



STUDENT HANDBOOK

7400 SCOTT HAMILTON DRIVE LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS 72209



On behalf of the entire Goodwill and Excel Center Families, I want to welcome you to The Excel Center! You are now part of an organization that fosters the culture of Amazing Customer Experiences, or as we call it, ACE. It is a culture that cares for all of our customers, both external and internal. A culture that believes that caring for our community and environment is woven into our history, present, and future.

Here at Goodwill and The Excel Center, our culture holds our customers (donors, shoppers, employees, persons served, students, employers, etc.), community, as well as our environment, in the highest regard. Our culture is supported by our core values, which put simply, spell out I CARE:

- Integrity- We operate in an open, truthful environment, and strive to meet the highest ethical standards.
- Collaboration – We achieve and deliver our mission together.
- Attitude- We serve with humility and passion, and act for the good of the organization.
- Respect - We treat all people with dignity and respect.
- Explore- We explore continuous improvement, bold creativity, and change.

Goodwill's motto is: ***"Changing Lives Through Education, Training, and Employment"***® Our donors give gently-used items to be sold in our stores; those dollars create jobs and fund programs like job training, supported employment career readiness services, and now education through The Excel Center. Since 1927, Goodwill has offered a hand-up not a hand-out to help Arkansans change their lives.

You made a great decision to further your education. We stand ready to support you.

Welcome to Goodwill and the Excel Center!

Brian Marsh
President & CEO

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I. THE GOODWILL AND EXCEL CENTER MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES

1.1 GOODWILL HISTORY

Goodwill was founded in 1902 by Rev. Edgar J. Helms, a young Methodist minister at Morgan Memorial Chapel, located in an impoverished area of Boston, Massachusetts. His vision was broad enough to encompass the people who were impoverished and who had disabilities in his community. He devised a simple plan of collecting usable clothing and household items from the public and putting people, many of them were considered unemployable, to work renovating the donated goods. The goods were then sold, and the money received was used to pay workers.

The workers not only earned wages but also acquired skills, learned trades and some for the first time became self-sufficient. Rev. Helms created the philosophy, —Not charity, but a chance for persons with disabilities and disadvantaging conditions. His vision expanded into a worldwide network of Goodwill Industries that still practice his philosophy today.

Goodwill Industries of Arkansas was started in Little Rock in 1927 by Charles E. Moyer, Mayor of Little Rock. The first donations included left over clothing donated by the Community Chest that had been collected for victims of the 1927 flood. Goodwill founder, Dr. Edgar J. Helms, inspected the Little Rock operation in 1928. His visit gave additional momentum to the local organization and enabled it to affiliate with the national office in April 1929.

Today, Goodwill continues to serve the people of Arkansas with a host of workforce services, retail stores and attended donation stations throughout the state. While Goodwill is no longer in the business of repairing donated items, it employs hundreds of people in the cycle of donations, processing, and resale of those goods, which is still the single largest revenue source for Goodwill. With this revenue Goodwill is providing people with hope, dignity, and independence by providing them with the means to earn a paycheck and support their families. Donate, Shop, Change a Life!

1.2 THE EXCEL CENTER HISTORY

The Excel Center model was developed by Goodwill Education Initiatives, the not-for-profit created by Goodwill of Central & Southern Indiana. The first Excel Center opened in 2010 with one site in Indianapolis. Since its humble beginnings, The Excel Center has experienced incredible success, with measurable impact in the community. The network currently serves more than 10,000 students across 51 campuses nationwide.

1.3 MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of The Excel Center is to provide adults the opportunity and support to earn a high school diploma and post-secondary education while developing career paths that offer greater employment and career growth opportunities.

The Excel Center meets students “where they are” in life and assists them in navigating academic and non-academic barriers to success. The Excel Center focuses on the student’s education and what comes after graduation. Relationships with life coaches and instructors, rigor in completing credits with our accelerated curriculum, facilitated coursework, and extended class periods, and relevance through hands-on work experiences set our students on a positive path for a successful future.

1.4 OUR VALUES – ICARE

It is important that you acquaint yourself with the core values of Goodwill and The Excel Center. They are summarized in the phrase I CARE.

Integrity – We operate in an open, truthful environment, and strive to meet the highest ethical standards.

Collaboration – We achieve and deliver our mission together to make our students succeed.

Attitude – We serve with humility and passion, and act for the good of the organization.

Respect – We treat all people with dignity and respect.

Explore – We explore continuous improvement, bold creativity, and change.

1.5 VISION

People in the communities we serve will have improved skills that provide long-term employment and a better standard of living. Thousands of individuals drop out of high school each year, impacting their career potential as employers seek workers with higher skills and specialization. As part of our commitment to enhance career potential and access to high-growth jobs for high school dropouts, The Excel Center provides effective ways to provide adult high school students accelerated learning, opportunities for post-secondary education, and individualized career planning.

II. NON-DISCRIMINATION

The Excel Center is committed to a policy prohibiting discriminatory practices in all aspects of its policies, programs, practices, and operations. All applicants and students shall be treated equally without regard to race, age, color, religion, gender or expression of gender identity, national origin, political affiliation,

disability, matriculation, personal appearance, sexual orientation, family responsibilities, familial status, veteran status, marital status, pregnancy, childbirth, genetic background, or any other legally protected characteristic.

The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding non-discrimination policies:

Keri Ledbetter, School Director-NWA
Phone: 501-398-1997

Sharlee Crowson, School Director-LR
Phone: 501-372-5100 ext 1149

III. YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES AS A STUDENT

3.1 CLASS SCHEDULE

Classes are held Monday through Thursday each week. On Fridays, students may schedule an appointment for tutoring or meetings with life coaches, instructors, or special services if they missed classes earlier in the week or need additional support. Students may attend part-time or full-time; however, they must commit to attend the same period or periods every day, Monday through Thursday.

The Excel Center utilizes the following class schedule:

Period 1	9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.
Period 2	10:35 a.m. – 12:05 p.m.
Lunch (not provided)	12:05 p.m. – 12:55 p.m.
Period 3	12:55 p.m. – 2:25 p.m.
Period 4	2:30 P.M. – 4:00 P.M.

3.2 ATTENDANCE POLICY AND WITHDRAWAL PROCEDURES

The Excel Center offers classes in eight-week terms, which makes daily on-time attendance very important. Missing even one day of classroom instruction is like missing an entire week in a traditional high school, making a student's path toward graduation longer. As such, The Excel Center has strict rules around attendance, to maximize student success in its accelerated program.

The Excel Center's primary objective is to propel adults toward their career goals by empowering them to earn high school diplomas and prepare for next steps toward college and career attainment. Further, the typical Excel Center student faces multiple challenges that may prevent an uninterrupted progression towards a diploma. (*i.e: some students need a break, leave of absence etc.).

Successful completion of the rigorous curriculum delivered at The Excel Center requires continued engagement of students. Therefore, this policy is established to set guidelines for attendance and when a student will be withdrawn from the school.

Definitions:

1. **Enrolled Student:** A student enrolled in an Excel Center's active database in the school's student information system upon meeting particular criteria described below.
2. **Withdrawn Student:** A student transferred from being enrolled in the active database within the school's student information system to inactive status, based on meeting particular criteria described below.
3. **Absence:** A student who did not attend any of his or her scheduled classes during a particular instructional day or misses more than 25% of their scheduled class time in a particular class during a particular instructional day. (25% = 23 minutes in a 90-minute class)
4. **Attend:** A student attends an in-person class by being physically present and attends an on-line class by logging in to the designated on-line student coursework tracking system.

*****Please note all enrolled students must be scheduled in the student information system and attendance must be taken in the student information system daily.*****

Criteria to be an Enrolled Student: All the following criteria must be met to be an Enrolled Student:

- Complete iExcel New Student Orientation
- Submit all necessary documentation
- Complete all required academic placement assessments
- Be scheduled in the school's student information system
- Be in good standing based on attendance and academic performance

Criteria to become a Withdrawn Student:

Only one of the following must be met for an Enrolled Student to become a Withdrawn Student:

- The student formally withdraws themselves by completing a Withdrawal Form
- The student states in writing to a school official that he or she does not plan to return, or that he or she needs a break from class. (This may include, but not be limited to illness, pregnancy, family issues, work, etc.)
- A student who attends in-person classes accrues eight days of absences in any term. Directors may use their discretion to waive the criteria based on a student's progress in assigned class.
- The student completes the registrar-defined Priority Withdrawal Requirements, including but not limited to transferring to another school, incarceration, moving out of state, death, hospitalization, etc.

