



Thornwell Charter School
2026-2027

Student/Parent Handbook

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STUDENT HANDBOOK

This Student Handbook and Student Code of Conduct describes Thornwell Charter School's (TCS) current policies and practices concerning matters that most often affect our students and their parents. Policies and practices described in this handbook are provided for the information and guidance of students and their parents and do not constitute, nor should they be relied on, as contractual obligations of TCS to any person. TCS reserves the right to modify this handbook at any time. Its contents, as they appear now, or as they may be amended in the future, apply to all students enrolled in TCS.

Equal Opportunity and Nondiscrimination

TCS complies with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations regarding equal opportunity and nondiscrimination. If any of the policies outlined in this Handbook are, or become unlawful for any reason, the applicable law will be followed. TCS is non-sectarian and will not discriminate against or refuse to provide educational services to anyone on the basis of sex, race, religion, disability, national origin, or any other characteristic protected by state or federal law.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

General Eligibility

We want every child to have the opportunity to attend TCS; however, limited space and waiting lists determine enrollment. Applications for the upcoming school year will open on the first school day after the New Year. Admission will be determined by a lottery system, with remaining applicants placed on a waiting list in the order drawn. The cut-off dates for admission are listed below.

Date	Admission Activity
January 6-22	Letters of Intent for Returning Students
February 11	Prospective Student Applications due to be included in the Lottery (if necessary)
February 18	Admissions Lottery (if necessary)
March 5	Lottery Notification to Parents

*Lottery letters will be due 10 business days following March 5th

Any applications received after the lottery drawing will be placed on the waiting list in the order in which the application was received. The following procedures are to be followed in conducting a lottery when a grade or class is oversubscribed. Under state law, a charter school must admit students through a random selection process if the number of applications for a grade or class exceeds the number of available spaces. If the number of applications does not exceed the number of available spaces, a lottery is not required.

Priority Enrollment

Priority preferences in the lottery are as follows:

1. child(ren) of the TCS Charter Committee members and employees, not to exceed 20% of the total enrollment for that year (Charter Committee members' children have priority for enrollment throughout the duration of the ten-year charter);
2. children of employees
3. sibling applicant(s) of a currently enrolled and attending student;

4. dependents of active-duty members of the military residing or stationed in South Carolina (Section 59-40-50(B)(13)(c)(iii) of the S.C. Code)

To be considered a “sibling applicant,” an applicant must have a sibling that is either currently enrolled or who has completed at least one year at Thornwell Charter School within the last six years. As with all other applicants, all sibling applicants are required to complete additional steps in the enrollment process, such as enrollment paperwork and participation in an Enrollment Orientation Meeting.

Lottery Process

All applicants to TCS must submit a lottery application prior to the published deadlines. If the number of applicants received exceeds the capacity of the program, class, grade level, or building, a lottery drawing will be used to determine enrollment. Any applications received after the published deadline will be placed at the end of the wait list in the order in which they were received. The drawing will be duly publicized and conducted in a public meeting. The lottery drawing will proceed as follows:

1. For each applicant, a lottery card will be created with applicant’s information as follows:
 - a. the name of the student, grade level and date of birth; and
 - b. sibling(s) if applicable including grade(s) and date(s) of birth.
2. The information on the card will be emailed to the family no less than one week prior to the lottery to ensure all information is correct.
3. Students who are in grades that do not require a lottery will be placed automatically as will the siblings of those children.
4. The remaining individual cards of students who will be in grades that require a lottery will be placed in an envelope. The outside of the envelope will note only the grade level for which the applicant applied.
5. Each envelope will then be placed in a container marked with each grade level. The envelopes will be thoroughly shuffled. The containers will be stored in a securely locked location.
6. The lottery will begin with the highest grade that requires a lottery with five-year-old kindergarten being drawn last. If there are open spots on both campuses, names will be drawn by alternating campuses beginning with West Campus then East Campus. For example, the first name will go to West Campus, the 2nd to East, the 3rd to West, etc.
7. A community representative, not associated with TCS, will then draw envelopes from the container until all have been drawn.
8. The applicant’s name will be called out and recorded. The name will be recorded on an independent tally sheet.
9. In the event a student drawn has a sibling that is on the wait list in another class, the student on the wait list will be moved to the top of the waiting list. This process will be repeated for each grade level until all grades and all cards have been drawn and a list has been created.
10. This process is repeated until all names are drawn and assigned to grade levels. As grade levels become full, remaining names will be placed on a waiting list in the order they were drawn.

Following the lottery drawing, TCS will send out acceptance letters to parents beginning at the top of the list for all available student slots. To be enrolled for the following school year, all applicants must satisfy three requirements:

1. Sign and return the acceptance letter within 10 business days. If the letter is not returned, then the first student on the wait list will be offered the placement. Upon receipt of the acceptance letter, enrollment packets will be sent to the parents. Students who receive a priority spot because of a sibling are subject to lose their spots if the anchor child does not enroll. The anchor child is defined as either the child where no lottery is needed or is pulled first of the siblings.
2. Complete and submit all enrollment packet information within 15 business days. Any enrollment packets that are received late or are not returned to TCS will constitute that slot being offered to the next child on the list.
3. Attend one Enrollment Orientation Meeting during the year of application. Dates will be published annually.

Student Appeals Process

If TCS denies admission to a student for a reason other than space limitations, the student may submit a written appeal to the School's sponsor.

Students Returning from Alternate Settings

Students may be immediately placed on a behavior contract if the student is returning to a regular school setting from an alternative learning environment (DJJ, Alternative School, Short-term Alternative Placement Homes, etc.). This policy will apply to students who have been in an alternative learning environment up to 6 months prior to enrollment to TCS.

McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act

According to the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act, the term "homeless children and youths" means:

1. a child who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence: and includes
 - a. Children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations, are living in emergency transitional shelters, or are abandoned in hospitals;
 - b. Children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
 - c. Children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
 - d. Migratory children (as such term is defined in Section 1309 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965) who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described above.

Enrollment

A child must be enrolled by the child's parent, legal guardian, or an agency representative serving in loco parentis. TCS shall record the name, address, and date of birth of the person enrolling the child. Upon enrollment, students should be completely toilet trained, unless it is due to a student's disability or medical condition. Please inform an administrator, the Special Education Coordinator, or the guidance department if special conditions or circumstances exist.

Barring Enrollment of Students

In accordance with S.C. Code Ann. Sec. 59-63-217, in determining whether or not a student meets the standards of conduct necessary for first time enrollment, TCS may consider records as they relate to the adjudication of delinquency in any jurisdiction, within or without this State, of violations or activities which constitute violent crimes under Section 16-1-60, adjudications for assault and battery of a high and aggravated nature, the unlawful use or possession of weapons, or the unlawful sale of drugs. Based on this consideration of the student's record, TCS's Board of Directors may bar the student's enrollment for a maximum of one year.

Legal Surname

A student must be identified by the student's legal surname as it appears on the student's birth certificate, other documents suitable as proof of the student's identity, or in a court order changing the student's name.

Required Documentation

In order to be in compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), one or more of the following types of documentation will be acceptable for purposes of consultation concerning educational programming, discipline, special education, emergency medical treatment, access to student records, and other matters relating to the student's educational process:

1. Power of Attorney;
2. Notarized letter or affidavit from parent, guardian, or the adult responsible for the minor child;
3. Assignment letter from the Department of Social Services;
4. Juvenile Probation, or other agencies;
5. Death certificate of natural parent(s);
6. Proof of receipt of federal assistance; or
7. Other documentation deemed appropriate by the Principal or Principal's designee.

At the time of enrollment or registration, the parent or guardian must supply TCS with the following:

1. The child's birth certificate or another document suitable as proof of the child's identity.
2. A copy of the child's records from the school the child most recently attended if he or she was previously enrolled in a school in South Carolina or in another state; students shall not be denied enrollment or be removed solely because they fail to provide the required documentation listed above.
3. A record showing that the child has the immunizations required by the Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC), proof that the child is not required to be immunized, or proof that the child is entitled to provisional admission.

Proof of Admission Eligibility

The school requires evidence that a prospective student resides in South Carolina to be eligible to attend TCS. Acceptable documents for verifying address include current SC issued driver's license, utility bills, and sale or lease agreements.

Child in DSS Possession

TCS shall enroll a child without the required documentation if the Department of Social Services (DSS) has taken possession of the child. DSS shall ensure that the required documentation is provided to TCS in a timely manner.

MEDICAL INFORMATION

Communicable Diseases

Communicable diseases are diseases that may be transmitted from person to person. Prevention and control of communicable diseases in the school setting is an essential part of ensuring a healthy, safe environment for students and faculty. To protect others from contagious illnesses, students infected with certain diseases are not allowed to attend school while contagious. The parent/guardian of a student with a communicable or contagious disease should phone the nurse or Principal so that other students who have been exposed to the disease can be alerted.

