the fourth quarter.

### **School Breakfast and Lunch**

All RePublic Schools participate in the National School Breakfast and Lunch Program, which provides free or reduced price breakfasts and lunches as well as free milk to eligible scholars. At the beginning of the school year, each family will be mailed a letter describing eligibility and an application to participate in the program. Families of scholars who have particular dietary restrictions should alert the Director of Operations as early in the school year as possible.

#### **School Breakfast**

At the beginning of each semester, scholars may register for the school breakfast program for the subsequent quarter. Scholars who register for the program can receive breakfast every morning, as long as the scholar arrives 15 minutes before official start time.

#### **School Lunch**

Scholars may either purchase lunch from the school or bring their own lunches from home. All of our schools are served by SLA Management, a school food service company that provides high-quality, nutritious, hot meals, prepared on-site.

#### **Lunches from Home**

For scholars to engage in the rigorous academic program at RePublic Schools, it is important that scholars have healthy, balanced meals. If you choose to send your scholar to school with lunch from home, we ask that you please do not include: soda (including diet), candy or fast food.

### **Dress Code**

RePublic Schools has a strict, non-negotiable dress code. The dress code applies during all school days and during all school-sponsored events (unless otherwise stated in writing by the school).

The dress code has been adopted to improve the educational environment for all scholars. Specifically, we have instituted a dress code to prepare scholars to act and dress as scholars, to foster a sense of school identity and community, to eliminate unnecessary energy spent on brand name clothing and image, to increase security and safety in the building, and reduce the cost of clothing families need to purchase each school year. RePublic has different dress code guidelines for each level of school - elementary, middle, and high school. To find what your scholar should be wearing, please see the specific guidelines for each tier of school dress code in the elementary, middle, or high school addendum at the end of this handbook.

#### **Enforcement of the Dress Code**

It is the goal of the school to have a dress code that makes things easier for parents and scholars. We have made every effort to be clear about this policy and to be consistent in its enforcement. Families who have questions or concerns should contact the school immediately for clarification.

Scholars are held accountable by their teachers to maintain the dress code. Teachers and leaders partner with families to ensure every scholar is in full uniform.

District or campus personnel will not discriminate against any student who has been exempted from the mandatory use of a dress code because of objections based on bona fide religious, medical or disability needs.

### Scholar Belongings

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

## SCHOLAR CODE OF CONDUCT

Learning is sacred at RePublic schools. The level of rigor that is placed in front of scholars requires a learning environment that is safe and free from distraction. The ability to complete college-level work alone is not enough to succeed in college. Scholars must also demonstrate the ability to make sound choices when faced with adversity. As such, RePublic Schools maintains equally high standards for conduct as it does academics.

In order to create the positive environment that leads to learning, we spend multiple days teaching our expectations for scholars at the beginning of the year. We reinforce this teaching throughout the year through lessons on culture and character education and coaching of scholars.

Schools are responsible for teaching and holding scholars accountable to these rigorous standards for character development. Specific rules and procedures for character are outlined at Back to School Night for parents, and are communicated to families through school-based communication throughout the school year.

### Corrective Discipline

The following list of behavioral infractions is not comprehensive; it offers examples of inappropriate or unacceptable behaviors. RePublic Schools has discretion to determine the consequence of behavioral infractions.

A school-related behavioral infraction refers to a violation of this code:

- While the scholar is engaged in school activities whether at home, on school grounds, or school-related transportation,
- During school-sponsored activities and trips,
- During all other school-related events, or
- Off of school grounds that results in substantial disruption to the learning environment.

Scholars are expected to always respond respectfully to the authority and direction of school staff. Responding inappropriately to staff will result in additional consequences being implemented. Behaviors that are considered disrespectful include but are not limited to: rolling of the eyes, “smacking” of the teeth, making inappropriate remarks or sounds in response to a request, or questioning a staff person’s action or authority in a disrespectful manner. Ignoring or failing to respond to an adult is also considered disrespectful.

At RePublic Schools we seek to help scholars become mature young adults. To that end, while we will not tolerate disrespect, we do allow for scholars to express disagreement in a respectful manner. The school has developed routines and procedures that enable scholars to easily express such disagreement with respect for all involved. Failure to disagree respectfully will result in further consequences.

Enforcement of RePublic Schools' Code of Conduct is based upon a framework of progressive discipline. Specifically, minor infractions result in less severe consequences while larger infractions result in more severe consequences. Some examples of minor consequences include issuing a deduction (demerit) at the middle school level, serving detention, serving in-class separation, and/or loss of privileges. Furthermore, first-time infractions result in less severe consequences while repeated infractions result in more severe consequences.

### In-Class Separation

Specific infractions warrant consequences that are more severe than detention, but less severe than out-of-school suspension. Therefore, RePublic Schools has an in-class separation model ensuring that scholars have access to the curriculum while at the same time ensuring that scholars face appropriately progressive consequences for more severe infractions.

Specific infractions which warrant in-class separation from the community include, but are not limited to:

- Disrespect to team or faculty
- Low-level dishonesty
- Repeated disruptions of a similar nature

Furthermore, in order to promote and uphold our school community's values and Code of Conduct, scholars who communicate with a scholar who is currently in-class separation will also earn a detention. Requirements: In the morning, scholars will need to check in with the principal and/or dean who will reiterate the expectations of in-class separation. Scholars on in-class separation will:

- Attend classes, receive instruction and complete class work.
- Not be permitted to communicate with any scholars throughout the day, including during breaks and lunch, except as specifically instructed by a teacher during an academic discussion.
- Not participate in selected class activities, as determined by each teacher.
- Not attend reward events including field trips, dances etc. (exceptions may be made in extraordinary circumstances at the sole discretion of the school administration).

Violation of the requirements of in-class separation may result in additional days of in-class separation or an out-of-school suspension. Scholars will not be allowed to participate in field trips and other class rewards while on in-class separation.

Scholars who are assigned in-class separation must show, through behavior and reflection, for an entire class day, that they are ready to rejoin the school community. If a scholar fails to meet this benchmark for 4 consecutive days, the scholar will earn in-office school suspension or out-of-school suspension depending on the circumstance.

Scholar Notification: If a scholar is assigned in-class separation, they will be notified by a staff member the

day before, or the day of, in-class separation.

Parental Notification: Parents of those scholars who have been assigned in-class separation receive notification. Parents will receive a letter each day a scholar is on in-class separation that must be signed and returned to the dean. The letter will indicate the reason for the in-class separation as well as an update on the status of the in-class separation (completed or continuing).

## Suspension

Infractions that may warrant an out-of-school suspension include, but are not limited to:

- Gross disrespect of a fellow scholar
- Multiple referrals from class
- Gross disrespect of faculty, staff, visitor, or school transportation provider
- Bullying of any kind which includes making verbal or physical threats, empty or otherwise
- Damaging, destroying, or stealing personal or school property or attempting to do so (including graffiti)
- Using or possessing tobacco products
- Disrupting in-school suspension through misbehavior
- Committing sexual, racial, or any form of harassment or intimidation
- Using abusive, vulgar or profane language
- Setting off false alarms
- Gambling
- Forgery, plagiarism, or cheating (including forging a parent's signature on school documents or assisting scholars to cheat)
- Extreme or repeated dishonesty
- Leaving school grounds without permission
- The school reserves the right to administer a suspension for any other egregious offense at the principal's discretion.

For an out-of-school suspension between one and ten days, the following procedures will apply: When an infraction occurs, the scholar will be removed from class and sent to the Main Office or another designated school location. The scholar's parent or guardian will be notified of the incident by the principal or another representative of the school.

Unless a scholar presents a danger or risk of substantial disruption to the educational process, the scholar shall receive notice and an opportunity to present her/his version of the relevant facts prior to a suspension of one to ten days.

In the case of danger or a risk of substantial disruption, the scholar will be removed from the school building and provided notice and the opportunity to present their version of the relevant facts as soon as possible. In the case that a scholar is assigned an out-of-school suspension, the scholar's parent/guardian must immediately come to the school, meet with the principal and/or dean, and remove the scholar from the school building. If the parent/guardian cannot immediately come to the school building, the scholar will wait in a designated area until the parent/guardian arrives. Written notice will be sent home designating the length of suspension.

In order for the scholar to re-enter the RePublic Schools community following an out-of-school suspension:

- An administrator will contact the parent/guardian to schedule a required re-entry meeting.
- The scholar may have to meet additional conditions as required by RePublic Schools.

Once the above conditions are met, the scholar will be welcomed back into the community. Scholars are responsible for completing academic work missed during the suspension. This work will be available in a folder for pick-up by a family member at the school after 1 pm. The completed work will receive full credit, if submitted by deadlines in accordance with the school make-up policy. If a scholar does not complete this work, the scholar will face the consequences outlined in the school make-up policy.

## Expulsion

Expulsion is defined as the exclusion from all RePublic Schools Campuses for up to 180 school days.

### Grounds for Expulsion

Local law provides the principal with the authority to expel scholars for a variety of behaviors, to include Zero Tolerance offenses, severe behavioral infractions, or for repeated disregard of school policies and procedures. In addition to these offenses, RePublic Schools upholds the expulsion decisions of all Metro Nashville Public Schools, Jackson Public Schools and charter schools. RePublic Schools recognizes the expulsion decisions of all public, private, and charter schools. This means if a scholar has been expelled from another school, they are not able to enroll at a RePublic Schools campus during the time of their expulsion.

Whenever the principal recommends expulsion, an expulsion hearing shall occur. The hearing shall occur as soon as practicable after the beginning of the suspension, and RePublic Schools shall endeavor to hold the hearing within ten days of the beginning of the suspension. In addition, as soon as practicable after the beginning of the suspension, the principal shall provide the scholar written notice of the following, which shall be translated into the scholar's/parent's primary language if necessary:

- Date, time and place of the hearing.
- Charges and a summary of the evidence against the scholar, which shall include the substance of the allegations.
- Agenda for the hearing.
- That the hearing is a closed meeting unless the scholar submits a request to the school in writing, at least five days prior to the date of the hearing, for an open, public meeting.
- That the scholar and/or parent, upon request, may review the scholar's records from the school in accordance with applicable law.
- Notice that the scholar has the right at the hearing to:
- Be represented by parents, legal representative, or other representative at the scholar's expense; and,
- Present witnesses and arguments in the scholar's defense and ask questions of school administrators who present information at the hearing, within the process and time constraints set forth in the agenda.