Steps to Submit an Enrolled Student for Withdrawal:

If an Enrolled Student completes a Withdrawal Form:

The student's life coach completes an exit interview with the student

The student's life coach reviews Withdrawal Form with student and has student sign

The student's life coach enters case notes into the student information system

The student's life coach submits Withdrawal Form to Registrar's Office

The registrar uploads information from Withdrawal Form to student information system and formally withdraws the student

If an Enrolled Student communicates they are withdrawing, but is not able to complete a Withdrawal Form:

The student's life coach completes an exit interview

The student's life coach completes Withdrawal Form on student's behalf

The student's life coach enters case notes into the student information system

The student's life coach submits Withdrawal Form to Registrar's Office

The registrar uploads information from Withdrawal Form to student information system and formally withdraws the student

Absence Policy:

1st through 3rd absence of a term:

- The student's life coach contacts the student using any form of communication (phone call, text, email, social media, etc.)
- There should be a minimum of two documented contacts.

4th absence of a term:

- The student's life coach has three documented contacts.
- The student's life coach sends pending withdrawal communication after 5th absence

8th absence of a term:

- The student's life coach works with the teachers of courses where the student is at risk of being withdrawn to determine if withdrawal is necessary.
 - If withdrawal is necessary:
 - The student's life coach submits a withdrawal form on behalf of the student
 - Student is formally withdrawn by the registrar
 - If the student is not withdrawn, a plan must be in place, developed by the life coach and the teacher(s), to ensure the student is able to be successful despite excessive absences.

3.3 INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

In the event of inclement weather, The Excel Center will post any delayed openings or closures on The Excel Center Facebook page, through text, and Google Classroom. Any days missed for inclement weather will be made up during a Friday of the same term or the interim days of the term if at all possible.

3.4 LIFE SAFETY PROCEDURES

In case of emergency, Students should exercise caution and put their safety first.

If an emergency arises when Students are at the School, Students should follow these guidelines.

Fire Emergency

Students should be aware of potential fire hazards and proper handling procedures. Students should become familiar with the site's designated rally location and the site's fire extinguishers.

Students are not required to use fire extinguishers. Fire extinguishers should only be used if the student is properly trained and can safely use it without increasing the risk of harm to him/herself or other Students.

In case of fire, Students should calmly notify other Students and other occupants of the school and evacuate in a rapid but orderly fashion. Everyone should assemble at the designated meeting area of the facility for an immediate roll call to account for all Students and others who were in the school. No one shall be permitted to enter a damaged building until the School Director, or her/his designee, has given approval to re-enter. Students who have children in the drop-in center should not attempt to collect their children as the drop-in center has exit protocols designed to keep all children safe.

Earthquake

In the event of an earthquake and/or structural failure, there will be little (if any) warning or time to react; however, Students and others in the school should protect themselves by seeking shelter under the nearest table, desk or other rigid or solid structure. When tremors have stopped, everyone should immediately evacuate the building as described in the facility's evacuation maps posted throughout the building. Everyone should assemble at the designated meeting area of the facility for an immediate roll call to account for all students and others who were in the school. No one shall be permitted to enter a damaged building until the School Director or her/his designee has given approval to re-enter. Students who have children in the drop-in center should not attempt to collect their children as the drop-in center has exit protocols designed to keep all children safe.

Tornado

In the event of a tornado, Students will be instructed to proceed to the nearest shelter in place location where they will sit on the ground facing a wall. The School Director or her/his designee will notify Students when they can leave the shelter in place location and will provide instructions as to whether to remain in the school or to evacuate the school. Students who have children in the drop-in center should not attempt to collect their children as the drop-in center has exit protocols designed to keep all children safe.

Power Outage

In the event of a power outage, there may be sufficient daylight to begin/maintain some activities. The building will remain open for business until a decision to close is made by the School Director or her/his designee. Flashlights should be made available for use if needed. For power outages after the end of the school hours, the School Director or her/his designee will determine if the power outage is of significant duration and determine the best course of action for Students reporting the next school day.

Flood

In the event of heavy rains and/or an imminent flood of the School, the School Director or her/his designee will inform Students to evacuate and move to higher ground. Students who have children in the drop-in

center should not attempt to collect their children as the drop-in center has exit protocols designed to keep all children safe.

Bomb Threat

If a school receives a call threatening a bomb or other violence at the school, staff members will direct students, faculty and staff through safety protocols. The School Director, or designee, will notify proper authorities and initiate evaluation procedures as appropriate.

Suspicious Package

Students are not to handle suspicious packages and should immediately notify the nearest school staff of any suspicious packages.

Lockdown Procedure

In the event a lockdown is ordered, Students will be given instructions on how to proceed by School staff. Students must remain in the location they are instructed by School staff to be in until the lockdown has been terminated. Students should remain calm and quiet during a lockdown.

Emergencies during Non-Business Hours

If an emergency occurs when the school is closed, students should follow the same procedures as described in the School's Inclement Weather Policy. A complete Emergency Preparedness Plan is available in the Office Manager's office.

3.5 COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

The Excel Center will not discriminate against any student based on the individual having a communicable disease. Students shall not be denied access to the school solely on the grounds that they have a communicable disease, although The Excel Center reserves the right to exclude a person with a communicable disease from the school where medically necessary to do so.

The Excel Center's decisions involving persons who have communicable diseases shall be based on current and well-informed medical judgments concerning the disease, the risks of transmitting the illness to others, the symptoms and special circumstances of each individual who has a communicable disease, and a careful weighing of the identified risks and the available alternative for responding to a student with a communicable disease.

Students should not return to school until 24 hours after the end of a fever or vomiting.

3.6 —STUDENT DRESS AND GROOMING

The Excel Center recognizes that dress can be a matter of personal taste and preference. At the same time, the school has a responsibility to promote an environment conducive to student learning. This requires limitations to student dress and grooming that could be disruptive to the educational process because they are immodest, disruptive, unsanitary, and unsafe, could cause property damage, or are offensive to common standards of decency.

The following guidelines are to be used in determining appropriate dress and grooming in the school

environment:

- Dress and grooming are to be in keeping with health, safety, and sanitary practices.
- Shoes must be worn as required by law. Slippers and similar footwear are inappropriate for school and are not to be worn.
- Clothing and accessories are not to substantially disrupt the education process.
- Students are not to wear clothing, buttons, patches, jewelry or any other items with words, phrases, symbols, pictures or signs that are indecent, profane, suggestive, inflammatory or that have negative overtones that appear to be derogatory or discriminatory.
- Students are not to wear suggestive or revealing clothing that diverts attention from the learning process.
- Students are not to wear sunglasses, full face coverings, or anything that keeps them from being identified.
- Students are not to wear clothing, outerwear, pins, symbols or insignia of prohibited organizations or street gangs while at school or at any school-related activity.
- Students are prohibited from wearing the following while on the grounds of the school during the regular school day and at school sponsored activities and events:
 - No tank tops or underwear as outer garments;
 - No shorts or skirts more than four (4) inches above the knee;
 - No pajamas
 - No clothing with negative overtones that appear to be derogatory or discriminatory;
 - No clothing or accessories that are profane, suggestive or inflammatory;
 - No shirts or blouses tied at the midriff, clothing with bare midriff, or not properly fastened;
 - No clothing or accessories of prohibited organizations or street gangs:
 - No pants that fall/sag below the waistline;
 - No clothing that exposes underwear, buttocks or clothing worn as under garments.
 - Personal audio devices of any kind are strictly prohibited, including earbuds, headphones, AirPods, and similar listening devices, unless they are permitted by instructors.

It is suggested that students do not wear expensive jewelry or other expensive accessories to school. It is difficult to recover such items when they are lost. The Excel Center is not responsible for replacing lost or stolen property

3.7 CODE OF CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE POLICY

The Excel Center is a place where all students have the opportunity to learn within a safe environment. The intent of the Code of Conduct is to ensure students remain focused on growth and learning. The Code seeks to provide fair and reasonable rules and procedures to ensure students do not engage in conduct that in any way harms others or interferes with the education of other The Excel Center students. While the discipline policy seeks to ensure order, students enrolled in The Excel Center can expect to receive prevention and intervention support aimed at mitigating behavior-based disruptions while at school.

Student Behavior Expectations

A culture of respect is critical to the success of The Excel Center. Students must demonstrate respect through appropriate actions, words, tone, and body language. All expected behavior is focused on preparing students for success in life and careers. Unacceptable behavior includes any behavior that

harms another person or infringes on another student's right to learn. To ensure expectations are clear for all students, a list of conduct violations is listed below along with the possible consequences for each violation. This Code of Conduct applies to conduct on or adjacent to school property or that is directed to students or staff of the school. After enrolling in The Excel Center, students are provided a copy of this policy and given an outline of ways each infraction can be prevented, along with expectations around intervention.