Allergy Information Requested Upon Enrollment

Parents are required to provide written notification of any known allergy. More information may be requested by the school nurse.

Health Services Policy on Head Lice

In review of the life cycle of head lice, research shows that the louse egg hatches every 7-10 days. The louse can survive 48-52 hours with no contact with a human host. Even after treatment with a pediculicide (Rid, Nix, Kwell, Pronto), remaining eggs in the hair are subject to hatch, causing re-infestation.

Therefore, the school policy is as follows:

1. Notification of parent/guardian of live lice or evidence of lice (nits). Parents may be required to pick up their student from school.
2. Exclusion of student until proof of treatment with a pediculicide (receipt of purchase, prescription). School will also exclude students with lice eggs (nits) following the first treatment until eggs are removed. Parent/guardians also should wash all bedding, coats, hats, combs and brushes in hot water and treat carpets, sofas, etc.
3. Students may return to school after initial treatment, if nits are no longer present. It is recommended that students receive a second treatment seven days after the initial treatment.
4. The school designee will send notification to parent/guardians to inspect their children at home when a case has been discovered in a grade level.
5. Notify the school if there is a sibling at Thornwell Charter School with lice, so that the child can be inspected by the school designee.

Emergency Medical Treatment

Parents or legal guardians are required to complete an emergency medical authorization form for their student(s) each year. This form provides space for a telephone number where a parent/legal guardian may be reached during school hours in the event of a severe accident or illness. ***It is the responsibility of the parent to notify the school in writing whenever contact numbers have changed.***

In the case of a serious incident, the student's parent/legal guardian should be notified as soon as possible to

discuss the transportation of the student to a medical care facility. If a parent/legal guardian cannot be reached, the instructions as outlined below are followed unless deemed inappropriate. Procedures for emergency medical care of the seriously ill or critically injured student are:

1. A faculty member or other responsible person will remain with the sick or injured student at all times.
2. The parent/guardian will be notified. When the parent/guardian cannot be contacted in a reasonable amount of time, the Police Department may assist in locating a responsible family member, if necessary.
3. In the event 911 must be called and the parent/guardian or designated family member cannot be located, the emergency medical authorization form will indicate the choice of health care provider and consent for transfer of student to receive medical attention.
4. A TCS staff member will accompany the student to the hospital if emergency transportation is needed. The school staff member will accompany the student and remain at the hospital with the student until a responsible family member arrives.

Health Services

School health services are provided to all students in accordance with the South Carolina Department of Education's rules established by the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control and other applicable laws. The following services are available to students:

1. Emergency/first aid for illness or injury
2. Health assessment and referrals
3. Evaluation and assessment of student illness and the need for medical referral
4. An effective communicable disease control program including immunization and protective measures
5. Administration of physician prescribed medication and special procedures with parent/guardian and physician permission
6. Early identification of health problems which may interfere with learning. Students in grades 5K, 1, 3, 5, and 7 receive vision, hearing, and other required screenings
7. Health education

Designated school personnel are skillful in emergency care, first aid techniques, and certified in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). Students may receive counseling regarding identified or potential health problems. Teacher/school designee and parent conferences may occur to discuss health concerns or issues and suggestions for parents to follow up with their family doctor for medical advice.

Immunizations

South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) has designated immunization requirements for school-age children. The requirements and allowed exemptions as stipulated by DHEC can be found at www.scdhec.gov.

Medicine at School

Ideally, all medication should be given at home. Time schedules for prescription medications that some students receive often allow the medication to be taken at home either before or after school. The parent/legal guardian of a student who must take prescription medication during the school day must bring the medicine in its original container from the pharmacy labeled with the date, student's name, name of the medication and

times the medication should be administered. **Medications are not allowed to be transported in the child's backpack and will not be sent home with students. This includes cough drops, Orajel, and medicated ointments.**

A signed parent/legal guardian statement accompanying the medication should request the medication be given and indicate the time the last dose was administered. Students may not carry or administer medications to themselves at school except in special cases, such as asthmatics whose licensed healthcare provider has individually evaluated the student's capability for self-administration and responsible behavior. The proper medication information must be filed in the office if a student needs to carry medication at school. When the duration of the medication or special procedure is long-term (greater than 10 days), a physician's order must accompany the parent's request and be on file in the school office. When the duration of the medication/special procedure is complete (or at the end of the school year), the parent/guardian shall be notified to pick up any unused portion of the medication or equipment. Any unclaimed medication will be disposed of at the end of the school year. Physician prescribed special health care procedures may be implemented only with approval of the school official. Neither the person administering the above medication nor Thornwell Charter School will be held responsible or liable for any effects or problems resulting from the given medication.

Please contact the school nurse directly to discuss the development of an IHP/Individual Health Care plan for any medically fragile students.

Psychological, Social, and Diagnostic Services

Psychological, Social and Diagnostic Services are provided for students who are experiencing significant social, emotional, or academic difficulties. The Special Education department is comprised of educational diagnosticians and speech pathologists. These student-centered professionals provide assessment, prevention, and intervention for K-12 students. The school will not conduct a psychological examination, test, or treatment without first obtaining the parent/guardian's written consent.

Child Abuse

Any discovered or suspected child abuse will be immediately reported to the appropriate authorities. In order to ensure the safety of TCS students, all employees and volunteers will undergo a criminal background check and sex offender registry check. All students are encouraged to report any type of abuse including verbal, sexual, and/or physical abuse to a staff member.

South Carolina law mandates that certain persons, including teachers, by virtue of their positions, report suspected child abuse or neglect to DSS or a law enforcement agency if in the person's professional capacity the person received information that gives the person reason to believe that the child has been or may be abused or neglected. Mandatory reporters are also asked to inform their immediate supervisor and/or Principal in the event a report is made.

STUDENT RECORDS

Address Changes/ Student Information Updates

Parents/legal guardians must keep phone numbers, addresses, custody and emergency information up to date with each student's building receptionist and/or PowerSchool Administrator anytime it changes during the school year. Throughout the school year, parents may be asked to update information. All information requested is for the safety of all children at Thornwell Charter School.

If there is a custody issue, the school office needs to have legal documentation within the student's file so that Thornwell Charter School can follow all court and legal orders. If the office is unaware of legally documented changes, Thornwell Charter School will follow documentation that is currently housed in the student's file. Thornwell Charter School cannot take verbal rulings; all changes must be documented from a court or legal advisor. If parent contact is deemed necessary by the school, Thornwell Charter School is only responsible for contacting one of the listed parents/guardians.

Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)

Under PPRA, schools must obtain written parental consent before students are required to participate in any survey, analysis, or evaluation that reveals information concerning any of the eight protected areas noted below:

1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student's parent/guardian;
2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or the student's family;
3. Sex behavior and attitudes;
4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
5. Critical appraisals of other individuals with whom the student or the student's family has a close family relationship;
6. Legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as lawyers, physicians, and ministers;
7. Religious practices, affiliations, or belief of the student or student's parent/guardian; or
8. Income, other than as required by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program or receiving financial assistance under such program.

Student Records/FERPA

By law, biological parents have access to the records of a student who is either under 18 or a dependent for tax purposes. A parent/legal guardian whose rights have been legally terminated will be denied access to the records if the school is given a copy of the court order terminating these rights. Records may be reviewed during regular school hours. Please contact the PowerSchool Administrator for information regarding student records.

Parents/legal guardians of a minor or of a student who is a dependent for tax purposes, the student (if 18 or older), and school officials with legitimate educational interests are the only persons who have general access to a student's records.

"School officials with legitimate educational interests" includes any employees, agent, directors of the school board, cooperatives of which Thornwell Charter School is a member of, or facilities with which Thornwell Charter School contract for the placement of students with disabilities, as well as their attorney(s), auditor(s), and consultants, who are:

1. Working with the student;
2. Considering disciplinary or academic actions, the student's case, an Individual Education Program (IEP) for a student with disabilities under IDEA or an individually designed program for a student with disabilities under Section 504;
3. Compiling statistical data; or
4. Investigating or evaluating programs.

Certain officials from various governmental agencies may have limited access to the records.

Upon request, the 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.

The parent/guardian's or student's right of access to and copies of student records does not extend to all records. Materials that are not considered educational records include, but are not limited to, teachers' personal notes on a student that are shared only with select personnel, including but not limited to substitute teachers.