The decision maker at the hearing shall be the Expulsion Authority, which shall consist of an odd number of and no fewer than three persons chosen from among the following: the principals of any RePublic Schools school, and the assistant principals or deans of any RePublic Schools school; provided, however that the

principal, assistant principal or dean of the school that the scholar attended at the time of the incident shall not be a member of the Expulsion Authority for that scholar's expulsion hearing.

At the expulsion hearing, the following procedural safeguards shall be in effect:

- The scholar may be represented by parents, a legal representative, or other representative at the scholar's expense.
- Due to the potential sensitivity of issues addressed, the expulsion hearing is a closed hearing; only the scholar, the scholar's family/representatives, the school administration, witnesses, legal counsel, and the Expulsion Authority may attend; provided, however, that the scholar may request an open, public meeting by informing the school of the request in writing, at least five days prior to the date of the hearing.
- The scholar has the right to present witnesses and arguments in the scholar's defense and to ask questions of school administrators who present information at the hearing, within the process and time constraints set forth in the agenda.
- The school may present information collected from scholar witnesses through school administrators, in lieu of calling the scholar witnesses themselves, to the extent permitted by applicable law and due process.
- The school will record (by tape or other appropriate means) the hearing and a copy of such will be made available to the scholar upon request.
- Proceedings will be translated into the scholar's/parent's primary language if necessary for their understanding.

After the hearing, the Expulsion Authority shall deliberate and issue a decision. The following procedures apply to the deliberation and decision:

- The Expulsion Authority may order removal of the suspension or expulsion unconditionally or upon such terms and condition as it deems reasonable or may suspend the scholar for a specified period of time.
- In its fact-finding, the Expulsion Authority shall decide based upon the information presented at the hearing whether it is "more likely than not" that certain alleged incidents occurred.
- The vote of a majority of the members of the Expulsion Authority shall constitute the decision of the Expulsion Authority.

During its deliberations, the Expulsion Authority may consult the principal who recommended expulsion solely for discussing appropriate sanctions that are less severe than expulsion; provided, however, that the scholar's representative may be present while the Expulsion Authority is consulting lesser sanctions with the principal, and in no event shall the principal during these discussions provide new evidence for expulsion that was not presented at the expulsion hearing.

The Expulsion Authority's decision shall be issued in writing to the scholar within five days of the hearing.

- The written decision shall be translated into the scholar's/parent's primary language if necessary for their understanding.
- The written decision shall inform the scholar and principal of the right to appeal the decision by delivering a written notice of appeal to the Expulsion Authority within five days of receipt of the written decision, that the notice of appeal must summarize the basis for the appeal, and that in the absence of a timely appeal the Expulsion Authority's decision is final.

In addition to the above stated policies, any breaches of federal, applicable state or local city laws may be handled in cooperation with the local police department.

### **Appeals to the Board**

The scholar or principal may appeal the Expulsion Authority's decision. An appeal is timely only if a notice of appeal is delivered to the Expulsion Authority within 5 days of receipt of its written decision. A notice of appeal must be in writing and summarize the basis for appeal. Absent a timely appeal, the Expulsion Authority's decision is final.

In the event of a timely appeal, the following process shall occur:

- The appeal shall be taken to the board of directors of RePublic Schools, which shall be the decision-maker for the appeal.
- The Board, based upon a review of the record, may grant or deny a request for another hearing and may affirm or overturn the Expulsion Authority's decision with or without a new hearing; provided, however, that the board may not impose a more severe penalty on the scholar without giving the scholar the opportunity for a new hearing before the board. For the purpose of this paragraph the "record" shall include (i) the audio recording of the hearing before the Expulsion Authority or any written transcript of that hearing and (ii) anything provided by the school or the scholar in the notice of appeal.
- In the event that the board decides not to conduct a new hearing, the board shall issue a written decision within fifteen days of its receipt of the notice of appeal. The written decision should include the following:
  - Date of initial decision;
  - Date of notice of appeal;
  - Statement that board based its determination upon review of the record; and
  - Statement that the board's decision is final.
- If the board conducts a new hearing, the same processes and protections shall be provided as for the initial hearing before the Expulsion Authority. The board shall endeavor to conduct the new hearing as soon as practicable.
- The action of the board in response to any appeal shall be final.

### **Procedural Safeguards for Students with Disabilities**

Federal and state law provide certain procedural rights and protections relating to discipline of scholars who have been identified under such laws as having special needs based upon a disability. A copy of the Notice of Procedural Safeguards can be found in each school's main office.

RePublic Schools campus officials may suspend scholars with disabilities and cease educational services for a total of up to ten (10) consecutive or ten cumulative school days in one school year without providing special education procedural safeguards. Detentions and in-school suspensions do not count toward the ten day limit.

The principal has discretion to be flexible in the amount of days of suspensions given to each special education scholar with disabilities. Scholars with disabilities can be suspended in excess of ten school days in

certain circumstances. When campus officials anticipate a referral for expulsion, the following rules apply:

- Campus officials must provide written notice to the parent/guardian or surrogate parent of the intervention or consequence being considered and the date of an Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting, which must be held within ten days of the date of the decision to discipline the scholar.
- The IEP team must:
  - Determine whether the misconduct is related to the scholar's disability by reviewing evaluation and diagnostic results, information from the parent/guardian, observations of the scholar, and the scholar's IEP and placement. The behavior is not a manifestation of the scholar's disability if:
    - the scholar was given appropriate special education supplementary aids and intervention strategies; and
    - the disability does not impair the ability to control behavior.
  - Review and revise, if necessary, the behavior intervention plan or, as necessary, develop a functional behavior assessment and intervention plan to address the misconduct.
  - Determine the appropriateness of an interim alternative educational setting, and as indicated, include in the IEP those services and modifications that will enable the scholar to continue to participate in the general curriculum and address the behavior so it will not recur.

Special education scholars with disabilities may be referred for an expulsion hearing if they are in violation of any zero tolerance offense. All scholars will be ensured a due process expulsion hearing.

## Bullying

Bullying is considered a zero tolerance offense at RePublic Schools. A scholar may not exhibit conduct that has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with another scholar's academic development; creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive learning environment; physically harms a scholar; or damages a scholar's property. A scholar may not bully, coerce, harass or attempt to bully, coerce or harass any person for the purposes of hazing, initiation into, or affiliation with any organization.

## Social Media

Scholar use of social media outlets, including but not limited to, Facebook and Twitter, is not permitted on RePublic Schools' internet service or during school hours. Scholars with social media accounts may not "friend" school staff or faculty, including coaches or enrichment leaders. Scholars are, however, permitted to "like" RePublic Schools' pages and/or follow them on Facebook or Twitter. Gossip, slander, etc. of RePublic Schools' scholars, faculty, and staff on social media outlets are unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Cyber bullying is treated in the same manner as in-person bullying, resulting in out-of-school suspension or other consequences depending on the severity of the infraction.

## Bus Behavior

Participation in bus transportation is a privilege. At RePublic, we want to ensure your scholar is transported to and from school in the safest of manners. All behavioral expectations outlined in the RePublic Schools Code of Conduct apply on school bus transportation. Scholars who take the school bus are expected to act

responsibly and respectfully at all times.

All school rules apply on the bus and at the bus stop. The following additional rules will apply to the bus and the bus stops:

- Scholars will be given assigned seats. Scholars are expected to sit in and stay in these seats unless given express permission by the driver or school administration to move.
- Scholars are expected to be silent on the bus.
- A school official will meet the bus every day. No child may exit the bus before the administrator checks with the driver as to behavior.

Scholars who violate these rules will lose bus privileges.

- Three low level infractions = One major infraction
- One major infraction = loss of bus privileges for a week.
- Two major infractions = loss of bus privileges for a month.
- Three major infractions = loss of bus privileges for the year.

Infractions, if serious enough, can warrant immediate loss of bus privileges for the year. Other consequences (e.g., demerits, detentions, suspensions) apply as well.

Examples of behaviors that qualify as minor bus infractions:

- Talking on the bus
- Not following directions on the bus
- Doing homework on the bus
- Eating food on the bus
- Using electronics on the bus
- Leaving trash on the bus

Examples of behaviors that qualify as major bus infractions:

- Moving seats during the route or sitting in the incorrect seat
- Failure to correct behavior after being redirected
- Disrespect to a driver
- Foul language
- Horseplay on the bus
- Throwing anything inside or outside of the bus
- Anything that compromises the immediate safety of anyone on or around the bus
- Defacing the bus

Families are strongly encouraged to reinforce the importance of proper bus behavior and the potential consequences for bad behavior. Should a scholar lose bus privileges, that scholar/their family is responsible for arranging alternative bus transportation for the scholar during that period. Unless a scholar is suspended, failure to attend school as a result of lost bus privileges will be considered unexcused absences and the scholar will receive consequences accordingly.

## Cheating, Plagiarism, and Copying Others' Work

At RePublic Schools, scholars do not plagiarize, cheat or otherwise copy one another's work. Plagiarism means using the exact words, opinions, or factual information from another person without giving that person credit. Plagiarism is intellectual theft and will not be tolerated at RePublic. We will review specific guidelines regarding cheating and plagiarism with scholars throughout the year. There are significant consequences for cheating, plagiarism and copying including out-of-school suspension. Scholars who knowingly allow teammates to copy or cheat off their work receive the same consequence. If a scholar is unsure about an assignment or unsure about a test question or testing procedure, they should go to a teacher and ask for direction.

### Scholar Searches

To maintain the security of all its scholars, RePublic Schools staff reserves the right to conduct searches of its scholars and their property when there is reasonable suspicion to do so. If searches are conducted, the school will ensure that the privacy of the scholars is respected to the extent possible, and that scholars and their families are informed of the circumstances surrounding and results of the search. School cubbies and desks, which are assigned to scholars for their use, remain the property of RePublic Schools, and scholars should, therefore, have no expectation of privacy in these areas.

### Field Trips/End-of-Year Events

RePublic Schools' curriculum may sometimes provide for the exciting opportunity for outside learning experiences or special school events. During these activities, it is important for all scholars to be responsible for their behavior since the site of the activity or event is a temporary extension of the school grounds.

A permission slip that allows scholars to attend all school-sponsored field trips and events will be sent home at the beginning of the school year and should be signed by a parent or guardian. The school will attempt to notify all parents and guardians before each school-sponsored trip. For trips that are not school-sponsored (e.g., voluntary trips), a permission slip will be sent home prior to the trip/event, and must be signed by a parent or guardian.