Level 1 Conduct Violations

- Displaying any behavior that is disruptive to the orderly process of classroom instruction or otherwise not appropriate in a professional business environment
- Loitering, including on the sidewalks adjacent to the building and the common areas in the building
- Cursing
- Smoking, vaping, or the use of tobacco anywhere other than the designated smoking area
- Littering trash and/or cigarette butts anywhere inside the building, on the sidewalks adjacent to the building, or in the common areas in the building
- Excessive noise inside the building, on the sidewalks adjacent to the building, parking lot, or in the common areas in the building
- Tardiness to school or class
- Issues with leaving the classroom during instructional time
- Answering cell phone calls in class
- Dress and grooming violations (see 3.6)
- Emitting the odor of alcohol or illegal drugs

Level 1 Conduct Violations may result in the following: Coaching/restatement of expectations from the staff member observing the behavior

Level 2 Conduct Violations

- Multiple documented Level 1 conduct violations
- Disrespectful words, actions, or gestures toward other students or staff
- Insubordination or repeated refusal to follow instructions given by a staff member or arguing with a staff member
- Gambling
- Inappropriate use of technology
- Engaging in behavior that demonstrates gang/neighborhood crew affiliation (displaying clothing or gestures associated with gangs)
- Committing academic dishonesty/plagiarism

Level 2 Conduct Violations may result in the following: Verbal reprimand, written reprimand, or short suspension of 1 to 4 days.

Level 3 Conduct Violations

- Using, possessing, being under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- Sexual harassment
- Making threats against others
- Fighting or committing assaults
- Engaging in group fighting or in any gang related activity, including intimidating or threatening violence

- Committing false alarms
- Stealing or attempting to steal from the school or any person
- Sexual activity in the building
- Destroying classroom, school, building or personal property
- Threats, bullying, and intimidation will not be tolerated at school or in connection with students, families, and staff of The Excel Center. Students may be subject to expulsion for verified acts which threaten, bully or intimidate others.

Level 3 Conduct Violations may result in the following: Short suspensions of 1 to 4 days and, based on the severity of the conduct and whether the conduct is part of a pattern, possible recommendation for expulsion.

Level 4 Conduct Violations

- Theft or robbery as defined in local and state code
- Commission of an act, which, if committed by an adult, would be first- or second-degree assault as defined in local and state code
- The sale or distribution of a drug or controlled substance as defined in local or state code
- Possession or use of any weapon
- Three or more Level 3 violations

Level 4 Conduct Violations may result in the following: Expulsion may be recommended for all these conduct violations listed above and will be mandatory for: bringing, using, or possessing a weapon. Expulsion from school for a period of not less than one year shall be mandated for a student who is determined to have brought a firearm to school. Violations involving weapons or the distribution or sale of drugs and alcohol will lead to local law enforcement involvement.

Any conduct illegal under the laws of Arkansas that is not otherwise covered in the Conduct Violations listed above will result in a discipline intervention commensurate with the seriousness of the illegal conduct.

Discipline Review Process

Should a student be responsible for any conduct violation, the incident will be reported to a designated school official. An assigned staff member will investigate as appropriate, which may include meeting with the student and speaking with any other relevant parties, and then as warranted engage in a variety of interventions that are commensurate with the conduct violation. The following is a description of each discipline intervention.

Coaching / Restatement of Expectations

Coaching by a teacher, life coach, or staff member is the initial step to mentor or modify conduct. The staff member will discuss the behavioral concern or conduct violation, affirm expectations regarding conduct, and communicate consequences for no improvement. Coaching will be documented in the student's file. Immediate resolution of the problem or issue is expected, and coaches will follow up with the student to ensure consistent success.

Verbal Reprimand	Same as Coaching above. In addition, a note will be in the student's file documenting the verbal reprimand and the specific steps toward resolution. Immediate resolution of the problem or issue is expected.
Written Reprimand	At this time, a coach will consult the School Director. The conduct violation and expectations will be communicated in written communication to the student. Tools such as attendance improvement plans, behavior improvement plans, and performance improvement plans may be used at this stage with students. A student may be expected to attend a course such as anger management, conflict resolution, peer mediation or stress reduction; participate in group or individual counseling, or attend other programs intended to redirect the student's perceptions and behavior. All copies of the signed written reprimand and any relevant plans will be shared with the student and appropriate staff. Immediate resolution of the problem or issue is expected.
Short Suspension (1-4 days)	The Life Coach will investigate the conduct violation and consult with the School Director. The Life Coach and School Director will meet with the student to give the student notice of the charge and the information the school has to believe the student engaged in the conduct. The student will be given an opportunity present his/her side of the story and/or an explanation for his/her behavior. If, after hearing the student's statement, it is determined that a suspension is warranted, the student will be told the timeframe for the suspension. A letter including the length and reason for the suspension will be given to the student. All students receiving suspension will be afforded the opportunity to appeal (see process in next section). Immediate resolution of the problem or issue is expected upon a student's return.
Expulsion	Expulsion may be necessary when any of the above interventions are not successful in improving conduct or if a student commits a level 4 conduct violation. The coach should investigate the matter promptly (ordinarily within 3 days) and review the performance history and record of progressive discipline with the Director. All students receiving expulsion will be afforded the opportunity to appeal (see the process in next section). When a staff member makes a recommendation for expulsion of a student, the School Director or designee may suspend the student until the conclusion of the investigation following the procedure for short term suspensions outlined above. This may occur if the School Director or designee believes that the students must be suspended immediately to prevent or substantially reduce the risk of: ▪ Interference with an educational function or school purposes

or

- A physical injury to themselves, other students, school employees, or visitors to the school

Discipline Appeal Process

Students shall have 2 business days after being notified of a suspension or expulsion to contact the School Director to request a meeting to appeal a suspension or expulsion. The staff hearing the appeal shall be someone who is above, in the supervisory chain of the school, the person who made the suspension or expulsion decision. During the meeting, the student shall have the right to review the summary of the conduct violations and present their case.

Discipline Process for Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities that demonstrate level 1, 2, and 3 conduct violations will immediately be referred to a Special Services Coordinator, where interventions plans will be developed, and implemented. Students with conduct violations that could be direct results of their disabilities will be required to attend a mandatory intervention meeting with their instructors, Life Coach, and Special Services Coordinator. In instances where students are aged 21 and under, The Excel Center will not need to continue to implement an IEP (which does not serve students aged 22 and over) goals for students who are expelled and will not need to contract services for students who are expelled.

For students under age 22 who have IEPs, the following procedures will be used:

1. If it is determined by the Special Services Coordinator, and the student's Life Coach that a student with a documented disability has violated the code of conduct, that student may be removed from his or her current placement to an appropriate interim alternative educational setting (IAES), inside the school, or suspension, for not more than 5 consecutive school days to the extent those alternatives are applied to students without disabilities.
2. A student with a documented disability who violates the code of conduct may be removed from his or her current placement to an appropriate interim alternative educational placement within the school or suspended for not more than 10 school days in that same school year for separate incidents of misconduct as long as those removals do not constitute a CHANGE OF PLACEMENT outside of the school.

If removals do constitute a Change of Placement, a Manifestation Determination shall be made by the IEP team within 10 school days of the removal. A removal of a student with a disability from his or her educational placement is a Change of Placement if:

1. The removal is for more than ten (10) school days in a row; or
2. The student with a disability has been subjected to a series of removals that constitute a pattern because:

- a. The series of removals total more than ten (10) school days in a school year;
- b. The student's behavior is substantially similar to previous incidents that resulted in the series of removals; and
- c. Of such additional factors as the length of each removal, the total amount of time the student has been removed, and the proximity of the removals to one another.

Whether a pattern of removals constitutes a Change of Placement is determined on a case-by-case basis by The Excel Center and, if challenged, is subject to review through due process and judicial proceedings.

School personnel may apply the relevant disciplinary procedures to students with disabilities in the same manner and for the same duration as the procedures that would be applied to students without disabilities, if:

- In the MANIFESTATION DETERMINATION review, the behavior that gave rise to the violation of the code of conduct is determined not to be a manifestation of the student's disability;
- SERVICES DURING PERIODS OF REMOVAL are provided to the student; and
 - Notification of a CHANGE OF PLACEMENT is given to the student.

School personnel must provide the student removed to a disciplinary alternative education program with written notice of the school's obligation to provide the student with an opportunity to complete coursework required for graduation that: Includes information regarding all methods available for completing the coursework; and states that the methods available for completing the coursework are available at no cost to the student. School personnel may remove the student to an IAES without regard to whether the behavior is determined to be a manifestation of the student's disability, if: there are SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES; and the removal is for not more than 45 school days.

3.8 BULLYING PREVENTION POLICY

The Excel Center is a place for all students to have the opportunity to learn within a safe environment. A key responsibility of The Excel Center is to provide services in a respectful and positive environment. Acts of bullying, harassment and intimidation are an attack on core values of The Excel Center. Thus, to facilitate our mission, The Excel Center has established this comprehensive bullying prevention policy. This policy protects the dignity and safety of The Excel Center community. The Excel Center staff will promptly report and investigate all incidents of bullying and provide appropriate consequences to those who engage in bullying.