Parent/guardians may be denied copies of a student's record for the following reasons:

1. After the student reaches age 18 and/or is no longer a dependent for tax purposes;
2. When the student is attending an institution of post-secondary education;
3. If the parent/guardian fails to follow proper procedures and pay any associated copying charges;
4. When the school is given a copy of a court order terminating the parental rights.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age certain rights with respect to the student's education records. The office that administers FERPA is:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-4605

ATTENDANCE

Under the guidance of the Federal Office of Civil Rights, the South Carolina Department of Education is now requiring all SC schools to report students who are "chronically absent." Research shows that students with a history of "chronic absenteeism" face a serious risk of falling behind in school, thus making it more difficult for them to succeed in the classroom. As part of these new requirements, South Carolina kindergarten through fifth grade students will now **be considered "absent" if they miss 50% of their instructional day for ANY reason, regardless of whether the absence is excused or unexcused** and sixth through twelfth grade students will **be considered "absent" if they miss 50% of their instructional class period or block for ANY reason, regardless of whether the absence is excused or unexcused.** This means that all Thornwell Charter School students, along with all other SC students, now must be in school for at least half of the instructional day to be counted "present" for that day. Students may not participate in extracurricular activities if they are not present for at least half of the school day on the date of the activity.

For our school, those new attendance requirements will be as followed:

Minutes Required to be Counted Present for the Day: 210 minutes

School Doors open at 7:15AM
Students report to Classroom at 7:40 AM
School starts for students at 8:00 AM
Dismissal starts at 3:00 PM

Teachers report at 7:30 AM (if not on duty)
Breakfast Ends at 7:55 AM
School ends for students at 3:00 PM
Teachers can leave at 3:30 PM (subject to meetings)

For more information, please review the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) on the US Department of Education website (www.ed.gov).

Attendance Guidelines

Students are expected to attend school each day in accordance with the approved school calendar. Any student who misses school must present a written excuse, signed by a parent/guardian, or the medical professional who treated the child and the absence will be considered LAWFUL. The maximum number of days that may be recorded as LAWFUL absences with parent notes will be FIVE per school year at the elementary/middle school levels and TWO per semester in high school. If a written excuse is not turned in within THREE days after the child is back in school or is without acceptable cause, the absence will be considered unexcused and UNLAWFUL. The maximum number of days that a child is allowed to miss in one school year (or semester for credit bearing courses) is a total of TEN, regardless of type. When a student is absent more than a total of TEN days, the Board has designated the school principal to approve or disapprove of any additional absences. In addition, attendance is an important factor that is used in promotion/retention decisions for students.

Students will be considered Lawfully absent when:

- They are ill and their attendance in school would endanger their health or the health of others, and can provide a written excuse from a medical professional.
- There is a death or serious illness in their immediate family—with proper documentation (i.e. bulletin, death notice, obituary, etc.)
- There is a recognized religious holiday of their faith and it has been pre-approved by the school principal.
- They are participating in sanctioned school activities.
- The student is suspended from school.
- There is a necessary medical, legal, or social services appointment that cannot be scheduled during non-school hours—with proper documentation.

Lawful absences will allow students to make up missed work.

While work will not be sent home or emailed to a suspended student or the parent/guardian, students are allowed to complete any available work in Google Classroom during the suspension. Students will have the number of days suspended to make up any additional missed work.

Students will be considered unlawfully absent when:

- They have exceeded the 5 days that may be excused with a parent note.
- A student is absent without acceptable cause with or without knowledge of his/her parents.
- They are out of town on trips or vacations.

Students must be present at least ½ the day to attend any athletic event, extracurricular activity, or other school-sponsored function held that day.

SEAT TIME FOR HIGH SCHOOL CREDIT BEARING COURSES: In order to receive credit for a high school course, a student must attend at least 85 out of 90 school days for a semester long class and 170 out of 180 school days for a year long class. Any student who is absent from a course block or the entire school day, must present a written excuse, signed by a parent/guardian, or the medical professional who treated the child and the absence will be considered LAWFUL. The maximum number of days that will be recorded as LAWFUL absences with parent notes will be TWO PER SEMESTER at the high school level. The maximum number of

UNLAWFUL days that a child is allowed to miss in one semester is FIVE. A student will be denied credit and fail due to attendance when they have accrued SIX UNLAWFUL absences in a class. When a student is absent more than a total of TEN days per semester, the Board has designated the school principal to approve or disapprove of any additional absences. In some instances, students may be eligible for Attendance Recovery Sessions to meet the minimum seat time requirements and recover a credit denied due to excessive absences. Eligible students will be notified by school administration and provided with the opportunity to enroll in the program. For example, high school students that miss more than 5 days per block regardless of reason, will be required to make up seat time outside of school hours.

TRUANCY: After THREE CONSECUTIVE or FIVE total UNLAWFUL ABSENCES are accrued, South Carolina State Regulation 43-274 identifies a child (between the ages of 6 and 17) as TRUANT. It also requires that school officials enter a discipline/incident report in the student's permanent record and report the truancy status to the State of SC. Parents will receive a letter when their child has been identified as truant and will be contacted for an attendance conference with a school administrator. The purpose of this conference is to identify the reasons for the child's absences and complete a Student Attendance Intervention Plan (SAIP) to develop interventions to ensure regular student attendance. In the event of continued unlawful absences after the SAIP meeting, the child/family may be referred to Laurens County Family Court and/or the Department of Social Services.

CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM School districts within our state are required to identify students who are chronically absent to the State Department of Education as part of the implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act. According to the United States Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights (OCR), an absent student is one who misses 50% of the instructional day for any reason regardless of whether the absence is excused or unexcused. 50% of the school day is 210 minutes at all grade levels. Using this definition of absent, OCR requires states to report the number of students in each school and district who are absent at least 10% of the time enrolled. The total number of chronically absent students will be included in both school and district report cards and reported to OCR. In order to facilitate the flow of information, the SC State Department of Education has standardized attendance coding and minute by minute tracking in PowerSchool for all schools throughout the state.

CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM AND TRUANCY: Chronic absenteeism is not the same as truancy. Although there is some overlap, the definition and types of absences considered are not completely the same.

	Chronic Absenteeism	Truancy
Definition	Any student in K-12 who misses 50% or more of the instructional day for any reason for 10% or more of the enrollment period.	A student between the ages of 6-17 who has accumulated 3 consecutive or a total of 5 or more unexcused/unlawful absences during the academic year. After the truancy intervention process begins, further absences may result in referral to family court and/or the involvement of the Department of Social Services.
Types of absences included	All types of absences contribute to chronic absenteeism, including days when a student is not present for 50% of the school day.	Only full day unexcused absences contribute to truancy designation for the academic year. Excused absences and suspensions do not

	This includes: --Excused absences --Unexcused absences --Suspensions --Tardy arrivals and early dismissals	affect truancy.
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TARDY POLICY

A student is considered tardy if he/she arrives to school and is in class later than 8:00 a.m. After a student has been tardy or leaves early 5 or more days (per quarter) he/she will be referred to the school principal for seat time recovery.

The following chart pertains to unexcused tardies. Tardies are considered unexcused if there is no note from a medical provider or it is a principal approved tardy.

Number of Tardies	Action Taken
1-2	Verbal Warning
3	Warning Letter to Parent/Guardian
4	Parent/Guardian Conference
5-7	After School Intervention 3pm-4pm
8-10	1 day of Focus Classroom
11	DSS Referral if warranted Summer Make Up hours begin accumulating

*Starts over every quarter

EARLY DISMISSALS

A student that leaves school before 3:00 p.m. will be counted for an early dismissal. Student Drivers who need to be dismissed early for an appointment or other reason must present a written request by the parent or guardian to the main office upon arrival to school or an email from the parent/guardian regarding the early dismissal must be received by 9:00 a.m. to Sydney Venable (svenable@thornwelcs.org) and Robin Finley (rfinley@thornwelcs.org). The email must come from the parent/guardian's email address that is on file with the school. Early dismissal by phone call will not be accepted for student drivers. Students who are granted early dismissal must leave the building immediately. After a student has been tardy or leaves early 5 or more days (per quarter) he/she will be referred to the school principal for seat time recovery. This seat time recovery may include after school attendance, early morning attendance, or summer attendance to make up the time missed. Thornwell Charter School reserves the right to conduct well-child visits when a student has missed 3 or more days without proper information to the school. These visits may or may not include local law enforcement or social services when needed.

GRADING GUIDELINES

Teachers are responsible for establishing and communicating grading standards to students and parents/legal guardians. This includes penalties for late work. These standards must be consistent with guidelines approved by administration. Parents are encouraged to check PowerSchool on a regular basis for updated grades. The PowerSchool Administrator can assist individuals who are having difficulty reviewing student grades or updating passwords. Questions about individual grades should be discussed with the teacher.

Academic Grading

All grade levels follow the South Carolina Department of Education's Uniform Grading Policy. Thornwell Charter School will use standard-based report cards in Kindergarten through 3rd grade. Thornwell Charter School uses numerical grades, starting in 4th grade, for all courses. The numerical grade ranges are as follows:

90-100 = A 80-89 = B 70-79 = C 60-69 = D Below 60 = F

Quarterly and Year Award Qualification

1. Perfect Attendance – No absences during the quarter/year. Any tardies must be prior to 11:15am and any early dismissals must be after 11:15am.
2. Principal's Honor Roll – All A's for the quarter (all averages are 90 or above). To be eligible for Principal's Honor Roll for the year, all final averages must be 90 or above.
3. Honor Roll – All A's and B's for the quarter (all averages are 80 or above). To be eligible for Honor Roll for the year, all final averages must be 80 or above.