A scholar may be considered ineligible for a trip for reasons including but not limited to: not returning the school-sponsored trip permission form, involvement in a disciplinary incident on a prior trip, poor school attendance, misbehavior or severe lack of academic effort in the days prior to the trip, etc.

If parents or other volunteers assist with such trips or events, scholars must afford these chaperones the same respect they would provide to teachers. Appropriate behavior must be maintained when attending school-sponsored events, and riding on school-provided transportation.

## GENERAL SCHOOL INFORMATION

### Visitors

Parents are welcome and encouraged to visit RePublic Schools at any time during the school year. All visitors are required to report to the main office upon entering the building. Any visitor who does not report to the office or is found in the building without authorization will be asked to leave immediately.

All RePublic schools use the Raptor Visitor Management System to ensure scholar, family, and faculty

safety. Using Raptor allows us to know who is in our building at all times, and it allows us to screen visitors, contractors, and volunteers to provide a safer environment for our school community. Upon entering our buildings, visitors are asked to present an ID such as a Driver's License, which can be scanned into the system. If a parent or guardian for any reason does not have a US government-issued ID, the school staff member can use any form of identification and manually enter the person's name into the Raptor system. The Raptor system will check to ensure that registered sexual offenders are not entering our school campus without our knowledge. **The Raptor system checks the visitor's name and date of birth for comparison with a national database of registered sex offenders. The registered sex offender database is the only official database checked by the Raptor system. No other data from the ID is gathered or recorded and the information is not shared with any outside agency.** Once entry is approved, Raptor will issue a badge that identifies the visitor, the date, and the purpose of his/her visit. A visitor's badge will not be necessary for those who visit our schools simply to drop off an item in the office or pick up paperwork.

While visitors are always welcome, they are encouraged to take great care not to disturb the teaching and learning process. Guests should not talk to or interact with scholars and/or staff during class unless they receive permission from the teacher in the classroom.

In the case of an emergency, parents or guardians should contact their school's main office either by phone or in person. Under no circumstances should parents or guardians contact scholars in their classrooms or attempt to withdraw scholars from the building on personal cell phones without notifying and receiving permission from staff members in the main office.

## Medical Policies

Health and safety are a top priority at RePublic Schools.

### Medical Records and Medication at School

Before a scholar can enroll in the school, the school must have on file the following forms:

- Medical Requirements Checklist
  - This form contains records showing that the scholar has:
    - up-to-date immunizations; and
    - permission to receive screening for vision, hearing, blood pressure, BMI, and scoliosis.
- Health Information Form
  - This form provides important information about a scholar's emergency contacts, health care providers, and insurance.
  - Most importantly, it gives the school permission to initiate emergency medical treatment in the event that a parent or guardian cannot be reached.
- Request For Assisted Self-Administration of Medications, Prescription and Non-Prescription Medication Form.
  - If a scholar requires medication while in school, the school must have on file a Request For Assisted Self-Administration of Medications, Prescription and Non-Prescription Medication form, filled out by the scholar's parent or guardian.
  - If the medication is prescription, the form must be signed by the scholar's physician. No scholar is allowed to bring medication to the school without the school's full knowledge.

- All medication must be delivered to the front office and picked up by a parent – medication should NEVER be sent with the scholar.
- All medication must be presented in its original container from the pharmacy, with dosage amount of medication listed.
- Scholars who have provided the school with assisted self-administration authorization forms should bring the medication to the school on the first day, or contact to the school to make other arrangements.
- The Authorization to Self-Administer Medication form must be updated annually.
- When there are any changes to the medication (including to the dosage of the medication), a new form must be completed and submitted, including an updated physician signature (if the medication is prescription).
- The Request For Assisted Self-Administration of Medications form requirement applies to all medication, including over the counter medication. If a scholar needs to take over the counter medication during the school day, the scholar must have on file the authorization signed by his or her parent or guardian, giving the school permission to administer the medication during the school year. This requirement also applies to asthma inhalers.

Scholars should never carry or take medications outside of these procedures. Scholars found in possession of over the counter or prescription drugs could face significant consequences.

### Health and Illness

The school requests that children do not come to school if they are ill. If school staff believes that a child needs to see a doctor, is contagious, increases the risk of illness to other children, or requires prolonged individual staff attention that interferes with the safety and regular functioning of the classroom, the school will contact families and ask them to pick up and take their child home.

Parents will be contacted if a child has a moderate-to-high-fever; is experiencing vomiting or diarrhea; shows signs of any contagious disease; and/or has an illness that prevents the child from participating in activities.

### Health and Sexual Education Policy

RePublic Schools provides a comprehensive health education curriculum designed to provide scholars with the knowledge and skills to make responsible, well-informed personal health decisions. The health education curriculum covers a wide variety of topics, including human sex education and human sexuality issues. Parents can choose for their scholars to opt out of these classes.

### Campus Safety and Supervision of Scholars

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

### Personal Safety Outside of the Building

To maximize personal safety outside the building, it is recommended that scholars stay in groups if possible and do not wear music players/talk on cell phones/or count money while walking down the street. Also, do not

engage in conversation, tough talk, or taunting with individuals. If you are threatened, go to a business or a public area as quickly as possible. Ask to call the police.

## Emergency Drills and Protocol

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

## FERPA and Scholar Records

### Notification of Rights under FERPA

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

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days after the day the school receives a request for access.

Parents or eligible students who wish to inspect their child's or their education records should submit to the school principal a written request that identifies the records they wish to inspect. The school official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA.

Parents or eligible students who wish to ask the School to amend their child's or their education record should write to the school principal, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it should be changed. If the school decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, School will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

3. The right to provide written consent before School discloses personally identifiable information (PII) from the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by School or the school district as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the school's governing board; a volunteer, contractor, or

consultant who, while not employed by School, performs an institutional service or function for which School would otherwise use its own employees and who is under the direct control of School with respect to the use and maintenance of PII from education records, such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist; a parent or student volunteering to serve on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee; or a parent, student, or other volunteer assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility. Upon request, School discloses education records without consent to officials of another school or school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll, or is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes of the student's enrollment or transfer. (Note: FERPA requires a school or school district to make a reasonable attempt to notify the parent or student of the records request unless it states in its annual notification that it intends to forward records on request or the disclosure is initiated by the parent or eligible student).

4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by School to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

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

## **Directory Information**

FERPA allows schools to disclose appropriately designated "directory information" from a student's education record without written consent. "Directory Information" is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released. School has designated the following as "Directory Information:" the student's name, address, email address, grade level, date and place of birth, telephone number, and his/her parents' or guardians' names, mailing addresses, email addresses, telephone numbers, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, awards and honors received, photographs and videos of students participating in school or school-sponsored activities that have appeared in school publications, and dates of attendance. Student social security number or student identification or unique student identifier will not be designated as Directory Information.

Schools may disclose Directory Information from time to time to the general public, including to military recruiters, the media, colleges and universities, prospective employers, and other outside organizations, such as companies that manufacture class rings or publish yearbooks. In addition, School may reach out to parents to inform them of, and/or connect them with, opportunities to engage civically, including to advocate for educational issues that impact their student and school. Schools may release Directory Information, namely parent names and contact information (mailing addresses, email addresses, and telephone numbers), to contractors and partners involved in those efforts. Our schools do not engage directly in any electoral activities, including to support or oppose any political party or candidate for public office.

Parents can object to the release of Directory Information regarding their student, which includes parent contact information. Please complete the opt out form available here within 14 days of receiving this parent handbook if you do not wish for your student's Directory Information to be released.

## Right to Know Policies

### Right to Inspect Credentials of Teacher

Parents may request information regarding the professional qualifications of the student's classroom teachers, including, the following:

1. Whether the student's teacher—
  - a. has met State qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction;
  - b. is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which State qualification or licensing criteria have been waived; and
  - c. is teaching in the field of discipline of the certification of the teacher.
2. Whether the child is provided services by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications.

The school will provide the requested information within 5 days of receiving the request.

### Right to Notification of Uncertified Teacher

If your student has been assigned, or has been taught for 4 or more consecutive weeks by, a teacher who does not meet applicable State certification or licensure requirements at the grade level and subject area in which the teacher has been assigned, you will receive written notification and information about the school's plan to ensure the student will be taught by a teacher that does meet applicable State certification or licensure requirements.

### Right to Information Regarding Student Performance on State Academic Assessments

Parents and guardians will be provided with information on the level of achievement and academic growth of the student, if applicable and available, on each of the State academic assessments when that information becomes available.

## Grievance Procedure

Any scholar or employee who believes that RePublic Schools has acted in violation of the law, school policies, or its charter may file a complaint with the principal by sending an email and copying the COO (kpoulos@republiccharterschools.org). This could include any act of harassment or discrimination because of race, color, origin, sex, disability, or sexual orientation. If the principal is the person who is alleged to have caused the violation, the complaint may be filed directly with the COO (kpoulos@republiccharterschools.org). The party responsible for investigating the complaint (the principal or the COO) will be referred to moving forward as the "Grievance Administrator."

## Filing a Grievance

### Contents of the Complaint

Complaints under this Grievance Procedure must be filed within 30 school days of the alleged offense. The complaint must be in writing. The principal, or any person of the grievant's choosing, may assist the grievant with the filing of the complaint. The written complaint must include the following information:

- The name of the grievant and the name of the school;
- The name of the grievant's representative, if any;
- The name of the person(s) alleged to have caused the violation;
- A description, with as much detail as possible, of the alleged incident;

- The date(s) of the alleged incident; and
- The name of all persons who have knowledge about the alleged incident.

### **Investigation and Resolution of Complaint**

Respondents will be informed of the charges as the grievance administrator deems appropriate based upon the nature of the allegations, the investigation required, and the action contemplated. The grievance administrator will interview witnesses whom s/he deems necessary and appropriate to determine the facts relevant to the complaint, and will gather other relevant information. Such interviews and information gathering will be completed within 15 school days of receiving the complaint.

Within 20 school days of receiving the complaint, the grievance administrator will submit a written report of the findings and proposed resolution. In the event that a resolution involves disciplinary action against an employee or a scholar, the grievant will not be informed of such disciplinary action, unless it directly involves the grievant.

All timelines specified above will be implemented as specified, unless the nature of the investigation or exigent circumstances prevent such implementation, in which case, the matter will be completed as quickly as possible. If the timelines are not met, the reason(s) for not meeting them should be clearly documented. Confidentiality of grievant/respondents and witnesses will be maintained to the extent consistent with RePublic Schools' obligations relating to the investigation of complaints and the due process rights of the individual affected.