Code of Conduct

As is discussed more fully in The Excel Center's Code of Conduct and Discipline Policy, a culture of respect is critical to the success of The Excel Center. Students must demonstrate respect through appropriate actions, words, tone, and body language. All expected behavior is focused on preparing students for success in life and careers. Unacceptable behavior includes any behavior that harms another person or infringes on another student's right to learn.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying means any severe, pervasive, or persistent act or conduct whether physical, electronic, or verbal that:

1. May be based on a student's actual or perceived race, color, ethnicity, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, intellectual ability, familial status, family responsibilities, matriculation, political affiliation, genetic information, disability, source of income, status as a victim of an intra-family offense, place of residence or business, or any other distinguishing characteristic, or on a student's association with a person, or group with any person, with one or more of the actual or perceived foregoing characteristics; and can reasonably be predicted to:
2. Place the student in reasonable fear of physical harm to their person or property;
3. Cause a substantial detrimental effect on the student's physical or mental health;
4. Substantially interfere with the student's academic performance or attendance; or
5. Substantially interfere with the student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by The Excel Center.

Prohibition against Bullying and Retaliation

Acts of bullying, including cyberbullying, whether by a student, volunteers or staff, are prohibited:

1. On The Excel Center grounds and immediately adjacent property,
2. At The Excel Center-sponsored or related events on and off The Excel Center grounds,
3. On transportation provided or sponsored by The Excel Center,
4. Through the use of any electronic devices owned by The Excel Center, or
5. Through the use of any electronic devices not owned by The Excel Center if the acts of bullying or cyberbullying create a hostile environment at The Excel Center for the victim or witnesses, infringe on their rights at The Excel Center, or materially and substantially disrupt the orderly operation of The Excel Center.

Retaliation against a student, volunteer or staff member who reports bullying, provides information about an act of bullying, or witnesses an act of bullying is also prohibited.

Reporting Incidents of Bullying or Retaliation

The Excel Center expects all staff members and volunteers to report incidents of bullying or retaliation they witness or of which they are made aware. Staff members should immediately report all such incidents to the Lead Life Coach.

Students are encouraged by The Excel Center to report any incidents of bullying or retaliation that they witness or of which they become aware. Reports of bullying or retaliation may be made to:

Keri Ledbetter, School Director
The Excel Center- Northwest Arkansas campus
Goodwill Industries of Arkansas, Inc.
kledbetter@excelcenterar.org
Phone: 5013981997

Sharlee Crowson, School Director The
Excel Center – Little Rock campus
Goodwill Industries of Arkansas, Inc.
scrowson@excelcenterar.org Phone:
501-372-5100 ext 1149

Reports of bullying or retaliation made by students may be anonymous, but disciplinary action cannot be taken by The Excel Center solely on the basis of an anonymous report, though such a report may trigger an investigation that will provide actionable information.

A student, volunteer or employee who promptly and in good faith reports an incident of, or information about, bullying in compliance with this policy shall be immune, in accordance with state law, from a cause of action for damages arising from the making of such report.

Investigating Incidents of Bullying

The Director is responsible for investigating reports of bullying. An investigation of an incident will be initiated promptly after the Director receives a report of bullying and will ordinarily conclude no later than 30 days after the receipt of such a report. As part of the investigation the Director may interview involved or relevant parties including alleged victims, bullies, witnesses, and staff members.

The Director will provide confidentiality as far as possible to relevant parties as part of the investigation, and inform all relevant parties that retaliation for reporting acts of bullying is prohibited.

The Director is charged with making determinations as to whether a reported incident constitutes a case of bullying. These determinations will be made in consideration of the totality of the facts and the circumstances surrounding the incident.

Sanctions

The Excel Center recognizes that for sanctions to be an effective component of a bullying prevention plan, they must be applied consistently, fairly, and equitably. To this end, The Excel Center shall ensure that staff follow these guidelines as closely as possible, while allowing for flexibility to adapt sanctions to individual contexts. Furthermore, to ensure equitability in applying sanctions, measures will be applied on a graduated basis determined by the nature of the offense, the disciplinary history of the student involved, and the age and developmental status of the student involved. Responses to incidents of bullying or retaliation will be consistent with The Excel Center's Code of Conduct and Discipline Policy and may include:

- Coaching/Restatement of Expectations
- Verbal Reprimand
- Written Reprimand
- Short Suspension
- Expulsion

Appeals

Parties dissatisfied by the outcome of a bullying investigation may appeal the determination of the School Director to the VP of Education and Training. This appeal should be submitted no later than 30 days after the initial determination. Upon receipt of an appeal, the VP of Education and Training must conduct a

secondary investigation within 30 days of the receipt of an appeal. This 30 days may be extended by up to an additional 15 days if the VP of Education and Training sets forth in writing the reasons why more time is needed to conduct an investigation. Additionally, upon the receipt of an appeal, the VP of Education and Training must inform the party making the submission of their ability to seek additional redress under applicable state laws.

Plan for Publicizing this Policy

This Policy will be a part of The Excel Center Student Handbook that is provided to all students each year. The Excel Center will establish a culture of respect and safety. As part of this commitment, The Excel Center will incorporate bullying prevention messages and efforts in various aspects of its operations that serve students.

Staff Training

Information on this policy shall be incorporated into the training of all new staff. Refresher training on this policy shall be provided to staff as determined by the School Director.

3.9 STUDENT MASTERY LEVEL

With the eight-week accelerated learning model of The Excel Center, it is imperative that students obtain the mastery of skills taught during each course to be successful in subsequent courses. Many courses build upon skills learned in lower-level courses. Students will be provided support through Life Coaches, tutoring, special services, and one-on-one meetings with instructors to successfully reach this benchmark.

Grading Scale

For purposes of grade reporting on transcripts, the following grading scale will be used.

A	90 – 100
B	89 – 80
C	79 – 70
D	69 – 60
F	59 and below

PART IV. YOUR RIGHTS AS A STUDENT

4.1 GENERAL GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES PERTAINING TO PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

It is the policy of The Excel Center that all employees, students, and visitors have the right to voice their complaints or grievances about matters pertaining to its programs and activities. Accordingly, the following grievance procedure should be employed to ensure that complaints receive full consideration.

What May Be Grieved

The Excel Center general grievance process should be used as follows: (1) to deal with complaints and concerns pertaining to the educational environment or interpersonal conflicts; and (2) to resolve complaints of discrimination and harassment based upon race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, religion, marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, familial status, family responsibilities, political affiliation, source of income, or otherwise.

Complaints of discrimination and harassment based upon sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression will be addressed according to the Title IX Sexual Harassment Policy as described in part 4.2 of this handbook.

Who May Grieve?

The procedures set forth below may be used by a grievant who is a student.

Other Remedies

The existence of this procedure does not bar a grievant from also filing claims in other forums to the extent permitted by state or federal law.

Informal Grievance

Because many difficulties can be resolved by communicating a concern to someone, a grievant is encouraged to discuss their concern or harassment complaint promptly and candidly with their Life Coach, Instructor, the School Director, or the Goodwill Vice President of Education and Training.

The grievant is not required to discuss his or her complaint with the alleged harasser or perpetrator in any manner or for any reason prior to initiating a formal grievance.

Formal Grievance

Within ninety (90) days of the harassment, discrimination, or complaint that is the subject of the grievance, a grievant shall file a written notice with the School Director or with the Goodwill Vice President of Education and Training. The written notice shall identify the nature of the complaint, the date(s) of occurrence, and the desired result, and shall be signed and dated by the person filing the grievance. The School Director and the Goodwill Vice President of Workforce Development can be reached at the contact information provided below.

Keri Ledbetter, School Director
The Excel Center- Northwest Arkansas campus
Goodwill Industries of Arkansas, Inc.
kledbetter@excelcenterar.org
Phone: 501-398-1997

Sharlee Crowson, School Director
The Excel Center – Little Rock campus
Goodwill Industries of Arkansas, Inc.
scrowson@excelcenterar.org
Phone: 501-372-5100 ext 1149

The School Director or Vice President of Education and Training will immediately initiate an adequate and impartial investigation of the grievance. Each formal complaint will be investigated and will be decided after receiving information from the appropriate individuals. Investigations may include interviewing witnesses, obtaining documents, and allowing parties to present evidence.

All documentation related to the investigation and discussions held in this process are considered EXTREMELY CONFIDENTIAL and should not be revealed to or discussed by any participant with those not directly involved with the complaint, with its investigation, or with the decision-making process. This provision does not include discussions with government authorities.