Late Work Policy

1. Non-absent Students - 10 points off per day late.
2. Absent Students - Students have the number of days they were absent to complete missing assignment(s) for work assigned during the absences. For example, if they were absent one day, they have one day to complete work missed due to their absence. Likewise, if they are absent 3 days, they have 3 days to complete work missed due to their absence. Previously issued assignment(s) will be due upon return. Extenuating circumstances may be appealed to the Principal.

Numerical grades in all subjects will be reported to parent/guardian and students at the interim (4 ½ weeks) of every 9 weeks and at the end of each nine-week period, as outlined on the school calendar. Conferences will be scheduled with parents/guardians to discuss and develop plans for students in danger of failing. Parents/guardians may request a conference with teachers at any time throughout the year.

Retake Policy – Grades 4-12

Only major grades are eligible for retake.

Retaking of Major Grades:

1. May retake if 79 or below
2. Can look like remediation or retake test
3. 80 is the highest a student can make on a retake

4. Maximum Retakes Allowed – 2 major assignments per semester

All retakes must be completed within 5 days of the grade being entered in Power School or before the end of the grading period (whichever comes first). Your student must contact their teacher to get needed information for the retake and to set up a time.

Exam Exemption Policy

High school students may be exempt from a final exam (excluding End-of-Course EOC or dual enrollment exams) if they meet one of the following criteria:

- Earned an **A** in the class, or
- Earned a **B** in the class **with perfect attendance**.

Please note: Students who are exempt but still attend school on the day of the exam **will be required to take the exam**.

For students who only need to take one exam on a given day, parents may sign them in at the scheduled exam time. If a student wishes to leave after completing an exam, a **parent must sign them out at the end of the block**. Students are **not permitted to leave before the block ends**, even if they finish their exam early.

If a student drives to school, a **parent-signed note** specifying the day and time the student may leave will be accepted. **Phone calls will not be accepted for early dismissal**.

Weighting of Grades

Assignments:	Middle/High (5th-12th)
Major Grades	60% of 9 weeks grade
Minor Grades	40% of 9 weeks grade

****Courses with an End of Course (EOC) Test – The EOC will be counted as 20% of the final grade as mandated by the State of South Carolina**

Withdrawals

Minor students may withdraw from school by presenting a request signed by the student's parent/guardian and stating the reason for the withdrawal. Students 17 or older may request withdrawal without parent/guardian signature.

Students within the compulsory attendance age are not withdrawn/dropped from the roster of any school except for the following reasons:

1. Moved from Thornwell Charter School;
2. Placed in an institution;
3. Deceased; or
4. Enrolled in a non-public school.

Student Grades upon Transfer to TCS

When a student enrolls at TCS during the middle of a quarter, the student's transfer grade average from the previous school will be applied to all assignments that occurred before the student's enrollment at TCS. After enrollment, all grades earned at TCS will be recorded individually and calculated into the student's quarter

average as they are earned.

Student Grades upon Withdrawal

Estimated grades to date of withdrawal are given by teachers on the withdrawal form when a student checks out of school. The date of withdrawal is shown on the permanent record. If a student transfers to another school, the grade to date of withdrawal is also sent with other records to the new school.

Promotion and Retention

Students are promoted from grade to grade based on their mastery of the South Carolina Career and College Readiness Standards. Grade-level advancement and course credit shall be based on mastery of the curriculum.

Credit Recovery Policy

In order to qualify for credit recovery, a student must have a final average of at least a 50 and if they have completed and submitted all required assignments for the original course in a timely manner. Students who have failed a core content area course due to absences or “seat time” are not eligible to recover the credit through Credit Recovery.

Local Promotion Requirements

Parent/guardian conferences will be held prior to retaining a student.

High School students who fail math or reading are required to attend Credit Recovery in order to be promoted to the next grade level.

Students who fail two of their core academic classes are subject to retention. A grade placement committee can look at the state testing and other factors to determine the best course of action for the next year's grade placement.

Students who fail three core academic classes will be retained for all respectable purposes for the following school year.

In grades K-12, promotion to the next grade level shall be based upon course-level or grade-level South Carolina Career and College Ready Standards (SCCCR). The grade placement committee (Principal, Teacher(s), and Parent/Guardian) will have the final authority in promotion/retention decisions.

TCS requires 95% attendance. A child may be placed even if he/she has more than the number of absences if the recommended by the promotion and retention committee.

TCS shall ensure that each student, other than a student with disabilities whose Individual Education Plan (IEP) provides for alternative achievement standards, demonstrates mastery of the state standards. Promotion standards of grade level classification of special education students shall be determined by the IEP team.

Requirements for Early Graduation

Students wishing to graduate early from high school must successfully complete all 24 credits and have passing scores on all portions of the WIN test, unless otherwise approved by the Head of School.

Requirements for Graduation Honors

Valedictorian and Salutatorian

The valedictorian and salutatorian are the senior students who have the highest and second highest GPA at the end of the first semester of the senior year.

Honor Graduates

High Honor Graduates are graduating seniors with a cumulative, unweighted GPA of 3.5 at the end of the first semester of the graduating year. These students will receive a gold Honor stole.

Honor graduates are graduating seniors with a cumulative, unweighted GPA of 3.0 at the end of the first semester of the graduating year. These students will receive a gold cord.

Graduation Marshals

Graduation Marshals will be chosen from the junior class. Marshals will be the top 6 ranked students of the junior class and will be based on the end of the first semester of the students' junior year.

Graduation Ushers

TCS students of the year (elementary, middle, and high school) will serve as the graduation ushers. If the high school student of the year is a senior, the administration reserves the right to choose a member of the student government to serve in his/her place.

Graduation Honor Cords and Stoles

High Honor Graduate - see above

Honor Graduate - see above

Legacy Graduate - A graduation senior enrolled at TCS continuously from the opening of the school (or 8th graders during the 2020-2021 school year) to their graduation. Beginning in 2029-2030, the requirement will change to students who are continuously enrolled from Kindergarten to twelfth grade. These students will receive a blue and gold cord.

College or Career Readiness - A graduating senior who has met requirements of College or Career Readiness as outlined by the SC Department of Education. Students will receive a kelly green cord.

Dual Enrollment - A graduating senior who has successfully completed at least 2 dual enrollment courses during their high school career. These students will receive a light blue cord.

Athletic Honors - A graduating senior who has lettered in a varsity sport at least two times. These students will receive a navy and white cord.

Fine Arts - A graduating senior who has completed 2 or more fine arts courses in the same department (Example - Art 1 and 2, Band 1 and 2, Musical Theater 1 and 2). These students will receive a light pink cord.

Beta Club - A graduating senior who is a member in good standing of the TCS chapter of the National Beta Club. These students will receive a black cord.

Read to Succeed Law

In June 2014, the South Carolina General Assembly passed Act 284 (Read to Succeed) as a monumental step toward closing the state's achievement gap and increasing opportunities for all students in South Carolina. Read to Succeed legislation is ground-breaking for South Carolina because it is comprehensive, systematic, and affects every educator and student in the state through eight components: 1. State, district, and school reading plans; 2. Focus on third grade progression; 3. Summer reading camps; 4. Provision of reading interventions; 5. Requirements for in-service educator endorsements; 6. Early learning and literacy development; 7. Teacher preparation; and 8. Reading coaches.

The goal of Read to Succeed is to ensure all students graduate from high school with the reading and writing skills they need to be ready for college and careers. While South Carolina students have made some progress in reading, the number of proficient students is still low compared to other states. Research is clear that students who are not proficient readers by third grade are more likely to struggle academically, greatly reducing their chances of graduating from high school, going to college, or successfully participating in a 21st century high-skill economy. The problem is not an English Language Arts issue alone; students who are struggling readers are less able to access content in all areas of learning, including science and mathematics.

Read to Succeed ensures that students who are unable to read and comprehend on grade level will be identified as early as possible and be provided with targeted support from all classroom teachers. Read to Succeed requires that all educators have the knowledge and skills they need to assess and address student reading problems effectively.

Read to Succeed, as amended by Act 114 of 2024, outlines that in-service professional development based in the science of reading, structured literacy, and foundational literacy skills, must be provided for teachers, school principals, and other administrative staff.

Act 114 requires that beginning with the 2024-2025 school year, a student must be retained in the third grade if the student fails to demonstrate reading proficiency by scoring Does Not Meet Expectations on SC READY Reading. A student may be exempt for good cause from the mandatory retention but shall continue to receive instructional support and services and reading intervention appropriate for their age and reading level.