### **Appeals**

If the grievant is not satisfied with the outcome, the grievant may submit an appeal to the board of directors by contacting the chair of the board.

The board of directors will issue a written response to the appeal to the grievant within 30 days of receiving the appeal.

## **Internet Acceptable Use Policy**

### **Acceptable Use**

The Internet is a global network linking computers around the world. Internet use provides valuable opportunities for research, curriculum support, and career development. RePublic Schools offers Internet access to its scholars and staff. The primary purpose of providing access to the Internet is to support the educational mission of RePublic Schools. RePublic Schools expects that scholars and staff will use this access in a manner consistent with this purpose.

While the Internet is a tremendous resource for electronic information, it has the potential for abuse. RePublic Schools makes no guarantees, implied or otherwise, regarding the factual reliability of data available over the Internet. Users of the RePublic Schools Internet service assume full responsibility for any costs, liabilities, or damages arising from the way they choose to use their access to the Internet. RePublic Schools has installed special filtering software in an effort to block access to material that is not appropriate for children.

### **Unacceptable Use**

The following is a list of prohibited behaviors. The list is not exhaustive, but illustrates unacceptable uses of

the RePublic Schools' Internet service:

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

### **Safety Issues**

Use of the Internet has potential dangers. The following are basic safety rules pertaining to all types of Internet applications:

- Never reveal any identifying information such as last names, ages, addresses, phone numbers, parents' names, parents' employers or work addresses, or photographs.
- Use the "back" key whenever you encounter a site that you believe is inappropriate or makes you feel uncomfortable.
- Immediately tell the principal if you receive a message that you believe is inappropriate or makes you feel uncomfortable.
- Never share your password or use another person's password. Internet passwords are provided for each user's personal use only. If you suspect that someone has discovered your password, you should change it immediately and notify the principal.

### **Privacy**

Users should not have an expectation of privacy or confidentiality in the content of electronic communications or other computer files sent and received on the school computer network or stored in the user's directory or on a disk drive. RePublic Schools reserves the right to examine all data stored on diskettes involved in the user's use of RePublic Schools' Internet service. Internet messages are public communication

and are not private. All communications including text and images may be disclosed to law enforcement or other third parties without prior consent of the sender or the receiver. Network administrators may review communications to maintain integrity system-wide and ensure that users are using the system responsibly.

### **Violations**

Access to RePublic Schools' Internet service is a privilege, not a right. RePublic Schools reserves the right to deny, revoke or suspend specific user privileges and/or to take other disciplinary action, up to and including suspension, expulsion (scholars), or dismissal (staff) for violations of this policy. Each school will advise appropriate law enforcement agencies of any illegal activities conducted through RePublic Schools' Internet service. Each school will also cooperate fully with local, state, and/or federal officials in any investigation related to any illegal activities conducted through the service.

### **Mandated Reporter Policy**

According to TN. Code Ann. 37-1-403(i)(1) and Miss. Code Ann. § 43-21-353, all school personnel are mandated reporters of suspected abuse and/or neglect. Mandated reporters are required to report suspected child maltreatment immediately when they have reason to believe that harm has come to a child that "reasonably appears to have been caused by brutality, abuse or neglect." Under these laws, failure to report such abuse is a Class A Misdemeanor.

Once any staff member becomes aware that a scholar may be the victim of abuse or neglect, they must:

- Call the DCS central intake hotline at (877) 54-ABUSE (552-2873),
- Notify the principal, and
- Complete an incident report.

When calling the hotline, the staff member must have the following information (or as much as is known): the name, birth date, and address of the alleged victim; the name, address, age or birth date, and relationship of the alleged perpetrator; what type of injury or harm was allegedly done to the victim; and a description of the incident (time/date, place in which it occurred, and indication of intention to harm). The staff member should also have the names and ages of other children in the household, information as to whether or not English is fluently spoken by the parents and the work phone number of the alleged perpetrator.

While these steps are taking place, the principal will assist both the faculty member and scholar in understanding the ramifications of the call. The dean/principal will debrief the scholar and, when appropriate, will contact the parent(s)/guardian.

No one in the workplace, even a supervisor, is permitted to suppress, change, or edit a report of abuse. A mandated reporter who willfully fails to report suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect is subject to license suspension or revocation, and commits a misdemeanor. Falsely reporting information to the hotline is also a misdemeanor.

### **Non-Discrimination Policy**

RePublic Schools as a matter of policy provides educational opportunities without regard to race, creed, color, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status,

disability, or age.

In addition, RePublic Schools does not permit or condone discrimination based on race, creed, color, national origin, religion, marital status, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, physical disability, or age in employment matters or assignment in programs or services provided.

If you wish to discuss the regulations governing these policies, or wish to discuss a concern or file a grievance, please contact:

- Tennessee Region: Rachel Kengeter, Regional Senior Director of Operations, at [rkengeter@republiccharterschools.org](mailto:rkengeter@republiccharterschools.org) (517-331-0683)
- Mississippi Region: Trey Vernaci, Regional Senior Director of Operations, at [tvernaci@republiccharterschools.org](mailto:tvernaci@republiccharterschools.org) (228-342-2572)

**RePublic Schools  
Elementary School  
Family Handbook**

2020-2021

# THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL HANDBOOK

## The Elementary School Resource

While all of our schools operate with the same RePublic mission, beliefs, and values, not every level of school is the same. Students change developmentally as they progress from elementary to middle to high school, and the policies and procedures in place at each level of school should reflect that. Therefore, the following policies and procedures in this Elementary School Handbook are specific to the elementary schools in the RePublic network. The policies and procedures in the RePublic Core Family and Student Handbook apply to all schools and all students. Please use this resource to better understand the processes that occur at the elementary school level.

## Mission

At all of our schools, the mission of RePublic Schools is to reimagine public education in the South. RePublic Schools achieves its mission by operating schools that prepare scholars to enter, succeed in, and graduate from the college of their choice, and by supporting schools that value innovation and ownership. At the elementary school level, this means engaging students in a love of reading and a joy of learning, which will unlock success in their secondary, post-secondary and lifelong careers. Socially, this means instilling students with a sense of integrity, strength, and tenacity.

# ELEMENTARY SCHOOL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

## Hours of Operation

The RePublic school day is extended to permit your scholar two classes of math, two classes of literacy, recess, and extra help every day, as well as computer science, science, and history multiple times per week.

On Wednesdays, the regular school day is a half day, from 7:45 AM - 1:30 PM.

School hours are as follows:

- Doors open - 7:25 AM
- School begins - 7:45 AM
- Dismissal (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday) - 3:40 PM
- Dismissal (Wednesday) - 1:30 PM

## Transportation Plans

During enrollment, families will be asked to complete a transportation plan form to indicate how scholars will get to and from school each day. It is critically important that if there are changes to this plan, families communicate with the school as soon as possible.

Specifically, if a permanent change is being made to a scholar's transportation plan, **families must call the main office and speak with the Operations Team.**

If families are making a modification to a single day's transportation, they can communicate that in one of two ways. First, they can send a written note with the scholar at the beginning of the day. The scholar should give that notice to their advisory teacher during homework submission. Second, the family can call the front office. If the family is making a call, that call should be placed before noon to ensure that ample time is provided to communicate changes to transportation. The school cannot ensure that calls received after these timeframes will be communicated to the scholar, in which case, they will proceed with their normal transportation plan.

### Elementary School Cell Phone and Electronics Policy

While RePublic believes technology can help scholars learn and grow, our middle and elementary schools do not allow cell phones, music players, tablets, smart watches, or other electronic devices to be used on campus. Please instruct your scholar to leave devices at home unless brought with teacher permission as part of a classroom activity. If a cell phone is needed for communication after school hours, your scholar must leave his or her cell phone off, not on vibrate, and in his or her locker during school hours. To get a message to your scholar during school hours, you can call the front office, and front office staff will assist you in communicating with your student.

If a student is seen using a cell phone or other electronic device listed above, the device will be held in the front office until the parent/guardian can come pick it up. Students who continue to not adhere to these guidelines will be subject to progressing disciplinary actions.

### Elementary School Grading Policy

Grades are an important tool in communicating a scholar's current levels of performance, and in determining readiness for promotion to the next grade level.

#### Grading Scale

Grades that fall in the blue and green are considered passing. Grades that fall in yellow or red are considered failing.

The grading scale is as follows:

- Blue - Advanced
- Green - Proficient
- Yellow - Approaching Grade Level
- Red - Below Grade Level

### Homework Policy

We believe in homework at RePublic Schools. Effective homework is work that advances a child's understanding and knowledge, not busy work or simplistic worksheets. It is critical for different reasons at different ages. Fostering a love of reading should be the primary purpose of homework in elementary school. It is also a time to practice essential skills like spelling words or quick math facts.

It is your responsibility to ensure that your child completes all homework assignments on time. Satisfactory completion of homework is one of the components we evaluate in assessing a scholar's overall performance and whether a scholar will move to the next grade. Written assignments in the homework packet may include

a mix of math facts, vocabulary, and spelling practice.

Here is a brief overview of homework by grade per night:

- Kindergarten:
  - Reading aloud to scholars: 6 books/week
  - Independent reading: 10 minutes
  - Written assignments: 5 minutes
- Grade 1:
  - Reading aloud to scholars: 6 books/week
  - Independent reading: 15 minutes
  - Written assignments: 10 minutes
- Grade 2:
  - Reading aloud to scholars: 6 books/week
  - Independent reading: 20 minutes
  - Written assignments: 10 minutes
- Grade 3:
  - Independent reading: 30 minutes
  - Written assignments: 30 minutes
- Grade 4:
  - Independent reading: 30 minutes
  - Written assignments: 30 minutes

Please ensure that your child is completing his or her homework each night. We recommend setting aside a quiet, distraction-free (no television, no video games) area in your house for your scholar to work in. Once a scholar has completed his or her homework, you should look through it to ensure that the scholar followed directions, did their best work, and completed all required exercises. **Parents must sign off on all scholar homework in order for the scholar to receive credit.**

Please do not complete your scholar's homework for him or her. Homework is an opportunity for your scholar to practice what he or she has learned in class or to prepare for an upcoming class. If well-meaning parents or guardians complete a scholar's work for them, the student loses the opportunity to practice and learn.