Within thirty (30) business days of receiving the written notice, the School Director or Vice President of Education and Training shall respond in writing to the grievant (the "Response"). The Response shall summarize the investigation, state whether the grievance has been found to have merit and, if so, state the appropriate resolution.

If, as a result of the investigation, harassment, or a valid grievance is established, appropriate corrective and remedial action shall be taken.

APPEALS

If the grievant is not satisfied with the Response, the grievant may appeal in writing to the President/CEO within ten (10) business days of the date of the Response. The written appeal must contain all written documentation from the initial grievance and the reasons for not accepting the response.

Within twenty-one (21) business days after receiving the written appeal, the President/CEO will respond in writing to the appellant stating whether the appeal has been found to have merit and, if so, state the appropriate action to be taken.

The President/CEO can be reached at:
Brian Marsh
bmarsh@goodwillar.org
Phone: 501-372-5100

PROHIBITION AGAINST RETALIATION

The Excel Center prohibits retaliation against any person who files a complaint in accordance with this policy, or any person who participates in proceedings related to this policy.

In addition, The Excel Center prohibits any form of retaliation against any person who makes a good faith report or complaint about perceived acts of harassment, discrimination, or concern, or who cooperates in an investigation of harassment, discrimination, or a concern. Any person who is found to be engaging in any kind of retaliation will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

MODIFICATION

The Excel Center may approve modification of the foregoing procedures in a particular case if the modification (a) is for good cause, and (b) does not violate due process rights or policies of the school board or applicable state laws and regulations.

Grievant also have the right to file a complaint with the Office for Civil Rights by: (1) mailing the complaint to Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, 1999 Bryan Street, Suite 1620, Dallas Texas 75201-6810; (2) faxing it to (214) 661-9587; or (3) filing it electronically at: www.ed.gov/ocr/complaintprocess.html. For more information, you can contact the Office of Civil Rights for Arkansas at (214) 661-9600 (voice), or ocr.dallas@ed.gov.

4.2 TITLE IX SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY INTRODUCTION

Title IX provides: “No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.”

This policy addresses sexual harassment by or against all individuals who participate in the school’s activities, including students, employees and third parties. Finally, the policy applies to all complaints against the school students or employees who are alleged to have committed Sexual Harassment (as defined herein) in the provision of the school’s education programs and activities.

Any school employee who has knowledge of sexual harassment is required to immediately report any allegations of Sexual Harassment to the Title IX Coordinator.

No one may retaliate against any individual for filing a reasonable complaint alleging Sexual Harassment, for assisting in a complaint investigation, or for refusing to assist in a complaint investigation. Any member of the school community who attempts to interfere with, restrain, coerce, discriminate against, or harass, whether overtly or covertly, any individual pursuing a complaint of Sexual Harassment or assisting in a complaint investigation will be subject to prompt and appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal of employment or suspension from the school. Any retaliatory conduct should be reported immediately to the Title IX Coordinator.

The school has a Title IX Coordinator who oversees the school’s compliance with Title IX requirements. The Title IX Coordinator is an available resource to advise any individual, including a Complainant or Respondent, about the courses of action available, both informally and formally. Contact the Title IX Coordinator at:

Keri Ledbetter, School Director
The Excel Center- Northwest Arkansas campus
Goodwill Industries of Arkansas, Inc.
kledbetter@excelcenterar.org
Phone: 501-398-1997

Sharlee Crowson, School Director
The Excel Center – Little Rock campus
Goodwill Industries of Arkansas, Inc.
scrowson@excelcenterar.org
Phone: 501-372-5100 ext. 1149

DEFINITIONS

“Complainant” is the individual who is alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute Sexual Harassment.

“Consent” means freely agreeing to engage in sexual activity. A person is not capable of giving consent in many circumstances, including, but not limited to, when the person is:

1. Asleep or unconscious.
2. Physically helpless.
3. under the influence of drugs or alcohol; or
4. Unable to give consent due to an intellectual or other disability. Past consent to sexual activity does not imply future consent. Consent can be withdrawn at any time.

“Formal Complaint” is a document filed by a Complainant or signed by the Title IX Coordinator alleging Sexual Harassment against a Respondent and requesting that the school investigate the allegation of Sexual Harassment. At the time of filing a Formal Complaint, a Complainant must be participating in or attempting to participate in an education program or activity at the school. “Respondent” is an individual who has been reported to be the perpetrator of conduct that could constitute Sexual Harassment.

“Sexual Harassment” includes conduct on the basis of sex that satisfies one or more of the following categories:

1. Quid Pro Quo Sexual Harassment occurs when an employee conditions educational benefits on participation in unwelcome sexual conduct.
2. Hostile Environment involves unwelcome conduct that a reasonable person would determine to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to the school’s education programs or activities.
3. Sexual Assault includes:
 - (a) any sexual act directed against another person, forcibly and/or against that person’s will;
 - (b) any sexual act directed against another person where the person is incapable of giving consent;
 - (c) Incest; or
 - (d) statutory rape

4. Dating Violence is violence committed by a person who is or has been in a social or romantic relationship with the victim. The existence of such a relationship is determined based on:
 - (a) the length of the relationship;
 - (b) the type of relationship; and
 - (c) the frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship.
5. Domestic Violence includes felony or misdemeanor crimes of violence committed by a current or former spouse or intimate partner of the victim, by a person with whom the victim shares a child in common, by a person who is cohabitating with or has cohabitated with the victim as a spouse or intimate partner, by a person similarly situated to a spouse of the victim under the domestic or family violence laws of Arkansas, or by any other person against an adult or youth victim who is protected from that person's acts under the domestic or family violence laws of Arkansas.
6. Stalking is engaging in a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to either:
 - (a) Fear for the person's safety or the safety of others; or (b) suffer substantial emotional distress.

REPORTING A CLAIM

Title IX Coordinator Response

Upon receipt of notification of a potential violation, the Title IX Coordinator will promptly and confidentially contact the Complainant to discuss the availability of Supportive Measures (as described below) and the Complainant's wishes with respect to Supportive Measures. The Title IX Coordinator will notify the Complainant that Supportive Measures are available whether or not the Complainant elects to file a Formal Complaint. The Title IX Coordinator will also explain the process of filing a Formal Complaint to the Complainant, and that a Formal Complaint can be filed at any time. If a Complainant does not wish to file a Formal Complaint, the school will generally respect those wishes and no further investigation will occur. However, if the Title IX Coordinator makes a reasonable determination that, under the known circumstances, an investigation is necessary even in the absence of the Complainant's filing of a Formal Complaint, the Title IX Coordinator may submit a signed Formal Complaint to initiate the investigation.

Supportive Measures

Supportive Measures are intended to restore or preserve access to the school's education program and activities in a manner that does not provide an unreasonable burden to any party. Supportive Measures may include counseling, deadline extensions, leaves of absence, mutual restrictions on contact between individuals, and academic and work accommodations. The provision of Supportive Measures will be kept confidential to the extent that maintaining confidentiality does not impact the school's ability to provide them. Supportive Measures will be non-disciplinary, non-punitive, individualized, and narrowly tailored. No fee will be charged to any party for the provision of the Supportive Measures. Upon notification of a potential report, the Title IX Coordinator will work with all parties involved to implement appropriate Supportive Measures or accommodations that are reasonably available to protect the safety and well-being of the Complainant and the Respondent.

Process of Filing a Report [Reporting Process]

Students, faculty, and staff who become aware of or are the victims of Sexual Harassment should notify the Title IX Coordinator in person, by mail, by phone, by email, or by any other means that results in the Title IX Coordinator receiving the person's verbal or written report. The person reporting does not need to be the alleged victim of the conduct that could constitute Sexual Harassment. The report may be made at any time, including non-business hours, by using the telephone number, mailing address, or electronic mailing address of the Title IX Coordinator.

Filing of Formal Complaint

If a Formal Complaint is filed by the Complainant or Title IX Coordinator, the school will conduct an investigation as set out below. However, if the allegations in a Formal Complaint do not meet the definition of Sexual Harassment or did not occur in the school's education program or activities, the Title IX Coordinator may dismiss the Formal Complaint.

The school will maintain the confidentiality of the Complainant, Respondent, and witnesses except as permitted by the Federal Educational Rights Privacy Act ("FERPA"), as required by law, or as necessary to conduct the investigation of the allegations raised by the Formal Complaint.

Mandatory Dismissal of Formal Complaint

If at any point prior to entry of a final determination on the Formal Complaint, the school determines that the conduct alleged in the Formal Complaint, if assumed true:

1. Does not constitute Sexual Harassment;
2. Did not occur in the school's education program or activity; or
3. Did not occur against a person in the United States, then the school must dismiss the complaint for purposes of this Title IX procedure.