GENERAL SCHOOL INFORMATION

Car Line Procedures

Thornwell Charter School staff and administration puts safety at the top of our priority list.

Drop Off

Arrival will begin at 7:15AM and end at 8:00AM. Once it is 8:00AM, you are asked to bring your child to the office, and they will be marked tardy. Doors are closed promptly at 8:00AM at every instructional building. Students are expected to be in their classroom by 8:00AM.

Pick Up

Each child will be given a car rider identification sign that needs to be hung from your rearview mirror when

you or your designee is picking the child up. If you do not have the sign displayed, then you will be asked to leave the carline to report to the office to obtain your sign or pick up your child(ren). We want to make sure all TCS children are going home safely with the designated person(s). Walkers are not allowed unless you are walking to a residence or parent/guardian workplace within 2 miles of the school. Walkers must have an approved walker form on file in the front office and leave promptly when walkers are called. Walkers who are being picked up on the school campus and are not walking to their designated address, will be asked to come back into the building and will need to be picked up from the office. For the safety of all students, walkers will be dismissed after all student athletes and student drivers. Students involved in an after school club or practice need to report to that area promptly when called.

Emergency Procedures

Student safety is very important. TCS follows state laws and guidelines in the case of individual or school-wide emergencies. The school has a trained Crisis Response Team (Principal, Nurse, and Executive Assistant) that will coordinate any emergency procedures. In case of an emergency, students should follow school procedures and the directions of their teachers. In case of an emergency, parents will be notified as soon as possible.

Severe Weather/Tornado Warnings

When there is a threat of severe weather, TCS School officials will monitor conditions and take the advice of the Emergency Broadcasting Center (EBC) and local authorities to determine when emergency procedures need to be implemented. When dangerous conditions exist and plans are implemented, we will use every means available to communicate this to our families. The safety of your children is our utmost concern and school may be the safest place for the children. When a tornado warning is issued, TCS will go into tornado safety mode. Parents who are on site or waiting in the parking lot will be invited to shelter in place. Students will not be released until the EBC has determined that the threat for severe weather has ended.

Emergency School Closing Information

In the event weather or other conditions make it necessary to close school, students and parents/guardians will be notified through announcements made on social media outlets, television, and via email and robocall/robotext. In most cases, TCS will follow the inclement weather closing of Laurens School District 56. Due to differences in transportation, there may be times we do not make the same call on a closing or delay. Thornwell Charter School will give notice to the local news agencies regarding closings.

Release of Students

By law, students may only be released to a parent, legal guardian, or the emergency contact listed on the child's enrollment forms. In the event of an emergency or crisis in which a child is involved:

1. Parents will be notified as soon as possible.
2. The school must obtain parental permission to release a child to an unauthorized person.
3. School officials will refer to contacts listed in PowerSchool when releasing a student.
Please make sure proper paperwork is on file.

At times, these rules may seem inconvenient; however, our responsibility is to protect your child, and we must obey the law. Please be sure that the people you identify as "emergency contacts" on your child's enrollment forms are people to whom you would allow us to release your child and advise those individuals that you have listed them as an emergency contacts. Persons that come to pick up students are required to show identification.

Students' parents will be contacted prior to a student's release if the above criteria are not met.

Student-Initiated, Non-Curriculum Related Student Organizations

The Equal Access Act (EAA) requires that public secondary schools grant equal access to student groups who wish to meet for religious, political, or philosophical purposes if the school allows other types of non-curriculum related student groups to meet. Thornwell Charter School will provide a limited open forum for student-initiated, non-curriculum related groups to meet on its school premises during non-instructional time. This policy will apply to the high school only.

Thornwell Charter School may prevent the formation of any student club/organization where the purpose of the club/organization is unlawful, or where activities of the club/organization may materially or substantially interfere with the orderly conduct of educational activities within the school or where meetings of the club will present a substantial likelihood of danger to students or damage to school property.

School employees will not promote, lead, or participate in the meetings of non-curriculum related, student-initiated clubs/organizations; however, a school employee will be present at the meetings for custodial purposes and general student supervision. School employees also may not influence the form or content of any prayer or other religious activity, nor require any person to participate in prayer or any other religious activity.

Students seeking to establish a student initiated, non-curriculum related club/organization must submit their request in writing to the Principal for approval. The request must state the name of the club/organization, the general purpose and mission of the club/organization, and the name of the faculty member who has agreed to act as the club monitor. The Principal will review the request and grant or deny the request of a club/organization to use school facilities for its meetings, consistent with the requirements of the EAA.

The Principal has the authority to designate reasonable times and places for student-initiated, non-curriculum related clubs/organizations to conduct their meetings. The Principal also has the authority to establish guidelines for the distribution on school grounds of club/organization literature and the posting of signs on school grounds notifying students of club/organization meetings. Such guidelines will be applied consistently to all non-curriculum related clubs/organizations.

Field Trips

Field trips, excursions, and outdoor education are a part of student education. Therefore, additional safeguards must be used for the protection of students. The Student Code of Conduct is in effect during all school-related trips. Conduct violations can be used to deny students the opportunity to participate in additional field trips. Refunds will not be given for students who are denied the opportunity to participate in a field trip due to conduct reasons.

Students who participate in school-sponsored trips will be required to ride in transportation provided by the school. If a parent or guardian is attending the field trip as a chaperone and is assigned the duty of supervision of students, he or she will not be allowed to bring siblings. While the student of a parent or guardian chaperone who is driving instead of riding the bus may be (at the teacher's discretion) allowed to ride with their parent or guardian, other students will not be allowed to ride with the chaperone if they are not that student's parent/guardian. In the event of student misconduct/sickness, parents/guardians may be contacted to pick up and transport their child at the discretion of the Principal. No parent/guardian will be able to attend any school-sponsored trips without a cleared background check.

Discipline Information: Buses or Other Vehicles

Students may be transported for a variety of reasons such as field trips, extracurricular activities, emergency situations, etc.

Students are under the Code of Conduct while they are using school transportation. Any student who violates the established rules of conduct while on school transportation will be disciplined according to the Code of Conduct.

Course Offerings

While TCS reserves the right to allow students to take online courses through approved vendors, students will not be approved from an online course if that course is offered in person at TCS and is offered at a time that fits into the student's schedule. Online courses must be approved by TCS administration and/or Guidance.

Dual Enrollment Courses

Thornwell Charter School is honored to offer the privilege of Dual Enrollment Courses through the University of South Carolina Union and Piedmont Technical College. In order to qualify for Dual Enrollment Courses, students must be in their Junior year of High school and have at least a 3.5 or an administrator's recommendation for USC-U or a 3.0 for Piedmont Technical College. All Dual Enrollment must be approved by TCS administration and/or Guidance.

Outside Food and Beverages

As a Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) school, all students receive free breakfast and lunch. Students are allowed to bring a lunch box from home that includes a balanced meal with water, juice, or milk to drink. Students are allowed water in a closed water bottle throughout the day. Water bottles may not be glass or have a straw. Students are not permitted to bring any beverage other than water nor allowed to bring or have delivered snacks or other outside food. There is to be no eating in classrooms outside of breakfast provided by the school.

Parental Involvement and Responsibilities

Education succeeds best when there is a strong partnership between home and school. Parents/guardians are partners with teachers, administrators, and the board. You are encouraged to:

1. Review the Student Handbook with your child prior to signing and returning to the school the written statement that you understand and consent to the responsibilities outlined in the Student Code of Conduct.
2. Encourage your child to put a high priority on education and to commit to making the most of the educational opportunities provided by the school.
3. Update address, name changes, and/or phone numbers in a timely manner.
4. Be aware of your right to temporarily remove your child from an instructional activity that conflicts with your religious or moral beliefs. Such removal cannot be for the purpose of avoiding a test and may not prevent the student from attending for an entire semester. Further, such removal does not exempt the student from satisfying grade level requirements as determined by the South Carolina Department of Education.
5. Review your child's school records in PowerSchool when needed; monitor your child's progress and contact teachers as needed.
6. Request for parent/teacher conference as needed.

Parent Volunteers

To become a volunteer, contact Thornwell Charter School's front office. Fill out the volunteer application, consent to a criminal background check and National Sex Offender Registry check, and be approved. **The form must be completed and approved every year.**

Prayer

The school recognizes a student's right to individually and voluntarily pray or meditate in school in a manner that does not disrupt the instructional time or other activities of the school. The school will not require, encourage, or coerce a student to engage in or refrain from such prayer or meditation during any non-instructional activity.

Individual Student Birthdays

Families are invited to celebrate student birthdays at school. Please keep in mind the following things:

1. Parents may bring store bought cupcakes or cookies to be distributed for student birthdays with the timing of distribution at the discretion of the teacher and Principal.
2. Students issuing invitations to individual birthday parties or other celebrations may only do so at school if all students in the class are invited.
3. Floral arrangements, balloons, cookie grams, etc. are not considered appropriate during school hours. The school office staff will not deliver these items to the classroom.