### Summer and Holiday Homework

During school breaks, scholars can lose the gains they made during the school year. To combat this, we assign homework over holidays and summer break so that every scholar is prepared to move to the next lesson when school resumes.

### Reading Logs

We count on you to help foster your scholar's love of reading by reading to him or her daily in the early elementary grades and ensuring that your child reads independently in the later elementary grades.

Reading aloud will help your child develop listening comprehension skills, critical-thinking abilities, and vocabulary, while independent reading at home will improve your scholar's concentration and

stamina.

Your scholar will come home with book baggies full of fiction and nonfiction books to read at home, so make sure you set aside reading time and use your scholar's book baggie as an exciting resource.

You and your scholar are responsible for tracking the number of books or number of minutes that you and your child read nightly on a reading log, which you can find in your child's homework packet.

We expect 100% completion of reading logs every week. To reach this weekly goal, families of scholars in **grades K-2 must read aloud six books per week**, and scholars in **grades 3 and 4 must read independently for 30 minutes a day, six days a week**.

### **Why Reading Logs Are Important**

In addition to reviewing a scholar's homework, we expect parents to ensure that scholars read every night and record their reading in their reading log. Completing the reading log should be a pleasant experience for you and your scholar, because reading is fun and enjoyable. We track how many books our scholars read and encourage scholars and families to go above and beyond – reading as many books as possible.

We expect no less than 100% completion of reading logs. An incomplete reading log is just as serious and disruptive to your scholar's education as a missed day of school or an incomplete homework assignment.

### **Recess**

Just like math and science, recess is a critical part of a scholar's day – and it is not optional. Our scholars want (and need) a break from the rigors of the academic day and the opportunity to exercise outside and socialize with their peers. We go outside for recess just about every day. Even in the winter months, we do not stop outdoor play. Unless it is raining heavily, snowing, or there is ice on the playground, low temperatures should not be a barrier to outside play. Please make sure your child comes to school dressed appropriately for the weather so that he or she can fully enjoy recess.

### **Promotion**

Promotion to the next grade is earned at RePublic Schools. Retaining a scholar in his or her current grade is not a punishment. It is an opportunity for that scholar to master the content of that grade before moving to the next. The goal is to ensure that all scholars who are promoted are set up for success in the next grade.

A scholar is a candidate for promotion into the next grade if he or she:

- Has fewer than twenty absences in the school year.
- Scores proficient and/or advanced on all assessments.
- Reads no fewer than two years below grade level.

Scholars who do not meet these criteria are candidates for retention in their current grade. RePublic is guided by these criteria in making the decision to ultimately retain a scholar.

Specific provisions of an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or an active English Language Learner may amend promotion or retention criteria, on a case-by case basis.

Schools will have conversations with every scholar who meets any of the above criterion at the end of each quarter. Schools will make final decisions on promotion at then end of the fourth quarter.

### **School Breakfast and Lunch**

All RePublic Schools participate in the National School Breakfast and Lunch Program, which provides free or reduced price breakfasts and lunches as well as free milk to eligible scholars. At the beginning of the school year, each family will be mailed a letter describing eligibility and an application to participate in the program.

Families of scholars who have particular dietary restrictions should alert the Operations Team as early in the school year as possible.

### **Snacks**

At the elementary school level, all scholars are also served snacks in the mid-afternoon, free of charge. If your scholar signs up to receive meals at school, he or she will receive free breakfast, lunch, and snack. Each family will be mailed a letter describing the school breakfast, lunch, and snack program at Smilow Collegiate and how to opt into the school meal program at the beginning of the year.

### **Elementary School Dress Code**

RePublic Schools has a strict, non-negotiable dress code. The dress code applies during all school days and during all school-sponsored events (unless otherwise stated in writing by the school).

At the elementary school level, all scholars must wear a school uniform. The dress code has been adopted to improve the educational environment for all scholars. Specifically, we have instituted a dress code to prepare scholars to act and dress as scholars, to foster a sense of school identity and community, to eliminate unnecessary energy spent on brand name clothing and image, to increase security and safety in the building, and reduce the cost of clothing families need to purchase each school year.

#### **Enforcement of the Dress Code**

It is the goal of the school to have a dress code that makes things easier for parents and scholars. We have made every effort to be clear about this policy and to be consistent in its enforcement. Families who have questions or concerns should contact the school immediately for clarification.

Scholars are held accountable by their teachers to maintain the dress code. Teachers and leaders partner with families to ensure every scholar is in full uniform.

#### **Purchase of Clothing**

School logo polos, school logo sweatshirts, and school logo cardigans will be sold through our vendor's website, featured on your RePublic school's website. Other uniform items may be purchased from any vendor or store of your choice as long as they meet dress code requirements. Select schools may choose to stock items for purchase at school, but please note that the uniform shop will not be open every day so families must plan accordingly. All other uniform components may be purchased through any other vendor or store of your choice as long as they meet dress code requirements.

NOTE: We cannot make exceptions due to untimely ordering or receipt of the uniform except in rare cases where it is a direct result of action or inaction on the part of the vendor.

## School Dress Code Information

### Polo Shirts

- Scholars must wear appropriately colored, unaltered, school shirts with school logos each day. Shirts must be tucked in at all times.
- Scholars may not wear anything underneath their school shirts except one solid white T-shirt, though scholars are not required to wear undershirts.

### Outerwear

- While scholars are not required to wear these items during the school day, we do recommend that each scholar own a crewneck, fleece, or cardigan to ensure they are comfortable in class, as temperatures can fluctuate slightly.
- Scholars may wear crewneck, fleece or cardigan sweatshirts with or without the school's logo. All items may not have any logos other than their school's logo.
- These items must be solid and one single color. Acceptable colors are limited to navy blue, black, or gray.
- Hooded sweatshirts are not allowed. Coats/jackets are not allowed and should be stored on scholars' hooks immediately upon entering the building.
- While appropriate items are available through the school, scholars may purchase these items from any vendor so long as they are in compliance with this policy.

### Pants/Skirts

- Boys must wear dress pants. Girls must wear dress pants or dress skorts. Shorts, skirts, capri pants, and corduroys are not permitted.
  - At Smilow Collegiate all uniform bottoms are black in color.
- Skorts must be knee length or longer and no slit may come too high.
- Scholars may not wear pants that are low-rise, flare, bell-bottom, cargo (more than two front pockets and two back pockets), carpenter, wide-legged, overly tight or baggy, or made of denim or corduroy.
- Scholars may not wear clothing with logos, unless it is the school logo or a small dress pant logo (i.e. Dockers) on the rear pocket.
- Designs, jewels, glitter, etc. on the pockets of the pants are not permitted.

### Shoes and Socks

- Dress shoes or sneakers must be solid black, including laces.
- Girls' dress shoes are acceptable only if they cover more than half of the foot and don't have more than a 1/2 inch heel (as measured from the back). Open-toed are not worn.
- Boots that rise above the ankle, and contain a less than 1/2-inch heel, flip-flops, stilettos, stacks, platform shoes, and sandals are not permitted.
- Shoes are not required to have laces, but if they do, they must be laced up, with tongue inside, and tied securely. Pant legs must be worn over the shoe.

- Socks are not required, but if they are worn, they must be solid white or solid black – no patterns or logos are permitted.

### **Belts**

- Solid black belts are worn at all times. Belts may not hang down. Pants must be purchased that allow for belts. Studded belts are not permitted.
- Scholars wearing skorts without belt loops are not required to wear belts; however, if they do have belt loops, scholars must wear a belt.
- Belt buckles are solid color metal (silver, gold, etc.). Buckles may not be oversized or in distracting shapes or designs (i.e.: glittered, heart-shaped, etc.).

### **Accessories and Makeup**

- Only light makeup and fragrances are acceptable within the dress code. Scholars will apply lotions and other fragrances during breaks or other non-academic times only.
- Wristbands, bracelets, and other jewelry should be modest, not distracting, and should not make noise when scholars move.

### **Head Coverings and Hair**

- Hats, do-rags, and bandanas are not allowed. Headbands are permitted but may not contain a brand logo. Religious head coverings are permitted.
- Hairstyles and designs that are overly distracting or obstruct other scholars' vision in the classroom are not permitted.

### **Miscellaneous**

- No visible (permanent or non-permanent) tattoos or body markings of any kind are permitted.
- Clothing is sized appropriately, not too baggy, not too tight.
- Clothing that is altered (drawing, cutting, fraying) is not permitted.
- Clothing with significant stains should be replaced.

## **ELEMENTARY SCHOOL BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS**

The culture of Smilow Collegiate is designed to equip scholars with the character traits and behavioral skills necessary for success in middle school and beyond. Scholars will learn to understand and control their emotions and behaviors, advocate for themselves, and problem-solve. They will exhibit self-awareness, kindness, and respect. Smilow Collegiate Scholars will be representatives of our school. They will understand that they represent our school community. People who interact with our scholars will understand what we believe and value as a school.

The culture of our school starts with what we value.

### **Elementary Scholar Values**

In addition to teaching scholars to be good readers, writers, mathematicians, and scientists, we believe they need to learn how to be people of high moral character and be self-reflective about their actions. Values start with adults and filter to children: Our entire school community lives by our FIRST values. At all RePublic schools, respect for others and proper behavior are taught, modeled, expected, and rewarded. Values and

good character are a part of our daily instruction. Our FIRST values are more than just slogans on a wall. They are central to who we are.

**FIRST:**

- **Family** - Scholars will see the value of being and working on a team. We provide love and support for one another as we work to grow as scholars and as people. We share similar values, goals, and we have each other’s backs.
- **Integrity** - A true test of character is the ability to be honest and truthful. We will take ownership for our mistakes and for our victories. We will do what is right because it is the right thing to do.
- **Respect** - Because we are a family, we also have to make sure that we are treating each other with kindness and love. This means we treat each other as equals and care in the way that we ourselves would want to be treated.
- **Strength** - Our scholars will be stretched mentally and socially and this will make them strong. The work we do will be challenging and will require our scholars to take risks, be vulnerable, and make mistakes. We want them to unleash their inner strength to be ok with these moments and use them to improve.
- **Tenacity** - Though the work is tough and challenging, we will instill this unwavering sense of determination in our scholars. Success requires hard work and perseverance. We will help scholars see the value of not giving up.