Optional Dismissal of Formal Complaint

The school may dismiss a Formal Complaint prior to final determination in its discretion if:

1. The Complainant would like to withdraw the Formal Complaint;
2. The Respondent is no longer enrolled or employed by the school; or
3. Specific circumstances prevent the school from gathering evidence sufficient to make a final determination.

If the Respondent is an employee, the school may impose paid administrative leave on the Respondent if the Title IX Coordinator determines there is an immediate threat to the health or safety of the school's students, faculty or staff.

Protection Order

The school will work to implement orders of protection issued by courts as those orders impact education programs and activities on the school property. If any member of the school community obtains an order

of protection or restraining order, that individual should promptly provide the Title IX Coordinator with a copy of that order so that the school can implement it as it relates to the school property, education programs, and activities.

INVESTIGATION OF A FORMAL COMPLAINT

Notice of Investigation

Upon receipt of a Formal Complaint, the Title IX Coordinator will provide the Complainant and Respondent with a written copy of this Title IX Policy. The Title IX Coordinator will also, in writing, fully disclose to both the Complainant and Respondent:

1. The allegations of wrongdoing, including, if known, the specific school policies that were violated, the conduct allegedly constituting Sexual Harassment, and the date and the location of the alleged incident(s);
2. The rights and responsibilities of all parties, including the fact that Respondent shall be presumed not responsible at the commencement of the investigation and that the ultimate determination will be made at the conclusion of the grievance process;
3. That each party has the right to request and inspect the evidence;
4. The formal and informal resolution process;
5. The prohibition against retaliation;
6. The need to preserve any relevant evidence or documentation in the case for use in other proceedings, including criminal matters, civil proceedings, and protection order proceedings;
7. The availability of supportive measures and accommodations;
8. The need to prove the allegations by a preponderance of the evidence; and
9. Possible remedies and outcomes.

The notice will also inform all parties that they may request to inspect and review evidence, and that knowingly making false statements or submitting false information during the process is prohibited. This notice will be provided to the Complainant and the Respondent with sufficient time for each to prepare a response before any initial interview.

Overview of the Investigation

The Title IX Coordinator will appoint one or more trained investigators to conduct a prompt, impartial, and fair investigation of the Formal Complaint. The investigator may be a school employee or an external investigator engaged to assist the school in conducting an investigation. The investigation begins with the presumption that the Respondent is not responsible for the alleged conduct, and that presumption remains until a final determination is made regarding the formal complaint. All parties involved, including witnesses, will be treated with respect and with sensitivity.

The investigation will be completed within 30 days following of the filing of the Formal Complaint unless the Title IX Coordinator determines that good cause exists to extend this time period. Good cause includes, but is not limited to, concurrent law enforcement activity, school closure for holidays and breaks, and witness availability. The Title IX Coordinator will notify the parties in writing if good cause is found to extend the deadlines. The Title IX Coordinator will provide the parties with periodic updates regarding the status of the process and will provide notice to the Complainant and Respondent of any additional allegations of Title IX violations discovered in the course of the investigation.

During the investigation, the investigator will:

1. Be objective, and will consider all relevant evidence, both inculpatory and exculpatory. The investigator will not make credibility determinations based on a person's status as Complainant, Respondent, or witness;
2. Treat all parties involved, including witnesses, with respect and sensitivity;
3. Allow both the Complainant and Respondent the opportunity to discuss the allegations and to gather evidence in support of the claim or defense;
4. Interview both the Complainant and Respondent, as well as any witnesses. The Title IX Coordinator or the investigator will notify the Complainant and Respondent (and their advisors, if any "Advisor(s)") of the date, time, place, and purpose of all interviews, or other meetings to which the Complaint or Respondent is expected to attend with sufficient time for the party to prepare to participate;
5. Allow the Advisor for the Complainant and the Advisor for the Respondent to attend any interviews or other meetings in which the investigator requests the presence of the party. However, the Advisor will attend these interviews or meetings in an advisory capacity only and the investigator may limit the Advisor's participation in the meetings or interviews as long as the investigator does so equally for both the Advisor to the Complainant and the Advisor to the Respondent;

6. Give both the Complainant and Respondent full opportunity to present evidence and Witnesses (both factual and expert) in support of or in opposition to the allegations contained in the Formal Complaint; and
7. Ensure that all interviews are properly documented and that the investigation is conducted in a thorough, objective manner that is considerate of all parties involved.

Review of the Evidence

Within 20 days of the beginning of the investigation, the Title IX Coordinator will give both the Complainant and Respondent equal opportunity to review and inspect any evidence gathered during the investigation that is directly related to the allegations raised in the Formal Complaint, including inculpatory and exculpatory evidence as well as evidence that the school does not intend to rely on during the decision process. Each party will then have 10 days to submit a written response to the investigator. If a party needs additional time to respond, the party should make that request in writing to the Title IX Coordinator who may, in the Title IX Coordinator's discretion, grant an extension. If an extension is granted to one party, it shall also be granted to the other party. The investigator will consider the written response from each party prior to finalizing the investigation.

Investigator's Report

Upon conclusion of the investigation, within 10 days the investigator will provide the Title IX Coordinator with a report that fairly summarizes and analyzes the relevant facts and any supporting documentation (which may include statements by the parties, third-party witnesses, or others with information and any physical, written, or electronic or other evidence). The Title IX Coordinator shall provide a copy to both the Complainant and the Respondent and either party may provide a written response within 10 days.

Informal Process

Except in cases involving allegations that a school employee has sexually harassed a student, at any time prior to the final determination of responsibility, the Complainant and Respondent may agree to utilize an informal resolution process such as mediation to resolve the Formal Complaint. If either the Complainant or Respondent is unwilling to participate, no informal process can occur. Prior to implementing an informal process, in addition to the information noted above, the Title IX Coordinator will provide the parties a written notice of the terms of the proposed informal resolution process, and any consequences resulting from an informal resolution, including the records maintained. The Title IX Coordinator will obtain the parties' voluntary, written consent to informal resolution.

The parties to the informal process will not be required to deal directly with one another unless both parties agree. Instead, either the Title IX Coordinator or a neutral third party appointed by the Title IX Coordinator will act as a facilitator who will share the results of the investigation with the parties, meet with the parties either jointly or separately, and make recommendations for resolution of the Formal Complaint. The Complainant and the Respondent may each have an Advisor present at all meetings in

which they participate. The facilitator does not have the authority to impose a resolution on the parties but will attempt to reach a satisfactory resolution of the Formal Complaint.

Steps taken by the facilitator to help the parties achieve informal resolution, and the results of the informal resolution process will be documented and provided to the Title IX Coordinator. The Title IX Coordinator will contact the Complainant and Respondent to determine whether the informal

Resolution has adequately resolved the Formal Complaint. Any party may request that the informal resolution process stop at any time.

Decision

Within 10 days of receiving the investigator's report from the Title IX Coordinator, the Superintendent will make a final written determination explaining for each allegation whether the Respondent is responsible or not responsible by a preponderance of the evidence, including the facts and evidence upon which the conclusion is based. Credibility determinations are for the Superintendent to make. The Superintendent's written report will include the following:

1. Identification of the section(s) of the school policies alleged to have been violated by the Respondent;
2. A description of the procedural steps taken from the receipt of the Formal Complaint through the determination, including any notifications to the parties, interviews with parties and witnesses, site visits, and methods used to gather other evidence;
3. Findings of fact supporting the determination;
4. Conclusions regarding the application of the facts to the policy language;
5. A statement of rationale for each allegation, including a determination regarding responsibility, sanctions, if any, on Respondent, and any remedies to be provided by the school to the Complainant designed to restore or preserve access to the Complainant's education program or activity; and
6. The school's procedures and grounds for appeal. The Superintendent should also inform the parties that the decision is not final until any appeal process is exhausted.

An appeal may be made to the President/CEO after the dismissal of the complaint before the decision process or at the end of the decision process. If the complainant is not satisfied with the decision, the complainant may appeal in writing to the President/CEO within ten (10) business days of the date of the decision. The written appeal must contain all written documentation from the initial grievance and the complainant's reasons for not accepting the decision.

Within twenty-one (21) business days after receiving the written appeal, the President/CEO will respond in writing to the appellant stating whether the appeal has been found to have merit and, if so, state the appropriate action to be taken.