Sexual Harassment/Abuse

Thornwell Charter School believes that every student has the right to attend school and school related activities free from all forms of discrimination on the basis of sex, including sexual harassment/abuse. Further, Thornwell Charter School, as required by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and its regulations, does not discriminate on the basis of sex in its education programs or activities. Title IX prohibits gender-based harassment, which may include acts of verbal, nonverbal, or physical aggression, intimidation, or hostility based on sex that creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment. Thornwell Charter School considers sexual harassment/abuse of students to be serious and will consider the full range of disciplinary options, up to and including recommendation for expulsion, according to the nature of the offense. Unwanted and unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, words, gestures, or any other sexual conduct, including requests for sexual favors, directed toward another student or employee is unacceptable. Thornwell Charter School encourages parental and student support in its efforts to address and prevent sexual harassment/abuse. Students and/or parents/guardians are encouraged to discuss their questions or concerns about the expectations in this area with a teacher or administrator.

Students must not engage in unwanted and unwelcome verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature directed toward another student or an employee. This prohibition applies to any and all inappropriate conduct. All students are expected to treat other students and employees with courtesy and respect; to avoid any behaviors known to be offensive; and to stop these behaviors when asked or told to stop.

Students who have actual knowledge of sexual harassment/abuse are encouraged to report such conduct to a teacher, administrator, or the Title IX coordinator. The Title IX coordinator will evaluate the complaint to determine if the conduct meets the definition of sexual harassment under Title IX. To the extent such conduct qualifies as sexual harassment under Title IX, the School shall conduct an investigation in accordance with the procedures required by Title IX. If the complaint does not meet the conditions of sexual harassment under Title

IX, the complaint will be reported to an administrator for further investigation and action, as necessary. A founded complaint against a student will result in appropriate disciplinary action and potential recommendation for expulsion, according to the nature of the offense and the Student Code of Conduct.

Tobacco/Vaping Products

Thornwell Charter School is a tobacco free campus. The use of tobacco products, including hemp and vaping products, is prohibited anywhere on campus, including the parking lot and car line.

Social Events

The rules of good conduct and grooming will be observed at school social events held outside the regular school day. Guests are expected to observe the same rules as students attending the event, and the person inviting the guest will share the responsibility for the conduct of the guest. Students attending social events may be asked to sign in and out for the event.

Telephone

Students will not be allowed to use the office or classroom phones without permission from the administration.

Visitors

Thornwell Charter School welcomes all visitors to the campus. All visitors, upon arrival, must check in with a valid state issued I.D., and will be subject to a background check. The visitor's I.D. will be checked against the parent pick-up list to ensure the visitor has permission to visit. Visitors should dress appropriately when entering the school. Visitors are not allowed into the classrooms during instructional times without prior arrangements being made.

Textbooks and Other Instructional Materials

Textbooks and other instructional materials used in the classroom are provided by the State. Since these items may be used for several years, it is extremely important that students take good care of them. Teachers may assign textbooks to students. Each student and the student's parent or guardian is responsible for all instructional materials and technological equipment not returned in an acceptable condition. A student who fails to return all instructional materials and technological equipment in an acceptable condition is required to pay all applicable damage or replacement fees.

All students in grades K-2 will have iPads and all students in grades 3-12 will have a Chromebook to use for educational purposes. It is the responsibility of the student to make sure that the device is well maintained and fully charged before arriving at school each day (K-2 students will not take their iPads home). Thornwell Charter School utilizes a safety monitoring system for all student-issued Chromebooks and school electronic devices. This system notifies administration of any violations of the student code of conduct including but not limited to profanity, inappropriate images, messages regarding self-harm or violence, unauthorized website visits, etc. These violations will receive a follow up from school administration in accordance with the school policy. The iPads and Chromebooks are the property of Thornwell Charter School and must be kept in the provided case at all times. Chromebooks must be safely placed in book bags for transport.

Internet Access

All Internet users are expected to abide by Thornwell Charter School's Acceptable Use Policy for Using the

Internet. An Internet Access Approval Form must be signed by the parent or guardian and the Technology Coach's office. Internet access is for educational purposes only. School administrators reserve the right to terminate access to any student or class abusing these privileges. The system administrator will deem what is inappropriate and that decision is final. Disciplinary measures are outlined in the School's Code of Conduct.

School Authority and Jurisdiction

School rules and the authority of the school to administer discipline apply whenever the interest of the school is involved, on or off school grounds, in conjunction with or independent of classes and school-sponsored activities.

Thornwell Charter School has disciplinary authority over its students including, but not limited to, the following circumstances:

1. During the regular school day;
2. While the student is in attendance at any school-related activity, regardless of time or location;
3. When retaliation against a school employee or volunteer occurs or is threatened, regardless of time or location;
4. When criminal mischief is committed on or off school property or at a school-related event;
5. For certain offenses committed on the Thornwell Campus as measured from any point on the school's real property boundary line;
6. When the student commits a felony, as provided by South Carolina code of law, section 16-1-10.
7. When the student is required to register as a sex offender.

Searches

The school has the right to conduct a reasonable search of areas such as lockers, backpacks, student's purses, cars, and any computer owned by the school or electronic devices brought on school property, at any time pursuant to applicable laws or regulations. Strip searches are prohibited. School administrators will report crimes as required by law and will call local law enforcement when an administrator suspects that a crime has been committed on campus.

STUDENT CONDUCT

Dress Code

The Thornwell Charter School dress code is established to instill discipline, prevent disruption, avoid safety hazards, and teach respect. All students are expected to exemplify proper dress and grooming standards in a manner that portrays an appropriate image for the student and the school. Sleepwear or pajamas are not acceptable.

Administrators have the discretion to determine the appropriateness of attire and grooming, and make special exceptions, including those for religious or medical necessities. If an administrator determines that a student's attire is inappropriate or violates the dress code, the discipline will be in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. Appropriate discipline procedures will be followed in all cases.

1. See-through, extremely tight, cut-away style garments (such as racer backs), plunging necklines/back, crop tops, or garments with holes in them are not permitted.

2. Skirts, jeans, pants, dresses, or shorts must be no more than 3 inches or the vertical length of an ID card above the knee for grades 6-12 and no shorter than fingertip length in grades 5K-5. No holes or tears are allowed above the knee. Pants must be worn at the waist. No biker shorts.
3. The straps of a student's top must be at least 2 inches or the horizontal length of an ID.
4. Clothing and masks with vulgar, obscene, racist, or suggestive writing (this includes sexually explicit material, and advertisements for alcohol, drugs, and tobacco) will not be allowed.
5. No bare feet, flip flops, or bedroom shoes. Tennis shoes must be worn on days a student has PE. Students are not allowed to wear shoes with more than a 2-inch heel to school.

Hairstyles

Hairstyles, in general, are expected to be clean, neat, and in good taste.

Body Adornments

Visible body piercing that is disruptive to the order of the school or is a distraction to the learning environment will not be allowed.

Head Attire

1. Hats, bandanas, caps, shower caps, sweatbands, etc. may be worn with permission.
2. Headwraps are not allowed in the building without prior written approval.

Dress Code Violations

Students must adhere to the TCS-approved dress code on school property during all academic days.

Number of Violations	Cost Response
1	Immediate parent contact for dress code-appropriate clothing
2	Immediate parent contact for dress code-appropriate clothing The student will be assigned Focus Intervention the day after the infraction
3	Immediate parent contact for dress code-appropriate clothing The student will be placed in Focus Classroom for that day

Personal Electronic Device Policy

The purpose of this policy is to create a phone-free school environment that fosters a positive learning experience free from electronic distractions. By prohibiting the use of personal electronic devices during the school day, this policy aims to provide an environment that enhances focus and engagement, allowing students to develop the college and career-ready skills outlined in the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate. Students will have more opportunities to engage in meaningful interactions, collaborate with peers, and cultivate the essential skills necessary for success in college, careers, and life.

- a. “Personal electronic device,” hereinafter referred to as “device,” means any device utilized to access the internet, Wi-Fi, cellular telephone signals, or to capture images or video. This includes, but is not limited to, cell phones, smart watches, tablets, and gaming devices.
- b. “Personal Electronic Device accessories,” hereinafter referred to as “device accessories,” include any wired or wireless accessory or wearable technology that connects to a device and any other accessory commonly used in conjunction with a personal electronic device.
- c. “School day” is defined as the period of time that a student is present on the school campus from their arrival (i.e., tardy bell) until afternoon dismissal at the end of the instructional day. This policy may also apply to school buses, field trips, and athletic events. The applicability of this regulation to these activities will be determined by the school district.
- d. “Access” is defined as viewing, holding, wearing, or otherwise using a device for the purpose of communication, internet access, gaming, recording, or any other function commonly associated with devices. During the school day, devices should be powered off and stored as directed by the school district. Exceptions granted for medical necessity, authorized for classroom use, or other authorized reasons should be in writing and are not considered violations of this definition.
- e. “Authorized for Classroom Use” is defined as the use of a personal electronic device that is explicitly approved by the District Superintendent or his/her designee in writing. The approval must include alignment with a standards-aligned educational objective that cannot be reasonably achieved using district-owned devices. Students must be provided with clear instructions on the appropriate use of devices and ensure that their use aligns with the approved educational objectives. The District Superintendent or his/her designee may revoke approval at any time if it is determined that their use does not meet the intended educational objectives or is causing disruptions.