Value/Definition	Examples of how parents/guardians can model FIRST values
<p><b>Family</b> - Scholars will see the value of being and working on a team. We provide love and support for one another as we work to grow as scholars and as people. We share similar values, goals, and we have each other’s backs.</p>	<p>Participate in school events, field studies, or the Parent Council. Volunteer when you can. Attend events to support your scholar and help more families get access to high-quality schools.</p>
<p><b>Integrity</b> - A true test of character is the ability to be honest and truthful. We will take ownership for our mistakes and for our victories. We will do what is right because it is the right thing to do.</p>	<p>Treat school staff and community members with respect and honesty.</p>
<p><b>Respect</b> - Because we are a family, we also have to make sure that we are treating each other with kindness and love. This means we treat each other as equals and care in the way that we ourselves would want to be treated.</p>	<p>Ensure that your child is following our school policies (e.g., in school every day for the whole day, on time, in uniform).</p>
<p><b>Strength</b> - Our scholars will be stretched mentally and socially and this will make them strong. The work we do will be challenging and will require our scholars to take risks, be vulnerable, and make mistakes. We want them to unleash their inner strength to be ok with these moments and use</p>	<p>Address issues proactively and constructively.</p>

them to improve.	
<b>Tenacity</b> - Though the work is tough and challenging, we will instill this unwavering sense of determination in our scholars. Success requires hard work and perseverance. We will help scholars see the value of not giving up.	Do everything that is necessary to help your child achieve success, no matter how difficult the task.

### Elementary School Honor Code

One of the things we value as a school is teaching, modeling and insisting that all scholars live with honor.

**We honor ourselves.  
We honor each other. We honor our school.**

The table below outlines the behaviors, character traits and mindsets are expected within each piece of the honor code. This is the honor code to which Smilow Collegiate Scholars will be held accountable.

We honor ourselves.	We honor each other.	We honor our school.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have appropriate emotional responses.</li> <li>• We keep ourselves physically and emotionally safe.</li> <li>• We advocate for ourselves while seeking solutions.</li> <li>• We accept feedback.</li> <li>• We take ownership of our growth while persevering through challenges.</li> <li>• We honor ourselves as scholars by being academically honest. We learn only when our work is our own.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We collaborate and share with one another.</li> <li>• We keep others physically and emotionally safe.</li> <li>• We show empathy by advocating for one another while seeking solutions.</li> <li>• We follow directions and seek understanding when directions are not understood.</li> <li>• We protect our learning space.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We take pride in our school by keeping it clean and leaving spaces cleaner than we found them.</li> <li>• We represent our school. We are kind and respectful to strangers.</li> <li>• We are mindful of our behaviors and self-regulate.</li> </ul>

### Our Approach

A healthy school culture is more than just a list of rules. Developing a healthy school culture is an opportunity to teach. Poor scholar choices are an outward display of the fact that the scholar may lack skills to respond appropriately or has unmet needs. We use moments when scholars make poor choices as a way to teach and

redirect behaviors to mirror character traits that will set up scholars for success. The essence of our approach is helping scholars to understand how their choices contribute (positively and negatively) to our school community and allowing them to develop ownership over their conduct. We believe each day is a new day and opportunity to show your best self.

In elementary school, we use proactive and reactive strategies to manage scholar behavior. Proactive strategies are used to create a positive learning environment for our scholars *before* a scholar makes a poor choice. Reactive strategies that we apply *after* a scholar makes a poor choice. They include de-escalating the scholar, preserving the learning environment, and reinforcing scholar ownership of actions.

**Proactive Strategies**

We create a learning environment that will best help our scholars learn and grow. Strong classroom culture is a balance of academics and character. The table below describes the strategies we take to build strong classroom culture.

Clear Vision	Teachers will create a vision for what they want their classroom to look like and a feel that is aligned to the elementary school vision.
Systems and Routines	Teachers create classroom systems and routines that are simple, efficient, and clear. Teachers explicitly teach expectations, systems, and routines and explain why we follow each one. Scholars practice those systems and routines. The teacher holds 100% of scholars accountable to following the systems and routines. Teachers sweat the small stuff when teaching systems and routines so scholars have a high bar of excellence.
Strong Relationships	Teachers build strong relationships with parents and scholars. Teachers create an environment in the Smilow Collegiate classroom where scholars form strong relationships with each other. Teachers plan routines that reinforce those strong relationships.
No Nonsense Nurturer Management	Teachers use a uniform approach to classroom management in which they give a clear direction, narrate scholars that are following that direction, and give a consequence to any scholar that does not meet the expectation.
Incentives and Rewards	Teachers create a joyful environment in their classrooms through praising and rewarding positive behavior by individuals and the class, positively framing their explanations for teamwork, social skills and academics, celebrating lessons learned from failures to reinforce strength and tenacity, and by teaching truly rigorous lessons that allows scholars to grapple with questions and problems worth solving.
Morning Meeting/Afternoon Circle	Teachers may put in place a system of team and individual incentives to celebrate and acknowledge scholars meeting and going beyond expectations. Some of these systems include earning compliments and rewards as a class (100% jar), utilizing online applications like Classroom Dojo aligned with Smilow Collegiate values, or earning a reward from the treasure box.
Wildcat Wednesday	WW is a school-wide assembly (twice a month) where individual scholars and

(Community Circle)	classes are acknowledged for living the values of the school. Leaders, teachers, and/or scholars also perform skits to highlight a particular skill that has been identified as an area of improvement for the whole school. This time is used to teach and reinforce character development.
Wildcat of the Week	Scholars and teachers will choose a scholar who has exemplified FIRST values. This scholar will get to wear a special blazer for the week, have their photo taken for display, and will be celebrated during Wildcat Wednesdays.
Second Step	Second Step is a social-emotional development resource to teach and develop our scholars' social and emotional skills. Teachers will teach Second Step lessons to build social-emotional capacity with our scholars so that they have productive ways to express their emotions, problem-solve, and engage in conflict resolution.
Preparedness	Being over-prepared and well-planned creates a positive classroom culture because time is used effectively to maximize learning time. In a well-planned classroom, scholars have little to no time to become off-task or disengaged with the lesson.  Well-planned looks like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Lessons internalized</li> <li>● Materials prepared</li> <li>● Planned for the unexpected/expected</li> <li>● Space clean, organized and free of clutter</li> </ul>

### Reactive Strategies

When scholars are not meeting expectations, we respond with the goal of preserving our learning space and getting the scholar back into that learning space productively. The following strategies can be used interchangeably to get to this intended end.

Color Chart	Teachers will move a scholar's clip after giving clear directions, checking for scholar understanding, and positive narrations to a scholar not meeting expectations. This clip movement signals to scholars that they are making poor choices. There are 4 colors on the chart: blue, green, yellow, and red (in order from great to needs improvement). Warnings are in the green phase and consequences begin in the yellow.
Reflections	Teachers will give scholars a timed break from the class when a scholar reaches yellow. During this time period, a scholar will reflect on poor choices and create a plan for how to rejoin their class successfully. Scholars will write and/or draw their plan.
Restorative Conversations	Teachers will engage in conversations with scholars about their poor choice(s) and verbally confirm why the choice impacts learning and has the student articulate what approach they will take to find success. The teacher will actively monitor for moments to praise as the student rejoins the learning space.
Buddy Classrooms	There are times that scholars may need a scene break from class to regroup.

	Teachers will send scholars with a timer and a walker to another classroom on their grade team. The scholar will join in the “buddy” classroom still doing classwork and will complete a reflection.
Parent Meetings	The partnership with families is crucial to making sure behavior expectations are being made. Teachers and parents will have in-person meetings to discuss issues, impact of issue on academics/performance, and action plan for strategies that will be employed both at home and school.
After School Detention	After school detention will be held from 4:00-4:45. This will be assigned at the discretion of the School Leadership team. During this time, scholars will complete grade level work and also create written action plans for rejoining the class the next day. A meeting with the parent may be held during detention as well.
Out-of-School Suspension	The principal has the final decision-making power to issue a suspension. The principal will fully investigate situations before issuing a suspension. The actions that qualify for suspension are listed in Tier 2 and Tier 3 behavior below in this document. When suspensions are issued, parents are informed of the suspension, given suspension work, and re-entry meeting is held with the principal and/or assistant principal.

### What We Ask Of You

We know that this work is impossible without parents. We value this partnership and know that our collaboration means that scholars will be set up for success.

Blue	Green	Yellow	Red
What It Means			
All scholars start the day with their clip on blue. Remaining on blue throughout the day implies that the scholar is living with honor and adhering to our code of conduct. Ending the day on blue means the scholar had a great day!	A scholar’s move to green indicates they have received verbal warnings about expectations in order to continue exhibiting honor and adhering to the code of conduct. Remaining on green throughout the day implies that the scholar has used those warnings as a reminder to control their actions and emotions. Ending the day on green means	A scholar's move to yellow indicates that he or she required redirection or reminders in order to continue exhibiting honor and adhering to the code of conduct.	A scholar's move from yellow to red indicates that the scholar did not exhibit honor and needed multiple reminders or redirections. A scholar on red also receives school consequences.

	the scholar had a good day!		
How to Respond			
When your child comes home from school and you see that his/her day ended on blue, you should celebrate him/her. Ask him what choices he/she made that allowed him/her to stay on blue, how that success made him/her feel, and what he/she will do to have another blue day.	When your child comes home from school and you see that his/her day ended on green, you should celebrate him/her for self control and deciding to fix behaviors. Ask him/ her what choices he/ she made that allowed him/her to stay on green, what choices led to the warnings, and what he/she will do to have a blue day instead.	If you see that your child ended the day on yellow, have a conversation with your child about his/ her choices that caused his/her clip to move. Talk to your child about why he/ she made those choices and what he/ she can do tomorrow to stay on green or blue. Encourage your child to make better choices the following day.	When a scholar is moved to red during the school day, you may be contacted via phone to help encourage and get your scholar back on track. We ask that you continue the conversation at home to problem-solve with your scholar and encourage better choices the following day. Home consequences are also implemented to help scholars understand the impact of their choices.

**RePublic Schools  
Middle School  
Family Handbook**

2020-2021

# THE MIDDLE SCHOOL HANDBOOK

## The Middle School Resource

While all of our schools operate with the same RePublic mission, beliefs, and values, not every level of school is the same. Students change developmentally as they progress from elementary to middle to high school, and the policies and procedures in place at each level of school should reflect that. Therefore, the following policies and procedures in this Middle School Handbook are specific to the middle schools in the RePublic network. The policies and procedures in the RePublic Core Family and Student Handbook apply to all schools and all students. Please use this resource to better understand the processes that occur at the middle school level.