The President/CEO can be reached
at: Brian Marsh
bmarsh@GoodwillAR.org
Phone: 501-372-5100

Grounds for appeal may be based on the following:

- 1) A procedural irregularity affected the outcome of the matter;
- 2) New evidence has been discovered that was not reasonably available at the time of the determination on responsibility or dismissal;
- 3) A conflict of interest on the part of the Title IX Coordinator, an investigator who compiled evidence, or a decision-maker, and the conflict of interest affected the outcome; and
- 4) When the result of the process is a suspension or expulsion of a student or in the event of a suspension or termination of an employee

RECORDS & RIGHTS

Record Retention

The Title IX Coordinator will maintain, for a period of seven years, records of any actions, including any Supportive Measures, taken in response to a report of alleged Sexual Harassment or a Formal Complaint. With respect to allegations that do not result in the filing of a Formal Complaint, the school will retain records of any actions, including Supportive Measures, taken in response to those allegations. Additionally, for Formal Complaints, the school will maintain, for a period of seven years, all records of:

1. The investigation, including determination, sanction, and remedies;
2. Any appeal and the results of that appeal;
3. The results of informal resolution attempts, if any; and
4. All materials used to train investigators, coordinators, and adjudicators with regard to Sexual Harassment. Upon request of either the Complainant or Respondent involved in the Formal Complaint, the school will make the records concerning that Formal Complaint available to one or both parties.

Other Reporting Options

Members of the school community who believe they have been subject to Sexual Harassment

are encouraged to use this policy. In addition, individuals also have the right to file a complaint with outside enforcement agencies, including the United States Department of Education Office of Civil Rights (OCR), the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), the Arkansas Department of Labor, and state or local law enforcement authorities. Whether or not an individual chooses to contact law enforcement and initiate criminal charges, the individual retains the right to file a Formal Complaint. Individuals may also file a civil lawsuit against the offending party. If criminal or civil proceedings are commenced, the school reserves the right to conduct its investigation and take disciplinary actions despite the ongoing legal proceedings and regardless of the outcome or disposition of any legal proceeding.

Privacy and Confidentiality

The school recognizes the sensitive nature of Sexual Harassment allegations. The school will do its utmost to protect the privacy of the parties involved to the extent that it is consistent with the law and the school's need to protect the safety of its community. Any information concerning a complaint will be shared only on a need-to-know basis. Information that is private and information that is confidential are not the same. "Private" information means information that will only be shared with a limited circle of individuals on a "need to know" basis to allow active review, investigation, or resolution of the report. While not bound by confidentiality, these individuals will be discreet and respect the privacy of all individuals involved in the process. Confidential information is information that will not be shared by the receiving party with any other party. The school will also abide by the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and the Freedom of Information Act. The school may call appropriate law enforcement authorities at any time to confidentially discuss sexual assault and other situations.

Misuse of Policy

A person who brings a reasonable charge of Sexual Harassment in good faith, even if it may be erroneous, will not be subject to discipline. However, the use of this policy for false, malicious, or frivolous purposes is strictly prohibited. Any student, faculty, or staff member who brings a false or malicious charge of Sexual Harassment may be subject to disciplinary action.

4.3 SAFEGUARDING OF STUDENT INFORMATION (FERPA) POLICY

Purpose: To clarify the restrictions on disclosure of students' education records under the Family and Educational Rights Privacy Act ("FERPA") for The Excel Center, Public Charter School ("School") and its employees.

Policy: The school may not release personally identifiable information contained within student education records to a third party unless such release is expressly permitted under FERPA. A student's education records under FERPA include all records directly related to the student and which are maintained by a School. Records covered by FERPA therefore include, but are not limited to: grades, report cards, transcripts, attendance information, academic appeals, and records of any disciplinary proceedings. This list is not exhaustive and is provided only as an example of the wide range of information considered to be an "education record" under FERPA.

Definitions:

Eligible Student: A student 18 years of age or over. (Eligible Students have FERPA consent rights)

Procedures:

Annual Notification

The school will provide annual notification to Eligible Students of their rights under FERPA.

Disclosure

The School will protect the privacy of all student education records and will not disclose personally identifiable information within student education records to anyone other than the Eligible Student unless (1) the Eligible Student has provided prior written consent to such disclosure using a "Consent to Disclose Student Education Records" form available from the School Registrar; (2) the information to be disclosed has been classified as "directory information" in the School's annual FERPA notification (described further below); or (3) the disclosure is permitted under one or more FERPA exceptions, some of which are presented below, but must be specifically determined to apply in a particular circumstance by the School's administration before the disclosure occurs.

Consent to Disclose Student Education Records Form ("Consent Form")

Unless the requested records are not covered by FERPA, have been classified "directory information" in the annual FERPA notification, or another exception applies, an Eligible Student must provide advance written permission to release the student's education records to an outside third-party. The Eligible Student's permission must be given through completion of the Consent Form available from the School Registrar. No information may be released beyond the scope of the permission as indicated in the form.

Once completed, the signed Consent Form will be kept in the school's records. Eligible Students may revise their consent at any time during the year by completing a new form.

No form shall be effective for more than one academic year.

Directory Information

Allowable Information

The school may disclose student information that has been classified as “directory information” in its annual FERPA notification. Directory information refers to information contained in an education record of a student that would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed.

Directory information includes, but is not limited to, the following student information:

1. Student name
2. Address and telephone number
3. E-mail address
4. Photograph
5. Date and place of birth
6. Grade level
7. Dates of attendance
8. Participation in officially recognized activities
9. Degrees, honors, and awards received

Directory information cannot include a student’s Social Security number. A student’s ID number or user ID can be considered directory information, but only if that identifier cannot be used to gain access to the student’s education records without utilizing a password or personal identification number.

Annual FERPA Disclosure Regarding Directory Information and Opt Out Option

In order for the school to disclose directory information, it must first provide public notice in an annual FERPA notification to Eligible Students of the following:

1. The types of personally identifiable information that is designated as directory information;
2. An Eligible Student’s right to refuse the designation of any or all of those types of information about the student as directory information; and
3. The period of time within which an Eligible Student has to notify the school in writing that he or she does not want any or all of those types of information about the student designated as directory information.

The required annual FERPA notification can be provided within other informational documents sent by the school or as separate School correspondence.

Exceptions

Allowable Disclosures

There are several exceptions that permit the release of student education records under FERPA. The following are some common examples of parties who can receive disclosures without the student’s written consent in a manner that does not violate FERPA:

1. A contractor, consultant, volunteer to whom the school has outsourced institutional services or functions, if the party is under the direct control of the school and has met the Third-Party Requirements described below.

2. Other schools, school districts or institutions of postsecondary education in which the student is seeking to enroll or to transfer credits.
3. Authorized representatives of the School Board, Arkansas Department of Education (ADE), U.S. Department of Education ("DOE"), the U.S. Attorney General ("AG"), or the U.S. Comptroller General ("USCG") for audit, evaluation, or compliance activity with respect to Federal or state education programs.
4. Organizations conducting studies for, or on behalf of, the School Board, the School, or another governmental entity provided such organization has met the Third-Party Requirements described below.
5. School's accrediting agencies.
6. To appropriate parties, if necessary to protect the health or safety of a student or other individuals.
7. To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena.

Responses to requests for student records can be made to the third-parties identified above. School staff must notify the School FERPA Contact prior to the release of these records, provided that such notification is feasible. Schools must within 15 days of such release provide the School Board with a brief description of such release. For releases that are recurring -- such as to contractors to whom the school has outsourced institutions services or functions, or organizations conducting studies for the school -- the School only needs to notify the School FERPA Contact prior to the first release of records and provide the School Board with a brief description of such release annually.

Recordkeeping Requirements

Unless the disclosure is to a school official as defined in 34 CFR 99.31(a)(1), a record of any disclosure must be made in the student's education records, which describes: (1) the party or parties who received the student's records; and (2) the legitimate interests of the party or parties had in requesting and obtaining the information. If the disclosure is to an authorized representative of the School Board, School, OSSE, the DOE, AG, or USCG, the record of the disclosure may be made by class, school, or other appropriate grouping. (For example, if OSSE requested all student records from the school, a record could be made indicating that the entire School's student records were provided, rather than placing a record in each student's file.)

Notification Requirements

If the School receives a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena, there may be certain notification requirements it must make before disclosing the students' records. The Eligible student may need to be notified of the order or subpoena to be given an opportunity to seek protective action. Upon receipt of any judicial order or subpoena (whether it requests student education records or not), immediately notify School's General Counsel ((202) 719-1235).

Third-Party Requirements

If the School discloses student records that contain personally identifiable information to a contractor or consultant who is a school official as defined in 34 CFR 99.31(a)(1), the School and the contractor or consultant must enter into a written agreement that specifies that the contractor

or consultant will not disclose the information to any other party without the prior consent of the eligible student.

If the School discloses student records that contain personally identifiable information to a research organization, a written agreement must be entered into. The agreement must specify the following:

1. The type of student records to be disclosed to the authorized representative;
2. The purpose for which the student records are being disclosed;
3. A requirement that the authorized representative must destroy any personally identifiable information when it is no longer needed for the purpose specified, and a time period in which the information will be destroyed; and
4. Requires policies and procedures to protect personally identifiable information within the students' records from re-disclosure and unauthorized use by the authorized representative.