Policy Implementation and Enforcement

- a. During the school day, students are prohibited from accessing their personal electronic devices, unless authorized for classroom use. Students may not wear or access device accessories during the school day. Students must store their devices and device accessories in lockers, backpacks, or otherwise as directed by the school during the school day. The School may forbid student possession of devices and device accessories on school property.
- b. If explicitly required by a student’s IEP, Medical Plan, or 504 plan, the student shall be allowed to access their personal electronic device for medically or educationally necessary purposes described and required for administration of the IEP, Medical Plan or 504 plan.
- c. A student who is a member of a volunteer firefighting organization or emergency organization may be authorized to carry a device with written permission from the District Superintendent or his/her designee.
- d. If a student violates the preceding rules during the school day, the student will be subject to progressive consequences in the student code of conduct and disciplinary enforcement procedures.

Thornwell Charter School is not responsible for any misplaced, damaged, or stolen devices. Smartwatches may be on but may not be used for anything other than time-telling purposes.

Number of Violations	Cost Response
1	Confiscation Cell phone returned at the end of the day to the student
2	Confiscation Cell phones may be picked up by the student's guardian at the front office after 3 pm. The student will be assigned Focus Intervention the following day
3	Confiscation Cell phones may be picked up by the student's guardian at the front office after 3 pm. The student will be assigned Focus Classroom for that day (or the following day depending upon the time of the infraction) Behavior Contract Initiated

Video Surveillance and Monitoring

Video cameras will be used in common areas for surveillance to ensure the security and safety of students, staff and patrons of Thornwell Charter School throughout the entire campus. Disciplinary actions can be taken based on the information in the video surveillance. Discipline will be in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. Due to privacy concerns, generally video surveillance footage will not be shared with parents or legal guardians unless instructed to do so with a court ordered subpoena.

While on Thornwell Charter School property or at school sponsored events, students may not record, whether audio or video, employees, other students, or parents or legal guardians, without first notifying the individual of the recording. This expectation does not apply to public events such as music performances, plays, athletic competitions, etc., where there is not an expectation of privacy.

ID Policy

Students must wear their school issued ID on a lanyard around their neck and visible while they are at school.

Students must wear their school-issued ID on a lanyard around their neck, which must be visible while they are at school. ID violations will be issued to students with IDs in their pockets, book bags, or other places not visible throughout the school day.

Number of Violations	Cost Response
3	Parent Contact/1 day of Afterschool Focus Intervention
4	2 days of Afterschool Focus Intervention
5	1 day of Focus Classroom
6	2 days of Focus Classroom

7	1 day of OSS and parent conference
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Failure to show an ID when requested by the school Faculty or Staff will result in the following

Number of Violations	Cost Response
1	Immediate assignment of Focus Classroom
2	1 day of OSS and parent conference

Violation counts will restart at the beginning of each semester.

DRIVING AND PARKING POLICY

DRIVING AND PARKING A VEHICLE ON THE THORNWELL CHARTER SCHOOL CAMPUS IS A PRIVILEGE AND NOT A RIGHT. The administration reserves the right to exclude persons who do not follow the rules or who endanger the safety and property of others. The driving rules are designed to protect everyone who drives or rides in a car on campus. The student disciplinary regulations apply to persons in the parking lot as they would anywhere else on campus. The driving and parking rules apply anytime that a student is operating a vehicle on campus before, during, and after school hours.

The fee for a parking permit is \$20.00. Any car parked on campus must have proper authorization and a clearly displayed valid parking permit. If a permit is lost or stolen, the student must purchase another permit before being allowed to drive on campus again. A replacement pass will cost \$10. The only exception for this is if a police report can be produced showing evidence that the pass was stolen.

Students may only park in the student parking lot, which is the gravel lot behind the school. Any student found parking in the faculty portion of the parking lot or in another parking lot or area on Thornwell's campus will lose their permit. Any student driving a car on Thornwell Charter School's campus must purchase an official parking permit from the office. Students may not purchase or trade parking passes with each other. The permit must be visible at all times while on campus. Only the student who purchased the permit is allowed to drive the vehicle. Allowing another student to use your permit in another car or driving a non-registered car to campus can result in loss of permit. If a student obtains a different car throughout the course of the school year, a new application needs to be completed and turned in to the administrator to record current information.

Students should drive responsibly and follow all SC driving rules and regulations and all local ordinances in the parking lot and on Thornwell's campus. Be aware and respectful that Thornwell's campus is in a residential neighborhood. Vehicles should not produce excessive noise on campus, including loud car radios, horns, and loud mufflers, etc.

Students are not allowed to sit in their vehicles upon arrival but instead must go immediately into a supervised area within the school building. Furthermore, in no case should a student be in the parking lot during the school day without written permission from an administrator.

Students are encouraged to lock their vehicles. The school is not responsible for any theft or vandalism to student cars and property.

Any vehicle on school grounds may be subject to search by administration if the administration has reasonable suspicion to believe that drugs, alcohol, stolen property, weapons, or other contraband might be present in the vehicle.

Excessive tardiness could result in your driving privilege being suspended for one semester.

Any student who leaves campus in an automobile without administrative permission could have their driving privilege revoked for one semester and/or subject to administrative consequences.

To obtain a parking permit, a student must have a valid driver's license, an insured vehicle, a valid registration, and a completed and signed parking application. Students may not loan or transfer parking permits to other students. Doing so will result in disciplinary actions. Vehicles not properly registered with the school may be towed at the owner's expense. (See list of violations below)

Below is a listing of offenses and the consequences for driving violations on the campus of Thornwell Charter School.

No permit hanging or visible	Warning (written ticket) After 3, pass revoked for the remainder of the semester
Parking in an unapproved area	Warning (written ticket) After 2, pass revoked for the remainder of the semester
Tardy to 1st period	After 5th unexcused, pass revoked for the remainder of the semester
Careless or reckless driving	Pass revoked for the remainder of the semester

STUDENT BEHAVIOR AND CODE OF CONDUCT

**** Can now be found in the Code of Conduct Document****

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Of Parent/Guardian:

Parents have the responsibility to:

1. Make every effort to provide for the physical needs of their children.
2. Teach their children to pay attention and obey the rules.
3. Be sure their children attend school regularly, and promptly report and explain absences and tardies to the school. When parents call the school, the staff member may ask for symptoms if their children are ill in order to better allow personnel to track trends in illnesses.
4. Encourage and lead the children to develop proper study habits at home.
5. Participate in meaningful parent/teacher conferences to discuss their children's school progress and welfare.
6. Attend parent-training workshops for home reinforcement of study skills and specific curriculum objectives.

7. Keep informed of school policies and academic requirements of school programs.
8. Participate in school-related organizations.
9. Be sure their children are appropriately dressed for school and school related activities.
10. Discuss report cards and school assignments with their children.
11. Bring to the attention of school authorities any learning problem or condition that may relate to their children's education.
12. Maintain up-to-date home, work and emergency telephone numbers and other pertinent information at the school.
13. Cooperate with school administrators and teachers.
14. Actively participate in communication with their children's teacher(s) and administration.
15. Read and support the programs outlined in the Student Handbook and other materials.
16. Submit a signed statement that they understand and consent to the responsibilities outlined in the Student Code of Conduct.

Of Administration:

Administrators have the responsibility to:

1. Respond to discipline problems referred to them by teachers.
2. Promote effective training and discipline of all students.
3. Encourage parent communication with the school, including participation in required parent- teacher conferences.
4. Provide appropriate assistance to students in learning mature self-discipline.
5. Assume responsibility and instructional leadership for discipline and for evaluation of the Student Code of Conduct.
6. Serve as appropriate role models for the students on their campus in accordance with the standards of the profession.
7. Assess and implement the Student Code of Conduct.

Of Teachers:

Teachers have the responsibility to:

1. Successfully complete effective training in the Student Code of Conduct.
2. Ensure good student discipline by being in regular attendance and on time.
3. Be prepared to perform their teaching duties with appropriate preparation, assignments and resource materials.
4. Comply with school policies, rules and regulations, and directives.
5. Maintain an orderly classroom atmosphere.
6. Teach to the standards of performance required by Thornwell Charter School and state law.
7. Establish rapport and an effective working relationship with parents, students, and other staff.
8. Teach students to strive toward self-discipline.
9. Encourage good work habits that will lead to the successful completion of assigned work.
10. Serve as appropriate role models for their students, in accordance with the standards of the teaching profession.