## Mission

At all of our schools, the mission of RePublic Schools is to reimagine public education in the South. RePublic Schools achieves its mission by operating schools that prepare scholars to enter, succeed in, and graduate from the college of their choice, and by supporting schools that value innovation and ownership. At the middle school level, this means engaging students in introductory college preparatory material and building strong literacy skills that will unlock success in their secondary and post-secondary careers. Socially, this means instilling young adults with a sense of resiliency, responsibility, and curiosity.

# MIDDLE SCHOOL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

## Middle School Hours of Operation

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday, the regular school day is from 8:00 am – 3:40 pm. On Wednesdays, the regular school day is a half day, from 8:00 am – 1:30 pm.

The school building is open to scholars at 7:45 am Monday through Friday. We serve breakfast to scholars between 7:45-8:00 am. Scholars are tardy if they are not inside the doors of the school at 8:00 am. The school building closes to all scholars who are not in a RePublic after-school activity 15 minutes after 3:40 pm on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday and 15 minutes after 1:30 pm on Wednesdays.

## Transportation Plans

During scholar orientation, families will be asked to complete a transportation plan form to indicate how scholars will get to and from school each day. It is critically important that if there are changes to this plan, families communicate with the school as soon as possible. Specifically, if a permanent change is being made to a scholar's transportation plan, **families must call the main office and speak with the Director of Operations.**

If families are making a modification to a single day's transportation, they can communicate that in one of two ways. First, they can send a written note with the scholar at the beginning of the day. The scholar should give that notice to their advisory teacher during homework submission. Second, the family can call the front office. If the family is making a call, that call should be placed before 2:40 pm on regular dismissal days and before 12:30 on early dismissal days to ensure that ample time is provided to communicate changes to transportation. The school cannot ensure that calls received after these timeframes will be communicated to the scholar, in which case, they will proceed with their normal transportation plan.

## Middle School Grading Policy

Grades are an important tool in communicating a scholar's current levels of performance, and in determining readiness for promotion to the next grade level.

### Grading Scale

In middle school, grades that fall at or above 64.5% are considered passing. Grades that fall below 64.5% are considered failing.

The grading scale is as follows:

- A: 89.5-100%
- B: 79.5 - 89.5%
- C: 69.5 - 79.5%
- D: 64.5 - 69.5%
- F: <64.5%

### Final Grades

The school year is broken into 4 quarters. At the end of each quarter, scholars receive a grade in each class. Each quarter, those grades will be comprised of three components, weighted as follows:

- **Unit Test Component: 30% of overall grade**
  - The Assessment component measures ongoing scholar mastery of a subject's skill and content standards, as determined by performance on end of unit assessments.
- **Unit Quiz Component: 30% of overall grade**
  - The Quiz component measures ongoing scholar mastery of a subject's skill and content standards, as determined by performance on by-weekly quizzes.
- **Homework Component: 20% of overall grade**
  - The Homework component measures only a scholar's completion of daily homework assignments – homework is collected and entered for a grade daily.
- **Classwork Component: 20% of overall grade**
  - The Classwork component measures the daily performance of scholars in their classrooms. These grades can be made up of assigned work in class, as well as participation.

Scholars' end-of-year grades are calculated by assigning 25% credit for each quarter's grades.

## Progress Reports

Along with your weekly newsletter, your scholar will receive a weekly paycheck, which includes a progress report of weekly grades, behavior data, and attendance data. The progress report is generated from our online grade book, School Runner. Please keep in mind that this is not an official MNPS or JPS progress report, so it will look different than those reports. To ensure that you receive this critical information each week, we ask that you sign each newsletter and weekly paycheck.

If we do not include a weekly paycheck with a newsletter, we will include a note in the newsletter explaining why and when you should expect the next paycheck, which includes the progress report. If you do not receive a paycheck, please first discuss with your scholar, then contact the school. It is our goal that families should not be surprised by scholars' performance in school. If you have questions or concerns

about anything, please contact the school immediately.

## Reading Logs

### Why Reading Logs Are Important

In addition to reviewing a scholar's homework, we expect parents to ensure that scholars read every night and record their reading in their reading log at the elementary and middle school level. Completing the reading log should be a pleasant experience for you and your scholar, because reading is fun and enjoyable. We track how many books our scholars read and encourage scholars and families to go above and beyond – reading as many books as possible.

### Our Expectations

We expect no less than 100% completion of reading logs. An incomplete reading log is just as serious and disruptive to your scholar's education as a missed day of school or an incomplete homework assignment.

### How to Fill Out Your Reading Log

Scholars have a reading log that they enter into twice per day. They make one entry for reading done at school and one entry done for reading done at home. For home reading, students must read for **thirty minutes** and get a parent or guardian's signature. Teachers check these reading logs on a regular basis for both grades as well as trends in scholar reading habits.

See below for a picture of the log.

Date	Home or School?	Title	Start Page	End Page	Home— Parent Sign

## Middle School Dress Code

RePublic Schools has a strict, non-negotiable dress code. The dress code applies during all school days and during all school-sponsored events (unless otherwise stated in writing by the school). At the middle school level, all scholars must wear a school uniform. The dress code has been adopted to improve the educational environment for all scholars. Specifically, we have instituted a dress code to prepare scholars to act and dress as scholars, to foster a sense of school identity and community, to eliminate unnecessary energy spent on brand name clothing and image, to increase security and safety in the building, and reduce the cost of clothing families need to purchase each school year.

### Enforcement of the Dress Code

It is the goal of the school to have a dress code that makes things easier for parents and scholars. We have made every effort to be clear about this policy and to be consistent in its enforcement. Families who have questions or concerns should contact the school immediately for clarification.

Scholars are held accountable by their teachers to maintain the dress code. Teachers and leaders partner with families to ensure every scholar is in full uniform.

## Purchase of Clothing

Your RePublic school stocks school specific polo shirts in all sizes. Polo shirts, cardigans, and sweatshirts with the school logos on them will be available for sale periodically throughout the year. Please note that the uniform shop will not be open every day, so families must plan accordingly. All other uniform components may be purchased through any other vendor or store of your choice as long as they meet dress code requirements.

## School Dress Code Information

### Polo Shirts

- Scholars must wear appropriately colored, unaltered, school shirts with school logos each day. Shirts must be tucked in at all times.
- Scholars may not wear anything underneath their school shirts except one solid white T-shirt, though scholars are not required to wear undershirts.

### Outerwear

- While scholars are not required to wear these items during the school day, we do recommend that each scholar own a crewneck, fleece, or cardigan to ensure they are comfortable in class, as temperatures can fluctuate slightly.
- Scholars may wear crewneck, fleece or cardigan sweatshirts with or without the school's logo. All items may not have any logos other than their school's logo.
- These items must be solid and one single color. Acceptable colors are limited to navy blue, black, or gray.
- Hooded sweatshirts are not allowed. Coats/jackets are not allowed and should be stored on scholars' hooks immediately upon entering the building.
- While appropriate items are available through the school, scholars may purchase these items from any vendor so long as they are in compliance with this policy.

### Pants/Skirts

- Boys must wear dress pants. Girls must wear dress pants or dress skorts. Shorts, skirts, capri pants and corduroys are not permitted.
  - At Liberty and Nashville Prep, all uniform bottoms are tan khaki in color.
  - At Reimagine, all uniform bottoms are black in color.
  - At Smilow Prep, all uniform bottoms are navy blue in color.
- Skorts must be knee length or longer and no slit may come too high.
- Scholars may not wear pants that are low-rise, flare, bell-bottom, cargo (more than two front pockets and two back pockets), carpenter, wide-legged, overly tight or baggy, or made of denim or corduroy.
- Scholars may not wear clothing with logos, unless it is the school logo or a small dress pant logo (i.e. Dockers) on the rear pocket.
- Designs, jewels, glitter, etc. on the pockets of the pants are not permitted.

### Shoes and Socks

- Dress shoes or sneakers must be solid black, including laces.
- Girls' dress shoes are acceptable only if they cover more than half of the foot and don't have more than a 1/2 inch heel (as measured from the back). Open-toed are not worn.

- Boots that rise above the ankle, and contain a less than 1/2-inch heel, flip-flops, stilettos, stacks, platform shoes, and sandals are not permitted.
- Shoes are not required to have laces, but if they do, they must be laced up, with tongue inside, and tied securely. Pant legs must be worn over the shoe.
- Socks are not required, but if they are worn, they must be solid white or solid black for 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade scholars – no patterns or logos are permitted.
  - 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade scholars may wear any-colored or designer socks. Designs must be school-appropriate.

### **Belts**

- Solid black belts are worn at all times. Belts may not hang down. Pants must be purchased that allow for belts. Studded belts are not permitted.
- Scholars wearing skorts without belt loops are not required to wear belts; however, if they do have belt loops, scholars must wear a belt.
- Belt buckles are solid color metal (silver, gold, etc.). Buckles may not be oversized or in distracting shapes or designs (i.e.: glittered, heart-shaped, etc.).

### **Accessories and Makeup**

- Only light makeup and fragrances are acceptable within the dress code. Scholars will apply lotions and other fragrances during breaks or other non-academic times only.
- Wristbands, bracelets, and other jewelry should be modest, not distracting, and should not make noise when scholars move.

### **Head Coverings and Hair**

- Hats, do-rags, and bandanas are not allowed. Headbands are permitted but may not contain a brand logo. Religious head coverings are permitted.
- Hairstyles and designs that are overly distracting or obstruct other scholars' vision in the classroom are not permitted.

### **Miscellaneous**

- No visible (permanent or non-permanent) tattoos or body markings of any kind are permitted.
- Clothing is sized appropriately, not too baggy, not too tight.
- Clothing that is altered (drawing, cutting, fraying) is not permitted.
- Clothing with significant stains should be replaced.

## **Middle School Cell Phone and Electronics Policy**

While RePublic believes technology can help students learn and grow, our middle and elementary schools do not allow cell phones, music players, tablets, smart watches, or other electronic devices to be used on campus. Please instruct your scholar to leave devices at home unless brought with teacher permission as part of a classroom activity. If a cell phone is needed for communication after school hours, your scholar must leave his or her cell phone off, not on vibrate, and in his or her locker during school hours. To get a message to your scholar during school hours, you can call the front office, and front office staff will assist you in communicating with your student.