If charter school staff are contacted by a party purporting to be an authorized representative of the School Board, ADE, the DOE, AG, or USCG requesting student records, or purporting to be a representative of an organization conducting a study or studies for, or on behalf of one of these entities, they must notify the School FERPA Contact prior to the release of student records unless School's General Counsel determines that there are compelling reasons not to notify the School FERPA Contact and takes reasonable steps to verify the identity of the requesting party.

Health and Safety Emergencies

The school may disclose student education records that contain personally identifiable information to appropriate parties, including parents of a student, in connection with an emergency, if necessary to protect the health or safety of students or other individuals as determined by the School's President & CEO, VP of Workforce Development or General Counsel. In disclosing student records, a determination must be made that there is a clear and significant threat to individuals' health or safety. If a disclosure is made due to a health or safety emergency, the school must record a description of the significant threat to students or other individuals that formed the basis for the disclosure, and the parties who received the information.

Other FERPA Requirements:

Right to Request Inspection of Student Records

Every Eligible Student must be allowed to personally inspect copies of his or her records upon request. The school must therefore either provide copies of student records to Eligible Students upon request, or make arrangements to allow for inspection of requested records within 45 days of when the request was received.

A reasonable fee for copies of student records may be charged, but not if imposition of a fee will prevent the Eligible Student from receiving copies of the records. No fee may be charged solely to search for or retrieve a student's education records.

Right to Request Amendments to Records and Hearings

If an Eligible Student believes that the education records maintained by the school relating to the student contains information that is inaccurate or misleading, he or she may ask for the records to be amended, in writing. If, based on that written statement, the school decides not to amend the records as requested it must inform the Eligible Student of its decision and the right to a hearing. The hearing may be conducted by any school staff who was not involved in the initial decision not to accept the Eligible Student's request to amend the relevant records.

In the event of a hearing, if the school staff who conducted the hearing decides that the information in question is inaccurate or misleading, it must direct relevant staff to amend the records accordingly and inform the Eligible Student of the amendment in writing. If, on the other hand, School staff decides that the information is not inaccurate or misleading, it must provide its decision in writing and inform the Eligible Student of the right to place a statement in the records commenting on the contested information.

School staff's decision must be based solely on the evidence presented at the hearing, and must include a summary of the evidence and the reasons for the decision.

Reasonable Protection of Student Information

The school will permit school employees to obtain access to only those education records in which they have legitimate educational interests. The school will use physical and technological access controls for controlling access to education records.

Annual Notification of Rights under FERPA

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

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days after the day The Excel Center, Public Charter School ("School") receives a request for access.
Students who wish to inspect their education records should submit to the School Registrar a written request that identifies the records they wish to inspect. The school official will make arrangements for access and notify the eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA.

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

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

One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official typically includes a person employed by the school as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel) or a person serving on the school board. A school official also may include a volunteer, contractor, or consultant who, while not employed by the School, performs an institutional service or function for which the School would otherwise use its own employees and who is under the direct control of the School with respect to the use and maintenance of PII from education records, such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist; a parent or student volunteering to serve on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee; or a parent, student, or other volunteer assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official typically has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

Upon request, 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.

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

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW Washington,
DC 20202
1-800-LEARN

School may disclose appropriately designated "directory information" without written consent, unless you have advised the school to the contrary in accordance with School procedures. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow the school to include information from the student's education records in certain school publications.

Directory information, which is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released, can also be disclosed to outside organizations without a student's prior written consent. In addition, two federal laws require local educational agencies (LEAs) receiving assistance under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (ESEA) to provide military recruiters, upon request, with names, addresses and telephone listings of students unless students have advised the LEA that they do not want the student's information disclosed without their prior written consent.

If you do not want School to disclose any or all of the types of information designated below as directory information from the student's education records without your prior written consent, you must notify School in writing within the earlier of: (a) 14 days after the student's first day of class at

the School; or (b) 14 days after the first day of the School year. School has designated the following information as directory information:

1. Student name
2. Address and telephone number
3. E-mail address
4. Photograph
5. Date and place of birth
6. Grade level
7. Dates of attendance
8. Participation in officially recognized activities
9. Degrees, honors, and awards received

Directory information cannot include a student's Social Security number. A student's ID number or user ID can be considered directory information, but only if that identifier cannot be used to gain access to the student's education records without utilizing a password or personal identification number.

4.3 BUILDING ACCESSIBILITY

The following plan outlines how The Excel Center will ensure the school is accessible to all guests and students:

The Excel Center in Little Rock is located at 7400 Scott Hamilton Drive, Little Rock, Arkansas. The school has one floor, and the entrance to the school is on the ground level. All guests that enter The Excel Center will enter through Door 6 and will be greeted by a receptionist. The receptionist can open the door and assist any individual who needs assistance.

The Excel Center in Springdale is located at 2100 South Old Missouri Road, Springdale, Arkansas. The school has one floor, and the entrance to the school is on the ground level. All guests that enter The Excel Center will enter through the front entrance and be greeted by the Office Manager. The Office Manager will open the door and assist any individual who needs assistance.

V. OTHER POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

5.1 COMPUTER, INTERNET AND EMAIL USE

Any computer equipment, software, and/or internet access ("computers") provided to you are the property of The Excel Center and are to be used for educational purposes only. Desktop and laptop

computers and any related equipment (i.e. headsets, mice, etc.) provided by The Excel Center are to be used solely within the classrooms and other designated learning spaces of The Excel Center and NEVER to be removed from the premises, for any reason. Your computer use may be monitored, and any inappropriate use of the computers may lead to disciplinary action per the discipline policy.

Computers may be used for:

- School work
- Searching for jobs or submitting job applications
- Researching college and submitting college applications
- Creating resumes, letters, and other employment-related documents saving to a USB/flash drive and/or cloud-based sites such as Google Docs or Microsoft Office 365
- Corresponding with prospective employers or colleges via e-mail

The following activities are not allowed at any time:

- Viewing or listening to any material that could be considered pornographic or inappropriate
 - Engaging in any form of business activity, including on-line shopping
 - Engaging in any form of illegal activity, including but not limited to, online gambling, file sharing, or hacking
 - Using the computer to engage in any form of harassment
 - Installing or downloading any software or files of any kind, unless specifically instructed to do so by your instructor
 - Changing any settings on the computer, unless specifically instructed by your instructor
 - Eating and drinking while using the computer equipment
-

5.2 Personal Electronic Device Policy ("Bell to Bell, No Cell")

In accordance with **Arkansas Act 122 (2025)** and to promote a focused, respectful, and distraction-free learning environment, the following policy governs the use of personal electronic devices at our Adult High School.

Purpose

The goal of this policy is to support student success by minimizing distractions during instructional time and encouraging meaningful engagement with academic content and peers.

Definitions

A **Personal Electronic Device (PED)** includes, but is not limited to:

- Cell Phones
- Smartwatches

- Tablets
 - Laptops
 - Bluetooth/wireless headphones or earpieces
 - Any device capable of wireless communication or media playback not issued by the school
-

General Rules

Use of personal electronic devices is prohibited during the instructional day — from the first bell to the last bell.

This rule applies in:

- Classrooms
 - Hallways
 - Restrooms
 - Cafeterias or break areas during class time
 - Any school-sponsored activities during instructional hours
-

Permitted Exceptions

Device use may be allowed for the following reasons:

1. **Emergency situations**, as determined by school staff
 2. **Health-related accommodations**, documented in a 504 Plan, IEP, or health plan
 3. **Instructional use**, as authorized by a teacher or administrator
 4. **Concurrent enrollment, credit recovery, or required online coursework**
 5. **School-issued devices** for educational purposes
-

Enforcement and Disciplinary Actions

If a student uses a device in violation of this policy:

1. The device may be **confiscated** by staff.
2. **Repeated violations** may result in progressive discipline, including:
 - a. Verbal warning
 - b. Loss of privilege to bring the device to school
 - c. Suspension (for severe or repeated noncompliance)

Note: The school is **not responsible** for lost, stolen, or damaged devices that are confiscated due to policy violations.

Accessibility and Equity

The school is committed to equitable access:

- Accommodations will be made for students with documented needs (e.g., medical, learning differences, English learners).
- If you believe you require an exemption or accommodation, please speak with an advisor or administrator.

Final Note

As an adult learner, your success depends on your ability to remain focused and self-directed. This policy is not intended to be punitive but to provide an environment that supports your educational goals.



Student Acknowledgement Form

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Goodwill Excel Center Student Handbook, which outlines policies, procedures, and guidelines related to enrollment of all students. I am aware that it is the responsibility of every student to read and be familiar with the contents of this Handbook. Further, I agree to comply with and abide by the policies, procedures and guidelines stated herein, as well as with any revisions made hereafter. I understand that I have an obligation to consult with my Academic Success Coach if any aspect of this Handbook is unclear.

Student's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Student's Printed Name: _____