Discipline Personnel:

The discipline shall be the responsibility of the Principal, or designee. Duties shall include the authority to:

1. Assess and implement the Student Code of Conduct.
2. Remove a student from Thornwell Charter School for compelling disciplinary reasons or pending a hearing.

Students with Disabilities

The Special Education Coordinator will participate in all decisions regarding in and out of school suspensions of a student who has an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). All in-school-suspensions/Focus Classroom Assignment (ISS) and out-of-school suspensions (OSS) are logged into the Incident Management System in PowerSchool and are monitored by the Special Education Coordinator. The Special Education Coordinator will keep a cumulative document to track referrals for all Special Education students. If the student has a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP), Administration and/or the Special Education Coordinator will ensure it was followed prior to disciplinary actions. Students with an IEP who are in ISS/Focus Classroom will receive periodic instruction and work from a Special Education Teacher. Administration reserves the right to reduce the OSS penalty based on the student's IEP.

After 5 days of ISS or OSS, if a child already has a BIP or behavior contract in place, an IEP and reevaluation planning meeting will be held to discuss the student's behavior and review the current Behavior Intervention Plan or behavior contract in order to determine the need for a new one. If it is determined by the team that the child needs a new BIP, another Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) will be given to that child. Once the FBA has been completed, the team will meet and develop a new BIP. After 10 days of ISS and/or OSS, the team will meet to determine if an alternative placement is appropriate.

Notification

The Principal or Teaching Family Director shall notify a student's parent by phone or in writing of any violation that may result in a detention outside of regular school hours, in-school suspension/Focus Classroom, out-of-school suspension, or expulsion.

Appeals

Questions from parents/guardians regarding disciplinary measures should be addressed to the teacher, school administration, or Teaching Family Director, as appropriate. Consequences shall not be deferred pending the outcome of a grievance.

Process

South Carolina law states that no student can be suspended from a teacher's class for more than **10 days** for any one offense. SC law states that no student can be removed from school for more than **30 days** in a school year unless expelled. This applies to both regular education and special education students. Before being suspended, a student and his/her parent/guardian shall have an informal conference with the appropriate administrator who shall advise the student and his/her parent/guardian of the conduct of which the student is accused and the length of the suspension. This conference shall be set within three days of the first day of suspension.

Newly Enrolled Students

A student who enrolls in Thornwell Charter School before completing a disciplinary action from another school district must satisfy the current disciplinary action.

EXPULSION PROCESS

Expulsion

A student may be recommended for expulsion for the commission of any crime, gross immorality, gross misbehavior, persistent disobedience, or for violation of written rules established by the School. The School's Board has the authority to order the expulsion of a student after a hearing.

A student may be recommended for expulsion for engaging in the following conduct no matter where it takes place:

1. Assault of a school employee or volunteer
2. Criminal mischief, if punishable as a felony
3. Aggravated assault
4. Sexual assault
5. Aggravated sexual assault
6. Murder
7. Capital murder
8. Criminal attempt to commit murder or capital murder
9. Aggravated robbery
10. Breach of computer security
11. Engaging in conduct relating to a false alarm or report (including a bomb threat) or a terroristic threat involving a public school

Further, a student may be recommended for expulsion for engaging at School, within 300 Feet, or at School Event:

1. Selling, giving, or delivering to another person, or possessing, using, or being under the influence of marijuana, a controlled substance, or an illegal drug.
2. Selling, giving, or delivering to another person, or possessing, using, or being under the influence of alcohol.
3. Possession of a knife, with a blade over two inches long, a blackjack, a metal pipe or pole, or any other type of weapon, device, or object which may be used to inflict bodily injury or death.

Mandatory Recommendation for Expulsion

A student will be recommended for expulsion for bringing a firearm to school. "Firearm" under federal law includes any weapon (including a starter gun) that will, is designed to, or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive; the frame or receiver of any such weapon; any firearm muffler or firearm destructive device, such as any explosive, incendiary or poison gas bomb, or grenade.

Investigation and action taken by administration

If after an administrator or his/her designee investigates a report of student misbehavior, and he/she decides to recommend expulsion, the administrator should suspend the student and notify the student's parent/guardian of his/her right to meet with the administrator. If after meeting with the parent/guardian the administrator still intends to recommend expulsion, the matter will be referred directly to the school hearing officer.

Notice of expulsion recommendation

By the end of the third school day following receipt of an expulsion recommendation, the school administration will notify the student and his/her parent/guardian, in writing, of the following:

- the rule(s) infraction alleged to have occurred;
- the right of the student to review his/her records, including the investigative documents in its entirety at least three days prior the hearing, to include all documents and videos, with appropriate exemptions and redactions as required by FERPA;
- the right of the student to a hearing on the evidence;
- the date, time, and place of the hearing; and
- the procedure to be followed at the hearing, including the right to be represented by counsel, including legal aid's contact information.

A response form will be enclosed with the notice on which the parent/legal guardian is asked to advise the hearing officer whether he/she intends to appear, whether he/she will be represented by legal counsel, and whether he/she wishes to waive an evidentiary hearing and merely address the Board. If the response form is not signed and returned to the hearing officer within 48 hours of the scheduled date of the hearing, the hearing may proceed as scheduled whether or not the student, the parent/legal guardian or the student's representative is present, or the hearing may be postponed.

Hearing Officer Hearing Procedure

The administrator, the administrator's representative, the student, the parent/guardian and/or the student's representative may be present at the hearing. If the school hearing officer and the parent/guardian agree, the student may be dismissed during portions of the hearing. The administrator and the student, or their representatives, will be allowed to present witnesses or witnesses' statements, and cross-examine the other party's witnesses. The school hearing officer may ask the witnesses questions. The parent/guardian and/or the student's representative will be given an opportunity express their views on the case. A tape recording of the testimony and/or written minutes summarizing the hearing will be kept on file by the school hearing officer.

Action following the Hearing Officer Hearing Procedure

Within 10 school days of the hearing, the school hearing officer will decide whether the student committed the alleged rule(s) violation or misconduct, based upon the evidence presented at the hearing, and the appropriate punishment. If the school hearing officer determines that grounds for expulsion exist, he/she may recommend that the student be expelled by the Board of Directors or recommend punishment other than a recommendation for expulsion.

The school hearing officer will report his/her decision in writing to the parent/guardian and school administration. If the school hearing officer determines that grounds for expulsion do not exist, the school administration can appeal the decision to the Board of Directors. If the school administration does not appeal the decision, all absences resulting from the suspension will be excused and the student's record cleared. The student will be allowed to make up all missed work.

Board Expulsion Hearing

If the decision of the school hearing officer is that the student should be recommended for expulsion, a hearing before the Board of Directors will be noticed. The notice procedure outlined above will be followed, including notification to the student and his/her parent/guardian, in writing, of the following:

- the rule(s) infraction alleged to have occurred;
- the right of the student to review his/her records, including the investigative documents in its entirety at least three days prior the hearing, to include all documents and videos, with appropriate exemptions and redactions as required by FERPA;
- the right of the student to a hearing on the evidence;
- the date, time, and place of the hearing; and
- the procedure to be followed at the hearing, including the right to be represented by counsel, including legal aid's contact information.

At the expulsion hearing, the established record will be considered, which includes the tape and/or minutes of the hearing in front of the hearing officer, and the hearing officer's decision letter. Both parties (administration and the student) will have an opportunity to present to the Board of Directors, cross-examination of the other party's witnesses will be allowed, and the Board of Directors will have an opportunity to question either party.

If the next scheduled board meeting is within 15 days of the decision from the hearing officer, the Board shall conduct the expulsion hearing at that meeting. If there are more than 15 days until the next regularly scheduled board meeting, the Board may hear the expulsion recommendation at a special-called meeting. The Board may uphold, reverse or alter the expulsion recommendation or school hearing officer's decision if the administration appeals the decision to the Board. If the recommendation for expulsion is reversed, all absences resulting from the suspension will be excused and the student's record cleared. The student will be allowed to make up all missed work.

Action Following the Board Hearing

Within ten (10) days of the hearing, the Board will issue written confirmation of its decision to the parent(s)/legal guardian(s).

Withdrawal During Process

When a student has violated TCS's Student Code of Conduct in a way that requires or permits an expulsion recommendation from the school and the student withdraws from the school before the expulsion hearing takes place, the school may choose to suspend the expulsion hearing. If the student then re-enrolls in the school during the same school year, the school may restart expulsion hearings at that time.

Restrictions During Expulsion

Expelled students are prohibited from being on school grounds or attending school-sponsored or school-related activities during the period of expulsion.