If a student is seen using a cell phone or other electronic device listed above, the device will be held in the front

office until parent/guardian can come pick it up. Students who continue to not adhere to these guidelines will be subject to progressing disciplinary actions.

## MIDDLE SCHOOL BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS

### Middle School Individual Incentive and Accountability System: Scholar Paychecks

RePublic Schools has developed a scholar Paycheck system to provide scholars, families, and teachers with a frequent, comprehensive report of scholar performance. A scholar's weekly Paycheck total is impacted by his/her fulfillment of Behavioral, Academic, and Attendance expectations.

Paychecks are an accountability system that works *in tandem* with the system of corrective discipline listed in the Core RePublic Family Handbook. To read more about the progressive disciplinary actions of in-class-suspension, in-office-suspension, out-of-school suspension, and expulsion, please see the RePublic Core Family Handbook.

All scholars receive a Paycheck each week. At the beginning of each week, a scholar's paycheck starts at \$100.

Scholars may increase their Paycheck by exceeding expectations during a given week by:

- Earning merits
- Having perfect homework every day of the week

Scholars will decrease their Paycheck when they fail to meet expectations by:

- Failing to meet behavioral expectations (e.g., they earn demerits or detentions)
- Failing to meet attendance expectations (e.g., they are absent, late, or dismissed early)
- Failing to meet homework expectations

At the end of each week, each scholar's Paycheck is transferred into the scholar's Savings Account. Scholars may use accumulated points to spend on prizes (e.g., school supplies, lunches with staff members, gift certificates, tickets to sporting events) at the school store or school auctions.

Over time, a scholar's average weekly Paycheck is also monitored. Scholar Paychecks can be used to redeem rewards, which may include but are not limited to:

- School celebration invitations,
- School dance invitations,
- Participation in a school store,
- Field trip invitations, and
- Enhanced scholar "status" levels that increase scholar privileges.

Scholars with low Paycheck averages lose privileges and receive other consequences. Specifically:

- Scholars will not be invited to the school store
- Scholars with a Paycheck average of less than \$70 cannot participate in various extra-curricular activities (i.e. after school activities, school celebrations, school dances, or school field trips)

## Demerits

A scholar can earn 1 or 4 demerits for a rule infraction. Severe infractions, such as gross disrespect to staff or other scholars, will result in the scholar being sent to the Discipline Office. Each demerit costs scholars \$1 to \$10 (depending on infraction) from their Paychecks.

## Detention

If a scholar earns eight demerits in a school day, the scholar will receive a detention. Detentions are served during recess.

On Friday at 4:30 pm, all demerit counts are “cleared” for the purposes of detention.

## In Class Separation

Specific infractions warrant consequences that are more severe than detention, but less severe than Out-of-School Suspension. Therefore, RePublic Schools has an In Class Separation model ensuring that scholars have access to the curriculum while at the same time ensuring that scholars face appropriately progressive consequences for more severe infractions.

Specific infractions which warrant In Class Separation from the community include, but are not limited to:

- Disrespect to team or faculty
- Low-level dishonesty
- Repeated disruptions of a similar nature

Furthermore, in order to promote and uphold our school community’s values and Code of Conduct, scholars who communicate with a scholar who is currently In Class Separated will also earn a detention.

Scholars who earn In Class Separation will receive a \$20 Paycheck deduction for each day they are on In Class Separation.

Scholar Notification: If a scholar is assigned In Class Separation, he/she will be notified by a staff member the day before, or the day of, In Class Separation.

Parental Notification: Parents of those scholars who have been assigned In Class Separation receive notification in two ways. First, they will receive a letter each day a scholar is on In Class Separation that must be signed and returned to the Dean. The letter will indicate the reason for the In Class Separation as well as an update on the status of the In Class Separation (completed or continuing). Second, parents will receive notice of In Class Separation on weekly Paychecks (notification will show up as a Paycheck deduction).

## Middle School Bus Behavior

Participation in bus transportation is a privilege. At RePublic, we want to ensure your scholar is transported to and from school in the safest of manners. All behavioral expectations outlined in the RePublic Schools Code of Conduct apply on school bus transportation. Scholars who take the school bus are expected to act responsibly and respectfully at all times.

All school rules apply on the bus and at the bus stop. The following additional rules will apply to the bus and the bus stops:

- Scholars will be given assigned seats. Scholars are expected to sit in and stay in these seats unless given express permission by the driver or school administration to move.
- Scholars are expected to be silent on the bus.
- A school official will meet the bus every day. No child may exit the bus before the administrator checks with the driver as to behavior.
- Scholars who violate these rules will lose bus privileges.
  - Three low level infractions = One major infraction
  - One major infraction = loss of bus privileges for a week
  - Two major infractions = loss of bus privileges for a month.
  - Three major infractions = loss of bus privileges for the year.

Infractions, if serious enough, can warrant immediate loss of bus privileges for the year. Other consequences (e.g., demerits, detentions, suspensions) apply as well.

Examples of behaviors that qualify as minor bus infractions:

- Talking on the bus
- Not following directions on the bus
- Doing homework on the bus
- Eating food on the bus
- Using electronics on the bus
- Leaving trash on the bus

Examples of behaviors that qualify as major bus infractions:

- Moving seats during the route or sitting in the incorrect seat
- Failure to correct behavior after being redirected
- Disrespect to a driver
- Foul language
- Horseplay on the bus
- Throwing anything inside or outside of the bus
- Anything that compromises the immediate safety of anyone on or around the bus
- Defacing the bus

Families are strongly encouraged to reinforce the importance of proper bus behavior and remind students of the potential consequences for bad behavior. Should a scholar lose bus privileges, that scholar/their family is responsible for arranging alternative bus transportation for the scholar during that period. Unless a scholar is suspended, failure to attend school as a result of lost bus privileges will be considered unexcused absences and the scholar will receive consequences accordingly.

**RePublic Schools  
High School  
Accountability and  
Grading Handbook**

2020-2021

## PURPOSE

At RePublic Schools, we strive to provide consistency in our expectations and practices while holding all students and staff to a high bar of excellence. This Grading Handbook outlines fair and replicable grading policies that best serve students as they prepare for college and careers while holding them to a high level of rigor in order to ensure that expectations across classes, subjects and schools are transparent and consistent.

## KEY BELIEFS ON GRADING

The grading policy outlined in the pages below reflects both the purpose of this document and the beliefs that we hold true as an institution:

1. **Grades are a reflection of student mastery.** A scholar's grade should be made up almost exclusively of whether or not that scholar has mastered grade level content.
2. **Grades are not a punishment.** RePublic does not use grades punitively, to punish behavior, or to make an example out of a scholar.
3. **A change in mastery mandates a change in grades.** Scholars will improve in content and concepts over the course of the year. Their grades should reflect that change.
4. **Grades are a tool, not an end goal.** Grades provide insight for a student and stakeholders to identify strengths and growth areas that can be addressed.
5. **Grades matter to colleges.** GPAs and ACT scores are the two most important numbers that will impact a scholar's acceptance into college. They matter. A lot.
6. **Teachers are responsible for the input.** Assessment turn in rates are not a reflection on scholars. They are a reflection of teacher actions.
7. **Grades should be clear to Stakeholders.** Parents and scholars are the most important stakeholders in a scholar's grade, and they must be able to understand the grade and the report card.

## FAMILY GRADEBOOK SUMMARY

### Grading Policy

At RePublic Schools, we strive to provide consistency in our expectations and practices while holding all students and staff to a high bar of excellence. This is especially true with our grading policy. Your scholar's GPA is one of two numbers that will influence their college acceptance. Their grades matter. You understanding their grades matters.

Your scholar will receive a percent score for each one of their classes every quarter. That percent score will translate to a letter grade and a number of GPA points, dependent on whether the course is an AP course or not.

Letter Grade	Cutoff	GPA Points - College Prep	GPA Point - AP
A	93-100	4.00	5.00
B	85-92	3.00	4.00

C	75-84	2.00	3.00
D	70-74	1.00	2.00
F	50-69	0	0

The score for each one of these courses will be made up of the following types of assessment:

Category	Examples	Mastery/ Completion	Abrv.	%
<b>Classwork</b>	Do Nows, Guided Practice, Exit Tickets, Oral Drill Accuracy, Participation or Discourse	Mastery OR Completion	CW	15%
<b>Homework</b>	Work completed outside of class to prepare for a lesson or to practice skills and content	Mastery OR Completion	HW	15%
<b>Quizzes</b>	Weekly or frequent assessments, shorter writing assignments	Mastery	QZ	20%
<b>Tests</b>	Unit Exams, Book-Based Essays, Culminating Projects, Multi-Day Labs	Mastery	TS	30%
<b>Interim Assessments</b>	End-of-Quarter Cumulative Assessments	Mastery	IA	20%

### Report Card Pickup Expectations

Report Card Pickup occurs quarterly, following the locking of grades. This event is an important opportunity for teachers and families to work together to make sure scholars are meeting their full potential every quarter. Below are the guidelines for Report Card Pick Up Night:

- All families attend Report Card Pick Up in person to meet with their scholar's advisor or a school leader to discuss progress and actions.
- During the conversation teachers will share an individual grade report, transcript projections, graduation requirements, the SchoolRunner login, high stakes testing data like TCAP and MAP, and discuss strategies for improving the scholar's grade.
- All students failing more than one course will receive a letter stating their "at-risk of retention" status.
- All students who scored below a 70 (an F) for the quarter are required to have a conference for that class for as many classes as they're failing.

### Grading Policies for Late Work, Makeup Work, and Work Resubmission

Below are the grading policies for late work, makeup work, and work resubmission. Make sure you and your scholar understand them!

- **Late/Makeup Work:** All assignments have a due date. All assignments turned in after the deadline (or revised deadline, if the student has an excused absence) are considered late. Students may not earn more than 80% for late assignments. Late assignments will not be accepted after 2 weeks.
  - If a student is absent on the day of an assignment, they should be given one additional day for each day absent to complete that work for full credit. If a student is suspended and the assignment can be taken home, they are required to turn the assignment back in when the day they return. If the assignment is not one that can be taken home, they will follow the traditional make up policy for absent students named above.
- **Work Resubmission:** Students may resubmit missing or poor quality work within two weeks of the assignment being given. Teachers have the discretion to determine when to offer resubmission. Scholars can receive up to 80% for any work that is resubmitted, providing the teacher is offering resubmission on the assignment.
- **Progress Reports.** Families will receive Progress Reports every Monday. These reports will include current grades, GPA information, and any notes/communication from the school.